

Commit to Change for 2011

This New Year a very dear friend of mine suggested that we document our resolutions so that we can review them, remind ourselves what they were, and hopefully help stay on track. Of course, this friend is much more creative than me so we scrapbooked them!!! We ended up with booklets of magazine pictures cut out, inspirational sayings, and a lot of time and effort being put into documenting what we want to accomplish this year. Some might think that odd, and a complete waste of time, but, if you are committing the time, energy and effort into just documenting your hopes, should you not, at the very least, put that much time, energy and effort into achieving them? Plus, the reminder of what you hoped to accomplish is constantly there. I loved the idea, and I am so glad I did it. It did begin me thinking about how this could relate to or help our children and youth suffering from mental illness.

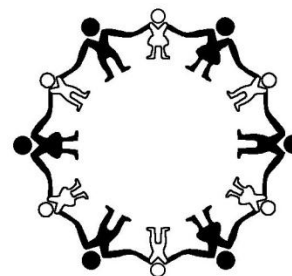
2011 will be a year of change -- an election year, another budget, and hopefully a commitment from our Government to finally address children's mental health. PCMH is going to demand our Government be accountable and seek to have this issue as an election topic. Leading up to this point, the Government has indicated that Children's Mental Health is indeed a priority (or at the very least becoming one). We have heard many discussions, seen many reports, and been promised (well....as much as politicians promise) change. **There seems to be a Commitment to Change**....in essence - their New Year's Resolution. They too documented their wishes (only not quite as craftily as my girlfriend and I did!) Their wishes have been documented in the Select Committee Report, the 10-year plan from the Ministry of Health, and many other reports as well. So far, we are all on the same track, right? We have wishes and things we want to accomplish, we have documented them, and now we do!

We (the public) are going to be the ones the Government is accountable to in ensuring their resolutions are met - so we (the public) should be accountable for ensuring our resolutions are met. **So I am proposing the....2011 Commit to Change Campaign - where we hold the Government accountable to change, and we ourselves accountable to change.**

How it will work:

- Anyone who wants to be part of our Campaign **will donate \$20 to Parents for Children's Mental Health** (indicate Change Campaign on donation);
- Everyone who donates will **choose a resolution** to stick to and be accountable for (lose weight, become more active, spend more time with family, etc.)
- Once registered you will receive information on how **to send in progress reports** and updates
- Regular **prizes** will be given out to those who are accomplishing much, and incentives may be needed as well;
- All our **progress and accomplishments will be shared in our newsletter**, so that others can follow and be inspired by us too;
- The **proceeds from the campaign will go directly into PCMH Advocacy** work ensuring that we are holding the Government accountable to achieving their resolution as well;
- In the end - **all of us who have committed to change have succeeded!**

If you would like more details about the campaign, please email admin@pcmh.ca - Subject Line - Commit to Change. Together, we can make a difference, and see to it that our children and youth with mental illness suffer no more! So.....what are you going to do with this challenge?
From Sarah Cannon's blog



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Information and Help Needed and Upcoming Events

Nominate a Champion of Mental Health!

The Champion of Mental Health Award honours those individuals and organizations in the London-Middlesex community who have made a significant contribution to mental health and the award is presented at the annual Breakfast of Champions. To nominate someone, visit the [web site](#).

Laura Rose – A Tribute to Karen Carpenter at St. Jacob's Country Playhouse Friday, February 18, 2011 at 8:00 p.m. For tickets call 519-747-7788

School Health Support Services

The following is an online survey to gather stakeholder input regarding Deloitte's 15 recommendations for School Health Support Services. [Click here](#) to take the survey. For more information about this project, visit the [web site](#).

Friend us on Facebook

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

Together Strong Sponsorship Packages

Sponsorship Packages for the conference are ready to go. If you would like a package, please e-mail admin@pcmh.ca or let Sarah know about companies that may be interested.

Together Strong Conference: April 15 and 16



Parents for Children's Mental Health and the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention are presenting a two-day joint conference and Gala April 15th, 2011 and April 16th, 2011.

Friday Conference will be held at the University of Western Ontario, Engineering Department with the Friday evening Gala and Saturday Conference taking place at the Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre, 551 Windermere Road. A shuttle will be provided on Friday from the Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre to the University of Western Ontario. Elizabeth Manley, often referred to as "Canada's Sweetheart" will be the keynote guest at the Friday Evening Gala. Elizabeth Manley speaks openly about her battles with depression and why she believes everyone needs to know about mental illness, and should start talking about it. Elizabeth's personal story and motivating message is bringing awareness to Mental Illness and shining a light on the illness as bright as the light she shines herself.

Often times the mental health system is fragmented and lacks integration and collaboration. Both Parents for Children's Mental Health and the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention recognize this and come together to bring participants a unique conference experience bringing audiences together to build partnerships, collaboration and working together to strengthen our system.

PCMH and OASP offer vital services and supports to those who are directly affected by mental illness and suicide. The funds generated from this conference will allow the costs of these services to be supplemented. For more information, visit our web site at <http://www.together-strong.ca/>

Our Sponsors

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Announcements

Pro Bono Law Ontario's *Child Advocacy Project* (CAP) is pleased to present a **new 13-minute web seminar** about our free school rights legal service.

CAP volunteer lawyers help Ontario students who face challenges to their legal rights at school, especially in the areas of **suspension/expulsion, special education, school safety** and **school enrollment**.

With this online seminar, service providers, parents, guardians, advocates and young people can learn about:

- How students can exercise their legal rights at school
- How to know when it's time for legal help
- How to access CAP's free school rights legal service

The seminar is found at www.childadvocacy.ca

Information and Help Needed and Upcoming Events

Bell – Let's Talk Day

This public awareness and anti-stigma campaign encourage us all to talk about mental health. **On February 9, Bell will donate five cents to mental health programs for every text message sent** and every long distance call made by Bell and Bell Aliant customers on that day. For more information visit Bell's [web site](#).

Teen Mental Health

A fabulous resource for Teen Mental Health can be found at TeenMentalHealth.org. They also put out a great newsletter that you can visit by [clicking here](#).

Survivors of Suicide Loss

Workshop featuring Dr. John R. Jordan. Saturday, March 26, 2011 at the Stoneridge Inn (corner of hwy 401 & #4 - 6675 Burtwistle Ln) in London, ON. For more information [click here](#).

Finding Your Way: A lecture series on the psychology of everyday life

Where: London Public Library Central Branch, 251 Dundas St. (Stevenson & Hunt Room A).

Cost: FREE! No registration required. Two hours free validated parking in Citi Plaza during library hours. For more information, about upcoming lectures, [click here](#).

Canada Post Receives Submission from PCMH Member!

Last month we told you that Canada Post was asking Canadians to submit and vote on the design for the 2011 Mental Health Stamp. Canadians were invited to submit designs online to: www.deliverhope.ca. This was the first time in its 159 year history, Canada Post asked Canadians to submit and vote on a design for a postage stamp.



PCMH member Darlene from Milton submitted her artwork called, "Mind at Peace" (pictured at left) and she describes it as follows: The flower signifies the beauty and brilliance that comes from the mind. We need to be aware that inside the beautiful mind lies trouble for some. If the mind isn't perfect it shouldn't be ignored. Everyone needs to accept that mental health issues are just as important as any other health concern. We need support from everyone in all communities to take away the stigma that you are not "crazy" if you have a mental health issue. We need to ensure that we as a society help each other and be kind to the mind.

The top five finalists will be revealed February 14 and judging will continue till March 14, 2011. **Please take the time to visit the site and [vote for Darlene!](#)**

Darlene also has an amazing blog about Raising Socially Anxious Children. Visit her by [clicking here](#).

CBC Radio and TVO Put Mental Health in the Spotlight

CBC Radio One's *The Current* featured a special program hosted by **Steven Page** (formerly of *The Barenaked Ladies* and presently solo Canadian pop musician) talking about his personal experience with mental illness. The show featured many guests including:

- A discussion about children's mental health with **Raychael Fisher**, from Samia;
- **Mark Vonnegut**, a pediatrician and son of the author Kurt Vonnegut; and
- 'Creativity and Mental Illness' including interviews with **Robert**

Munsch (children's author), **Mariette Hartley** (actor) and **Mike MacDonald** (stand up comic).

Listen to it by visiting: [The Current](#). A follow-up phone-in show also took place a week later.

The TV Ontario Show *The Agenda with Steve Paikin* featured a panel discussion around mental health reform in Ontario.

A new report on Ontario's mental health system has found that Ontario is failing the mentally ill. The province hopes to change that, and is moving ahead on an overhaul of the troubled system. Where should they begin? And will they meet with success? To view the program and see a list of panellists visit the [TVO web site](#).

Inspirational Messages

Crazy Daisy prunes stigmas

Sarah Moir's dream was to open a floral design company that raised awareness about mental health and created jobs and opportunities for psychiatric survivors like herself. With help from Mohawk College in Hamilton and a local commercialization company, the Mohawk graduate launched Crazy Daisy in 2008.

Three years later, business is booming and Crazy Daisy's success is drawing attention and acclaim. Moir was recently recognized with an Ontario Premier's Award for outstanding college graduates and a Mohawk College Alumni of Distinction Award.

"I started Crazy Daisy because I thought it was needed," she said in her acceptance speech at the Premier's Awards ceremony in Toronto. "Because I saw other companies set up like this around the world and the results for the people they are trying to serve. It changes lives."

Surprised by the recognition, Moir says she's more committed than ever to growing her company, which includes plans to go Canada-wide. Moir's love of working with flowers gave her the idea to launch a floral design business. But until she received treatment for a borderline personality disorder, she had trouble holding onto a job and staying in school. She became motivated to create a business that would support others in similar situations while addressing common misunderstandings about mental illness.

"Sarah shows what happens when you combine passion and vision with a college education and some help along the way," said Mohawk College president Rob MacIsaac. "We're proud of what Sarah has accomplished and we can't wait to see what the future holds for Crazy Daisy."

Originally published in *College Voice*, published by Colleges Ontario

What if he were your kid?

Following the tragic shootings in Arizona, Joshua Coleman asks some difficult questions and wonders, "What if he were your kid?"

After Arizona shooting arrest, parents might ask: "What if it were my child?" He spins out scenario of behavior, treatment, outcome for families of mentally ill child and he says for all the lousy parents in the world, good kids with good parents do bad things. When this happens, parents are tormented by: "How could I have let this happen." This piece was published on the CNN web site and sums up how many of us often feel ... [Check it out.](#)

Joshua Coleman is co-chairman of the Council on Contemporary Families and a psychologist specializing in parent-adult child relationships. His most recent book is "When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies When You and Your Grown Child Don't Get Along."

Information and Help Needed and Upcoming Events

Parents Partnering with Educators

These two half-day workshops on Saturday, February 26, 2011 in London, ON are designed for parents of special needs children entering school and in elementary school. Visit the [web site](#) for more details.

Youth, Parents and Siblings

Are invited to participate in a study being conducted at Wilfrid Laurier University exploring people's experiences of mental health issues. For more information, please email: Maria Liegghio, PhD Candidate (Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University) at lieg0067@mylaurier.ca or call (416) 220-0694

CMHA – Brant Events

A number of workshops are planned for the coming months including: Families Caring, Families Sharing; Bereavement Support Groups and more. Visit their [web site](#) for more information.

Coping with Crisis Workshop

This workshop takes place Saturday, March 5, 2011 at the Grand Valley Golf & Country Club in North Dumfries, ON. For information, call 519-766-4450, Ext. 224 or email

cshanel@cmhagrb.on.ca

Sharing Our Stories

Mental Illness came barging down my door...it didn't bother knocking. It feels more like a home invasion and my family is siding with the monster that just walked in. So, if I'm not actually working on growing my business, I'm dodging the attack. These days, the business is getting less attention. When I'm on line, I've not had the gumption to research more knowledge on the subject like, what organizations are available and what I can do. It's more survival mode -- seeking the basic facts about a certain medication or symptom.

Stephen Smith is a PCMH member from Fenelon Falls, ON. His son has a mental illness and here he shares his thoughts about what it's like for him, his son and the rest of his family. If you'd like to share your journey, please e-mail admin@pcmh.ca we'd love to share more members' stories.

Mental Illness is all around me...sometimes I wonder if I caused it...then I learned THAT in itself is a common trait in some caregivers...guilt. My older son has a virtually insurmountable challenge ahead of him if he is to fully recover. It's hard to maintain hope that he can especially when one considers his past three months.

My wife just entered treatment at CAMH and my little guy is coping despite all this. Of course, it takes loads of support and we've been lucky and loud enough to get it. I will not complain. But I sure as heck can't sit on my hands and watch everyone succumb without a fight. Maybe, to vocalize our experience can be the legacy of our collective suffering.

My wife figures I should talk about it. Some close to us wish we might talk less but....that's another problem!

In March 09, our story was published in the Globe and Mail. We've been to and been involved with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health, Centre Mental Health Penetanguishene, CAMH and we've got experience dealing with the Ontario Criminal Courts, CMHA, Chimo, Kerry's Place..etc.

In every place, we've seen within the individuals that work in this system, a level of care and compassion that's second to none but watched their efforts squandered by insufficient funding, politics and misrepresentation by the media. That is going to result with the unsuspecting public, that's about to be forced into engaging Mental Health Treatment industry, to find a very broken system...just like we did.

UNLESS -- we can take my family's story as an example, and try to make some good from a bad situation. I have no clue where to start, but talking about it just might be as good idea as any others I've come across.

Dialogue with those who "get it" is rare. I really appreciate you taking the time to engage. Some would describe our journey as so outrageous, it's too hard to believe so it's not difficult for our story to overwhelm those who inquire. To view what has happened to my family in a movie, I would expect most would find it difficult to suspend enough reality to accept the plot line.

We have been at this for six years. It started simply enough. We sought help for dealing with our "acting out teenager" by attending a parents' self-help group in Aurora called APSGO. They saved our marriage. The friends we made there are still helping us today, though our case outpaced their mandate the day we were told by a respected and educated person familiar with our family, that we consider beginning the process of mourning the loss of your son because his best days may already be behind him" How does one recover from that?

What we did, we're still doing. Some days show better results than others. I could talk your ear off about it all but I fear the message is too important to louse up with poor delivery. Should there be a means to get it aired out without losing the audience, there could be some potential to make a difference and possibly help bring about some good from a rotten story.

Others have suggested there is a quality to my writing....I don't know about that but I can attest there is a passion behind what I'm writing about. Eight years ago, I was coaching my son in hockey and living the Canadian dream....now, I'm trying to see him through to stable recovery...and from what I've been told about his case, we're lucky he's still alive at all.