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Living in Recovery and Taking Action: CAMIMH Announces the *Faces of Mental Illness* for 2017

(Toronto, Ontario) July 13, 2017 - Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) proudly announced the five Canadians who have been chosen for the 15th annual *Faces of Mental Illness* campaign. CAMIMH received a record number of nominations from individuals across the country recognizing people living in recovery from mental illness.

“It thrills me to see how much is being done each year to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, and to increase conversations about mental health,” stated Fred Phelps, CAMIMH Campaign Chair 2017. “These five individuals are truly inspiring, as it requires a great deal of courage to speak openly about mental illness and to live in recovery as they do.”

The *Faces* campaign, presented by Bell Let’s Talk, takes place over the next year. The *Faces of Mental Illness* will participate in events that will help educate Canadians about living with mental illness, and the importance of mental health for all Canadians.

“Bell Let’s Talk is very proud to support the *Faces of Mental Illness* campaign again this year,” said Mary Deacon, Chair of Bell Let’s Talk. “By sharing their personal experiences with mental illness and their individual paths to recovery, the *Faces* are inspiring others to talk more openly while helping to reduce the stigma of mental illness. Congratulations to the 2017 *Faces of Mental Illness*.”

The 2017 *Faces of Mental Illness* are:

Rachel Beazley (Winnipeg, MB) *After diagnoses of OCD, Tourette Syndrome, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, ADHD, and Depression, Rachel began her advocacy work at her high school, making presentations to students and staff. She has since continued her work at the University of Winnipeg, and has expanded her platform to Instagram and a personal website. Rachel has also published a book about her experiences.*

Martin Binette (Montreal, QC) *For more than 20 years, Martin has been living with a mood disorder and general anxiety. Since going public with his illnesses, Martin has started a mental health blog which aims to help end the prejudices and stigma surrounding mental illness.*

Chris Nihmey (Ottawa, ON) *After being diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and OCD, Chris was forced to end his career as a teacher and chose to hide his illness for a number of years. While working on his healing through numerous therapies, Chris began to write a memoir which has since inspired him to launch a new career as a writer and speaker, addressing topics of recovery and fighting stigma.*

Brian Rose (Oshawa, ON) *For years, Brian coped with his Schizophrenia by using drugs and alcohol. However, after being found not criminally responsible in the death of his grandmother, Brian is dedicated to living a healthy and meaningful life in her*

honour. Since first sharing his story in 2014, Brian has been speaking publicly about his experiences with his illness, in the hopes that sharing his story will help others who are living with complex mental illnesses.

Kharoll-Ann Souffrant (Pierrefonds, QC) *Kharoll-Ann grew up in a family that did not openly discuss mental illness, and it wasn't until the beginning of adulthood that she was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder after living with depressive symptoms since childhood. Since deciding to share her story publicly in 2015, Kharoll-Ann has spoken at many events and received a number of awards.*

The Faces will be featured in a national media outreach campaign, which includes short videos that will be shared with Parliamentarians at an event during [Mental Illness Awareness Week](#) (MIAW, October 1 to 7, 2017). MIAW encourages action and engages Canadians in a public conversation about mental health.

Posters and postcards featuring the stories of each of *The Faces* will be distributed to Canadians across the country. Canadians have until August 11 to [order](#) MIAW posters, postcards and stickers. To learn more about the campaign and order campaign materials, please visit <http://www.camimh.ca>. CAMIMH would also like to thank its generous sponsors who make this campaign possible: [Bell Let's Talk](#), [the Mental Health Commission of Canada](#), [Lundbeck Canada](#) Inc., [Innovative Medicines Canada](#), and [Impact Public Affairs](#).

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Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of 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.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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