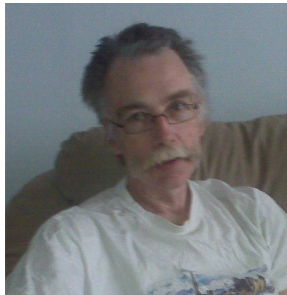


EQUALITY, DIGNITY AND INCLUSION: LEGISLATION THAT ENHANCES HUMAN RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Consultative Group Biographies

Manitoba

Robert Kirkwood



I have been a Mental Health client more than half of my life. I got into recovery in 1986, two years prior to that I was given no hope of recovery.

I live in a mining town in Northern Manitoba. My family made this our home. I've raised my own family here. Nine years of that was as a single parent.

I obtained a pardon September 8, 2008. I have had involvements with the Law for a variety of reasons. I have quite a bit of experience in both Criminal and Family Court.

The last number of years I've enjoyed quite a good life. For the past 11 years I've served on the board of our local CMHA. I served a two year term on the Manitoba Division Board. Last Fall I was recognized with a Heroes of Mental Health award. I currently work in the field of Mental Health.

I'm proud to be a Canadian. I feel honored, that I was asked to be part of this process.

Robert Kirkwood

Gail Sweetland



Gail, a life-long Winnipegger, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1978. Before getting involved in the mental health and addictions fields, Gail had a career in systems analysis and project management. She commenced her addiction recovery in 1975 and her mental health recovery soon after that.

Currently, Gail volunteers for CMHA and other mental health and addiction organizations at the local, regional and provincial levels. Her interests around mental health include housing, co-occurring disorders, stigma, justice and human rights.

Gail is grateful to have been selected for and looks forward to participating in this project.

Gail Sweetland

Nova Scotia

Keith Anderson



Born on November 10, 1960, in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He graduated from Dalhousie Law School in 1983 and practiced law for three years. He then attended University College London, England, and obtained his Master in Laws in 1987. Keith returned to practice until 2003 at which time he was diagnosed with depression. He lost his health and career in the span of 5 days.

Keith has recovered and in the last two years he has become a mental health advocate. He has spoken at two national conferences and presented a speech in his hometown at the 5th Annual Living With Mental Illness Conference before an audience of 550 people. Keith has had articles appear in the National Post and in publications of the Canadian Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society.

Keith Anderson

Wanda Cummings



Wanda has been a reluctant consumer of mental health services since 1982 when she sought assistance for life issues arising out of childhood sexual abuse. Since that time, she has experienced bias and, unfortunately, revictimisation both inside and outside the mental health care system, as well as marginalisation and, more recently, unwarranted criminalisation as a result of her mental health history.

Notwithstanding the challenges Ms. Cummings faced, now at the age of 48, she has spent her entire adult life advocating for the disadvantaged within any realm. She has always been a friend to the disillusioned, as well, offering hope, humour, and practical activism toward change, resolve, and restoring dignity. She is no stranger to community-oriented, grassroots movements and is a team player with avid listening skills, modest writing skills, and an earnest ability to speak up when called upon. For more than 25 years, she has worked as a graphic designer, illustrator, and teacher of some repute, servicing fortune 1000 companies, small businesses, non-profits, charities, and individuals with the same enthusiasm, creativity, and versatility.

Ms. Cummings was very excited to have recently learned about the MHCC Project as she believes both her intimate and bird's-eye views of those living in or around the mental health care system would offer a mutually beneficial exchange and, hopefully, another step toward greatly needed, long overdue change.

Wanda Cummings

British Columbia

Mark Stephens



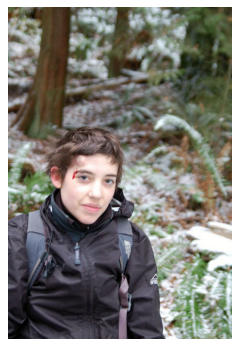
Mark resides in Langley, BC and was diagnosed in 2001 with late onset "Schizo-Affective Bi-Polar Disorder" on his thirtieth Birthday while attending Kwantlen University College (Currently named Kwantlen Polytechnic University). Mark went on to obtain his Undergraduate Degree from the University of Victoria in Political Science in 2004.

Mark is a Public Speaker for the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society since 2006 sharing his personal story and his journey to recovery speaking to High Schools, Universities and Organizations. Further, Mark has been a Facilitator for the Canadian Mental Health Association, Delta Branch sharing the "Youth Net Program" to local High Schools.

Mark has received numerous awards for his personal achievements and has a great sense of civic duty offering his time to the local and larger community as a whole.

Mark Stephens

Trevor Fritz



I am 22-year old University of British Columbia student. In addition to my studies here, I've been working for the university for 4 years, doing research in the fields of psychiatry and psychopharmacology. When my depression first started, my English teacher encouraged me to write a research essay on a mental health-related topic to better understand what I was going through. I had no idea at the time, but my decision to write about the neurobiology of depression would change my life forever! Research quickly became my way of coping with all of the negative emotions and thoughts of suicide. My academic goals are to major in either biochemistry or biopsychology and go on to do the MD/PhD program at UBC and become a psychiatrist with a special interest in bipolar disorder research.

Other than research, some of my interests are mountain biking (Vancouver is great for that), photography and backpacking. One of my greatest achievements in life has been my completion of the infamous West Coast Trail, a 75km trail along the west coast of Vancouver Island. I took a lot of film production and photography courses in high school and they turned into hobbies after graduation. I have been in the mental health system for 7 years now, first with a child and adolescent psychiatrist and now with an adult psychiatrist. There have been psychiatrists I have liked, and some I really did not. I have also been hospitalized a total of 11 times, sometimes involuntarily.

I spent three years leading a young adult support group at the Mood Disorders Association of BC and now I am starting my own group at UBC. I have four volunteers, including one faculty member, and we are in the process of building a website and advertising. We are aiming to start this fall.

Trevor Fritz

North West Territories

Arlene Hache



Arlene Hache has 25 years experience providing front-line advocacy support to visible minority women and their families living in northern, remote communities. Arlene has been Executive Director of the Centre for Northern Families in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories Canada for more than 20 years. The Centre offers a broad range of services that support multi-stressed and marginalized families. She is well known across the North as an advocate for social change and is a founding partner in the development of therapeutic programs and in-home family support services designed to support families recovering from trauma related to colonization and ongoing violence. Arlene's passion stems from her own experiential recovery from trauma related to childhood abuse. Arlene was awarded the Order of

Canada for her work in the North in 2009.

Arlene Hache

Quebec

Leah Daigneault



I was born in London, Ontario but I have been living in Quebec since the age of 9. I am therefore completely bilingual in reading, writing and speaking.

I am a trustworthy person, with a great passion and commitment to human rights of all forms; especially in the field of mental illness. I have a background in political science and law although I was unable to complete my degree due to having small children at that time; this has never stopped me from researching and

reading up on the laws and changes in human rights policies within the government and the world. It has always been incredibly important to me to involve myself in committees and organizations where the rights of those living with a mental illness are the primary goal as they should be for every human. I was very proud to have been the project manager earlier this year in setting up a seminar or conference where the rights and freedoms of those living with a mental illness was the topic and the attendance was great in numbers from many fields including local government.

I have also personally experienced injustices as a person living with a mental illness. Two instances where looking for a job, one in the private sector and the other in a community organization specializing in mental illness, should not have proved to be very difficult, but it was.

On another note, having admitted myself once to the emergency room of the local hospital for suicide watch a few years ago, the stigma and disregard for my rights as an individual as well as someone with a mental illness was once again very apparent.

Leah Daigneault