

# NEWSLETTER

## Winter 2008

On behalf of the Family Council I would like introduce and welcome our new boards members. **Anne Colby** was born and raised in Timmins, Ontario. She received a B.Sc in Nursing at UofT and worked in the Scarborough Public Health Department, and Research Department at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre before she went on to live in Midland where she worked for the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care from 1987-2004. **Ezzatolzaman Pezeshkzad** comes from Iran and has two children. Getting help and support for her child's illness has been a struggle due to language barriers, lack of understanding of both Muslim and Iranian cultural norms for a young woman and a lack of respect for the family religious and cultural background. Her daughter's condition encouraged her to go back to school where she received a Behavioural Science Technology Degree from George brown and is currently employed at Kerry's Place as a Mental Health Support Associate. We are pleased to have them as part of the Family Council Board. Congratulations!

As you know, we held our 7<sup>th</sup> Family Council Annual General Meeting at the Queen Street site. On the evening of November 3<sup>rd</sup>



2008, family members came together and this year, we welcomed Dr. Kwame McKenzie, M.D. MRC Psych as our guest speaker. As Deputy Director of the Schizophrenia Program, Medical Director of Diversity and Mental Health, Senior Scientist Social Equity and Health Research and Professor of Psychiatry at UofT, Dr. McKenzie provided some statistical insight and direction for families to take to improve the wellbeing of their loved one, focusing on the importance of being a contributing member of society on their road to recovery. Specifically, he discussed past successful projects that reinforced the significance of family involvement in the recovery process. He has great expertise in the social causes that surround mental illness and in particular, the relationship between discrimination and mental illness. His academic work has had a direct impact on patient care and national policy in the UK. We thank Dr. McKenzie for his invaluable time and clear position that families are paramount in the prevention and recovery of mental illness.

The launch of the *Family Council* DVD "**Families Make a Difference**" directed by Elizabeth Littlejohn, BFA MFA was presented at our AGM for the membership-at-large to comment on and make suggests about as it is still in the early stages of development. The video demonstrates the struggles families endure when a member is mentally ill in conjunction with their dissatisfaction with family involvement. It touches on the topics of stigma, hope, and the significance of families being able to aid in the treatment process. This DVD was created for educational purposes in hopes that staff will begin to understand the importance of family involvement. The video features members of the Family Council telling sharing their personal stories of determination for getting help and the hope they always held for their loved one during their recovery.

If you were at the AGM but did not make comments or would like to contribute more ideas please forward them to [jill\\_simmons@camh.net](mailto:jill_simmons@camh.net) or by mail to 33 Russell Street, Room 2043, Toronto, M5S 2S1. Any input would be appreciated while we are still in the beginning stages of the films development.



### **My Mother's Garden**

The Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival was an enormous success as was expected. The *Family Council* was an official community sponsor of “My Mothers Garden” which is the story of a mother whose hoarding disorder has entered a hazardous and life threatening stage. Directed by her daughter Cynthia, it documents how one family comes together to cope with their mother’s disorder and restore a lost sense of family. *My Mother’s Garden* was an official selection of the 2006 New York IFP Market and was a finalist for the IFP Socially Conscious Documentary Award. The film has also received support from the 2007 New York State Council For the Arts and the 2007 Pacific Pioneer Fund.

“My personal journey through this documentary was necessary to heal the wounds of abandonment, isolation, and dependency that are often present when raised by a parent with a persistent mental illness. Though my brothers and I are now adults, we all feel a deep need for a stabilizing center for our family, a permanent place to call home. This longing for stability has caused disorder in our lives, both socially and emotionally.”

Cynthia Lester Director

### **Ruth Acker Award**

During the Family Council AGM, Elsa Southam presented the second Ruth Acker Award, given annually to an outstanding volunteer who represents families in mental health and addiction, to the memory of **Norman Hayman**. We were delighted to have Norm’s wife Carol and daughter, Leslie present to accept his award.

In 1995 Norm was a member of the Family Advisory Committee where he demonstrated a passion for improving services and support to families and their loved ones struggling to navigate the mental health and addiction systems. This committee was responsible to starting the Family

Resource Centre, where Norm volunteered countless hours of caring support, and which still flourishes today and is an active support arm of the Family Council. In 1998, Norm became a family representative on the Empowerment Committee, which eventually lead to the creation of the Empowerment Council for clients and the Family Council for families. He was a founding member on the Board of Directors of the Family Council, providing wise leadership in his role as Treasurer and a member of the Executive Committee. Norm, along with long time friend Elsa Southam, served together as family representatives of CAMH’s Constituency Member model, adopted as a unique approach to hospital governance when CAMH was formed in 1998. They completed a nine-year tenure in the spring of 2007, becoming members of the first “graduating class” of Constituency Members. Norm was involved in numerous committees within CAMH and participated in countless workshops, forums, focus groups, and committees and Elsa Southam stated, “His dedication and commitment to families knew no limits.” Thank you to Norm’s family for receiving this award on his behalf.