



Public Education Evening

The Tin Gods and a Box of Q&A

A presentation on 34 years of journals written by a mother with schizophrenia



Featuring Debbie Palmer

Wednesday, September 25, 7:30 p.m.
Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium

Understanding her mother's struggle with schizophrenia

The box of journals Debbie Palmer discovered in her late mother's home were a treasure trove of insight into her mother's mind and her struggle with the hallucinations and delusions caused by schizophrenia. The entries went back 34 years, describing in great detail the daily torment by her perceived adversaries, the "Tin Gods."

Join us on Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the Lions Gate Hospital auditorium for our first public education evening of the fall, *The Tin Gods and a Box of Q&A* featuring Debbie Palmer.

Debbie will discuss her experiences of having a mother with severe schizophrenia, what she learned after her mother's death, how her perception of her mother changed after reading the journals, and what she might have done differently had she had a better understanding at the time.

The name of the presentation refers both to the entities her mother believed were working against her and to Debbie having found as many questions as answers in the journals. Did her mother's illness fully explain her behaviour? Why was her illness a family secret?

Letter from the President



This is my first letter as President of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society. I am happy to say I am assuming the role as president at a time when the society is thriving and taking important steps forward.

Many small organizations do not make it past the initial prominent years of organization-building by strong founding members. Due mainly to the foresight and hard work of some of our members and staff, most notably Marguerite and Herschel Hardin, we are already in a healthy transition phase. New people are stepping up to contribute and sustain the organization, hopefully for many years to come.

An important example of this is the completion of a draft Support Manual, which documents much of the knowledge and experience, gained over thirty years, by Marguerite Hardin. Support, particularly one-on-one support and crisis counselling, is the foundation of who we are and what we do. The Support Manual will be used to train a new Support Team, made up of a small group of volunteer members who, with Marguerite's guidance as NSSS Support Coordinator, will eventually carry out the support role both on the North Shore and in the Sea to Sky.

The first formal training session, in fact, is about to happen, September 14, after a series of informal

dialogue sessions along the way.

One-on-one support is intensive front-line work, requiring a very serious commitment of time and energy on the part of the new Support Team members. Hats off to these members for taking on such a vital role.

Melanie Scott, our newest staff member, has taken over as Family-to-Family representative for B.C., acting as liaison with other locations teaching the course and administering course updates for the province. In the future, working with Herschel, she will be assuming increasing responsibility for the *Advocacy Bulletin* and other editorial and advocacy work.

We have a strong and dedicated group of board members. In November of this year, the board and staff will gather for a strategy session – something we do every two years – to set direction for the next several years. We will be asking questions such as:

“What are our greatest strengths?”

“What are we most passionate about?”

“What should we focus on moving forward?”

One of our most notable accomplishments in the past year has been exceptionally successful fundraising. This is critical to sustaining our organization. On behalf of the society, I applaud the work of our hard-working Fundraising Team. To that end, we have recently revised our Business Plan, with a view to strengthening our financial position and making it more stable over the long term.

My message is that the society is in good hands moving forward. We are working hard to strengthen our capacity to continue providing our core programs, which results in much-needed support for the families of people with serious mental illnesses.



Learning about eating disorders

There is no single known cause of eating disorders and there appears to be a strong genetic component, according to Dr. Julia Raudzus and Dr. Grant Millar from the B.C. Provincial Tertiary Adult Eating



Disorders Program at St. Paul's Hospital, featured speakers at our spring lecture on eating disorders.

Drs. Raudzus and Millar discussed the different types and subtypes of eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

As with mental illnesses, people with eating disorders have a biological illness of the brain. There are known areas of disruption of neurotransmitters or their receptors, including serotonin and dopamine.

Treatment may include some combination of medication, cognitive or dialectical behavioural therapy, and other counselling or therapy programs. Antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, or, in severe and intractable cases, antipsychotics may be helpful. Other, non-psychiatric medications may also be used to help with the physical effects of the disorders.

People with eating disorders more often than not also have a co-occurring mental illness such as anxiety, depression, substance use or personality disorders. Dr. Raudzus noted that low weight affects how well a person responds to medication.

The presentation also covered the effect of eating disorders on family and friends and provided some suggestions for effective communication and tips on how to help.

Some of the myths about eating disorders are very familiar to families dealing with mental illnesses, such as they are not real illnesses; they are caused by bad parenting; they are a choice.

An electronic version of the detailed presentation is available. Please contact us at the Family Support Centre at info@northshoreschizophrenia.org

Global web screening of new documentary October 10

On Thursday, October 10, NSSS will be part of a worldwide web screening of *Hidden Pictures*, a new documentary film by Delaney Ruston. *Hidden Pictures* is an exploration of mental illness in different parts of the world, with in-depth interviews and personal stories from India, South Africa, China and the U.S.

In the film, Ruston discusses the different attitudes toward mental illness, availability of treatment, and other issues in different parts of the world. The film's subjects include individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety.

To view *Hidden Pictures* on October 10, visit our website (www.northshoreschizophrenia.org). The link

to the film will be posted under News and Events.

NSSS also recommends Ruston's previous film, *Unlisted: A Story of Schizophrenia*. In *Unlisted*, Ruston reconnects with her father, who has schizophrenia, after ten years. NSSS was able to donate a copy of the DVD to the Whistler and Pemberton Public Libraries, along with several books on mental illness, thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Whistler.



Seymour Golf and Country Club tournament sets a new record

Seymour Golf and Country Club's annual Charity Invitational Golf Tournament raised a record \$47,500 to support the North Shore Schizophrenia Society's Family Support Centre. These funds will provide key funding to some of our core support services for the next three years.

The tournament, named the Sunflower Swing, was held in July. The event included a full day of golf, silent auction and gala dinner.



Volunteers from the club started work on the event last fall. A huge amount of work went on behind the scenes to make the event successful, including creating the theme and connecting with the many donors.

On tournament day, volunteers were on hand early setting up and decorating, helping out with registration and the auction, and many other tasks throughout the day and into the evening.



In August, Seymour Golf and Country Club Charity Chair Lynda Derkach and Women's Captain Jeanne Douglas presented NSSS with a cheque and accepted a framed certificate thanking the volunteers and staff who had worked so hard and given so much of their time and effort.



Our thanks also go out to the many generous donors and everyone who came out to play, bid on the auction items, and have fun while raising funds to help support our work.



Left to right: Seymour Charity Chair Lynda Derkach, NSSS President Cheryl Zipper and Executive Director Cheryl Archer, and Seymour Women's Captain, Jeanne Douglas

Student club raises funds and awareness

The Argyle Students Helping Humanity Club held a fundraising event in May for the benefit of NSSS and our Family Support Centre. Outgoing club president Claire told us, "We were glad to choose such an important cause for our fundraiser!" Our thanks to the members of the club and to the school for supporting their efforts. It's wonderful to see the youth in our community working together to help others and building their leadership skills.

Fifth annual Circle of Strength luncheon

Our fifth annual Circle of Strength fundraiser luncheon was our largest to date, with nearly 200 people in attendance. The event was sponsored by the Vancouver law firm Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP (Blakes).

Nancy Sartene from Blakes opened the event on behalf of the firm. Master of Ceremonies was Herschel Hardin, whose many hats include NSSS vice-president and editor of the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin*.

Circle of Strength is possible because of the many volunteers working behind the scenes, including the NSSS Fundraising Team, table hosts, speakers, set-up crew, video producers and the three family members featured in the video.



Film producer Antonio Germinario and camera operator/editor Cliff Hokanson generously donated their time, equipment and materials to create the video for the event. The video can be viewed on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/nsschizophrenia.

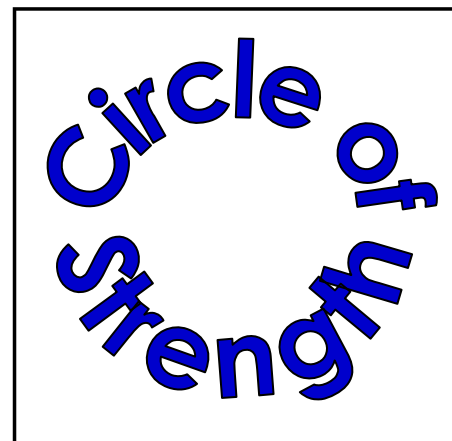
Thanks to the many generous donors at this year's Circle of Strength, we raised over \$30,000, not including pledges for future years. Donations from

this annual event are a key source of revenue, underpinning our core programs.

Our thanks also go out to Margitta and Karl Schulz Margitta's Flowers for once again providing beautiful centrepieces for the event. It was an exciting moment when our guests discovered who had won the centrepiece from each table.



In addition to being an important source of funding, Circle of Strength provides an opportunity to raise awareness about serious mental illness and our work at the Family Support Centre.



The North Shore Schizophrenia Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Province of British Columbia; City of North Vancouver; District of North Vancouver; District of West Vancouver; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Soroptimist International of North and West Vancouver; North Shore Rotary Clubs; Canada Post Foundation for Mental Illness and Mental Health; West Vancouver Community Foundation; Community Foundation of Whistler; Lynn Valley Legion; Seymour Golf & Country Club; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; North Shore Credit Union; and our many other generous donors.

First NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award presented to North Shore psychiatrist

NSSS is pleased to present our first Responsiveness to Families Award to North Shore psychiatrist Dr. Rosalynd (Cindy) Holdsworth.

Dr. Holdsworth was nominated by several families, all of whom remarked on her caring, professional manner. In their nomination letter, one family wrote, "If not for her diagnoses, treatment, care and caring, our family would have completely fallen apart."



NSSS President Cheryl Zipper and Dr. Cindy Holdsworth

At a presentation ceremony in May, Dr. Holdsworth, a tireless advocate for improvements to mental health services, spoke about the need for early intervention programs for children and youth on the North Shore, programs available in other areas of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority region, but not available to residents of the North Shore.

Nominations for the NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award are accepted on an ongoing basis, with an annual closing date of February 15. The award is given to a psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, case worker, social worker, or other service provider involved in the treatment and rehabilitation of people with a mental illness, for outstanding responsiveness to family members.

For more information, please see: www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/nominations.htm or contact the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856.

Notes from the Family Support Centre

Family-to-Family education course update

NSSS's flagship education course, Family-to-Family has been updated and revised for the first time since 2001. The course was created by the National Alliance on Mental Illness in the United States and is adapted for use in British Columbia by NSSS. This includes adding specific information on laws such as the B.C. Mental Health Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Revisions to the teachers' manuals and participant handouts were completed over the summer and are being sent out to the different organizations in the province teaching the course.

While the course has been extensively updated with the latest scientific information, the classes cover the same important topics as the previous version. Family-to-Family continues to be one of our most popular and valuable programs for families.

See page 8 for information on the next course starting in September.

Christmas Party volunteers needed

It may only be September, but we're already planning and preparing for our annual Christmas Party. NSSS and Santa are looking for helpers in October and November to do some shopping and wrapping.

We will also need volunteers before, during and after the party on December 7 to drive guests to and from the venue, set up, decorate, serve, clear and clean up. If you would like to get involved with our biggest and most festive gathering of the year, please get in touch with Susanna at the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856 or email susanna@northshoreschizophrenia.org.



Notes from the Sea to Sky

School presentations

Partnership and other school presentations took place at Pemberton Secondary School and Whistler Secondary School near the end of the school year. As a new school year begins, plans are underway for presentations to students in Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton.

The Sea to Sky family support group meets in Squamish monthly, with meeting dates on the first Tuesday of each month. For information, please call the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856 or email seatosky@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

Mental Illness Awareness Week

Mental Illness Awareness Week is coming up October 6 to 12. Activities will include a public education evening at Squamish Public Library on Tuesday, October 8 at 6:30 p.m. The evening will feature a panel discussion and personal stories about mental illness. This free event is open to the public. For more information, contact Christine at christine@northshoreschizophrenia.org or 604-849-2252.

Whistler Welcome Week

NSSS is presenting a performance by Stand Up for Mental Health during Whistler's annual Welcome Week in November. Stand Up for Mental Health program participants complete a course in stand up comedy and then perform their comedy routines in public venues. Participants, who live with a variety of different mental illnesses, learn to use comedy to help raise awareness, defeat discrimination, and for personal growth. Whistler Welcome Week is an excellent opportunity to connect with the many newcomers who have recently arrived to work on the mountain over the winter and to let them know about our services and how to get help.

Employer education workshops

Planning is underway for employer workshops on mental illness in Whistler this winter. Employers may find themselves needing to find help when an employee with no local family shows signs of a mental illness. These workshops will help employers identify signs of mental illness and provide information on how and where to seek help.



Research Briefs

Neuroimaging May Offer New Way to Diagnose

Bipolar Disorder: Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) may be an effective way to diagnose mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder. Currently, most mental illnesses are diagnosed based on behavioural symptoms only, creating an urgent need for new approaches. In bipolar disorder, there may be a significant delay in diagnosis due to the complex clinical presentation of the illness.

The research team used MRI to scan the brains of people with and without bipolar disorder. Using advanced computational models, they were successful in correctly identifying the subjects with bipolar disorder with 73 percent accuracy using their brain imaging scans alone.

Source: *sciencedaily.com*, June 2013

Greater marijuana use linked to more severe

schizophrenia: New research reveals that schizophrenia patients with a history of cannabis use have longer hospital stays and a higher rate of hospital readmission. They may also have a type of schizophrenia "that may be more severe than schizophrenia cases in general," according to Peter Allebeck, M.D., Ph.D., professor of social medicine in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

Those who had schizophrenia after cannabis use had many more hospital days: more than a third (38 percent) of those who used cannabis had more than 2 years in total in hospital compared with 21 percent of nonusers. The median number of hospital days was 547 for cannabis users and 184 for nonusers.

Source: *21st European Congress of Psychiatry*, via *psychcentral.com*, April 2013

Biomarker Could Point the Way Past Trial-and-error Inefficiencies – NIMH-funded Study:

Currently, determining whether a particular patient with depression would best respond to psychotherapy or medication is based on trial and error. In the absence of any objective guidance that could predict improvement, clinicians typically try a treatment for a month or two to see if it works. Consequently, only about 40 percent of patients achieve remission following initial treatment. This is costly in terms of human suffering as well as health care spending.

Brain PET scans prior to treatment predicted whether a patient's depression would best respond to an antidepressant or a psychotherapy.

Source: *National Institute of Mental Health*, June 2013

Summer outreach and awareness events

Summer is a great time to get outside, meet people and be seen. We participated in two parades and held our annual awareness walk as part of our regular outreach and awareness work.



Thanks to all the volunteers who came out to help us set up, decorate our parade vehicles, meet the public, march and walk with us and, most importantly, raise awareness about serious

mental illness and the programs available to families through our Family Support Centre.

First up was the West Vancouver Community Day Parade, back after a year off. The rain stopped just in time for the start of the parade and the weather cooperated throughout the afternoon for other Community Day activities, including our information booth in Ambleside Park. Our parade vehicle was provided by North Shore Kia, in a perfect shade of blue to match our logo.

There were plenty of old friends and new faces at our 22nd annual Walk the World for Schizophrenia. After being welcomed by special guest Dr. Cindy Holdsworth, recipient of the first NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award, participants walked along the West Vancouver



Sea Walk from John Lawson Park to Dundarave Pier and back with NSSS t-shirts, signs, Family Support Centre brochures and balloons. Participants then enjoyed a free Zumba class courtesy of DestinoZumba.

Thousands lined the streets for the North Shore Canada Day Parade in North Vancouver, providing another great opportunity to reach out to our community and get information into the hands of more members of the public.



Register now for the Family-to-Family education course

Contact us right away at 604-926-0856 if you are interested in participating in the Family-to-Family education course starting Tuesday, September 17 at the Family Support Centre. For those in the Sea to Sky, the next course will begin February 2014.

This free, 12-week program covers all aspects of serious mental illness and is taught by trained family peer instructors. To qualify, you must have a close family member or friend with a serious mental illness. Seating is limited and pre-registration is required.

Family Support Centre

Personal support and information on major mental illnesses – schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders

205 - 1865 Marine Drive
West Vancouver BC V7V 1J7

Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
or by appointment

North Shore/Lower Mainland: 604-926-0856
Sea to Sky: 604-849-2252

www.northshoreschizophrenia.org

info@northshoreschizophrenia.org

Facebook: [northshore.schizophrenia](https://www.facebook.com/northshore.schizophrenia)

Twitter: @NSSSoc

Monthly Support Meetings

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with family members.

Support group meetings are held each month in West Vancouver and Squamish for family members and close friends of people who have serious mental illnesses.

For information on the West Vancouver group, please call 604-926-0856. For Squamish, please email seatosky@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

Families Helping Families

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. Your donations are appreciated.

Tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.