

# the CLIENT'S VOICE

For the clients, from the clients  
Newsletter of The Royal's Client Advisory Council

FALL 2019

## A Volunteer Story

by Glenda O'Hara

Mahatma Gandhi said "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." I have been volunteering at Royal Ottawa Place for several years now and it is one of the best wellness tools that I have found for myself.

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Royal Ottawa Place (ROP) right next door to The Royal provides an environment that supports and enhances the quality of life of adults with stable mental illness or physical limitations, and other individuals who may benefit from a home-like environment.

I started out with a reading group, then a journaling group and for some time now have moved to one on one visits with several residents.

I live with mental illness as well and there are days when depression sets in and I don't want to leave my home but there are those looking forward to a visit and I push myself and go to ROP and when I am done and riding the elevator down on my way home, I smile

and think to myself "you got more out of this today than they did."

I am going to tell you about four people I visit with or have visited with at ROP. I am not going to discuss their diagnosis mentally or physically because that does not define them. You have to get to know what is in their heart and behind those eyes – that is what I will tell you about.

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands — one for helping yourself, the other for helping others." — Audrey Hepburn

The person I have been visiting with the longest is Sue Racine. She is a spit fire to say the least. She sits on the resident council and a Royal committee that deals with the physical transfer

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## A Volunteer Story continued

of patients. She attends pretty well every in-house activity that is thrown at her – bingo, art groups,

Karen Lemieux loves her soft dolls. While not allowed soft dolls as a child, she has had her large soft dolls Raggedy Ann and Raggedy

to books on CD. Her greatest accomplishment is her involvement with Propeller Dance. This past season which many of Karen's friends attended, saw her perform an especially poignant number. Pre recovery Karen held a banner that said REJECTED, then she danced with the other dancers and came up to the spotlight and told us her story of struggle in spoken word. Post-recovery Karen then held a banner that said GLORIOUS bringing all of us to tears. Karen was a super star that night.

"The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves." — *Helen Keller*

Lynda Fitzsimmons and I have a very special relationship. We are patient with one another – her speech is sometimes difficult to understand and I am a bit hard of hearing – so we are quite the pair. She has the most amazing



Sue's good friends Lindy Mellor, Glenda O'Hara and Sue Racine

computers, relaxation... the list goes on. Her hobbies include reading, colouring, writing poetry, journaling, time with friends and of course listening to music. Sue has over 300 CDs that we have recently catalogued – she is always promising to buy no more. She has some wonderful poems and a mystery story in Chris Nihmey's book "Reflections from The Other Side". We are currently doing a scrapbooking project together – collecting photographs and cards that mean a lot to her. Sue cares deeply for her friends and is never at a loss to give us advice.

"Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more."  
— *H. Jackson Brown Jr.*

Andy for a long time – they are well loved. They have been joined by seven others: Raggedys Ashley, Anita, Andrea, Amelia, Alvin and Aline. She always sleeps with a couple and carries one or two around with her in her wheelchair. Finding something that brings you comfort is a great wellness tool. Karen is very artistic and loves to paint at home and with her group. She also loves to play music on her keyboard, kazoo or dulcimer as well as listen to music. She is currently enjoying classical and jazz music that another volunteer has turned her on to. Karen also loves to read either large print or listen



Karen Lemieux performing at Propeller Dance

sarcastic wit and I never have a visit with her that doesn't include many laughs. I arrive on the second floor to her sitting at her usual spot near the





Lynda Fitzsimmons



Donna Lordon with son, Casey, and Barry the attendant dog.

fish tank by the elevators with a big smile and those amazing blue eyes just dancing with delight. Lynda has many lovely memories of her family – parents long gone but fondly remembered – and a brother and sister and extended family that keep in touch. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning, Lynda sets out on Para Transpo to meet her brother Harry for lunch at Good Companions – this is a real highlight of her week – to get out and about and see her lovely brother. I have heard many a tale of the mischievous Lynda as a young girl who went on to work in her father's real estate office. She does not let her lack of mobility stop her from participating in many activities such as art, music and relaxation. Lynda also enjoys relaxing in her room, listening to the radio or her CDs, and her afternoon chocolate treat.

"At the end of the day it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished... it's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back." — *Denzel Washington*

I started reading to Casey Lordon a couple of years ago. I was told he had degrees in history and museum technology so I chose a Dickens era mystery that we both got tired of. Next we chose a sci-fi fantasy style book depicting life on Mars with its inhabitants uprising and the language was just as difficult as the old-style book – many made up fantastical names that very hard to plod through while reading aloud. Casey loved sports especially soccer which was on 24/7 in

his room – sometimes I'm sure he would have liked to tell me to let him be to watch his beloved sport. Sometimes I would choose not to read but sit with him and watch – nattering away – I'm sure he would have liked to tell me to be quiet. You could tell by his eyes that he had a sense of fun. He was so well loved by his family – I met many of them and spent a lot of time with his mother, Donna, and proud attendant dog Barry. Our last book was enjoyed by both of us "The Cuckoo's Calling" by Robert Galbraith aka JK Rowling. The title is taken from the mournful poem by Christina Rossetti called, simply, 'A Dirge,' which is a lament for one who died too young. Perhaps it was a foretelling, as Casey passed away May 31st before we finished the book. I think his spirit is somewhere out there in the universe having the "Perfect Day" – finishing the book to find out who done it, watching soccer, eating Lindors and listening to Neil Young and Lou Reed.

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy... when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." – Author Unknown

*"Being rich of heart  
makes you wealthy beyond  
compare."*

— Rodney Williams

# This section includes family stories and opinions

## A Family Affair



by Pari Johnston

Mental illness has touched my family through the generations.

My father had undiagnosed bipolar disorder and my sister and brother live with depression and schizophrenia respectively. My siblings are strong, brave and resilient people and we are a close family.

My 18-year old teenage son spent time at the The Royal last fall for

several weeks as an inpatient. He received excellent care and support: I am eternally grateful for the high-quality mental health resources we have in Ottawa.

But getting him into the system – and making sense of patchwork of services - since he began to struggle at age 12 was a huge challenge. Families often feel alone, isolated, confused and helpless. Thanks to an understanding employer, I took a leave from work since December to support and advocate for our son, and take care of my own health.

I have a few thoughts on system improvements based on my lived experience these last nine months.

First, dedicating real people whose primary role is to help families navigate the youth mental health system at the community level is essential. I had the time, financial resources, and lobbying skills (thanks to my day job) to manage the many transitions our son experienced: from in- to out-patient, re-entry into the public school system and moving into the adult

## Ottawa Network for Borderline Personality Disorder

On June 27th, the Ottawa Network for Borderline Personality Disorder (ON-BPD) hosted its 3rd in a series of lectures to generate awareness, mobilize commitment and garner support for moving initiatives forward that benefit families in our community touched by Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and related conditions. "I was delighted to welcome our guest speaker, Dr. Joanne Bezzubetz, President and Chief Executive Officer from The Royal Ottawa" says ON-BPD President, Michèle Langlois, "and, like many others in attendance, was captivated by her vision of a hospital without walls."

The event was attended by family members of loved ones with BPD, members of ON-BPD and its' Board, Family Connections course leaders and graduates, along with professionals in the area of mental health services delivery.

Participants were hopeful to learn of The Royal's plans to improve family and loved one's access to services meeting people where they are at. "Community need and engagement is reflected in the well attended events The Royal hosts and/or sponsors with organizations such as the ON-BPD," says Juliet Haynes, Regional Family Support Program Coordinator at The Royal.

"The impact of these for participants can be life changing," says Haynes. Conversations at The Royal, Family Information Groups and courses such as Family Connections really make a difference for participants as highlighted by the following examples of feedback:

"It was great to find a resource where people facing the same challenges could learn about BPD. I now have a much better understanding of this illness and have new skills to help me."

"Hearing other people's stories and finding support and similarities – not feeling alone."



# *“People protect what they love.”*

mental health system. I found it a bureaucratic maze. What do families do who are new to Ottawa or Canada, whose first language is not English or French, who cannot take time off work or who work shifts, or who cannot afford (or don't have insurance) for a private psychologist? Privilege should not determine your child's access to and success in the mental health system.

Second, a quality mental health care professional is someone who puts him or herself in

family member's shoes and has authentic empathy for their stress, worry, and sense of being overwhelmed. Communication with families need to come from a place of empathy and compassion.

Third, serious health policy attention is needed for regarding how to properly assess and support dual diagnoses like autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and mental illness, especially among young adults like our son. I have discovered that these are two

very separate worlds: it's the families who are connecting the dots across clinicians, social workers, services, programs and community resources. ASD is the fastest growing neurological disorder in Canada and it's incumbent on the mental health sector to better understand and respond to the interconnections.

I'm really looking forward to being part of the The Royal Family Advisory Council this year.

**This is The Client's Voice with an extra special addition.**

*“It was such a comfort zone to share without judgement and understanding the elements that I was doing right and seeing where I can improve in myself.”*

*“The more we do, the more we learn about what is helpful and valued by the community.”*

Collaborative efforts with organizations such as the Ottawa Network for Borderline Personality Disorder, which provides education, skills training and peer support via Family Connections to family members of loved ones with BPD are well underway to increase access to quality programs that are proven to work for families of loved ones with BPD.

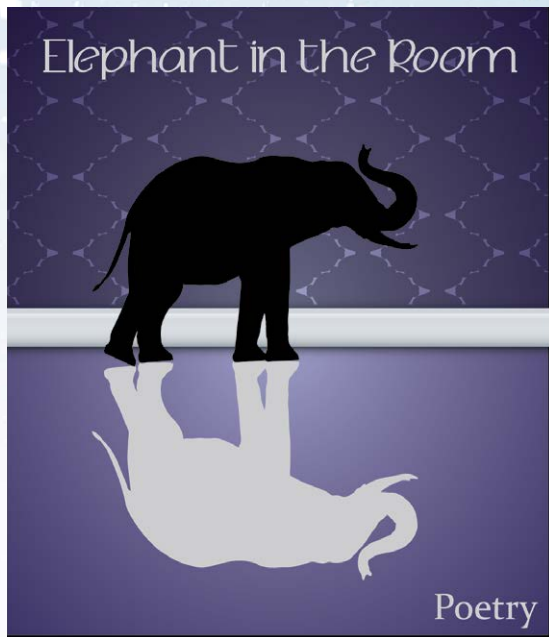
Fully realizing the vision of a hospital without walls will happen over time and through collaborative efforts between The Royal and the many stakeholders it serves.

*“Fortunately, many community-based organizations such as ours have stepped up in our collective efforts to fill support and resource gaps,”* says Michèle. *“Many, run by volunteers, operate with a laser focus on their specific area of concern. It is reassuring to learn that The Royal is leading the charge to bring together various community, family and client stakeholders to coordinate, co-design, test and implement solutions that will meet people where they are, provide immediate relief and contribute to longer-term mental health wellness*

*outcomes within our community.”*

Michèle Langlois is President of the ON-BPD, Course Leader and also member of The Royal's Family Advisory Council.

**About BPD:** *ON-BPD is a volunteer-run charitable organization (Registered Charity Number: 708830492RR0001). The main objectives of Ottawa Network for Borderline Personality Disorder (ON-BPD) are to educate and support relatives of people with BPD and to help family members develop skills for coping. This is done primarily through the Family Connections program. Read more about the program in the Family Connections page of our site, <https://on-bpd.ca/>.*



## The sound of silence

Don't talk about it; it will make it real.  
Don't talk about it; they will judge us.  
Don't talk about it; they won't like us.  
Don't talk about it; it hurts too much.  
Don't talk about it; everyone will know.  
Don't talk about it; I don't have to face it.  
    Don't talk about it; I'm afraid.  
    Don't talk about it; it's taboo.  
    Don't talk about it; it's a secret.  
Don't talk about it; someone will get hurt.  
    Don't talk about it; it makes me angry.  
Don't talk about it; no one wants to know.  
    Don't talk about it; no one would  
        understand.  
    Don't talk about it; it will destroy.  
The elephant in the room is bigger than it  
appears, it keeps you trapped within your  
fears.  
Set it free and speak your mind, a better  
understanding you may find.

Brenda Buckley

## home

I took a walk in the snow  
And left my door wide open  
And he walked in  
With his beautiful smiling face  
I was lost  
And he helped me find my way  
Back home to  
Where I was supposed to be  
I was damaged  
But he didn't care  
I didn't know who I was anymore  
And he helped me find myself  
I was sad  
And he made me happy  
I was afraid  
And he made me feel safe  
I told him all my stories  
And he listened  
I was sick  
And it didn't scare him  
I took off my mask  
And he said I was beautiful  
We laughed until we cried  
And I found joy in my life again  
The snow is starting to melt  
I feel the warmth  
That true caring brings  
I have found my home

Glenda O'Hara



Divorce is okay  
 Breaking up is okay.  
 Starting over is okay.  
 Moving on is okay.  
 Saying no is okay.  
 Being alone is okay.

What is not okay is:  
 Staying somewhere where you aren't  
 happy, valued, or appreciated.  
 That's not okay.

— Unknown Author

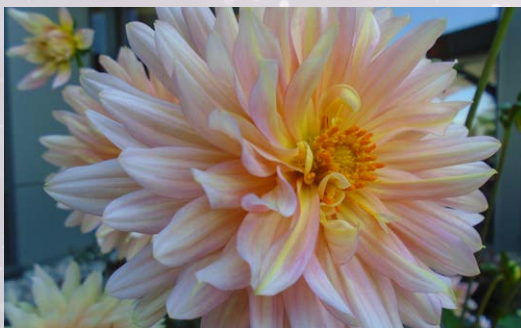
## Dear Me,

Don't you ever give up on yourself.  
 This life is going to challenge you and  
 knock you down, but you can never  
 give up. When you fell you have given  
 it your all and there is nothing left,  
 remember your power.

You are the creator of your reality.  
 Your current destination is not your  
 final destination.

Remember who you are. Keep  
 dreaming, keep fighting, keep  
 growing, keep learning, never give up!

— Brenda Buckley



OUT FRONT OF HOSPITAL BY VDM

## At The Royal

We get to have warm showers  
 Three meals every 24 hours  
 Thankful to Ra's power  
 The sun that blooms flowers

— VEssEL

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home in an Australian country town, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through his meagre possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas editions of magazines around the country and appearing in mags for Mental Health. And this old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this 'anonymous' poem winging across the Internet.

## CRANKY OLD MAN

What do you see nurses?.....	What do you see?
What are you thinking.....	when you're looking at me?
A cranky old man,.....	not very wise,
Uncertain of habit.....	with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles his food.....	and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice.....	'I do wish you'd try!'
Who seems not to notice .....	the things that you do.
And forever is losing .....	A sock or shoe?
Who, resisting or not.....	lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding .....	The long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking?.....	Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse .....	you're not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am.....	As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, .....	as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of Ten.....	with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters .....	who love one another
A young boy of Sixteen .....	with wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon now .....	a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at Twenty.....	my heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows.....	that I promised to keep.
At Twenty-Five, now .....	I have young of my own.
Who need me to guide.....	And a secure happy home.
A man of Thirty .....	My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other .....	With ties that should last.
At Forty, my young sons .....	have grown and are gone,
But my woman is beside me .....	to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more, .....	Babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children.....	My loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me.....	My wife is now dead.
I look at the future .....	I shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing.....	young of their own.
And I think of the years .....	And the love that I've known.
I'm now an old man .....	and nature is cruel.
It's jest to make old age .....	look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles.....	grace and vigour, depart.
There is now a stone .....	where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass.....	A young man still dwells,
And now and again .....	my battered heart swells
I remember the joys .....	I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living .....	life over again.
I think of the years, all too few .....	gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact.....	that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, people.....	open and see.
Not a cranky old man	
Look closer.....	see ME!!

Remember this poem when you next meet an older person who you might brush aside without looking at the young soul within. We will all, one day, be there, too!

# we want to hear from you!



**Show your artwork**

**Share your poems**

**Tell a funny story**

**Show your photos**

**Share your wellness journey**

**Tell us your favourite quote**

**Contact Us** We would love to hear what you have to say about *The Client's Voice* or if you would like to become a member of the Client Advisory Council, feel free to call, write or email your questions and comments to:

## Client Advisory Council

The Royal,  
1145 Carling Avenue, Room 1349, Ottawa ON K1Z 7K4  
613.722.6521, ext. 6767

Email:

[cac@theroyal.ca](mailto:cac@theroyal.ca)



Send your submissions to:

**Alexis Milne**

[alexis.milne@theroyal.ca](mailto:alexis.milne@theroyal.ca)

## List of ACRONYMS to find!

### How well do you know your Hospital?

Z	K	L	Y	A	X	N	P	H	L	G	N	M	Q	S
N	V	B	R	K	I	H	L	J	Z	K	P	G	T	Z
M	O	S	J	H	M	P	D	R	M	C	H	M	B	P
Y	G	A	L	C	N	H	Y	F	W	R	A	P	D	H
R	F	R	Z	W	P	G	N	C	N	T	H	Q	F	C
Z	C	V	A	O	S	C	H	I	B	O	J	E	L	O
Y	I	C	Y	L	M	F	M	O	M	I	D	M	K	N
V	F	D	F	H	C	L	A	R	W	L	O	L	P	A
Y	X	J	A	P	X	F	C	O	Q	H	J	R	Y	D
Z	I	K	U	N		Y	D	P	L	W	O	T	C	T
G	A	C	G	A	S	C	I	T	R	P	I	K	U	O
N	R	J	M	F	C	O	C	B	U	M	W	F	X	P
Q	T	O	G	C	K	T	V	F	S	R	A	K	Z	F
J	X	N	J	A	J	C	T	O	C	C	N	S	M	H
O	K	M	T	C	D	U	E	J	H	Y	D	R	F	K

- 1 Brockville Mental Health Centre
- 2 Registered Practical Nurse
- 3 Ontario Nurses Association
- 4 Community Mental Health Program
- 5 Client & Family Centred Care/Patient & Family Centred Care
- 6 Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- 7 Canadian Mental Health Association
- 8 Client Advisory Council
- 9 Family Advisory Council
- 10 Local Health Integrated Network
- 11 Service Access to Recovery
- 12 Resident Assessment Instrument
- 13 Assertive Community Treatment Team
- 14 Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- 15 Royal Ottawa Place
- 16 Client and Family Relations
- 17 Constant Observation
- 18 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- 19 Alternative Levels of Care
- 20 Registered Nurse
- 21 General Practitioner