

REASONS FOR HOPE



VOLUME 18, NUMBER 4, Fall 2006

MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Manitoba's Own Michael Thomson: The Distinguished Visionary President of SSC

Manitoba's own Michael Thomson was recently elected President of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, and in so doing, became the first Manitoban to hold this prestigious office.

Recently, we sat down with Michael and posed a few questions, now that he's had a few months "on the job".



Michael Thomson

What does becoming the president of SSC mean to you?

It provides an opportunity to have more direct influence in the national discussion regarding mental illness in Canada and the development of policy to improve the quality of life for those who suffer from mental illness as well as their families. It is also an honour to have the opportunity to work with so many dedicated individuals in the schizophrenia movement in Manitoba and across Canada.

What particular passion or drive do you bring to your role?

A desire to address the stigma that attaches to mental illness in Canada; by that I mean to try and have people confront their own quiet fears and prejudice towards those who suffer from serious and persistent mental illness, and to converse about illnesses that affect the brain in the same fashion that we converse about illnesses that affect the heart, the lungs, etc.

What has been your personal and professional experience with mental illness/mental health challenges?

Like every person in Canada I and my family have been affected by mental illness/mental health challenges. They are as much a part of Canadian families and communities as any other health issue that we have just spoken about. As a lawyer, I have also had a particular perspective on the way in which those with mental illnesses come into conflict with the legal system or at a disadvantage in participating. I also have family members who work within the mental health community.

What are some of the issues you would like to address as President of SSC? Are there some initiatives that SSC is embarking on that you can share with us at this time? If you could change one thing about our mental health system in Canada to benefit consumers what would it be?

A rare opportunity exists by reason of the recent report released by the Senate Standing Committee, headed by Senator Michael Kirby. Canada desperately needs a National Mental Health Strategy and as Senator Kirby identifies an important first step is the creation of the Canadian Mental Health Commission. I am firmly of the view that creation of that Commission not only will enhance the development of a National Strategy for dealing with mental illness in Canada, but will go a long way to addressing the stigma that attaches to those with serious and persistent mental illnesses. The other matters that need particular focus and attention relate to ensuring access is available to the best medications for those living with serious and persistent mental illnesses and ensuring that research into new treatment modalities and the origins of such illnesses are funded properly, and by that I mean funded proportionately to the cost that is currently incurred by the national economy and Canadian families.

What are your thoughts on "recovery" and why do you think it is important for SSC to fully embrace this "paradigm"?

At the risk of sounding like a "homer" or Manitoba booster; Chris Summerville, who has been advocating this paradigm shift and the recovery model for years, it is unquestionably the correct approach, and has come to be generally recognized as such across Canada, and certainly at the SSC. Having said that, the organization is dedicated to enhancing the life of those who live with serious and persistent mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and supporting families. We can hope for recovery and ultimately for a cure, but there is an enormous amount to be done on a day to day basis as well to protect and enhance provincial formularies, to ensure appropriate access to all treatment resources, to housing, to employment and to achieving the quality of life that all Canadians deserve. ■

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Manitoba Centre For Health Policy - Information About Manitobans and Mental Illness

What is MCHP?

Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MHCP) is a research unit in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine.

What does MCHP do?

MCHP does research on the health of Manitobans. They examine patterns of illness in the population and study how people use health care services. MCHP's primary focus is on the question "What makes people healthy?" Many factors affect one's health such as income, education, employment and social circumstances.

Why is this research important?

Their research helps health care decision-makers address some of today's difficult questions: "How can we make the best use of our health care resources? Who are the heavy users of health care services? What services will Manitobans need in the future? What factors - beyond medical care - determine people's health?"

From four reports that NMHCP has produced in the last several years here are some mental health issues in Manitoba they have found. You can read the full reports at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/centres/mchp/reports.htm>.

THE HIGH COST OF HIGH-COST: DRUG USERS IN MANITOBA

"This study has given us new insights into high-cost users of pharmaceuticals in Manitoba, who are among the most seriously and persistently ill people in the province. High-cost users are also more likely to have mental health problems; they are twice as likely to suffer from depression as non-high-cost users, and six times more likely to suffer from schizophrenia."

IS ASSESSING MANITOBA'S NURSING HOMES GOOD ENOUGH?

Drug related quality indicators "...focus on those residents in nursing homes who were taking nine or more drugs at one time; benzodiazepines (used to treat things like anxiety and insomnia); antipsychotic medications; and drugs considered high risk for seniors. Residents taking these drugs are more prone to disorientation, falling and getting injured."

CAN WE COMPARE FAMILY PRACTICES IN MANITOBA?

"We came up with a range of typical complaints for which a family doctor sees a patient. These fall into one of 27 diagnostic groups. ...The top six—accounting for 57% of all visits—are: cardiovascular; muscle/bone, ear-nose-and-throat, psychiatric, respiratory and skin."

MENTAL ILLNESS IN MANITOBA: A GUIDE FOR RHA PLANNERS

"The truth is that between 1997 and 2002, more than 1 in 4 Manitobans had at least one mental illness diagnosis. During that time, they used nearly half the days that people spent in our province's hospitals."

"People with mental illness visit physicians, are hospitalized and use home care more than twice as often as people with no mental illness. But only about 1 in 5 of their physicians visit and 1 in 10 of their hospitalizations are for mental illness."

"People with mental illness are roughly twice as likely to be hospitalized for physical complaints—respiratory, circulatory, digestive, and most other illnesses."

"About 83% of nursing home residents have at least one mental illness diagnosis, and about 75% of those admitted in 2002/03 were diagnosed with a mental illness in the previous five years."

"Those who are most likely in need of a psychiatrist's care are the least likely to get it. It is not the poor who see psychiatrists the most; curiously, it is those from high-income areas—where treatment prevalence for mental illness is lowest—who are the highest users of psychiatrists."

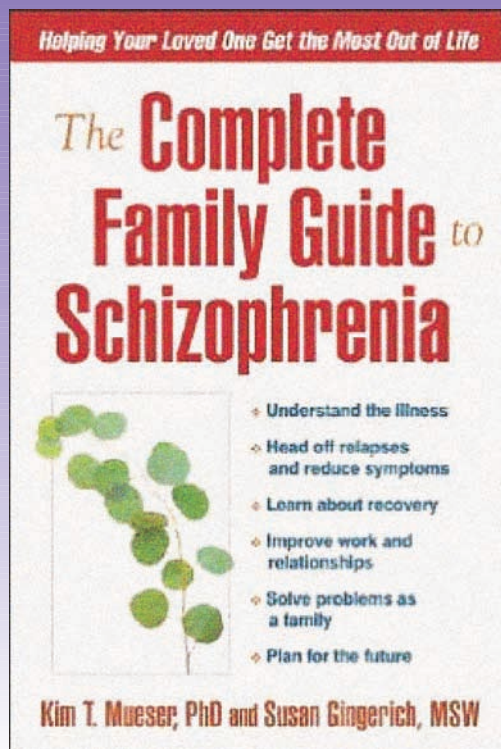
This information, along with the 118 Recommendations by Senator Kirby from "Out of the Shadows at Last," says Chris Summerville, "demonstrates the need for a comprehensive Manitoba Mental Health Action Plan. To date we have no such plan or strategy. We continue to fund mental health services according to a "crisis response mentality" in this province which does not address the issues of fair access and equity for all Manitobans in all regions." ■

2007 Fundraising Events

11th Annual Iris Gala Evening
Saturday, March 10, 2007

Vegas on the Red
Saturday, May 26, 2007

16th Annual Golf Tournament
Monday, June 18, 2007



This is the book to get...

...if you can only buy one book or just want to read one volume on schizophrenia! **The Complete Family Guide to Schizophrenia** is a must read for all board members and staff of the national and provincial schizophrenia societies in Canada, especially in light of the proposed new mission statement under consideration.

-Chris Summerville, Executive Director,
Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, Inc.

Published by The Guilford Press, this volume by Kim T. Mueser, PhD and Susan Gingerich, MSW document, endorse and support the recovery model; they offer clearly written, easy to read information on understanding the illness of schizophrenia, how to head off relapse, reduce symptoms, improving communication skills and conflict management, handling stress, solving family problems, planning for the future and learning about recovery.

As Dr. William T. Carpenter, Jr., MD with the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center says, "Mueser and Gingerich cover all the bases to guide you along the road to recovery."

Comprised of six sections or parts, they are:

An Overview of Schizophrenia (Schizophrenia: The Basics, Diagnosis and Symptoms, Creating a Vision of Recovery, Comprehensive Treatment of Schizophrenia, Community Resources)

Special Issues for Family Members (Parents, Siblings, Spouses and Partners, Parenting and Children),

Preventing Relapses (Medication, Managing Stress, Developing a Relapse Prevention Plan, Responding to Crises)

Creating Supportive Environment (Communicating Effectively, Solving Problems, Establishing Household Rules and Sharing Responsibilities)

Coping with Specific Problems (Psychotic Symptoms, Negative Symptoms, Cognitive Difficulties, Anxiety, Depression, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Anger and Violence, Lack of Insight)

Improving Quality of Life (Social Relationships, Work and School, Independent Living and Self-Care Skills, Leisure and Recreation, Dealing with Stigma, Planning for the Future.

The official description found at Amazon is:

"Do people with schizophrenia ever get better? With the vast majority of those with the disorder dependent on their families for care, close relatives often grapple with that question. "The Complete Family Guide to Schizophrenia" inspires hope. Authors Kim T. Mueser, PhD, and Susan Gingerich, MSW, walk readers through a range of treatment and support options that can lead to a better life for the entire family. Individual chapters highlight special issues for parents, siblings, and partners, while other sections provide tips for dealing with problems including cognitive difficulties, substance abuse, and psychosis. Families learn to help their loved ones manage day-to-day tasks, develop friendships, and set personal life goals. Like no other book, this powerful, practical resource helps families stay connected to the individual behind the disorder so they can work together toward recovery." ■



Executive Director MSS Chris Summerville with
Steven Fletcher Parliamentary Secretary for Health
at Stigma Conference in Ottawa during Mental Illness Awareness Week

Let your voice be heard and get us “Out of the shadows at last”

The *Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology* released its report on mental illness, ***Out of the Shadows at Last***, in May. The report strongly recommended the creation of a Canadian Mental Health Commission that would serve as a first step towards a much-needed national strategy to improve mental illness services and outcomes in this country.

To date, the federal government has made no move to establish this Commission.

On behalf of everyone affected by schizophrenia and other mental illnesses, the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and the Provincial Schizophrenia Societies are conducting an on-line letter writing campaign to illustrate the seriousness of this issue to our Members of Parliament, to our Health Minister Tony Clement and to our Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

According to Mary Jardine, Chief Executive Officer, Schizophrenia Society of Canada, the keys to a successful campaign will be:

- encouraging all our members, volunteers and staff to participate
- spreading the word to our various networks of partners, and encouraging them to participate and further spread the word to their networks.

“We need to tell everyone we know about this campaign,” says Mary. “We have two tools that may assist you in helping to spread the word to your networks:

- The first is a general e-mail message that you can use as is, or adapt, to send out to your chapters, branches, regions, and other networks and partners.
- The second is a press release that you are welcome to distribute to your provincial and local news contacts. We will be distributing this to the national media, but we encourage you to send it to your media contacts.”

There has been no formal commitment from the federal government that the Canadian Mental Health Commission will be established. This campaign is our opportunity to gather so much support and raise our voices so loud that the government must take notice!

Here is the suggested e-mail letter:

Dear partners and friends:

We are inviting you, your members, stakeholders and partners to take part in an important on-line campaign to raise support for the establishment of a Canadian Mental Health Commission.



Senator Michael Kirby

We are asking you to take action now by joining our campaign! Visit www.healthcampaign.ca and follow the link for the Canadian Mental Health Commission.

Once there, you'll be able to review background information about the issue and email a letter of support to your Member of Parliament. You can customize the letter, if you wish to do so. The web site locates your MP's contact info and sends the e-mail for you.

It's a fast, easy and powerful way to tell the federal government that you support this vitally-needed improvement for our mental health system.

We need to gather as many voices as possible to help make this Commission a reality, so please forward this message along to your members, stakeholders and partners and encourage them to participate. Join this important call for action and visit www.healthcampaign.ca today! Add your voices to ours so that we can show our government just how important the Canadian Mental Health Commission is for all Canadians.

Here is the Press Release:

Schizophrenia Society of Canada launches online campaign for establishment of mental health commission

Markham, Ontario...October 16, 2006 –The Schizophrenia Society of Canada (SSC) is asking all Canadians to join a new online campaign calling on the federal government to establish a Canadian Mental Health Commission to oversee mental illness services across the country.

The Commission was recommended in the final report of a Senate Standing Committee on the state of the mental health system as the first step towards improving services and outcomes for the approximately 20 per cent of Canadians who will experience a mental illness during their lifetimes.

"If we are going to establish a vitally-needed national strategy to deal with mental illness and mental health issues, then the federal government must first create a Canadian Mental Health Commission," said SSC President Michael Thomson. "This recommendation by Senator Michael Kirby and his colleagues represent the logical starting point."

Members and volunteers of the Schizophrenia Societies across Canada, individuals who are directly or indirectly impacted by mental illness, people who work in the mental health field and other members of the general public are being invited to join the SSC's campaign by visiting www.healthcampaign.ca and following the links for the Canadian Mental Health Commission.

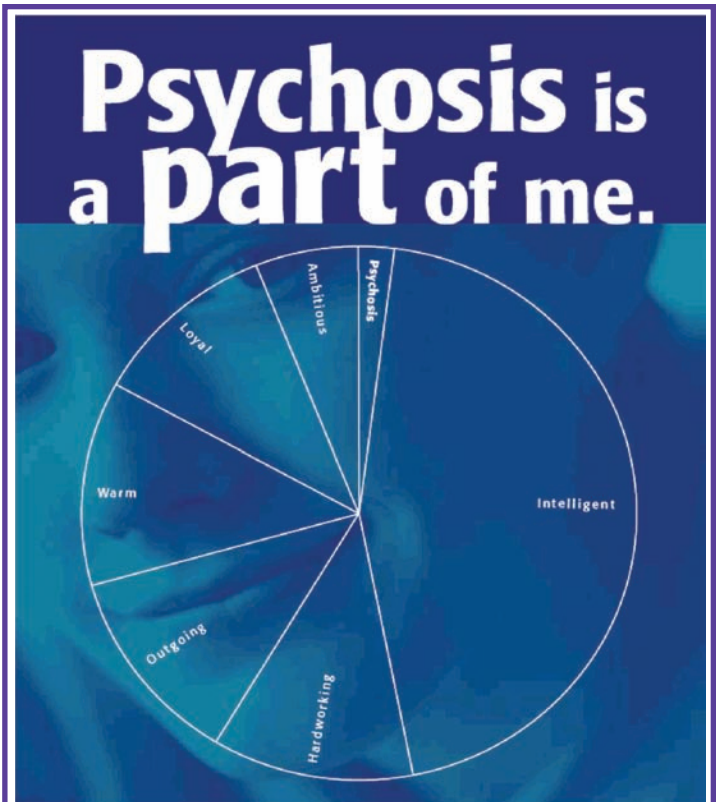
Visitors can send an e-mail directly to their Member of Parliament and sign an on-line petition supporting the Commission.

The Senate Committee recommended the Commission as a means to mobilize federal, provincial, and territorial governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, to gather information on the state of mental illness and address service needs in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion. This would provide an accurate picture of the mental health system in Canada and ensure that services are equitable and accessible across the country.

"Senator Kirby's report called for the Commission to be up and running by September 1, 2006," said Mary Jardine. "Unfortunately, Ottawa has not fulfilled this request, to the detriment of people living with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses."

The SSC was pleased to be part of the Senate Committee's consultations during the review and looks forward to working with the government, partner organizations and stakeholders to put the report into action. As an organization representing people living with schizophrenia and their families, the SSC believes it is imperative that consumers, families and caregivers have a voice in the process.

The SSC, founded in 1979, is dedicated to alleviating the suffering caused by schizophrenia and related mental disorders. Its membership includes people living with schizophrenia and related mental disorders, their family and friends, and mental health professionals who work directly with consumers and their families. The SSC works with 10 provincial societies and their over 100 chapters, branches and regions in a federation model to: raise awareness and educate the public in order to reduce stigma and discrimination; support families and individuals; advocate for legislative change; and support research through the SSC Foundation and other independent efforts. ■



It's not my whole life.

ABOUT THIS SITE : <http://www.gethelpearly.ca>

This website is an Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Youth and Family Education Initiative developed in partnership with the Ontario Working Group on Early Intervention in Psychosis. In 1997, I was diagnosed and treated on an out-patient basis for my first-episode of psychosis at the Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychoses (PEPP) in London, Ontario. At the time, I lived with my parents in a small Northern Ontario town, and we had to travel 800 km to access treatment at the PEPP program. Given that early intervention services were so far away during a critical time in my recovery, my mom and I began working on GetHelpEarly.ca so that young people and families like ours could connect with one another. We wanted a place where first-episode youth and their loved ones could go together to learn and share their personal insights through stories and art. - Tara M. ■

MSS thanks the Manitoba Writers' Guild and the Manitoba Arts Council for its donation towards the Writers Group of Women's Program in Winnipeg.



Uncle Mickey and the Pony by Gary Barg



Many years ago, before my younger brother was born, Uncle Mickey brought a birthday gift to the house for my mom. I remember that the box was very big, I thought he had bought her a new refrigerator or maybe a pony (hey, I was five years old, it made sense at the time). As she started opening the box, she found that it contained one box after another until the family room floor was littered with discarded cardboard boxes of various sizes. Opening the final box revealed a beautiful black lacquered jewelry box with inlaid Mother of Pearl. Mike was fun that way, he was fourteen years younger than mom and she adored him and was like a second mother to him.

Years later, in high school I remember being in Mike's apartment, assuring him that he was not being spied on by the neighbors and that the mailman was not "out to get him". See, Mike was diagnosed with schizophrenia after his medical discharge from the Army. Mike lived with us for a while and I remember mom spending many days with him at the Miami VA hospital. He then spent years traveling the world. We would receive postcards from Bali and Bangkok as he motorcycled alone across Southeast Asia. Shortly thereafter, Mike disappeared, surfacing only occasionally to call his dad, my grandfather, to wish him a happy birthday or to have money wired to him. I bring this up because it was six years ago this month that my mom received a phone call from the Nevada authorities that Mike had died of a heart attack. He was 49 years old.

In Uncle Mickey's memory, I would like to share the following list of tips from NAMI, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (<http://www.nami.org/>). It may not be a pony, but still another great gift from Mike.

Here are some important facts about mental illness and recovery:

- Mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders. They cannot be overcome through "will power" and are not related to a person's "character" or intelligence.
- Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability (lost years of productive life) in the North America, Europe and, increasingly, in the world. By 2020, Major Depressive illness will be the leading cause of disability in the world for women and children.
- Without treatment the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society are staggering: unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, suicide and wasted lives. The economic cost of untreated mental illness is more than 100 billion dollars each year in the United States.
- The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective; between 70 and 90 percent of individuals have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of pharmacological and psychosocial treatments and supports.
- Early identification and treatment is of vital importance; getting people the treatment they need early, recovery is accelerated and the brain is protected from further harm related to the course of illness.
- Stigma erodes confidence that mental disorders are real, treatable health conditions. We have allowed stigma and a now unwarranted sense of hopelessness to erect attitudinal, structural and financial barriers to effective treatment and recovery. It is time to take these barriers down. ■



MSS, Lilly Canada Jointly Establish "Lilly Moving Lives Forward" Scholarship

The Manitoba Schizophrenia Society is pleased to partner with Eli Lilly Canada Inc. to jointly establish the Lilly Moving Lives Forward Scholarship in Manitoba. The purpose of the Scholarship is to provide financial assistance to persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder enabling them to participate in a range of eligible educational programs. The Scholarship is intended to help such individuals acquire the educational and vocational skills they need to move their lives forward and realize their full potential. The following are recipients of this year's scholarship fund. Congratulations to: Hannah Elaine Hamseed, L. Stephensen, Andrea Doble, Melissa Pearson, Margo Andrea Hewitt and an individual who wishes to remain anonymous. ■

THE MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY PRESENTS



The Iris Gala



Mark your calendars!
March 10, 2007 at the Fairmont Hotel.
Ticket prices: \$135.00 each.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for any event please contact Pat at **786-1616**

Choose a job you are interested in:

- picking up prize donations
- calling for prizes or sponsorships
- becoming a committee member

Coming Saturday May 26, 2007!



3 Hour Cruise aboard the River Rouge
Great Music, Great Food and a chance
to win Great Prizes

VEGAS ON THE RED

Call 786-1616 for more information and to reserve tickets

THE MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY

THE JOURNEY OF HOPE WALK

was held **SEPTEMBER 16, 2006**
at the **ASSINIBOINE PARK DUCK POND**

A Big Bouquet to ALL our canvassers who raised over \$14,000.00. Our Grand Prize winner of a \$1,000.00 shopping spree was Shauna Derksen.

Many thanks to ACE Burpee of Hot 103FM who was our emcee for the day and was quite entertaining.

Also Many thanks to our entertainment, the Winnipeg Fire Department, Eddy on the Accordion, Dan the Magic Man, the Pipers and BoDittles the clown. The walk was also attended by the Oz characters, Dorothy (Karisma Gislason), Scarecrow (Al Crane), Tin Man (Darryl Kosheluk), Glinda (Sophia MacKay) and the Lion (Robert Younge).

A Big Bouquet to All our Sponsors:

Dorothy Sponsorship Level – Eli Lilly Canada Inc., Janssen-Ortho Inc. & Genpharm

Lion Sponsorship Level – Manitoba Hydro & Toledo Food Service

Scarecrow Sponsorship Level – Central Product & Foods Ltd., Kaplen's Earth & Cartage, Maple Leaf Meats, Peak of the Market & Transcona Meats

Also, Many Thanks to ALL MSS Volunteers for their endless hours of work to help make this a successful event. Your time and effort are **GREATLY APPRECIATED!**



Schizophrenia Services Around the Province

Manitoba Schizophrenia Society Inc.

100 - 4 Fort Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1C4
Phone: 1(204)786-1616
Fax: 1(204)783-4898
Website: www.mss.mb.ca
Email: info@mss.mb.ca
Toll Free: 1-800-263-5545

Regional Services

Burntwood

43 Fox Bay
Thompson, MB R8N 1N2
Phone: 1(204)677-6056
Fax: 1(204)677-5534
Email:
selfhelp@cmhathompson.ca

Central

306 Main St. Box #129,
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Email: msscentral@mts.net

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Email: eastmanmss@mts.net

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Brandon & Assiniboine

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Parkland

112 6th Ave. NE
Dauphin, MB R7N 0W6
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Email: +jshew@mts.net

SMHC

Box #850, Teulon, MB
R0C 3B0
Phone: 1(204)482-3810 ext.
416
Fax: 1(204)785-9901
Email: mssinterlake@mts.net
or
selfhelp_smhc@mts.net

Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, Inc. is a self-help organization providing mutual supports and services, public education, research and advocacy for people living with schizophrenia.

Reasons for Hope is the official newsletter of the Society. It is published quarterly. Submissions are invited. **Opinions set forth in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society or its members.** Reprinting of articles is permitted with the proviso the Society is given appropriate credit.

Editor: Chris Summerville, *Executive Director*

MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY

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Manitoba Schizophrenia Society Membership & Donation Form

MSS is a registered non-profit organization. Charitable donation #88938 3998 RR0001

Single, \$15 Family, \$25 Corporate, \$50

Donation: \$ _____

Visa # : _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I am: Mother Father Sibling
Consumer Service Provider Other
I am renewing my membership

Members receive the MSS newsletter, Reasons for Hope and the Schizophrenia Society of Canada (SSC) Bulletin.

Please make cheques payable to:

MSS
100 - 4 Fort Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1C4