



Attention members: This is your official notice of the annual general meeting of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society



NSSS Annual General Meeting

Featuring a conversation with **Lenore Rowntree and Andrew Boden**, editors of *Hidden Lives: Coming Out on Mental Illness*

Join us:
Wednesday, March 27, 2013, 7:30 p.m.
Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium

Hidden Lives: Getting Personal About Serious Mental Illness

Story-telling is empowering. Sharing stories can lend encouragement to those facing the trauma of serious mental illness. Stories also add a much-needed human face to advocacy issues when working to change the system.

For this year's annual general meeting, NSSS presents a conversation with Lenore Rowntree and Andrew Boden, editors of *Hidden Lives: Coming Out on Mental Illness*, a collection of 26 personal essays covering schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and personality disorders, as well as autism, a developmental disorder.

Each essay is written either by a family member of someone with a brain-based illness or by someone with an illness. The writers are painfully honest as they bring their private stories to the surface. They share feelings of confusion and hope, uncertainty and belonging, isolation and acceptance.

During a visit to the Family Support Centre in early January, Rowntree explained that she and Boden want to help clear the air when it comes to the harsh reality of brain-based illnesses. "We want to take what is a regular life for millions of people with an illness, or for those with have a close relative with an illness," she said, "and make it seem as regular as possible for those who don't."

Lenore and Andrew each have a sibling with schizophrenia. They understand how serious mental illness can forever change a family. On March 27, they'll share their own stories, and how and why they worked with the writers who are part of *Hidden Lives*. They'll also sign a limited number of copies of the book, available for purchase.

A review of *Hidden Lives*, by NSSS board member Janet Blue, can be found in the [January 2013 issue](#) of *The Notepad*, on our website (click on "[Newsletter](#)" for more issues).

In order to vote at the AGM, membership dues must be paid by March 20, 2013.

Letter from the President



I was reminded by the Volunteer Party the other week just how much of a volunteer organization we are and what a great organization we belong to because of that fact.

We don't, as it happens, have enough volunteers. There are all kinds of gaps. We're badly in need of help all the time for certain functions, including a volunteer coordinator of volunteers! Circle of Strength, our fundraising luncheon, needs table hosts. We're always on the lookout for family members to make first-person presentations to the community. The Fundraising Team is short two or three people. The Sea to Sky is short-handed. And so on. I'm resisting temptation to draw up an entire list. If you are interested in helping out, then, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Having said all that, I'm still impressed by how much of a contribution our volunteers make. We're lucky to be able to have some staff, whose role is also critical. Volunteers, though, are at the heart of our organization.

Our core programs are delivered by family-member volunteers. This nucleus of programs includes the support group, one-on-one peer family counselling and crisis support, and Family-to-Family. It's done this way as a matter of principle: that such peer work be done by volunteer family members, who best understand and have the experience – who, in a profound way, are peers of those coming to us for support.

For Family-to-Family, we need not only teachers but also teacher instructors, and we have a couple of those available, too.

Our Partnership Presentations in the schools are done by volunteers – a family member and someone with an illness. Other presentations use both volunteers and staff. Advocacy is also done by volunteers and staff working together.

Volunteers handle a lot of the nitty-gritty: putting up posters, folding materials, stuffing envelopes, distributing leaflets to a wide range of locations (most importantly, doctors' offices), helping out at our lecture events....you name it.

The event that involves the greatest number of volunteers, albeit only for one day, is – you guessed it – the Christmas Banquet. They constitute quite a crew: gift purchasers, gift wrappers, drivers, set up and take down, servers, master and mistress of ceremonies. Even Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus show up for that one.

Then there's our Circle of Strength luncheon fundraiser, which begins with the Fundraising Team, but doesn't end there. Those who set up, table hosts, the master of ceremonies, other speakers, a greeter, and most of the people at the sign-in desk are volunteers, as are the people who produce the program's video for us...and those whom they interview!

Let's not forget, either, our parade appearances and Walk The World for Schizophrenia, the latter in particular involving a large crowd.

Nor should we forget some other, more specialized tasks, like technical computer help. And there's the board of directors, their many meetings, and all the responsibilities they handle.

Well, I'll stop there.

We all pitch in not because volunteering brings us together and can be a lot of fun, although that's part of it. We do so because we are committed to helping those with a severe mental illness. The satisfaction of being part of that is more than enough compensation for our time.

Thank you again, volunteers, for your commitment and all the work you do.

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; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Soroptimist International of North & West Vancouver; North Shore & Squamish Rotary Clubs; Lynn Valley Legion; Canada Post Foundation for Mental Illness and Mental Health; West Vancouver Community Foundation; Community Foundation of Whistler; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Seymour Golf & Country Club; North Shore Credit Union; and our many other generous donors.

Notes from the Family Support Centre and Sea to Sky

NSSS contributes to WVPD training program

NSSS, in late January, put together panels for a West Vancouver Police Department training program to help officers deal with crisis situations involving those with a mental illness. The four panels, covering four different shifts, included Cheryl Zipper, Tricia Millman, Karen Kallweit, Ross Graham, Susan James, and Marguerite Hardin, speaking of the family experience, and Sarah Fox, Philip Wright, Erin O'Byrne, and Sean Stewart representing those with an illness. Panel sessions lasted for an hour as part of a 10-hour training program that all officers will have to take in order to remain on patrol.

The same training program, on crisis intervention and de-escalation, has been mandated by the provincial government for all police forces in the province, following recommendations made by the Braidwood Inquiry into the death of Robert Dziekanski. He was tasered five times by RCMP officers and died on the scene at YVR in 2007.

The facilitators for the WVPD sessions were Constables Chris Lincoln and Jamie Bartlett. Chris reported that the one thing the officers talked about most after the training was the panels and how much help they were in understanding the mentally ill in crisis. As it happened, in the weeks immediately following the training, a series of incidents involving mental illness called for police intervention, which gave the officers a chance to put what they had learned into practice and better handle such situations.

Another two WVPD training sessions are scheduled for April for officers who weren't able to make the January sessions.

Family-to-Family on the North Shore and in the Sea to Sky

The Family-to-Family 2013 spring classes continue on the North Shore and in Squamish for the Sea to Sky. Halina Haboosheh and Connie Chung are the North Shore co-teachers. Laurice Martin and Marion Anderson, the latter from Whistler, are handling the Squamish classes. Connie and Laurice participated in the recent three-day teacher training course held at the Centre in January. Wherever possible, novice teachers are paired with experienced teachers the first time they facilitate the course – not that it's necessary but it makes teaching the course the first time much easier.

Vancouver Family Advisory Committee visits the Centre

Representatives of the Vancouver Family Advisory Committee met with members of the NSSS board early this month to share notes and discuss matters of common concern. Board members Herschel Hardin and Halina Haboosheh, and support coordinator Marguerite Hardin, hosted the visitors. Committee head Pat Parker, Gloria Baker (family advocate for Vancouver community mental health), Penny Ford, and Tammy Lohnes (BCSS Vancouver/Richmond family support coordinator) attended from Van-

cover. A topic of special interest was the need for extra training for service providers on family involvement and information sharing.

Fairmont Waterfront Hotel employees open their hearts... and their pockets

The Fairmont Waterfront Hotel employees, with their annual Valentine's Day charity bake sale, raised a grand total \$755.67 in support of the Family Support Centre and its programs. Candygrams (boxes of candy delivered with a message) and greeting cards were also sold at the event. Special thanks to Amanda O'Brien, assistant director, human resources, at the hotel and a Family-to-Family graduate, who put forward NSSS as the beneficiary.

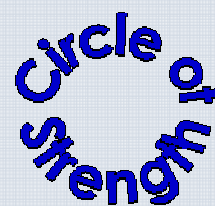
NSSS celebrates its many volunteers

NSSS congratulated its volunteers for their dedication and hard work on Friday, February 22, at the Family Support Centre. All those who've donated their time over the past few years were invited to drop in between 5:30–8 p.m., for food, drink, and conversation.

NSSS President Herschel Hardin gave a short speech, thanking everyone for continuing to make a difference in the lives of those affected by serious mental illness.

Guests enjoyed a variety of sweet and savory treats, some homemade and some generously donated by two Amble-side coffee shops, TrafiQ (1860 Marine Dr.) and Coffeebar (1695 Marine Dr.).

For more on volunteers, see the "Letter from the President," on page 2.



"Blakes" to sponsor Circle of Strength

Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP ("Blakes"), one of Canada's top business law firms and named Canada's "law firm of the year" for 2012, is this year's event sponsor for Circle of Strength, NSSS's annual complimentary luncheon fundraiser to be held May 25 at the Hollyburn Country Club. Blakes has offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, New York, Chicago, London, Bahrain, Beijing, and associated offices in Al-Khobar and Shanghai.

For more on Circle of Strength, contact the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856 or cheryl@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

Family-focussed Care: A Pilot Project at St. Paul's Hospital



Can a small pilot project in a psychiatric ward at St. Paul's Hospital eventually change how all acute care nurses work with families of those with serious mental illness?

Peggy Simpson, a clinical nurse specialist and psychiatric consultation liaison at St. Paul's Hospital, is trying to do just that. As the lead in a family systems nursing research study at St. Paul's, Simpson explained how this project works and what comes next, at the last NSSS public education evening, on January 30.

In the past 20 years, Simpson has implemented similar family-focussed nursing programs in an acute care hospital and a psychiatric care facility, in Alberta and Hong Kong. Last year, at St. Paul's, she received the backing of hospital leadership and a grant to begin a new study. For the project, nurses were hired, in part, for their willingness to work more openly with families. They were then trained to identify and assess both patient and family needs and find a means for everyone – staff, patient, and family – to work together to assist in the ill person's recovery.

To do this, nurses first documented information from patients and family members by using techniques from family-systems nursing: listening, asking specific questions, and creating a collaborative care plan. Family was defined as "whomever the ill person says it is," with the understanding that nurses interview and collect collateral information from as many people in the ill person's life as possible. This is, of course, problematic when an ill person, in the grips of psychosis or delusional thinking, can push away caring family members who are primary caregivers, convinced they are imposters or out to harm them.

Simpson says, while the medical focus is and must be on diagnosis, family-systems nursing looks at a "different part of the story or illness experience." It builds on families' existing strengths and resources, based on the idea that all parts of care are interrelated. During the study, families gave feedback to the nurses by filling out questionnaires. This information provided them with the opportunity to discuss what was, and wasn't, working.

Overall, the project's results were positive, with the pilot project team receiving the highest score in B.C. in a province-wide patient satisfaction survey. St. Paul's is now looking at implementing the same model with other psychiatric teams and outpatient services. Beyond that, the project could eventually begin in other hospitals, in other communities. One major challenge lies in changing the existing culture surrounding psychiatric health care and convincing doctors and nurses to get on board.

If you'd like a copy of Simpson's PowerPoint presentation, or would like copies of, or links to, scientific research papers offering strong evidence that family involvement produces better outcomes for patients, please contact the Family Support Centre.

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

www.northshoreschizophrenia.org
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. Tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.