

October 8, 2013

From Awareness to Action: Moving Forward for Mental Health

CAMIMH Recognizes Mental Illness Awareness Week on Parliament Hill

OTTAWA, October 8th, 2013 – Today, members from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) are joined by the Faces of Mental Illness to advocate for changes to the way mental health is addressed within the federal framework. The annual Faces campaign aims to get people talking about mental illness and recognizes the important role mental health plays in the lives of all Canadians. The Faces have come forward to show Canadians that mental illness has many faces-faces that are recognizable to us all. This year, CAMIMH received nearly 100 nominations from across Canada of people living in recovery from mental illness.

“The Faces of Mental Illness are shining examples of strength and resilience while showing Canadians that with appropriate access to services and support, recovery from mental illness is possible,” said Dr. Karen Cohen, CAMIMH Campaign Chair 2013.

This year’s Faces of Mental Illness 2013 are:

Karen Aujla

A student from Surrey, British Columbia and the youngest ever speaker for the Speakers Bureau with the Mood Disorders Association of British Columbia.

Marli Brown

A social worker, a wife and a mother from Dauphin, Manitoba who advocates for family support as part of the healing process from mental illness.

Arthur Gallant

A former Crown Ward from Burlington, Ontario who inspires youth through his extensive advocacy work.

Bernard Saulnier

A blogger and researcher for a local radio show about mental health, from Montreal, Quebec.

Lenore Zann

An award-winning Nova Scotian actor-turned-politician with 17 years of recovery from substance abuse, who uses her creativity to empower her community while helping others who still struggle with their addictions.

“As well as recognizing exceptional individuals, the Faces campaign has a proud history of raising awareness and placing mental illness high on the public agenda. In the past few years, the conversation about mental illness has become more prominent. We are very pleased to see that more and more Canadians are coming forward to share their experiences and to ask for help. The next crucial step is to make sure the resources are available so that when someone asks for help, it is there for them,” continued Dr. Cohen.

CAMIMH members and Parliamentarians assembled this morning for a breakfast, sponsored by Bell as part of their Bell Let’s Talk mental health initiative, to discuss mental health concerns in Canada.

In addition to speaking with Parliamentarians, the Faces of Mental Illness will spend a few hours this afternoon sharing their stories with the Governor General of Canada’s spouse, Her Excellency Mrs. Sharon Johnston. Her Excellency has included mental health as one of her key priorities because it is an issue she considers very important.

“The lack of access to services and treatment for Canadians living with mental illness is something Parliamentarians can change today. That is why we are on Parliament Hill - to encourage the government to take action and make mental health a priority,” concluded Dr. Cohen.

Today’s activities and events are taking place as part of Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) 2013, an annual national initiative organized by CAMIMH which runs from October 6-12. MIAW’s purpose is to raise awareness on the importance of mental health for the overall health of all Canadians and to facilitate a much-needed national conversation about mental illness.

Mental Illness Awareness Week would not be possible without the support of generous sponsors: Bell, Lundbeck Canada Inc., Rx&D, and Janssen. To find out more about MIAW or other CAMIMH initiatives, please visit camimh.ca.

Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of national mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH’s mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.

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