

HEARING our VOICES The struggle for housing stability is among the many challenges faced by people with schizophrenia. That struggle was the focus of a recent participatory action research project under the direction of Barbara Schneider, PhD, Faculty of Communication and Culture, University of Calgary, and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Participatory research involves members of a community group in meaningful participation in all stages of the research process, including developing the research question, gathering the data, analyzing the data, and disseminating and using the results.

Hearing our Voices is the process and outcome of 6 years of a project by Dr Schneider and nine of her researchers who have schizophrenia (DVD 30min 2008)

People you'll meet @ MM April 29 9am at the "MM Monthly Sixth Floor Screening"



Barbara Schneider

Barbara Schneider is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Communication and Culture, University of Calgary. She started doing research on schizophrenia about six years ago, when one of her children was diagnosed with schizophrenia. In 2001, she began working with a group of people from the Peer Support Unsung Heroes program at the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta, Calgary Chapter, all of whom have schizophrenia. This very fruitful collaboration has led to two research projects together. The first was on the experiences of people with schizophrenia with their medical professionals, and the second is the housing research described in this website. More information about her research can be found on her [website:www.ucalgary.ca/~baschnei](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~baschnei)



Michele Misurelli

As the coordinator of the Unsung Heroes, Michele brings a warm balance of passion, empathy, care, and dependability to the project. Michele is a strong advocate for others, and is generous with her time when it comes to helping members of the team or other people in the community. She believes we all deserve safe, clean, affordable housing. Her hope is that through this research "we can make recommendations to reduce homelessness in our community." Michele appreciates that her current Habitat for Humanity home is a safe, secure, and healthy place for herself and her daughter. The contrast between Michele's experiences and where she lives now are really clear in the photos she took. Her favourite photo is the one of the washer and dryer, something she never had before.



Mary Mitchell

Mary's confidence and positive attitude have brought a steadiness and reliability to the Unsung Heroes support group for a number of years. She values the strengths of the research team and feels that as a group we can have more impact and more can be done to change the housing situation. Mary's goal for the research is that it will help to find ways to create more stable housing. She hopes this research will provide meaningful ideas that others can draw on. For Mary home is a place to relax, be your own person, and socialize with others. Her photos show how important choices can be in helping people stay well.



Dale Silbernagel (on film)

Dale is the strong, silent, thoughtful member of the research team. He doesn't say much, but when he does he makes a significant contribution. Dale learned to operate our video camera and became the team's official videographer, taping many of the meetings and interviews. Through his participation in the research, Dale came to understand that people who are homeless do not choose this way of life, but end up without a home often through circumstances that are beyond their control. He hopes that the research will help to change how people who are homeless are perceived in society.



Laurie Arney (on film)

As an artist, Laurie brings creativity and compassionate insight to the research project. Known for her gift for saying the right things at the right time, Laurie enjoys the chance to talk about subjects that don't normally get talked about and feels she is helping to make a difference. For Laurie, being part of the research team means she has learned that she is not alone. It has confirmed for her how important it is to feel heard. She hopes the research will make changes to the way the homeless are treated. Described by the research team as intelligent, empathetic, and helpful, Laurie helped the team create art that described what home meant to them. For Laurie, home is a place to energize and grow. "It's my own living space, where I tend my indoor garden, create my art, and find peace.

**Originally presented at Movie Monday
& Psych Grand Rounds May 2009 (with the top three in person)**

Details and links on the project at: <http://callhome.u-calgary.ca/>