

thank you!

DONOR Dialogue

“When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on” – Franklin D. Roosevelt

MY NAME IS LESLEY Pasquariello and I am a 37 year old mother to three wonderful children – 6 year old boy/girl twins and a 22 month old boy and I am blessed to have a very supportive husband.

A few months ago, I contacted Karen Wilkinson, at the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. I was interested in donating some of my paintings to the Association. Karen invited me to attend a staff meeting to present my artwork and it was such a heart lifting experience. The 3 pieces I donated are displayed in the CMHA, Ontario office – for which I am truly honoured. It’s a strange feeling to have my work displayed – it makes me feel vulnerable – but the staff at CMHA, Ontario were so welcoming and complimentary. I felt at ease with them.

At 19 years old, I was first diagnosed with bi-polar disorder. I had a manic episode and was on medication for a year. Then I was off medication for 9 years. My next episode happened when I was 29 years old (another manic episode). So I have remained on medication since then, except during my pregnancies.

Generally, I am in a hypo-manic state and experience anxiety on a daily basis. Occasionally I have periods of depression. I really hope to inspire others by sharing my story and my artwork.

Having bi-polar disorder has affected my life in such a positive way! The benefits definitely outweigh the disadvantages.

Benefits:

- Life is never dull or boring
- I am able to transfer my nervous energy onto canvas where I can create unique abstract artwork
- I can tackle difficult obstacles with ease compared to others I know
- I have excessive energy and heightened awareness of myself

- I lost 55 pounds since my babies were born due to low blood sugar (avoiding sugar makes me feel healthier and helps my medication work better)

Challenges:

- Two hospitalization periods in my life
- Monitoring sleep and medication
- Numerous doctor’s appointments
- Never knowing what type of mood I will be in each and every day
- Often, I feel as if I’m at the end of my rope, but I know that I have the strength to get through anything life throws at me.

After everything I’ve been through,

positive or negative, I wouldn’t change a thing! I feel truly blessed.

I am able to cope well with bi-polar disorder because I am a very strong individual and like to share my

insight and knowledge with others – using it to my advantage. I have started attending a self-help group, which has been very beneficial. Also, I’m not sure what I would do without being able to paint – it allows me a way to express so much of myself in a relaxing and rewarding way. I also have a small baking business, which I really enjoy.

In a society where discussion of mental health is still taboo for some individuals, I feel that I am the new face of mental illness. A person would not truly know me unless they knew I had bi-polar disorder.

So thank you for letting me share my story with you and perhaps it has helped some of you with what you are dealing with at this time of your life.

If you are interested in learning more about my artwork or me, please send an e-mail to either Karen or myself or feel free to visit my website at www.lesleypasquariello.com
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Lesley Pasquariello



MESSAGE FROM THE President

DEAR DONOR,

It is a pleasure to be able to thank you, on behalf of the Board of Directors of CMHA, Ontario, for your valuable support and donations. Your contributions allow us to continue our mission, by enabling us, with our 32 branches, to promote mental health, provide information regarding mental health and mental illness to consumers, their families, friends and communities, health professionals and employers.

Your contributions assist consumers, families and friends in many ways. CMHA Ontario works in partnership with CMHA branches to build capacity for leadership training, knowledge exchange, advocating for public policy and now, most recently, the creation of an Ontario Consumer and Family Advisory Council. While CMHA Ontario has always welcomed and encouraged consumer and family participation on our Board, this new Council will offer an additional way for the integral voice of consumers and families to be heard in organizational decision-making.

I am sure that, as a donor like me, you experience great satisfaction in seeing how your contributions have made a difference to consumers and their families, and to the mental health of all Ontarians. Mental health is finally on the health agenda. The general public is more aware and is beginning to recognize that it affects all of us.

You are making a difference in so many peoples’ lives. On behalf of the Board of CMHA Ontario, and personally, on behalf of my family...**thank you.**

Sincerely,

Judy Watson

President, CMHA Ontario



Lesley presenting artwork to Karen

The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.

Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

Your comments are important to us!

Please use this space for anything you would like to share. *(feel free to attach additional paper)*

I would like to subscribe to Mental Health Notes, CMHA, Ontario’s weekly e-newsletter. My e-mail address is: _____

Please send me information about “Mental Health Works” (workplace mental health program) I have included my mailing address.

I **do want** to receive the donor newsletter twice a year (spring and fall).

I prefer to receive the newsletter electronically – here is my e-mail address: _____

For bequest purposes our legal name is Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division. Official information returns filed with the Canada Revenue Agency can be viewed at www.cra-arc.gc.ca.

Charitable Registration Number 10686 3665 RR0001.

www.ontario.cmha.ca/donate

IN *Memory* of John Wakunick 2006

(the following are excerpts taken from the memorial service in Toronto for John Wakunick, given by Beth Rablosky, one of his work colleagues)

John's funeral was held October 18, 2006 in Halifax and for many people the distance made it difficult to attend. This service allows his friends in Toronto to remember him and to celebrate his life.

John grew up in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. He started working for KFC at 16 as a cook in store 1002 on Wyse Road in Dartmouth. Kevin Feltmate hired him and quickly recognized the potential in this young man.

Kevin said:

"When I first met John he was just a kid. But he was not like the other guys that were his age. He was clean cut, soft spoken and overly polite. It was an easy decision to hire John and one that I never regretted. He had a good work ethic from the start. I know that as time passes our memories tend to be selective but I honestly cannot recall anything negative about John's behavior or work habits."

When an opening arose in the Network/LAN group, he applied convincing Ruta and Maureen (colleagues) that he was right for the

ABOVE: John's Mom, Cathy Snow (right of the tree) with his aunts and uncles.

If you are interested in making a donation in memory of a loved one or someone special, please visit our website at www.ontario.cmha.ca/donate or call Susan at 416-977-5580 ext 4122.

job. For the past 7 years John has worked in this group. In this capacity he touched almost every one of our computers, and as a result he has touched every one of us.

John was kind, caring, handled matters in a calm manner and was always courteous. When I asked him to work late, come in early, work a weekend, he always agreed and always positively. I never had to convince him to do it...and I was extremely appreciative of his efforts. Kevin, Maureen and Ruta were right when they saw great potential in this young man.

Above all John was very well liked personally and respected for the work he did. He always handled his work in a professional manner. Kevin remembers him as a very independent fearless young man who never took anything for granted and was always grateful for the time that he spent with his friends.

Derek (a colleague) adds that...

"...outside of work, John was our friend who we could always count on to have a great time and lived life to its fullest. John gave so generously without asking for anything in return; he truly had a giving heart. He always



Tree Planted In John's Memory



looked out for people, always making sure they were taken care of."

I would just like to conclude with an email John sent to Maureen (a colleague) back in the spring. We should all learn from it. The subject was happiness and it is a quote from the Dalai Lama, called *'The Art of Happiness'* *And all the roads we have to walk are winding...*

"If you maintain a feeling of compassion, loving kindness, then something automatically opens your inner door. Through that, you can communicate more easily with other people. And that feeling of warmth creates a kind of openness. You'll find that all human beings are just like you, so you'll be able to relate to them more easily. That gives you a spirit of friendship. Then there's less need to hide things, and as a result, feelings of fear, self-doubt, and insecurity are automatically dispelled."

I am sure I speak for all of us here that John will be truly missed. He is missed already.

NOTE: A total of \$3,322 was raised by John's colleagues and donated to CMHA Ontario. May the knowledge that this gift will aid others be of comfort at this time.

News Flash – EFFECTIVE APRIL 16, 2007

I AM THRILLED to join the talented team of volunteers and staff at the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario.

My 30 year career in health care, includes a proven record of leadership in strategic and health service planning in Ontario, in establishing and maintaining alliances and partnerships, and in government relations. I have extensive experience with non-profit boards and volunteers from my professional work as a senior executive, and numerous experiences as a volunteer board member.

Most recently, I served as the Interim CEO for The Change

Foundation, where I assisted the organization through an extensive strategic planning and transition process. Prior to this, I served as Senior Vice President at the Markham Stouffville Hospital and had responsibility for many aspects of the organization's operations.

My background in management change and in policy and planning of Ontario's health system, I hope will be beneficial as CMHA Ontario continues to work with our partners through system change in Ontario.

I am very aware there is no health without mental health. I am looking forward to hearing from you and our



many other valued stakeholders about your experiences related to issues of mental health and what's important to you. Together we can continue to make a difference and ensure mental health is always a priority on the health agenda.

Lorne Zon
Chief Executive Officer

 CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ONTARIO
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE, ONTARIO

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NOTE:

We have changed our system, and you must now notify us if you want your name recognized on our annual list of donors

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We welcome your ideas, comments and stories. Please submit ideas either by mail to Karen Wilkinson or by e-mail – kwilkinson@ontario.cmha.ca

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your friends, co-workers and family

www.ontario.cmha.ca/donate

Think beyond your lifetime if you want to accomplish something truly worthwhile.

– Walt Disney

