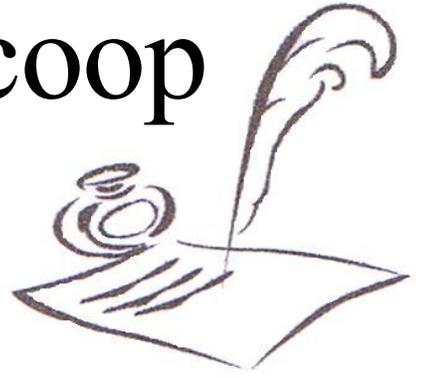


# The Sensitive Scoop

## *Consumer Newsletter*



For *any* Woman living with Mental Illness

Editor: Jo-Ann Paley

Issue 58, July August 2009

*The Sensitive Scoop is now available on the MSS Website at [www.mss.mb.ca](http://www.mss.mb.ca)*

Editorial Message

by Jo-Ann Paley

### **Summary of our MSS Board Retreat**

I have been on the MSS Board of Directors for nine years. This was the first Board Retreat we've had. It was held on June 6 of this year. These were the following "Objectives" that were meaningful and appropriate enough to share with you.

To review the current mission, values, programs and direction and affirm these or list necessary changes.

To generate one to three ideas of future projects or directions. These ideas could then be further explored in future Board meetings.

To review the Board's own functioning and determine need for future changes or directions.

An overall agreement was held that the Mission as it is currently worded is relevant and should be maintained for MSS. However, comments on possible future fine tuning of the mission included: lacking in empowerment and recovery language; should include our core values.

Next on "Values", here are some recommendations for the wording of values and whether they reflect what MSS is all about, in relation to future change:

Add hope and recovery in a more optimistically worded manner.

Add a statement with the recognition that not all individuals are the same.

Add wording reflecting better that consumers need to be listened to.

In language changes, MSS should be more direct, specific, authentic and optimistic; and less passive, vague or tentative.

As for the general direction MSS is heading in, only one suggestion may interest you. Think about an orientation program to encourage more consumers on the Board of Directors. Also, filled with hope, generally, most of the proposed changes regarding the mission and values appear to be of a 'fine tuning' nature. So we are on the right track, and together as a team our ideas are all similar and consistent. And that is hopeful too.

Next the question asked was "What do you think MSS as an organization has the greatest difficulty with. Perhaps, from these ideas, you can come up with your own and let us know what they are.

We need to work on our policy manual.

We need to do succession planning (for the CEO).

Is our target population aware of what we do? We need more public education programs/activities (like anti-stigma), and get a pro-active, positive message out

Less talk and more action in the system

More up-to-date psych wards

Support groups need to evolve more (some remain stuck at the same level); this is walking the fine line between having the groups determine their own progression, versus staff moving groups along. The conclusion of the plenary was that there needs to be different levels of groups meeting the needs of different individuals depending on their interest (eg. age and stage of recovery). There may be a need for different modes of support for different demographics (like through texting) or different opportunities (like volunteering at MSS).

Need for 1-on-1 peer support (eg. Red River College Peer Support Training Program)

We need more advocacy, possibly through teams for separate issues

We need more outreach for people who are hard to reach/isolated, people from different cultural backgrounds

As for what we would like to see more of, I am only going to share a few of the many suggestions with you.

We would like to see more innovation in peer support.

Maintaining the present good atmosphere of values such as being professional while still maintaining contact with the individual; and a global approach to wellness. Creating and maintaining our welcoming and empathic atmosphere of hope and recovery.

A greater global awareness of what services are available would be nice.

One important point of what we would like to see is an increased consumer involvement in curriculum development for all health and mental health professionals

As for peer support programs and services, we would like to see these more organized in ways such as a:

Sophisticated, coordinated peer support group network

Formal peer support program: with full training (e.g. Red River College program) and in a collaborative process (with health professionals)

Technologically advanced groups that are accessible (texting etc.)

Aboriginal component, age relevant, and culture relevant

An MSS peer support specialist in each region

So, overall, if we can work together and help each other to make these things really happen, with more work and less talk, just remember to stay focused, do a few things right; and don't ever expand beyond our capability and resources. A greater global awareness of what services are available is important as is the need for increased consumer involvement in curriculum development for all health and mental health professionals.

## **Book Review**

**Book: Who Calls Me Beautiful**

Author: Regina Franklin

This is a book about finding our true Image in the Mirror of God. Chapter one is about Worldly Beauty and says beauty pageants make physical beauty become the message of life's story rather than a mere detail. Culture screams: "I am what I look like." Chapter 2 is about voices without --- they are first the voices of our peers. No longer content to play with Barbie dolls, you want to be Barbie – the girl who captures any young man's heart, who knows what she wanted out of life and how to get it...who looked great and knows it. The book quotes Proverbs 25:11 and Colossians 4:6 and declares that we must speak about our bodies positively. In chapter 4 – Mirror, Mirror some days I felt "if only I were ...taller, thinner" after looking in the mirror. It also says "To understand beauty, I must understand I belong to God. I was created in an out spring of God's love and I am chosen." We must know that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). It says also in Psalm 139:13 "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This book ends with "When you see yourself as God sees you, as He created you, suddenly you have the freedom to be the unique woman you are created to be in Christ. And you can then pass this legacy on to other generations of women."

By Audrey Ruth Wiebe

## MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER--CMHA Manitoba Conference Highlights

On June 5th, 2009, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba Division hosted its first-ever provincial conference entitled 'Moving Forward Together: Facilitating Empowerment in Mental Health'. The conference, that took place at the Victoria Inn and Convention Centre in Winnipeg, had an attendance of over 325 people from across Manitoba, as well as British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario!

The Master of Ceremonies for the day was Marcy Markusa, a broadcast journalist with CBC radio. During Marcy's opening remarks, she revealed that, while known for her warmth and humour both on and off the air, she, like many others in attendance, has personally experienced the challenges of depression. Following Marcy, the Minister of Healthy Living, Kerri Irvin-Ross addressed the audience with a message full of hope and humour.

In her very down-to-earth manner, opening keynote speaker Margaret Trudeau spoke of her life with Pierre Elliott Trudeau, her love for her children, the devastating loss of her son, Michel, and her personal experience with mental illness. With candour and humour, Margaret described her journey with bipolar disorder, from pre-diagnosis through to recovery. She stressed the importance of finding a balance of mind, body and spirit and credited her son, Justin, for his invaluable help advocating on her behalf. After more than an hour of sharing her stories of love, hope and inspiration, Margaret received a standing ovation from the audience!!!

Margaret is currently working on her third book, a memoir describing her experiences with bipolar disorder. It will be available in the fall of 2010--watch for it at the Mental Health Education Resource Centre! During the buffet lunch, CMHA Manitoba launched the premiere issue of their new publication, Kaleidoscope! To be published bi-annually, Kaleidoscope is comprised of artwork, prose and poetry submitted by individuals recovering from mental illness and those that know them. Kaleidoscope creative director and Artbeat alumnus Henry Peters is the driving force behind this new endeavour, along with Laurie Green (layout) and Lindsay Boutet (typesetting).

The day-long conference ended on a high note with an energetic and upbeat presentation, 'Taking Crazy Back: A New Roadmap for Mental Health in the Workplace', by Tod Maffin. Tod spoke of how new technology and the 'always-connected' workplace may be eroding the mental health of employees. He shared his strategy for bringing a discussion of mental illness out of the shadows, and also related his journey through depression and alcohol addiction. Tod's words were both entertaining and motivational, garnering him both cheers and a standing ovation!!

A big CMHA thank you goes out to everyone in attendance, for making this first conference a great success, and, hopefully, one of many to come!!!

Cheryl McClure, Resource Coordinator, Mental Health Education Resource Centre  
Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba Division  
4 Fort Street, Suite 100, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1C4  
204-953-2355 info@mherc.mb.ca

### Red River Community College

They did not comprehend why so quiet; a kitten hiding in a corner, protective armour wrapped tight around her. I felt I had no ground to stand on. They looked, smiled at my pretty hair and face wondering about this nervous, withdrawn creature, who self-consciously stood alone waiting for classes to start. I felt like a three out of ten amongst society's elite. My isolation – pathological, with self-esteem eaten away like moths at a fine, wool sweater.

When giving oral presentations my body shook and my throat seized up; so badly I could hardly speak. *Of course I remember you, Debbie*, a teacher said years later when I dropped by her office, *You were having some problems then; I don't know what they were...* Recollecting all this I see the good; that my great determination was evident even then and I rejoice today I'm so much healthier, emotionally and spiritually...a gift from gentle work and Father Time.

- Debora Ann Haliburton

# **Women's Program Schedule**

## **July & August 2009**

*Meetings are held on Thursday afternoon from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM at 4 Fort Street (FACES) although sometimes we go on outings. Any women living with a mental illness are welcome to attend. Occasionally we are out of the office for an activity so please call to confirm your attendance at 786-1616.*

### **July**

- July 2<sup>nd</sup>**      **NO GROUP – MSS OFFICE CLOSED**
- July 9<sup>th</sup>**      **Writer's Group** – If you have a poem or story you would like to share with the group bring it along and get positive feedback. We also do short writing exercises.
- July 16<sup>th</sup>**     **Sharing and Planning** – This is your chance to give us your suggestions and ideas for future programming.
- July 23<sup>rd</sup>**     **Arts and Crafts** – Using your creativity make something nice to take home.
- July 30<sup>th</sup>**     **Visit The Forks** – Meet at MSS at 1:00 PM and we will walk to The Forks or meet us at the Centre Canopy – (Winter Rink) area at 1:45 PM.

### **August**

- Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>**      **Writer's Group**
- Aug. 13<sup>th</sup>**     **BBQ – 12:30 PM at Bonny Castle Park – Rain Date Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>**
- Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>**     **Mini Golf – Cost involved**
- Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>**     **Sharing**



Funded by:

A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.  
MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY  
SOCIÉTÉ MANITOBAINE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE  
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE