

Breakthrough

Spring 2009

Campaign draws from tragedies and triumphs Methadone Saves Lives battles the stigma of opioid addiction

It started with severe intestinal pains. The prescription drugs were soothing. They dulled young Pete Kristy's physical pain, but they also calmed a mental pain that included depression, anxiety and panic attacks. It wasn't long before he added alcohol to the mix.

As he spiralled into addiction, Pete finally confessed to his mother Betty-Lou about his multiple addictions and his unsuccessful attempts to quit, but before he could get help, he died

of a multiple drug overdose.

Betty-Lou realized too late that what defeated her son in his attempts to quit was the severity of his withdrawal symptoms, which could have been alleviated by methadone maintenance treatment (MMT).

"Methadone



Sean Winger and Betty-Lou Kristy share their stories.

"Methadone maintenance treatment is a proven, effective way out of this trap," Betty-Lou recently told Halton Regional Council. "Had this been available for Pete, I know he would be standing before you as proof of the ability of methadone maintenance treatment to transform and save lives."

While the need for treatment grows across Ontario – an estimated 30,000 people require it – the availability of MMT services has been limited. Out of this situation grew the *Methadone Saves Lives* campaign, and its

website: www.MethadoneSavesLives.ca.

Led by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), this province-wide campaign aims to increase the availability of MMT, and to combat the stigma of opioid addiction that too often bars people from seeking help, and medical professionals from offering it.

For Sean Winger, a need for opioids turned into a "four-to-five-pill-a-day habit," which was costing him \$300 a day to "stay normal."

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Methadone: FAQs

Is it replacing one addiction with another?
Think of methadone as a potential treatment option – the same way you would consider any other medication. The right dosage, combined with support and counselling, eliminates physical withdrawal symptoms and allows people to lead a stable life.

Will methadone make me high?
At a therapeutic oral dose, methadone does not produce the euphoric feeling of being high.

How long will I have to be on methadone?
The length of time a person remains on methadone depends on the individual. Some people may taper off; others may remain in methadone treatment for many years.

Are there any side effects?
Once your dose is stabilized, methadone is usually a very well-tolerated medication. Most people experience few, if any, side-effects. Common side-effects include sweating, constipation, sleepiness or drowsiness.

Will the availability of methadone have a negative impact on my neighbourhood?
Since methadone is a prescribed drug that eliminates physical withdrawal symptoms, it allows people to lead a stable life without resorting to potentially criminal behaviour to get drugs.

Are there other treatment options?
Yes, addiction counselling and support groups such as Narcotics Anonymous are options to consider. Buprenorphine (marketed as Suboxone in Canada) is another medication used in opioid substitution treatment.

Since I started on methadone, I've been free of the crushing physical and mental burden of using illicit drugs. I feel better, I look better – I'm even playing hockey again.
Top, 36, on MMT for 6 years

My mental has been the chance to enjoy my family, to be employed, to be out of my hospital.
Bottom, 51, on MMT for 11 years

The whole situation that surrounds methadone has many people getting involved. People who had no idea that it works.
Beth, 42, on MMT for 4 years



Recreation therapy levels the playing field

Whether it's on ice or in a gym, nothing brings people in Canada together like a rousing game of hockey, and that spirit of camaraderie filled the gymnasium at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health during Therapeutic Recreation Week.

The game offered CAMH clients a place to be considered part of a team, as CAMH client Sal told the Liberty Village newspaper.

"For that hour I'm not hearing voices," he said. "For that hour I'm just Sal. It gives me a break for that moment. It's a chance to play with other people and not let them even know you have an illness. It's like an even keel."

Thirteen volunteers from PCL Constructors took part in a floor hockey challenge with CAMH clients on February 2, the second time PCL has been involved with the Corporate Volunteer Program at CAMH.

"It could not have gone better. It was just a great group all around," says Peter Sliskovic of PCL Constructors Canada Inc. "Both groups were pretty athletic and very evenly matched. The

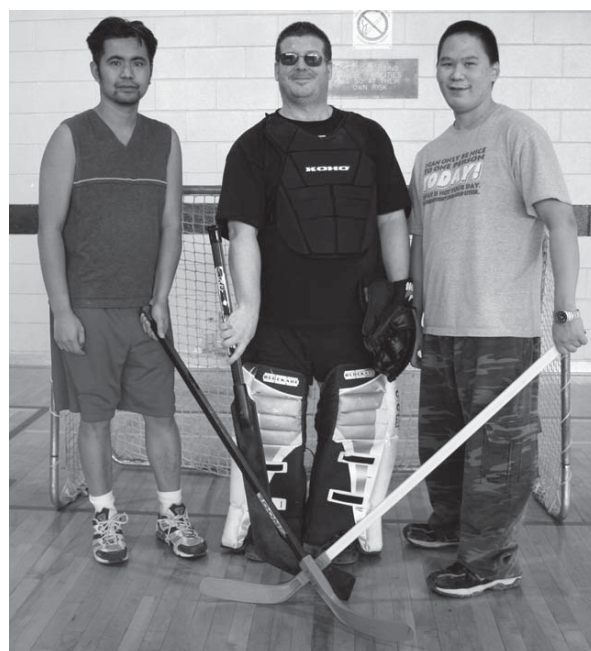
only difference we saw between us and the clients at CAMH is that they are slightly better hockey players."

After dividing the group of 30 participants into two teams, they dropped the puck for a fast-paced and exciting game, demonstrating how two communities can develop bonds through teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play. In the end, the red team prevailed by a score of 11-9.

Along with the fun, the game carried a valuable therapeutic benefit.

"For a variety of reasons, our clients are at higher risk than the general population for developing metabolic problems such as type II diabetes and hypertension," says Natasha Golding, Recreation Therapist, Mental Health and Metabolism Clinic.

"That's one reason why it's so



Sal (pictured at left) poses with teammates from his ball-hockey team.

important that our clients have opportunities such as this to participate in physical activity," she says. "When they are playing floor hockey and socializing with others, they're having fun, they're doing something good for their bodies and the exercise doesn't feel like work." ❧

In This Issue

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Mission & Vision

CAMH Mission

Improving the lives of those affected by addiction and mental health problems and promoting the health of people in Ontario and beyond.

CAMH Vision

Strong and healthy communities, in which people with addiction and mental health problems can access appropriate and effective services and live as full participants.

How to Reach Us...

CAMH's Main Number:
416 535-8501

For information, support, or an assessment for a mental health or addiction concern, you can call:

416 595-6111 (within Toronto) or
1 800 463-6273 (toll-free outside Toronto)



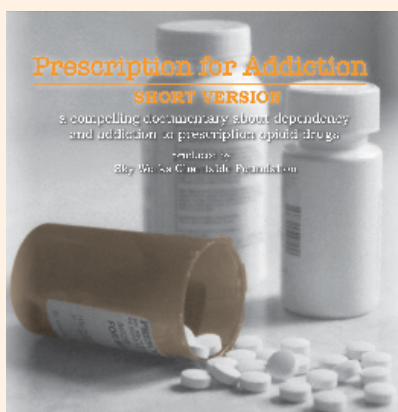
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

A Pan American Health Organization /
World Health Organization Collaborating Centre
Fully affiliated with the University of Toronto

Prescription for Addiction: Searing film on opioid dependence

A compelling documentary that examines the growing problem of dependence and addiction to opioid pain medications, *Prescription for Addiction* features personal stories told first-hand, as well as insights from doctors and other health professionals.

To build awareness of methadone as a treatment option for opioid dependence, CAMH has made the documentary available in a shorter form on DVD.



In the film, we meet Lisa, a car accident survivor; Charles, a seniors advocate; and Chris, a youth recovering from “oxy” addiction. Parents tell the story of their son, Ben, who committed suicide because he saw no way out of his opiate addiction.

We travel to a First Nations reserve, where leaders are grappling with a serious prescription pill problem in their community. And we meet Scott, a former opioid user who is undergoing methadone maintenance treatment in a determined effort to turn his life around.

This 39-minute version of the film has been condensed from a longer 85-minute version. The DVD contains new material and special features, and comes with a comprehensive User Guide offering support for facilitators, teachers, and others wishing to screen the film in their communities.

Prescription for Addiction (short version) was commissioned by CAMH in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs and St. Joseph’s Health Care Group, Thunder Bay.

For copies of *Prescription for Addiction*, contact Kathryn Weiser, at kathryn_weiser@camh.net or 416 535-8501 ext. 6655, or visit www.MethadoneSavesLives.ca for more information.

Helping hands

Archway clinic hosts client spa day

With classical music playing in the background, a group of clients relaxed and waited for their turn to be pampered at the Archway clinic on spa day at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Student stylists from Marvel Beauty School volunteered their time and skills to provide haircuts, manicures, and make-up applications to Archway clients in late November. Accompanied by Marvel instructor Sandra Alexander, the stylists beautified about 50 clients.

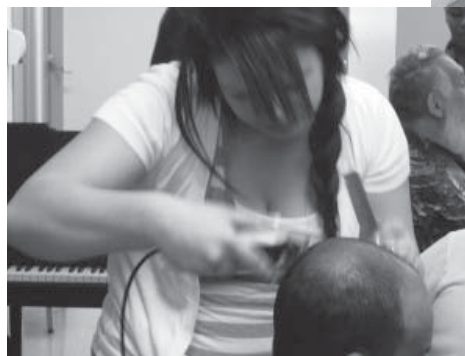
The beauty school has been providing free treatments to CAMH clients during spa days held a couple times each year.

A client-centred community-based outpatient program, Archway offers a wide variety of programming every weekday, including group sessions in cooking, fitness, arts and crafts, stress management, and outings to community events and attractions.



Admiring newly polished fingernails.

A manicure begins with a soothing hand massage.



A volunteer stylist expertly wields her clippers.



Archway staff: Melissa Taylor, Recreation Therapist, Unit 2-5; Joan Loughran, Archway Recreation Therapist; Erica Baxter, Archway Occupational Therapist; Jodie Lavell, Archway Occupational Therapy student; Maria Lainas, Archway Case Manager

Opening doors for employment

Delta Chelsea Hotel connects with clients

Finding a job often comes down to networking, and Jamie Dookie recently helped several clients at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health make a valuable connection.

The CAMH Director of Procurement secured an agreement with the Delta Chelsea Hotel in downtown Toronto to help CAMH clients who are seeking employment.

Lauren Murphy, Recruitment Manager at the Delta Chelsea, hosted CAMH staff on two detailed tours of the hotel to get a sense of the “backstage” work done there.

“Lauren explained Delta’s commitment to diversity and went through their recruitment processes and procedures,” says Diana Capponi of CAMH Human Resources, who works to help clients find employment opportunities.

Lauren then went one further, coming to CAMH in October to meet with interested clients and offer job-seeking advice. About 35 clients attended with resumés in hand.

“Lauren delivered a wonderful

presentation to them about the recruitment process, and met with clients individually to review their resumés,” Diana says. “The time and attention Lauren gave to each participant was awesome.”

For Jamie, this type of connection

brings CAMH’s values to life in a real, practical way.

“I think helping our clients find work is about embracing diversity and removing the barriers that hinder them from leading more fulfilled lives,”

he says.



Left to right: CAMH Procurement Director, Jamie Dookie; Delta Chelsea’s Recruitment Manager, Lauren Murphy; and Diana Capponi of CAMH Human Resources

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Canada's pioneer drug treatment court celebrates 10 years

DJ spins the beat of volunteerism



New Peer Support Worker, Paulette Walker; Ontario Attorney General, Chris Bentley; Superintendent Michael Farrar, Toronto Police; DTC Manager, Shannon Coote; and Justice Paul Bentley, DTC founder and presiding judge

Paulette Walker is frank about her circumstances when she came to the Toronto Drug Treatment Court Program run by CAMH six years ago.

"I was homeless. I was desperate. I was on crack."

Now clean, and a program alumni, Paulette has started a new journey employed as a peer support worker, helping current clients who are following her path to overcome drug dependency.

Paulette is CAMH's first peer support worker in addictions, and the first for drug treatment courts in Canada. It was a fitting milestone as Paulette and two other alums addressed a 10th anniversary celebration of the Toronto Drug Treatment Court, a pioneer program for treating people whose non-violent offences arise from addiction to cocaine, crack or opioids.

Clients who successfully complete the one-year program normally receive non-custodial sentences instead of being incarcerated, and that's the real focus of the program, according to TDTC Manager Shannon Coote.

"It's based on a harm reduction

approach to treating the underlying causes of addiction," Shannon says. "It's often a long and painful journey. We are working with some of the most marginalized members of our society. Shame and stigma are an enormous challenge."

Peter Lye says he entered the Drug Treatment Court Program 10 years ago, "under persuasion of the authorities and my family."

Like a great many of its clients, he struggled to get through the program, but today he says it helped him turn his life around. Peter is a member of the Dream Team stand-up comedy group and speaks publicly about his experiences. He's back playing in a band, something he loved doing as an 18 year-old but fell by the wayside when he began using.

"I was amazed that an ostensibly adversarial process could do so much good," Peter says. "This was where I caught my first glimpse of how I could get out of my situation."

"I found much more than sobriety through my work with the Drug Treatment Court. I found a purpose." 🎧

Local DJ Adrien King (aka DJX) treated students to a first-hand lesson on what it takes to make it as a professional, in a visit with CAMH's Youth and Addiction Program arranged by the Corporate Volunteer Program.

Meeting clients in late November, DJX described the realities and the business side facing anyone wanting to become an accomplished deejay, and how he started out as a 15 year-old in love with music and spinning LPs. That led to trick scratching, and then a stint as a volunteer DJ on CKLN at 16, and then to hosting a vibrant hip hop show on Flow 93.

Adrien conveyed the importance of presentation and professionalism to anyone who wants to become a working DJ. He discussed the hard work, focus and self-motivation it takes to achieve a recognizable standard in the industry.

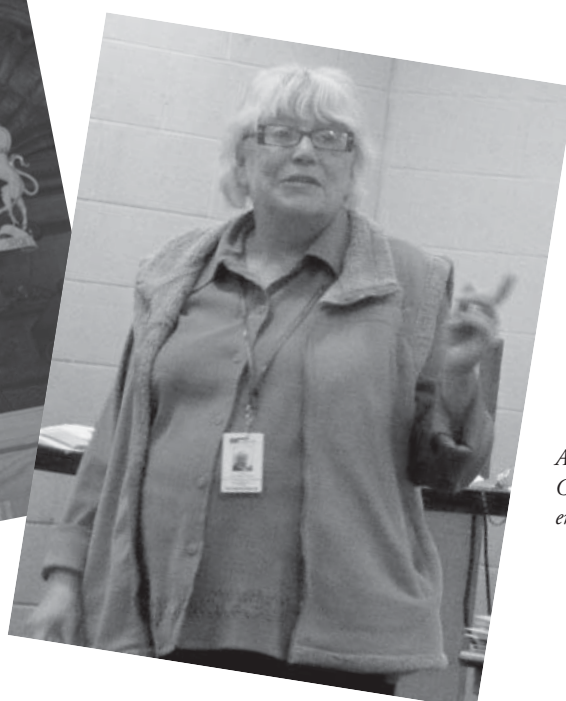
The students were then given an opportunity to do some "scratching" and get a hands-on feel of what it is like to be a DJ on the equipment.

"The experience was extremely liberating for me," Adrien says. "I felt a genuine connection with the people that came out." 🎧

DJ Adrien King (aka DJX) demonstrates spinning techniques.



Program alumnus Peter Lye speaks at the celebration.



Another newly minted Peer Support Worker, Linda Chamberlain recounts her personal experiences to new CAMH employees as part of the newly-revamped staff orientation.

Campaign draws from tragedies and triumphs

...continued from page 1

“That’s when I phoned a methadone clinic,” Sean says. “Within a week I was able to quit. Now I’m at McMaster in Addiction Studies and taking anthropology at Wilfred Laurier.”

Today, both Sean and Betty-Lou volunteer with the Halton Methadone Committee, relating their personal experiences to help build local support for a MMT facility.

Too often stigmatized as being “for junkies,” or only for heroin users, methadone is a prescription medication that helps manage the cravings and eliminates symptoms of withdrawal for people with a dependency on opioids.

Most people who seek treatment became dependant by using prescription medications (obtained legally in some cases, illegally in others), such as OxyContin, Percocet, or morphine.

Methadone Saves Lives is already rolling out in four Ontario communities: Thunder Bay, Halton, Ottawa and Chatham-Kent. The campaign complements the work of CAMH’s regional consultants and their community partners to develop a plan to address the lack of treatment and related issues.

For more information on *Methadone Saves Lives*, contact Kathryn Weiser, CAMH, at kathryn_weiser@camh.net or 416 535-8501, ext. 6655, or visit www.MethadoneSavesLives.ca.



The following groups at CAMH are currently looking for participants:

Men’s group for concurrent eating and substance use problems

If you are a male and you struggle with:

- alcohol; street drugs; prescription medication
- smoking; gambling
- overeating; dieting; body image
- constant thoughts about food

...then there is a place for you. Please call: **Penny Vernon** at 416 535-8501, ext. 6482. This group is offered by the **Eating Disorders and Addiction Clinic** at CAMH.

Client feedback focus group

If you are **Black, African-Canadian or a person of colour**, have received or are currently receiving treatment in the **Addiction Program** at CAMH, they would like to hear about your treatment experiences to improve their service(s) to you. An honorarium and light refreshments will be provided.

Please contact: **Savi Boodhai** at 416 535-8501, ext. 6701 to confirm your attendance at one of the following sessions:

60 White Squirrel Way, Room 226
Tuesday, March 24
6:30 to 8:00 pm

33 Russell St., Room 4058A
Wednesday, March 25
2:00 to 4:00 pm

Yak & Snack!

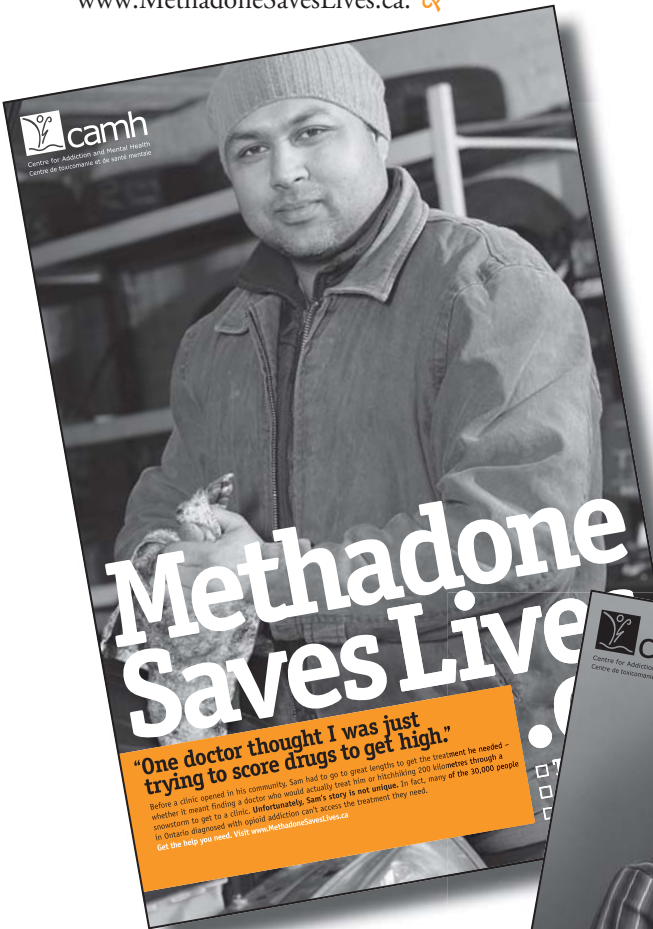
If you have a pet and/or a companion animal that you love to talk about then this get-together is just for you! On **Friday, March 13th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm** the Consumer/Survivor Info Centre located in the Mall at CAMH, 1001 Queen St. West will be holding a **Yak & Snack!** – a get-together to chat about your pets and/or companion animals. If you’d like to attend give them a call at **416 595-2882**.

Computer help available

Free over-the-phone or online technical support is available for consumer survivors. Help with repairs, upgrades, installation, networking. Coaching in MS Office, Photoshop, etc. Virus and spyware scans and clean-ups. Contact Martha at gandier47@hotmail.com or call the C/S Info Centre at 416 595-2882 who will put you in touch.

Reminder!

Sunday, March 8th marks the beginning of Daylight Saving Time so don’t forget to set your clocks one hour ahead when you go to bed on Saturday night.



Poster campaign for MethadoneSavesLives.ca

