

ON THE

# COAST

COAST PROMOTES RECOVERY OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Photo: Dave Roels

## Housing for Vancouver's Most Vulnerable

*In Canada's most expensive City*

Executive Director Darrell Burnham

You've all read how Vancouver's real estate prices have gone through the roof. We now have the title of "The Most Expensive City in Canada." Recent articles indicate the average house price in Vancouver may reach \$1 million in just a few years.

If you are a home owner or a real estate investor, this is great news. If you have a mental illness and live on disability or welfare, it sure isn't. If you're an organization dedicated to helping

people with mental illness, it makes your job that much harder.

In the face of these costs, it's no surprise that supported housing for people with mental illness is falling behind, resulting in a doubling of homelessness in Greater Vancouver since 2002. That's only part of the story, as government policy changes have contributed to this problem. In 1993, the federal government eliminated the National

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Engaging the Public



Responding to the Need



Building & Reinforcing Our Foundation



Pursuing Excellence



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**COAST**



Photo: Dave Roels

Wow! What a spectacular event! As Tom Malone, Regional Vice President BC & Yukon Region, Scotiabank, a long-time sponsor, put it in an e-mail message to Executive Director Darrell Burnham, "last night was, in my opinion and also others I have spoken to, the best of the best."

It was an evening of superlatives. A first-time attendee simply called it "unforgettable." Unforgettable, indeed. Who can forget the stirring

vignettes on the screens and the heartfelt thank-you's of the recipients. ("Take a deep breath," asked Jamie Waterlow, "and let it out with a sigh and a smile.") Who can forget the special award recipient, Mayor Sam Sullivan, thanking the taxpayers of British Columbia and the citizens of Vancouver ("although some of you didn't vote for me") for supporting him throughout his comeback. Who can forget Peter Legge, who adapted his pitch for money to the ambiance of the room.

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## Donor Feature *Marjorie T.*

Marjorie has always cared about people. She spent 35 years as a missionary in Japan. When she arrived back in Vancouver in 1986, she was shocked at the situation she saw on city streets. “It really hit me how much things had changed when I saw how many people were roaming the streets with nowhere to go.

They obviously weren’t being cared for and had nothing meaningful to do with their lives. I was heartsick.”

When Marjorie’s own nephew was diagnosed with schizophrenia, she realized how lucky he was to have a family and the ongoing professional support that was so essential. She learned how seriously under funded mental health is and vowed to help improve the lives of people with mental illness.



It was difficult to know how to help. In 1990, she watched as the Coast Mental Health Resource Centre was being built at Seymour and Davie Street. “I was happy to help, because I saw this as a place that can really make a difference.”

Marjorie donates to the Coast Foundation Society because it has a broader approach to mental health issues than any other organization she knows. As Marjorie says, “Coast does the best job; they help and they work so hard. I want to help more, but Coast Foundation does the work for me.”

Marjorie is a wonderful supporter of Coast Foundation. Her generosity helps Coast continue our work to promote recovery of persons with mental illness. By giving through Coast, the contributions of others are leveraged to bring about real change in people’s lives. 🏠

*cont. from page 1 HOUSING*

Housing program in the face of a budget crisis. In 2001, the BC Government eliminated its Homes BC program. With the elimination of those two programs, probably 10,000 units of low-income housing were not “built” at a time when real estate values were more palatable. After 30 years Coast knows that recovery from mental illness starts with a home.

Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Health Authorities have recently drafted mental health housing plans calling for roughly 4,000 new units of housing over the next 10 years. The plans recognize the scope of the problem, but have a major flaw – no money is attached to making the plans work... at least not yet!

We’ve put our thinking caps on at Coast to find new ways of raising funds for quality housing and acquiring quality, affordable housing for people with mental illness.

Even in tough times, it makes sense to invest in housing. Studies have shown it can cost \$50,000 to support someone who is homeless through revolving door hospitalizations, justice issues, etc., where it costs only \$13,000 to house that same person for one year.

The choice is obvious. 🙌



AFTER 30 YEARS COAST KNOWS THAT RECOVERY FROM MENTAL ILLNESS STARTS WITH A HOME.

{Coast Tennant, Rosemary Mah}

# WAR and PEACE *Managing My Bipolar Disorder*

Simon Wu

***This story is the first of three segments, presented by Coast member and volunteer, Simon Wu. His UBC psychiatrist, Dr. Lancelot Patrick, has written an introduction.***

*“This story is about a man with a serious mental illness. He has done well, and I, his psychiatrist, am pleased to be asked by this exceptional man to make some commentary about his methods to reach success. The fundamental thing that has distinguished Simon is his personal, unshakable determination to face mental illness with courage and never give up. He recognizes the truth; that he has a serious problem. He does not minimize or ignore the illness, nor make excuses that it was somebody else’s fault, or take any refuge in the concept of “bad luck”. Any of these mental rationalizations could have diverted him from fighting the illness and realizing a good quality of life. I encourage you to look at the strategies he is sharing freely with you, and use those strategies to gain understanding.”*

## *My Mental Disorder*

Eight years ago, I was married, a proud father and gainfully employed as an electrical engineer. At the age of 48, I suffered a serious stroke. While I felt blessed to have narrowly escaped death, I suffered from brain damage and post-stroke depression and was put on anti-depressants. After the depression seemed to have lapsed, I began to develop symptoms of bipolar disorder. I did many crazy things I never would have considered doing before, like spending \$80,000 of my RRSP in six months.

My behaviours caused so much anxiety to the people dearest to me, yet I didn’t seem to care. I didn’t realize at the time that I was very sick. When I fell into yet another episode of depression, sleeping constantly and refusing to eat, I contemplated killing myself. My family thought they had lost me.



Pablo Picasso's Face of Peace

I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS HOW CRITICAL MY OWN PARTICIPATION IS. I AM IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT - ON THE ROAD TO VICTORY.

## *Declaring War against Bipolar Disorder*

My psychiatrist said that the idea of war motivated me to try my hardest and use every strategy to defeat my illness. With help I learned I would have to deal with bipolar disorder for the rest of my life. I was pessimistic.

Today I realize that while full recovery is impossible, the symptoms can be managed. Through self-discovery, a supportive family and a trusted doctor, I gained the courage to confront my illness, and began to believe that I could triumph over its assaults. I now know I cannot be passive, and must be prepared to fight. I always remind myself that the battleground is in my brain and whether I want to fight or not, the battle is on.

As in most wars, we don’t fight alone: allies are always necessary. My wife, my family and my psychiatrist are indispensable partners in my battle to combat this illness. And while I would never underestimate the importance of my allies or my medication, I have learned over the years how critical my own participation is. I am in the driver’s seat - on the road to victory. 🙌

Engaging the Public





## Coast Art Show & Sale

June 1st, 6 – 9 pm  
1225 Seymour Street,  
Vancouver (@ Davie)

Coast is showcasing incredible artwork created by clients who are recovering from mental illness. The show features mixed media, painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and poetry. These works of art were created in the art program at the Resource Centre and vividly portray a range of colour and emotion. There will also be a silent auction on two exclusive pieces.

The show will remain on display until June 9th, by appointment. For more information Contact: [ArtShow@CoastFoundation.com](mailto:ArtShow@CoastFoundation.com) or call 604.675.2319. 📞



SOME SAY  
“A PICTURE  
IS WORTH A  
THOUSAND  
WORDS...”

cont. from page 1 COURAGE

Oh yeah, the money. When Peter appeared on stage with the mayor after dinner, the total stood at \$139,531 - well more than the final total last year and almost ten times the \$14,800 raised in 2003. But there was more to come: by the time the inimitable motivator was done, it was far and away a great

moment. The total: \$405,591. Wow, indeed.

“What a terrific night,” said Darrell Burnham. “We’ve come a very long way from the first one in 1999. But the driving force, the reason we’re there, hasn’t changed: those remarkable people, the heroes next door, whose triumphs inspire us all.” 📢 📢



## The Coast Community Tour Changing Lives

**Date**  
3rd Tuesday of the month

**Time**  
Noon 'till 1:00 pm

**Lunch**  
will be provided

**Location**  
Coast Mental Health  
Resource Centre  
1225 Seymour St  
(at Davie)

**Purpose**  
To inform the community about  
Coast mental health services

**RSVP**  
Sharlene Hertz  
**Phone**  
604.675.2316  
sharlene@  
coastfoundation.com

### NEED A CUSTOM TOUR?

No problem! If you would like a tour on a different date than those listed, or if you would like to visit Coast licensed care homes or learn more about our employment or housing programs – please contact us with your ideas. We can also conduct a “virtual tour” at your workplace or service club.

**For more information about Coast visit [www.coastfoundation.com](http://www.coastfoundation.com)**

Engaging the public



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