The Notepad



Supporting families dealing with serious mental illness

March 2014, No. 133



Dear Members: A Year in Review

This is your official notice of the **Annual General Meeting** of the North Shore
Schizophrenia Society. Please join us:

Wednesday, March 26, 2014, 7:30 p.m. Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium



Volunteering the Focus of AGM

We've been busy this year! Our work wouldn't exist without the time donated by our many dedicated and energetic members and volunteers. For this year's Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, March 26, at Lions Gate Hospital, we're celebrating by showcasing our activities and events through the eyes of our members.

This is a wonderful opportunity to hear members share their experiences as leaders and participants in our support, awareness, advocacy, and educational programs and services.

What is most rewarding about teaching Family-to-Family? What does it take to be a family support worker? What is most enjoyable about participating in a parade or helping out with the Christmas banquet? What is it like to talk regularly to high school students about coping with serious mental illness? What goes into planning and organizing our large fundraising luncheon, Circle of Strength? And what current advocacy issues is NSSS working on?

We'll answer these questions and any others you may have about anything NSSS does.

For more on the AGM, please see page 2.

A special door prize will be awarded to one lucky attendee: a \$300 gift certificate from BFit Personal Training, North Vancouver.

In order to vote at the AGM, membership dues must be paid by March 19, 2014.

Letter from the President, Cheryl Zipper

We are a small, but I would say, thriving organization. A lot is happening at the North Shore Schizophrenia Society. Some activities we have been doing for many years, and they are what define the organization - these are support, education and advocacy. Other activities, particularly around fundraising and administration, are necessary to keep NSSS going. There are also new activities, such as building relationships and partnering with community agencies and organizations, that are no less necessary to the future of NSSS. And we are continuing to strengthen our presence in the Sea-to-Sky corridor, where a great



NSSS members bring awareness of serious mental illness to the 2013 West Vancouver Community Day events. From left to right: John Nixon, Byron Giraud, Cheryl Zipper, Mandy O'Brien, Lisa Stringle, Marti Sevier, and Herschel Hardin.

need exists for services related to serious mental illness.

We have an annual budget of approximately \$175,000. We have a wonderful staff of four— two full-time and two part-time. We have a board consisting of eight members who volunteer a great deal of their time for the Society. And we have you, the general membership, some of whom are active volunteers, also giving your precious time and energy.

You, the membership, may not realize how important you are. We are a peer-driven organization. The very essence of who we are and what we do depends on volunteers. Our volunteers are mainly family members, like most of you, who have gained an understanding of mental illness from your experiences with your loved one. Not everyone has the time or the capacity to teach the Family-to-Family course; not everyone gravitates toward fundraising. Our hope, however, is that everyone is interested and engaged in what the Society is doing.

To this end, we feel that the upcoming Annual General Meeting is an important event. This is your chance to get a deeper look at what we do and learn where we are headed in the future. Once a year the activities and af-

fairs of NSSS should take centre stage. And as a member, your vote counts.

To get a better look at what we did in 2013, we will be enlisting the help of both staff and volunteers to highlight the various activities and events. What was it like to be part of a panel presentation, talking to the West Vancouver Police Department about the family's or the ill person's perspective on mental illness? What is involved in organizing a huge event like the Circle of Strength fundraising luncheon? Who are the people working behind the scenes to make the Christmas party such a great success?

We encourage all of you to come out to the Annual General Meeting on March 26. I think it is going to be not only informative, but uplifting. We would love to see you there.

Cherry

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; Resort Municipality of Whistler; Seymour Golf and Country Club; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Canada Post Foundation for Mental Illness and Mental Health; West Vancouver, Squamish, and Whistler Community Foundations; Lynn Valley Legion; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Fulmer Capital Partners; and our many other generous donors.

Notes from the Family Support Centre



Bill Murdock leads NSSS financial planning workshop.

NSSS holds Providing-for-the-Future Workshop:

Financial Security Advisor Bill Murdock, who has a brother with schizophrenia, joined NSSS Vice-President Herschel Hardin for a special workshop on estate planning, discretionary trusts, and strategic giving, Saturday, February 22, at the North Vancouver District Library (Edgemont Village). Despite the snowy weather, the room was full and the crowd engaged, as Bill and Herschel shared information to help families understand and make the most of their options as they work to secure the financial future of their loved one with a mental illness or disability.

Bill covered topics such as will preparation, fund provi-

sion and management, RDSPs, discretionary trusts, and tax burden reduction, while Herschel spoke to strategic giving and legacies.

Bill thanked NSSS for the opportunity, saying, "I never thought as I matured in my profession I would be presenting topics like this to an organization out of need for my own family. You truly are the 'front line' for families."

Likewise, families appreciated the opportunity to learn from other family members. As one participant commented, "You've made such a daunting subject easier to understand. I appreciated you sharing your own life example."

NSSS meets with Lions Gate Hospital social workers: NSSS President Cheryl Zipper and Executive Director Nancy Ford were invited to speak to a group of 25 social workers at Lions Gate Hospital, Wednesday, February 26. Cheryl and Nancy shared their own personal stories; outlined NSSS programs, including one-to-one support, Family-to-Family, support group, and the partnership program; discussed advocacy and how to work in partnership; and spoke to challenges families face in the system.

Notes from the Sea to Sky



Christine Buttkus bids NSSS farewell: After four-and-a-half years as the NSSS Sea to Sky outreach coordinator, Christine Buttkus is moving on to other projects. We would like to thank Christine for her dedication and hard work, and wish her well in her future endeavours.

Christine writes, "It has been my privilege to support families and communities in their efforts to find solutions that on the surface seem like they should be easier to find. Based on needs expressed by the communities, NSSS has allowed me to respond in ways that are sometimes different in Sea to Sky than on the North Shore. This has included enhanced education and consultation in schools, Suicide Awareness and Prevention Workshops, and collaborative capacity development around mental illness.

"It has been a particular pleasure to work with individuals and families as they share and refine their stories as part of our public education events. Seeing the significant impact of these stories has been encouraging and we continue to receive positive feedback.

"As a consultant and researcher, my longstanding passion remains quality of care and service for best outcomes. I am particularly grateful to the Community Foundation of Whistler whose dialogue sessions helped us to connect our collective thoughts for enhanced un-

derstanding. NSSS has allowed me the unintended benefit of a deeper understanding of the complexity surrounding mental health and mental illness and our collective efforts to find better solutions.

"Thank you to families for allowing me the opportunity to do this work with you and for trusting me during your personal journeys."

NSSS holds Healthy Workplaces workshop: How can employers respond immediately and appropriately, and manage the situation effectively, when employees experience mental health problems. To help answer these questions, NSSS brought together Dr. Kathryn Wynn, Vancouver Coastal's Mental Health and Addiction Services, to give advice on responding, and Amanda Shpeley, to share her story of recovery, to a group of Whistler-based employers, Wednesday, February 19. Christine Buttkus introduced the panel, while NSSS President Cheryl Zipper shared a parent's perspective and described what signs of mental illness to watch out for. NSSS Executive Director Nancy Ford facilitated the open-floor discussion.

NSSS speaks to Whistler RCMP watch: ED Nancy Ford spoke to Whistler RCMP B watch on responding to those with serious mental illness, Wednesday, February 19. The group discussed Section 28, collaboration, and concerns shared by among families and the police.



Save the date!

6th annual Circle of Strength luncheon fundraiser Saturday, May 3, 2014, from noon – 1 p.m. Hollyburn Country Club, West Vancouver

Our Name, Circle of Strength

Where does the name "Circle of Strength" come from? NSSS member and volunteer Gillian Santo writes:

"When I first became a member of NSSS in 2008, I had just completed the fall Family-to-Family course. I received an email to members asking for ideas on naming the first fundraising and awareness luncheon that the Society was planning for Spring 2009.

"A picture immediately came into my mind of a circle of people, arms outstretched, hands joined, enclosing a very lonely and vulnerable person, struggling to cope as they provided care for their sick relative. 'Circle of Courage' was the name that occurred to me, and I submitted it to NSSS.

"A while later, I was told my entry was the one that worked best, but how would I feel if the name was changed just a little to "Circle of Strength"? I thought this was absolutely perfect and agreed.

"Circle of Strength was launched."

Our Master of Ceremonies

We're honored to have Jon McComb, host of CKNW radio's *The World Today*, as our Master of Ceremonies. For over 20 years, Jon's informed view of politics



and his humour have engaged listeners. Last year, Jon, speaking on-air, chose to break the silence about his personal experience with depression and anxiety, after struggling for many years to accept it. He's now involved in raising awareness of mental illness in our local communities.

Our Sponsor

We're pleased to welcome Fulmer Capital Partners as this year's



sponsor. Founded in 2010 by entrepreneur Yuri Fulmer, Fulmer Capital Partners is a Vancouver-based boutique private equity firm that brings direct operational and hands-on experience to small and mid-market companies, in sectors such as hospitality, digital, manufacturing, recycling, and transportation. "Giving back" to the community is an integral part of Fulmer Capital's corporate philosophy.

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

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info@northshoreschizophrenia.org

Twitter: @NSSSoc

Monthly Support Meetings

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

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

To register, please call the Centre.

Families Helping Families

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. Your donations are appreciated. We issue tax receipts for all contributions.