



Jane and David Renwick

## Helping David on his Path to Wellness

**“I remember seeing a bus coming toward me. I imagined stepping out in front of the bus – it would be so easy to end the pain.”**

David Renwick's journey with anxiety and depression was initially triggered by significant work stress. He became harder and harder on himself. His relentless anxiety led to difficulty sleeping and unhealthy weight loss, so a colleague suggested he visit his doctor.

“Eventually, all I could get was two hours of sleep. I was having panic attacks in the middle of the night,” David says. “I experienced some very dark thoughts.”

He needed to take a leave from work. With the support of his employer and the care and concern of his wife Jane and the rest of his family, David focused on becoming well. He started taking prescribed medication and was able to sleep, and by the time he was due to return to work he felt as good as new.

Unfortunately, the darkness very quickly returned. Soon afterwards, Jane found him curled up on the family room floor. He was incoherent and in distress, so she

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immediately took him to the Emergency Department and he was admitted to London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC).

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It was a scary time for them both – but this was the beginning of David’s recovery. He spent the next three weeks at Victoria Hospital, resting, restarting his medication, and taking part in cognitive-behavioural therapy and mindfulness programs. The hospital stay provided David with the support and routine that allowed him to focus on regaining his mental health.

The tools learned at the hospital, combined with medication and therapist visits, allowed David to return home, where he continued to receive support through LHSC’s “Track to Wellness” program. David now enjoys

a full and healthy life and has become a spokesperson within his company in an effort to help colleagues who may be experiencing mental health difficulties. He’s also joined London Health Sciences Foundation’s (LHSF) Mental Health Care Campaign Cabinet because he wanted to give back to the program that supported him.

“I’ve received such incredible support and it’s great to be able to help others,” he says. “Mental illness is a silent killer, and so if people can think about it in that context and put their money towards mental health, we are going to have a much healthier population down the road.” ■

## Making a Difference at Country Classic Auction



David Renwick was among more than 1,200 attendees at last year’s Country Classic Auction, presented by Siskinds LLP and themed “A Grand Ole Night in Nashville,” in support of LHSF’s Mental Health Care Campaign.

The most powerful moment of the evening for many was the “Make a Difference” appeal. The lights dimmed, a hush came over the room, volunteers lit candles, and Ivory Hours singer Luke Roes gave an emotional performance of The Fray’s “How to Save a Life”. Following the heartfelt

performance, David and other audience members raised their bid cards high in the air, pledging \$161,000 in donations during an emotional 10-minute appeal that highlighted the compassion and generosity of our donors.

The funds raised during Country Classic Auction supported hiring a research associate, furthering clinical innovation within the mental health care program. ■

## LHSC Mental Health Program Moves into the Community



The Donor-Supported Cornerstone Counselling Team

On March 1, 2017, LHSC unveiled a donor-supported pilot project aimed at improving the system of mental health and addiction care for transition age youth (16-25 years). Cornerstone Counselling, as the service is known, is delivered at Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) in partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association-Middlesex, Addiction Services of Thames Valley and mindyourmind.

The self-referral program provides access to a team of health professionals including a peer support worker, social worker, addiction counselor and psychiatrist to youth transitioning out of the adolescent mental health program, or who are seeking support for the first time.

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“Youth told us they wanted a service that was after hours, non-crisis and youth centered. They told us they wanted peer-support. They told us they wanted better integration of hospital and community services,” said Dr. Javeed Sukhera, LHSC Physician Lead, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. “We engaged and listened authentically to the voices of our community partners and most importantly, to youth themselves.”

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The project received generous funding from the London Community Foundation, the LHSC Auxiliary and Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life. ■

## New Geriatric Unit Provides Enhanced Care for Older Adults

Mood disorders such as depression in the elderly can be difficult to recognize. Depression can be overlooked as a symptom of another medical condition or viewed as the inevitable result of the losses in life we all will experience. The sad reality is many older adults suffer in silence.

The Geriatric Mental Health Program at LHSC provides assessment, treatment and referral for people 65 years and older who experience mental disorders of late life including mood disorders, psychoses, dementia and related disorders.

The new 12-bed mental health Geriatric Behavioural Unit, which opened this past April at Victoria Hospital,

supports elderly patients that have behaviours that may compromise their safety or the safety of others. The Unit is a calming space staffed with experts in geriatric care and mental health who promote various activities and therapies that aid in improving well-being for the body, mind and soul.

Thank you to the donors to the Geriatric Behavioural Unit, including Meaghan Innes and LHSF Board Member Matthew Creighton, who held a special fundraiser in their home this past June for family and friends that raised \$35,000. ■

## FEMAP: A Much Needed Program



This past March, Days Inn London presented Dr. Elizabeth Osuch, Psychiatrist and founder of the First Episode Mood and Anxiety Program (FEMAP) with a \$25,000 donation.

A donor-supported program, FEMAP has grown over the past decade from a research idea to a highly sought-after service for youth mental health care. The clinic has been so successful that the waiting list to receive treatment is ever-growing, making donor support all the more necessary in helping FEMAP expand its services. ■

**GOOD FRIDAY FOOTBALL** is an annual event hosted by Dave Strano and LHSF Mental Health Care Campaign Co-Chairs Paul and Barb Hebert that has raised more than \$200,000 over the years for FEMAP through the Alexander Hebert Endowment Fund. It draws more than 170 participants who gain a greater understanding of mental illness and the importance of early intervention while enjoying a memorable day outside playing football. ■



**LET'S PAINT** is a youth mental health education and awareness initiative in partnership with the London District Catholic School Board. Participating schools held standalone assemblies aimed at helping students, parents and families gain a better understanding about youth mental health.

In May, the group held an art auction at Mother Teresa Secondary School to celebrate student talent and creativity that raised \$8,000 for FEMAP. ■

**PROM LOOK** is an annual model scouting tour and charity fashion show hosted by Anita Norris Models of London, Ontario. Held at Finch Auto Group's Mercedes-Benz Dealership, this year's event featured the latest prom fashions and raised \$18,484 for FEMAP.

LHSF would like to thank these community event groups along with the many others who are fundraising for mental health care at LHSC. ■



## Farm Boy Supports Adult Eating Disorders Program



Farm Boy has pledged more than \$30,000 over the past three years to LHSC's Adult Eating Disorders Program.

Farm Boy is committed to making a difference in the community by focusing their charitable efforts on nutrition education and support that encourages wholesome eating.

The Adult Eating Disorders Program offers a range of services including day treatment, residential and relapse prevention services for eating disorders including anorexia,

bulimia and binge eating disorder. The community-based program is run in partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Middlesex and operates out of a welcoming location on Riverview Avenue.

LHSF would like to thank Farm Boy and other donors to the program, including Jan Pryde, Eating Disorders Foundation of Canada and London St. Thomas Association of Realtors (LSTAR). ■

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## Mental Wellness for Immigrant and Refugee Families

When the team from LHSC's Transcultural Mental Health Consultation Service (TMHCS) presented a workshop at the Canadian Public Health Association Conference in May, conference participants continued their questions well beyond the allotted time despite this being the last session of the day.

Their topic, "A Collaborative Approach to Mental Wellness for Immigrant and Refugee Families," addressed the mental health and wellness of a diverse population whose needs are often not adequately met.

The TMHCS is now in the second of its two-year pilot of the service, implemented through the RBC Centre for At-Risk Children and Families at LHSC and Children's Hospital, thanks to generous support from RBC Royal Bank.

TMHCS is made up of a multi-disciplinary team trained to provide family-centred mental health services that are comprehensive and integrated, and where cultural factors influence the client's or family's needs.

"Because London is small and doesn't have the ethnocentric health centres that cities such as Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal have, it can be a challenge for the immigrant and refugee communities," says Rita Van Meyel, Clinical Lead, TMHCS. "We serve those who identify as immigrant or refugee and are experiencing moderate to severe mental health concerns." ■

## Dr. Lena Palaniyappan Awarded for Innovative Work in Brain Imaging and Schizophrenia



Lawson Health Research Institute scientist Dr. Lena Palaniyappan recently received the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology's 2017 Young Investigator Award as well as a prestigious five-year grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Dr. Palaniyappan studies the processes that operate in the brain when patients experience symptoms of psychosis with symptoms of repeated voices, hallucinations and delusions, such as schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia was not long ago described as premature dementia because of its seemingly progressive tissue deterioration in the brain. But there is new hope in battling this frightening disease. Through studying imaging data, Dr. Palaniyappan and his team discovered that brains of patients with schizophrenia have the capacity to reorganize and fight the illness. With further research, these findings

could point to the development of targeted treatments that will improve the outcomes of patients with schizophrenia.

Dr. Palaniyappan is also the medical director of LHSC's Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychoses (PEPP), a donor-supported program which provides treatment for patients with first-episode psychosis in order to increase their chances of recovery and improve their quality of life. ■

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*"With the increasing sophistication of tools to understand the mysteries of the human brain and the world-renowned expertise available in London, there has never been a better time to study psychiatric disorders."*

- Dr. Palaniyappan

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## Novel Research Helps People with PTSD

Dr. Ruth A. Lanius studies how Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which affects nearly 10 per cent of Canadians, impacts the brain and which drugs and therapies serve as effective treatments. She established the Traumatic Stress Service at LHSC and the Traumatic Stress Service Workplace Program – services that specialize in the treatment and research of PTSD. By investigating early markers for the development of PTSD, Dr. Lanius and her team can better understand what physiological factors play a role in its development. ■

## Upcoming Events

## PEPP @ 20: An Evening of Hope and Recovery



Join us September 28 at 6 p.m. at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn for this milestone event celebrating 20 years of PEPP. The evening will include dinner and live entertainment with Master of Ceremony Nick Paparella from CTV and a special presentation by world-renowned Scottish Psychiatrist Sir Robin Murray. ■

## Mental Health Walk or Run

Lace up your running shoes for the Fourth Annual Mental Health Walk or Run taking place October 22 at Springbank Gardens, in support of Geriatric Mental Health and Mental Health Patient Assistance and Education.

**Learn more about these and other events  
at [lhsf.ca/communityevents](http://lhsf.ca/communityevents) ■**



# Bringing our Campaign into the Community



This year, LHSF took part in Bell Let's Talk Day at Covent Garden Market to raise awareness about mental health care and encourage support from our community. Mental Health Care Campaign Co-Chairs Barb and Paul Hebert were among those interviewed by CJBK 1290 that day, sharing why they passionately advocate for mental health care after the tragic loss of their son Alex to suicide.

The Mental Health Care Campaign is well underway thanks to generous donor support and awareness initiatives like Bell Let's Talk, but needs further support to reach its \$12 million campaign goal. We are seeking new members for our Mental Health Care Campaign Cabinet to volunteer their time and expertise for this important cause. Please contact Alison McCloskey (contact details below) to learn more. ■

## We'd Be Happy to Hear from You!



Please contact us if you are interested in joining the Mental Health Care Campaign Cabinet, have any questions or concerns about this report or if you would like to discuss your philanthropic goals.

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