



North
Shore
Schizophrenia
Society

The Notepad

The NSSS Newsletter

PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENING

Homelessness and Mental Illness

Speaker:

Dr. Michelle Patterson

Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2011

**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

*Your generosity is appreciated.
Receipts will be issued for income tax purposes.*

Inside

Volunteer Spotlight	2
February Lecture	2
Event Publicity	2
Centre's Work	3
Christmas Party	4
November Lecture	4



Marti Sevier (centre) shows her NSSS pride at the Community Day Parade. 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



Marti Sevier

Marti Sevier has played many roles at NSSS over the years. She served three consecutive terms as a board member (the maximum allowed under our by-laws), taught the Family-to-Family education course several

times, and co-facilitates our monthly North Shore family support group.

Marti is also a vigilant editor - she is an English teacher by trade - and has helped write and rewrite many key documents, including some large grant applications.

She is also involved with our public events, marching in parades, and participating in Walk the World for Schizophrenia. A lesser-known role that Marti has played several times is that of Santa's elf, helping distribute gifts at our annual Christmas party.

Thanks, Marti, for everything you do for the Family Support Centre and NSSS.

**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, please send me the form.
- 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; please contact me

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel: _____

Homelessness and Mental Illness



Michelle Patterson

“Homelessness and mental illness are not just issues of housing and health,” says Dr. Michelle Patterson, “They involve a complex set of factors related to social justice, identity, and community.”

Dr. Patterson is our featured speaker at the next NSSS Public Education Evening on Wednesday, February 23 at

7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Lions Gate Hospital.

Michelle is a scientist and adjunct professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University. Her research interests focus on the intersection of housing, mental illness and substance abuse.

The presentation will cover estimating the size and scope of the population and the cycle many people with mental illness go through: from the criminal justice system, shelters and hospitals to living on the street.

Michelle is the Research Coordinator for the Vancouver At Home/Chez Soi research demonstration project, sponsored by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The project will examine which services and systems best serve people coping with mental illness and homelessness. Vancouver is one of five project sites across the country. The project here is focusing on those with concurrent disorders: substance abuse or addiction in addition to mental illness.

Volunteers Needed

Getting the word out about our programs and events is an important part of our community outreach. Volunteers are needed for a few of our poster distribution routes on the North Shore, including Ambleside and parts of Lonsdale. Posters are distributed eight or nine times a year. Our thanks to the loyal volunteers who have delivered posters to these locations for many years.

A Support Centre's Work is Never Done

You'll all know the adage, "A woman's work is never done." It could apply just as well to the Family Support Centre, where the work continues day in and day out with never an end, because of the need.

Whether it's teaching Family-to-Family on the North Shore or in Squamish – or doing the outreach to let people know about the course - or facilitating NSSS's support groups, or advocating for more responsive mental health services, the Centre keeps its programs going with purpose and energy. Lecture series, Partnership Presentations in the schools, awareness events, updating the website (and, yes, posting tweets, in this day and age), para-legal support, preparing the extensive Family-to-Family materials, training FtoF teachers, NSSS social events, *The Notepad* and the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin*, bringing programs on stream in the Sea to Sky – all of this happens because of the commitment of both volunteers and the Centre's small staff and because of the financial generosity of members and other donors.

And don't forget the Fundraising Team, which organizes our Circle of Strength major fundraiser and does other fundraising work, to help provide the wherewithal to deliver our many programs.

There are also, as always, surprises – unanticipated turns of events or challenges in which, willy-nilly, we end up becoming involved. This January we showed up in federal Tax Court, definitely a first for us. An NSSS member, Hedy Theed, appealed a re-assessment by the Canadian Revenue Agency denying her the caregivers allowance. Hedy acted as her own counsel at the court hearing.

President Herschel Hardin appeared as an expert witness, to describe what caregiving of someone who is seriously mentally ill entails.

When it was all over, Hedy had won her case. [See the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin* for more details.]

Meanwhile, the November edition of the *Bulletin*, a feature issue on the sharing of information with family members had an unexpectedly widespread impact, generating comment in health authority circles and receiving reprinting requests from as far away as San Francisco.

The *Bulletin* is distributed widely across Canada

and also has several readers in the U.S. and the U.K. The feedback on this issue alone justified our decision to launch the *Bulletin* back in the fall of 2008. It's only two pages long and comes out only five times a year, but its cogency and insight make it invaluable.

Our general advocacy work has also broken new ground, with often detailed submissions on troubling cases, and the meetings, emails, sometimes news releases and media appearances, and other follow-through that result.

Last month, January, we received a coroner's report on the death of Ben Williams – a report undertaken in response to our submission on the case. We also received word that the education program on involuntary admission, for Vancouver Coastal Health mental health services, is finally to get underway this spring. The health authority's launching of the program grew out of our submission and other work in the Marek Kwapiszewski case.

Both the Ben Williams and Marek Kwapiszewski cases have been covered in issues of the *Bulletin*. For details, check out the *Bulletin's* page at www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/bulletin.htm.

We also participated in a meeting with mental health officials on the North Shore on a series of tragic cases that should not have turned out the way they did, and are looking forward to steps being taken so that history doesn't repeat itself.

Maybe the most important thing we do is active outreach – using our know-how and contacts to help get someone badly in need of treatment into hospital. This crucial work, of course, continues as well, often on behalf of family members from out of province, but whose ill relatives are in our catchment area.

Getting somebody who is severely ill the help they need is particularly satisfying, but you could say the same of most of our other work as well. The Family Support Centre keeps plugging away.

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; Community Foundation of Whistler, Squamish Community Foundation, Lynn Valley Legion; North Shore Credit Union, and our many other generous donors.

And to all a good night!

The NSSS Christmas Party is one of the highlights of the holiday season. This year's event was our largest yet, with 140 guests filling the room at St. David's United Church.

The evening began with boisterous and festive music from the West Vancouver Adult Pops Band, who once again generously donated their time and talents.



After a brief introduction from Masters of Ceremonies Herschel Hardin and Cheryl Olney, all assembled enjoyed a scrumptious roast beef dinner with all the trimmings.



Singer Emma Postl gave an outstanding performance of jazz standards and jazzy renditions of Christmas classics for our after dinner entertainment.



And the evening wouldn't be complete without a visit from Santa Claus. There were so many gifts for so many guests this year, Mrs. Claus had to make the trip from the North Pole to help him out!

Thanks to all the volunteers who set up, decorated, drove people to and from the event, served and cleaned up, and to Santa and Mrs. Claus for making time during their busiest season to bring cheer to all our guests!

Trials of a Forensic Psychiatrist

Our November public education evening at Lions Gate Hospital featured forensic psychiatrist Dr. Elisabeth Zoffmann, speaking about the forensic system and her experience in the field.

Dr. Zoffmann recounted a recent case in which she appeared as an expert witness. The defendant was being described as 'malingering' - faking symptoms to avoid prison. Crown counsel in the case seemed determined to send a very ill man to prison, despite clear evidence of his acute illness. Dr. Zoffmann was cross-examined for more than five days.



Fortunately, the judge ruled that the man was Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD) and he was sent for appropriate medical treatment at the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital.

The mentally ill are often at a significant disadvantage in court as the resources available to people receiving legal aid - the financial ability to call expert witnesses and mount a proper defence - are very limited compared to those available to Crown counsel. In the case Dr. Zoffmann recounted, the Crown had an almost unlimited budget and called five expert witnesses.

Dr. Zoffmann's work helps address the growing problem of the needless criminalization of the mentally ill. As beds continue to be reduced and people with serious mental illnesses continue to go without treatment, they are far too often ending up in jail instead of receiving the care they so desperately need.