



**Mood  
Disorders  
Association  
of  
Ontario**

# EQUILINK *news*

THE EQUILINK NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY THE  
MOOD DISORDERS ASSOCIATION ON ONTARIO (MDAO)

## Network and Training Day with CREST.BD

On May 11, 20 group facilitators from across the province gathered in Kingston for a network and training day. They heard presentations from Dr. Roumen Milev, from Kingston, and Dr. Erin Michalak from the CREST.BD team in Vancouver.

Dr. Roumen Milev is the Head of Psychiatry at Queen's University, Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston General Hospital, and Providence Care. In his presentation, Dr. Milev shared highlights of a research project that featured a 7-week psycho-educational group designed to help people to understand how stigma can impact their lives, and develop strategies to manage its effects.

The Collaborative Research Team to Study Psychosocial Issues in Bipolar Disorder (CREST.BD) is a multidisciplinary collaborative network of researchers, healthcare providers, and community members (people living with bipolar

disorder, their family members and supports) dedicated to researching and exchanging knowledge about psychological and social factors in bipolar disorder. Our aim is to enhance the health and wellness of people living with the condition.

Dr. Erin Michalak, the Team Leader for CREST.BD, updated the group on many of the research projects they have conducted including their work in measuring Quality of Life in Bipolar Disorder. They sought feedback from the group as to how their work may be applicable to peer support groups.

In addition to the presentations from Dr. Milev and Dr. Michalak, participants had an opportunity to share some of the work that they are working on in their groups. Most of all, they enjoyed meeting their peers and getting a chance to have some social time together.



## SAVE THE DATE!

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on September 19, at the Toronto Central Grosvenor St. YMCA Centre (20 Grosvenor Street, Toronto).

Our special guest will be Dr. David Goldbloom, Vice Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. All are invited to attend and those members that have paid their yearly fee by that date will be eligible to vote during the meeting.



## “Lit From Within” Award Presented

On May 30th, the MDAO office hosted a presentation of our “Lit From Within” Volunteer Award, an award given to a volunteer who has demonstrated leadership, creativity, and innovation in their contribution to our organization. This year’s recipient was Fay Ganz, one of our group facilitators. The presentation

was made by Ann Marie Mac Donald, our Executive Director, as well as Karen Liberman, MDAO’s former Executive Director and the inspiration for the award. Also in attendance was Ellen Ostofsky, a great friend of the organization and the person responsible for encouraging Fay to volunteer with us years ago. The event was a celebration of the importance of Fay’s work, a reunion of friends, and an affirmation of the integral role volunteers have at MDAO.

## MDAO Membership Model

In 2011 and 2012, the Mood Disorders Association, with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, conducted a needs assessment to evaluate the peer support needs of member groups across Ontario. This assessment identified a need to develop an organizational and membership model that is more sensitive, flexible, and adaptable to the demands and expectation of each local community. As a result of this initial work, we are currently finalizing this

process with our regional partners using this new membership model to better suit the needs of their population of service users. By implementing these recommendations, we will be able to increase the standardization of peer support and recovery programs, disseminate best practices to member groups, and support Ontario’s regional volunteer networks, thereby ensuring high quality peer support province wide.

## Laughing Like Crazy Research Project

The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario is pleased to be collaborating with the University Health Network Department of Psychiatry on an exciting research project about our Laughing Like Crazy stand-up comedy training program. As many of us are already aware, there is scientific evidence to support both the psychological and physical benefits of humour, however, there have been few studies conducted to test the effects of humour training programs. Laughing Like Crazy is a free 15 week program that takes participants through all stages of developing a stand-up comedy routine that culminates in a showcase performance for the general public. This innovative UHN - MDAO study taking place

with our current LLC participants is a pilot trial evaluating the impact of this training program using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. A big thank you to all our study participants for helping us out with this exciting research project and we look forward to sharing the results with you in the future.



# THE NUMBERS OF MDAO



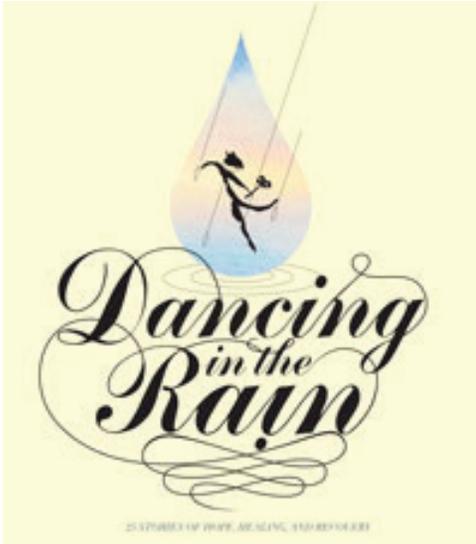
In the past year, MDAO served 19,726 individuals in Ontario. We have engaged people around the province in our support groups, recovery groups, training workshops, Touched by Fire Exhibition and Show, Laughing Like Crazy, MAD About You Awards Gala, as well as our online forum and the Distinguished Speaker Program. We are thankful to all of the many volunteers who make these programs possible.

In addition, MDAO casts a much wider net around the province and beyond through its websites: [www.mooddisorders.ca](http://www.mooddisorders.ca), [www.touchedbyfire.ca](http://www.touchedbyfire.ca), [www.madaboutyougala.ca](http://www.madaboutyougala.ca), and [www.mymentalhealthmap.ca](http://www.mymentalhealthmap.ca). This increases the total service recipients for MDAO to 79,716 for this year!

## LOOKING FOR STORIES

Interested in adding content to our next newsletter? Send your suggestions to Lawrence at [lawrencep@mooddisorders.ca](mailto:lawrencep@mooddisorders.ca)

# From the Library



## Dancing in the Rain

*25 Stories of Hope, Healing, and Recovery*

As exemplified in MDAO's motto "talk to someone who's been there," an important part of recovery is sharing one's experience. This MDAO publication is a collection of personal stories by people who, after being made to feel helpless by

their mood disorder, were able to find assistance from our organization. Many individuals with a mood disorder feel that it's not "normal" to experience the thoughts and feelings they're having, and learning that it is in fact common and acceptable is often an epiphany that has life-long benefits.

While *Dancing in the Rain* is the perfect gift for someone struggling with a mood disorder, the stories inside will benefit anyone who finds inspiration in the strength against adversity of which we're all capable, sometimes with just a bit of help. This book is full of evidence that the first difficult step of reaching out can lead to recovery. The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario is an extended network of compassionate and open people who are here to share, listen, and help you get there.

*Dancing in the Rain* is on sale at the MDAO office. The cost is \$25.00 for members and \$30.00 for non-members (\$5.00 shipping and handling for either). This publication is also offered as a gift to those who donate \$50.00 or more to the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario.

## A New Addition

We have just received a most interesting book as an addition to our library: "Not Anytime Soon! The Life & Times of Linda Chamberlain."

A longtime friend of MDAO, Linda Chamberlain is quite an amazing woman who has experienced a rollercoaster of a life. This book follows her through a difficult childhood, an early break for independence, the onset of psychiatric symptoms, various low-paying jobs and abusive relationships, eventually to her bottom of homelessness and addiction – then back up again through the mental health system, her incredible love of cats, to her current role as mental health advocate. It is a fascinating read, a colourful book about the strength of the human spirit, and how the system can help people rise out of difficult places – and contribute their own lived experiences to improve that very system!

MDAO members will find this book under the "General"(GE) section for withdrawal for a period of three weeks, or anyone may peruse our reference copy during their visit to our office. Enjoy!

Ingrid Mraz  
Program Assistant



# UPCOMING PROGRAMS



The Summer Painting Programs are starting, at the Toronto offices. Please contact Ingrid Mraz, at (416) 416-8046 ext. 238 or [ingridm@mooddisorders.ca](mailto:ingridm@mooddisorders.ca) for more information.

## Learn to Paint

Class A – Mondays and Wednesdays (11 classes)  
June 17th to July 24th (no class on July 1st or 15th)  
2:00pm to 4:30 pm  
\$25 materials fee

Painting II – Intermediate Acrylic  
Fridays, June 21st to July 26th (6 weeks)  
1:00pm to 4:00pm  
\$25 materials fee

## Mixed Media

Thursdays, June 20th to July 11th (4 classes)  
6:00pm to 9:00pm  
\$20 materials fee

Saturday, July 27th (one-day workshop)  
9:00am to 4:30pm  
\$20 materials fee

(Mixed Media includes items graciously donated by The Japanese Paper Place, 77 Brock Avenue, Toronto)

# Staff News



## It's a Boy!

Leanne Needham and Dan D'Aoust are proud to announce our new Bouncing Baby Bundle of Boy, Oliver Jeremy Robert D'Aoust, born May 15 at 21:35 weighing in at 5 pounds 3 ounces!

Mom and Baby Oliver are doing great!

## A Big Welcome to Shelly

My name is Shelly Murphy-Hines and I am pleased to announce that I will be the acting Family & Youth Services Coordinator for the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario. During the next year, my role will be to provide support to families whose loved one between the ages of 14-35 are showing signs of a first episode of psychosis. I can support you and your family by providing education, counselling, information, and referrals in a group and/or one-on-one setting.

I recently graduated with a Master's Degree in Social Work, but before I acquired all those fancy letters behind my name I spent close to 20 years working in mental health as a Youth Counsellor for Child & Family Services in the province of Prince Edward Island. Growing up and living in P.E.I. has afforded me with insights into the importance of community engagement and family

preservation; these insights I humbly draw upon and incorporate into my daily life and practice. I have also come to understand that many of the small town values and life lessons I learned have provided me with what I consider to be one of my best qualities, that being the ability to create a connection with another human being in a matter of minutes. I take with me into this role a significant amount of lived and professional experience and can state without hesitation that I am excited and well prepared to "hit the ground running" as I begin my time with MDAO. If you have any questions at all or just feel like a "chat", please don't hesitate to contact me.

I'll leave you with one of my favorite quotes from Alice in Wonderland:

Mad Hatter: *"Have I gone mad?"*  
Alice: *"I'm afraid so. You're entirely bonkers. But I'll tell you a secret. All the best people are."*

## Join us in saying goodbye!

As you probably know, Kim Umbach has resigned from her position here at MDAO.

Please join us for a celebration to honour Kim for all of her great accomplishments, to show her how much we're going to miss her, as well to wish her all the very best in her new journey.

WHEN: Thursday, June 20th 2013, 3:00 pm

WHERE: Mood Disorders Association of Ontario  
36 Eglinton Ave. W., Suite 602  
Toronto, ON M4R 1A1

We'll have some light refreshments, which will of course include cake, and hopefully exchange some stories.

Please RSVP to Lawrence, at (416) 486-8046 ext. 222 or [lawrencep@mooddisorders.ca](mailto:lawrencep@mooddisorders.ca), by Monday, June 17th.

We hope to see you there!



Mood Disorders Association of Ontario

A special thanks to all those who helped put this edition together:

Andrew K.  
Eric J.  
Ingrid M.  
Jonathan A.  
Kim U.  
Lawrence P.

## BECOME A MEMBER

When you join the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario, you will be demonstrating your support of the important work we do. Thank you!

Members of MDAO receive notices of events, support group calendars, and a copy of our newsletter.

Visit our website, at [www.mooddisorders.ca/membership](http://www.mooddisorders.ca/membership) to join today.

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