



North
Shore
Schizophrenia
Society

The Notepad

The NSSS Newsletter

PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENING

After Her Brain Broke: Helping My Daughter Regain Her Sanity

Speaker:

Susan Inman, Author

Date: Wednesday, April 28, 2010

**Location: Lions Gate Hospital
Auditorium
13th Street entrance**

Time: 7:30 p.m. . . . sharp

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. Monday to Friday, or by appointment.

Tel/Fax 604-926-0856; Sea to Sky 604-898-9372
www.northshoreschizophrenia.org
email: info@northshoreschizophrenia.org

The North Shore Schizophrenia Society is a
CRA Registered Charity: BN 89422 6935 RR0001

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Herschel Hardin makes his mark at the Family Support Centre. See Volunteer Spotlight, page 2.

Support Groups

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with members of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society. Support Group meetings are held each month at the Family Support Centre and in Squamish, for family members and close friends of those afflicted with any serious mental illness.

Please call 604-926-0856 for more information, upcoming dates, or to register.

Volunteer Spotlight



Herschel Hardin wears many hats at NSSS. He is our president, the editor of the NSSS Advocacy Bulletin, and a contributing writer for The Notepad, the NSSS website, and several of

our brochures. Herschel also teaches the Family-to-Family course (10 times and counting), co-chairs our fundraising team, makes presentations to members of the public, and is actively involved in both support and advocacy cases. He was instrumental in the creation of our database.

Maybe his favour volunteer role was playing Santa Claus at our Christmas banquet, which he did for several years.

He tells us that it's easy to volunteer for NSSS because the practical benefits, to those coming to the Centre for help, are so apparent. "That's as great an incentive for volunteering as you could want," he says.

Many thanks, Herschel, for your contribution.

**I would like to help the
NORTH SHORE
SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY
205 - 1865 Marine Drive
West Vancouver, BC V7V 1J7**

- with a donation to help keep the Family Support Centre operating
 Cheque enclosed
- I prefer to donate by monthly direct deposit
\$20__ \$30__ \$50__ Other __
- by making a contribution to the NSSS endowment fund, a gift that goes on forever
- by making a bequest to the North Shore Schizophrenia Society in my will;

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel: _____

Email: _____

15 years and counting

The Family Support Centre marked its 15th anniversary April 1, the date the Family Support Centre opened its doors, back in 1995. Who would have thought we would get this far?

"It seemed a great adventure then," Marguerite Hardin, co-founder of the Centre recalls. "It was all new to us. I remember the trials and tribulations we went through just deciding what furniture to buy. But soon we were up and running and we haven't looked back.

"We were determined to provide a 'home of our own' for family members, where they could feel safe and could share their experiences with others who knew what they were going through. Our organization was founded on the principle of peer support – families helping families. Our commitment to that idea and practice, seeing how powerful it can be and how effective it is in helping families and their loved ones, has sustained us all this time."

And what a ride it's been! Even the loss of the grant for the Centre's entire operating budget in 2002 was overcome, by painstakingly rebuilding our financing from other sources, including members' donations.

From the Centre's humble beginnings in 1995, we now have three work stations, networked computers, a custom-built database, a website, online donation capacity and a credit-card facility for donations, a new colour laser photocopier/printer, and many other accoutrements of an adequately equipped office. And let's not forget even simple things like email. In 1995, few people had email. The Centre's acquiring it was considered by the NSSS Board at the time a bold step forward on the technological frontier, routine as email might seem now.

All this has allowed us to step up our programs, reach more people and provide our volunteers with the support and back-up they need which, of course, is the point of it all. The volunteers have been wonderful, and more are involved now than ever, as we continue to grow and extend our reach.

Think of the Centre and you think of all the people who have taken Family-to-Family there over the years or participated in the support group, all those who have been helped by support coordinator Marguerite Hardin, a generation of North Shore young people who have benefited by our Partnership Presentations, and all the other programs and services we now provide.

We're looking forward to the next five years and to our 25th anniversary after that.

Court case, immigration hearing prompt NSSS involvement

When the going gets tough, the NSSS gets going, fighting for family members and their mentally ill relatives in whatever situation they find themselves. It's the credo of our crisis support and of the work of support coordinator Marguerite Hardin - work that often happens behind the scenes but is no less crucial, and no less intense and stressful, for all that.

Two recent cases illustrate the point – one involving a criminal trial and another an immigration hearing.

In the criminal trial, a young man, Stephen, who had recently moved to Vancouver, was charged with attempted murder after assaulting his landlady and declaring his intention to kill her. His parents, who live in Vernon, contacted Marguerite for help.

They were sure, knowing their son, that the attack must have been driven by an acute episode of mental illness, it was so out of character with the good, kind young man when he was well. Their son had had a few problems with anxiety and depression since his late teens, but this incident was over the top.

The facts of the case – what actually happened - were never in dispute. At issue was whether Stephen could be found “not criminally responsible because of a mental disorder” (NCRMD), an outcome which the Crown aggressively opposed, insisting he was a “malingerer”, that is, he was faking mental illness to avoid punishment for his actions.

Marguerite, as well as providing the parents with moral support, confirmed their view of the situation after learning more details and helped them find a forensic psychiatrist to provide an expert opinion about their son's pattern of behaviour. This testimony was crucial, and refuted that of several Crown experts. Marguerite also attended much of the trial herself, reporting back to the parents in Vernon when they couldn't make it to the court house in Vancouver.

The trial was excruciating, in no small part because Crown counsel kept asking the same questions over and over in different ways, prolonging the proceedings in a drawn-out, obstinate attempt to make the awkward facts fit the prosecution theory.

In the end, common sense and the defence's expert witness prevailed. The judge came down with a finding of NCRMD.

In the immigration case, Michael, a young man with schizophrenia, originally from the Philippines, was faced with deportation because he several times found himself

on the wrong side of the law. Two of his offences, although relatively minor in themselves, carried a possible maximum sentence of ten years, triggering an admissibility hearing which resulted in a deportation order.

Expulsion to the Philippines would have been disastrous for Michael. Most of his family, critical for the personal support he needs, are here in Vancouver, where he also has access to a mental health team, with medication and other help.

Marguerite took on the case. She was regularly on the phone with Michael, or meeting him in person, over several months, to help him re-establish stability in his life, stay on his medication, avoid bad company, and show up for his appointments. She was in touch with his mental health team in Vancouver and arranged with the doctor to write a letter outlining Michael's illness and the importance of family support for someone with schizophrenia.

At the same time, she contacted the young man's mother and sister, explaining the situation and procedure to them and ensuring they provided letters of support. She found an experienced lawyer who took the case on a legal aid basis, filling her in on mental illness and making sure the letters from the family arrived on time. She wrote a letter of support herself for the initial dispute resolution hearing. Finally, she appeared as a witness, as did Michael's mother and sister, when the matter went to a full formal appeal hearing.

Michael was given a four-year stay of the deportation order, allowing him to remain in Canada with his family and giving him the chance to show he could behave responsibly.

Two major cases involving a considerable amount of time and work. Two positive outcomes. For NSSS, there never was any question of not going ahead.

Support is what we 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, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Soroptimist International of North and West Vancouver; West Vancouver Community Foundation; Lynn Valley Legion; North Shore Credit Union, and our many other generous donors.

Help us raise awareness of serious mental illness

Spring is here and that means we will soon be marching in parades and walking along the West Vancouver waterfront. It's never too early to volunteer for these summer events. Call us at 604-926-0856 and don't forget to give us your t-shirt size!

This year, the **West Vancouver Community Day Parade** is on Saturday, June 5, starting at 10 a.m. Join us for a celebration of community spirit and volunteer involvement on a (hopefully) pleasant late spring morning.

Our 19th annual **Walk the World for Schizophrenia** will be Sunday, June 27, also starting at 10 a.m. After opening ceremonies at John Lawson Park, with the West Vancouver Adult Pops Band enhancing the festive atmosphere, participants walk to Dundarave Pier and back on the West Vancouver Memorial Seawalk, wearing NSSS t-shirts, carrying signs and giving out information as they go. Don't miss NSSS's very own awareness event!

And, of course, we can't forget about the country's birthday. As always, the **North Shore Canada Day Parade** is on July 1, which falls on a Thursday this year. We hope you can join us there!



After Her Brain Broke: Helping My Daughter Regain Her Sanity

Author Susan Inman will discuss her new book, *After Her Brain Broke: Helping My Daughter Recover Her Sanity* at our next public education evening on Wednesday, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Lions Gate Hospital.



Susan Inman

The book is a journey through Susan's experience with her daughter's mental illness, the good along with the bad. As Senator Michael Kirby writes in his introduction, "Susan's heart-wrenching account is an important reminder of the work we still have to do to ensure that people with mental illness and their families get the same treatment and respect that individuals with physical illnesses receive. It is also testimony to the devotion and dedication of families, which sadly often comes at the expense of their own well-being."

Copies of *After Her Brain Broke* will be available for sale at the event. The talk will begin promptly at 7:30, so please come a few minutes early if you would like to purchase a copy. Susan will be available to sign books afterward.

North Shore Schizophrenia Society Annual General Meeting

The 2010 Annual General Meeting will be held Wednesday, May 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Lions Gate Hospital. A report on the year's activities will be followed by an election of new directors and a social. NB: Only members in good standing (dues paid by May 19) will be able to vote.

2010 Family Conference

The 5th Annual Family Conference, Working Together for Mental Health, will be on Saturday, May 1 in the Paetzold Theatre at VGH from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Workshops include financial and legal planning, leisure opportunities, and emergency resources. Our own Herschel Hardin will be a participant on the Family Panel.

This year's keynote speaker is psychiatrist and Director of UBC's Schizophrenia Program, Dr. Bill MacEwan, who will be speaking about improving communications between psychiatrists and families.

To register, call Vicki Rogers at the Mood Disorders Association at 604-873-0103 or email familyconference2010@gmail.com. Admission is \$35 for individuals, \$50 for families, and \$10 for low income.