

# CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

WOOD BUFFALO



ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**16** VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION-  
RUTH AND ALFRED HOFFMAN



**14** HEARTMATH



**03** SEE MORE PHOTOS OF OUR  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **03** CMHA WOOD BUFFALO

A detailed look at our vision and board of directors.

## **04** MESSAGE

Directly from CMHA's Executive Director and President of the Board.

## **05** ABOUT US

Learn more about CMHA and our strategic priorities.

## **07** CMHA STAFF

Read about the who's who of the office.

## **08** MEET THE TEAM

Take an in depth look at the roles and responsibilities of the staff.

## **09** COMMUNITY EVENTS

Explore our list of mental health awareness campaigns and events.

## **10** FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Find out more about our fundraisers and take a look at our sponsors.

## **11** SUCCESS STORY

Read our clients inspiring story about his journey with mental health.

## **12** ADULT PROGRAMMING

Read about the programs and services offered for adults.

## **13** YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Have a look at our extensive work with the youth community in Fort McMurray.

## **14** SPECIAL HIGHLIGHT

Learn how Imperial Oil made it possible to launch HeartMath in the local schools.

## **15** RECOGNITION

Take a look at our 2016/2017 Awards!

## **16** VOULUNTEERS

We are shedding light on our amazing volunteers on this page!

## **17** MEMBERSHIP

Find out how you can become a CMHA member!

## **18** CONTACT US

Looking to get in touch with CMHA? This page will help you reach out.



# CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION (CMHA)

WOOD BUFFALO REGION

## OUR VISION

Mentally healthy people in a healthy society.

## OUR MISSION

A nation-wide voluntary organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports people experiencing mental health issues.

## OUR GOAL

To provide services to all demographic areas in the region.

2016/2017

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Melanie Ramage

Vice-President

Chere Hemsworth

Treasurer

Crystal Baldwin-Danson

Secretary

Donna Rice

Director

Stephanie Brake

Director

Steve Kelly

Director

Brenda Smith

Director

Consuelo Alfaro

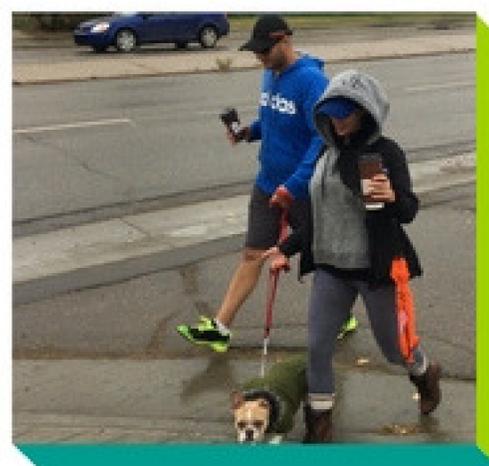
Director

Tracy Meyers

Director

Corinna Pirie

Director



# Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director

This report will review the 2016/2017 programming year, and what a year it was! Now, you'll hear the words "we" and "us" often. That's because CMHA Wood Buffalo is more than just the staff or Board. It's all of us. It belongs to everybody in the community in which we live. And together, we've been through a lot.

We faced some of our biggest challenges due to the wildfires and the evacuation of the entire community. The support of our board of directors, our staff, the Alberta Division of CMHA, and the National CMHA organization positioned the agency to respond to the immediate and shifting needs of a community affected by one of the largest natural disasters in Canada's history.

Our focus quickly shifted from helping the community transition during re-entry to how the future would look. And as the year came to a close, we recognized that the work of recovery was far from over. In addition to dealing with unimaginable material loss, residents of Wood Buffalo were facing the psychological and emotional impacts of the fires as well as the economic downturn. While there are always mental health issues to triage after these types of events, typically the majority of the issues start to rise months and years after the events have taken place. These are impacts we are still trying to understand and address today.

The rebuild is now well underway. While many citizens are getting the support they need, we still have a long road ahead of us. With much work and collaboration between the Board and staff to develop strategic planning, we have clear, solid direction to move us forward in assisting those impacted as they settle back into their normal routines and lives post-rebuilding.

**CMHA Wood Buffalo has also gone through some major structural changes. As a result of the fires and other life events, a number of board and staff members have left the organization. And in March of this year I started my position as the Executive Director. But make no mistake: CMHA has made incredible progress on many fronts in the past year. We are leveraging our expertise, capacity, and dedication in new ways to address the mental health and mental illness needs of this community. Our focus is on collective action and collaboration.**

**We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our incredible team for their dedication and work ethic. They are the reason we have been able to come this far in a relatively short period of time. We also want to thank our long-term funders and sponsors for their confidence and support. And in particular we want to acknowledge the board of directors who continue to provide insightful, enthusiastic leadership in the governance of this association.**

**As we look forward to our 2017/2018 programming year we will continue to be guided by our multi-faceted mission: provide mental health services that improve the quality of people's lives, reduce the stigma of mental illness, and advocate for a better health care system for you, your families, and our community.**

**Christine Savage**  
Executive Director

**Steve Kelly**  
President, Board of Directors

# About us



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Wood Buffalo  
*Mental health for all*

**Welcome to CMHA - Wood Buffalo!**

The Canadian Mental Health Association is a national organization, focused on the mission to promote mental health for all and to support people experiencing mental illness.

Since 1980's we have been focused on supporting the mission to bring awareness and support to our community in regards to mental health. Our organization was incorporated in 1994 and we moved into our new location in 2015.

All our mental health programs are based on principles of empowerment, participation in decision-making, citizenship, inclusion in community life, peer and family support.

We seek to consistently improve and build upon our past successes, so as to better connect and help individuals in the community.



Alberta Northeast Region

## Strategic Priorities

### **RAISE AGENCY PROFILE**

**to maximize stakeholder engagement and funding opportunities**

### **INCREASE OUR SCOPE**

**of services to our outlying Aboriginal Communities**

### **STABILIZE OUR DIVERSITY**

**our funding to ensure a sustainable future**

### **ATTRACT AND RETAIN**

**people resources to become employer of choice**

# Staff

<b>Christine Savage</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
<b>Monica Viel</b>	<b>Executive Assistant</b>
<b>Katie McDonald</b>	<b>Mental Wellness Program Coordinator</b>
<b>Jasmeen Toor</b>	<b>Fund Development &amp; Event Coordinator</b>
<b>Angela Betts</b>	<b>Consumer Advocate</b>
<b>Suellen Ware</b>	<b>Youth Programming Coordinator</b>
<b>Krista Anthony</b>	<b>Youth Programming &amp; Caregiver Connections Coordinator</b>

Did you know two of our current staff members began as CMHA volunteers?  
"I originally came to CMHA to take a course for my own mental health. The facilitators were so inspirational, from my very first class gave me the confidence to become a facilitator myself, to know that I might be able to help someone as much as they helped me. I'm so proud to now say that I work with CMHA, I love what I do, and can say I feel like I'm making a difference"



# MEET THE 2017-2018 TEAM!

Executive Director	Consumer Advocate	Executive Assistant
<p><b>Christine Savage</b></p> <p>In her role as the Executive Director of CMHA, Christine is responsible for the successful leadership and management of the organization. She focuses on establishing of excellent working relationships and collaborative arrangements with community groups, funders, politicians, and other organizations. As the Executive Director, Christine helps to achieve organization goals of the organization through leadership in teamwork, planning, and implementation of the organization's programs and services.</p>	<p><b>Angela Betts</b></p> <p>In her role as Mental Health Advocate, Angela works on behalf of individuals living with Mental Health Illnesses, and on behalf of their families and friends to fulfill their basic needs and human rights. She offers referral services to clients, facilitation of support groups, assistance in goal planning, as well as a variety of information and resources.</p>	<p><b>Monica Viel</b></p> <p>As the Executive Assistant, Monica is the heartbeat of our office. She ensures the efficient day-to-day operation of the office, helping to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for all that visit the office. Monica , supports all team members, and works directly under the Executive Director, assisting in a variety of tasks.</p>
Fund Development & Events Coordinator	Youth Programming Coordinators	Mental Wellness Program Coordinator
<p><b>Jasmeen Toor</b></p> <p>As the Events Coordinator, Jasmeen highlights community visibility and accessibility to services through our social media, community initiatives and CMHA fundraising events. Our Events Coordinator consistently is working on new campaigns to raise awareness and support CMHA roles to help community members throughout the RMWB.</p>	<p><b>Suellen Ware &amp; Krista Anthony</b></p> <p>Both parents themselves, Suellen and Krista enjoy teaching children in our community as part of their role as Youth Programming Coordinators. In this role, they are responsible for the coordination and implementation of curriculum taught to students from k – 12 in the Fort McMurray Public School District.</p>	<p><b>Katie McDonald</b></p> <p>Working as the Mental Wellness Program Coordinator, Katie is responsible for the coordination, development and implementation of programs to the general public throughout the Municipality of Wood Buffalo on a variety of mental health topics.</p>



Throughout the year, CMHA staff, board members, and volunteers take part in a variety of special community events and programs. In addition to conferences and public forums, CMHA was involved in the following community initiatives in 2016:

- Mental Health Week
- Consumer Christmas Dinner
- Seniors Month
- Adopt-a-Trail
- Community Registration Day
- STHT (Support Through Housing Team)
- United Way “Seeing is Believing” Tours
- Homeless Connect
- Keyano College Orientation Day
- Peter Pond Mall Wellness Fair
- Volunteer Management Breakfast
- Community Registration Day at MacDonald Island Park
- Anti-Stigma ‘Make Noise’ Campaign at Keyano College
- Information booths at MacDonald Island Park
- Urban Market
- Bell Let’s Talk
- Community Café
- 2016 Wildfire Recovery Community Wellness BBQ



During 2016 end of summer, CMHA hosted a Welcome Back Community BBQ generously funded by the Red Cross for community members returning home after the wildfire. This event saw more than 600 community members stopping by to enjoy an afternoon of free activities, food and important information regarding mental health services and resources from a variety of organizations.



# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

CMHA held a variety of successful fundraising events in 2016! These fundraisers would not have been possible without the tremendous, ongoing support from community members and local businesses, along with the hard work of our staff, board members, and volunteers. The events included:

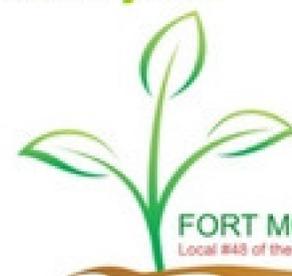
- Charity Jam & Silent Auction
- Canadian Tire Community BBQ
- Bake Sale Fundraiser - Supporting The United Way of Fort McMurray
- Casino Night at Boomtown Casino
- March Mullets for Mental Health

## THANK YOU!

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our partners, donors and sponsors, for making these events such a resounding success. Your dedication and ongoing support are making a larger impact to help so many in our community. We couldn't do it without you!



**United Way**  
Fort McMurray

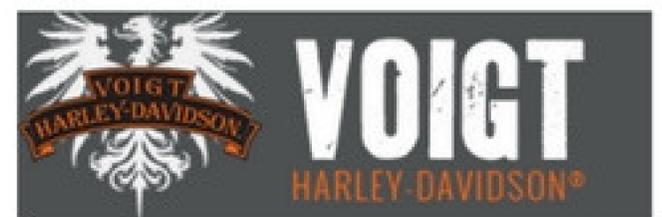


**FORT MCMURRAY TEACHERS**  
Local #43 of the Alberta Teachers' Association

Doing what we love. Loving what we do.



EMERGENCY SERVICES



# Peter's Journey

## A CMHA SUCCESS STORY

In March of 2017 Peter (not his real name to protect client confidentiality) walked into the Canadian Mental Health-Wood Buffalo and stated that he was currently thinking of taking his life and had been struggling with deep bouts of depression and suicidal thoughts.

Peter, who at the time had been a contributing member of society as a Transport Operator, was hit head on by a drunk driver. As a result of the accident Peter's started having recurring nightmares and was officially diagnosed with PTSD shortly after. This diagnosis deeply affected Peter and he fell deeper and deeper into bouts of depression and he started using hard drugs to numb the pain.

In a brief moment of clarity Peter made the decision to begin to fight for his. The day he entered the office, Peter was in a state of despair he stated he was actively suicidal and had a plan to end his life. He felt he was fighting harder than the medical system. Over the course of the conversation we were able to work through his feelings and put a safety plan was put in place to support his life. This plan included a number of community partners as Peter had a number of concurrent disorders that needed to be addressed. In Peter's mind he finally felt that others were willing to look after and care for his wellbeing, as a team of professional were put in place and work with Peter.

One of the supports Peter identified that day was painting. When struggling with hopelessness and depression Peter stated that painting allows him opportunity to get in touch with his aboriginal culture and share that culture with others. He feels comforted knowing that "I can come in the door anytime to do my art at the CMHA office and I know it is safe . . . People are fighting for me for the first time".

Peter has worked very hard in the last year stay on top of his struggle with depression and HIV. He is no longer in a position to work but he has found a new passion which is giving back to the community. He takes a lot of pride in volunteering at the local hospital and stops by every Thursday to work with the aboriginal patients on the fourth floor, teaching them how to paint as well as providing them with drumming circles. Peter lives on a very limited income so selling his art has also provided him the ability to financially give back to his family through the sale of this art, which "makes me feel human again".

Peter continues his struggles with his own mental illness, but is now a daily warrior in the healthiest of ways.

# Education and Services - Adult Programming

**CMHA's programs and services are designed to help people...**

- Improve their mental health
- Integrate into the community
- Become more resilient
- Be supported in their recovery from mental illness

We strive to provide support and education for all to protect and promote mental health through education, advocacy, understanding and support with the goal to reduce stigma around mental health.

**It is our mandate to provide Mental Health programs and services that are responsive to local needs. We provide training and workshops to adults on a variety of topics affecting individuals in our community through 2016 including:**



- Empowering Women's Self esteem
  - Anger Management for Adults
  - Stress Management
  - Living Life to the Full
- Mental Illness Support Group
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)
- Mental Health First Aid Training for Adults Who Interact with Youth
- Basic Facilitator Training

**Looking forward into 2017,  
we are excited to have new  
programming options including:**

- SafeTALK
- Mental Health First Aid BASIC

**255** individuals took part in CMHA mental health education programs in 2016.

**CMHA WOOD BUFFALO  
IS A COMMUNITY LEADER  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
PREVENTION &  
EDUCATION.**

- Advocacy, Education and Awareness
- Facilitate/ Coordinate/ Collaborate
- Providing Programs and Services
- Workshops and Support Groups

**A big "Thank You!" to  
The Red Cross for  
providing funding  
support, allowing us to  
provide critical Applied  
Suicide Intervention  
Skills Training (ASIST)  
at a lower cost to the  
community after our  
return from the 2016  
Horse River Wildfire.**

# Education and Services - Youth Programming

Our programming is not limited to only adults. CMHA believes in the development of our youth, and has a well developed partnership with the Fort McMurray Public School District, allowing us to offer in school programming to youth, grades k – 12.

## This programming includes:

- Fun with Friends
- Fun for Life
- The Fourth R – Healthy Relationships Plus Program (HRPP)
- Mental Health and High School Curriculum
- HeartMath
- Additional presentations on stress, anxiety and other mental health topics.

# 976

students impacted during the 2016/2017 school year.

With programming beginning trials in 2016, CMHA is pleased to offer new programming in 2017 inclusive of:

- **WITS Primary/LEADs Program**
- **Journey of Hope**
- **Be Safe!**
- **Kids in the Know – Safety Program**

Despite school closures and recovery from the 2016 Wildfire, youth programming positively impacted 976 students during the 2016/2017 school year. Looking forward into 2017, we are growing in leaps and bounds. For the next school year, we are set to exceed this benchmark over by 100%. CMHA has projected to be working with 2700 youth across the 16 FMPSD schools in Fort McMurray, and will be adding new services in Anzac.

## 2017 Projections



# 2,700

youth to be reached by CMHA



# 16

schools to be visited by CMHA

# Education and Services

## Special Highlight

In 2016, Imperial Oil generously partnered with CMHA to provide a **\$30,000 sponsorship** for the launch of the HeartMath Program in the Fort McMurray Public School District schools.

With this funding, iPads equipped with the HeartMath Program and hardware attachments were provided to schools within the Fort McMurray Public School district as well as the CMHA office.

Heart Math helps the students lower their stress level and anxiety by doing breathing activity, combined with cutting edge technology.

They learn to self-regulate, and the program helps to improve mental and emotional balance for the students as they use it on an ongoing basis.

Many students have reported they enjoyed using this software, especially around exam time as it helped to calm them during stressful times.

This is a gift that continues to give back as the initiative grows within our community.

Looking forward to the kick off of the 2017 Mental Health Week, we partnered again with the Fort McMurray Public School District and Imperial Oil to support the mental health of first responders. During this event children demonstrated to first responders how to use the software, and explained the many benefits they would see as a result.



2016-2017

# Award Recipients

Media Award

**Rick Kirschner, The Bridge**

Business Award

**Harley Davidson & Canadian Tire**

Professional Award

**Sandy Gradison**

Outstanding Service Award

**UNIFOR Local 707A**

Volunteer Award

**Ruth and Alfred Hoffman**

Mental Wellness Program Volunteer Award

**Milena Joveska**

Community Enrichment Award

**ATA Local 48**

Exceptional Act of Kindness Award

**Russell Thomas**

## Special Service Recognition

As of October 2017 Suellen been with CMHA for 5 years. Over the years she's impacted many youth in the community with repeat students recognizing her work year after year. She has contributed to our growth and success in the community, and is without fail a fixture in our organization. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize Suellen Ware for all that she has done, her sense of humor, laughter and friendship to us all.

## Board Recognition

A special "Thank You!" to all of our Board members who will be moving on to new opportunities. We thank you for your support and commitment to the Canadian Mental Health Association family here in the Wood Buffalo Region

# Volunteer Facilitation

We are incredibly proud to be one of the oldest volunteer organizations in Canada, and strive to embrace the spirit of volunteerism through our events, and programs.

Two of our longest running volunteers are program facilitators whom have been with us since **1984**

Ruth and Alfred Hoffman have been long time contributors to the community, having been in Fort McMurray for over 40 years. They have said that Fort McMurray will always be home, and CMHA a second family.

In 2017, artist Russel Thomas created a beautiful piece of art to honor these volunteers, which will be hung in the CMHA office commemorate their long standing dedication and passion to the organization.



To become a CMHA volunteer email [events@woodbuffalo.cmha.ab.ca](mailto:events@woodbuffalo.cmha.ab.ca)!

## Paws For People

### Pet Therapy Volunteerism

Pet therapy originally began in Fort McMurray in 1989 with two residents and their dogs visiting seniors. Since these beginnings the program grew into a network of volunteers and pet therapy animals with more visitations being added. In 2010 PAWS for People joined under the CMHA umbrella as a local volunteer group interested in the therapeutic effect of animals on people. These volunteers and their dogs/cats are screened and trained to make visits to multiple locations across town. The program continues to grow and is coordinated by Koralee Samaroden .



By the end of 2016, 9 new teams completed their training bringing the total pet therapy animal count up to 25 dogs and 1 cat along with their handlers. These teams went on over 150 pet visits to 19 different locations including the airport, hospital, McMurray Experience and seniors homes.

Looking forward into 2017, PAWS is projected to grow by another 5 new teams.



# Membership

CMHA – Wood Buffalo is seeking passionate individuals to become Association Members.

By Becoming a CMHA – WB Member you help by:

- Supporting specialized services across Alberta and in your local community
- Joining a movement to build a community of hope, support and inclusion for people experiencing mental illness
- Showing you care about mental health in Alberta and your community

## What Do You Gain?

- Membership with your local CMHA region and the CMHA Alberta Division
- The opportunity to vote for members of our governing board of directors
- The opportunity to attend our divisional annual meeting
- Information and news about mental health in your community

## Memberships

Annual membership fees:

- \$5 Individuals on a limited income
- \$20 Individual
- \$50 Organization

Contact us at [adminassistant@woodbuffalo.cmha.ab.ca](mailto:adminassistant@woodbuffalo.cmha.ab.ca) to sign up or learn more.



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Wood Buffalo  
*Mental health for all*

## Stay Connected

**Canadian Mental Health Association Wood Buffalo**

10019 MacDonald Ave, Fort McMurray, AB. T9K2K7

Phone: 780-743-1053 Fax: 780-743-0959

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

## Follow us

 Facebook @ [facebook.com/CMHAWB](https://facebook.com/CMHAWB)

 Twitter @CMHAWB

 Instagram @CMHAWB

 Website: [woodbuffalo.cmha.ca](http://woodbuffalo.cmha.ca)

**Thank you to our  
Primary Funders**



**United Way**  
Fort McMurray  
[fmunitedway.com](http://fmunitedway.com)



**Alberta Health  
Services**



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF WOOD BUFFALO



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**