

# Consumer Survivor Initiatives

## MOVIE MONDAY

a consumer initiative

By Bruce Saunders

One of our favorite correspondents and all-round model on how to carry out a consumer initiative, Bruce Saunders was mentioned in our last Networker and was asked for some background for a more in depth piece.

### Some Background:

Movie Monday began 18 months ago, showing a weekly movie in the then underused 100 seat lecture theatre at the Eric Martin Pavilion, Victoria's psychiatric hospital.

This 'recreational' use was quickly adopted because Bruce, an ex-patient, is also a member of the mood-disorder support group, and the film night's purpose was to provide an entertainment alternative for patients and alumni - a wellness purpose.

The concept has been broadened to draw a fully integrated audience.

A fund was begun to replace a dying video projector. With the help of articles by Deborah Pearce, Times-Colonist reporter and herself a consumer, Bruce went public about his manic-depressive illness and his idea.

A direct appeal to Sony obtained a considerable discount on the new machine. The hospital auxiliary, seeing the publicity and worthiness of the program, came through with the balance - even though they usually fund only medical equipment.

Now, after upgrade other a/v equipment to match the new projector, MM has a healthy balance for working expenses held by G.V.H.S. Small profits from the concession and a donation jar sustain the program - no grants sought or required!

The technical staff are available when needed but otherwise it's entirely a 'consumer driven' show, involvement is encouraged, but the leg work was and still is done primarily by Bruce, his wife and two sons and one or two helpers pitching in on refreshments.

### Reflections:

In many ways Movie Monday's a tremendous success. We've drawn several capacity crowds lately and have 2/3 houses. There's no shortage of great movie material. We're in good standing with the hospital, having put on 85 events, always leaving the area tidy and secure.

We get a varied audience - regular comers from the community who just like a good movie, many consumers and others living



alone and on tight budgets, some group home clients who come very regularly, and always a few patients, some in their robes. A healthy mix.

Some of the more challenging movies on mental health themes we've shown are: Rainman, 35 Up, Benny and Joon, An Angel At My Table, Awakenings, and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (and soon, Fearless and Mr. Jones!). I've tried for these presentations to round out the experience with background info and discussion to add some depth and capitalize on our unique setting and audience.

However, I do try to mix up the offerings; action, drama, comedy, fantasy, usually an animated short or cartoon to start. Oldies are good - we had 70 people for Wuthering Heights!

So MM is a critical success. But some aspects haven't worked out as I'd hoped. The biggest disappointment has been that so few consumers like myself have joined in the project. So far MM has remained 'my thing'

and depends on my energy and thrust to keep going. If I run out of poop, as occasionally happens, I can see that it could fold.

The other big disappointment has been the lack of encouragement/ participation from the professional community. Individuals who work in the same building and for the same people I wish to serve have been amazingly uncurious. On a bad day I get a feeling they're just waiting for this aberration to 'fill his boots' and go away - one of the things that keeps me going!

Now that MM is conspicuously succeeding more people are taking an interest, but in the early days a few individuals were especially supportive - Norm Ellis, a psych nurse - my 'reproductive technician', Dr Milliken, the Chief of Psychiatry at E.M.P. and Gail Simpson of CMHA and NAMI particularly. The hospital's Human Resources dept. and the A.V. staff have been very generous and deserve commendation.

That concept - 'partnership' - it seems to work in pockets.

These negative comments aside, MM has been especially good for me. It's been a great outlet for my creative drive. I can get an idea and make it happen in this great little theatre. Every week I have that opportunity.

Especially rewarding have been the many people I've met. Like Dr. Dean Brooks. He's a very lively 80 year old who was Superintendent of Oregon State Hospital and played 'Spivey' across from Jack Nickelson in 'Cuckoo's Nest'. Dr. Brooks answered my request to visit Victoria's mental health community and present the movie in style. . . in my little theatre!

The project has given me an identity - a role in the mental health community, the chance to be not 'just a mental health service consumer' but a producer!

Bruce was the recipient of a special recognition plaque at the Christmas Awards Banquet sponsored by the Vancouver Mental Health Support Society.

### Mothers in Transition

A Support Group for Parents with a Mental Illness Seeking

Parents who have lived through living without their children.

If this describes you, would you be willing to:

share what you've learned benefit others and possibly become a resource/support to others going through the experience now.

For more information contact Dawn between 10 am - 3 pm at 689-7938



### Mothers In Transition

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#### SEEKING

Parents who have lived through living without their children.

If this describes you, would you be willing to:

- share what you've learned
- benefit others and
- possibly become a resource/support to others going through the experience now.

Please call Nora at 879-5101 or Dawn at 879-5105 or 689-7938.



### Consumer Initiatives

#### Funding Requests

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network

#### Notice:

Funding decisions will no longer be made by Network Staff

All requests for funding are to be made directly to the FORUM.

For information on the next FORUM call the Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network at 879-5122.