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THE MOVIE MONDAY PROJECT -

*MENTAL HEALTH & OUTREACH
THROUGH MOVIES*

SUBMITTED BY:
BRUCE SAUNDERS
2033 CHAUCER ST.
VICTORIA, B.C. V8R 1H6
(250) 595-5977

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BACKGROUND

Bruce Saunders started the Movie Monday project following his second admission into Eric Martin Pavilion for treatment of symptoms of his manic-depressive illness. That was in 1993, and he has consistently organized a weekly event since. After over 300 shows, Saunders has demonstrated that consumers of mental health services can effectively promote healthier attitudes about mental illnesses. He does this not only by bringing the public into the hospital, and the patients down from the ward, but also by standing up in the theatre every week and being open about his illness and his recovery. This high visibility and quality programming has earned Saunders respect of his peers, service providers, the local film and theatre industry, media and the general public. In January 1999, with assistance from Bruce Wallace, Saunders built on the success of Movie Monday and organized the **Reel Madness Film Festival**. Promoted as *"Films and Discussions – An exploration of mental illness and recovery"* the five-day festival was successful in meeting all its goals. (Please see attached summary of festival for information.)

MOVIE MONDAY FACTS:

- In 1998, over 5,000 participated in a Movie Monday event. There were 63 shows with an average of eighty people per show.
- In total, over 22, 500 people have participated in the 330 Movie Monday events since June 1993.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Movie Monday Project is so successful because of its ability to integrate several objectives and several target groups within each event.

- To provide **education** about the issues of mental illnesses and recovery.
- To provide **outreach** to the general public and to individuals and families struggling with mental illnesses by inviting them into Victoria's psychiatric hospital for a positive, entertaining and educational event.
- To develop **partnerships** through the universal appeal of movies, bringing together mental health service providers and consumers, current EMP patients, individuals and families living with mental illnesses in the community and the general public.
- To provide consistently high-quality **entertainment** that is accessible to people regardless of income or mental and health condition.
- To facilitate and model ongoing **personal recovery** from mental illness through Movie Monday as a consumer-driven enterprise.

MOVIE MONDAY WORKS...

Because it is a consumer initiative

- A 1998 study on Early Intervention (by CMHA BC Division) reports: One strikingly consistent finding was the source of inspiration found by meeting others "who had been where I'd been and gotten to where I wanted to be". This built both acceptance and hope for recovery in people who otherwise may have been reluctant to face the prospect of living with a mental illness. (pg.71)
Experiential information and peer counselling/support in helping people deal with the challenges of a mental illness was highly valued by those surveyed. Both are an integral component of our weekly programming.
- A 1996 report from the Vancouver Health Board summarizes comments from their survey of adults with serious mental illness. The conclusion, entitled "Refocusing the System" includes:
One respondent said, "we need a Rick Hansen of mental illness – a positive role model for people inside the system and the broader public. Respondents felt that consumers/survivors could play a bigger role in helping others through peer counselling and support."

Because it uses movies to educate

In a sense Movie Monday and the Reel Madness Film Festival are reclaiming movies about madness. People's perceptions of mental illnesses are greatly formed through films. Consider the stereotypes and stigmatization that millions of people encounter in classic films such as *The Shining*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Exorcist*, *Psycho*, and *Dressed to Kill*. Compare these films to more insightful and constructive portrayals of mental illnesses in films such as *Shine*, *Awakenings*, *The Madness of King George*, *Don Juan de Marcos*, *Ordinary People*, *Mr. Jones*, *What About Bob*, *Prince of Tides*, *Secrets and Lies*, *The Hanging Garden* and even *The Full Monty*.

The power of these images on people's perceptions of mental illnesses has been as underestimated as has the use of films to support accurate depictions of mental illnesses. Saunders has proven that even the notorious movie *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest*, with its negative portrayals of treatment and abuses in psychiatric facilities can be presented in a positive and constructive way when done with the right resources. Movie Monday has shown close to 100 films about mental illness over the last five and a half years, and there are many more to come. Just recently, we have noticed others who are seeing the unique value of movies to educate about mental illnesses.

- NAMI's Campaign to End Discrimination is focusing on Hollywood to "change the way people with brain disorders are portrayed on the big screen". NAMI will aggressively confront "tinsel-town depictions that are based on negative stereotypes of people with mental illness as untreatable, dangerous, and subhuman".

- Psychiatrists recognize the power of movies to educate. At the 1998 Annual Meeting of the APA (American Psychiatric Association) movies were used to "inspire, illuminate, educate, and entertain those who attend". Films such as *Shine*, *Pennies From Heaven* and *Beautiful Dreamers* were viewed and discussed. The conference even included a workshop for psychiatrists interested in using films entitled "Film Clubs: How To Have Fun While Learning Psychiatry".
- Academics use movies to educate about mental illnesses. Stephen Safran, a professor of education at Ohio University studied Academy Award winning films and discovered a "dramatic increase in what I call disability movies", with psychiatric disturbances being the most common type of disability portrayed. And while Safran asserts that these award winning films have little reality base he still uses them in class as a tool for examining real issues facing people. "We are a society of film viewers, and special education professionals can use movies to promote critical viewing skills and an understanding of people with special needs", says Safran.
- Three psychiatrists at the 1989 APA annual meeting present a paper entitled "Homicidal Maniacs and Narcissistic Parasites: Stigmatization of Mentally Ill Persons in the Movies. Their conclusion was "mental health professionals can fight this source of stigma by increasing their collaboration with patient advocacy groups in monitoring negative portrayals of mentally ill people, using campaigns such as Mental Illness Awareness Week to call attention to the process of stigmatization, and supporting accurate dramatic and documentary depictions of mental illnesses".

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

This section details the four major activities to fulfil the objectives of the Movie Monday Project.

- Movie Monday programming
- Outreach & Partnerships
- The Reel Madness Film Festival

• MOVIE MONDAY PROGRAMMING

There are many responsibilities and tasks involved in operating a weekly theatre project. Also there are additional responsibilities and tasks to host this theatre project in a psychiatric hospital, as a consumer of services, and in partnership with the myriad of other service providers and consumer groups in the community.

- **Programming:** Movie Monday provides a unique line-up of films to attract audiences who need (or desire) an alternative to the mainstream commercial theatres. This line up includes; blockbuster movies, classics no longer available on the large screen, Canadian independent films, foreign and esoteric films including films in the festival circuit, shorts, current events and occasional documentaries. Special attention is given to films with mental illness/health content to expand the discourse on those topics in this special venue. The intentionally eclectic line-up also delves into other issues of concern for the community such as films related to sexual orientation, international issues, First Nations, and other social issues. In spite of this wide scope, and often challenging content, Movie Monday has succeeded in drawing large audiences and even being voted "Best Place To See A Movie" by *Monday Magazine*. The programming requires up-to-date knowledge of the film industry, viewing of possible films, liaising with filmmakers and distribution companies and proceeding with obtaining copies, background, presenters, and rights of the film for presentation. Programming of films also requires compliance with Public Performance Rights administrative requirements and payments.
- **Facilitating Participation & Dialogue:** An integral component of Movie Monday is providing a forum for dialogue about mental illnesses and recovery that includes professionals, consumers and the general public. The films provide a vehicle for this dialogue – a safe point of reference to discuss complex issues related to one's experiences. Often Guest Speakers are arranged (such as Dr. Don Miliken for *As Good As It Gets* and *Awakenings* and Dr. Richard Williams for *Madness of King George* and *Don Juan De Marco*) to facilitate discussions while sometimes Saunders is the facilitator. Saunders is also responsible for introducing the films, where he takes an opportunity to welcome the audience to the event, notify them of upcoming community events and share his insights. The weekly events often also include consumer-produced entertainment such as music or short films, also scheduled by Saunders. Lastly, educational materials are regularly sought out and presented in the theatre lobby on large boards.

- **Theatre Operations:** Movie Monday works in partnership with EMP's Audio-Visual Department to utilize the hospital theatre and equipment. Regular consultation is required with the department on issues such as equipment maintenance and repair, theatre bookings and related matters. Within the theatre, Movie Monday operates its own equipment such as the video projector, aids for the hard of hearing, slide projector and smaller equipment which requires purchase, maintenance, security and replacement.
- **Concession:** Movie Monday prides itself on being a 'real movie-going experience' not a dull educational event in an institution. This requires setting-up the theatre lobby to look inviting, interesting and festive. A concession is also operated, including popcorn, at prices much less than the commercial theatres. This much-appreciated service requires ongoing purchasing of inventory, storage and management of concession volunteers. Each evening after the event, care is taken to restore the area to its functional institutional condition to maintain our good standing with the hospital.
- **Promotions:** Movie Monday consistently enjoys sold out and near-capacity crowds for both commercial films and more challenging independent or foreign films and films that deal with mental illnesses. These crowds are partly the result of promotional efforts which includes submitting announcements to various media outlets and community newsletters as well as targeted promotions through the production and distribution of playbills advertising the upcoming six weeks of programming. Promotions also include providing a Movie Monday Hot line, with an answering machine that is updated weekly and maintenance of our web-site. Invitations are regularly offered to individuals in the media, health professionals and to consumers.
- **Administration:** Finances are administered in partnership with the hospital's Human Resources and Audio-Visual staff. The hospital manages the Movie Monday account and issues charitable tax receipts as required. Ongoing provision of receipts and invoices are required to ensure accountability. To date, the project has been completely self-sustaining, with the concession paying for itself and small donations at the door and the sponsorship from Yo Video covering ongoing expenses. What remain are the costs of organizing the project. Contacts for Professional Fees are partially subsidized by Capital Health Region's Consumer Initiatives.
- **Volunteer management:** Movie Monday provides support to many volunteers who in turn help to make each event run smoothly. Volunteers help with the concession, in the projection booth and with set-up and clean up. While our volunteers are a diverse crowd including individuals with learning disabilities, family members of mental health

consumers and "regular folks", for many volunteers who are also consumers this is a way to positively interact with the institution that may

hold bad memories for them. Movie Monday provides a means to empowerment within an institution, a way to informally, or casually, participate in a user-friendly program. Throughout the year several volunteer appreciation dinners are organized by Saunders.

○ OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

The Movie Monday Project is an outreach project – first to the theatre's weekly audiences and secondly through Bruce Saunders' consumer advocacy. Several years ago Saunders realized the role Movie Monday played in other consumer's lives and he has constantly been expanding on this objective. In the theatre, there are many examples of people at risk who receive the support and acceptance they desperately need to continue to function in the community. Movie Monday is a valuable support to many past-patients of the hospital that come every week to get out and be a part of an audience. Seeing Saunders, another consumer, welcoming an audience again to an event he organized, every week with dogged regularity, is an inspiration to others who are determined to stay healthy.

Saunders' successful recovery includes being self-employed as a freelance landscape gardener, requiring him to constantly choose between paid employment or consumer advocacy. It is a challenge to balance his pursuit of this constructive consumer initiative and the responsibilities of maintaining a business and raising a family.

As government agencies and services increasingly seek out "partnerships with consumers" Saunders is increasingly being requested to attend meetings, submit articles and share his views. He is a well-spoken consumer advocate who plays a valuable role in the Victoria mental health community but it is a commitment that requires time and energy, as he attends coalition meetings, publishes articles, writes letters, makes phone calls while also mentoring others. These commitments include CMHA, the MHAIN Committee, the Mood Disorders Association (MDA) (bi-weekly support group, peer support and liaising with parent body) and IASPSRS (International Association of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Services) (includes monthly teleconference calls and follow-up with the Consumer Committee as well as workshop co-presentation at the 1997 Vancouver Conference and submissions to both their regional and international publications).

An integral component of this consumer run enterprise is working in partnership with consumers, service providers and others. Several of these partnerships have already been mentioned:

- **Local non-profits** such as Our Club, Laurel House, Resource Centre for Independent Living, NEED Crisis Line, WesCom Connectors, StreetLink

Shelter, Pandora Project Activity Centre, Open Door, Upper Room, Salvation Army, A.C.E., Westhaven, B.C. Schizophrenia Society, local and BC CMHC's Open Mind Project, the Caregiver's Network, members of Capital Mental Health Association's network and group homes (through Norm Ellis).

- **Programs within EMP** such as liaising with the 2B therapy program, the EMP Library, ongoing outreach with patients and staff in the wards (including the 6th Floor programs), partnerships with professionals and front-line workers in Emergency Mental Health, Victoria Mental Health, Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia Services, and the Friends of Music program.
- **Media outlets** such as Times-Colonist, Monday Magazine, News Group, CBC Radio, Attractions, street publications such as the Red Zone Magazine and Ho's & Hype's Magazine.
- **The arts community**, such as, UVic's Cinevic Theatre, the B.C. Mental Health Audio/Video Library, Media Net, filmmakers and film distributors, Toronto's Rendezvous with Madness film festival and the Canada Council for the Arts.

- **The Reel Madness Film Festival**

This year Movie Monday included an annual film festival as part of its ongoing programming. The first Reel Madness film festival was held in January 1999 and enjoyed widespread media coverage and an impressive list of special guest speakers (see attached festival summary for details). The once a year festival provides a concentrated opportunity to impress the media and general public about the issues raised throughout the year through Movie Monday. It is also an opportunity to showcase more challenging films, documentaries, and independent short films that don't fit the Movie Monday bill.

Like Movie Monday, the Reel Madness Festival is much more than showing movies, and it is much more than public education on mental illnesses. The goals of the festival are:

- **Consumer run enterprise.** The festival is a project of Bruce Saunders who has successfully produced Movie Monday for the last five years at Eric Martin Pavilion's theatre. Bruce provides a consumer run enterprise that is highly visible and respected in Victoria for its consistency, good value and positive interaction between community and consumers.
- **Consumer opportunities.** The festival will provide volunteer and paid opportunities to both consumers and professionals to work together on the event organizing and program delivery. Further consumer opportunities will be created as the festival promotes consumer-produced arts and entertainment and a forum for educational materials and presentations. The festival will also be video recorded by a team of consumers with an interest and talent in consumer-based education.

- **Partnerships.** The festival is about bringing people together, behind the scenes and in the audience. While the project will be consumer run, the organizing will also involve professionals who will pass on their skills, and sponsors who will share their resources. The event itself will provide a setting, much like Movie Monday, where people regardless of their diagnosis sit together, laugh together, cry together and exchange ideas as an audience.
- **Public education.** The festival creates several opportunities to educate people about mental illnesses:
 - The first step is awareness raising of the issues, which is accomplished through the promotion of the festival's concept in the media.
 - People who participate in the festival organizing and who attend the events will be educated as they interact with consumers of mental health services.
 - The films that are being selected provide facts and uncover myths surrounding mental illnesses while entertaining.
 - The festival will provide venues for discussion, presentations, consumer-produced art and entertainment and other educational material.
 - The festival also provides a vehicle, or vocabulary, to express a person's emotions and experiences with mental illnesses.
- **Entertainment.** While workshops and forums are useful in educating people who come out to workshops and forums, a mental health film festival will be educational to people who like to come out to see a movie. In some ways, people are drawn unwittingly to discuss issues surrounding mental illnesses. As with Movie Monday's regular ongoing programming, the festival's educational goals will be effective because the event is entertaining and will attract the general public.

Planning for the festival is year-round, and includes these major activities:

- **Obtaining films:** The festival is an opportunity to screen unreleased, independent films – films which may be hard to locate and obtain. A great deal of time is taken viewing many films to select the most relevant ones to showcase in this once a year event.
- **Scheduling Guest Speakers:** A highlight for festivalgoers is meeting the filmmakers, writers and personalities behind the films that are viewed. Organizers seek out guest speakers and arrange for travel and accommodation.
- **Toronto's Rendezvous With Madness film festival:** The festival director and festival coordinator attend this original festival held in November in Toronto, where many films are screened, filmmakers contacted, information shared and new ideas for presentations and promotions gleaned.

- **Promotions:** As mentioned, a festival provides a wonderful opportunity for the media to cover a positive story about mental illness and recovery. Media work includes the development of press kits, nurturing rapport with media representatives, publication of media releases and PSAs, and interviews.
- **Advertising:** Separate from promotions, advertising includes the creation, production and distribution of the festival poster, pamphlets and the festival program as well as T-shirts.
- **Hosting the event:** The festival is a busy week, with non-stop commitments between the daily events such as handling media requests, individual inquiries and meeting the needs of special guests as well as always being on the ready for the unexpected.
- **Festival Partners and Supporters:** A special event allows us to develop partnerships with local businesses and others who advertise in the program or are listed as a supporter on the poster and in media information. Time is spent cultivating these relationships, securing funds and administration.
- **Volunteer Management:** A team of festival volunteers are recruited, trained and supported to assist in the planning and hosting of the special event. Specific volunteers are recruited for videotaping (and editing) the festival discussions for future educational purposes.
For volunteers who are consumers of mental health services this provides them with an opportunity take on a time-limited commitment and to be a part of a team.
- **Follow-up:** After the event, supporters and partners are provided with a summary of the festival – an account of the outcome of their participation. These summaries come attached with media clippings and the festival program. Also, videotapes of the festival and written records are made available and new partnerships pursued.
- **Administration:** With a special event comes extra bookkeeping and record keeping tasks, with new costs and revenues to be calculated and more people to coordinate.

OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

The Movie Monday Project and the Reel Madness Festival are able to provide definite indicators of success. Examples of specific measures include: number of events, record of attendance, level of community (financial) support, volunteer commitment, level of consumer involvement, and record of media coverage. More in-depth, qualitative indicators can be collected through audience feedback forms, letters of support, quotes from post-film

discussions, videotapes of key events and the organizers' individual evaluations of the project.

PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET

This annual budget reflects the costs associated with the 3 main activities described in this report – organizing and hosting over fifty events, plus a concentrated five day festival and ongoing outreach and partnerships as a consumer of mental health services.

	Movie Monday Programming	Outreach & Partnerships	Reel Madness Film Festival
Professional Fees (based on \$20.00 an hour)	\$7,800 (7.5 hrs a week)	\$5,200 (5 hrs a week)	\$10,400 ¹
Equipment costs (includes devaluation, maintenance, repair and replacement costs)	\$200		\$100
Office materials (includes postage, phone, fax, photo- copying, stationary, office space & equipment)	\$500	\$500	\$2,000
Fees (Public Performance fees, film purchase & shipping & handling)	\$1,500		\$500
Travel (mileage based on \$.30/kl.)	\$100	\$50	\$2,500 ²
Miscellaneous	\$100		\$2,000 ³
SUB-TOTALS	\$10,200	\$5,750	\$17,500
<u>TOTAL= \$33,450</u>	<i>\$6000 has been found annually from "Consumer & Family Initiatives" funds - otherwise the program is entirely supported by at the door, private & corporate donations.</i>		

This was our wish list budget in Mar'99 - Our fest was not funded by The Capital Health Region but was accomplished in full for approx \$9000

¹ Budget Notes:

Based on two part-time contracts: Festival Director and a Festival Coordinator as well as smaller contracts for specific services such as video recording and packaging and volunteer coordination.

² Air travel, accommodation and costs for two to Toronto to participate in the Rendezvous with Madness film festival.

³ Includes the costs of promotions and hosting guest speakers and honorariums for speakers and core volunteers.

PROPOSAL TO FUND THE MOVIE MONDAY PROJECT