



THE SHARING TREE

Consumer Newsletter

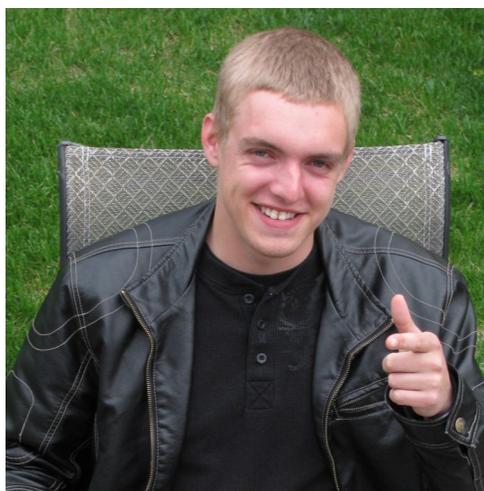
For any Man or Woman Living with Mental Illness

Issue 24, March & April 2015

Editor: Jo-Ann Paley

Jared's Story

by Leslie Flynn



I am Leslie Flynn, the very proud mother of Jared James Daoust who passed away on October 21, 2014 at the age of 25.

Jared's long road and causes of his diagnosis of Schizoaffective Disorder began when he was in his mid teens and started heavy marijuana use. My family and I firmly believe that his brain chemistry changed as a result of this and started him down the path of mental illness and ultimately, his death.

Jared's mental health decline after marijuana use is text book to what is described in the David Suzuki documentary, The Downside of High.

In early 2009, Jared was sold what he

believed to be cocaine by a close friend. It turns out that the drug was either laced with or was pure crystal meth. After using this drug, Jared suffered a serious and potentially life threatening drug induced psychotic break. Though his life was saved, his brain was not.

He was hospitalized for the first of several times in March 2009 at the age of 19.

Talking to him one night in mid March 2009, he told me about the voices and hallucinations he was experiencing. His brother Aaron and I immediately picked him up and took him to the hospital. Jared was, as always, surrounded by the love and support of our family during this time.

The ultimate diagnosis, though not immediate, was Schizoaffective Disorder.

Jared continued to smoke marijuana and after much counselling he made the choice to quit.

He was so very proud of himself in his ability to quit and made a point of telling me every mile-

Jared's Story cont. on page 2

INSIDE

- "Jared's Story.....".....P.2
- "MSS Group Activities".....P.3
- "We have HOPES"P.4
- Voice Hearers Pilot Support Group.....P.4
- "Family Support Group".....P.4
- Partners in AwarenessP.4
- MSS Peer Support Group Schedule.....P.5
- MSS Women's Program Schedule..... P.6

If you would like to send something in for this newsletter please email your submission to:

Karen@mss.mb.ca

or send it to

**The Manitoba Schizophrenia Society,
100 — 4 Fort Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1C4**

Message from the Editor

We reserve the right to change the formatting of work received but we will not change the meaning of any work submitted.



stone, be it a day, week or month.

Over the next several years Jared spent time in hospital as he struggled with his condition. It seemed that he had finally been prescribed the right combination of anti-psychotic, anti-depressant and sleep aid medication.

In early 2013, Jared attended a work placement program at Sara Riel Inc. This was largely due to the gentle encouragement of my sister-in law who works at Sara Riel. His close, trusting relationship with her encouraged him to give the program a try. It was a resounding success and he was hired by the first employer he approached.

In May 2013, Jared moved out of my house and into an apartment with a roommate. He was always welcome at home and spent a great deal of time with us.

He continued to work part-time despite not enjoying his job. In March of 2014, Jared applied for and was hired for a full-time job. It was a position he was proud of, it boosted his self-confidence and he developed a close relationship with his employer.

Jared and I had a Mother and Son

bond that was unbreakable; we saw each other anywhere between 5 and 9 times a week, often multiple times a day. He was very open about how he felt, his struggles and his triumphs. He was always kind, appreciative and incredibly loving and he had an incredible sense of humor. It seemed everything was going as well as it could for someone battling his illness. We talked about the future, upcoming events and things we planned to do together.

I often felt that people judged Jared and assumed he was taking advantage of me. That was not the case at all. I knew how much he struggled, I knew what he needed and I also knew what I needed to do for him. I knew when to question him or challenge him but what I absolutely knew best was how to love him and help him manage his illness. He knew that I was by his side every second of every day and was always available to him.

Despite his seemingly good state in life, I worried about him constantly and did everything I could to see him, talk to him, take him to appointments, engage him with family, etcetera, to keep his life smooth and balanced.

Jared and I had such a deep level of trust that he was now allowing me to attend his psychiatric appointments with him. Our last appointment was less than 3 weeks before his death and I was so proud of him and where he was at. Unfortunately, I was falsely comforted.

Sometime in the last several months of his life, he was introduced to the world of street drugs, in particular, oxycodone and cocaine. Jared had also started smoking marijuana again.

In the week leading up to Jared's death, I was seriously alarmed by an injury to his face that he could not explain and I knew he was not telling me the truth. I begged him to let me take him to a walk-in clinic. I talked to and texted my family about my concerns. Jared stuck to his story and even though I asked him endless

questions about what happened he stayed firm. Through our conversations, the door was wide open for him to talk to me and/or several of my family members. For the first time ever, he did not let me in. All that he needed to say was Mom, I need help.

I had no idea that Jared was fighting a losing battle against a new set of demons, street drugs. Jared was incredibly smart and thought he had it all under control.

The night of Monday, October 20, 2014 I had a nightmare that Jared had died. I woke up in a panic then realized it was just a dream. I did not know that he had made a terrible miscalculation in the ingestion of prescribed and street drugs.

On Tuesday, October 21, 2014 at 1:00pm as I waited for Jared's call to arrange for his daily ride to work and a packed lunch, the doorbell rang. It was two police officers at the door to tell me that Jared was dead; the nightmare was indeed true and will never end.

If sharing both Jared's and my story, a life can be changed or saved, it would be the greatest and only remaining gift that I can give Jared.

*If Love Could Have
Saved You
You Would Have
Lived Forever"*

MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Peer Support Group members were asked to share what they felt were highlights of programs from the last couple of months.

One of highlights of the programs for February at the Peer Support Group was having a speaker come from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Sheri Lysy—Sigurgeirson did a presentation about Addictions and Mental Illness. The comparison between having a good or healthy relationship or a bad and unhealthy relationship with drugs or alcohol was explored.

Comments from group members: “The information was emotionally thought provoking and very challenging.” “The presentation was interesting and good material was provided.”

People shared that they enjoyed playing bingo and singing karaoke at the Valentine’s Day party.

The MSS Women’s Group enjoyed the Writers’ Group exercise answering questions about comfort foods, favorite movies or music, cultural events, and other group activities.

Comfort foods that people enjoy include: “all foods that make me happy and well; toast and jam; chocolate chips, candies, junk food, chips, sweet food, French fries and pasta.”

TV shows, movie favorites and music included: “Criminal Minds; The First 48 Hours; Castles; Stargate Atlantis; Kindergarten Cop; Forest Gump; Titanic; Country music; Dance, Pop, Love Songs; Christian Contemporary and Christian Alternative music; Celtic music; Metis music; Slow and meaningful music that makes me relax.”

A common theme that people found in doing these writing exercises was that “I enjoy things that make me feel loved.”

Traditions that people remember from childhood reminding many of Easter included: “Going to church; Easter Egg hunts; family dinners and Easter bread; no meat; potluck dinners.”

Art and culture that moves or inspires people include: “Multicultural events and exchanging cultural ideas, “for I learn new things and I understand people better without any barriers between us.”

Overall people said they enjoyed the camaraderie of being together with their friends and sharing ideas as part of the Peer Support group and Women’s support group.

Oops. *In the printed copy of the newsletter in the poem, My Poor Brain, the word, sandwiches should have read sanditches. Sorry for the misprint on the play on words.*

My Poor Brain

My poor brain
Has thought too many thoughts
It now wants to lay with sleeping cats
& eat peanut butter “sanditches”.
It wants to listen to the neighbour’s vacuum
cleaner run
Reassured that someone is cleaning.
My brain wants to look at wooden things &
filmy drapes
With half opened eyes.

-Anonymous

I feel the intensity of my gaze, burning in
the night.
Impossible to sleep.
Impossible to stay awake.
I enter the in-between place.
I enter the world of the night - the shadows.
They are the owl's eyes - a strong,
unflinching gaze."

-Anonymous

We have **H.O.P.E.S.** *for young people living with psychosis and schizophrenia*



If you are a person between 15 and 30 and are living with psychosis and schizophrenia, or schizo-affective disorder, **H.O.P.E.S.** or **Hope and Opportunity through Peers, Empowerment and Support** might be a place for you!

4 Fort Street, Winnipeg

First Thursday of the Month 4:00 pm—5:00 pm

Contact: the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society
at 204-786-1616

Introducing a 9 week

VOICE HEARERS PILOT SUPPORT PROGRAM



Based on

International Hearing Voices Movement

Voice Hearers Pilot Support Program

The nine week program helps voice hearers to gain a positive relationship with their voices. During the nine week program, members learn to explore the content of their voices and learn coping tools to empower voice hearers in their journey of recovery. Following the program, an ongoing voice hearing support group will be available for support members to attend.

The Hearing Voices Approach Objectives

- Accepting that hearing voices is part of some peoples' experience
- Hearing voices is meaningful for the person and related to life experiences
- Believing in each person's strength through resiliency and ability to recover
- Respecting each person's process of recovery
- While hearing voices is a challenge, the difficulty is in coping with the experience
- Owning their voices enables people to cope with their experience

Benefits of group

- Safe and comfortable space to share their experience with their voices
- Self-acceptance of hearing voices
- Learn what the voices mean and how to gain control over the experience
- Develop a better relationship with voice(s)
- Learn new coping exercises
- Develop self-confidence and self esteem
- Self-Empowerment
- Feeling not alone
- Build stronger support systems
- Develop strategies to reduce stress

100-4 Fort Street, Winnipeg Manitoba

To register call MSS at 204-786-1616 or email matthew@mss.mb.ca

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

For families and friends of those experiencing schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and psychosis.

Fourth Tuesday of every month

**Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Multipurpose Room**

**For more information contact 204-786-1616
or info@mss.mb.ca**

Partners in Awareness

A peer support group made up of interesting dynamic professionals living with schizophrenia.

Receive support from those who understand!

You Don't Have to Do It Alone!

**Next Meeting: March 19th,
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**4 Fort Street, Winnipeg
Contact: 204-786-1616**

Sponsored by:



Manitoba Schizophrenia Society
4 Fort Street
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 204-786-1616

“Need to talk to someone about your life with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder?”

Then consider attending the

Peer Support Group Schedule (For Men & Women)

March & April 2015

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM (Unless otherwise indicated)

Date

Activity

March

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Humour Day & Planning |
| 11 | Movie Day (in Multi Purpose Room) |
| 18 | Overcoming Stigma |
| 25 | Bowling—Meet at MSS and go to the Alley from here |

April

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Holiday Celebration—treats, games, music |
| 8 | Hobbies—What’s Effective for You? |
| 15 | Emergency Services—Crisis Hotlines |
| 22 | Education & Mental Health |
| 29 | Famous People & Mental Illness |

Women's Program Schedule

March & April 2015

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 woman living with a mental illness is welcome to attend. Occasionally we are out of the office for an activity so please call to confirm your attendance at 204-786-1616.

March

Activities

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|
| 5 | Writers' Group |
| 12 | Creative Movement to Music |
| 19 | Movie Day—GROUP STARTS AT 1:00 P.M. ON MOVIE DAY |
| 26 | Arts & Crafts—Holiday Theme |



April

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Potluck Lunch—GROUP STARTS AT 12:30 P.M. FOR THIS OCCASION |
| 9 | Writers' Group and Planning |
| 16 | Employment Options |
| 23 | Outing—Please call the office to confirm your attendance |
| 30 | Physical Activity—Please call the office to confirm your attendance |



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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