

L. MacCormack

SEAC

Message from
the E. D.

PCMH Mem-
bers Get In-

HEAR OUR VOICE

When the time came that I had to make the unbearable decision regarding one of my sons I was filled with all sorts of emotions. This was by far the hardest decision I have ever had to make in my life. Do I choose to continue to try to and save my one son with no guarantees or change my direction and save my other two sons before it's too late? This was a decision that NO parent should ever have to make, to choose one child over another, yet I know I'm not the only one that has had to do this. There is not one single incident that makes you say "okay this is it". Its years of situations that have occurred and will continue to occur for years to come, that cause me to fear for the safety of my other two sons and myself. Just some of the questions that constantly went thru my mind: Will "D" ever get better? Who will "D" hurt next? Will I get there fast enough to protect the others? What will "D's" weapon of choice be when he comes after someone? What hospital is closest? Can I risk going to the store with "D"? Will I ever find a sitter who can handle "D" so I can go get groceries alone? How long do my other kids have to suffer the violence? Will my other 2 kids ever be able to have a childhood? go to the movies, have friends over, go to the park, have a water gun fight, or even have something they cherish without it being destroyed? Will my oldest "T" ever come out of his room while his brother is awake? Over the years of trying to get treatment for one child the others have suffered in so many ways. Other then the simple things in life that all kids should enjoy, mine have had to put up with years of emotional and physical violence. Not from myself the parent but from their own brother. My oldest would spend the entire day in his room just to avoid his brother. He can't handle any form of confrontation. If someone is to raise their voice to him "T" will break down into tears almost immediately. My other son "W" is a twin to the one with all of the mental health issues. "W" wears the biggest burden of all. "W" suffers from what I call abused spouse syndrome. He fears his twin, can't get away from his twin, yet is the first to try and protect his twin. "W" was also mimicking the behaviors of aggression that his twin displayed. There were many appointments with Doctors and teachers, with me trying to explain that just because they are twins "W" does not have the same issues. "W" was just mirroring what he has seen since birth. Then there is the home, we were prisoners in our own house. Every cupboard had a padlock, every sharp object and medication was in a locked tool box, my bedroom door had lock on it for it was the safe place for "T & W" to hide while I tried to get "D" under control. I had to carry a cell phone and a ring of keys at all times, including when I went to bed at night. I have looked like I was wearing leopard print over my entire body due to the bruising, I have been kicked, punched, spat at, bitten, even had objects thrown at me all because he was angry at someone or something and I was preventing him from hurting them. Since my decision this past November I've witnessed tremendous improvements in "T & W". My friends, family and even the school have noticed the change in the kids. They are no longer living in fear. And as for "D", he does not seem to show much interest or care about my decision. Does "D" have a place to live after this treatment center, not as of yet. I have met with many government offices, most of them just point me in another direction sending me into circles. Some of them flat out state that they can not help me, I've even had one state that "I must really hate this kid" But I will continue to fight for what is best for my family. My entire family. Is it fair for "D" what I have done, no. Am I scared out of my wits what could happen to him, most definitely. But it came to a time when I had to step back and look at the big picture. Do I save one with no guarantees of improvement while destroying 2, as well as losing my sanity OR do I save 2, keep some sanity while destroying one.

WRITTEN AND REPRINTED WITH THE PERMISSION OF LAURA MACCORMACK

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

As part of PCMH's strategic plan, one of the goals is to have PCMH member representation across the Province. The roles and responsibilities of SEAC are as follows:

- ◆ Making recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students within the board.
- ◆ Participating in the board's annual review of its special education plan
- ◆ Participating in the development of the board's annual budget for special education
- ◆ Reviewing the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education
- ◆ The plan must also include a description of ways in which parents and other members of the public can make their views known to SEAC

We are asking that all members currently holding a SEAC seat or wanting to hold a SEAC seat to please let us know via email at :admin@pcmh.ca. A list will be co-ordinated and then forwarded to Yolanda Gallo who is our chapter leader in Barrie and also a member of our board who will be taking the lead as liaison on this project. A big thanks to all members that have replied thus far! An excerpt follows from one of our respondents.

“As the mother of a child with mental health issues, I cannot begin to express my disappointment in the lack of special education funding and the distribution of the funds within the board. The countless hours our family has spent meeting with board/school members trying to get our daughter the help that she needs has been, to say the least, very frustrating. My daughter is currently enrolled at a treatment centre committed to helping children with a wide range of mental health issues. I am learning more and more about the disturbing number of children that need treatment, yet are unable to receive it on a timely basis. I can say from personal experience that our family has spent YEARS on waiting lists, which unfortunately lead to the deterioration of my daughter's mental health. I believe the schools must be leaders in treatment for these children, as this is where they spend the bulk of their childhood. Schools must provide the resources for parents to seek treatment elsewhere if necessary. I really could go on telling you about my experiences for hours, but in the interest of time will leave you with this: Children's mental health needs to be at the forefront of all special education.”

Thank you to the member who has allowed us to share a part of her story. Together our voices grow louder! If you would like to contribute to our newsletter please contact:

admin@pcmh.ca.

Message From The Executive Director:

This weekend I attended a series of presentations and meetings for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. I was particularly moved and inspired by a special film presentation I was fortunate enough to have the privilege of watching regarding the struggles, ongoing faith and determination and good work of Aboriginal People, and in particular the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. I am not going to pretend to understand all the history, complexities or nuances of the ongoing hardships and battles of the Aboriginal, Inuit and Metis people but, I felt fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn another perspective than the one I am often faced with as presented to me by media. It struck me that so many "causes" face the same struggles and if we are to be truly committed to one another, and truly dedicated to making a difference, we cannot only give our passions and understanding to our immediate cause, but open our minds and hearts to the struggles that others too are facing, and recognize that while we ask for their participation in our efforts, we must too be willing to participate in theirs.

There are so many things I learned this weekend that touched my heart around the residential School Settlement, Truth and Reconciliation, and the Royal Commission, and again, I cannot pretend to have all the knowledge required to impress upon all of you the importance, what I can do, and what I promised I would do at the meeting is to help with raising awareness around the closing of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Federal Government's decision to no longer provide funding. I am asking all of you to take the time to visit the website www.ahf.ca and commit to writing to the Prime Minister, your member of Parliament or both stating that you believe this decision is wrong, and that indeed this Foundation should have the continued support of our government.

I would also ask that regardless of your decision whether or not to write in support of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, you also share this message with your networks, ask them too to share with their networks, and maybe together we can help raise their voices, and in turn build partners that will help raise our children's voices, all of them!

For a list of Members of Parliament:

[http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/Members of Parliament/MainMPsCompleteList](http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/Members%20of%20Parliament/MainMPsCompleteList)

To email the Prime Minister

pm@pm.gc.ca

Or

Office of the Prime Minister

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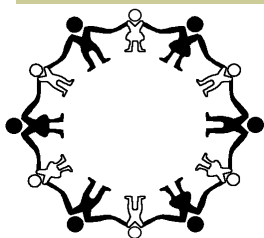
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**Life is about 10% how you
make it...**

And 90% how you take it.



PCMH Members Get Involved

It is with deep appreciation that we recognize chapter members Ken and Michelle Boe (St Thomas) along with Terri Snell (Iona) for their commitment and hard work in helping PCMH St Thomas Chapter bring Barbara Coloroso to a sold out crowd of 508 attendees!



The success of this event would not have been possible without the dedication, passion, caring and amazing efforts of Chapter Leader-St. Thomas, Gaby Wass. We also welcome Gaby to our team as our new Administrator/Coordinator and look forward to working with her and growing our networks and communications with our members! Thank you Gaby!!!

It is with pride and admiration that we salute Ken and Michelle Boe for the idea:

A DAY IN THE PARK WITH PCMH

August 14th 12-10:30p.m.

Pinafore Park St Thomas

The Boe's are organizing a day to raise awareness for Child and Youth Mental Health, decrease the stigma associated with mental illness, raise awareness around suicide prevention it will be a fun filled family-day in the park with live bands and children's entertainment!

Congratulations to Sean Quigley our London Chapter Leader for his successes at the London Fringe Festival!

"What started as a conversation last August with Robin Rundle Drake quickly turned into eight months of rehearsals and the creation of this play about mental illness. The process of its creation is important, in that we took the lived experience of the participants. The play is about the absurdity, the frustration, the joy and the pain experienced by people who live with mental illness. Many are deeply personal to the cast and their bravery and the bravery of those who deal with these issues needs not only to be acknowledged but sung from the mountain to the valley. Sadly in Canada we are way behind almost every western nation when it comes to working with and supporting those with mental illness. That's 1 in 5 Canadians by the way. We need to move on this with as much commitment as we have done with breast cancer. I hope our work helps to shed some light about why."-Sean Quigley