



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Windsor-Essex County

Community well-being is our sole focus.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It's hard to believe that yet another year is coming to a close. We have much to be thankful for this year as we move into recovery from a global pandemic that has impacted every facet of our lives. Personally, I believe there are several important things we have learned over the last 20 months. As an organization, CMHA-WECEB has emerged stronger and more resilient than ever. We have found new,



effective ways to interact with our clients, introduced new programs and services, and continued to work collaboratively with our invaluable partners.

We are most thankful to all of the individuals, businesses and organizations who have continued to support CMHA over the last year. 2021 marked the 50th anniversary of CMHA-WECB. There have been numerous highlights to celebrate with reaching this milestone. Our \$1 million Move the Dial fundraising campaign was launched at the beginning of the year and I am delighted to share that we are close to reaching our goal!

With the holiday season upon us, we were excited to launch our annual [Light the Way](#) campaign on November 25 at Devonshire Mall. The CMHA display and volunteers will be at the mall until December 5 - be sure to stop by at the display located by Guest Services. Again this year funds raised support our Bereavement program and Client Assistance Fund – both of which rely on community support for sustainability. As part of Light the Way, be sure to also check out our [online silent auction](#), Load the Sleigh. So many fantastic items and great gift ideas! (Details are provided below).

Our 13th annual [Candlelight Vigil](#) in remembrance of children who have died will once again be virtual this year and will be held on Sunday, December 12 at 6:30 p.m. Although we are disappointed that we cannot meet in person, we are pleased to be able to present this alternative. We look forward to a return to an in-person gathering in 2022.

On behalf of all of us at CMHA-WECB we wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy New Year!

All the best,

Claudia den Boer
Chief Executive Officer



KIRSTEN'S STORY

On April 23rd, 2015, my son Zachary turned 21. I had literally just arrived home from running my 13th marathon during my second Boston Marathon.

I was a competitive distance runner, business owner and above all was a very happy Mom to my four children enjoying for the most part, every aspect of my life. My son Zachary was truly my biggest fan who would often run with me and support me in so many ways. And, even though he lived at home, he would still text me and call me every single day. He was my fierce protector and equally so to his brother and sisters. He had a gumption about him that electrified a room when he walked into it. His presence was silently magical and he was known as the life of the party. He was a genuine and kind man with an innate ability to bring people together, no matter your place in life.

Three weeks later, on May 15th, 2015, Zachary, died in his sleep. To this day, after further intensive investigation, there is still No. Known. Cause.

My world as I knew it ceased to exist. It quite literally went dark. I could barely walk. Running was over. I began smoking up to two packs a day. I did not work. It was all I could do to wake up just to be able to be driven to the cemetery where I could 'be with him'. Over the next year my desire to carry on dwindled greatly. I lost my hair and became severely underweight. On any given day I could barely go a day or two without Zachary. How was I to live a life without him? The pain was... unbearable.

My reluctant relationship with the CMHA began in the fall of 2015 approximately six months after Zachary died. I was welcomed into the Bereavement group for parents who have lost children. I recall at first feeling out of place (as though I really shouldn't be there) and too full of pride to give the group a chance. Once I got over my own pride, I relaxed my shoulders and listened to what other equally shattered Mothers and Fathers were saying. And what I was truly able to hear and learn was that while enormous pain and loss existed amongst us all, hope and a life worth living was the common denominator. I was advised that I must put the hard work in on this long and painful journey. It would take a great deal of time but to that end, time was all I had. Numerous times I would hear over and over "you can't hide from it, or dance around it, or try to avoid it. You Must Walk Through It." Walk through it I did. I'd rather walk barefoot across hot coals. Truly. How could that be any more painful? If not for Zachary's brother and sisters and father, how could life be worth this insurmountable pain?

And so, I would keep attending the support group more often than not in tears and was constantly reassured of hope for better days of peace in some small way to come. And I would consistently deny it all in my mind. "How on earth can this possibly get any better? He is gone. No one will bring him back." But the CMHA group allowed me a safe place to go without wearing a mask that "all is fine". Here you are able to say your child's name and speak of his or her story without the concern of burdening others. Here there is unconditional love much like that of you and your child.

Well, six and a half years have passed now. It still hurts. Like a lot! There are still dark days and days spent in tears.

But...

There are far more spent in light and happiness and some peace.

Zachary is a part of my life every moment of every day.

I no longer smoke.

I am running a very successful business teaching others to save lives.

I am training to one day run the Boston Marathon again.

And my heart, while forever broken has managed to heal enough to let love encapsulate it.

And... most importantly... I am a happy Mom to my four children once again.

My lifelong gratitude will be to the CMHA bereavement program and facilitators who in part guide the broken hearted towards a path of healing and light.

But above all... they provided me with hope where at one time, none existed.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Light the Way
November 25-December 31
www.LightTheWayYQG.com

Load the Sleigh for Light
the Way Online Auction
December 1-12
[Click for details](#)



Blumz Ornament Sales
Now until supplies last
[Visit website for details](#)



Candlelight Service
December 12, 2021
[RSVP here](#)
Online via Zoom



FOCUSED RECOVERY PROGRAM

With a goal to deliver the best services possible to individuals experiencing moderate-to-severe mental illness, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Windsor-Essex County Branch (CMHA-WECEB) officially launched the **Focused Recovery Program (FRP)** on November 15. It will replace the existing Intensive Case Management (ICM) Program.

As part of the FRP, services will be tailored to be focused on recovery, best practices and trauma-informed care. The FRP will enhance CMHA's ability to support clients' mental health and addiction wellness and recovery goals.

Twenty percent of Canadians experience a mental illness annually and this has only intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, demand has continued to escalate for ICM and the program has had a wait-list for several years.

"The Focused Recovery Program is a "Stepped-Care Model" that will focus on creating independence versus dependence for the client. Staff will focus on providing an intensive level of support to achieve goals in a timelier manner," says Tammy Kotyk, Integrated Director, Outpatient & Community Mental Health Services, HDGH and CMHA-WECEB.

The Stepped-Care model is a best practice that focuses on independence versus dependence for the client. The FRP will match the level of need with the level of support a client needs based on his/her diagnosis and will establish CMHA-WECEB staff as professional case managers equipped with the best tools to support their clients.

Other benefits included reduced wait times, better outcomes, rapid access, equity and a more focused clinical approach to achieving wellness and recovery goals.

The implementation of the FRP has already yielded positive results. For the first time in several years, the program does not have a wait list which means individuals are being provided care more efficiently.

"With the implementation of this model and the FRP, we start by asking clients, what does recovery look like for you?" says Kotyk.

The FRP services will continue to be offered in both Windsor and Essex County. Referrals to the FRP program will continue to be done through Coordinated Access. If this is not the appropriate program for the individual, our staff will refer to the appropriate provider.

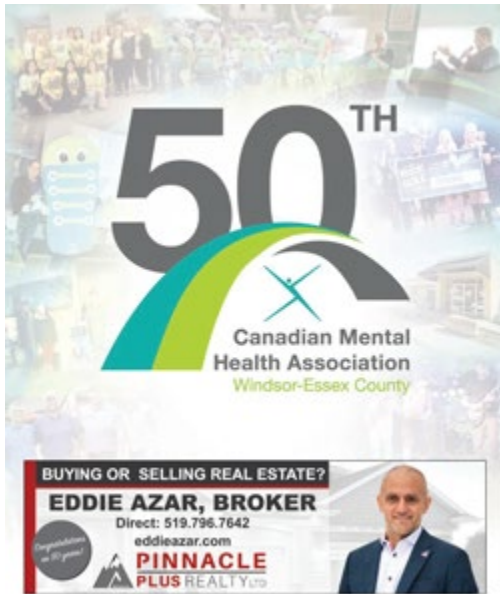
The FRP is only one of CMHA's programs for individuals with moderate-to-severe mental illness. For a complete list visit, www.windsor-essex.cmha.ca.



SO MANY REASONS TO SMILE!

There are so many reasons to smile! Earlier this year, CMHA-WECA was delighted to be selected along with Autism Services, as the recipients of Tim Hortons annual Smile Cookie campaign. The campaign ran from September 13-19, and once again, Windsor-Essex demonstrated why we are the most generous community going! An incredible \$200,000 was raised, making this the most successful campaign year to date locally. We were ecstatic to receive a \$100,000 cheque that will support the Windsor-Essex Youth Hub, as well as provide Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training to teachers in our community.

We also hosted our annual Go Green Golf Tournament in September, with a sold out group enjoying the immaculate greens and hospitality of Essex Golf & Country Club. While the format was once again amended to reflect COVID protocols, it was our most successful to date, raising over \$80,000 for our Griefworks program, providing grief therapy to children and youth.



HAPPY 50th CMHA-WECB!

As part of our year of celebrations, we have partnered with Neighbor to produce a special edition insert that celebrates some of the people and organizations that have helped to shape CMHA-WECB and the mental health landscape over the last five decades. It also showcases some great fundraising events and the people that make them possible; and most importantly, provides information on the services we offer today and how to access them.

Check out our [anniversary video](#) on our YouTube page!

You can find the insert anywhere you find Neighbor (formerly Snapd Windsor), online by [clicking here](#), or by emailing khill@cmha-wecb.on.ca for your copy.



WILL POWER

CMHA-WECB has partnered with Will Power, a national movement to educate Canadians on the power they have to make a difference through their Wills.

By leaving a gift to CMHA-WECB in your Will you can make a bigger contribution than you ever thought possible to mental health and addiction services.

Many donors believe that they can't support both their loved ones *and* their favourite cause with their Will. **The truth is, just a small percentage of your estate left to charity can have a big impact, while still leaving the majority for loved ones. Choosing to**

support your charity can also reduce and, in some cases, even eliminate the taxes to be paid. A win-win!

No matter the size of your estate, you can be a part of this powerful movement for change. Wondering how your future gift would be used? Find out about how we use donations [here](#).

Take a look at the free resources and tools on the Will Power website to learn about the [common myths surrounding gifts in Wills](#), [the potential tax benefits](#), and more.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Kim Willis, Director, Communications and Mental Health Promotion at 519-244-9940 x161 or kwillis@cmha-wecb.on.ca.

[Make a Donation](#)

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**Canadian Mental Health Association
Windsor-Essex County Branch**

Main Office:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm



Be sure to add our email address to your address book or safe senders list so our emails get to your inbox.

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1400 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, ON N8X 3L9