



## Together Strong! April 15 & 16, 2011

This conference program is a powerful one, with many experts and new topics in direct response to past evaluations (ie: cyberbullying, The Impact on Siblings, School Programming). For full program details visit [www.together-strong.ca](http://www.together-strong.ca).

## Sponsorships for April Conference Available – Apply NOW!!!

With great thanks to Peel Children's Centre, a number of sponsorship opportunities have become available for families so that they may be able to attend our upcoming conference - Together Strong. For full program and conference details [www.together-strong.ca](http://www.together-strong.ca)

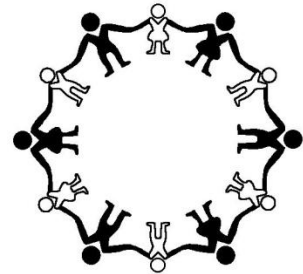
If you are interested in one of the sponsorship opportunities please forward the following to [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) : Name, Contact information, brief description of why you would like to attend, which conference package you are interested in, and what, if any, portions of the costs you are able to support on your own.

Full and partial sponsorships are available - partial sponsorships can be used to attend either the one day portion of the conference, or to subsidize attendance to the full conference. Thank you again to the generosity of Peel Children's Centre and to their belief in families and the work we are doing. You are true Champions PCC!!!

**Also, available on our website is a template letter that can be submitted to agencies, community partners, education system etc to request sponsorship for you to attend.** We have had a number of successes and families have been sponsored to attend this year's conference through support from community mental health agencies, school boards, community members, and even in one case, a local community business. Feel free to access the template letter online and personalize it. To access the online template requesting support visit [www.pcmh.ca](http://www.pcmh.ca) or email [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) for more assistance.

## PCMH Attends Queen's Park for Press Conference, Opposition Day Motion and Debate

March 9th was a day about children's mental health at Queen's Park, and Parents for Children's Mental Health was there ensuring the family voice was heard. The day began with a Press Conference held by Ms. Christine Elliott, Whitby MPP, putting forth a motion asking the legislature to pass a motion that plans for implementation of recommendations from the Select Committee's Report to be tabled within 60 days. Ms. Elliott was joined in the press conference with statements made by Gordon Floyd, Executive Director of Children's Mental Health Ontario, Sarah Cannon, Executive Director of Parents for Children's Mental Health; and fellow caucus member, Sylvia Jones. Following the Press Conference, the motion and debate was held in the house. In a historic event, **the issues of mental health and the current mental health system in Ontario were debated for approximately 3 hours.** Parents for Children's Mental Health was there to witness the debate, as well as their presence being recognized by a number of MPPs, including the Minister of Child and Youth Services. The motion was passed, and thus a plan regarding the system of mental health in Ontario is expected within 60 days from the government. To see full debate comments, and which MPPs chose to speak to the issue check back to the PCMH website when the Hansard transcripts of the day are available.



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Follow PCMH on Twitter:  
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## Upcoming Events and Help Needed

### Mental Health, Sensory Processing and *Challenging Behaviour*, Toronto, ON

Featuring Kim Barthel. For further information contact: Lisa Hamilton Ph: (416) 394-7491 or e-mail:

[lisa.hamilton@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:lisa.hamilton@tdsb.on.ca).

### Mental Health: Awareness to Action A Solution Focused Approach for Children and Youth in our Community

Featuring Dr. Jean Clinton. [Click here](#) for more information.

### Heroes in the Home Caregiver Recognition Awards 2011

The Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) wants to celebrate, empower, connect and say thank you to the special individuals who give so much of themselves to help others in need in our communities. Whether it is through warm smiles, gentle hands, or shared laughter, caregivers make it possible for countless individuals to live in their own homes with dignity. For more information, visit the [web site](#).

## A Message from the ED: Sarah Cannon

### Engagement - what does it mean, how can we use it to benefit our children and youth?

Over the last month I have found myself discussing "engagement" at a variety of tables and this has led to some thinking on my part about the benefit of engagement for our families and how that impacts our organization and movement.

To be engaged means to be in gear, to be prepared to commit to something and hence all the actions and requirements that will follow. Sounds tiring though right? I have to be honest, the day I write this excerpt falls in a week where I find myself asking those very questions, and truly wondering if I even desire to be "in gear" anymore, feeling like the gas tank is dry and even if the desire to be in gear remains, the fuel for it is nonexistent.

As families of children and youth with mental illness we find ourselves "engaged" in so much; staying engaged with our children and youth; staying engaged with their school; staying engaged with others in similar situations; staying engaged in learning what is being done at system levels to improve things - when do we get to "engage" in an obligation and promise to self?

Here is a suggestion: **what if we re-align our position and thinking?** What if we start to truly believe what we have been saying for decades – that we are the experts, therefore, we are in demand, and we have a precious commodity. As families we need to commit to a belief in that commodity. We need to **pledge to believe in our expertise, and the value of that expertise**. Once we take that pledge, we eliminate a whole element of time constraint and restrictions that tend to drain our fuel tanks and prevent us from either being, or feeling engaged.

Surrounding yourself with, and aligning yourself with people who hold the same pledge, and are engaged in the same commitment - refills your fuel tank - at no cost! Imagine, Free Gas. We are each other's most precious commodity, and while we say that Together we will make a difference, we have to BELIEVE that TOGETHER we WILL make a difference. That is our pledge. **That TOGETHER we are stronger, TOGETHER we provide each other fuel and energy, TOGETHER we hold the power, and TOGETHER we will eliminate the negative forces that to date have drained and prevented the full success of our movement.**

A couple of things I have been doing to re-affirm my pledge and keep me grounded, while continuing to build awareness, and yes - not having to commit one second of extra

time:

- When I get calls from people asking me support a charity or organization, I say, *"Sorry my full commitment is to ensuring better care for child and youth mental health as this is the most critical illness at this time."*
- When I go through a check-out line that asks me to add a dollar or whatever I say the same thing. Sometimes it has generated a conversation and I have had an opportunity to educate and perhaps recruit someone to help pass on our message.

What I am asking of you - our membership - is to **re-affirm your pledge and commitment to the importance of the family voice**, a belief in the power of our expertise, and the recognition that indeed we are stronger TOGETHER. **Nothing is more powerful than a parent fighting for their child's life - so imagine the power of thousands of parents fighting for the same thing.**

## Upcoming Events and Help Needed

### Sharing Inspiration

#### *Perspectives on Autism*

Featuring Dr. Temple Grandin, the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world. March 16, 2011 at the Stratford Rotary Complex, 353 McCarthy Rd. E-mail [autismhuronperth@gmail.com](mailto:autismhuronperth@gmail.com) for more information.

### Eat at Wendy's in St. Thomas March 15, 2011 and Help Raise up to \$1,000 for Children's Mental Health

Join us at the Wendy's (1063 Talbot St. In St. Thomas) and help raise funds for PCMH. For more information, e-mail [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca).

### Call for ARTISTS: London, ON

The seventh annual Framing the Phoenix Art Show will take place in downtown London at The Arts from May 3 to 14, 2011. For more information, please contact: Beth Muia at 519-455-5110, x. 47323 or Marla Banning at 519-858-5158, x. 20083.

### DVD about Bipolar Kids

Order 24: A Day in the Life of Bipolar Children and Their Families from Janice Papolos Co-author *The Bipolar Child* <http://bipolarchild.com/24/index.html>

### Superhero: A Visual Poem – related to the experience of mental illness

Visit this [web site](#) to see it.

There will hopefully be many ways you can contribute in the upcoming months to promoting the power of our voice and our expertise. **We are at a tipping point, the election looms, and it is time that our Province heard loud and clear that we no longer are begging, asking nicely, or hoping for better for our children, we are demanding it, and we are demanding it together, with the power of numbers, and we will have a renewed strength that will not be defeated because we have recognized and pledged to honour the expertise we possess.**

## PCMH continues to grow and improve and we want to hear from you

Almost two years ago, PCMH launched a new and improved web site. In Internet years that is about 1,000 years ago right? We have heard informally from many about how we could improve our website to better serve our membership, some of the barriers our members feel they encounter, and some of the information they would like to see posted. PCMH has been successful in receiving funding to make some of these changes, and we are eager to further improve our website so that we can continue to expand the support networks for our membership. We want to hear from you! A very brief survey will soon be available online asking how we can further improve and update our website so that it best suits your needs and your activities. Please take the time to lend your voice to these improvements so that we can continue to grow, develop relationships with communities, and support all the work that as families you do each and every day. With your input, we will achieve ultimate success and provide parents with the best online resource and support system. Contact [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) any time!

**Also, check out Sarah's [ED Blog](#) and respond to other issues developing in Children's mental Health.**

## Resources for Teachers

Sometimes schools and teachers struggle to understand the challenges faced by our children. The following is a page of links and resources for teachers that may be helpful. The link is on the CMHO website - so it is vetted.



[http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/professionals/mh\\_for\\_teachers\\_classrooms.php](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/professionals/mh_for_teachers_classrooms.php)

## Mental Health Commission of Canada

The goal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the strategy development process is to translate the vision and goals in *Toward Recovery and Well-Being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy in Canada*, launched in November 2009, into priorities for action.

The new approach is to develop an overarching action plan organized around eight strategic directions. The first five concentrate on key immediate dimensions of transforming the mental health system, while the remaining three focus on key enablers of transformation and on creating the infrastructure that is needed in order to produce detailed, sector-specific, recommendations. We invite you to review the description of these strategic directions on our webpage.

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/Strategy.aspx>

As always, your ideas and comments are very welcome and helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [mhs@mentalhealthcommison.ca](mailto:mhs@mentalhealthcommison.ca)

## Online Magazine Fundraiser for PCMH

Help us raise funds for PCMH by renewing or subscribing to magazines RIGHT NOW – they also make GREAT gifts! The online fundraising store has more than 650 of the most popular magazine titles at up to **85% off** newsstand prices. Purchase or renew your favourite magazine subscriptions and **37% of your purchase will go directly to Parents for Children's Mental Health**. For more information [click here](#).

## SSLI Consultation in Niagara Area

If your child has or may have a mental health problem or an addiction problem, you are invited to join others in sharing your experiences and your impressions of mental health supports for children and youth, including education and community health services. We are interested in your insights into effective ways to inform, serve and involve parents like you in the delivery of child and youth mental health services. The Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI) community engagement sub-committee - a community partnership chaired by Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) - is organizing a consultation for parents to share their stories, connect with others facing similar challenges, and find out more about how to get the services they need. This consultation is an opportunity for parents to be heard, to add their experience and their voice to influence positive change in child and youth mental health services in Ontario.

**Your Kids, Your Voice** parent consultation will be held in **St. Catharines on Saturday, March 26, from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** There is no charge to participate and lunch will be provided. Free child care and transportation support is available. You can register online until March 19 [here](#) or by calling Armand at 1-866-537-6199, Ext 62.

## 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!*

### Inspiration from Other Parents

As the mother of a daughter with bi-polar disorder, I know all too well the devastating effects raising a child with mental illness can have on a family. In 2008, I attended a round table discussion facilitated by Sarah Cannon, the newly appointed executive director of Parents for Children's Mental Health.

This chance meeting forever changed my life and in reality that of my entire family. What had, to that point, been a lonely and painful journey became an opportunity to effect change for other families across the province. To be witness to the growth of PCMH under Sarah's leadership has been nothing short of amazing! PCMH has grown to be an organization of provincial and even international recognition thanks to Sarah's tireless efforts. Sarah has been able to engage parents in a realm where we often suffer from our own self stigmas. She has given many parents, including myself, the gift of empowerment and the confidence to collectively raise our voices to make Ontario a better place for all children.

I have been blessed to see Sarah present to numerous audiences and have a heartfelt appreciation for her poise and dignity when sharing what have been some of the most painful experiences in her life. Sarah lost her husband to suicide and works with extreme passion to ensure her own daughter and all other children whose lives have been touched by mental illness do not meet the same fate.

When I think of what Sarah means to me and to many other families in Ontario two words come to mind. HERO and CHAMPION. A hero who is truly the wind beneath my wings.

Sarah is a valiant fighter and a woman that fights for a cause. I know that I am not alone in believing that she deserves to be recognized for her efforts to bring mental illness out of the shadows forever!

Gaby Wass

### **A nobody is someone who sits alone at lunch**

by Emily Cannon

A somebody is someone who sits with their friends and gossips.

A nobody works alone and ask no questions.

A somebody works with people and asks loads of questions.

A nobody goes to the mall by herself.

A somebody goes to the mall with their friends and buys clothes.

But when a somebody and a nobody bump into each other the somebody ask if the nobody wants to hang out with them.

The nobody nods and becomes a somebody.

So a nobody is a somebody. So don't let people sit alone at lunch let them sit with you.