

Introduction

This report gives a synopsis of the impact that Home on the Hill has had serving families of those with serious mental illness and the broader community.

Implementation of our Strategic Plan.

Home on the Hill was accepted for pro bono consulting by the non profit organization, Endeavour Executive which completed an extensive review over the Spring and Summer of 2018. Accordingly, Home on the Hill has followed recommendations and focused energy on advocacy for the inclusion of families in the care of their family member, providing information and support to families, and providing educational opportunities for them and the general public through our signature program, the Robert Veltheer Lecture Series on Mental Illness.

Most importantly, families feel most supported when their family member is meaningfully engaged. The programs which Home on the Hill has developed provide meaningful engagement and fit our newly developed guidelines because they are geared to serve the unique needs and strengths of each client. Each client has different interests and we endeavour to support these interests. In addition, our programs often take place in the community which offers opportunities for integration. Home on the Hill has fostered a caring community which provides opportunities for growing, learning and sharing.

Current Home on the Hill Programs

1. The Robert Veltheer Lecture Series on Serious Mental Illness.

Home on the Hill is committed to provide four educational lectures each year through the Robert Veltheer Series, which is sponsored by a Community and Cultural Grant from the City of Richmond Hill. Our organization is very proud to offer most of our lectures through our you tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUCXPemfrvjNEgJssmf59UQ/videos>. We thank our videographer, Billy Dennis who films and edits these videos and Bill Stathokos for web support. Our consultants stated in their 2018 report that Home on the Hill is a small organization with a wide reach. Making these videos available to the public is a means of providing information about mental illness to the broader and therefore helping to increase understanding.

On February 5th, Home on the Hill was delighted to welcome Dr. Amir Barsoum back to discuss the very important topic of marijuana use and the development of mental illness. This event drew in members of the general public and a good number of members of the York Regional Police. Dr. Barsoum also discussed the opioid crisis. After his lecture, Dr. Barsoum took many questions about this current topic from the floor.

On May 10th, the public was invited to a luncheon (free for family caregivers) and panel discussion with psychologist, Dr. Lori Triano, psychiatrist, Dr. David Dawson and Joanna Cheung Art Therapist. The topic of the discussion was Schizophrenia. Dr. Lori Triano's presentation covered her own personal and professional experience with schizophrenia. She is the current President of the Board of Directors of the

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Schizophrenia Society of Canada. She was joined by noted psychiatrist, writer and artist, Dr. David Dawson. Dr. Dawson's presentation discussed the onset and trajectory of schizophrenia.

Joanna Cheung, Art Therapist and Social Worker from Markham Stouffville Hospital presented upon the history of art therapy, art therapy definition, effectiveness of art therapy, rationale for art therapy especially for clients who struggle to express themselves verbally. She included art work from patients who have provided consent. Joanna Cheung is a Certified Art Therapist and has practiced as a social worker for thirty years.

The topic of schizophrenia drew so many questions from families and professionals that Home on the Hill invited Dr. Dawson back again to answer more questions on November 7th. He will be accompanied by two people with lived experience who will describe their own experiences living with this illness.

On September 17, Queen's Psychologist Dr Christopher Bowie returned to discuss Cognitive Remediation. This talk was not be 'too academic' and designed to reach a broad audience. Parents, those who have a psychotic illness, family members, as well as members of the public attended and later took part in an interactive discussion with Dr. Bowie Hill whose presentation provided information on the progress made in fine tuning this much needed intervention. Home on the Hill has played a strong role in advocating for this much needed therapy and hopes that it will soon be available in our community. Dr. Bowie plans to return in two years to share again the progress made regarding cognitive remediation.

2.Supportive Housing Program. Home on the Hill continues to support one tenant in an apartment at the Richmond Hill Community Hub. Home on the Hill is also on the waitlist to receive another unit from Richmond Hill Ecumenical Homes. Plans to continue to build our supportive housing program are underway and will be shared later.

3.The Cook Group Our cooking program which includes a free community lunch cooked by our team of volunteers and offered to community members has attracted more diners. We are now welcoming people from the Community Food Bank, the Salvation Army, the Krasman Centre and the Chinese Community Church. This program offers the volunteers who participate opportunities to learn cooking skills, take part in team work and a chance to give back to the community.

4.The Art Therapy Program. A qualified art therapist runs a weekly program with clients. This program has been beneficial for those individuals whose sense of well being and self worth have been improved which has enhanced their interpersonal skills.

5. Art Expression through Painting. This program is run by a volunteer who is a popular artist from the Richmond Hill Group of Artists. This is not an art therapy program. It offers an opportunity for people to relax and enjoy expressing themselves through painting. It takes place in Covernotes in Richmond Hill. Caregivers and others affected by mental illness are welcome. This group just enjoyed an outing to the McMichael Collection in Kleinberg followed by a lunch in Kleinberg.

6. Music Jamming. The members of this group have been challenged by mental illness and participate in weekly jamming sessions.

7. Family Support Group . This group takes place on alternate Wednesdays. It offers a place where participants can express their concerns in a safe confidential environment.

8. Family Respite Program. This program is becoming increasingly popular. Caregivers value getting together for recreational outings with others who are experiencing the same struggles. They like getting together and forgetting their concerns for a little while. Caregivers have met for breakfast at Tim Hortons on several occasions. They have attended two High Notes Avante events where they have enjoyed a musical evening, plus a number of caregivers attended a week end retreat. Plans are underway for our end of year holiday party!

Outreach

Home on the Hill is an active member of the Richmond Hill Community. Board Directors have attended the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and the Mayor's Lunch sponsored by the Richmond Hill Board of Trade of which our organization is a proud member. We have attended community barbecues of our provincial and federal elected representatives. We have been honored to be invited as servers at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church where we have met many community leaders and raised our profile. We are grateful to receive the proceeds of the breakfasts. Kathy Mochnacki who is President of the Board was an invited panelist at the Richmond Hill Public Library on October 2nd to take part in the topic of Mental Illness and Stigma. Recently our organization was invited to register as a collaborator in the new proposed Eastern York Region and North Durham Ontario Health Team. Kathy Mochnacki and Maria DeCicco served on the Service Coordination Council on Mental Health and Addictions of the Central LHIN. This Council came to an end in March after three years.

Social Media

Home on the Hill has a wide audience that follows our facebook and reads pertinent articles on serious mental illness, access to services, and other issues of real concern to families of those affected by serious mental illness. The Home on the Hill website also contains relevant information. We also have a twitter account.

Funding.

Home on the Hill thanks the families and other members of the public who have sent cheques by mail, or contributed by donations at our public events. Each of these contributions are received with much gratitude.

Home on the Hill is delighted to announce that our organization is now receiving funding from Bingo World Richmond Hill. We are required to provide volunteers to staff Bingo events to welcome customers and perform light clean up tasks. This funding will enable us to hire staff for our programs.

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Our organization has also been the successful applicant of funding from the Town of Richmond Hill for which we are most grateful.

Our organization received a grant of money from the Taiwanese Business Association of Toronto.

Our organization has received a grant from the Richmond Hill Canadian Legion.

Home on the Hill is the grateful recipient of funding from St. Mary's Anglican Church Christmas Bazaar, the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Community Breakfast Program and St. Matthews United Church.

Home on the Hill is delighted that the Richmond Hill Lawn Bowling Club sponsored a fundraising event called "Lawn Bowling with a Goal" at their club on Sunday July 7th 2019 . The Royal Bank of Canada issued a grant to support this event. This was a fun day of lawn bowling, food and entertainment.

Home on the Hill has been the successful recipient of funding from the Canada Summer Jobs Program. York University Social Work student, Maddy D'Urzo was the successful applicant and led the cook group and also provided technical support for our mailings and social media.

In summary, Home on the Hill would like to thank our volunteers, supporters, and members of the community for their ongoing and much valued support.