

Keystones

Our Annual NewsReport

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Centre for Research and Education in Human Services

Civic Participation



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Editor's Note



by *Melissa Pound*

Welcome! As you may have noticed, this year's NewsReport has a new title and a slightly different look. As Joanna points out in her Coordinator's Note, this year has been one of growth and change at the Centre and what better way to reflect and celebrate that development than through the NewsReport?

Our new title emerged from the Centre's motto, "building bridges within communities." In classic Roman bridges, the keystone is the stone that completes the arch and makes it strong. In Centre bridges, our keystones are the things that we write about in the NewsReport: people, ideas, the wisdom of experience and the excitement of innovation.

As in past issues, this year's articles share a common theme. This issue's theme, citizen or civic participation, is one that has always been central to our work. Our vision statement includes the beliefs that "each person has...the right to equitable participation," and that "social justice is advanced as people build on their stakeholder roles to move toward full citizenship." But what does participation mean? And how can we as an organization support it?

Contributors to this issue start to tackle these questions. John Lord provides an overview of some of the issues in civic participation and the

related concept of civil society (actions and organizations not controlled by the market or the state). Janos Botschner, Rich Janzen and Andrew Taylor reflect on the connections between civic participation and specific research areas that the Centre is involved in (disability/mental health issues, cultural diversity, and family support respectively). Joanna Ochocka outlines parallels between participatory community research and other forms of participation. Nash Majstorovic, a community researcher, shares his perspective on civic participation as a newcomer to Canada. And finally, Karen Taylor-Harrison describes her recent experiences around civic participation as a City Councillor.

Writing on the topic of civil society, journalist Karen Sawatsky, quotes Al Etmanski, a founder of the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network for people with disabilities and their families. He says that "in Canada, we do it. We might not talk about it as much [as in the U.S. or Britain] but...we're creating models that don't exist elsewhere" (www.impacs.org/civilsociety/karens.html). At the Centre for Research and Education, we are excited to help document different aspects of this development, and to help get people talking.

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Coordinator's Note



by Joanna Ochocka

The first year of the new millennium is coming to an end. At the Centre for Research and Education, the year 2000 can be characterized by growth, integration, leadership and impact. Let me reflect on these four themes.

Growth. We have grown as an organization. During the last year, we employed a large number of researchers, including over 35 community researchers who we trained and supported, and who now work on Centre projects or have found employment outside the Centre. We currently have 40 staff on the payroll. Janos Botschner and Purnima Sundar have joined us as full-time researchers and Amanda Soikie has joined us as a full-time research and administrative assistant. Eight other Centre researchers have been working from satellite offices in Welland, Hamilton and Cambridge. Four Master's students from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph have completed practicum placements through involvement in Centre projects.

We have also expanded in terms of the depth and breadth of our research. Over the past year, we have worked in total on 25 research projects. We have moved into the area of neighbourhood safety and crime prevention, as well as increased our involvement in cultural diversity research. Currently we are working on four longer term projects: a provincial evaluation of the Early Years Initiatives, an evaluation of the Safe and Sound project, a longitudinal study of Consumer/Survivor Initiatives in community mental health, and a provincial research study on immigrant parenting issues.

Integration. As a Centre, we have always been conscious of what we learn through our work and through our interactions with people in communities and human services. We use a

bridge as a metaphor; our work is primarily about making connections between learnings and between people. We stay grounded locally in our work but also try to work on similar issues provincially and nationally. We also share our learnings with others and in this way we work globally.

We have been working in six main research areas: mental health, disabilities, family support, cultural diversity, crime prevention and aging. Within each research area there is a cluster of activities: research projects, consultations, building and maintaining local and national networks, education events and dissemination activities. Each research project is a collaboration of a large number of innovators, providers and citizens. People interacting and contributing to research studies learn and integrate learnings with practice as projects proceed. As well, there has been an integration of many learnings within projects and across projects.

Leadership. The Centre continues to contribute to our research areas by playing a leadership role in initiating research projects, collaborating with others, linking interested people together and training community researchers who have firsthand experience with human services and social systems. For example, in the mental health area, we collaborate with researchers from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and Wilfrid Laurier University, train and hire community researchers who have experienced the mental health system, and maintain a large network of service innovators and system shakers in various regions. The same is happening in other research areas. The Centre is also a leader in sharing learnings with others. We are active in conferencing, publishing books and articles, conducting workshops and disseminating research findings, and are



outreaching always to find new opportunities to share our work with others.

Impact. We practice and teach collaborative approaches that link research closely with action and change. The impact of our work is in engaging innovators, providers, funders and consumers of human services in ongoing reflection and action to make communities more responsive and supportive to their citizens. Through involvement in Centre projects, people share promising practices, confirm changes that were experienced, clarify concepts and find a common language and vision for change. Our projects provide a forum for mutual learning.

Our impact is also strong in training and employing community researchers, who often have limited access to power and opportunities. It is significant that we learn much from people at the margin: their perspectives ground our insights and understanding of the interrelationships within systems. The participatory action approaches we use in our projects facilitate mutual learning and provide a platform for future change.

We will continue this work in the future. We believe that good research conducted in a participatory and action-oriented fashion is a key element in making our communities better places for everyone. We encourage you, the long term friends and partners of the Centre for Research and Education, to support this work and to contribute to the future of human services in Canada.

Be well,
Joanna Ochocka

Our Active Participation: Conferences & Workshops



The Institutionalisation of Participatory Action Research in Canadian Psychology
Canadian Psychological Association: History and Philosophy of Psychology Program, Ottawa
June 2000

Needs of Newcomer Youth.
OASIS Settlement Sector Conference, Toronto,
November 2000

Newcomer Youth Settlement: Needs, Services and Emerging Best Practices.
The Fifth International Metropolis Conference,
Vancouver, November 2000

Making a Change Together: Promoting Better Access to Professions and Trades in Ontario.
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
Annual Professional Development Conference,
Orillia, Ontario, October 2000

Innovative Solutions: Culturally Sensitive Services in an Age of Diversity.
Notre Dame Child & Family Institute - Speaker,
Kitchener, October 2000

The Paradigm Shift in Community Mental Health.
Community Mental Health Association, Waterloo
Branch, Annual General Meeting - Keynote Speaker,
Kitchener, September, 2000

Promoting Access to Trades and Professions
Two workshops for the Ontario Network For Access
to Professions and Trades (ONAPT), Toronto, July
2000

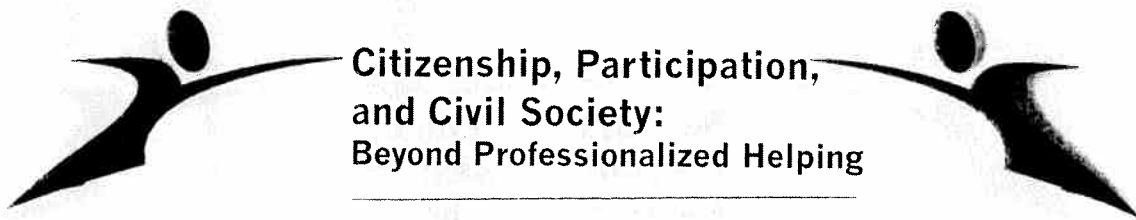
Promoting Access to Trades and Professions
Newcomer Settlement Professional Development
Workshop, London, Ontario, June 2000

Strategic Planning: Values, Principles, Action Plan and Evaluation.
Niagara Mental Health Coalition - Workshop
Facilitator, Port Colbourne, Ontario, May, 2000

Rights and Recovery. Shifting the Paradigm in Community Mental Health.
Second National Conference on Best Practices and
Mental Health Reform, Vancouver, BC, April 2000

More conferences and workshops continued on page 16...





Citizenship, Participation, and Civil Society: Beyond Professionalized Helping

by John Lord

Over the years, an important paradox has emerged from the Centre's research on human services. Although formal human services in Canada now expend huge amounts of public resources, formal services have many negative effects. It has been shown, for example, that formal services can limit people's participation in community life. Formal human services legitimize professionalized helping, which has become dominant in our society. In many ways, this has had the effect of restricting people's thinking about other possibilities and options. Especially for citizens who are more vulnerable, formal human service paradigms and programs are often seen as *the only* strategy that can benefit individuals.

Centre studies have helped us understand that formal human service interventions are only *one* of the ways that individual and community issues can be addressed. Centre work shows that it is often community participation and citizenship activities that enhance or empower individuals and communities. Communities and groups that are welcoming and inclusive provide a context for relationship building and participation. Citizens grow when they become engaged in helping themselves and others through local projects, whether for child care, self-help and mutual aid, or neighbourhood development. We all benefit from having opportunities to participate in civil society.

There is growing interest in civil society and citizenship, and participation in democracy is expanding in many parts of the world. Civil society, sometimes seen as a way to promote a partnership culture, is based on trust, collaboration, and inclusion. Unfortunately, these issues related to formal human services and civil society are currently influenced by opposing world-wide trends. Global corporations, technology, and consumerism now have an enormous impact on everyone's

life. These trends are increasing the corporatization of services and communities. Ironically, at a time when communities are trying to cope with downsizing and globalization, researchers are noting that emerging paradigms and values in various fields, whether child development, family support, or mental health, emphasize the importance of community participation, self-help, and community development. The struggle with these differing perspectives is creating tension and uncertainty for communities.

Ronald Wright, a Canadian archeologist, has written of the importance of balance and scale in the survival of civilizations. In my own work in studying community approaches with vulnerable citizens, I have noted that each "promising" approach is somehow embedded in civil society. There is a balance between formal and informal supports. Scale in these initiatives means that hierarchies do not dominate, and that decisions are made by people directly affected by the issues. In these promising community approaches, partnerships with other community members and groups enable people to experience genuine choice and participation in the community.

Citizenship and participation in civil society is not a panacea. Rather, it recognizes that all human beings have a desire for social bonds, and a sense of community. Community participation offers benefits to individuals and communities. Friendship and inclusion are central to this vision of people in community. Professionalized helping has a role, but it should never replace the power of relationships with family, friends, neighbours, and the community the essence of civil society.





Civic Participation in Mental Health and Disability Research: Aspirations and the Moral Imperative



by Janos Botschner

Routes to Real Work, Consumer Survivor Initiatives in Ontario, the Dual Diagnosis Resource Service, the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation and the Mental Health Employment Coalition of Niagara. These are just a few of our recent projects dealing with groups of people who have experienced mental health issues or physical or intellectual challenges. Were one to ask what all of these diverse programs, activities and people have in common, the conventional response might involve words such as "disability," "challenge," "trauma," or perhaps "*deficit*." The problem is that these words don't just describe people; they define them in ways that make more of differences than of commonalities. It is true that each of the organisations listed above focuses in some way on what might be termed "other-ability." However, what I'd like to do here is talk about an *elemental similarity* something that binds us all together.

To describe this similarity, I might use a word like *aspiration*. One of the most important reasons for the existence of any of these programs is an aspiration, a hope for something better. I would like to suggest that this can best be understood in terms of a moral imperative. Isaac Prilleltensky, our last Annual General Meeting keynote speaker, has talked about a moral imperative as a sense of what constitutes the good life; in more social terms, it can be thought of as a notion about what constitutes a good society. In a very personal sense, the reasons for aspiring to have a good life and a good society usually involve issues of participation. At the heart of these aspirations is the desire to participate in civic life in ways that both empower one's self and take seriously the rights and obligations of others. In a fundamental sense, then, we can not talk about the work that we do in the areas of mental health and disabilities without coming upon the issue of civic participation, or the opportunity

for full integration into the civic life of a community.

Paul Carling has observed that social integration isn't just something that one person does to or for another; it "comes from a genuine desire to change the nature of one's own relationships." Whether we are working with an employment program run by and for consumer/survivors, or a treatment and support program on behalf of people with dual diagnoses, civic participation lurks at the heart of our work, and close to the hearts of our collaborators. But how is this played out in the day-to-day work that we do? Reflecting on our work over the last year in the areas of mental health and disability, two themes stand out.

While access to different social roles may be the goal, access to valued resources is an important beginning.

Most of us take for granted our ability to enjoy varied senses of self. If we want, many of us can experience new ways of being by taking courses or trying out different kinds of activities. Yet at a global level, and to an increasing extent in our own communities, these kinds of opportunities are a privilege. To have access to continuing education or to recreational activities, a person must also have access to resources. The most common of these, of course, are financial resources and the skill sets that allow people to become employed. The Routes to Real Work project is an example of the growing recognition of the importance to wellbeing of meaningful employment. This was a third party evaluation

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1. Carling, P. J. (1995). *Return to community*. New York: Guilford Press. (p. 265)



of a project funded by Human Resources Development Canada, which aimed to create real employment opportunities for people with mental health issues. Six consumer/survivor researchers worked for our Centre in various cities across Canada.

The Consumer Survivor Initiatives (CSIs) of Ontario project has been an evaluation of the efforts of 59 initiatives across Ontario that aim to foster self help options for people who identify themselves as consumer/survivors of the mental health system. The Centre is currently involved in a multi-year evaluation study of the services and supports being carried out by the CSIs. An important part of this project has been the hiring and training of eleven consumer/survivor researchers to help carry out the project. This was done with the recognition that these individuals were ideally positioned to understand the purpose and benefits to be gained from the initiatives. The ability to also support people for future competitive employment was a key aspiration and a happy by-product of the study.

A focus on meaningful relationships is central to participatory research and community intervention.

The kinds of collegial relationships that have developed during the CSI project have helped all involved to explore the extent to which civic participation can be an ongoing experience, not just a goal, of community research. Providing access to a valued resource *and* working with colleagues to build their capacity to gain access to future employment is one way of enacting the moral imperative that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. As our collaboration with the intended beneficiaries of community interventions continues, we will learn more about how best this can be accomplished. The lesson so far is that constructive and mutually respectful relationships are both the bedrock and a key indicator of civic participation.

Culturally Diverse Civic Participation



by Rich Janzen

Civic participation is a theme that threads together the Centre's growing work in the area of cultural diversity. Through our five projects we have begun to better understand the challenges that immigrants face when coming to Canada, and their resourcefulness in adapting and contributing to society.

We have learned, for example, about the challenges foreign trained people experience in trying to make an "immediate and positive contribution" to their new home country as intended by Canadian immigration policy. In this case it takes many people, strategically working together over a long time, to change a regulatory system that frequently prevents equitable participation in our society.

We have also learned about immigrant youth and their need to "fit in." For immigrant youth, civic participation is linked to being connected and welcomed by a network of friends, all the while balancing their family expectations. Youth want to participate in social/recreational events, and they want to improve cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural sharing both in the school system and in the broader community.

Looking to the future, we anticipate learning more about the diverse meanings and practice of civic participation. How do different ethnic communities understand what it means to actively participate in society? In what ways are these communities presently contributing to and shaping the society around them?

In light of the incredible multicultural explosion across this province over the past three decades, these questions are central to any future discussion about civic participation. Today's "mainstream" includes cultural diversity. And tomorrow's society will, in large part, be shaped by the dynamic interplay among people of diverse backgrounds.





Family Support and Community Development: Citizen Participation Takes Many Forms



by Andrew Taylor

The Centre is involved in several research and evaluation projects dealing with family support themes. We are, for example, working with school boards and child welfare agencies in Huron and Renfrew Counties on an evaluation of a co-funded school social worker program. We are also working with family resource programs in Toronto (the Healthy Childhood Development Project and Family Day's Flemingdon Park Resource Centre). Locally, we are working with the Waterloo Region National Child Benefit Outreach Worker program and the CAPC project. Our largest family support project at the moment is the provincial evaluation of the Early Years Demonstration Projects.

We began thinking about the relationship between family support programs and citizen participation a few years ago. The Healthy Childhood Development Project was starting up in downtown Toronto. It was based in part on the belief that family support principles and practices (such as flexible, responsive programming, a participatory approach, and a focus on linking people to services) could be applied to other spheres of family life besides parenting. In their efforts to use a drop-in program as a platform for community development, the staff and participants in this program faced some interesting challenges.

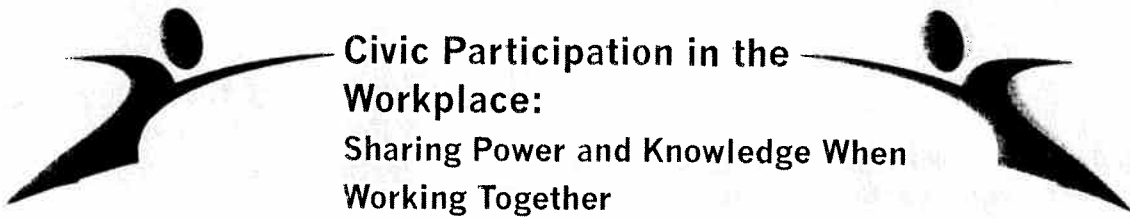
For example, I had originally assumed that we would measure the project's success in engaging neighbourhood members by tracking the degree to which they developed a meaningful "stake" in the running of the project itself. We thought they would join the advisory committee, help to run programs, and so on. As the project evolved, some people did just that. Others, however, found that their experiences with the drop-in motivated them to find other opportunities to voice their concerns. Some joined the local neighbourhood association, for example. Others sought jobs

related to family support or started new businesses. The project was not just an example of stakeholder involvement it was a doorway to a variety of seemingly unrelated forms of citizen participation.

Unseen or indirect forms of engagement are also apparent in our evaluation of a local community development and crime prevention project called Safe and Sound. Although community development workers have, at times, struggled to get residents to take an active role in the project or the neighbourhood association, there is evidence everywhere of more informal forms of engagement. In high-density neighbourhoods, we have seen countless examples of people helping their neighbours with child-care, transportation, or conflict resolution. The challenge is not so much to persuade citizens to become engaged, but to try to help them focus their existing efforts and energy in more strategic ways.

For me, referring to someone as a stakeholder calls attention to the uniqueness of the perspective s/he brings to a discussion. At the same time, it runs the risk of making that person feel as if we are only interested in one aspect of who he or she is as a person. Referring to someone as a citizen, on the other hand, emphasizes their basic right and responsibility to take an interest in all aspects of community life, whether they have a direct personal interest or not. Focussing on civic participation also challenges us to move beyond trying to control social problems and to try to begin to participate as one of many equal partners in the ongoing and unpredictable process of community development.





Civic Participation in the Workplace: Sharing Power and Knowledge When Working Together

by Joanna Ochocka

At the Centre for Research and Education we believe that research conducted in a participatory way is an important element in any effort to make our community responsive and supportive to its citizens. This is a central reason for our existence and for our ongoing search for innovation and participation in research. Involvement in research projects can be compared to involvement in any other programs, supports or civic activities. All of these types of participation involve sharing power and knowledge in order to (a) increase ownership, so that people affected by changes are more likely to support and sustain these changes (b) respect the right of those who are affected to have a voice (c) build skills for all involved and (d) build networks of people who can work together on issues.

I would like to share some learnings about meaningful participation coming from our work with community researchers. These researchers are people affected by the services or systems that they help us to investigate. Employing community researchers on our projects makes us aware of issues of power and control in all aspects of our work. Our learnings point to the importance of shifting the way that professionals or other civic leaders work with people who experience limited access to power and opportunities.

Learnings

There are two major learnings regarding the reduction of power imbalances between professional researchers and community researchers: (1) the importance of building relationships among researchers that are meaningful, authentic and supportive, and (2) the importance of adequate research training and support for community researchers. Both of these lessons can be applied to other collaborative efforts between

professionals/leaders and community members. Some specific tips that might be useful in equalizing power differences include:

☛ *Have a team to implement the project.* A team approach allows the sharing of responsibilities and rewards, as well as encouraging personal growth for each team member.

☛ *Have regular team meetings.* Training, support, updates, check-ins and clear communication foster a flow of information and feelings of personal control.

☛ *Value the difference.* Realize the variety of norms and perspectives. Recognize that difference is essential to living and working and it is OK.

☛ *Involve community members in all aspects of the project.* By working on different research tasks without hierarchical divisions, we expose all researchers to the complexities of the research design and research process. This approach could work in other projects as well to build skills and self-sufficiency.

☛ *Relate to each other as people, with strengths and weaknesses.* We try to develop authentic relationships that merge our professional and private selves.

☛ *Have realistic expectations.* Being proactive in planning each research (or other project) task, pairing more experienced people with those who have less experience, and providing honest feedback can avoid disappointments or feelings of failure.

☛ *Celebrate small and big successes together.* We have found this helps to create a positive climate that includes food, fun, laughter and learning.

☛ *Build a foundation of trust and collaboration.* Active listening, ongoing invitations to collaborate, mutual understanding and meeting people where they are at can help to build this foundation.

☛ *Recognize the importance of experiential knowledge.* Community members are "experts"



Feeling at Home: A Personal View of Participation



and owners of their own experiences and can shape research questions and suggest ways of collecting information. In other types of projects, they can contribute to suggesting solutions or identifying the real problems to be solved.

☛ *Ensure that community members ask hard questions and express their frustrations.* Their knowledge will not be useful if they do not feel able to speak up.

☛ *Have an approach that is planned but flexible in its implementation.* This helps to adapt the workplan, timelines and budget lines to the current situations.

☛ *Facilitate accommodations for all team members.* Using a supportive team approach allow anyone to offer or request individualized support to help weather life's challenges.

☛ *Use plain language.* Try to present information in a way that is meaningful, usable and understandable for community members, including those who may have a different language or a disability.

Participants say:

"The relationships amongst team members strengthened as the project progressed and there was cohesiveness and growing trust that was enhanced as everyone shared pieces of their personal lives. This created a comfortable environment that allowed me to be and participate even on those days when I was struggling with life...I get to know a little bit more about each other and feel that much more connected."

Consumer/survivor researcher

"I've experienced not only personal growth but a lot of feeling over some of the losses that occurred in my life, as a result of being sick...I feel like participation on this project has helped me a great deal even in terms of my own recovery. How? Well, just by being involved, you know. Feeling that I carry everyday that I'm glad to be a part of this. It adds meaning...And for me to be involved in this project, knowing that it means a lot to a lot of people, even on a provincial level, make me feel pretty good, that I've been a part of it."

Consumer/survivor researcher

*An interview with Nash Majstorovic,
by Melissa Pound*

Nash Majstorovic is a community researcher working on the Immigrant Parenting project and doing statistical analysis for the Safe & Sound evaluation. He has a degree in psychology and worked for many years at the University of Novi Sad, in Belgrade. After conducting a recent Immigrant Parenting focus group, Nash sat down with me for a few minutes to share his thoughts on participating as a newcomer to Canada.

Melissa:

What does citizen participation mean to you? How do you think people could or should get involved?

Nash:

I'm thinking about some difficulties people are facing, and maybe that is the place to start. For example, people who have language barriers in the case of schools. If they had some help to communicate about their kids' successes and problems in school, that could be a way for them to get involved in that system. This can be a starting point for many people who have children in schools.

Every society has its own subsystems: school is one, healthcare and for example the legal system. Many things are unknown for newcomers regarding these subsystems. For me, I think they should be more bilingual. Speaking from my experience, many newcomers need "life tutors". That's my term. It's a metaphoric term - it means that you have someone who can help you if you don't know where to go, what to do, who to ask. If you have somebody, or you have a place where you can meet people who know about these systems, it's a starting point.

I heard one story of a guy who was in an accident that required the involvement of the courts and the healthcare system. He was totally confused by these systems. For example,



Staff Milestones



he was going to physiotherapy and after a while he told them "I am feeling quite well." But they scheduled more appointments anyway. He said "I don't understand why they keep making appointments." It was like a Franz Kafka story.

Melissa:

What are the benefits of getting involved in the community?

Nash:

The main value is to feel that you are at home. It will be closer to that feeling if you are a newcomer and you get involved. The precondition for that is that you know what is around you. If you don't know what is around you, you will be isolated or will only be involved with your own ethnic group. The main disadvantage of staying with your own ethnic group is that the kids will associate mostly with the new culture, and the parents will not be part of it. For my people, family is very important and this can be very painful.

Melissa:

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Nash:

It is interesting that you are doing this topic, because a group that I meet with is talking a lot lately about how to develop civic participation skills. I think this Centre is a good place for this type of discussion because it is neutral. It can contribute through research and through being a place where immigrants can start to deal with problems in their lives.

Sherri van de Hoef, a recent graduate of Wilfrid Laurier's Community Psychology MA program and a full-time researcher at the Centre during the winter and spring of 2000, was awarded the Psychology Department's Sid Hellyer book award for outstanding performance, as well as the Science Faculty's Gold Medal for Academic Excellence.



Hannah Janzen, whose arrival was expected any day at press time last year, was in fact born safely to Rich and Jen Janzen a little over a year ago. Welcome, Hannah! Happy first birthday!



After countless hours of dedicated volunteer work, Holly Williamson was hired as Executive Director by the Eating Disorders Awareness Coalition. Happily, she continues to be involved at the Centre as a part-time researcher. Congratulations and good luck, Holly. No-one could deserve it more.



John Lord, a founder, former coordinator and long-term friend of the Centre, recently had an award named after him. The John Lord award, to be given out annually by the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC), will recognize a person, group, or organization for participatory research related to the field of disabilities. CAILC notes that John's research and consultation work has "resulted in the participation, contribution, and validation of persons with disabilities." This award is a fitting tribute to that work.



The Year of Janos: this year, Janos Botschner successfully defended his PhD, married the lovely Susan Gross, moved to a new house and became a full-time senior researcher at the Centre. We also hear he leapt several tall buildings in a single bound...

left: Joanna and Janos after a successful defense...Congrats!





Building Inclusive Communities



by Karen Taylor- Harrison

The following is excerpted from a speech given on June 22 by Karen Taylor-Harrison, City Councillor, at the "Building Community Capacity" meeting of the Connecting Initiative. The members of the Connecting Initiative all work to connect people with various kinds of disabilities to community life. The meeting took place as part of a Trillium-funded development of the initiative, managed by the Centre.

It is interesting. On Monday of this week I spoke at a special council meeting about the report brought to us from the community for Compass Kitchener. On Tuesday evening I was privileged to speak in a panel dealing with social capital and civil society. Now this morning I have returned to the Westminster room at St. Andrew's church to talk about building community capacity as it pertains to people with disabilities. The connection for me between these three speaking opportunities is how utterly simple yet incredibly complex all of this is.

Compass Kitchener was a visioning and direction setting exercise undertaken by the city of Kitchener. It began as part of the corporate strategic plan for 1998-2001. The strategic plan identified the need to develop a community vision. Boy, was that a frustrating exercise initially as we tried to ascertain exactly what we were trying to accomplish and why. Over a period of eight months, over 1,200 individuals and groups expressed their values, hopes and dreams for Kitchener. It was the kitchen table talks that really gave me a rush, and it was a physical rush - because in the scheme of things, in our increasingly technological and sophisticated world, we are still questing after the same thing: a sense of community.

At the Social Planning Council Annual General Meeting, the question was asked: what would

create a more civil society? Here I am, a mere politician, privileged to sit and talk with people who are much more steeped in these issues than I am, and they are talking about things like comic books, smiling at people, playing, celebrating. Wow, that blew me away. Again, it would appear that the more complex our society gets, the more technical and thus further away from human day-to-day interaction, the more we crave simple community. Yet...somehow it eludes us.

Now this is all about people who are able-bodied. What about people who are invisible within our communities, those who do not have a voice or even a face? If we who are privileged are feeling disassociated, what must it be like for people who have disabilities?

I was forced for awhile to really think about this when our son was little. He did not have intelligible speech until he was four and continued to have serious reading problems until the beginning of grade six. That was a beginning for me. I had to seriously consider what life would be like for him if he could not communicate in the way our society expects people to communicate. He is doing wonderfully well now but still suffers from the stigma of being "stupid."

As a result of daily visits to the Rotary Centre, Todd and I were exposed to people with disabilities that they were not going to recover from as my son has. I think this experience influenced our family's choice to live where we do: in an area of Kitchener that now is the most wonderful community to us because it includes many group homes, probably the highest concentration of group homes in the region, plus all forms of housing. It is an inclusive community and I am so very grateful for the opportunity to grow and experience people who are not the same as I am. My children, who are





plus all forms of housing. It is an inclusive community and I am so very grateful for the opportunity to grow and experience people who are not the same as I am. My children, who are certainly not little any more, have grown to be caring, sensitive people, as have both my husband and I.

I have asked myself so many times the questions you are wrestling with here: How do we measure a community's capacity? How do we build upon community capacity? Is it as simple as people helping people? And what does that mean? When is helping too much? Oh the questions! What incredible opportunity for discussion! One conclusion I have come to after three years in municipal office: government at all levels must remain involved with these discussions. Elected officials need to be reminded every day that their constituents aren't all able bodied and are sometimes invisible.

There is lots of hope though.

On the weekend I took my seven year old niece (or rather, she took me) to see the newest kids' movie, called "dinosaurs." The theme of the story was that the strongest must survive if the herd is to continue. But the interloper, a young dinosaur who had been raised by monkeys and joined the herd through a natural catastrophe, starts to question that theory. He believes that the only way to survive is for everyone to work together so that everyone survives. It was interesting. When my niece and I arrived home, my husband asked her what the movie was about and she described in great detail how the young dinosaur became an advocate and supporter of those who were disabled in the herd.

Thank you for doing this incredibly valuable advocacy and support work, and for so obviously caring with such grace, respect, humour and dignity.

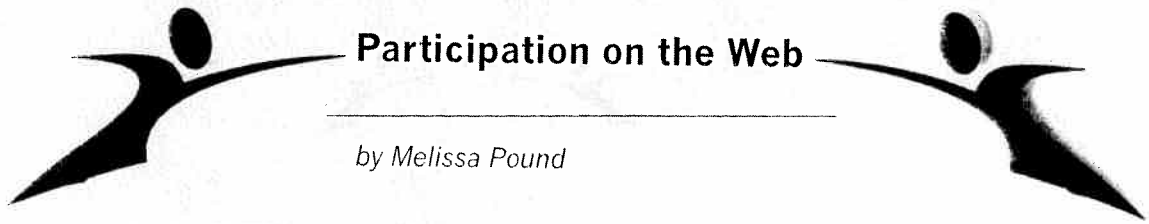
Top Ten Dreams for Kitchener

As part of Compass Kitchener, a community visioning project spearheaded by the City of Kitchener, local residents were asked how they would like to see their city in the future. The top ten most frequently mentioned items, as reported in Compass Kitchener's June 2000 report, paint a picture of the type of vibrant, thriving community that civic participation is meant to create.

- * improved, accessible, clean, sustainable and integrated public transportation - less cars, more bikes, more walking
- * better air and water quality and improved environmental strategies
- * more self-sufficient neighbourhoods
- * a downtown for people, with vital businesses, shopping and image
- * more green spaces, park facilities, natural areas and access to the Grand River
- * a vision in land-use and better urban design, more mixed-use areas
- * build on and improve arts and culture
- * less crime and a sense of safety for all ages, day and night, throughout the city
- * affordable activities and places for youth and children
- * better traffic management/road safety/courtesy

For more information about Compass Kitchener, contact Marie Morisson at 741-2967 or marie.morrison@city.kitchener.on.ca, or visit the city's website at www.city.kitchener.on.ca.





Participation on the Web

by Melissa Pound

We are re-vamping the Centre website (www.crehs.on.ca)! Look for our new links section, with connections to all kinds of organizations and information related to innovative human services and community research. Here is a glimpse of the resources you can find on the theme of civic participation.

© At Civicus, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (www.civicus.org), you can contribute to "a worldwide initiative to consider, deliberate, and proclaim what it means to be a citizen" by submitting your answers to the following questions:

- * What are your three most important rights as a citizen
- * What are your three most important responsibilities as a citizen?
- * What three things can you and your fellow citizens do to make your community and the world a better place for all?

© At Ron Stutzman's list of participatory action research sites (www.goshen.edu/soan/soan96p.htm), you can link to "Participatory Research and Community Organizing" a paper by Sung Sil Lee Sohng, PhD, or go directly to www.interwebtech.com/nsmet/docs/sohng.htm.

Here's a sample:

It is not new for people to raise questions about their conditions or to actively search for better ways of doing things for their own well-being and that of their community. But what participatory research is proposing is to look at these actions as research that can be carried out as an organized cognitive and transformative activity (Park, 1993). This vision implies a new framework of political will to promote research as collective action in

the struggle over power and resources, and as the generation of change-oriented social theory in the post-industrial, information-based society. Knowledge becomes a crucial element in enabling people to have a say in how they would like to see their world put together and run (Gaventa, 1988).

© At the B.C. Citizen's Handbook (www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook), you can find an amazing array of hands-on resources, and information. The following excerpt provides some more questions to consider as you reflect on civil society and civic participation.

In a typical visioning exercise a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes and imagine they are walking through their neighbourhood as it should be fifteen years into the future. What do they see? What do the buildings look like? Where do people gather? How do they make decisions? What are they eating? Where are they working? How are they travelling? What is happening on the street? Where is the centre of the neighbourhood? How does greenspace and water fit into the picture? What do you see when you walk around after dark?

Speaking of global participation...

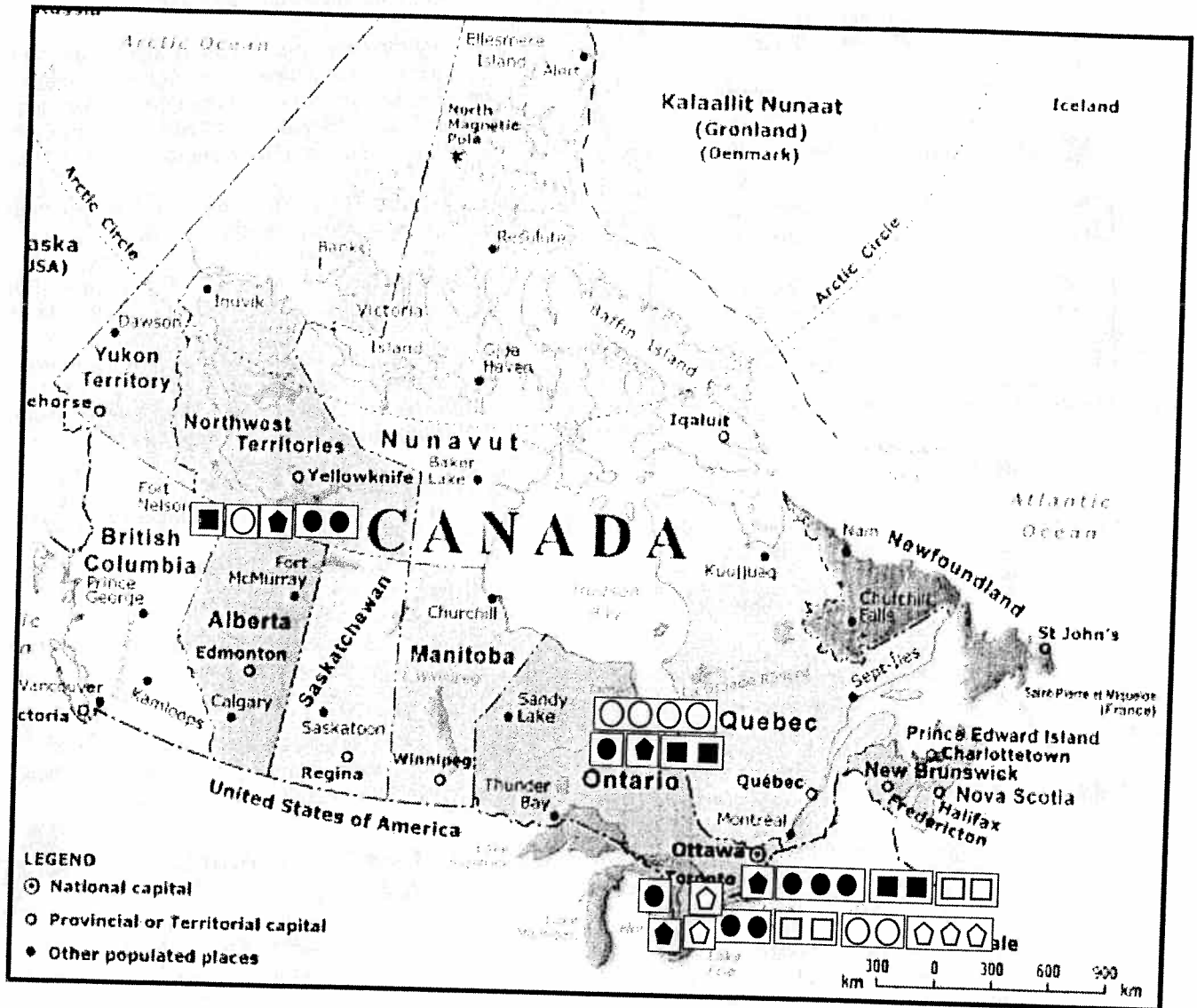


During her recent whirlwind tour of Germany, Jenny House stumbled across this "cute little gaffer" in Nuremberg. "I would have brought him home, as a symbolic keystone of my trip, but he's heavier than he looks...."





Where We Are Project Site Map 1998 - present



<p>● Family Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Project for Healthy Childhood Development - <i>City of Toronto</i> Community Action Program for Children - <i>Waterloo Region</i> Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Baseline Study) - <i>Provincial</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Aid Society Huron/Renfrew - <i>Huron and Renfrew County</i> Supporting Fathers - <i>National</i> Books for Birthdays - <i>Waterloo Region</i> Early Years - <i>Toronto</i> Family Day Care Services - <i>Toronto</i> Family Day Care Training - <i>National</i>
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Cultural Diversity

Immigrant Youth - *Waterloo Region*
Pathways to Change - *Provincial*
Access Committee Evaluation - *Provincial*
Immigrant Parenting - *Provincial*
Civic Participation - *Provincial*
Peer Youth Health Workers - *Waterloo Region*

Disability Issues

Navigating the Waters - *National*
Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation - *Provincial*
Dual Diagnosis - *Toronto and Peel Regions*
Community Connections Initiative - *Provincial*
Dual Diagnosis Resource Service - *Toronto and Peel Regions*

Seniors

Helpers Using Group Support - The Support Clusters Project - *Waterloo Region*
C.H.A.T.S. (Community Home Assistance to Seniors) - *York Region*
Evaluation of the K-W Friendship Group for Seniors - *Kitchener-Waterloo*
Peel Senior Link - *Peel Region*

Mental Health

Routes to Real Work - *National*
Longitudinal Study of Consumer Survivor Initiative in Community Mental Health - *Provincial*
Mental Health Employment Coalition of Niagara - *Niagara Region*
Dual Diagnosis Resource Service - *Toronto and Peel Regions*

Other Projects

Safe and Sound - *Waterloo Region*
Evaluation of Hospice - *Waterloo Region*
Workplace Determinants - *Waterloo Region*
Hate Crimes - *City of London*
ACORD (A Community for Offenders Reconciliation and Diversion) - *Guelph*

More Conferences & Workshops



Immigrant Youth in Waterloo Region
Teaching English as a Second Language Regional Conference, Kitchener, March 2000

Shifting the Paradigm in Community Mental Health: A Community Study of Implementation and Change.
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPRS), Ontario Chapter Conference, Niagara Falls, Ontario, October 1999

Longitudinal Study of the Consumer/Survivor Initiatives in Community Mental Health in Ontario.
International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPRS), Ontario Chapter Conference, Niagara Falls, Ontario, October 1999

Partnerships: Friends or Foe. An Interdisciplinary Skill Development Workshop
South-Central Community Health Units - Workshop Facilitator, April, 1999, London, Ontario

Supporting Fathers
Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs
Facilitator, October 2000, Ottawa, Ontario

Family Day Care Training Project
Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs
Facilitator, October 2000, Ottawa, Ontario

School-based Social Worker Program
Canadian Forum on Linking Research to Practice
Facilitator, March 2000, Ottawa, Ontario

New Publications & Articles



Ochocka, J., Nelson, G., & Lord, J. (1999). *Organizational change towards the empowerment-community integration paradigm in community mental health. Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 18(2), 59-72*

Sylvestre, J.C., Ochocka, J., & Hyndman, B. (1999). *Selected findings from the Ontario regional evaluation of the Community Action Program for Children. Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 14 (2), 29-56*

And in January 2001:

Nelson, G., Lord, J., & Ochocka, J. (2001). *Shifting the paradigm in community mental health. Toronto: University of Toronto Press*





Who We Are: The Centre's Current Staff



Project Researchers

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Tim Epp
Barb Fowke
Alice Hutton
Valerie Kenny
Susan Murtha

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Connecting Initiatives
Connecting Initiatives
Hospice Evaluation
Early Years
Workplace
Determinants
& CAS Huron/Renfrew
Safe and Sound
& CSI
Safe and Sound
Consumer/Survivor
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&CSI

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Alison Rice Roberts
Outreach Worker
Demonstration Project





The Centre for Research and Education in Human Services is an independent, non-profit organization established in 1982. The Centre works with professionals, consumers and other community members to create an understanding of human service policies and practices that affect citizens who have been disadvantaged. The Centre works collaboratively with a wide range of groups and organizations in research, education and planning capacities.

Mission Statement

The Centre for Research and Education in Human Services is committed to social change and the development of communities and human services that are responsive and supportive, especially for people with limited access to power and opportunity. Demonstrating leadership through research, education and community involvement, the Centre stimulates the creation of awareness, policies, and practices that advance equitable participation and integration of all members of our community.

NewsReport

Editor: Melissa Pound
Layout: Amanda Soikie

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