

## Season's Greetings!

This has been a very productive year for Parents for Children's Mental Health. We have worked diligently at building a strong foundation for our organization. We have established new activities which have expanded our role as advocates, educators and agents for change throughout the province. We believe the organization has a bright future because of this strong foundation. The walls of our organization are strong and well-supported because of the dedication of so many of our members.



Thanks to all our dedicated members, committed Board members, and the help from our partners, government funding and private donors, PCMH has begun to build our dream of strengthening the voice for all families and their children who live with mental illness. We look forward to continuing to support our families in the New Year and wish you all the best over the holiday season.

Warm regards,  
Sylvia Naumovski, President, PCMH

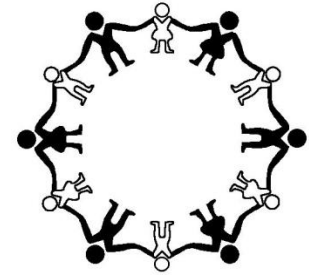
## Chapter Leader Retreat

PCMH hosted its first (hopefully regular) Chapter Leader Retreat in London in November. It gave us a chance to get together and discuss the many initiatives and priorities PCMH needs to commit to in representing families in Ontario who are currently struggling with raising children and youth with mental illness. Thank you to all the leaders who participated and brought with them such rich and thoughtful input as we move forward in our growth at PCMH.

One of the main topics of conversation was our "political platform" as we enter this important election year. As most of you are aware, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions recently released its final report, containing 23 recommendations for moving mental health and addiction services forward in Ontario. Our group of leaders worked extremely hard discussing the recommendations and determining the five priorities that are most pertinent to families with children and youth. We determined that all of the recommendations are important, but we also recognize that we need to realize that the likelihood of all recommendations moving forward simultaneously is not going to happen, and likely the Government will begin to act on a limited number as their first priorities. It is up to us, as a group, to ensure that the priorities the Government sets are in line with our priorities, as well as continue to have input from those directly affected in implementation planning.

We have taken the rich comments of the weekend and are currently working with our Communication Consultant - David Kraft, of StratComm Communications, and will soon be producing and distributing our "platform." It was agreed at our leader retreat that this will be key in moving our agenda forward. We must present a unified and consistent voice, with all of us presenting the same position. Once completed, the communication draft will be sent to all of our membership and we encourage all of you, when given the opportunity, to participate in motivating positive change for our children and youth with mental illnesses. So stay tuned, more to come in the New Year.....

Also at the Retreat, we revealed some of the products that we now have available for sale, and for use by our chapters as we travel and represent PCMH across the province. Banners, lawn signs, posters and information cards are now available for use by members.



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## Information and Help Needed

### Friend us on Facebook

Help PCMH reach their goal of 1,000 friends on Facebook! Look for us under PCMH Provincial and join today!

### Joint Conference Sponsorship Packages

Sponsorship Packages for the Upcoming Joint Conference are ready to go. If you would like a package, please e-mail [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) or, if you have companies or ideas that you think appropriate, please let Sarah know and she will send them directly to those potential sponsors.

Thank you everyone for all your hard work in helping to promote the conference.

### Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO) is gathering information on the educational experiences of students with learning disabilities and other special education needs in the Ontario publicly funded school system. We are asking for your participation as parents in sharing your perspective, so that we can advocate more effectively for appropriate services for students with learning disabilities and other special education needs. [Click here](#) for more information.

Contact [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) if you would like further information about the display products we have available and how they can be of use to you and your area. Available for sale are T-shirts, mouse pads, note books, keychains, ball caps, and pens/notepads/post-it notes. Soon we hope to have them available on our website for sale, but if you would like more information about these products and pricing, please contact us information.

## Centre Stage

After an initial six year contract with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, the Provincial Centre of Excellence has been granted a new six year contract, however, their contract underwent some significant changes. As Dr. Ian Manion, Executive Director for the Centre of Excellence states, "initially we were trying to be everything to everyone, this is no longer possible". The new contract is much more focused and concentrates on services primarily to MCYS funded agencies. The Centre of Excellence realizes the importance and much-needed assurances that children and youth mental health services continue to be formed with integrated and collaborated approaches.

One of the initial changes due to the new contract was a new group of representatives who would act as members of an Advisory Committee to the Centre. In the past the Centre had Advisory Committees made up of many groups; consumers, youth, and advocates; service providers from across sectors; researchers; and a governance committee. The new Advisory Committee combines this expertise into one Advisory Committee and consists of representatives from across geographic regions, sectors, and brings together parents, youth, service providers, both front line and management to help inform and help to lead the Centre in its new contract. A call for nominations was sent out provincially, and from these the Advisory Committee was formed. There are three parent representatives on the Committee, all members of Parents for Children's Mental Health, and hopefully all will continue to represent the global issues of parents at this table. You are encouraged to learn about the Centre and the work they do, and when given opportunity to contribute to the surveys, questions, etc. that will likely follow in the coming months and years. The Centre is a Ministry Funded "project" and thus has the "ear of the Ministry". It is another avenue where we can have our voices heard and our input valued.

### About the Centre

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO, along with other leaders, is working towards an integrated system that truly meets the mental health care needs of children, youth and their parents and caregivers.

The Centre:

- Facilitates and engages in partnerships, networks and collaboration.
- Funds new research and new research partnerships through a comprehensive grants and awards program.
- Provides consulting services to encourage more organizations to conduct research and to support their use of research to improve services.
- Builds, synthesizes and mobilizes credible child and youth mental health evidence.
- Generates opportunities for knowledge exchange to promote evidence-informed practice and community mobilization.
- Supports the critical role of youth engagement through partnerships, project funding, youth specific grants and awards and youth representation on its advisory committees.

Learn more at [www.onthepoint.ca](http://www.onthepoint.ca)

### Advisory Committee for The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child Youth Mental Health

Thank you Wendi for your summary of the meeting for our membership, and your continued support and representation of families across the Province. Together, We WILL make a difference.

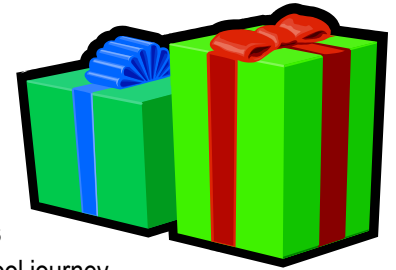
December 9, 2010

The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Committee for The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child Youth Mental Health took place in Ottawa on December 2nd, and 3rd. 25 representatives from the child and youth mental health sector including parents and youth learned about the Centre's refined mandate and strategies to "improve outcomes for children and youth." The key goal of "advancing the uptake of evidence-informed practices..." remains unchanged in the Centre's new 6 year contract with Ontario's Ministry of Child and Youth Services. In 2009, the Centre invested upwards of 2.5 million dollars in grants but Executive Director, Dr. Ian Manion insists grant giving days are over. Future funds will be limited and specific to advancing the system wide uptake of evidence-informed practice within community-based agencies. The Centre's 2010-2016 accountability framework and strategic directions currently under review by the MCYS will be made available in January 2011. The Advisory Committee's next meeting will take place in Ottawa in February 2011.

Wendi Waters  
Parent with H.O.P.E.  
VANIER Children's Services  
London, Ontario

## Holiday Gift Ideas

This year, consider giving the gift of a donation to Parents for Children's Mental Health in the name of someone. It is an excellent way to not only promote awareness of the importance of children's mental health, but also to support our organization in its continued growth. Have a teacher, school, principal, social worker etc. that you would like to recognize, but have no idea what to get them - make a donation in their name to PCMH and we will send them a card recognizing the donation and a charitable tax receipt should the donation be in the amount of \$20 or more. You can add a personal message if you like, perhaps a teacher is a champion for your child, or a principal has made outstanding contributions to your child's school journey, recognize them, honour their contribution, and also support our organization and participate in raising awareness about children's mental health and Parents for Children's Mental Health. You can donate by clicking on the "Donate Now" button on our home page - [www.pcmh.ca](http://www.pcmh.ca), or email us at [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca) to discuss your donation and make a contribution.



## Sharing Messages of Hope

This week marks the anniversary of what I've been referring to on my blog as the Incident! (The day that my downward spiral ended and hit the bottom of the pit). It was both the worst and best night of my life. Reflecting upon this past year, I look at how much I've changed and how far I've come. The first thing that comes to mind is that I am genuinely astonished and, frankly, impressed with myself. *Toot toot toot.* (That's the sound of my own horn being tooted). The second is a question...

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*November 30 was the anniversary of the day Amy Van Es attempted suicide. She has bipolar disorder and is 100% happy now, but that was a rough time in her life. She plans to do something to increase awareness about mental health in the community and commemorate her triumph. Stay tuned for more information! Included here is her blog post from December 3, 2010*

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### Do we need to experience suffering in order to know happiness?

Contrast is of great importance for some matters. Without dark, we would not have light. Without being aware of cold, we would not know hot. We have no frame of reference to classify something unless there is something that it is not. It's a sore thought for me to wrap my head around that suffering is a mandatory part of life. Perhaps it's because I have done just that and am not entirely sure it was necessary. Or perhaps it's because I believe that the natural state is one of happiness.

## Information and Help Needed (continued)

### Ontario Human Rights Commission

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) launched a survey to learn more about the human rights issues and barriers people with mental health and addiction disabilities face. The survey kicks off a broader consultation process on human rights and mental health-related issues.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect personal accounts of lived experiences, rather than the collective knowledge or expertise of organizations, advocates and researchers.

The OHRC will use these stories to identify key issues for policy development and for future OHRC projects involving human rights and mental health.

The survey can be found online at: [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

If you have any questions, contact us at [consultations@ohrc.on.ca](mailto:consultations@ohrc.on.ca).

### CanadaPost

Canada Post is asking Canadians to submit and vote on the design for the 2011 Mental Health Stamp. Canadians are invited to submit designs online to: [www.deliverhope.ca](http://www.deliverhope.ca). This is the first time in its 159 year history, Canada Post is asking Canadians to submit and vote on a design for a postage stamp.

## Request from the Student Support Leadership Initiative

We have been asked by SSLI (Student Support Leadership Initiative) to poll our parents on the following questions. Please take the time to answer and send [admin@pcmh.ca](mailto:admin@pcmh.ca).

1. What (if anything) have you found useful while your child/youth waited for service?
2. What would have been useful while you waited for service?
3. What was NOT useful while waiting for service?

## Announcements

Member Tina Blanchette sent news of the following announcements from the Ontario government regarding brain research and new guidelines for the Children's Activity Tax Credit. Thank you Tina! If you hear news about other programs like this, please let us know for consideration in future newsletters.

### McGuinty Government Supports Better Health Care, Life Science Jobs

A member shared news about a recent Government announcement regarding a \$15 million investment into a new Ontario Brain Institute (re: neurological disorders) which is being established in Ontario - with a research focus for healthcare discoveries to help those with brain/neurological disorders. This is a great initiative to better understand the brain, genetics, and perhaps medications or other breakthroughs that will better help our kids and improve the quality of their lives. Just as Cancer and AIDs has done, they've invested and continue to invest in research initiatives, and it's exciting to know that now 'neurological and brain' disorders are doing the same!

For more information about Supporting Brain Research [click here](#).

### NEW Children's Activity Tax Credit

Parents can receive a refundable tax credit of up to \$100 per child with a disability (which our children qualify for, regardless of income) when you show spending of up to \$500 on activities (both Sports AND now NON Sports) instead of only a Sports focus. There are links below the announcement which provide additional information (activities that qualify). Some of the new one's I've noted are: Tutoring services (yeah!!), music/voice lessons, extracurricular activities, language instructions, arts programs, drama, programs that help develop social skills, etc. Please pass this info onto your family/networks.

Learn more about the Children's Activity Tax Credit [here](#).

## Online Magazine Fundraiser for PCMH

Help us raise funds for PCMH by renewing or subscribing to magazines this Christmas – they also make GREAT gifts for anyone on your list! 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](#).

## Poetry from Our Members

So many people, write poetry to work through emotions, share ideas and say things that often can't be said out loud. In this regular feature, we hope to share with you poetry by our kids and poetry about our kids. Please feel free to submit your own poems, and those of your children, for consideration. Our thanks to those who have offered to share their thoughts and words with us.

*Leslie is the daughter of one of our Chapter Leaders, and she has given us the privilege of sharing some of her poetry with us. Thank you Leslie for trusting us and allowing us to share these beautiful works!*

### Truth Hurts

She sat,  
Razor blade to wrist,  
In that dark alley she called home.  
Pushed out, no love, psychotic they  
thought.  
A girl, not alone, but lonely,  
With that razor blade she cut,  
1 in 5 in her skin,  
Not alone she knew  
Just yet to find her 2 in 10.  
Blood trickling down her arm.  
Pain relieved from her world.  
Her arm now speaks the truth,  
That society has left unspoken.

*PCMH member, Andrea Boulden shared the following poems written by her mother, Margaret Marsan, about her grandson, Andrea's son, Liam.*

### The illusion

Oh savage beast,  
You did suddenly appear.  
Eyes blazing,  
Ready to devour me, your prey.  
I hear you roar,  
What magic must I perform,  
For you to go away?

Something stirs, inside of me,  
I calm it and let it be,  
As I try desperately,  
To put magic, in the words I say,  
As a pattern, weaves it's way,  
To close a curtain, on your rage.  
I watch, the curtain opens,

#### Magic

I have turned a page,  
The tiger he has gone,  
He changed, into a little boy,  
Another battle won.

I look into his tearful eyes and see,  
A mind struggling, longing to be free,  
From driving forces, deep inside,  
Helpless, fearful, he tries to hide.  
Yet, in his struggle, he is not alone,  
We search to find him,  
And bring him home.

### Fragile Wings

Today you are an angel  
yesterday's storm, seems far away,  
who knows what tomorrow may bring?  
We take it day by day.

We cherish these moments,  
when the sun comes shining through,  
bringing light into your eyes  
and all the love, from inside of you.

You are a special angel,  
needing lots of care,  
your wings are so fragile,  
your emotions, they lay bare.

We tread lightly as we teach you,  
giving out the tools you need,  
so that you can use them,  
on this path we lead.

The sky may turn dark tomorrow,  
we will hear the thunder roar,  
but today's all bright and sunny,  
it's today, we are living for.

