

# camh CONNEXIONS

transforming lives

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## Easy Access to Information on Addictions and Mental Health

By Deborah MacKenzie

The R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre – a CAMH initiative – is much more than just bricks and mortar on the east side of Toronto’s Dufferin Street near King Street West.

Created in 2003 by a \$1 million donation from the R. Samuel McLaughlin Foundation, this information centre is for people and their families to have access to timely and relevant information and support on addictions and mental health. The McLaughlin Centre occupies both real and virtual space through its four programs:

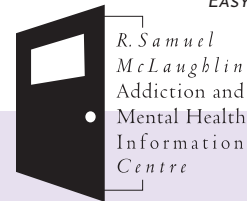
- a walk-in storefront at 219 Dufferin St., Suite 3B operating Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Staff and volunteers at the R. Samuel McLaughlin Information Centre have an open-door policy for people enquiring about addictions and mental health issues in person, by telephone or online.

- a telephone information line at 1 800 463-6273 or 416 595-6111 in Toronto staffed 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday
- Internet resources at [www.camh.net/McLaughlin](http://www.camh.net/McLaughlin) and email at [mclaughlininformation@camh.net](mailto:mclaughlininformation@camh.net)
- a telephone support line (same number as above) for those struggling with mental health and/or addiction issues. Hours are 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., Monday to Friday.

*EASY ACCESS, continued on page 5*



## Care for the Caring

Working on the support line of the McLaughlin Centre can be challenging. If a call is particularly difficult, it’s important for the volunteer to take a few moments to debrief and discuss it with the volunteer coordinator. This allows one’s batteries to recharge so the next caller will be met with renewed energy and empathy.

Carl\* has just finished one such call. It has been difficult since the caller’s depression colours her entire perception of life. She cannot see the tremendous strength she has already shown in coping with her illness as well as she has, day after day. Carl, with a relative dealing with depression, does see it and tries, gently, to point it out.

Lisa Pont, the volunteer coordinator on duty, reassures Carl that he has handled the call to the best of his ability. “You showed empathy and you focused on strengths,” she tells him. Some more discussion follows and then Carl is ready for whatever the next call may bring.

Mandy\*, another volunteer, says she finds it frustrating to be removed from the callers. “You just want to reach through the telephone line and hug them,” she exclaims. Overall though, her experience is positive and she finds it rewarding when she hears back from a few of the callers who phone on a regular basis. She knows she is helping and that her help is making a difference.

*\*Names have been changed.*

# Navigating the Housing Maze at CAMH

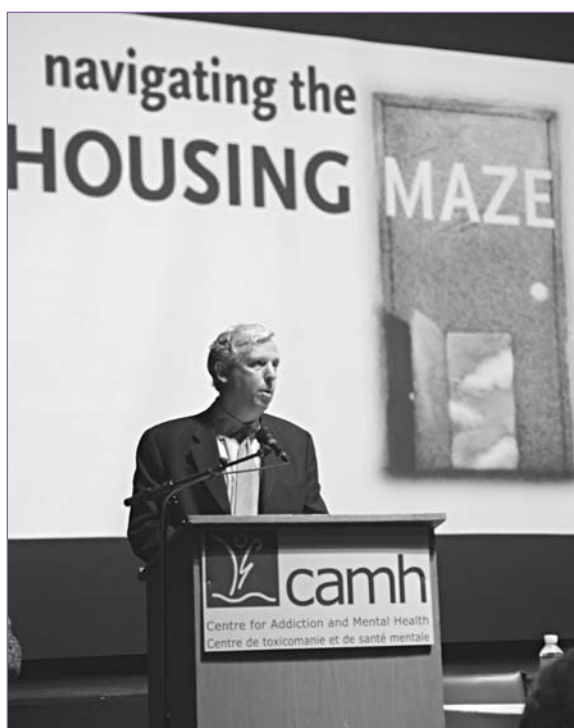
On March 24, the Workman Theatre at CAMH's Queen Street site was at capacity to hear Toronto Mayor David Miller introduce *Navigating the Housing Maze* – a housing forum held to provide CAMH clinicians, clients, families, housing providers and those in the community with information about the housing options available in Toronto.

“Sometimes the housing system in Toronto can be confusing for our clients and others,” said CAMH manager Melonie Hopkins. “It is difficult to know what programs are available and, more importantly, it is hard to determine the one that is most suited to a person’s individual needs. At CAMH we recognize that housing is a key determinant of health. The importance to an individual’s recovery of having a place to call home cannot be overstated.”

Of those living on the streets, it is estimated that approximately 30 per cent have a mental illness, and a recent task force suggested that close to 75 per cent of homeless women have problems with mental health. It is extremely difficult for those living on the streets to seek and maintain regular medical and psychiatric care if they are spending much of their time trying to find food and shelter.

That is why it is critical for organizations like ours to work in partnership with those seeking to resolve and demystify housing issues. “Much can be done when people come together to share their ideas and strategies for change. Events – like this forum – provide that opportunity,” said CAMH CEO and President Dr. Paul Garfinkel in his opening remarks. “We are fortunate to have caring community partners and others who are working with us to build healthy communities in a healthy city.”

One of those partners is the City of Toronto, and the Mayor in his introductory remarks reinforced the need to continue to work together. “These partnerships are helping to identify and break down the barriers to services for the homeless and people who are at risk in our community. But regardless of the barriers, we must confront one fundamental truth: We



Toronto Mayor David Miller giving the introductory remarks at CAMH's *Navigating the Housing Maze* forum

must make it much simpler to both find and keep a home in our city. No person – regardless of their circumstances – should be without a decent place to live in a city as diverse and resourceful as Toronto.”

The issues and challenges facing those seeking housing in Toronto were highlighted during the panel discussion. Panel members brought different perspectives, with one of the highlights coming

from Phil Hozer of the Toronto Homeless Speakers Bureau. He described his own personal experience of what it means to be without housing in Toronto. Other panellists included: Jim Nason, Loft Community Services; Bridgette Witkowski, Mainstay Housing; David Reycraft, Dixon Neighbourhood Homes; and Gladys Cheung, Hong Fook Mental Health Association. The moderator was Consultant David Reville.

The morning wrapped up with a Housing Fair at which over 30 housing providers and service agencies set up displays and were on hand to talk about their services. “We were overwhelmed by the positive response to the Housing Fair,” said Melonie. “Those attending and participating appreciated having all the information in one place and the opportunity to speak directly with clients about their services.”

For Sean Goetz-Gadon from the Affordable Housing Office at the City of Toronto, “This Housing Forum was invaluable in connecting members of the mental health community with agencies and public officials. The Forum has kept the issues related to affordable housing on the public agenda. Due to the networking opportunities at the Forum some persons actually received the supports needed to move into permanent housing.” ■

## News Highlights

### Does a Common Genetic Difference Cause Alcohol and Nicotine Addiction?

In a paper recently released in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, CAMH's Dr. A.D. Lê and colleagues found experimental evidence to support the theory that a shared genetic difference accounts for abuse of both nicotine and alcohol.

The scientists studied the behaviour of rats to see if P rats (a heavy-drinking rat strain bred to prefer alcohol) were more likely to self-administer nicotine, versus NP rats (a strain bred for low alcohol preference). The scientist found that the P rats self-administered more than twice the amount of intravenous nicotine as the NP rats. In addition, the experiments showed that P rats were more likely to start using nicotine again.

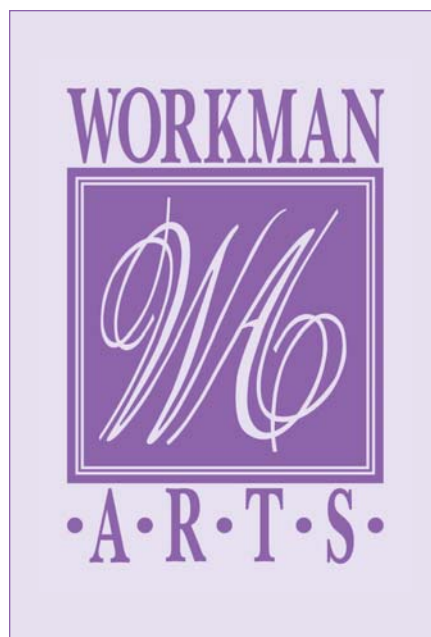
The results of this study provide a better understanding about the co-abuse of nicotine and alcohol. This kind of information could lead to diagnostic tools and targeted treatment programs to help prevent and treat alcohol and nicotine addiction in humans.

### Unhealthy Working Schedules for Nurses Revealed

A study published in the *American Journal of Nursing* by CAMH's Dr. Carles Muntaner and colleagues showed that:

- More than one quarter of the American nurses sampled reported that they typically worked 12 or more hours per day.
- One quarter of the nurses with more than one job worked 50 or more hours per week
- Single parents were as likely as those with more than one job to work 13 to 15 hours per day and many days consecutively.

Anecdotal information has been widely available, but this American study quantifies some of the adverse working conditions experienced by nurses. The next step will be to use this information to implement solutions to protect the health of nurses and patients, and evaluate these measures to help inform policy.



The renamed Workman Theatre Project's new Workman Arts logo

### New Name – A Sign of Success

The Workman Theatre Project is changing its name.

“Our new name is *Workman Arts (WA)*,” says Lisa Brown, Artistic Director, “which better reflects the broader scope of artistic media that the company now works in, namely theatre, film, visual arts, music and literary arts.”

Founded in 1987, the company has grown from 50 to 370 members. Originally, there was a focus on integrating people who receive mental

health services (members) with the professional theatre community. Today the membership has evolved to also include people who receive addiction services, and professional artists who have experienced mental illness and/or addictions and who work right across the artistic spectrum.

WA works in partnership with CAMH and other arts and mental health organizations.

“Our mandate is to promote a greater understanding of mental health and addiction issues through various artistic media, and to support individuals with mental illness and/or addiction in their artistic pursuits,” says Lisa.

The list of accomplishments of WA is a lengthy one. To date, WA has produced more than 16 original new Canadian plays, 13 Rendezvous with Madness Film Festivals, eight Annual Being Scene Art Exhibitions, four multidisciplinary festivals and one international festival. It has created numerous theatre and visual arts touring shows.

The next big event for WA is participating in the 2nd Madness and Arts World Festival in Germany in May. Workman Arts will be taking part in two symposiums, *Art and Madness* and *The View from Within*, as well as staging four performances of *Vincent*, a one-act play written specifically for WA by Terry Watada. WA produced the inaugural Madness and Arts World Festival in Toronto in 2003.

“This is a very exciting period of growth for us. Artists with mental illness and addiction are now more than ever before being recognized for the significant contribution they make to our society. We are glad to be part of this growing movement,” says Lisa. ■

# CAMH welcomes Geriatric Mental Health Expert

By Michael Torres,  
CAMH Media Relations Coordinator

After ten years as a Medical Director at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Dr. Benoît Mulsant has returned to Canada to redefine the Geriatric Mental Health Program at CAMH – and beyond. Geriatric mental health is a specialty that, internationally, has not received the attention that it needs or deserves. As the new Clinical Director of CAMH's Geriatric Mental Health Program (the largest such program in Ontario), Dr. Mulsant has a challenge ahead of him.

“As an older person, there is a large chance that you will develop dementia or another late-life mental disorder,” says Dr. Mulsant. “Geriatric mental health issues will soon affect millions of Ontarians, and we have a responsibility to respond to the specialized needs of older populations – and provide appropriate care.” This outlook is reinforced by findings in a paper studying depression in seniors and proper use of medications, co-authored by Dr. Mulsant and published in March in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

It is the number of people impacted, coupled with what he calls the ‘double stigma’ surrounding mental health or addiction issues and aging, that helps sharpen Dr. Mulsant's vision of what treatment for geriatric mental health issues can become. Along with Dr. Bruce Pollock, a Canadian colleague who has also returned from Pittsburgh as Senior Scientist at CAMH, Dr. Mulsant has made research an important focus for the Geriatric Mental Health Program at CAMH.

“Right now, many of the drugs that we prescribe to seniors have been tested in younger people. Likewise, younger people are the subjects in the Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans currently being done to understand mental illness,” said Dr. Mulsant. “We need to re-focus our research and study seniors more. There is far too much we still don't know.”

The Geriatric Mental Health Program has begun plans to work closely with CAMH's PET Centre in order to study mental health disorders in older populations.

Dr. Mulsant wants a model of care that fits those geriatric mental health clients who are also living with substance use problems, such as alcoholism. “Through a new program structure and increased capacity building CAMH is helping to build a system where

older clients can have their mental illness and substance use problems treated concurrently,” said Dr. Mulsant. “People who are treated in this manner are more likely to successfully manage their illness.”

As CAMH moves ahead with the redevelopment of its Queen Street site, Dr. Mulsant sees great opportunities for geriatric mental health. The first phase of CAMH's redevelopment will include a new geriatric outpatient clinic and two units to treat geriatric mental health patients. These units will be in a modernized setting filled with natural light and access to outdoor space, in a facility that helps staff integrate with clients, and clients transition back into the community into appropriate long-term care.

With experience and passionate determination to advance the field of geriatric mental health in Ontario, Dr. Mulsant is poised to guide CAMH in becoming a world leader in the field. Listed among the top geriatric psychiatrists in *Best Doctors in America* for over ten years, CAMH is pleased to welcome Dr. Mulsant and his innovative approach to geriatric mental health. ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Meeting the Challenges of Borderline Personality Disorder – A Community Information Forum* Tuesday, June 6, 2006

**Location:** Meeting Centre, (Room 2029),  
33 Russell Street, NE corner of College and Spadina  
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **Free Admission**

### *CAMH Annual General Meeting* Thursday, June 22, 2006

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** 1001 Queen St West, Cafeteria  
The business portion of the meeting will be followed by *Catch da Flava Radio live at the AGM*, a 20 minute live radio hip hop and spoken word radio show presented by youth involved with Regent Park FOCUS.  
*Reception with refreshments will follow.*

### *2006 Being Scene Art Exhibit*

**Opening Thursday, June 29th, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
with a reception in the lobby of the Queen Street site, 1001 Queen Street West. The year-long art exhibit showcases artists who receive services from CAMH. On display at the Queen Street, College Street, and Russell Street sites in Toronto until June 2007, the exhibit is open seven days a week to the general public. Self-guided tours and guide books available at each site.  
*For further information please contact: Cheryl Saracini, Workman Arts, 416 583-4339 or 416 535-8501, ext. 3164*



Dr. Benoît Mulsant

### Telephone Information Line

Staff members working on the telephone information line know they cannot afford to have a bad day. After all, the caller on the other end of the line may be having the worst day of their lives. Staff know that it takes courage for a person or a family member to pick up that phone and ask for help. Being ready to help means having access to information and treatment, experience and the people skills to put these to the best use. They are special people doing a special job.

The addictions and mental health “systems” in Ontario are large and complicated. The McLaughlin Centre staff see their role as both helping the caller navigate these complexities while still empowering them with as much choice as possible. The hope is that at the end of the call, the caller will be able to confidently take the next step.

The McLaughlin Information Centre networks with outside resources like the Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART), the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline and the newly formed Mental Health Service Information Ontario, which provides a toll-free, province-wide treatment and referral service about addictions, gambling and mental health.

Callers are not confined to those directly affected by mental illness and addictions. The information line often takes calls from law and healthcare professionals, teachers, as well as from students of all ages.

Recorded messages on a variety of mental health and addiction topics are available in 16 languages at any time, in addition to English and French.

### Surf the web

For those who prefer the Internet, there is a section of the CAMH website, [www.camh.net/McLaughlin](http://www.camh.net/McLaughlin), devoted to information material on a variety of topics available for downloading. Some of these are accessible in 23 different languages. Acquiring information in this way has increased enormously since its introduction in 2003, with an average of 21,000 downloads per month of pamphlets, articles, brochures and fact sheets. The website has information on everything from helping parents talk to their children about the safe use of medicine, to information for women dealing with problem gambling.

### Friendly Faces, Warm Welcome

Although phone and Internet inquiries are the preferred methods of contact for those using the McLaughlin Centre, the storefront location welcomes drop-in visitors with friendly faces and a multitude of printed materials on mental health and addictions in a variety of languages.

### Support is just a call away

Sometimes people affected, directly or indirectly, by mental illness and/or addiction are not looking so much for information as empathy. This is where the telephone support line program has a role. It is staffed by volunteers – many of whom have themselves encountered mental illness and/or addictions or others who have an interest in these fields. These volunteers want to contribute positively to their community, and on the support line they offer a friendly voice and an open mind at the end of the line. The support line is not a crisis line but provides an empathetic listener to those who want to be heard. Callers are most often people dealing with mental illness and/or addictions, however friends and family members, perhaps stressed by a loved one’s problem, also call.

Eventually the centre will relocate and be integrated into CAMH’s planned redevelopment of our Queen Street West site. One thing for sure, wherever its walls may be physically situated, the McLaughlin Centre will always offer information, compassion and support – the building blocks of a healthier and more empowered society – cemented by the caring and determination of its volunteers and staff. ■

## Access to Information – By the Numbers

Accessibility to resources associated with mental health and addictions is very important, especially when the stigma associated with these conditions often deters people from seeking the help they need. In an effort to remove barriers to information dissemination, the McLaughlin Information Centre has information available in many languages, and through different gateways like live telephone, recorded messages, print and online materials.

CAMH’s recent *Transforming Lives* awareness marketing campaign, which has been running in the media since May 2005, was created to increase CAMH’s visibility with the public and to inform the public where to call for more information. As a result of the campaign, there has been a dramatic increase in calls to the McLaughlin Information Centre.

Below are the increase in calls compared to the same period last year:

- 92% increase in September
- 106% increase in August
- 76% increase in November

Between April and November 2005, the following statistics have been noted:

Three Most Distributed Mental Health Fact Sheets (English):

- Depression – 1,505 sheets
- Psychosis – 1,240 sheets
- Bipolar Disorder – 985 sheets

Three Most Listened to Languages (other than English or French) for Recorded Messages:

- Greek • Tagalog • Cantonese and Italian (tied)

Busiest time of day for phone inquiries:

- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – 7,077 (Year-to-date total)

Busiest day of the week for phone inquiries:

- Tuesday – 7,555 (YTD total)

**The Mayor Excited by CAMH Redevelopment Plans!**

Mayor David Miller and City Councillor Joe Pantalone stopped by the Redevelopment Office on Friday March 24 to receive a quick presentation on CAMH’s redevelopment project. CAMH President and CEO Paul Garfinkel led the Mayor through the multi-phased redevelopment plans, and described how the project will improve the quality of client care at CAMH and help to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction. Miller listened enthusiastically as he learned of the large number of Toronto and wider GTA residents who benefit from the wide array of programs that CAMH provides.

The Mayor, a long-time supporter of ‘city building’, was also excited by the new parks and the integration of the site with the rest of the neighbourhood. Opportunities for such mixed uses as retail stores, galleries and cafes will help to support the revitalization of the Queen West neighbourhood.



Toronto Mayor David Miller examines a plan of the new CAMH site with help from CAMH CEO Paul Garfinkel.

**Update on Start of Construction**

We are hoping that, subject to government approvals, groundbreaking will take place in late summer/fall. This will be for our Alternate Milieu (AM) buildings for the care and recovery of our clients in a more home-like setting, and a related ambulatory patient care building. Construction of this phase (Phase 1A) should be complete by early 2008.

Prior to construction, CAMH will be erecting hoardings around the northwest section of our property to ensure safety and security. We wanted to give you advance notice about how the following areas of our property will be affected:

- **The Sunshine Garden** will have an early harvest this year in its current location and then will move to its new location. This area, which the garden workers started to prepare last year, is on the southwest part of CAMH’s property. Community sales of their organic produce will continue.
- **“Fennings Park”**, the green space at the northwest corner of the site, will be enclosed for at least part of the time of the construction. We are looking at ways to make it available to the public as soon as possible.

- **The tennis courts** will become unavailable, as the area will be needed for construction trailers and equipment. As the property will be required for construction of another building in the long-term, they will not be reinstated. We will be posting signs advising users of when the courts will become unavailable so that people can make alternate arrangements (see below for alternative courts in the area).
- Construction of the extension of **“Fennings Street”** (the official name will be determined by the City) will also begin at this time.

We will be communicating with neighbours in more detail as the construction date approaches, including putting in place mechanisms to ensure that we are able to deal with any issues that may arise during construction. We appreciate your patience while we go through this process. We also hope that you feel some pride in being part of a community which is developing a project that will help to transform lives!

If you have any questions please leave a message at 416 535-8501 ext. 1650 or e-mail [Redevelopment\\_Feedback@camh.net](mailto:Redevelopment_Feedback@camh.net) ■

**Other Tennis Courts in the Area**

**Trinity Community Recreation Centre**

155 Crawford St. & Queen - 416 392-0743

**Niagara Community Centre**

700 Wellington St. W. (Niagara & Wellington) - 416 392-6674

**Parkdale College Institute**

209 Jameson Ave. (Lansdowne & Queen) - 416 393-9000 (becomes open to the public when the school year is over)

**CAMH Connexions**, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health’s (CAMH) external newsletter, is published four times a year to inform our stakeholders about current issues and events at CAMH.

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DISPONIBLE EN FRANÇAIS

**HIGHLIGHTS** DISPONÍVEL EM PORTUGUÊS

**Mission**

Improving the lives of those affected by addiction and mental health problems and promoting the health of people in Ontario and beyond.

**Vision**

Strong and healthy communities, in which people with addiction and mental health problems can access appropriate and effective services and live as full participants.

**How to reach CAMH**

TELEPHONE  
416 535-8501, ext. 4250  
COMMUNITY INFO LINE  
416 535-8501, ext. 1650  
(to leave us a message with your questions or concerns)  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
1001 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M6J 1H4  
WEBSITE [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)