



## Public Education Lecture Series “Two Personal Stories of Success and Courage”



**Erin Emiru Hawkes MSc, Author,** remembers the voices. She started hearing them when she was about five, but they were nice to her then. By the time she was a teenager, though, the voices had grown more demanding and controlling, sometimes becoming downright nasty. *“I was told I’d never have a job, that I would never be that recovered,” “I was described as refractory [resistant to treatment], which basically means there’s no hope. It feels good to prove them wrong.”*

Dr. Richard O’Reilly, MB FRCP Professor, Department of Psychiatry U. of Western Ontario writes the Introduction to Erin’s book: “Erin, with her unique expertise as a neuroscientist and as a patient suffering from schizophrenia, tells us clearly that schizophrenia is a brain disorder and that its symptoms are related to disrupted levels of brain neurotransmitters.” Erin will have copies of her book, “When Quietness Came”, on hand for sale for \$20.00.



**Savanna Beatch,** at age 22 was diagnosed with Bipolar I. Savana shares her story with high school students across the North Shore. *“I love doing the talks and I am in full support of education early on in order to demolish stigma.”* She goes on to say, *“Stigma towards mental illness is so prevalent that it affects everyone. So when you develop a mental illness you hold onto those stigmas and you believe them and it stops your growth. This is self-stigma. Sharing openly about my Bipolar is a great way to get people to change their ideas about mental illness.”*

**Please join: Erin Emiru Hawkes and Savana Beatch  
as they share their personal journeys:**

**Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016 NEW TIME: 7:00 p.m.**

**HOpE Centre Atrium—13th. and St. Andrews**

**No registration required.**

Supported by



## NSSS President's Message Nov 2016



Amidst the dark winds of the American election baffle-gab, notions of kindness, compassion and caring seem to have all but been swept aside by many.

And yet I am reminded of how truly important and enduring these values are as we continue to strive for a better world for all those suffering from the debilitating effects of mental illness. We have such an important role to play as educators, supporters and agents of change. From our support services comes help and the knowledge that you are not alone. From our education courses comes awareness, understanding, compassion, and eventually, empowerment.

### Greetings

Our voice is the unique and independent voice of families supporting each other and ourselves. We continue to make such a critical difference for so many struggling to cope, and yet we can do so much more. Our work continues to expand with a growing number of families, communities and the many mental health organizations with which we are engaged.

Over the past few months, I have been so impressed by our members and volunteers that give so much and so generously. So many dedicating their time and talents, committed to taking up the challenge of organizing an event, training to become a family to family teacher or a support volunteer, participating on a committee, sitting on the board, providing office administrative support, coming out to a parade, the list is long.....

And as much as we do, there is always a need for so many more of you to volunteer also.

I encourage you to stay in touch with us, renew your memberships and get involved in any way you choose. Every friend of ours is important, every member and volunteer is vital. In return, we promise the work will be both rewarding and meaningful while sharing in our camaraderie and friendship. You will see a volunteer form inside for your convenience or, if you wish, please contact the office to discuss further.

Become one of our small group of committed people that really can create the changes we want to see in the world for our families and loved ones suffering from the effects of mental illness. Please join us.

By the way, please come to our wonderful heart warming Christmas Party. It will be bigger and better than ever this year, thanks to the financial generosity of our members and our dedicated volunteers. The invitation is on the back page.

Best wishes for a warm and loving holiday season and with much gratitude,

*Janice Lilley*, NSSS President

# “High Potency Pot Poses Risks to The Developing Brain”

Dr. Diane MacIntosh—Sept. 28, 2016 Lecture Recap by Kate Breakell



Doctor Diane McIntosh began her medical career with a focus on medicine. This is what led her to become interested in psychiatry with the professions focus on evidence based medication. Recently she has become an online blogger for The Huff-

ington Post with a focus on research on Marijuana and the developing brain. You can read her articles at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/diane-mcintosh/>

A survey in 2012 revealed that there are about 3.1 million marijuana users in Canada and of those users about 1/3 of them are teens. Doctor McIntosh stated that part of the problem is that cannabis has not been seen as an illicit drug, so most parents don't worry if their child smokes marijuana. It's been seen as a safe drug to use; however research is confirming that young brains can be highly affected by marijuana use.

Marijuana is comprised of many elements including TCH and CBD. THC is responsible for the “high” and CBD has been determined as medicinal with a therapeutic value. The problem is today's marijuana contains many contaminants as well as higher levels of THC. Thirty years ago the THC content in marijuana was 1-4%, but now it is around 25-30%. We as humans have bred marijuana in order to increase the amount of THC and bred out the value of the CBD. There is increasing evidence that the high amount of THC in the young brain can result in an increase in

Psychosis especially during the teen years as there is constant wiring and rewiring of the brain. Teens who smoke marijuana during these developmental years when the brain is “super-plastic” tend to destroy certain circuits and pathways. In some cases this has been shown to lead to schizophrenia and psychosis.

Like most illnesses there is evidence of a genetic link to schizophrenia. A predisposition to schizophrenia has been seen in children with a family history of schizophrenia. Cannabis alone is not sufficient or necessary to cause schizophrenia or psychosis. Only a small percentage of teens who use marijuana will develop schizophrenia or psychosis. However in 2016, 31 research papers showed that TCH can alter brain size and function, especially in frequent users.

The group that is most at risk are boys between the ages of 15-25 with a family history of schizophrenia. Family members, relatives, may have a brain that is vulnerable to schizophrenia and psychosis. Yet they can be unaware of this because for many years mental illness has been a “don't ask, don't tell” type of illness. We need to educate people about cannabis and it's relation to psychosis and schizophrenia. As the brain develops, which current theory states is age 25, any chemical introduced to the developing brain should be questioned.

The only way we can make smart choices is to be over 25 years of age, and be well informed about both cannabis and our family's history of mental illness.



# Upcoming Workshop on Securing the Future for You and Your Relative

## *Estate Planning, Discretionary Trusts, and Disability Tax Credit, RDSP and Strategic Giving Workshop.*

**Saturday, February 18, 2017 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**



### **Presenter: Bill Murdock,**

This workshop is designed for families of those with a mental illness.

Bill is a financial security advisor who also has a brother living with a mental illness. He will explain how to make the most of your options to help secure the financial future of your loved one, and also ensure future caregivers have the support they need.

### **Topics covered include:**

- **Making a will**
- **Fund provision and management**
- **RDSPs**
- **Discretionary trusts**
- **Reducing tax burden**

**indesign financial group ltd.**



**Modern Planning Concepts**  
**Vintage Quality Advice**

Location to be announced.

The workshop is offered **free of charge**.

To register, please call the Family Support Centre at :

604-926-0856.

### **مرکز حمایت از خانواده:**

رسالت این مرکز، حمایت و آموزش درباره بیماریهای روانی از جمله اختلالات دو قطبی(بای پولار)، افسردگی، اضطراب و شیذوفرنی (اسکیزوفرنی) می باشد.

مرکز حمایت از خانواده، روزهای دوشنبه تا جمعه از ساعت ۹ صبح تا ۵ بعدظهر آماده ارائه خدمات به فارسی زبانان محترم می باشد.

جهت دریافت کمکهای مشاوره ای با شماره ۰۸۵۶-۹۲۶-۶۰۴ تماس بگیرید و یا به آدرس زیر مراجعه فرمایید:



# Family Members deliver Partnership Presentations in the High Schools

By Cindy and Savanna Beach



My name is Cindy and I have a daughter, Savanna, who was diagnosed with Bipolar I three years ago. I started doing the Partnership Presentations last fall. I find that after having done the presentations numerous times, I am still occasionally, a little apprehensive. The unease comes from sharing publicly some of the worst experiences of my life and wondering how that information will be received.

The high school power point presentations are uniquely designed to pair a person with lived experience of mental illness along with a family member of a person with a mental disorder. We start with empathy, a cute but poignant animated video that describes empathy beautifully. And then we proceed with true and false questions and impart a lot of information about the major mental illnesses.

The highlight of the presentation is the moment when the partner with a mental illness shares. The partners are generally very detailed and graphic about their experiences of living with psychosis, depression and mania. They share open heartedly and are willing to answer very personal questions about their struggles. I remember a student asking one of our presenters if “his hallucinations were like dreams” or if he could “control his paranoid thoughts on his own.” I could see the student was really trying to understand what was going on inside Rob’s mind. His answer was that he never dreamed so he couldn’t compare and that he could control the thoughts for a while in the beginning but eventually they just took over.

Then it is my time to share my experience of living with my daughter from her initial onset of bipolar, to diagnosis and finally treatment. My story is filled with emotions; my fear in the beginning about not knowing what was happening to her, would she always be this way; my guilt over not really believing her when she told me she wasn’t sleeping at all over a period of months; and finally, my relief when she finally came back to us after responding well to medication. I remember a student sharing with me that “his mom was really sad when her mom died.” He said he came home from school everyday and she was really sad and there was nothing he could do and it went on for a long time. I asked how she was doing now and he said she was ok now. I realized that this student was truly able to empathize with me. This is how we start and end the talks-- with the definition of empathy. That is why I do the talks. Promoting an open, honest dialogue reduces stigma and allows for empathy and compassion to arise. The Partnership Presentations are successful in achieving this. I am honoured to be a part of the team at NSSS.

I was fortunate to do some presentations with my daughter Savanna this year and that was a really fun experience. Here are her comments:

My name is Savanna and I am 22 and was diagnosed with Bipolar I. I felt confident and loved seeing people in total listening mode, excited on the edge of their seat. I loved doing the talks and I am in full support of education early on in order to demolish stigma. Stigma towards mental illness is so prevalent that it affects everyone. So when you develop a mental illness you hold onto those stigmas and you believe them and it stops your growth. This is self-stigma. Sharing openly about my Bipolar is a great way to get people to change their ideas about mental illness. I really want to do more talks. We hope to see you at the Lecture.

## Family Support Centre

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 or call Sea to Sky: 604-390-0100**

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

[www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org)

[info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org)—Facebook: [northshore.schizophrenia](https://www.facebook.com/northshore.schizophrenia)—Twitter: [@NSSSoc](https://twitter.com/NSSSoc)

# Family Support Centre News

Kathryn Seely, Family Navigator, & Brittany Beggs, Sea to Sky Outreach



With the days getting shorter and the nights getting colder, we would like to extend our warm appreciation to those friends and members who volunteer their time to help families in need. We could not do this important work without you. We are grateful for those who assist us with the work we do in support and education, and we hope that this note will bring you up to date with the work that we have been doing.

## Support

We continue to host monthly support group meetings in Whistler, Squamish, the North Shore and the Tri-Cities. In the Sea to Sky, we have been connecting with parents of students at Whistler Secondary School. We continue to provide one on one support for family members dealing with a loved one with mental illness. Whistler Secondary School is doing great work educating the students around decreasing stigma and increasing awareness of mental illness, and we find that this extends to their families and the community. In Squamish, our support group is active, and we've had a growing number of referrals from community partners, including Squamish Corrections.

In the Tri Cities, we've recruited a handful of Family to Family graduates who have happily stepped up to help co-facilitate our monthly support group. In September, we had a guest presenter come and present her 'lived story', and in December we look forward to making Christmas cards while providing support to one another.

As Family Navigator on the North Shore, I have the privilege of attending some of the Support Group meetings, as well as providing one to one support for families with a loved one with mental illness. The issues I notice that families need the most help with are access to care (treatment, continued medication, no early discharge) and access to resources (housing and ongoing support services).

## Group Facilitation Session

We held our first Facilitation training session on October 1<sup>st</sup> to teach group facilitation skills, as well as discuss some of the situations families face and how to manage them. Some of the highlights of the day were:

- Having discussions that highlighted key values and skills for support team members to focus on - listening to and supporting family members to use their own intuition to guide them through struggles.
- Remembering that group facilitation is a difficult skill and continuing to learn which tools to use to help guide us in tricky situations.
- Connecting with other strong family leaders and finding support in each other.

We look forward to continuing to model these values and continuing to teach the 'nuts and bolts' of facilitation at our next training session in May 2017.

We are now more than halfway through our Fall Family to Family Education courses, which we are running from September – December 2016. By mid-December 2016, we will have more than 30 new Family to Family Graduates. The courses will begin again at the end of January 2017. If you know of a family member that might benefit from this course, please give us a call at 604-926-0856.

## Monthly Support Meetings

Support group meetings are held each month in: **West Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler, and Tri-Cities.** For family members and close friends of people who have serious mental illnesses.

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

**For Sea to Sky please contact 1-604-390-0110. [www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org)**

## Renew Your Membership and Stay Connected to NSSS

Membership remains the best way of keeping in touch with what's happening at NSSS, and helps strengthen our work with families. We value our members and encourage anyone interested in our work and in helping to alleviate the suffering caused by schizophrenia and other serious mental illness to become a member and renew membership each year.

As a member, you receive *The Notepad* newsletter, and notices on current events, invitations to special events, and more. Membership also allows you to vote for the directors of the Society at its annual general meeting.

You will receive a renewal form with your printed copy of *The Notepad* or one in PDF format with your email version, please fill out and return it to the Family Support Centre with your membership dues, still just \$20 per year.

We would like to thank you for your continued support.



## HELP WANTED Volunteers are What Makes Us Strong



NSSS believes in families helping families. All our programs and events are designed and delivered by family members, from peer support, to Partnership presentations in schools, to community outreach activities and advocacy, to lecture series and events planning, to fundraising, to the Family-to-Family education course. Even our annual Christmas party (see back page) is planned and organized by dedicated family members just like yourself.

We appreciate the investment of all our volunteers' time and energy.

If you would like to become involved with any of our programs or events, please contact staff at the Family Support Centre—by calling 604-926-0856 or emailing [info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org).

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; Mayor's Golf Tournament, Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Vancouver Foundation; West Vancouver Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Whistler; North Shore Rotary Clubs; Lynn Valley Legion; Bouygues Building Canada; First Memorial Boal Chapel, Hollyburn Funeral Home., Margitta's Flowers; and our many other generous donors.



## This Holiday Season, give the gift of a donation to the NSSS

Looking for the perfect gift for someone who cares? Why not make a donation to NSSS in lieu of a Christmas parcel and surprise your friends and family on Christmas morning? When you send us your donation we'll send a Christmas thank-you card before December 25. Any amount aids the society in getting people the services they need, and also warms the heart of your friend or family member.

For those who have already donated THANK YOU!



## Christmas is Coming Early !

**RSVP TODAY** and join NSSS for our  
annual **Christmas Party**

**New location:**

**North Lonsdale United Church**

**3380 Lonsdale Ave, North Vancouver**

(corner of Osborne and Lonsdale)

**Saturday, November 26, 2016**

**Doors open at 5:30pm**

**Dinner at 6:00pm**

Enjoy a roast turkey dinner prepared by local chefs, seasonal musical entertainment and a visit from a jolly old character with a sleigh full of gifts!



This is a **free event** for people with any mental illness or family members.

**Reserve your seat today!**

**Registration closes Friday, November 18, at 5 p.m.**

**Please call 604-926-0856 or email Pouneh at  
pouneh@northshoreschizophrenia.org**