



ISSUE 01 NOVEMBER 2009

Leadership Victoria

Alumni Newsletter

Stand Up for Mental Health

A SERIOUSLY FUNNY MESSAGE

LV alumni from many cohorts gathered on October 21 to enjoy a performance of Stand Up for Mental Health at UVic's Farqhar auditorium. In this show, people living with mental illness use the stand-up comedy with a seriously funny message about mental illness. Alumni were treated to free tickets to the show, courtesy of the University of Victoria, and enjoyed an alumni-only reception afterwards at the Maltwood Gallery. Members of various cohorts had the opportunity to reconnect

with former team-mates and make new connections. We also had the chance to meet the performers from a wide variety of ages and experiences.

David Granirer, counsellor, stand-up comic and author, created and leads Stand Up For Mental Health. David teaches stand-up comedy to people with mental illness as a way of building their confidence and fighting public stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. *(cont. on next page)*



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Stand Up *cont.*

The shows look at the lighter side of taking meds, seeing counsellors, getting diagnosed, and surviving the mental health system. SMH performs at conferences, treatment centres and psych wards in partnership with numerous mental health organizations, in prisons, on military bases and university and college campuses, at fundraisers and forums, and for the general public across Canada and the US.

David, who himself suffers from depression says: If

you have bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health diagnoses, you're a perfect fit for this program! SMH has received funding to set up a program here in Victoria. (www.standupformentalhealth.com/)

Thanks to UVic for sponsoring this great alumni event – the first of what the alumni committee hopes are many to come!



Alumni profile

A CONVERSATION WITH LEE HERRIN, CLASS OF 2007

What was your old job?

From 1998 through 2009 I worked for the provincial government at BC Stats. I started as an analyst, became a Manager, and eventually a Director with a staff of 20 and a budget of over \$3M. My unit conducted survey research for over 200 client organizations across the breadth of the public sector. It was a tremendous place to learn about government, but also was a great place for me to learn about management and leadership. The province sponsored me to participate in Leadership Victoria in 2006/07.

What is your new job?

In August 2009, I became the Executive Director of Fernwood NRG, a neighbourhood-based non-profit focused on urban sustainability.

Invitation for November 12: Th

The Prodigy Group - affiliated with the Greater network of Victoria professionals under the age of 40, is on Thursday, Nov 12 at 5:30pm at Canoe Club. For more information, check out the website: www.prodigygroup.com





Reflections on the Leadership Victoria Experience

TANYA RAK

Since graduating from the Leadership Victoria program in June 2009, I have asserted my desire to gain more meaningful employment. During the year, I went through an emotional divorce that culminated in feelings of uncertainty and self doubt. Being a now single income earner, I thought that a career shift would be the last thing to consider. After a lot of self reflection and personal truth, I felt a real need to be honest with myself and take more risks.

The skills I learned through Leadership Victoria encouraged me to have a heart-to-heart conversation with my employer. I communicated my needs and, when it was expressed that those needs for stimulation and meaningful engagement could not be accommodated in my current position, I asked for

support as I ventured forward. With her support, open and honest communication with myself and others, and a clear vision, I pursued other research opportunities in my field. A week later, I successfully joined a new branch as a Senior Research Officer. I feel so empowered now that I believe I am making a difference!

Oh yeah, I also decided to take a trip on my own to Australia in October. Attached is a photo of my surprise birthday party held by my new Australian friends! Journaling, believing in myself, having a clear vision, setting goals, taking risks, giving back, making a difference... all of these things, in part, because of participation in the Leadership Victoria program... thank you!

There are over 40 employees providing a range of services including child care, family support, recreation, and affordable housing. We also operate the Cornerstone Café at the corner of Fernwood and Gladstone which contributes greatly to the social life of the neighbourhood.

What prompted the change?

I have been involved in Fernwood NRG since 1998 as a member of the Board of Directors. I served as Chair of the Board from 1999 through 2006. I have been committed to the organization for a long time, and when our long-serving Executive Director, Roberta Martell, stepped down to pursue other opportunities this past summer, I decided to apply for the job. I was honoured to be selected, and so far, it has been a great opportunity to test my leadership skills in a completely different setting. I'm looking forward to continuing to serve this organization and the neighbourhood in the months and years ahead.

The Prodigy Group

The Victoria Chamber of Commerce - is a diverse group of 40 with an interest in connecting to the community. Check out their Monthly Mingles - next one on Oct 10th at the Club. There is no cost to attend the event. For more information visit www.prodigygroup.ca.

Class Notes

2009

Since graduating in June, **Tanya Rak** has travelled to Australia and accepted a new position as Policy Analyst with the Ministry of Health Services (EMA Licensing Division).

Since graduating from the program in June 2009, **Jaya Polden** has accepted a new position working as a graphic designer for the provincial government. She works with a fabulous team of people, putting her leadership and communication skills to work.

2008

John Carlow continued with his team's CAP project (Reynolds

Greenspaces project) in a more limited role post graduation. The project has been tremendously successful since his LV team's involvement and is ongoing (www.greenspacesproject.org/). John, who is the Supervisor of Materials Management for VIHA at the Victoria General Hospital, is also part of the newly formed Alumni Committee.

2007

Catch up with **Lee Herrin's** updates in the "Alumni Profile" elsewhere in this newsletter.

In August 2009 **Anna Russo** married Taylor Kennedy and has recently "gone back to school" taking computer science courses at UVic.

Vancouver has gained **Raveen Sanghera** where she is working as a Program Coordinator in Continuing Studies at Simon Fraser University.

2005

Congratulations to **Marguerite Casey-Wolnicki**, who married Thomas Wolnicki in April 2009.

Rachelle McElroy is in a new position as Knowledge Mobilization Specialist with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, in partnership with the Canadian Social Economy Hub at UVic. She is also the chair of City Green Solutions.

Barbara Patterson started a new job in March 2008 as Branch Administrator for ScotiaMcLeod.

Paul Senez moved to Montreal in November 2007.

New job? New volunteer organization? Did you get married since graduation, or welcome a future LV alumnus into the world? Interesting travel experience? Whatever it is, drop your Class Rep (listed in this Newsletter) a line so we can run it in future Class Notes!

Volunteer Opportunity with Rotary

Harbourside Rotary Victoria is interested in creating and implementing a Community Action Project in the period of January 1, 2010 – May 1, 2010.

The project correlates with the Rotary Community Leaders Program to engage newer Rotarians to learn and develop leadership, project management, financial management, planning, and event organization skills while making new friends. One of the intended outcomes is to apply for a potential Rotary Governor's Award to recognize the efforts of the participants.

Harbourside Rotary Victoria has asked for the assistance of Leadership Victoria Alumni to mentor and coach the project participants. Chris Fraser has agreed to facilitate the early stages of team development and project selection. Jason French ('09) has agreed to be one of the 2-4 Leadership Victoria Alumni requested to participate.

If you are interested, or if you would like more information, please contact Shawn Steele ('09) at shawn.steele@shaw.ca. Alternatively, if your organization is looking for volunteers as board members, fundraisers, etc, use this space to cast the net amongst fellow LV alumni!

Class Reps

Class Reps are members of the Alumni Committee that have volunteered to be the liaison between you and the Committee! You may receive emails from your Class Rep from time to time.

2009: Tanya Rak tanyamariarak@gmail.com & Kate Longpre klongpre@hotmail.com

2008: John Carlow jdcarlow@gmail.com

2007: Brenda Kennedy andrewbrenda@shaw.ca

2006: Heather Regan hregan@uvic.ca

2005: Marguerite Casey-Wolnicki mcasey@uvic.ca & Barb Patterson barb_patterson@scotiamcleod.com

2004: Bonnie Hallett bonnieh@uvic.ca

2003: Vacant! Interested? Send one of the other Class Reps an email!