

SHARE & CARE

THE RECOVERY OF HOPE ~ THE HOPE OF RECOVERY

OLIVER, RANEE AND ALL THAT JAZZ

It's our third public concert and this time we have top entertainers, a professional organizer and a brand new approach to fundraising

To a ticket-buyer, October 29 promises to be a fabulous evening of music, with two jazz stars celebrating the memory of a jazz legend: Oliver Jones and Ranee Lee in *We Remember Oscar Peterson*.



Oliver Jones

not professionals in that field, but Pam Litman is. A skilled fundraiser who's worked in the field for over 17 years, she's signed on to raise both our sights and our return on investment.

The professional approach

"Fundraising is a serious, highly competitive business these days," she informed us. So while Litman is responsible for the allover coordination and management of the concert, a large chunk of her time is dedicated to maximizing the level of donations we receive. She works closely with concert co-chairs Sherry Ellen, Claudia Ikeman and Paul Rubin and the fundraising committee, a wonderful team she calls them, one with all the right energy and commitment.

Our concert needs to succeed on two levels. One is ticket-selling, very important because presenting top-flight entertainers with empty seats in the audience is a definite no-no. The second level is sponsorship. For the first time we're soliciting companies and individuals to become event sponsors. Funds raised at this

To AMI, the event will be all that and much more. We're counting on it to bring in some serious dollars. A solid financial base will consolidate our growth and allow us to safely undertake new initiatives in support of families dealing with mental illness.

Our first two concerts mixed fundraising with an element of mental illness education and awareness-building. This year's event is pure fundraiser. We're

level will help offset the cost of mounting the concert, meaning more ticket-sale money will be available to invest in our programs. Litman has been approaching potential corporate sponsors on her own and also accompanying anyone who feels more comfortable making a pitch with her present.

Leave nothing to chance is a good coordinator's mantra. One of the first things Litman did was to draw up an agenda and a timeline, a flowchart of dates when things must happen en route to October 29. Selling begun, printing completed, flowers ordered, caterer engaged — it's all been pinned down.

"What I find interesting about fundraising is that there's always room to be creative and try something different," Litman says. "For instance, if somebody can't attend the concert, this year

continued on page 2



Ranee Lee

One year already!

A look at what the Mental Health Commission of Canada and, in particular, the Family Caregivers advisory committee have been up to

It was March, 2007, when we learned there would be a Mental Health Commission set up and chaired by former senator Michael Kirby, its long-time proponent. The work agenda has full ever since.

A board of directors was chosen and eight advisory committees were set up: Mental Health & the Law; Service Systems; Children & Youth; First Nations, Inuit & Métis; Seniors; Science; The Workplace; and Family Caregivers, the committee headed by AMI's executive director, Ella Amir.

The Commission has identified three key goals it intends to pursue. It plans on running a multi-year anti-stigma campaign. It wants to create a forum to facilitate the exchange of information between professionals, consumers, families, communities and organizations.

continued on page 3

A PARENT'S WORST NIGHTMARE

Suicide is second only to car accidents as a cause of death in young people. Psychotherapist ANDREW TIBBETS has some advice for parents who worry about the possibility in their family

People sometimes have the idea that it's normal for teenagers to be surly, miserable even. I once had a teen client whose parents dragged her (almost literally) to therapy after she made several suicidal gestures. This was against the advice of the student's teacher, principal and youth leader.

Their opinion: her parents were spoiling her. My opinion: her mother and father saved her life. Not just by bringing her to therapy, but by taking her feelings seriously. They helped make some changes to her life, got some help to do it and the girl made it through.

Hope is the key

If someone is deeply unhappy with no hope for change, a thought will eventually occur: why go on? From inside the experience of despair it makes perfect sense to end the pain.

A colleague once told me that she thought the main job of a therapist was to provide hope — that clients come to therapy when they run out of it. Unlike most people in their lives, a therapist is okay listening to how awful it is. We can see the brighter future that the client has temporarily lost sight of.

Once hope is back and a client can embrace the possibility of a different future, almost anything can work to get a person back on track. It's hopelessness that kills, not a lack of ideas.

Here are some tips from the Canadian Health Network:

- Warning signs are an invitation to communicate. A direct, straightforward response is most effective.

- Ask if your child is contemplating suicide. No matter what you hear, try not to be judgmental, shocked or angry.
- Do not communicate your personal attitudes about suicide. Instead, offer support and reassurance that suicidal feelings do not last forever.
- Seek the help of a trained professional as soon as possible.
- It is important that suicide not be romanticized or glamorized.

Instead, discuss the characteristics and events that can lead to suicide and explore other options that exist.

- A friend's attempted or completed suicide is an opportunity to explore your child's stress levels and methods of coping.

Avoid dramatic statements of horror and fear of suicide. Talk and be supportive, no matter what else may be happening.

I took a great workshop offered through the Canadian Mental Health Association called Living Works (www.living-works.net/index.htm). Training like this can improve your ability to sit calmly with someone who is inside a self-destructive mental storm. Your very calmness is the hope that another point of view is possible.

Andrew Tibbets runs a psychotherapy program in Toronto. This text edited from his article in *moods magazine*, fall 2007. □

*It's hopelessness that kills,
not a lack of ideas.*

Fundraiser ... continued from page 1

we're asking them to purchase a ticket anyway and turn it over to someone else who can use it." She's upped the skills of the fundraising committee by passing on her knowledge of successful donation solicitation and involved the committee in recruiting volunteers to help sell tickets and advertising space in the program book.



Pam Litman

Litman sees the concert as a great opportunity to tackle negative attitudes. "On the sponsorship level, the impetus behind a major donation to a cause is often a personal link. In AMI's case that would mean acknowledging a connection to mental illness, something not everybody wants to admit. That attitude wouldn't exist with a campaign for heart disease or cancer. Breaking down the stigma is part of the challenge that this fundraiser presents."

From our perspective, the concert is giving us new insights into fundraising expertise, encouraging ongoing donations to keep us growing and setting the standard for future events we might undertake. But for ticket-holders, it will simply be an evening of listening to Oliver Jones and Rane Lee make great music.

Surely you'll want to be there. **October 29, 7:30pm, Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W. General admission, \$75. Concert with partial tax receipt, \$100. Concert, partial tax receipt and a cocktail reception, \$150.** Call the office for reservations and more information. □

Mental Health Commission ... continued from page 1

Ultimately, yet perhaps most urgently, a national mental health strategy must be put in place.

Advisory committees are meant to advise. But so far the Commission's eight have been acting more like working commit-



Family Caregivers committee members, l-r: Ed Connors (ON), Len Wall (ON), Joyce Smith (NL), Nérée St-Amand (ON), Ella Amir (QUE), Chris Martens (BC), Susan Hess (ON), Eugene Niles (NB), Judy Gold (QUE), Norman Segalowitz (QUE). Missing: Bill Ashdown (MB).

tees. Each one has had to submit to the Board a multi-year work plan accompanied by a funding rationale. "We all have our own interests and priorities," says Amir, "but we still all have to pull together so the Commission can achieve its goals." The big challenge for the Board will be to decide which projects get priority. They all have merit, but, as usual, funds are not unlimited.

Virtual Peer Support

Last January the Family Caregivers committee presented plans for seven different projects. The largest, most ambitious of the lot, the one they're super-keen on, is called Virtual Peer Support, or VPS. If it's approved, it will allow caregivers, no matter where they live in the country, to access guidance and information on mental illness problems by dialing a 1-800 number and being matched up with others who've had experience and success with similar situations.

"It's a bit like our own tele-workshop program," says Amir, "but we really modeled it after the Cancer Connection, a very successful initiative of the Canadian Cancer Society. That started as a pilot project in Ontario in 1996 and today it's national. So we're not reinventing the wheel, just adapting a very good idea to our needs."

Putting Virtual Peer Support in place won't come cheap. Yet Amir is optimistic that the Board will recognize its merits and give it the nod, even if, like the Cancer Connection, it needs to begin as a smaller pilot project.

The other proposals the Family Caregivers committee presented are smaller and less costly, but they still answer an important need. One is the creation of a life-planning guide for families. This could be a booklet or other printed material that explains the different phases in the trajectory of mental illness. With this knowledge, families will be alerted to possible trouble in the future and be able to plan accordingly.

Another project focuses on mental illness education. "For families, we'd like to scan a range of education packages being used both in Canada and abroad to see which ones have features we can best adapt for our needs," explains Amir. "The same approach could work for future professionals. We'd scan programs being used in medical schools, social work schools and nursing schools in other countries to find any elements that would make valuable additions to the curricula here."

Whichever project gets the go-ahead, one commitment is permanent: to insure that the importance of family caregivers in the mental health picture is recognized and that any compromise to their well-being resulting from their caregiving responsibilities is addressed.

Major research dollars for the homeless

Ottawa recently allocated \$110 million for the Commission to fund research into the burgeoning problem of homelessness in the country.

In an address Kirby gave in Vancouver last April, he quoted some alarming statistics. An estimated 25-50 percent of homeless people have a mental illness. One in seven users of emergency shelters across Canada are children. Almost one-third of Canada's

continued on page 8

The Hon. Michael Kirby will address the Low-Beer Lecture, September 25

Most likely without Michael Kirby there wouldn't be a Mental Health Commission today. As chair of the Senate Social Affairs committee, 1999-2006, he was the principal author of the committee's recommendations on how to reform Canada's acute healthcare system. His critical report, *Out of the Shadows at Last*, impelled Ottawa to take action.



Don't miss the chance to hear former Senator Kirby at the John Hans Low-Beer Memorial Lecture. By all accounts he's a dynamic and inspiring speaker. **Thursday, September 25, 7:00pm at Oscar Peterson Concert Hall, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W.**

The John Hans Low-Beer Memorial Lecture is co-sponsored by AMI and Concordia University's Department of Psychology. Free admission, English presentation.

THE NIGHT CONSUMERS STOLE THE SHOW

**Our 31st annual general meeting was proof positive:
there can be life — and a good one — after mental illness**

There was Hilary Griffiths standing at the podium alongside her mother Renée, AMI's incoming president. She was there to present Stella Lacoursière with the AMI-Québec Award for Exemplary Service. The twist? Hilary had been a patient of Lacoursière's at the Allan. "Because of the many ways she helped me, I never felt like a number in the system," she recalled. "Thank you for being you."

There was Carol Vandette receiving her Volunteer of the Year Award, overcoming her often-shy demeanor to express her gratitude: "This is truly a great honor."

Six consumers, all residents of Our Harbour long-term housing in Longueuil, made the trip to Montreal to receive the

Extra Mile Award on behalf of Catherine Gillbert, Our Harbour president.

And, most spectacularly, there were the recipients of our Certificate of Honor, *Le Groupe MusiArt*. A celebrated choir of 13 outpatients at the Montreal General's department of psychiatry, they're putting the lie to every mental illness cliché in the book. (See story on p. 6) With Dr. Marie-France Boudreault conducting, they offered two songs to open the meeting. By the time they launched into *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* and *MusiArt Blues* at the close, they had the audience clapping along and rising for a standing ovation.

In her first address as president, Renée Griffiths spoke of the difficulties



Al Winslow, dedicated Board member for over 12 years, received the Monty Berger Award for Exemplary Service from Claudia Ikeman

The Extra Mile Award, won by Catherine Gillbert, president, Our Harbour, was accepted on her behalf by a group of residents. Beppie Boudens (third from right) made the presentation



consumers continue to face in quest of a good life and, calling AMI a lifeboat in a storm, recounted the vital role our support and education program played in helping her family through trying times. Her confidence that this coming year will be a good one for AMI was contagious. In any event, 2008-2009 was off to a fine start. □

Board of Directors 2008-2009

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Renée Griffiths, president; Annie Young, vice president; Danielle Gonzalez, vice president; Claudia Ikeman, treasurer; Joseph Lalla, secretary; Lorna Moscovitch, immediate past president

MEMBERS: Jean-Claude Benitah, Alison Clark, Elva Crawford, Anna Beth Doyle, Moira Edwards, Sherry Ellen, Danielle Medina, Judy Ross, Lynn Ross, Paul Rubin, Norman Segalowitz, Joanne Smith, Al Winslow

DIRECTORS EMERITUS: Marilyn Block, Queenie Grosz, Sylvia Klein, Dorothy McCulloch, Anita Miller, Evelyn Ortenberg, Monica Reznick, Sylvia Silver, Kay Simpson, Elizabeth Tremain

HONORARY MEMBER: Edith Low-Beer



Mike Santoro presented the Volunteer of the Year Award to Carol Vandette



*The Exemplary Psychiatrist Award went to **Gustavo Turecki**, noted clinician and researcher at the Douglas. Warren Steiner (l) did the honors*

SUMMER 2008

SUPPORT GROUPS

Mondays 7:30pm 4333 Côte Ste-Catherine Road unless otherwise indicated

FAMILY for relatives

July 7, 21; August 11, 25; September 8, 15, 22

SOUTH SHORE for relatives

Wednesdays 6:30pm

Call 514-486-1448 for location

July 9, 23; August 6, 20; September 3, 17

PAC Parents of Adult Children

No meetings July or August

Resume at AMI September 9

SIBLINGS AND ADULT CHILDREN

July 21; August 25; September 15

DEPRESSION for consumers and relatives

July 21; August 25; September 22

BIPOLAR DISORDER

for consumers and relatives

July 7; August 11; September 8

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

for consumers and relatives

July 21; August 25; September 22

KALEIDOSCOPE for consumers

July 7; August 11; September 15

LIFELINE for consumers

Thursdays 1:00-3:00pm

Alternative Centregens, 5770 Auteuil, Brossard

For more information, call 450-445-5427

HOARDING GROUP (in collaboration with Quebec OC Foundation)

for consumers and relatives

July 7; August 11; September 8

BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesdays 7:00pm at AMI

No meeting in July; August 5; September 2



Marie-France Boudreault and Le Groupe MusiArt with their Certificate of Honor



Stella Lacoursière, marking four decades of nursing service at the Allan, holds the AMI-Québec Award for Exemplary Service given by Renée Griffiths and daughter Hilary

THOSE MULTI-TALENTED MEMBERS OF MUSIART

They're into singing, songwriting, cutting CDs and winning awards. Oh, and they're all consumers

They were there at our annual meeting where they accepted a Certificate of Honor and entertained with a selection of songs. It was a fine evening for *Le Groupe MusiArt*, but not that unusual. The choir is quite used to being in the public eye.

Launched in 1998 as a performing arts choir for outpatients at the Montreal General's department of psychiatry, MusiArt was the brainchild of Dr. Marie-France Boudreault and music therapist Lillian Eyre.

Boudreault has continued in her role as MusiArt conductor, managing the group together with music therapists Mélanie Auberson and Dany Bouchard.

The choir started as barely a choir, exactly two people. Staff members had to be recruited to fill out the ranks. Now it's a group of 12-15 men and women, but no staff at all. "We made the choir part of the Transitional Day Program," Boudreault explains, "so that gave people an option — join the music or go to occupational therapy." For many, the choice was easy.

Good medicine

Alfred Hepworth was attracted nine years ago, when still an inpatient, just by hearing the choir rehearse. He never knew he had a voice, didn't know he could sing. "I'm bipolar," he says. "If I'm down and don't really feel like showing up one day, I push myself and get rewarded. The music does a lot for my mood." These days Hepworth not only sings, he also writes lyrics, paints and is passionate about photography.

Music is a confidence-builder *par excellence*. Back in the day, choir members wanted to have only the lyrics because they thought it would be easier. Now they can read a score and they're in better voice, too. Says Boudreault: "Group singing requires

concentration and a level of cognitive ability. Once people find they can do it, they also decide they can handle going back to school or work. The choir becomes a stepping stone."

Dubbing themselves creative ambassadors for mental health, MusiArt is dedicated to

educating the public and repudiating stigma. They've performed at fundraising concerts, conferences, business meetings and celebrations of all sorts. And not only locally, but in Mont-Tremblant and Ottawa, too.

The media have taken notice. There've been articles in newspapers and they've been interviewed on radio. Boudreault applauds their perseverance.

"It's so courageous what they're doing and they've come such a long way. People remark, 'But you can't be a patient.' And they'll answer, 'Yes, I am.' As if to ask, 'And your point is...?'"

In 2000 the Canadian Psychiatric Association gave MusiArt an award for the most innovative activity during Mental Illness Awareness Week. To earn it they put together a project that included a text to de-stigmatize mental illness and, at Alexis-Nihon Plaza, three concerts, a poetry reading and an information booth where healthcare professionals participated.

In 2006 they received an Innovation bursary from the MUHC for the production of



A musical launch to this year's annual general meeting



Hepworth



Boudreault

a CD. The project took a year to complete and everyone participated. There's a mission statement plus 10 songs on the disc, all original, all written by choir members. (A Hepworth photograph is on the cover.) The writers suggested the sort of music they had in mind — everything from reggae to blues to folk — and therapists Auberson and Bouchard did the composing. "With the grant we were able to buy an editing machine and bring in musicians from the outside," says Boudreault. The music was recorded in a studio set up at the hospital as part of the Transitional Day Program. "The choir was fascinated to see how a recording gets made," she adds. "It was all very professional."

Next October MusiArt will celebrate its tenth anniversary. They're dreaming of a trip to Europe. But if the funds for that don't materialize, some other plan surely will. Something to help the members continue feeling good about themselves. They've earned it. □

MusiArt's CD, entitled "Confidences... in confidence," is available for purchase (think gift, think holidays) for \$20. Call Dr. Boudreault's office, 514-934-1934, local 42071.

Mental health court to begin as a 3-year pilot project

Quebec's first mental health court opened its doors this past May. It offers integrated health, social and judicial services and deals only with cases where mentally ill individuals find themselves accused of having committed municipal violations or minor crimes such as shoplifting.

A room in the Montreal municipal courthouse has been set aside for the exclusive use of the court. At their first appearance, individuals have the right to choose between having their case heard by the mental health court or the regular court system. If they choose the former, they won't be fined or sentenced, won't be incarcerated or have a record. They do, however, have to prove that they are receiving treatment imposed by the judge.

Once treatment is chosen, the court makes certain that the accused is psychiatrically stable and respects the conditions of supervision by showing up for appointments, for example, or taking prescribed medication.

Employed by the mental health court are a worker from UPS-J (Emergency Psychosocial Justice), a probation officer, a liaison worker to mental health services and a doctor. They are responsible for facilitating the process of determining which people present mental health problems.

Sorely needed

There are currently more than 22,000 people in Canada's corrections system. According to Correctional Services Canada, 12 percent of men and 25 percent of women in the system are diagnosed with a mental illness. Those figures represent a stunning rise over the past 10 years: 71 percent for men and 100 percent for women.

Mental illness needs to be decriminalized. Studies show that

WEAR THE BUTTON, SPREAD THE WORD

One in five. Twenty percent of the population. That's how many Canadians will be affected by some degree of mental illness in their lifetime.

When you wear a 1 in 5 button, you'll be teaching people that mental illness isn't some rare misfortune that only besets strangers. Rather, it can and does intrude uninvited on any family anywhere, even the next door neighbors.

AMI created the 1 in 5 button as a fundraising project to help fight stigma and increase understanding of the prevalence of mental illness. The buttons cost \$5 each and are available at the office.

Call 514-486-448 and button up your overcoat, your T-shirt, your jacket, your...



mental health courts reduce repeat offenses and violence and cost less than keeping people in jail. Courts already exist in Manitoba and Ontario. B.C. is scheduled to open its first this summer and Nova Scotia plans to take the step shortly. About 120 mental health courts presently function in the U.S.

The hope is that Quebec's three-year pilot project will evolve into a permanent program so that those suffering from mental illness can be helped by treatment in the community instead of being hurt by time behind bars. □

Based on information from *Friendly Link*, vol. 27, #1.

TRIBUTES & MEMORIALS

In honor of Joan Friedman
Elaine Podbere

In honor of Evelyn Sacks
Rev. Shirley and Bob Smith

In honor of Pat Rubin
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Bina and Leonard Ellen
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Jackie Dealy
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Pam Litman
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Judy Ross
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Lucia and Luigi Di Nardo
Kimberley Jackson
Mike Santoro

In honor of Elaine and Ted Matthews
Pat and Paul Rubin

In honor of Loyola High School
Timothy Storms

In honor of Claudia Ikeman and her grandson's bar mitzvah
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Sarah Utting
Sherry Ellen

In honor of Diana Neate
Sally Verrall

In honor of Monica and Maurice Reznick
Sylvia Klein

In honor of Sherry Ellen
Pam Litman

In memory of Helen Elmslie
Rev. Shirley and Bob Smith

In memory of Fanny Greenbaum
Ura Greenbaum

In memory of Jenö Finkelstein
Queenie Grosz

In memory of John Ross
Josephine and Hugh McQueen
Josef Schmidt

In memory of Fay Waxman
Sylvia Klein

In memory of Pal Romer
Queenie Grosz

In memory of August Franck
Dr. Robert Franck

AMI-Québec extends sympathy to the bereaved and appreciation to all donors for their generosity. For information, please phone 514-486-1448.

AMI-Québec Membership & Donation Form

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Membership includes the quarterly *Share&Care*, other mailings and lecture announcements, access to support groups and education programs and all other activities. Complimentary membership is available for people with limited incomes.

- ☐ I wish to renew my membership
- ☐ I wish to become a member
- ☐ I have a family member with a mental illness
- ☐ I have a mental illness
- ☐ I am a mental health professional

Donations

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I wish to support your work with a donation

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- ☐ \$250 Patron ☐ \$500 Benefactor ☐ Other _____

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FOR US TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR GENEROSITY, SUPPLY DONEE'S NAME AND ADDRESS

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Payments may also be made by phoning 514-486-1448

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Card number _____

Name on card _____ Exp. date _____

Send payment to **AMI-Québec**,
5253 Décarie, Suite 200, Montréal, Québec H3W 3C3

Mental Health Commission ... continued from page 2

homeless are 16-34 years old.

Ottawa's \$110 million will pay for five sets of demonstration research projects, each targeting a distinct group of homeless people living with mental illness in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The projects will run simultaneously over a five-year period.

"The goal," Kirby said, "is to determine the most effective way of getting homeless people living with a mental illness off the streets by providing them not only with housing, but also with the mental health support services they need."

The Commission has a 10-year mandate. The Family Caregivers committee has a three-year mandate with an extension possible. So while impressive progress has been made to date, there's really no time to waste. ☐



JANSSEN-ORTHO

This issue of *Share&Care* has been made possible by an educational grant from Janssen-Ortho.

amiquébec

Agir contre la maladie mentale
Action on mental illness

AMI-Québec, a grassroots organization, is committed to helping families manage the effects of mental illness through support, education, guidance and advocacy. By promoting understanding, we work to dispel the stigma still surrounding mental illness, thereby helping to create communities that offer new hope for meaningful lives.

Mental illnesses, known to be biologically-based brain disorders, can profoundly disrupt a person's ability to think, feel and relate to others. Mental illness affects not only individuals, but also their families, friends and everyone around them.

Renée Griffiths, *President*
Danielle Gonzalez, *Vice President*
Annie Young, *Vice President*
Joseph Lalla, *Secretary*
Claudia Ikeman, *Treasurer*
Lorna Moscovitch, *Immediate Past President*
Ella Amir, *Executive Director*

SHARE&CARE

Share&Care is published quarterly for members of AMI-Québec and mental health professionals.

Ella Amir, *Managing Editor*
Bryna Feingold, *Associate Editor*
Liane Keightley, *Designer*

Articles and comments are invited. Anonymity will be respected if requested. Guest articles reflect the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AMI-Québec.
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Member of La Fédération des familles et amis de la personne atteinte de maladie mentale (Québec)

