

Healthy Communities

strengthening social, environmental and economic well being across Ontario



Spring/Summer 2008 | FOCUS • No Health Without Mental Health

A Different Kind of Business

On a typical day, the managers, cooks and the kitchen staff at the Raging Spoon might be preparing lunch for a group of lawyers, making a catering delivery for a meeting at the Ministry of Health, or sending supper to a group meeting at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The Raging Spoon, located at 761 Queen West in Toronto's artsy west-end, is not a typical catering company. It is an Alternative Business, a business that employs and is managed by psychiatric consumer/survivors.



Out of This World Café

The Raging Spoon Catering Company, established in 1997, is one of four consumer/survivor run businesses operating under the umbrella of the Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses (OCAB). The Spoon, as it is fondly known, is located at 761 Queen Street West in a former church that now houses a variety of non-profit and social service organizations. Michael Lewin, the Business Manager and Jerry Thistle, the Food Production Manager are the creative forces who also guide the business. They employ about fifteen part-time staff who make and deliver the food to a variety of customers.

The menu from the Spoon offers a range of items from lime barbecued shrimp skewers to Louisiana crab cakes and grilled panini sandwiches. Dinner menus can be created according to the needs of the customer. Hors d'oeuvres, salads, platters, entrees, and deserts can all be custom ordered.

Why Consumer/Survivor Controlled Businesses?

People with mental health issues are often told that they are incapable of working or should not return to their former occupations. Some are placed in vocational rehabilitation programs where they may earn less than minimum wage or apprentice for long periods in unpaid training programs. However, these programs still do not provide the participants with real work experience. Other employment initiatives that target people with disabilities may place individual consumer/survivors in a work

continued on page 4

What is a consumer/survivor?

A consumer/survivor is self-defined: someone who has been institutionalized by the psychiatric system or treated by mental health staff in the community—a consumer of services or a survivor of the medical/mental health system. Some consumer/survivors continue to use the mental health system while others seek alternatives to the traditional medical model. A fundamental principle in the consumer/survivor movement is respect for individual choice.

Inside

A Different Kind of Business • 1

Editorial • 2

Mental Health, Diversity and Equity • 3

Stand Up For Mental Health • 5

Resources • 6

News Briefs • 6

Member Profile • 7

Newest Members • 8



Editorial

by Lorna Heidenheim, OHCC

The theme of this issue is mental health, which is defined as a “state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.¹

Mental health is a serious issue for communities in Ontario. The Citizens for Mental Health project projected in 2004 that one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, with 3% or nearly 1 million having a severe and persistent mental illness. They also reported that stress and mental health problems currently represent 40-50% of the short-term disability claims among employees of some of Canada’s largest corporations.²

According to “No Health Without Mental Health”, the first of a series of six reviews on global mental health published in the journal *The Lancet*, “about 14% of the global burden of disease has been attributed to neuropsychiatric disorders, mostly due to the chronically disabling nature of depression and other common mental disorders, alcohol-use and substance-use disorders, and psychoses.” However, the authors caution that this estimate is likely to be low, because it doesn’t take into account the connection between mental health and other health conditions. These connections are so frequent, diverse and varied that the authors conclude “there can be no health without mental health.”³ It is critical, therefore, that mental health be integrated into all efforts to create healthy communities.

Our mental health is affected by many factors, including environment, genetics, socio-economic status and relationships. Social conditions such as income insecurity, housing insta-

bility, breakdowns in family relationships, income disparities, homelessness and housing instability, racism, sexism and homophobia all negatively impact mental health. These conditions, along with the social stigma of mental illness, often compound the difficulties associated with accessing necessary services and supports.

In addition to appropriate diagnostic and treatment services, a wide range of community services are required. Supports for income, housing, employment, social activities and recreation are crucial to ensure that individuals living with mental illness have an acceptable quality of life. To ensure that these services are in place for all of those who need them governments, professionals and community organizations must work together to develop and implement policies, legislation and programs.

There have been many wonderful community programs and initiatives developed in response to the high levels of unmet needs of those living with mental illnesses, some of which are highlighted in this issue. Programs have been created to provide community care, educate the public and involve communities, families and consumers in treatment and support programs; many of which involve a variety of sectors, such as health, education, social services, faith programs and employment services, and many have developed inter-organizational partnerships that contribute significantly to their success. Remember, “There can be no health without mental health.”

¹ World Health Organization. www.who.int/mental_health/en/ (accessed April 24, 2008)

² Canadian Mental Health Association. Mental health: citizens for mental health background www.cmha.ca/citizens/mental_illnessENG.pdf (accessed April 24, 2008)

³ Prince M, Patel V, Saxena S, et al. No health without mental health. *Lancet* 2007

Healthy Communities is the newsletter of the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition.

Contributors

Lorna Heidenheim
Joyce Brown
Jadie McDonnell
Erin Margetts

Editor

Jadie McDonnell

Design and Layout

MediaDoc Inc.

Translation

Traductions MJP

Printing

Captain Printworks

Readers are encouraged to submit articles, newsbriefs, comments and suggestions.

Please contact us at:

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
2 Carlton Street, Suite 1810
Toronto, ON M5B 1J3

telephone (416) 408-4841

toll free 1-800-766-3418

fax (416) 408-4843

email ohcc@ohcc-ccso.ca

Visit our web site at:

www.ohcc-ccso.ca

OHCC would like to thank our funders:

Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion
Public Health Agency of Canada
Ontario Trillium Foundation

The material contained herein reflects solely the views of the contributors and is not officially endorsed by OHCC or our funders.

Mental Health, Diversity and Equity

A Report of the January 16, 2008 Learning Exchange

One in five people in Ontario will experience mental illness at some point in their lives. But statistics such as this do not reveal the complex ways in which poverty; violence, racism, homophobia, sexism and other factors complicate each individual's experience of mental illness. They also do nothing to address the limitations of the kinds of healing that are available and accessible to persons living with a mental illness.

In January 2008, the Ontario Inclusion Learning Network (OILN) coordinated a Learning Exchange which brought together 45 community workers, citizens, students and community activists to share ideas and discuss issues relating to *Diversity and Mental Health*. The following questions were addressed in this session:

How do changing definitions of mental health serve to include or exclude specific communities?

How are mental health institutions grappling with the challenges of diversity and inclusion?

How are particular communities working to challenge discomfort and taboos around mental health concerns?

What do therapists, psychiatrists, and other providers of mental health care need to learn in order to provide inclusive care to diverse populations?

Three panelists were invited to represent three different aspects of the Mental Health system; large institutions, community based organizations and individual therapists. The panel speakers were:

- Kwasi Kafele, Corporate Director of Diversity at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH);
- Martha Ocampo, co-director of the community advocacy organi-

zation Across Boundaries; and

- Farzana Doctor, an independent therapist, educator and writer.

While all three panelists spoke from their specific positioning, it was illuminating to see how their own lived histories of activism and on-going community engagement informed their analyses of the challenges involved in making mental health care truly inclusive.

Although CAMH has instituted a Diversity office and is actively implementing its Diversity policy, Kwasi Kafele suggested that such measures only speak to one aspect of the issue. "Why is it", he asked, and "that most schizophrenia wards include so many black men?" Kafele emphasized the historic and systemic ways in which the diagnosis and labeling of mental illness has operated as a mode of social control. Kafele also pointed out that unlike most developed nations; Canada does not have a National Mental Health Strategy or Policy which would integrate mental health within a larger framework that includes related issues such as poverty, immigration, homelessness, racism and violence.

Kafele urged all institutions to make knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion central to their daily practices, so that tenure, promotions and other rewards to staff members would depend on their genuine commitment towards increasing the accessibility and relevance of health care to all communities.

Martha Ocampo is the founder and co-director of the innovative community-based mental health organization *Across Boundaries*, which provides services to and advocates on behalf of marginalized and racialized communities. Rooted in principles

of anti-oppression and anti-racism, *Across Boundaries* has developed innovative and creative ways to reach out to communities that have traditionally been marginalized by mainstream mental health services. *Across Boundaries* uses alternative holistic therapies, such as ayurveda and acupuncture, as well as performance and visual art, to heal the body, mind and spirit.

Ocampo stated that while many organizations claim to want to improve their diversity and inclusion practices, they fail to go about it in ways that truly respond to the specific needs of such communities. She stressed the importance of organizations performing regular needs assessments.

Across Boundaries has set up satellite offices in non-traditional spaces, such as community centres and the Jane-Finch Mall, to ensure that marginalized communities have direct access to their services and programs. *Across Boundaries* also hires outreach workers from the community in which they work and are therefore cognizant of the local issues and concerns.

Based on her work with *Across Boundaries*, Martha Ocampo suggested that partnerships are a vital way for mainstream organizations to connect with marginalized communities, but she warned that such partnerships need to be built with sensitivity and care so that the less powerful or privileged partner is not 'gobbled up' by the other. Ocampo also stressed that advertising events and programs in multi-lingual community media is another key factor in reaching out to communities that may not normally have access to information on mental health.

continued on page 5



A Different Kind of Business (cont'd)

continued from page 1

environment where other people know the person has been labeled as “mentally ill”. This can also contribute to an uncomfortable and disempowering work-setting.

In contrast businesses managed and staffed by consumer/survivors offer a very different work environment, one that is developed and managed with peers. People who have ownership have self-respect. As one employee says: “It makes you stronger and more confident; the group creates a synergy. People are willing to take risks and feel proud.”

Work is critical to the staff, many of whom are in receipt of social assistance. Work can be a catalyst for

Quick Facts About Mental Illness

One in five Canadians will develop a mental illness at some time in their lives

Mood disorders affect an estimated 10% of Canadians

Anxiety disorders affect approximately 12% of Canadians

Stress and mental health-related problems represent 40-50% of the short-term disability claims among employees of some of Canada’s largest companies

In 1998, the total value of lost work time in Canada due to depression was \$2.16 billion. The total economic burden of mental disorders was \$14.4 billion.

Source

Public Health Agency of Canada,
Canadian Health Network, May 1, 2007

change. Employees have said that working gives them a reason to get up and out in the morning—it gives them a renewed sense of responsibility sense of accomplishment, a sense of self-respect and of identity.



Other Alternatives

In addition to the Spoon, OCAB also operates **Out of This World Café**, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). To the best of our knowledge, Out of This World Café is the only consumer/survivor business operating out of a psychiatric setting in Canada and possibly the only one in North America. With an annual business income of over \$220,000, it has changed the relations between hospital staff and patients—challenging traditional perceptions of what people with mental health issues can achieve.

OCAB’s third business, **Parkdale Green Thumb Enterprises** provides street-scaping services (installing and maintaining plants in street-side planters and in hanging baskets) to Business Improvement Associations, and interior plant maintenance services to a variety of customers. The next time you visit the Direct Energy Centre (the large building on the Toronto Exhibition grounds) take time to notice the Green Thumb plants.

Last but not least, **Voices from the Street**, the latest initiative of OCAB, provides speakers for colleges and universities, community groups, and conferences. Members of Voices,

all of whom have personal experience with poverty, homelessness and or mental health issues, have been trained in public speaking and they are paid for this work. They provide public education on issues of mental health, poverty, and homelessness—issues that are all too familiar to the employees of Alternative Businesses. In addition to educating the public, they seek to impact public policy. Mike Creek, the Coordinator of Voices, is now a board member of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). Dawnmarie Harriott, another member of Voices is a member of the Women Abuse Council of Toronto.

Whether working at a catering company, a café, a horticulture company or providing public education, work in the Alternative Business sector is central in changing people’s lives and changing society’s views of those who are traditionally marginalized by mental health issues, poverty and abuse.

* Although the Spoon is now focusing exclusively on catering, it will be opening a café area in May of 2008, offering wireless internet service and a variety of baked good, sandwiches and specialty coffees. Please drop by 761 Queen West.

For further information please contact:

Joyce Brown

*Executive Director, OCAB
ragingspoon@bellnet.ca*

The Raging Spoon

www.ragingspoon.com.

Green Thumb

greenthumb@on.aibn.com.

Out of this World

outofthisworldcafe@hotmail.com.

Stand Up For Mental Health

Looking to spice up your AGM or next meeting? Consider asking the Toronto “Stand up for Mental Health” Troupe to perform. This is a group of 15 dynamic individuals who use stand up comedy to cope with the symptoms and issues of mental illness.



Created in Vancouver, by comic David Granirer, author of *The Happy Neurotic: How Fear and Angst Can Lead to Happiness and Success*, Stand up for Mental Health assists individuals with mood disorders “empower themselves by taking their stress and trauma and turning it into a comedy routine.”

This project of the Mood Disorders Associations of Ontario is lead

by Michael Cole, a support group worker and “humour coach.” Cole offers a 4 month, 3 day a week program to fifteen participants with significant mood disorders. Participants are taught to write, perform, structure and edit a comedy with the use of a Stand up Comedy Clinic workbook and CDs. Upon completion of the program, graduates have the opportunity to try out their material in a Showcase performance for friends, family, invited guests and the general public. The graduates are then offered to join the Stand Up for Mental Health comedy troupe and invited to perform at events across the GTA.

Stand Up for Mental Health is not intended to replace therapy. Its goal is to empower individuals living with depression and anxiety disorders and encourage them to speak openly about their struggles. One participant claimed that Stand Up for Mental Health has helped him emerge in “a very good, healthy, safe way, in a peer group that’s non-competitive and encouraging” (Network

Spring Summer 2007).

The program also aspires to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness in a fun and informative way. Cole claims that the program shows “the general public what people with mental difficulties are capable of, and thereby help[s] reduce the ever-present stigma” One participant stated “I wish that the whole general public could see this because there is a myth that someone who has a mental illness looks a certain way. With the diversity in this room alone, and to see us capable of doing this and being genuinely funny, it would be a great way to break down a lot of prejudice.” (Network Spring Summer 2007)

To learn more about Stand Up for Mental Health please visit their website www.standupformentalhealth.com.

To book the Stand Up for Mental Health group for your next event please contact Michael Cole at (416) 285-7125 or email michaeldavidecole@sympatico.ca

Mental Health, Diversity and Equity (cont'd) *A Report of the January 16, 2008 Learning Exchange*

continued from page 3

Farzana Doctor is known for her work as a trainer on LGBTTIQ issues in therapy and provided a quick overview of the histories of stigma and taboo around sexuality that continue to be embedded in therapeutic terminology.

Doctor suggested that the dominant model in therapy continues to be that of the “clinician as expert” which positions the client as “damaged” and in need of “treatment”. She asserted that such models of care create false dichotomies of behaviour which are then marked as “normal” or “abnor-

mal”. Thus distress or grief, which may be perfectly normal responses to oppressive social structures, are seen to be “abnormal” and the person who suffers this is often misinterpreted and pathologized by a mental health care system that does not draw connections between social structures and their impacts on individuals and communities.

Following the panel presentation, participants shared their experiences and raised additional issues that they had encountered. Many of the questions asked focused on ways of integrating what they had learned in the

session into their own work. This Learning Exchange highlighted some important issues relating to diversity and mental health services and stimulated discussion on ways to be more understanding and inclusive, at a personal, professional and institutional level.

OILN is a network of provincial organizations which promote inclusion and share information about programs, tools and resources relating to inclusion. For more information about OILN and its activities please view their website at www.oiln.ca.

Recommended Resources: Mental Health

International

World Health Organization – Mental Health:
http://www.who.int/mental_health/en/

The Lancet Global Mental Health Series:
All the review papers and commentaries included in can be accessed without payment at the following weblink. http://www.thelancet.com/online/focus/mental_health/collection

Canada

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
CMHA has a range of resources dealing with many aspects of mental health and mental illness, most of which can be viewed online. The Mental Health Pamphlet Series includes more than 30 pamphlets with vital information on mental health and mental illness. Some pamphlets are available in Farsi/Dari, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Serbo-Croatian, Tamil and Urdu. http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=4-42

CAMH Mental Health Promotion Tool Kit
http://www.cmha.ca/mh_toolkit/intro/index.htm

The Canadian Psychological Association
<http://www.cpa.ca/home/>

Health Canada – Mental Health, Mental Illness
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/mental_e.html

Mental Health Commission of Canada
<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1807>

The Mental Health Promotion Unit, Public Health Agency of Canada.
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/mhp-psm/index-eng.php>

Mood Disorders of Canada- Quick Facts about Mental Illness
<http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/QuickFacts/>

National Network for Mental Health
<http://www.nnmh.ca/>

Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health
<http://www.takingcultureseriouslycura.ca/>

Ontario

Children's Mental Health Ontario
<http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/>

Community Mental Health Evaluation Initiative
<http://www.ontario.cmha.ca/cmhei/>

MENTAL HEALTH : 2000 and Beyond : Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health System.
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/mental/mentalreform.html>

Toronto

Across Boundaries
<http://www.acrossboundaries.ca/>

Hong Fook Mental Health Association
<http://www.hongfook.ca/>

Navigating Mental Health Services in Toronto- A Guide for Newcomer Communities.
<http://www.crct.org/lanresources/PDFs/CRCT-NMHS-English.pdf>

University Health Network. Community Mental Health Program
http://www.uhn.ca/Clinics_&_Services/clinics/community_mental_health.asp

NEWS BRIEFS

Vital Signs: Measuring The Vitality of Communities Across Canada

Vital Signs is an annual community report that measures the vitality of 11 communities across Canada : Saint John, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Waterloo Region, Sudbury, Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Vancouver, and Victoria. The project identifies significant trends within these

11 communities and assigns grades in at least ten areas necessary to quality of life. In October 2007, Vital Signs released an Annual Report which provides national data on each indicator, as well as detailed local reports on each specific community.

For more information on Vital Signs, to view the 2007 Annual Report and the local reports please visit www.vitalsignscanada.ca

Beautiful Minds

Who Are They?

Beautiful Minds is a leading organization in the provision of education programs focusing on positive mental health promotion and the reduction of stigma. They work with schools, social agencies and community partners to develop, promote and deliver education programs which increase knowledge and promote positive attitudes towards mental health.

Programs

The Beautiful Minds program, currently being offered in Secondary Schools, is an awareness program adapted from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health program "Talking About Mental Illness" and is proven to be effective in bringing about positive change in people's knowledge of mental health, and in reducing stigma that surrounds mental health issues. The program consists of a four component teacher package which includes full lesson plans to support the mental health curriculum in secondary schools. The third component of the program is a presentation in the classroom, where fully trained volunteer speakers share their personal experience of living with mental illness. In each presentation, students, teachers and school support staff receive additional resources including the Beautiful Minds Student Handbook.

Parents are encouraged to attend presentations or information events. A Parent Handbook has been designed to compliment the Student Handbook and to foster family communication around mental health.

This program has been highly successful, reaching over 2200 students through 100 presentations at 24 schools in the 2006-2007 school year alone. Evaluation is done through pre and post-testing and has shown a significant ($<.01$ for most questions) change in knowledge and attitudes of students.

The program has received excellent feedback from both students and teachers. One student reinforced the importance of discussing mental health in an open environment "the presenters were so comfortable talking about their personal experience, teaches you way more than any hand-out." Another student says "that the speakers were for real. They told us about how that just having a mental illness doesn't make you different from anyone else."

Currently, Beautiful Minds is offered in Secondary Schools in Waterloo Region and Wellington County. However, they are open to collaboration with organizations and groups in other areas who are wishing to deliver the program or enhance their existing programs.

Beautiful Minds is also the lead organization for the Consumer Survivor Initiative Network for Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network, providing networking and workshop opportunities to community members experiencing mental health issues.

They are always open to additional opportunities and collaboration and have been involved in a number of other activities, events and presentations that encourage positive mental health promotion.

Future Initiatives

They are currently in the process of creating Beautiful Minds in Senior Elementary Schools as well as Beautiful Minds in the Workplace. All of the programs are designed to deliver the message of positive mental health promotion and the reduction of stigma.

For more information, please visit the Beautiful Minds website at www.beautifulminds.ca.



Our Newest Members

OHCC welcomes the following new members who have joined since the last Issue of Healthy Communities

Jill Ryan
Petoskey

Christa Costas-Bradstreet
Burlington

Mike Fogarty
March of Dimes Canada

Bhavna Sivanand
Region of Peel Health Services
- Chronic Disease and Injury
Prevention
Brampton

Annie O'Donoghue
Guelph Civic League
Guelph

Madelyn Law
Brock University
St. Catharines

Penny Nelligan
Huron County Health Unit
Clinton

Erika Steibelt
Toronto

Shari Brown
Timiskaming Health Unit
New Liskeard

Lois Dewey
Leeds, Grenville and Lanark
District Health Unit
Smiths Falls

Julia Dearing-Vollett
Etobicoke

Terrie Meehan
Ottawa

Julie Vaillancourt
Sudbury

Christabel Bremner
Cobalt, Coleman, Latchford and
Area Food Bank
Cobalt

Myriam Beaulne
CPCHE
Kingston

Hinda Goldberg
Lanark

Sadiyya Ibrahim
Flemingdon Health Centre
Toronto

Natalie Curl
Scarborough

Alexis Kane Speer
Centre for Urban Health
Initiatives (CUHI)
Toronto

Clark Bernat
Niagara Historical Society &
Museum
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Neluka Leanage
University of Waterloo
Toronto

Cherrie James
Scarborough

Denika Andrews
Hastings & Prince Edward
Counties Health Unit
Belleville

Abdibasis Abdimalik
Wabi Shabelle Development
Association
Ethiopia

Steve De Quintal

Nannette Gropp
Calgary Health Region
Calgary

Holly Gillis
Public Health, capital Health

Building Equitable Partnerships Symposium 2008

November 5, 6 & 7, 2008 | Toronto, Canada

Reducing Health Disparities through Collaborative Action between Diverse Communities, Mental Health & Addictions Service Providers and Policy Makers.

- Why do we need equitable partnerships?
- What elements and strategies are required to address the challenges of building equitable partnerships?

To receive a Call for Presenters package and/or Registration information, please contact: Mary_Quartarone@camh.net

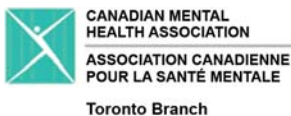
Symposium Themes:

- How do we initiate, build and sustain equitable partnerships?

Call for Presenters

Submission Deadline - June 6, 2008

Sponsored by the BEP Project Partners:



"Equitable partnerships are those that are formed on the basis of equity and respect."