



# PATHWAYS

FAMILIES  
HELPING  
FAMILIES

## Serious Mental Illness Society

THE NOTEPAD

March 2018. Issue 153

### Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society

Invites you to attend our **Annual General Meeting**

**Wed., March 28, 2018 , 7-9 p.m. HOpe Centre Atrium**

**Please RSVP: 604-926-0856 or [info@pathwayssmi.org](mailto:info@pathwayssmi.org)**

In order to vote your membership must be up to date.

The Board and volunteer families have worked tirelessly this past year with great success on many fronts. We look forward to sharing some of the highlights this evening with our membership. Please join us as we thank our amazing volunteers, as we welcome the incoming board, and acknowledge the work of the outgoing dedicated board members. You'll also learn about the many volunteer opportunities for families in Advocacy, Education, Support and Events. We look forward to seeing you.

- Inside this edition, Family voices making a difference. Janice Lilley, President and Nancy Ford, Executive Director. Pg. 2. and 3.....
- Mark your calendars , Circle of Strength fundraiser, Saturday May 26. pg. 7.....



## Welcome to Pathways



Family voices make a difference and individually or collectively they can be a powerful agent for change. Advocacy is at its core.

Advocacy can take many forms and be conducted at many levels. Sharing a personal story, participating in a group event to increase awareness, writing a letter to focus attention on an important issue, participating in solution focussed actions group discussion, developing a positional paper, or participating in a committee or collaborations working for change.

Pathways is active in all of these levels including working with our members. We provide families with the information and assistance needed to tell their stories, and guidance to help navigate complex mental health systems they need to engage with.

### **Janice Lilley, President**

Pathways also represents the collective interests of families within the broader mental illness landscape. We organize community events to bring awareness and forums in which stakeholders and professionals are invited to address current and systemic issues relevant to families dealing with mental health care issues. Pathways works in collaboration with many stakeholders, agencies and authorities to support lasting positive changes for everyone.

We grapple with current issues. The mental health issues surrounding the legalization of cannabis in Canada this year are at the forefront of our areas of concern. Pathways monitors published papers by various medical professional organizations with respect to the use of cannabis and mental illness. We have arranged for medical experts to lecture on the subject, and we have heard from many of our family members regarding their loved ones who have experienced psychotic episodes following drug consumption. We share the widespread medical concerns regarding negative impacts to brains not fully mature as well as to those that may have a greater genetic predisposition to psychosis. There is still much work to do.



With the legalization of cannabis in Canada this year, we will be asking governments to direct a portion of the anticipated tax revenues toward, researching the impact of cannabis use and mental illness, educating young people of the potential impacts of cannabis use and mental illness and improving access to mental health professionals.

This month's Advocacy Bulletin is a letter written from a mother's heart, a Pathways member, to the attorney general and others, concerning the impact marijuana has had on her son's health and the legalization of marijuana. For further discussion refer to our website to see a repost of "[High-Potency Marijuana Use](#)" prepared by the Hazelden Betty Ford Institute for Recovery Advocacy.

### **Nancy Ford, Executive Director**

In collaboration with Canadian Mental Health Association, our recent lecture/town hall attracted over 80 families out to discuss relevant issues affecting them and to explore possible solutions. Two substantial outcomes to that evening include: (1) [We Do Matter](#), an online platform for family and patient feedback, concerns, and suggestions launched by psychiatrists in the field, sharing families concerns. (2) [Pathways](#) sent a letter to the Director, Mental Health & Substance Use, Vancouver Coastal Health outlining the core issues identified at the town hall, with suggestions on best practice. We were invited to send the letter recognizing again that everyone needs to be at the table if we are to find best outcomes for patients, families, doctors, nurses, and staff. Relationships and partnerships are key in addressing these complex issues with solution-focused advocacy at the heart. Continued on pg. 3

## Leadership and Advocacy

In the 1990s, an anti-psychiatric/medication coalition was working towards weakening the mental health act and specifically to eliminate or weaken involuntary commitment. North Shore Schizophrenia's (now Pathways) response was to deliver a manifesto, to the government at the time as a proactive treatment document. Subsequently, the act was not only left as is but was further enhanced with the addition of Bill 22 - "to prevent substantial deterioration". Bill 22, as amended, made the act more explicitly pro-treatment for people in serious decline.

Today, the challenges continues with a constitutional challenge to the Mental Health Act in the supreme Court of British Columbia between the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and the Attorney General of British Columbia. You can read the letter written by me, as a mother, to the Attorney General. ....pg. 3. below

The work continues however with the collaboration of our amazing families the work is shared and the expertise of so many families become part of the fabric for change.

Dec. 4, 2017—Letter to the Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, and to CBC Radio 1

Cc: Hon. David Eby, Q.C. [david.eby.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:david.eby.mla@leg.bc.ca), Hon. Judy Darcy, Mental Health and Addictions: MH.Ministry

M. Jane Thornthwaite, MLA, Critic, North Vancouver-Seymour [jane.thornthwaite.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jane.thornthwaite.mla@leg.bc.ca)

Re: BC's Mental Health Detention System Violates Charter Rights - Report Nov 30, 2017

My son's right to health care.

As the executive director of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society I was deeply concerned to hear on CBC Radio 1 and to read in the Globe and Mail and Vancouver Sun, that a person's right to critical care and to their health and safety, was being reported in such a sensationalized manner without any proper research into the subject. The fact that the Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) would initiate such a distorted attack on BC's Mental Health Act leaves me to question both their credibility and their agenda.

As a mother of a son diagnosed with schizo-effective disorder, I am personally concerned with such biased and sensationalized reporting. Under the BC Mental Health Act and with the help of the RCMP, my son received involuntary treatment and medication. Prior to treatment, he had no insight into his delusions, and lacked any appreciation as to how extremely ill he was. Without the help of the BC Mental Health Act he would have continued to be a threat to others, a threat to himself, and most probably would be living on the Vancouver Downtown East Side, or very possibly dead. Instead he is connected to his family, works part time, has a diagnosis of schizo-effective disorder, is seen regularly by a psychiatrist, takes his medication willingly, and understands his illness.

Nothing is more important for those with delusions and other psychotic symptoms than prompt treatment of psychosis. The longer a psychotic episode is allowed to continue untreated, the more destructive and heartbreaking the illness. A look at Vancouver's Downtown East Side suggests that the Mental Health Act is certainly not being overused, nor as Laura Johnston, lawyer for CLAS, asserted in her interview, in her inflammatory language, are masses of people being "locked up" and "punished" in our hospitals; in fact these people are finally receiving the psychiatric treatment they so desperately need.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ford, Executive Director

# #Let'sTalk About Patient Care in Mental Health and Addictions



On January 31, 2018, Pathways in collaboration with Canadian Mental Health Association held a lecture/town hall with a distinguished panel gathered to discuss patient care in mental health and addiction. The panel included: Jane Thornthwaite, North Vancouver MLA; Dr. Dianne McIntosh, Psychiatrist and Clinical Assistant professor, UBC; Dale Handley, Head Nurse, PRN, MBA Carlisle Youth Concurrent Disorders Centre; and Andrea Paquette President, Stigma-Free Society,

**Jane Thornthwaite, MLA**, began the evenings discussion highlighting her priorities as opposition critic for mental health and addiction. One of Jane's continuing priorities is to ensure early diagnoses and treatment of mental illnesses. She suggested that we could do a better job helping youth with recovery and prevent addiction from happening in the first place by increasing awareness through public education within the schools. As an advocate for the North Shore Foundry, providing integrated services for youth, and the Carlisle Centre, Jane encouraged the audience to write to her and our other respective MLA's explaining the problems that families and patients face along with proposed solutions. *"Don't assume that we know what the issues are, write to your MLA"*, and Jane will continue to do her part presenting ideas to the minister of mental health.

**Dr. Diane McIntosh** discussed the current state of mental health patient care, emphasizing the need to change the way people - doctors included - think about mental illness. She has written extensively about the inadequate psychiatric and addiction funding and services in B.C. and across Canada. *"Regrettably, the services that are available are not always patient-centred and enlightened. Some centres provide sub-standard care and terrify, rather than comfort, patients."* [January 2018 Advocacy Bulletin](#). Diane shared her dramatic experience in an attempt to visit one of her patients on a psychiatric ward. She was refused access and informed that if she didn't leave, they would call security. *"I know many excellent psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses that I would confidently recommend to someone I love. To me, this is the greatest mark of professional respect. However, a few of my colleagues disgrace their profession and blemish the work of the compassionate, enlightened majority, who strive to maintain their patients' dignity. We are judged as a society by how we treat our most vulnerable members. The abuse of power and the use of*

## **PATHWAYS Serious Mental Illness Society**

205 - 1865 Marine Drive, West Vancouver BC V7V 1J7—Open 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by appointment

**North Shore/Lower Mainland: 604-926-0856 or call Sea to Sky: 604-390-0100**

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

**[www.pathwayssmi.org](http://www.pathwayssmi.org)**

**[info@pathwayssmi.org](mailto:info@pathwayssmi.org)—Facebook: Pathways—Twitter: @Pathways**



*humiliation and aggression demonstrated by some staff on psychiatric units has no place in a just and civilized society". Dr. McIntosh and other psychiatrists believe these individuals must be held accountable by their colleagues, by patients and their families.*

**Dale Handley, Head Nurse**, described the new Carlisle Centre within the HOpe Centre at Lions Gate Hospital. The centre is dedicated solely to youth aged 13 to 18 who reside in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region with mental health and substance use challenges. This unit provides improved care to youth, so teenage patients will be better served at a crucial early time in their lives, when some life-long mental-health and addiction challenges are first diagnosed and respond well to treatment. Dale expressed a desire to get everyone involved in the community, to create a respectful youth-centred in-patient care place that does not feel like a hospital. Improving hospital care by sensitizing health care workers in understanding the human face of the illness, and not just the diagnosis, will have a positive impact for young people and their families to take the first step toward recovery.

**Andrea Paquette** described herself as a survivor of Bipolar Disorder; she was diagnosed at 25 and presented with psychosis and mania. She described attempts to recover in hospital; her attempt to take her own life. It took her 11 years to get the right medication and 7 years to accept that she was sick. Out of all of her experiences she says that the moment she was treated with respect by a psychiatrist, a simple touch on the shoulder, was the most amazing; it was like she was a *"partner to my own treatment"* and this she said gave her purpose, a purpose that ultimately helped fuel her recovery. Her message was that there is always hope and always help available to the mentally ill.

Discussion followed with many questions, stories and shared experiences from the audience.

Dr. McIntosh presented a new website <http://www.wedomatter.org>. Their position is: *The Mental Health Care system needs change, but real change will only happen when enough people come together and tell the world their stories. We've heard many of them. We know there are many more out there.*

Pathways followed up with a letter to the Vancouver Coastal Health Director for Mental Health and Addiction, outlining the core issues identified that evening including, the use of the Vancouver Family Involvement Policy, the need for adult concurrent disorder treatment on the North Shore, the use of the "isolation room" on Hope 4, patients diagnosed by staff other than psychiatrists, and the need for accountability mechanisms for patients and families.

Pathways encourages families to share their experiences and participate in these important discussions.

<http://www.wedomatter.org>

## MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

**Support group meetings are held each month in:**

**WEST VANCOUVER:** 3rd. Friday afternoon and 3rd. Wed. evening **SQUAMISH:** 2nd. Thursday evening

**WHISTLER :** 4th. Thursday evenings **TRI CITIES:** 2nd. Thursday eve.

**VANCOUVER:** last Sat. morning 10:30-noon. Café Artigiano, Main & 24<sup>th</sup>

**For more information, please call 604-926-0856.**

## Self-sufficiency with Advocacy at the Heart

Pathways independence from government health and ministerial funding provides us with the ability to be an effective advocate and voice for families. As a result Pathways accountability is to its families, not to government and as such has a unique seat at the table when advocating for best practice and innovative solutions to the challenges families and the health authorities experience. In 2002 the NS Schizophrenia Society learned that government contracts come and go with the loss of a \$65,000 health authority contract. In order to ensure sustainability a diversified funding base is required.

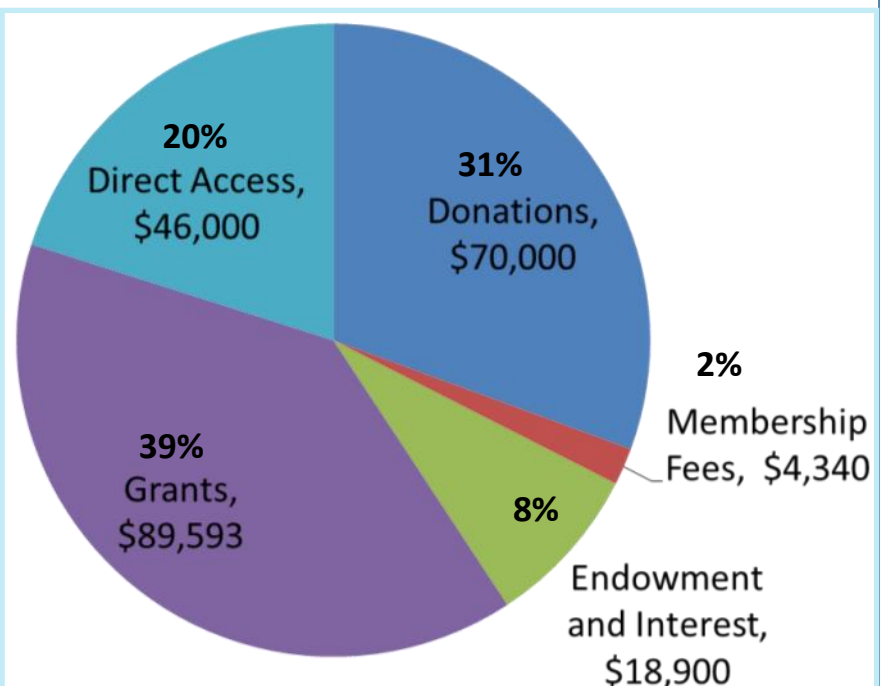
Over 100 families attended our signature Family-to-Family education course in 2017 and while the course is free to families the cost works out to approximately \$350 per participant taking into account materials, administration, salaries and rent. We do not charge families however funding must come from somewhere. Our four core programs, support, education, advocacy and awareness must be supported by families, community donations, grants, endowment income and Direct Access, (an operational source of funding from government and not a health authority).

The graph below outlines Pathways 2017 income sources where approximately \$35,000 of the \$70,000 donations received last year were raised at our annual Circle of Strength Fundraiser. Our goal this year is to increase donations from 31% of our operating costs to 50%, and we need your help to achieve this goal.

Circle of Strength is by far one of the most important events for this society not only for fund development but in helping to raise awareness of the issues families face. It's a fabulous lunch, with polished speakers and story tellers. Participants rave every year about the event, praising the speakers, the luncheon and the professionalism of the event.

### **This is where we need your help.**

Please volunteer to host a table at this years May 26th event. By hosting a table with your contacts, business community, friends and family, you will be helping to raise awareness, and to reach our fundraising goal to ensure the sustainability of this incredible organization of volunteer families helping families. If you are unable to host a table, then donate please. Families are counting on us, and every dollar counts.



## An Invitation to Circle of Strength Table Hosts



On Saturday May 26th, Pathways will be hosting its major fundraising event, aptly named the Circle of Strength. Many key elements go into organizing the Circle of Strength luncheon, however the most important role is that of the volunteer Table Host. Your job is to invite business contacts, friends, family and community out to the event, ideally filling a table of eight to ten. The society provides the written invitations and emails so you can add your contacts and extend the invitation with ease. The Circle of Strength coordinator, Elena Andrews, is a wonderful coach and supporter as Table Hosts fill their

tables. We require 20 Table Hosts to fill the room.

Extending an invitation to a Saturday, complimentary one hour lunch, at the West Vancouver Hollyburn Country club with amazing speakers, is also an opportunity to reach out to those close to you and your ill relative and helps to provide family and friends with a way to connect and better understand mental illness.

The event is conducted by a Master of Ceremonies, with two family guest speakers. Tables are beautifully set with flowers graciously provided by yet another volunteer family member, Margitta Schultz., Lonsdale Quay.

Your guests will be invited by the MC to make a donation; fully tax receipted. That said, nobody who attends the event is obliged to give. The work Pathways does, though, is so important, and those with a mental illness and their families are so courageous, that attendees do respond – most often financially, but always with greater understanding of mental illness.

Sincerely,

Janice Lilley, President



# Mark Your Calendars—2018 Circle of Strength



**PATHWAYS**  
Serious Mental Illness Society

**11th Annual Circle of Strength Fundraiser Luncheon**

**SATURDAY, MAY 26, 2018, 12-1 P.M.**

**Hollyburn Country Club, West Vancouver**

**For information on Hosting a Table please contact [Pouneh@pathwayssmi.org](mailto:Pouneh@pathwayssmi.org)**

**or call 604-926-0856**

