

Schizophrenia Public Forum

BY ANN KORNUA

There is a mountain of misconceptions and questions that a person faces when someone they love is diagnosed with Schizophrenia. This can be tough to face head-on. A public forum was presented on Tuesday November 30th at the Mainway Recreation Center located at 4015 Mainway in Burlington. The Halton Branch of the Schizophrenia Society presented this public forum with support from Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, Halton Healthcare Services and Janssen-Ortho Pharmaceuticals. This forum presented many different aspects of schizophrenia both from doctors in the field and from patients and family members caught in the middle. Presentations were made by Dr. Purohit explaining treatments and approaches to the disease, Brandon Hahn who is a public speaker for schizophrenia through his own life story "Laughter is Good Medicine" and Mikki Kim with her own personal experience of the disease.

Schizophrenia is commonly misinterpreted by the general public as just one kind of mental illness. In reality, schizophrenia is defined as an extensive group of psychotic disorders usually characterized by a withdrawal from reality, illogical patterns of thinking, delusions, hallucinations, and accompanied in varying degrees by other emotional, behavioural, or intellectual disturbances.

This can lead to social withdrawal or a general lack of motivation or worse, depression or suicidal/self destructive behaviour. Schizophrenia is also associated with dopamine imbalances in the brain's chemical makeup as well as defects of the frontal lobe and can be caused by genetic, biological or psychosocial factors.

"There is a gap between what is known and what is practiced." Dr. N. Purohit noted in his opening remarks in his presentation on Treatment Approaches for Schizophrenia. Dr. Purohit pointed out that advances have been made in different aspects of the medical and psychological practices over the years when dealing with Schizophrenia. Dr. Purohit's presentation outlined some of the aspects of the disease, history, and the importance of addressing an individual's problem through a combination of cognitive behaviour therapy and antipsychotic medications.

A raffle took place that evening for a beautiful quilt donated by the Halton Quilters' Guild. Rosemary's Quilt is a tribute to the spirit her son Kenneth, designed and created in a beautiful wildlife design. Kenneth developed schizophrenia at the age of twenty-three and passed away in his sleep at the age of twenty five due to interactions his medications.

Young people sought for youth exchange program

Acton Rotary hosting information sessions

BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

The Acton Rotary Club is hosting information sessions this month to attract young people to the club's Rotary International Youth Exchange Program.

Rob Charette, who is chair of the program, says the exchange provides a great opportunity for young people. He said he's always impressed each year by the students who take part. "It's extremely fulfilling to talk with the students after they have experienced their exchange because they come back with a wealth of knowledge and it's always a fantastic experience because Rotarians make sure that they experience as many activities as possible."

No date has been set for the information sessions, but people can contact Mr.

Charette for times and locations and any other information at 519-853-4577 or by email at toci1984@yahoo.ca. Students can also contact their student services department for more details. The sessions will be held at local high schools.

The international exchange, which is designed to foster global goodwill and understanding, has involved Acton students for about 25 years. The program, which is open to students aged 15 to 17, is suitable for students who are succeeding academically and who demonstrate leadership in their community.

In previous years, students have taken part in exchanges to Chile, Japan, Thailand, Brazil, Australia, France, Italy and Germany.



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