

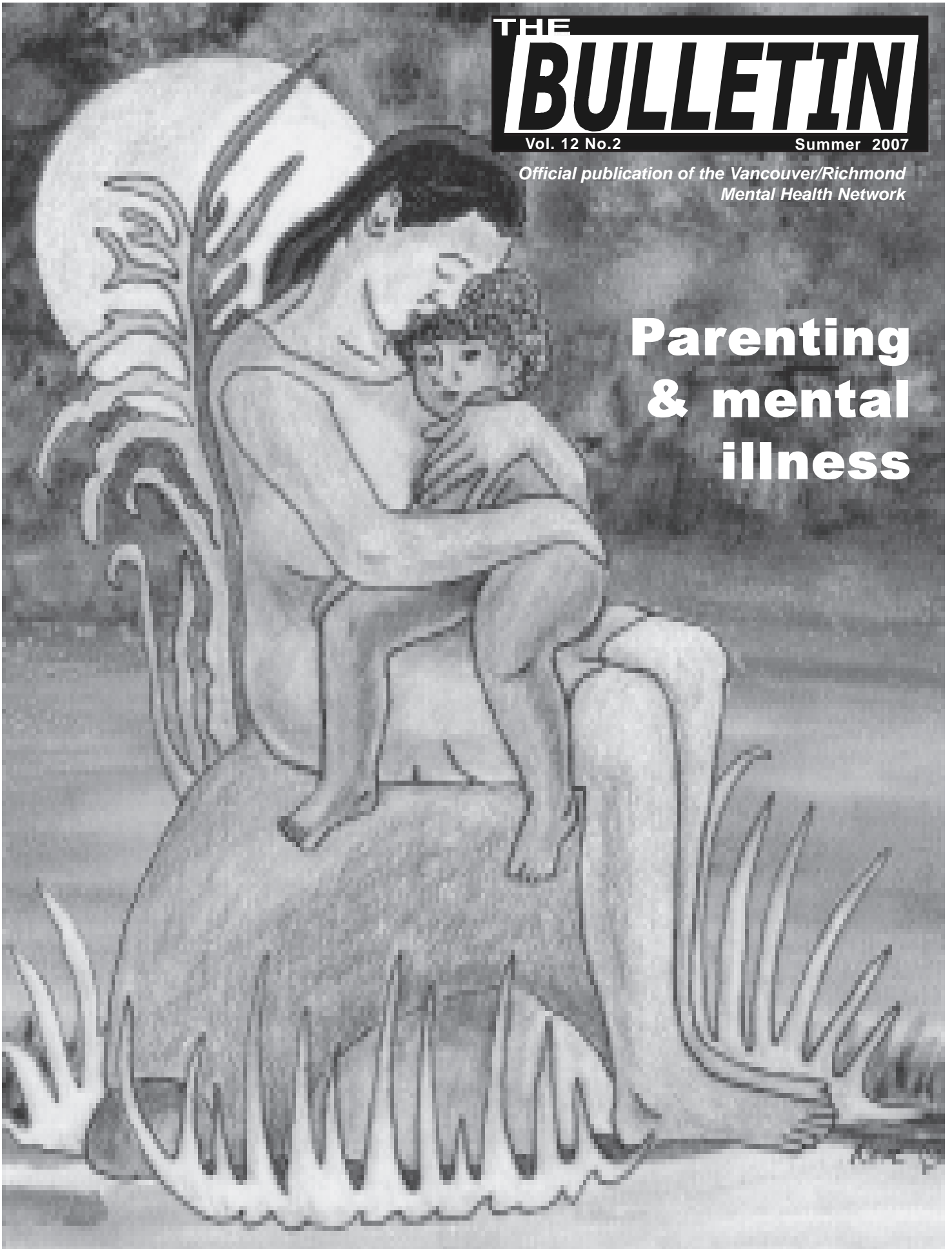
THE **BULLETIN**

Vol. 12 No.2

Summer 2007

*Official publication of the Vancouver/Richmond
Mental Health Network*

Parenting & mental illness



Art by Rose Ananda Heart

THE BULLETIN

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The Bulletin is the official newsletter of the Vancouver Richmond Mental Health Network; its contents are the opinions of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the Network. This edition was produced by mental health consumer/survivors. It is a vehicle for the expression of concerns and opinions for the enlightenment of all.

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We welcome readers' letters, including those from outside the Lower Mainland. We also welcome inquiries about the Network's self-help groups and other programs.

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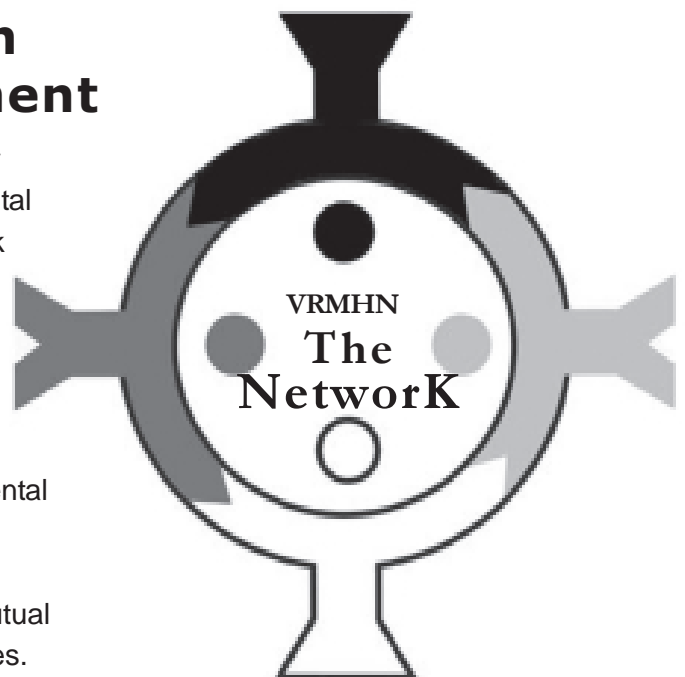
Network services

The Network offers the following services for consumer/survivors:

- Co-Ed Badminton/Volleyball Group
- Community Education Program
- Expressive Art Group
- Latin American Peer Support Group
- Men's Peer Support Group
- Pan Asian Peer Support Group
- Song Circle
- Shakti Peer Support Group
- Women's Peer Support Group
- Yoga Group
- Events and Workshops throughout the year
- Information and Referrals
- Mental Health Resource Library

Mission Statement

The Vancouver Richmond Mental Health Network serves to promote growth and healing of people who go through the mental health system through the provision of mutual aid opportunities.



From the Co-ordinators

Pair to share Network duties

Warm greetings! My name is Mildred German and I am one of the new office coordinators/executive directors for the Vancouver-Richmond Mental Health Network. I am meeting a lot of new people, keeping myself busy with different tasks and learning a lot!

My fellow co-ordinator Kristine Stratford and I are busy with the many day-to-day aspects of the Network, such as administration, membership, budgeting and co-ordinating programs and more. Everyday is a learning experience with different tasks and fruitful results.

We are also working on many upcoming events for our members to participate with this summer. Some of these events are the Net-



Mildred German

work's Extra-ordinary General Meeting on June 23, the Mad Pride 2007 in July, the Pride Events, and the Vancouver Folk Music Festival. I encourage all Network members and supporters check out at least one of these great events and to give us a call in the Network Office at 604.733.5570 for more information.

About myself, I have been a mental health consumer and have survived the mental health system. My experience has motivated me to address mental health issues, challenge the stigmas of people living with mental health issues, and work for social justice.

I also have worked with other community-based, charitable, and grassroots organizations around issues of mental health and trauma, labour, immigration, racism, and women issues. I take inspiration from the struggle of the people for a better society free of exploitation and oppression. I hope to fulfil my tasks for such goals...I am positive that as a community working together and united, we will never be defeated!

I see the main focus of the network as a peer support system and referral advocacy centre. As one of the new coordinators I am excited to take on the challenge and invigorated to do my best to help empower and give voice to those who otherwise may not be heard. As a former member/survivor of the mental health community, I take notice and am interested in the ongoing issues surrounding Mental Health advocacy and survival. I look forward to helping at the network office with the day to day functions, delivery of services; and areas of interest such as promoting health and wellness through network sponsored events, peer support services and fundraising for larger causes on the whole for the mental health community. I hope to be a helpful and knowledgeable advocate for the societies members and participants.

What I foresee happening in the next few months with the network is working on the upcoming EGM slated for June 23rd,



Kristine Stratford

12:30-3pm, with the intention of bringing the networks' members together to elect on 'the purpose' of the network as a society gaining Charitable Status, as well as several other calendared events. All members are welcome.

Currently in process is the Vancouver Folk Festival tickets for our members and the upcoming Mad Pride Event. What I intend to bring to the society is unity, purpose and strength. I hope to bring to the society further support for its members as well as peer support groups, additional events funded and supported additional support systems and funds; in general; provided from outside enterprises to grow, sustain and facilitate the network.

From the President

Two heads better than one, Board decides

Greetings. It looks like various challenges have emerged for consumer/survivors across Canada.

Even our own local Network has seen some recent changes regarding our re-application and upcoming vote on charitable status. Our Interim Coordinator, Christie McRae, has chosen not to renew her three-month contract and after some review of the complexities of the job, the Board of Directors has decided that having two part-time coordinators is more realistic. The revised

2007- 08 Service Providers contract with VCHA is expected to be ready soon. I would like to say that I greatly appreciate the energy and intelligence Christie brought with her and she will be missed.



Susan Friday

And so, please allow me to introduce our new Office Coordi-

ners, Mildred German and Kristine Stratford. Welcome aboard!

At VCHA head office, a meeting took place regarding the PARIS client/patient tracking system. Concerned consumers met with Kim Calsafferri and Lorna Howes to discuss the implications and in particular, the security levels of the system. It was a good meeting. According to Kim, "The PARIS system is locked down to mental health" and "mental health case notes are only accessi-

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Parenting important from Day 1

In this issue we will be exploring the subject of Parenting. Whether we are parents ourselves or our experience of parents is through the parenting we have received, we all have experiences to share in some way regarding this important topic.

I have heard it said that what parents do during the first few years is not that important because children will forget most of their early experiences anyway; this line of thinking is deceiving, however, because whether we remember what happened to us or not, our early experiences shape our characters & ultimately our lives. We are creatures of habit, therefore we tend to repeat what we have experienced whether it's rational or not.



Josanna Savoie

Therefore how we were parented and how we parent our children is of utmost importance from Day 1. It is clear that our readers understand this from the insightful and informative submissions we have received. I hope you will learn from as well as enjoy the articles presented.

A very special thank you to Elly Litvak for her "Now who's crazy now" monologue performed in March. Elly courageously shared her personal healing journey and delivered hope that recovery is possible for everyone.

We have two new coordinators at the network; Kristine Stratford and Mildred German. Kristine is a freelance make up artist and has her own business. She has an extensive administrative background and is a believer in healing arts, self help and therapy. Her desire is to help and inspire others to realize their goals. Kristine took the position because of her desire to help others, inspire and motivate less fortunate individuals to believe in their forgotten or unrealized goals

and inspirations.

Written & artwork for *The BULLETIN* are welcome although we cannot always publish all submissions due to lack of space. Our next topic will be on mental illness and poverty. We would like to know how poverty has affected your life as a mental health consumer. Although we like to receive some articles on our related topic, it is not necessary for all submissions to relate to the topic. The submission deadline for our next bulletin will be Saturday, September 1. Articles should not exceed 1000 words. You are also welcome to send us your ideas for topics you would like to see covered in future issues.

The Network operates the following programs free of charge for members; Badminton & Shakti, Educational workshops, Expressive arts, Yoga, and Men's & Women's social groups. For information on programs & upcoming events or to send articles contact the network at 604-733-5570 or vrnhn@vcn.bc.ca. Correspondence for *The BULLETIN* should be marked c/o the editor.



Illustration by Jayne Gayle

from Page 3
ble to mental health workers" - sounds good. There is a website that can be accessed for more information: www.parisproject.ca and the phone numbers for the Information Privacy and Security Office are: 604-875-4925 or 604-875-5568.

On the national level, various challenges are noted. Recently, a consumer/survivor organization in New Brunswick, *Our Voice/Notre Voix* was informed by the Director of Mental Health Programs (over the phone) that their Board of Directors must include a mental health professional. This is just another example of misplaced paternalism which undermines the principle of empowerment and the value of self-governance.

The Executive Director, Eugene LeBlanc, decided to fight back. He knew we would all be supportive of him. Don't worry Eugene, we're with you!

In the province of Ontario, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has attempted to divest a consumer/survivor run business, Crazy Cooks Catering, into a mainstream mental health agency,

a local area CMHA. This sort of trend is alarming, and the National Network for Mental Health has taken notice. According to Constance McKnight, National Executive Director for the NNMH,

"Experience has shown our community that mental health mainstream organizations are disempowering and stigmatizing, and to

merge two such entities is irresponsible and neglectful..." So far, letters sent to the Honorable Minister George Smitherman have not been answered.

The long awaited legislated review report on Community Treatment Orders (CTO) has been released by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care of Ontario. Although it is 153 pages long, it is well worth reading. The frustrations and complexities involved in the issuing of CTOs remains and it is interesting to note that some psychiatrists refuse to use them. If a leave of absence (i.e. using a day pass) is good enough, why go through all the extra work of preparing a CTO? Besides, getting a patient to agree to sign an "order" seems rather contradictory.



Soothsayer by Sandra Yuen MacKay

Motherhood mangled for manic mom



I hate Mother's Day. Most mothers can expect a call from their kids. Not me. Most mother's get breakfast in bed or flowers on mother's day. Not me. I get up and look at the phone thinking that maybe this year things will be different. I tried to be the best mother I could, doing everything the opposite of what my mother did. She was Joan Crawford and the wicked witch of the west rolled into one. I used to call her on mother's day, but not anymore. My mother hated being a mother, but having children was one of the highlights of my life. I loved being pregnant and even the birthing experience was a spectacular life changing event. I became a super mom, an attentive parent who enjoyed watching my children grow, and growing with them. But suddenly they were snatched away from me, or I was snatched away from them, the result is the same. I missed out on being their mom and not being there to tend to their daily needs. I was also in the psych ward over-drugged on stelazine. I'd gone manic and my kids were with their father. On Mother's

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By Elly Litvak

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Day I was given a pass to visit them. When I walked in, my former mother-in-law shrieked "Look at her! She's drooling! She's out of it! Don't let her near the boys!" I was crushed.

For the next fifteen years I had a seemingly unending cycle of psychotic manic episodes which resulted in hospitalizations. The episodes were triggered by the anguish over the loss of my kids and my desperate need to reunite with them. My life was chaotic and out of control. What my kids witnessed time and time again was a manic mom. I'd show up at their home at six a.m. in a taxi that I didn't have any money to pay for, to whisk them away to a planet that only existed in my mind. Or I'd show up at family holidays like Thanksgiving and the Jewish New Year

with street people or other lost causes I'd met in an all night donut shop. I thought it was a mitzvah. Unfortunately my mother didn't view sharing the holidays a blessing. She'd freak out, call the police, and I'd be back in the hospital.

I sent my kids cards and letters constantly letting them know how much I loved and missed them. Talking to them on the phone was difficult, but visiting them was one ordeal after another. I'd make arrangements with my ex to see them on the weekend. Initially he'd be agreeable but by Friday the conversation would take a different turn. Either one of the kids was sick, at karate lessons or needing to attend a birthday party so Saturday was out. Perhaps Sunday was a better day. But Sunday morning was out because the boys went to He-

brew school. If I got lucky Sunday afternoon would work out and I would take the subway out to the suburbs to spend the afternoon together. Even though I had an agreement that would allow me access to my kids, things usually didn't work out and I didn't see them. I loathed what I came to refer to as Suicide Sunday. For a while I couldn't even bear to see a mother pushing a stroller. I'd loose it, breaking down into fits of hysteria. My coworkers were on stroller alert, warning me of mother's with strollers coming in the door. I'd run into the bathroom and hide, sobbing until the coast was clear. Wednesdays my kids went to my parent's for dinner and although it was always a bitter sweet experience I was allowed to join them. I got to see my kids but in a controlled environment. My mother would declare that they were 'her boys' and that I should stop 'interfering' in their lives. After all, I was the 'crazy' one.

Both my sons grew angry with me. As they grew older their anger took the form of wrathful insults, hurtful accusations, and omitting me from their lives. The truth as I was to fully recognize and admit some years later was that my kids were suffering from feeling abandoned by me. Throw in the manic mom episodes and it's not too surprising. Things turned around when I wrote my adult sons a letter of apology. I took full responsibility for my mistakes, naming them and telling them how ashamed I was of myself. I told them that I was sorry for not being present in their early lives and that it was not their fault their dad and I divorced. I went on to apologize for specific events in each of their lives that I was truly sorry for. I wasn't defensive and I didn't use mental illness as an excuse.

Now, the pictures of my kids dissolve in and out on my desktop family slide show. Dissolve to my eldest son, 34 and an entrepreneur. He is standing proudly next to his 11-year-old daughter who is showing off the carrot cake she made him for his birthday. Dissolve to my youngest son, 32 and an executive chef, preparing one of his creative concoctions. I am grateful for the fact that my kids grew up to be healthy, self-sufficient young men. This is what I prayed for the past 30 years. I realize that as healed as we are there is still residue from their childhood that may always be there. I will always bear the guilt of the past. They may not always call me on Mother's Day or send flowers but I know my kids love me, and I love them.



Metamorphosis by Rose Ananda Heart



By Sandra Yuen MacKay

Care, a give and take affair

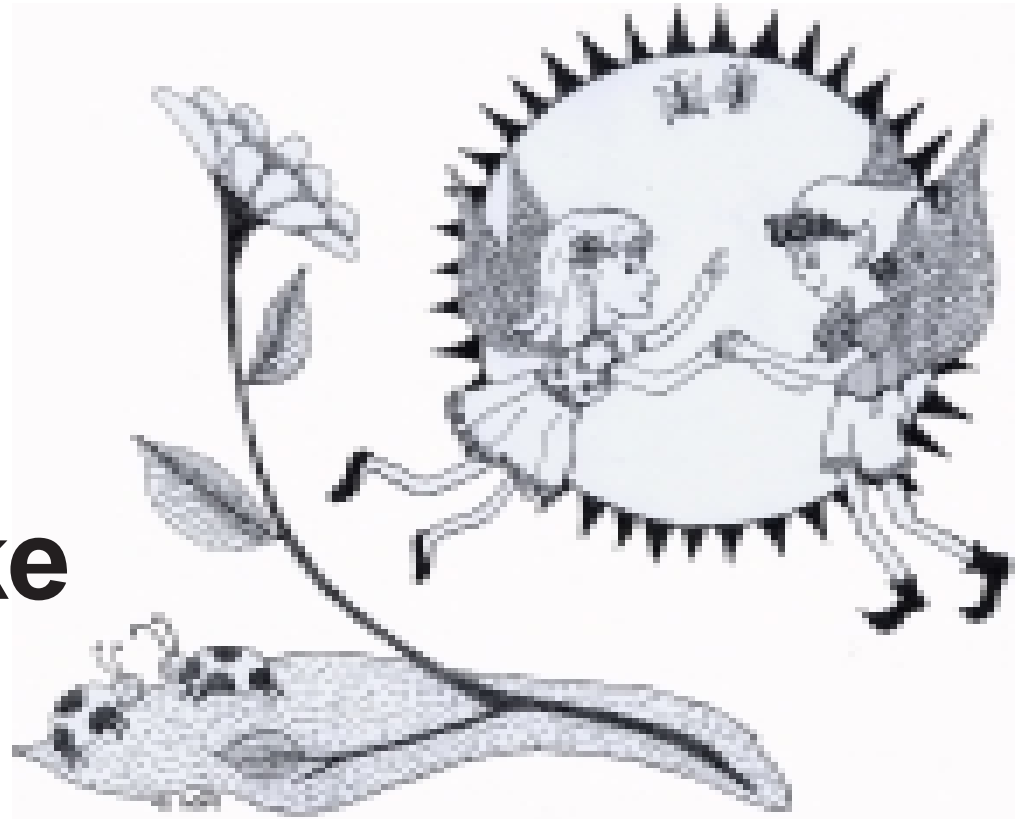


Illustration by yRose Ananda Heart

Dysfunction, neglect and lack of communication were once evident in my family. When I first got ill, before I was diagnosed, I rarely spoke to anyone. My parents, two sisters and I lived in the same house, but as strangers. My father was busy building up his own business and my mother was often absent, going back to school and fulfilling her own needs.

At the time, I don't think any of us had inkling about schizophrenia or its symptoms. There was no genetic history of mental illness in my family. At 14, I became severely ill but was not diagnosed until a year later.

We started family counseling and my parents tried hard to create a nurturing home. The distance between us lessened as they realized the care and attention I needed. My younger sister was the strongest of us all. She dealt with it well even at a young age.

When I was 15, we went on a holiday to Hawaii during summer vacation. We had a good time and enjoyed each other's company. I remember those times when we all got along and life was good, but it wasn't all a bed of roses. My parents tried their best but my mood fluctuations were hard on them. Nurturing a sick teenager is difficult when both parents are working full-time and dealing with other stresses.

Periodically, I was hostile or incoherent because of delusional thoughts. Instead of abandoning me because of my erratic behavior, my family embraced me. My parents encouraged me to complete high school and enter post-secondary education. They believed I could still lead a purposeful, full life despite my illness. I was expected to behave properly, be responsible, and study for school. I not only finished high school but also graduated from the University of British Columbia with a bachelor's degree in art history. After years of low self-esteem, I was a late bloomer, maturing into an adult with a better sense of self and a balanced outlook.

Based on my life experience, I would suggest the following guidelines to caregivers:

- Recognize and respect the consumer as a multi-dimensional person rather than labeling him or her only as mentally ill.
- Recognize and celebrate big and small accomplishments to help build self-esteem in the consumer. Foster his/her strengths.
- Watch out for mood changes, withdrawal, anger, depression or signs of thought disturbance. If such behaviors continue, encourage the person to speak to their case manager or psychiatrist.
- Make sure the consumer takes his/her medication. Prescribed medicine is fundamental in treating mental illness.

- Educate yourself about mental illness. Be tolerant and understanding. If the consumer is paranoid, he or she may not trust you. It's important to keep the lines of communication open. Don't criticize but support him or her to solve the problems he or she faces if you can. Help the person gain insight and see things from a broader perspective.

- Finally, take care of yourself. Don't overdo it. Caregivers need time off to relax too. Taking care of a mentally ill person can be trying but your efforts have the potential to contribute immensely to his/her well-being and quality of life.

Psychiatrists and people in the health system have years of education and coping strategies to aid in their work. Sometimes caregivers feel worn out or lost because they live with the consumer, seeing him or her suffer day in and day out. Caregivers may not have the resources to aid that person, only learning what works and what doesn't from trial and error.

Currently, my husband is my main caregiver, which allows me the flexibility to pursue various interests and part-time volunteer work. With his help, I am more aware of symptoms, can identify triggers and cope with illness and life stresses better than in the past. My parents and caregivers made all the difference in my life. I thank them for their perseverance and help they have given me.

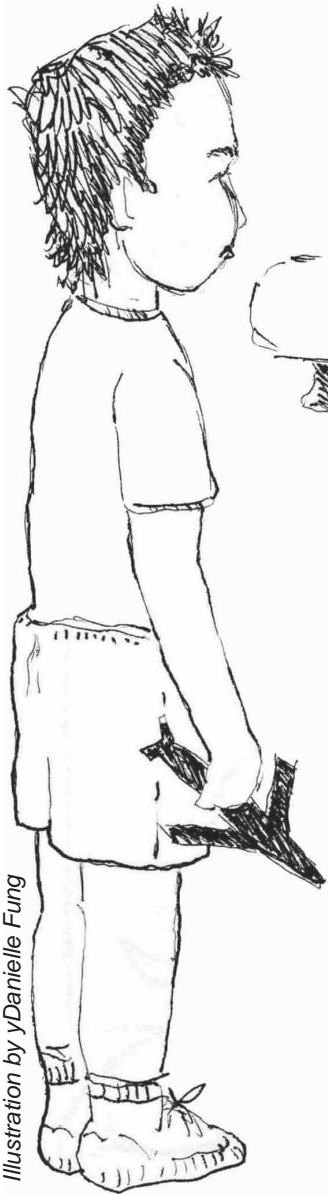


Illustration by Danielle Fung

Legacy of suicide

Many children grow up in families marred by the history of a parent or grandparent who has committed suicide.

There is often much sympathy for the departed as they were often suffering greatly from mental illness and became unable to live with the circumstances of their illness and chose to die. Other people are not so sympathetic and see these acts as very selfish as the loved ones are often not only to mourn but with feelings of guilt and remorse wondering if they could have prevented the death of themselves.

What are not often thought of are the long effects on children after the death of a suicide victim in the family. Children do not have the maturity and experience to understand the whole picture. As well they are often shielded from all the facts. Children however know how to feel. One of the feelings is often a sense of guilt or remorse that can run very deep, especially in the case of a parent, and a belief that they are somehow responsible for the death itself. There are of course many effects that should be monitored and attended to for different age groups. Although fewer in the past, today there is vast resource of books, groups and online information to assist families with children to help them cope.

It's a challenge but I will share with you my own experience of being a child growing up with knowledge of a family suicide.

Amended Dawn of Recovery – a person's

By Adam Brown

Recovery from schizophrenia has been a long and difficult process for me. Now at the end of my six and a half year long second episode, I still have difficulty knowing when in this time I was thinking more or less clearly or when the illness took a turn for the better or for the worse. Even with the benefit of hindsight I am unable to say what methods, if any, would have been effective at dealing with thoughts I knew were symptomatic of the illness. Such methods as I was able to muster made little noticeable difference even when I had insight into how my mind was confused. I took medication over this period every day almost without fail. I had housing, support, and was compliant with

nearly all the specifications of medical staff entrusted with my treatment.

Because of the effect of this particular form of schizophrenia with its alteration in perspective and it's often obfuscation of judgement, however, my ability to think clearly was affected. I was unable to tell when my thinking was more or less disordered. This lack of insight had an effect on how I informed my therapist at our regular appointments, which as a result gave him inaccurate information and a mistaken impression on the nature and seriousness of my symptoms. I often felt badly and was able to at least tell him so, although I supplied the correct information about what I was doing, whether my sleep was disturbed and if I was at risk for what medical people consider

grounds for intervention. Whatever was on my mind at that particular time, but I was unable to be objective or give people a satisfactory impression of what was causing me to suffer. Methods of realizing the severity of the illness causing this condition might also have been effective by allowing me to combat these deluded episodes.

Delusions were, although I did not realize it at the time, taking up a considerable amount of my time and seemed to have become entrenched. In a sense I was only aware that I was ill when I could be well and feeling badly when I wanted to feel better. Aside from trying to challenge deluded beliefs and premises by contradicting them I could only try to maintain my health and keep occupied. Because of the duration of

victim and what could have been devastating results. My father grew up on a farm and was one of seven children. One day in the midst of winter with no warning my grandfather went down to the river and walked in to die. The river froze over so his body couldn't be recovered until spring. My father at the time was only eleven years of age and felt very close to his father, therefore his father's suicide had devastating results on own mental health that would come to last a life time.



By Jayne Gale

I grew up on the Island as a child with my parents, a brother and sister. My father was often depressed, quick tempered and very big and physical man. When we were very young children he spent some time in what they called a mental institution, what we now refer to as a psychiatric hospital. When he came home he told us how people he knew quite well would cross to the other side of the street when they saw him, so he carried a lot of shame. My grandfather's suicide was often mentioned all through my growing up. It was an issue my father could never truly accept. This information became most crucial was during my teen years.

Around the age of 15 I had a nervous

breakdown. I became suicidal, depressed and downed a few bottles of barbiturates. As I thought of doing the act I can recall thinking that if my grandfather took this way out so can I. I feel I actually died that night. I went through an experience of leaving my body and watching it slumped over, feeling I was no longer in the lifeless form. After floating above me for what felt a long period of time I returned to my body to survive.

It was like history repeating itself through the generations. Because my siblings and I were exposed to a home life with a parent suffering from a mental illness and the dysfunctions of this dynamic in our family as well as stories of my grandfather's suicide, we were all at one time or another suicidal ourselves. We did not share these experiences with our parents as our boundaries had been violated through verbal and physical abuse leaving us with no sense of trust that they could hear our pain or validate it for it us.

What's important here is that as a parent it is important to realize that young people in particular can twist things in their minds to make it work for them, including seeing a family member's



Illustration by Rose Ananda Heart

suicide as an excuse or vehicle for their own suicide. Also it is important to be mindful of the intelligence and sensitivity of children who often hear more than one thinks and take these matters quite seriously. Are your children going to be effected by your acts, or threats of suicide? Of course they will.

It is great responsibility to deal with mental illness and cope with raising children. There are however many resources today to assist parents to gain the tools they need.

My last word on suicide is a serious one for those who have not only thought about, but may still be thinking of or may consider suicide in the future. I believe we are on a journey; whether we have to suffer some injustice along the way or not, it's part of learning and growing in the life we live. However, when we disrupt this journey or as some might view it take the easy way

out by committing suicide then, I believe you will be reborn to live through every single bit of injustice or suffering you have already experienced right up to the moment you decide to kill yourself again, but finally make a different choice. I'm talking about the choice to live and see your journey through and learn to grow from each experience.

I story of recovery from schizophrenia

the illness and the seeming impossibility of it I sometimes worried I would never recover.

The schizophrenia that took hold of me and altered drastically the life I was leading began in my early 20s, up to which time I had no knowledge of my propensity to develop a mental illness. Ideas of persecution, belief in telepathy, somewhat grandiose and distorted sense of reality and psychotic thinking resembling flights of the imagination were features of the first episode. This episode lasted over a year until I was treated and stabilized. Fairly similar symptoms characterized the second episode.

I was more accustomed to some episodes while others I interpreted wrongly or reacted to although they were nothing

out of the ordinary for me. Severe panic attacks warning of impending death and suspicions of certain peoples perceptions of me characterized my second episode. Near the end I was able to combat these symptoms using the partially healthy functions of my mind. These techniques can allow a sane person to respond conceivably in these situations with impunity. When I was subject to certain moods I sometimes became under the impression I had or would soon returned to a state similar to the one before I was ill. At times I would return to the state I had been in the five years between these two serious episodes. The circumstances present at these times in my life I have recognized as not being the same as the ones that

confront me now. I see these circumstances in a different context and I do not desire their return to prominence.

In a way recovery is like solving a puzzle, a process propitiated by a multiplier effect that is allowed for by the parts of the healthy brain solving the thinking that remains deluded. A sense of satisfaction can be derived from discontinuation of a psychotic mode of functioning, unmitigated by former fears and anxieties that had little justification. The recovery often, because of the return of normal functioning, exceeds the person's expectations if his or her environment is the way he or she wants it to be. These circumstances put to rest "problems" that had not been for a long time, or never were very serious.

Rough Man from the Street

Rough, you look rough, man
So rough you make me
Nervous
He wore too tight jeans
With an open black leather vest
Upon his bare chest
He looked like an exploding ego
I don't know you at all
But you're sitting at
My Nelson Park bench
Tying up your packsack
With rapid jerks of your
Hands and fingers
"I have a disability", he said to me
Thirty percent of people on the street
Die from my disability
I'm curious about his disability
I wonder whether it is the same as mine
I think he wants me to ask about his impairment
But I don't want to struggle with his angst
He goes off on a tangent about his rent supplement
Being stolen, about his landlord assaulting young boys
About the corruption of the mental health system
He sets his pack over his shoulders, grabs the handlebars
Of his bicycle, looks me deeply in the eyes and says goodbye
"Best of luck to you", I say
I'm reminded of a life I was forced to live a long time ago
I'm glad I escaped.

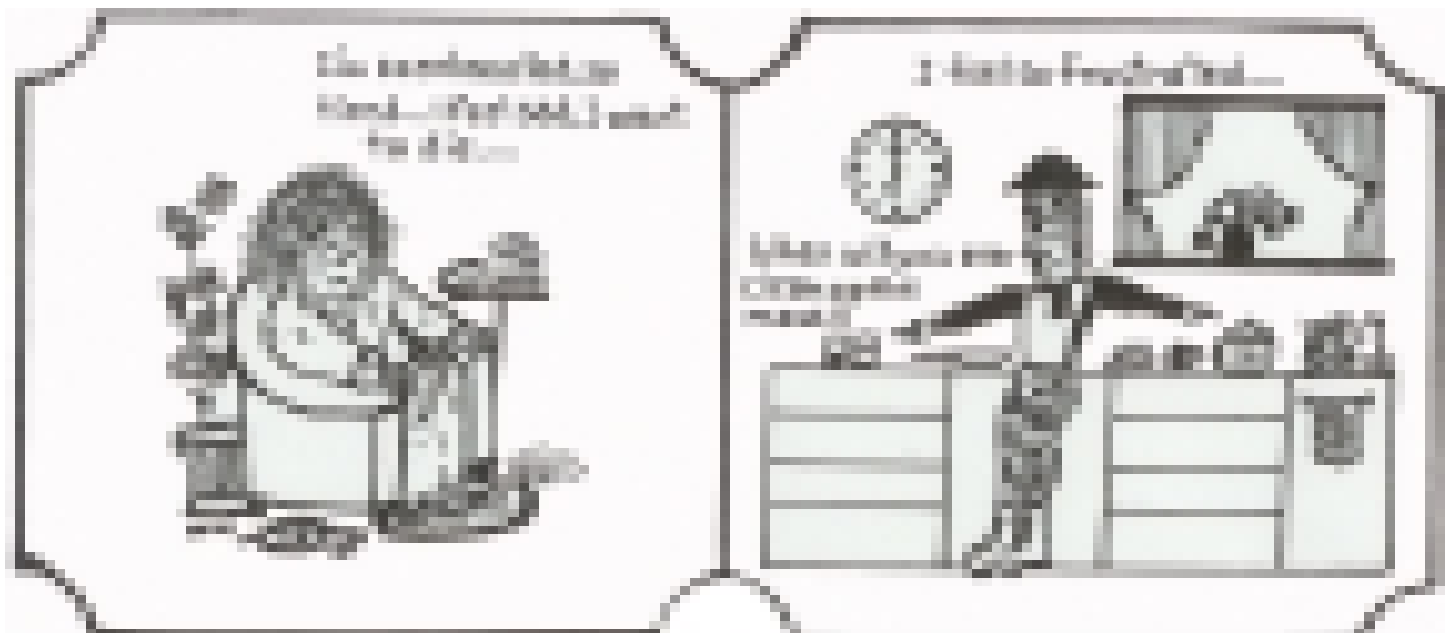


Sharon Taylor

Mr. Adam's Room

This was Mr. Adam's room
- number 224.
He stayed for four years
Until he died.
The bedspread thin & frayed.
The window showing a tiny strip
Of city street.
An upright chair.
This room lit by a 60-watt bulb
With no shelf for books
Photographs or trinkets.
No television. No radio. No carpeting.
This room pea-soup green.
Mr. Adams had a penchant
For raw onion sandwiches
And coffee over tea.
He kept on reading, too
Right up to the end
& wouldn't leave for a holiday
Or to take Christmas
At his only daughter's.
He'd only lie on his narrow bed
& tell himself "This is your home"
Some say how you live
Measures your nature
And at ninety-three
He had more to show
For his life than this
Old black grip
Mr. Adams warranted better I'm sure.

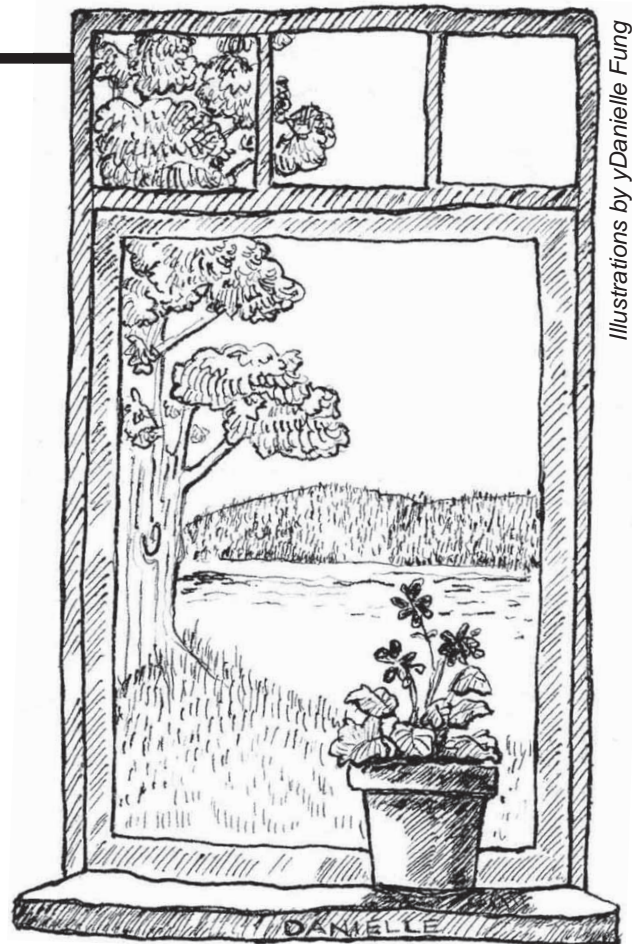
Gail Whitter



The Prophet in His Own Hometown

On a driftwood bench
He overlooks the muscular sea
Watches the flexing of boats on the horizon.
He is not easy even here, where people jog past.
He jogs future, his brows furrowed
His eyes on the horizon that others
Would silence into a postcard.
He mutters it into a wildly unedited tale
And punctuates it with articulate swinging of the arms.
It is I, walking stiffly by, who is wearing the straightjacket
Bundled against the true elements,
Incapable of such free animation.
He, the *enfant terrible* all grown up,
Shackled with the truth, and no one
To soften his horizon's sharp cutting lines for him.
The worst silence, as the horizon with its boats
Gives way to a myriad of shouting, frantic colours,
That drowns out the sounds of laughter on the seawall,
Even temporarily drowning his own history,
His station of misunderstood alienation.
His driftwood cross.

Monica Chattaway



Losing You

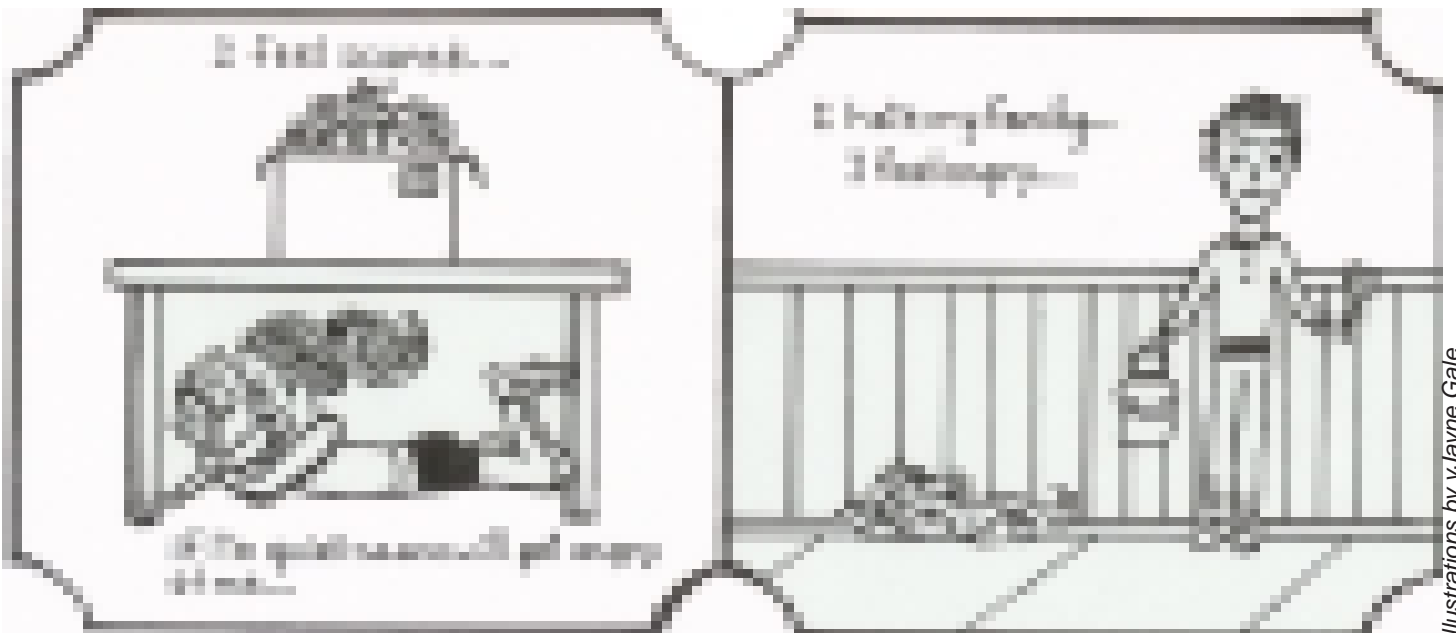
The emptiness of the cavern spills over into
The buckets of light within the hollow tubes of darkness
Forever waiting for the shadows to be filled
Filtering through your image of love
They come and dance always moving within your silence
I called your name and the echoes of your voice
Bounced between the shadows of silence

Maureen Glaser

Sands of Time

Empty vessels are slowly filling the sands of time
Trickling from everywhere, they prance and dart
Sometimes they are noisy, other times silent
But always moving into the vessels
Forever waiting for them

Maureen Glaser



Illustrations by yJayne Gale

Mothering most important work in the world, author says

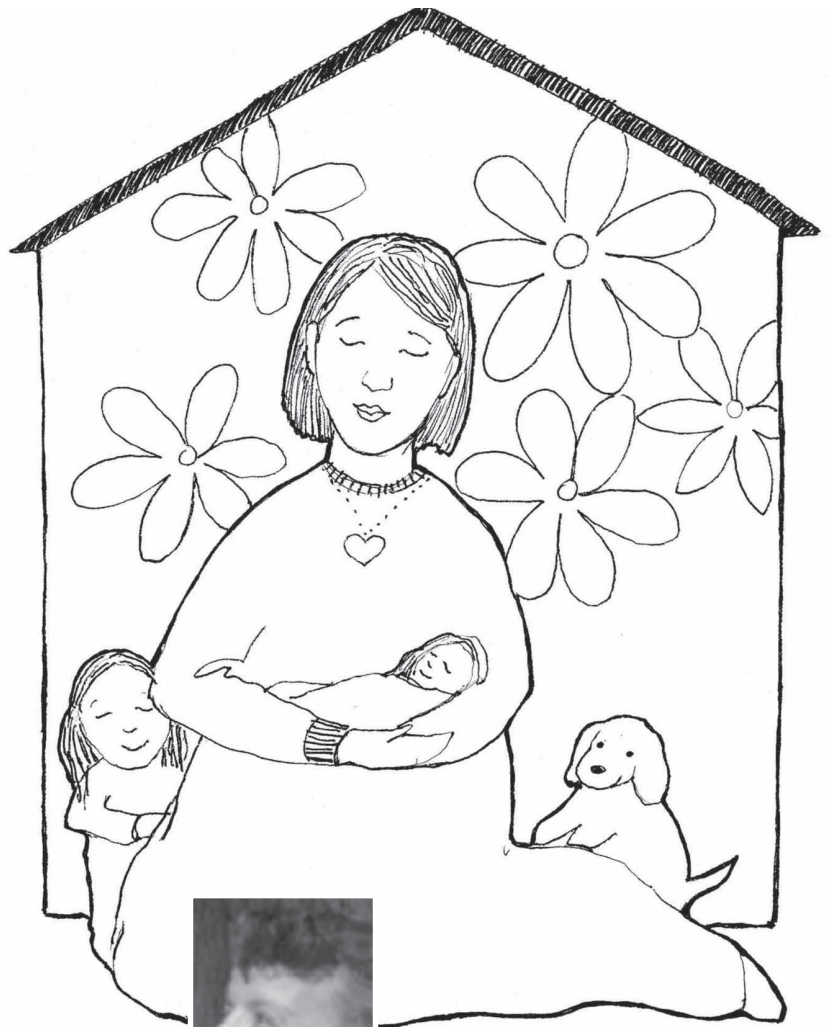


Illustration by yDanielle Fung



By Rose Ananda Heart

As a single mother on welfare, caring for a baby, I was struggling to get by. Although I was working harder than I'd ever worked, because I was struggling financially, it was easy to feel completely worthless and undervalued. One day, while I was walking past a row of books at the local library, a book caught my attention. It was entitled, "Are mothers really necessary?" I was intrigued by the title and after browsing through it, I decided to check it out and take it home for further study.

In this book, author Bob Mullan says that mothering is the most important work in the world, work that deserves recognition as such, by providing mothers with all that they need to do the job well. He was a student of the famous child psychologist, John Bowlby, who said that all human problems could be solved with quality mothering. Apparently, when a child is deprived of appropriate mothering, that child will suffer long-term consequences.

Mullan states that the roots of social problems, like crime and antisocial behaviour lie in early childhood. He says that the best way to produce intelligent, well-adjusted citizens, who truly are the most valuable resource a country has, is through good mother care during early childhood.

What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child experiences a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his/her mother, where both are enjoying themselves and feeling satisfied. When a child doesn't have this relationship with his mother, the child suffers maternal deprivation, which can cause acute anxiety, excessive need for love, and powerful feelings of revenge, guilt and ongoing depression. According to John Bowlby, forming a strong attachment bond with Mother or other primary caregiver who acts in a motherly way is essential to a child's well being.

In her book, *Untouched*, Mariana Caplan speaks of the politics of bonding. She tells the story of James Prescott, a researcher who worked for almost 15 years in the National Institute of child health and human development. He stated publicly that the origins of violence stem from failure of the mother-infant bond. Soon after being invited to speak to the US congress to inspire the passage of a new legislative bill, he was fired. Why? Because if this information were made public it would mean more money for welfare, education and women's health, etc., and these are the places where the government chooses to cut spending. Supporting those causes wouldn't serve their plan to disempower the masses. In a 1996 letter to the New York Times, Prescott wrote:

"The legal-judicial and criminal justice system is challenged to find one murderer, rapist or drug addict who has been breast

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fed for two years and beyond, (the recommendation of the World Health Organization) in any prison, jail or correctional facility in the United States.” (Caplan, 150)

We are not born evil; evil is created. How a baby is treated is the biggest factor in whether we create a violent or non-violent society. When a child has been adequately nurtured, he/she is highly unlikely to act out aggressively as an adult. The abuse of children by adults, stems directly back to the wounds of childhood.

The price we pay in our society for devaluing children and the mothers who care for them is very high.

“Millions of adults go around trying to tranquilize their pain and satisfy their insatiable hunger for security and approbation by sucking on cigarettes, losing themselves in alcohol, sex, drugs, work, and stuffing the perennial feeling of emptiness with food. More and more we are a nation of people who need some sort of fix, some sort of narcotized, altered state to get by.”

(Gabriel Roth, *Maps to Ecstasy*, p. 97)

We live in an addictive society, still seeking to experience the euphoria that we never got from being constantly in the arms of a mother, adult-children longing for the sweet ecstasy of our mother's breast.

One important way to support parents is through adequate financial assistance. Marianne Williamson says, in her book *Healing America*,

“If babysitting, cooking, driving the kids here and there and so on were counted for their financial equivalency, how much of the nation's productivity would come from women?”

When we compare the childhood of Hitler to that of Jesus Christ, we find an interesting contrast. Hitler was raised in an Austrian family in which he was consistently tormented, humiliated and mocked by his father, without his mother being able to protect him.

Jesus, on the other hand, received love, protection and reverence from his parents. They saw him as a Son of God and considered themselves his servants. He grew up to be a strong, aware, empathic and wise man who was able to experience strong emotions without being engulfed by them. He could see through insincerity and mendacity and he had the courage to expose them for what they were. He finally ascended as a completely awakened being, a master, without the need to have power over anyone else.

Making sure that our children's early needs are met is essential in creating the good and just society we all deserve.

Bob Krzyzewski's Wellness column

No-show guru leads people to discover their healing powers

This past month of May, I booked two workshops. The first on May 5th was on the subject of creative problem-solving strategies using Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and was very motivating; the second, booked for May 25th, called Pranic Energizing, was a bit of a surprise.

The presenter, a Certified Pranic Healer, failed to show up. So, having previously learned some of the techniques myself, I felt comfortable in leading the seminar spontaneously.

The 10 or so gracious folks who stayed on had a very animating and stunning time, as they discovered their own innate healing energy transmitted through their hands. We explored simple methods of opening our meridians, charging our energy fields with prana (life-force), and feeling this energy as it circulated around and through our bodies, relieving stress, fatigue and pains. We put our newfound resources to the test and paired off and exchanged healings with one another. The results were electrifying, as we offered, in some cases rather cautiously, the skills we had just learned and overcame our inhibitions about being able to extend healing energies to others.

We also shared our best strategies for coping with the stresses of daily living. Many shared their interest in cultivating a daily practice of Pranic Energy Healing, although asking for future direction and encouragement. Then participants were asked to suggest activities and topics for upcoming workshops and we discussed the relative merits of each approach. Obvi-

ously, many topics have already been offered, but emphasis was on “hands on” approaches, such as back massage, reflexology, or the ayurvedic influenced practice of head massage. I'll be exploring the availability of experienced presenters in the immediate future.

The topic of this issue, Parenting, is a huge topic of concern to those with children. Under the best of conditions there are endless stresses and pressures to deal with. When you add mental illness to the equation, additional family, social, economic and generational issues mount exponentially. Although only a small help in the larger picture, all of the healing techniques community edu-

cation offers could be very supportive for parents. Part of the bigger picture would be to get parents together to discuss their particular priorities and specific situations.

Although our Network doesn't have an operative parent support group at the present time, it is helpful to connect with such groups which may be already established. One such peer group is operating under the Consumer Initiative Funds (CIF) with Janet Ashdown as coordinator. Any readers interested in joining the peer group or community education workshops are welcome to contact our office coordinators Kristine or Mildred at 604-733-5570 or vrnmh@vcn.bc.ca.

Summer Solstice and beginning of summer ... don't over bake in the sun, but enjoy the rays!



Bob Krzyzewski
Community Education

We all are one



I saw I saw by Sandra Yuen MacKay

Think of something that warms your heart, be it an eagle majestically soaring, a roaring waterfall, a beautiful sunset, a fond memory — any thought that creates that expansive well being. Feel your heart and take notice of the sense of unconditional love, as your heart chakra opens up the expanse of your heart. Breathe in deeply through your nose right into that place; fill it with your breath until your heart chakra expands. Connect with that beautiful feeling and exhale, sending the love and expansiveness out to the universe in a gush of unconditional love vibrations reaching far out to all humans on this little green and blue planet, to all the Universe's inhabitants. We are all part of each other, whether or not we will meet on a physical level in this lifetime.



By Michelle McCann

A good time to do this is in the car waiting for the light to change, or standing in the line-up at the grocery store, in the bathroom or on an elevator. Anywhere, any time you find there is time, try it before the ego mind searches for some mundane thing to worry about. There is no pressure at first, it's just for fun but soon after, it will become a habit. As the synapse in your brain gets a hold of the receptor repeatedly, this will bridge a connection and eventually become second

nature with very little effort.

The anxious tight feeling we sometimes experience in our chest is the heart trying to get out. In the old paradigm, people used their heads, the logical part of the brain only. We did this so much that we inadvertently closed off our heart chakras... There was a need for this in that time period for "survival of the fit-

test' as the ego-based energies of competition and a "me-first", 'us against them'

warring against each other prevailed. Therein underlies a basic feeling of disconnection with our fellow humans, as we lived in a fear-based reality. That no longer exists. It's illusory to be able to live only in our egos and imaginations in an illusion we held collectively. The long-time of conditioned fear response has passed and so will the Patriarchal domination that was propelled by this fear. Fear is the unknown being actualized.

The tension of the last thousand years or so has been generated by a negative-versus-positive energy. The blending of two opposing elements has occurred; much like magnets, these two energies have turned toward one another. The return of the goddess energy has ushered in a new paradigm where there is balance and harmony, and energy is now being perceived as necessary parts of the whole. Division, the idea of all-for-one and "every man or woman for him or

herself" is all but over. What is left is like the stars we still see in the sky that have existed for who knows how long.

Soon there will be the expression of androgyny in our semantics and languages as well. Once we are communicating telepathically there will be no prejudice or lies. There is no longer such thing as positive or negative, only a synergy of the two. Evolution is, in our arbitrary division of time, very long and totally immeasurable. Our duration of life is but a mere speck in the continuum of the galaxies; on earth, there is evidence the pendulum has already begun to steady. The feeling is of expansion and contraction, expansion and contraction infinitely. We are in a stage of contraction, a time of amalgam, parallels are being drawn between physics and metaphysics, religion and spirituality, astronomy and astrology, science and religion.

We are all waking up, remembering, and recognizing that we are all part of the same whole. This is the essence of the new paradigm. The word individual is separating as in "divide you all." The new international sound of peace Ohm is now Hue as in human. The microcosm of the Internet now connects us all to anywhere and anyone, bringing individuals of like mind together all over the world. of people of all races and religions. Even in the opposite sex line is becoming blurred and more androgynous. The lines are so blurred they are hardly
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seen, unless viewed through the eyes of an ego-based individual who has not yet awoken or chose not to in this lifetime. Free will and destiny are the same things we are all expressing in our unique aspects and perceptions of what is. All of us chose to be part of this wonderful time.

The Indigo children that have been trickling in for the last hundred years or so are now being born in droves. They are of an even higher vibration than us. They will help us raise our vibrations to meet theirs. Some remember why they came, who they chose to be incarnated as or reincarnated with. Even if we do not remember quite yet, we are all here to usher in the new age of love, light and unity that will ultimately save mother earth from her many billions of inhabitants.

The wise souls who are arriving and are already here are light workers and able to see, feel and hear more than most of us could imagine. The 80 percent rise in the numbers of children with Aspergers Syndrome and Autism since the year 2000 (as well as the group we refer to as ADD or ADHD – attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactive disorder) are the beginnings of a new race of humans capable of

communicating telepathically and are brilliant in some cases beyond our very comprehension. Instead of medicating them into being like us, it is up to us to learn from them.

It is not the illness of our children and some adults; it is the diagnosing and stifling of this new and to some strange and aggressive behaviour. They are an expression of a higher frequency of energy.

The words of the song “All we need is love” are truer now than ever before. It must be a different kind of love, the only true love that is unconditional love for oneself and one another, as well as our home, the earth. We must love her as much as she unconditionally loves us. The sky is not mad if it rains on you. The earth is not angry when it rocks us with hurricanes or volcanoes. The sea is not angry when its natural rhythms destroy.

These forces of nature are just reflecting the collective selfishness that was once our way.

Once our collective unconscious is filled only with unity and knowing abundance due to the power of love unconditionally mixed with intention and action then the Universe and the state of the earth will reflect that back to us in kind and Earth will once again become paradise. As time rushes up to meet us and as we emerge from a chrysalis state, we will witness the opening to a new higher plane of existence. Start with a deep breath of love, open your heart chakra and feel the flow return in waves of a higher vibration, infinitely flowing back and forth just like the waxing and waning of our moon. So believe and then breathe out to me as I breathe into thee as the universe reflects this and we all will be free.



**Do you have a recovery story?
Do you have an interest in acting?
Do you like meeting new people?**

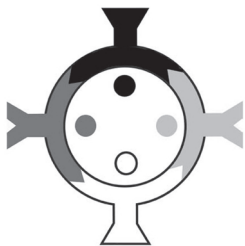
Now Who’s Talking! Recovery Theatre is seeking participants. Contact the Consumer Initiative Fund at 604-708-5252



MAD PRIDE 2007



JURIED GROUP ART SHOW July 6–28, 2007



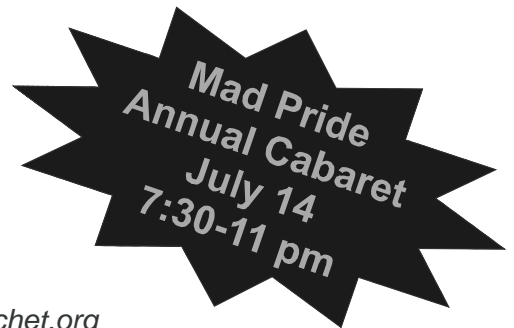
Important dates:

Opening reception July 6, 2006, 7-10pm

Cabaret Saturday, July 14, 7:30-11pm

Closing date Saturday, July 28, 6pm.

For more information: email: madpride@gachet.org



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For more information, contact:

CELO@psrbc.org (604) 969-6676 or John Higdonson,
JHIG@psrbc.org (604) 969-6676

Featured Speakers

Elly Litvak – 'Now, Who's Crazy Now?'
In this fall period, one-woman play 'Now, Who's Crazy Now?'
Elly Litvak discusses her experience living with and
Recovering from a serious mental illness.

Regina Casey BSc OT, MA, PhD candidate
Regina will discuss her Masters' thesis 'Promoting Recovery
Within 'CMHS' and discuss recent implementation of
her research.

Breakout Sessions

- **WIPAC** - Wellness Recovery Action Plan- find out what the buzz is all about!
- **CEEP** - Collaborative Supported Education Program for students with a mental illness
- **HOPEFUL BRIDGES** - a peer led psychosocial education program in the psych ward
- **Sharing Our Success Stories On Volunteering** - hear success stories from consumers
...and much more!

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