

## Summer Fun?!

It's the beginning of August and as I look back on July and look forward to September (Ha!), I wonder how many other people both welcome and fear the summer holidays. This summer has not been a bad one for my family. Our daughter has been relatively stable and seems to be enjoying herself – meeting up with friends, spending time online with friends and hanging out.

It doesn't seem like long ago though when she was too young to stay on her own and summer was an extension of the school year – an endless string of calls from camps. Often these camps claimed to be able to deal with "special needs" children and had extra staff available to assist but too often, these claims were false and despite meetings where we explained our daughter's mental illness and the resulting symptoms (or as they called it, "behaviour"), they found themselves unable to deal with her and we were left scrambling for activities to occupy her time. I wouldn't say she was expelled from EVERY summer camp she attended, but I will tell you that one summer she attended summer camp at the company my husband and I ran at the time – and we had to expel her – she threw scissors at another child.

This summer I have spoken to many of my friends who are parents of children with mental health issues – it's been an up and down summer for most people I think. There have been some definite highs (in a good way), but also some terrible lows. It seems our kids (and by extension, us) don't get many breaks.

Recently, I found myself flipping the calendar to August and as I did, I realized that it was about a month until school starts again. My pulse started to race and I found myself breathing more quickly as I began to anticipate a new school year – with new teachers and new students in new classrooms, a new bus company and .....

Then I stopped and reminded myself that there would be plenty of time to worry – in September.

So, fellow parents, I invite you to sit with me and relax. Right now, I invite you to breathe deeply and think about one fun thing you did with your child this summer. Imagine your daughter or your son's smiling face as they rode the ferris wheel, or as they enjoyed ice cream on the beach, or laughed as water splashed on them in the wake of a boat, or sat quietly collecting shells or looking at an interesting bug.

Take a deep breath and savour that moment – that one moment when your child was one with universe and you caught them and saw them – leave tomorrow for tomorrow and enjoy the rest of your summer!

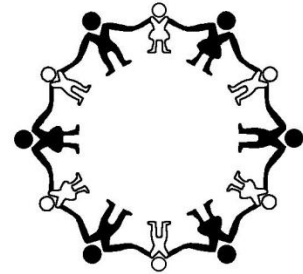
## Moody Mom

## PCMH Needs Your Help!

We are looking for your help in understanding a variety of issues/concerns. Please help us by telling us:

1. What would you consider family engagement at a committee level?
2. What are your barriers to participating at committee tables?

Email ideas to [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca)



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## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

CIAJ Seminar - **Mental Health and the Justice System: Barriers and Solutions** - September 26, 2011 - Toronto, Ontario – to register, visit the [web site](#).

**Understanding Bipolar Disorder**  
Stephen Fry is a British comedian who often Tweets about mental illness (he has bipolar disorder). The following is a link to a [recent report](#).

Don't forget, **World Suicide Prevention Day**, Saturday, September 10, 2011. For more information, visit this [web site](#). The Mental Health & Suicide Awareness Committee of Brant, in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Brant County Branch have activities planned, for more information call 519-752-2998, ext. 112 or e-mail [lill@cmhabrant.on.ca](mailto:lill@cmhabrant.on.ca)

## PCMH launched our Pledge for Child and Youth Mental Health!

Last month, PCMH announced that it had launched its Pledge for Child and Youth Mental Health. As we move closer to the election, please remember this important initiative and keep our children top of mind for our elected (and soon-to-be-elected) officials!

In consultation with many of you, and families across the Province, PCMH has developed the Pledge for Child and Youth Mental Health, which outlines what we require to meaningfully transform mental health services in a manner that will truly benefit us and our children. The upcoming election on October 6 is our chance to raise our voices, to increase public awareness and build political support for comprehensive reform of mental health services for children, youth and their families.

**You can support the PCMH campaign in the following ways:**

1. **Take a moment to pledge your support by clicking the Take the Pledge button!** By signing the Pledge, you are adding your voice to thousands of others who are calling on government to promote family-centred child and youth mental health care in Ontario.
2. **Forward this message to all your networks.** Share it via Facebook, Twitter or email by clicking on the icons on this page. Ask others to sign the Pledge and support the campaign to show that *children's mental health is everybody's business*.
3. **Ask all your local candidates to sign the Pledge.** Visit each candidate or contact them by email, letter, or phone and ask them to sign the Pledge online. Urge every candidate to make a commitment to improve services and supports to families dealing with mental illness.
4. **Join the Pledge Campaign!** Contact us at [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) to request your campaign package, which will include Tools, Tips and Strategies on how to advocate and promote the Pledge. Working together we can make a difference for our kids!

**Thank you for your support!**

## Chapter News!

**Many Chapters take a break during the summer from regular activities but keep planning for the months ahead! In York Region, they are planning a speakers' series for this fall and have also received funding for a library – watch for more news!**

**Andrea Boulden sent the following information about special passes for Canada's Wonderland to help our kids enjoy the amusement park:** This summer my family discovered that Paramount Canada's Wonderland offers a boarding pass for the day to bypass the line ups for individuals who have special needs - which fortunately includes mental health issues! On the first visit they ask a lot of questions, related to why it is difficult for your child to wait

in a line up and what their diagnosis is. For us, when we explained his Tourette Syndrome, Bipolar Disorder and OCD and how aggressive he can get with other people it was easy to justify why it would be difficult for him to be at Wonderland in their long line ups!! They record how many people will be going on rides with him, as everyone in the group is allowed to bypass the line with him. The way it works is that we walk through the exit line up and show an attendant our boarding pass, they either let us on right away if the line isn't long or, they write a time on the pass (usually within 30 minutes) when we should come back. This allows us to do other things ie. go the washroom, play game or have a snack. When we arrive back at our time, they put us right on and even offer us our pick of which seats we want!

## Mental Health and Addictions Strategy: Update

### WHAT'S NEW?

The government announced in the 2011 Budget an investment in a comprehensive 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, starting with a three-year strategy focussed on children and youth.

### KEY FACTS

- The Minister of Health and Long-term Care established an advisory group in October 2008 to help develop the 10-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.
- In July 2009, the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) released Every Door is the Right Door, a draft consultation paper developed by the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions. Every Door sets out a framework for the proposed strategy, which was introduced at a Summit on Mental Health and Addictions.
- An all-party committee was formed by the Ontario Legislature in February 2009 to help develop ways to improve access to mental health and addictions services. The Select Committee engaged in consultations across the province.
- A final report was released in August 2010. The final report provided a series of recommendations that contributed to the development of the province's mental health and addictions strategy.

### FUNDING

The announced investment for the three-year Child and Youth Mental Health Strategy will grow to \$93 million per year by 2013-14.

### NEXT STEPS

The strategy will start with children and youth to:

- Focus on strengthening services for children and youth;
- Create a more integrated and responsive system;
- Build awareness and capacity within the education system to support students and families

There will be additional announcements over the next several months on initiatives to support these objectives.

## From Our Members

*Our members often send us inspiring messages, poetry, and their thoughts about what their family is going through – feel free to submit your own essays, poetry and thoughts by emailing [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) and let us know you want to be in the newsletter!*

### Book Ideas

We have all read amazing books that have helped us deal with parenting children with mental illness and understand mental illness. Herewith, a short list of recommendations from some of our members:

- The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold by Evelyn Waugh
- An Audience of Chairs by Joan Clark
- Addition by Toni Jordan
- She's Come Undone by Wally Lamb
- Beyond the Cuckoo's Nest: Mental Illness in Fiction by Beth Carswell
- The Bird's Nest by Shirley Jackson
- House Rules by Jodi Piccolt

- Intense Minds by Tracy Anglada
- Detour: My Bipolar Road Trip by Lizzie Simon
- Madness: A Bipolar Life by Marya Hornbacher
- The Bi-Polar Child by Demetri Papolos, M.D.
- A Promise of Hope By Autumn Stringam
- Mind Race by Patrick E. Jamieson
- Acquainted With the Night by Paul Raeburn
- Confessions of a Swinger by Karen Kennedy

For complete descriptions, visit your local bookstore or search online!

If you would like to recommend a book that helped you, or your child, please e-mail [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca). We'll be adding a special section to the web site soon!