

Locating Parkdale's Mad History: Backwards to back streets, 1980-2010

SLIDE 1 – title

INTRODUCTION

SLIDE 2 – INTRODUCING US

locate ourselves in relation to our topic.

DAVID: I'm going to say that I am a psychiatric survivor, that I teach mad people's history at Ryerson and that I was a city councilor in the 80s.

MEGAN: Social historian of health, teach at York in Health & Society, involved in history of madness website and history of de-institutionalization project

SLIDE 3: WHY MADNESS?

MEGAN: Why Madness?

SLIDE 4: NAMING OURSELVES

DAVID:

* - thank the Parkdale Library & whoever did those clippings! – thank John Court & archives at CAMH

DAVID:

When Pat Capponi was discharged from the Queen St. Mental Health Centre, they sent her to live at Channan Court, a huge boarding house at the corner of King and Dufferin. Pat lay low for quite a long time, trying to learn how to survive in a dreadful environment. Eventually, she decided she needed to get out of there and, in preparation for leaving, she began walking around the neighbourhood. She “found a library [the Parkdale Library, in fact] a few streets away...and took to reading the notices posted in front...one of these notices advertised a

community meeting and I was amazed at the reason given for it: us, the crazy people...as soon as the meeting started, a flurry of speakers blasted the province for all the “weirdos”...in their midst...I was getting angrier and angrier, and fighting with myself to keep quiet...I stood up...tried to conceal my shaking...I identified myself as one of the “nuts” they’d been discussing...objected to being spoken of as garbage...and suggested that their energies might be better spent investigating living conditions in their community...before the meeting ended I had figured out...how I might try to change things. I was feeling up to the challenge¹

MEGAN:

- but there are many mad moments & much mad history in Parkdale – more connected with madness in the post-institution era than any other neighbourhood in Toronto – story with mixed reviews – for some, this is a story of the creation of community, for others a tale of threats to property values, perceived lack of personal safety etc because of influx of newcomers to the neighbourhood – but common thread is of impact and reaction

ARCHWAY CLIP

* NO SLIDE FOR MY NEXT POINT BUT THEY JUST SAW THE CLIP, RIGHT?

MEGAN:

- brief history of Parkdale: – fashionable Toronto neighbourhood in inter-war years – large family homes on tree-lined streets – Gardiner Expressway & high rise apartment buildings, more transient population – subway routed along Bloor not Queen – large homes became rooming houses – by 1970 Parkdale noted as area with extremely low level of community organization – Atlantic Centre (counseling for transient Maritimers by Jesuits) – Parkdale Community Coalition – Single Parent Family Association – Tenants Committee – Youth Board – Community Health Clinic – Drop-In Centre – only last initiative truly local²

¹ Capponi, Pat. (1992) *Upstairs in the Crazy House: the life of a psychiatric survivor*. Viking. Toronto. 193-196.

² *Osgood Hall Law Journal*, vol 35, nos 3 & 4, Fall & Winter, 1997, pp.478-9

- Have located our story in what we see as series of pivotal Parkdale 'spaces' and 'places' – Parkdale Activity & Recreation Centre; Archway; Houselink, Cuckoos Nest; Parkdale Community Legal Services - temporal and physical spaces that emerged over the 1980s – these locations – radicalized spaces, stigmatized spaces, safe spaces, medicalized spaces, therapeutic spaces - all of them are unique spaces infused with the politics of deinstitutionalization - but the politics behind their creation and their embodied activities have broader significance because they represent the shape which community mental health took in the post-asylum era, not just in Parkdale, but in towns and cities across Canada - thus, what happened re community housing and community legal services for psych survivors HAPPENED FIRST IN PARKDALE (not elsewhere in Ontario)– this makes the Parkdale story more important in Ontario terms than just a local perspective would suggest

SLIDES 5 & 6

DAVID

- Story of Parkdale in the late 20th century = a moral tale of broken policy - a story about mad people and about what happened when a lot of them showed up in a community that wasn't ready for them. Some of the neighbours wanted the mad people to go away; other neighbours tried to learn how to accommodate them; some of the mad people began to learn how to fight for some of the changes they needed.
- characters in this drama include crazy people (and we try in this talk to made them central, though it is difficult at times to do this when so many of the other actors (social workers, politicians, government bureaucrats, journalists) spoke with much louder (i.e. in the media) and seemingly authoritative voices.
- Also tale of efforts to help – to create change – from within the survivor community and from allies from within and beyond the Parkdale community - can see the emergence of a network of support, connections between various groups, agencies and institutions – this is actually a kind of cool thing I am seeing in the documents, connections between Cuckoo's Nest, PARC,

Archway... The thing I like the best are the acts of resistance by the dumpees – mad people who rise up and say “I’m not putting up with this.”

SLIDES 7 & 8

De-institutionalization in the western world & local stats and developments

MEGAN:

- During the latter half of the twentieth century, mental health care experienced a transformative shift as patients were released from long-stay mental health facilities, signaling the end of the era of asylum-based care. Deinstitutionalization, a trans-national phenomenon in the post-World War II period, relocated large numbers of individuals deemed ‘mentally ill’ in communities across North America. – regional variation in Canada, but in most places evidently a story of the 1960s & 1970s
- Why de-institutionalization?
- The move to abandon asylum-based care derived from a number of factors including a contemporary dissatisfaction with chronically overcrowded and under-funded state institutions. – seen as a treatment system (or a system of managing those with mind-problems) that was no longer working, an unsatisfactory and expensive care economy - within and without the psychiatric establishment, there was a push from the 1950s to reform the system (just like there is today – MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION – POSTAGE STAMPS – CALLS TO RE-INSTITUTIONALIZE)
- The introduction of new pharmaceutical treatments in the 1950s offered promise that patients would be able to manage their symptoms in the community. By the 1970s thousands of patients in Canada were consuming (or at least prescribed) psycho-pharmaceuticals, while the figures world-wide were in the millions and continued to grow.

- also an humanistic argument that saw social integration of mental health patients as an aspect of emerging rights-based society – so this is about the growing attention to the civil rights of mental health patients by the 1970s
- Complicated process, but each of these impulses played out in Parkdale –

DAVID:

- Transinstitutionalization - I would argue that all these years later we are still waiting for the other deinstitutionalization shoe to drop. The community supports are still not adequate. One of the responses is a call to re-institutionalize. I think another approach is to say that what happened was transinstitutionalization. People were institutionalized in the community at a fraction of the cost. Other systems – jails, homeless shelters – picked up part of the slack and families have picked up the rest.)
- Stats – during 1960s-70s 75% of Ontario hospital beds for mental health patients were closed and thousands of patients discharged. – in Toronto the number of residential psychiatric beds decreased from 16,000 to 4,600 – estimated that by early 1980s approx 1,200 discharged psych patients living in Parkdale – Why Parkdale? Pretty close to Queen Street Mental Health Centre, had large houses that could easily be turned into boarding houses.³
- impact of deinstitutionalization clearly felt in Parkdale before 1979, but ramped up with closure of the Lakeshore Hospital in Mimco in 1979 and downsizing of Queen Street, as it is now known, between 1970-1975 – some kind of general description of impact, movement of people – but need to convey how this was experienced by folks already in the community & by psych survivors
- Difficult to get Parkdale stats – Know that the peak patient numbers for provincial residential mental health facilities are 1959, but dramatic declines not until early 1970s. – 1952

³ “Madness in South Parkdale,” *Today*, 6 March 1982.

Queen Street had 1,200 residential inpatients, 440 in 1972⁴ - Key dates were mid-1970s when downsizing began in earnest at Queen Street and in 1979 when the Lakeshore Psych hospital was closed - estimates from the psychiatry side = 1,300 discharged psych patients in 1982; increased to 2-3 thousand by 1989.⁵

SLIDE 9 – ARCHWAY SLIDE

ARCHWAY:

DAVID:

- Archway – first located on Queen near Gladstone – began taking shape in 1976 and incorporated at the close of that year – attempt at community health, i.e. meant to support people living in the community & community board etc – attracted ire of Pat C and others
- Satellite clinic of QSMHC - in 1980 newspaper article described as “a residential care service of the Queen St Mental Health Centre”⁶ – also described as a “store-front, walk-in, counseling and crisis intervention model of operation,” – Archway pushed to add day care component in 1981 which added considerable pressure to the facility (what is interesting about this is that it suggests that Archway used politically by Queen Street as a venue for things that didn’t have space/staff/time for.)⁷ I always saw Archway as a satellite of the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. There’s another in my end of town – Pape and Danforth – called Spectrum and a third at Parliament and King called Central Link. These started as out-patient clinics for people with schizophrenia. They were among the very first community mental health facilities notwithstanding they were operated by a provincial psych hospital. They had community advisory boards.
- Community/Institutional Model: - Archway Board included community residents, professionals working in Parkdale and

⁴ John Court’s chapter, p.189

⁵ “An Evaluation of the Archway Case Management Program,” Donald A Young, CAMH Archives.

⁶ “Merchants, patients clash over centre,” *Toronto Star*, 6 June 1980.

⁷ “Crisis building on Queen St.,” *Toronto Sun*, 22 Dec 1981.

consumer/survivors⁸ - a 1989 report noted that it was the largest outpatient clinic in Canada for “severely disabled chronic psychiatric patients” - in 1989 team included: 5 nurses; 3 social workers; 1 OT; 1 psychometrist; 1 psychologist; 2 parttime psychiatrists; 2 residents; 3 admin staff. ⁹ . Ron Ballantyne was the director of an early community mental health agency called Community Resource Consultants of Toronto; later, he was the CEO of the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital. Lina Chartrand was a community legal worker at PCLS.

MEGAN:

- Representative of emergence of psychiatry from the asylum in the 20th century (previously a profession that was bounded by the institution)¹⁰ – post-1950 period saw establishment and development of psychiatric wards in general hospitals, growth of private practice – and community outpatient clinics like Archway.
- Archway can therefore be understood as a “outpost” of psychiatry in Parkdale – kind of medicalized space transported from the asylum and relocated in the community – one Parkdale illustration of transinstitutionalization or ‘de-mental-hospitalisation’, a phenomenon that many scholars argue is a more accurate descriptive phase than deinstitutionalization
- But also evident that the relocation of psychiatry from Queen Street Mental Health Centre to Parkdale meant Archway orientated to both institution and community
- But if Archway also locale for social workers, psychologists You want expansion – community mental health went from virtually nothing to about \$600 million in 2008)) - then interesting because represents professional expansion in the post-aylum period¹¹ - early Archway board minutes

⁸ CN, June 1984, p.6.

⁹ “An Evaluation of the Archway Case Management Program,” Donald A Young, CAMH Archives.

¹⁰ Gijswijt-Hofstra and Harry Oosterhuis, Introduction: Comparing National Cultures of Psychiatry, p.13

¹¹ Gijswijt-Hofstra and Harry Oosterhuis, p.14

demonstrate focus on fostering “life skills” like cooking, shopping, laundry, budgeting and “befriending clients” using “big brother”/“big sister” model

- Social worker Bob Rose worked for 3½ years at Archway in the mid-1980s – part of an innovative case management program where 10 staff met with their clients, not in the office, but on the streets and in the boarding houses of Parkdale, trying to help foster positive life changes by placing themselves within the life circumstances of the people they were trying to help. – in another illustration of the connected nature of mad Parkdale, Rose then moved down the street to work at the Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre.¹²
- Rose’s story suggests that Archway (and working professionally in Parkdale) could be politicalizing space/experience for health professionals. (this is a kind of interesting concept – do you think it holds true for Reva Gerstein - Others – maybe Paul Quinn) sure, I believe Reva G. learned as much from Pat as Pat did from her.
- Relationship between Archway & reactionary Parkdale elements - – pressure on Archway from Parkdale Business Association when they tried to relocate to a larger building further west on Queen Street in 1981 – Antique store owner Sam Mozun collected 450 names on a petition opposing relocation – told Star that there were already 1,200 ex-mental pats in Parkdale “more than our share.”¹³

SLIDE 10 - PARC

PARC

* **DAVID:** MENTION LIVING ARCHIVE PROJECT!!!!

- Opened doors in 1980 in former Lakeside Pool Hall & Bowling Alley – had only 4 staff in total at beginning – 2 workers, director (Mary Stern) and financial person – furnished in part

¹² “Mental health worker tired of saying ‘sorry’ instead of giving help,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 July 1987.

¹³ “Merchants, patients clash over centre,” *Toronto Star*, 6 June 1980.

with items taken from the Lakeshore Psych Hospital, an interesting recycling of institution to community in the deinstitutionalization process.¹⁴

- PARC – the Parkdale Activity – Recreation Centre founded in 1980 by a group of community volunteers, “They found that Parkdale has a very high proportion of socially isolated and unsophisticated (!!!!)¹⁵ people, including ex-psychiatric patients, alcoholics, transients and unemployable
- – representatives of various PARC health and social agencies began meeting in 1977 (this is interesting because they take AGES to get PARC off the ground, compared to the MPA in Vancouver, likely a marker of the loss of flexible, accessible community project funding like the LIP and LEAP grants available earlier in the decade) - plan was that the community centre would be run by 2 full-time professionals – set in a location that would visible, accessible and “in no way disruptive to the surrounding community”¹⁶
- Earliest direction of PARC therefore set in social work/social services rubric of Liveskills programming through the “socialization process” where the disenfranchised crazy just needed something to do as directed by professionals, i.e. cooking, parlor games like checkers, bingo, chess, craft projects, discussion groups.
- Composition of PARC Board also shifted early on to include members – ½ board = PARC members, other ½ local

¹⁴ P. Quinn interview.

¹⁵ I guess they hadn’t met Pat. “socially isolated” she was, “unsophisticated” she was not. Luckily for us, Pat was very much unlike most of the walking wounded. She didn’t have schizophrenia, she had been to a community college, she had been psychiatrized for just a few years, she was young. She wasn’t (unlike me) middle class but she had read lots of books and she had early on figured out how to connect with people who could do stuff for her, by which I mean, high-powered people who would pick up on her causes – June Callwood is an example but so is Paul Quinn and the woman at ARCHWAY. Pat also knew how to get the media interested in stuff – Betty Jane Wylie, Jojo Chintoh (CITY TV), Joey Slinger. I wonder if we should include the Parkdale lunch guerrilla Laundromat theatre that Pat and I dreamed up?

¹⁶ “Activity centre in the works,” *Enviro-News Express*, 3 August 1977

community allies who were “useful” , i.e. Bob Rose when he was at Archway (Quinn interview)

- In early days PARC was one of few Toronto drop-ins and different from others in lack of structure and regulation, openness, acceptance of difference and of “mad” behaviour - in early years had a certain rep as place to come for a “hot time” suggestion of prostitution – Paul Quinn began working at PARC in 1981 and continued there until he left for the Gerstein Centre in 1989 - Quinn acknowledged that it was a difficult place for women to work and women to be. (Quinn interview)
- Cast of PARC characters – Quinn talked about long-time members including those whose longterm friendships had bridged institution & community – interesting ref to 2 men who had been in Lakeshore together and continued their friendship in Parkdale (Quinn interview)
- Shift to becoming advocate for the psychiatrised evident by (crap, whenever betty whosit did her undercover thing) when Toronto Star article “Ex-mental patients face housing hell,” referenced Mary Stern, 1st director of PARC, speaking to the plight of former patients trying to live on welfare payments of \$258./mth and the lack of clear legal protection for boarders who did not have exclusive use of their own space or lock on their room door.¹⁷ – in June 1981 Stern spoke to the Globe & Mail about the housing crisis for ex-patients and the lack of real support structures in the community or legal recourse.¹⁸
- Personnel shifts after 1981 shifted PARC to a less-hierarchical model – Stern left 1983/84 - Pat Capponi started working at PARC – staff began working as a collective – Pat & David Lipman doing community pieces; Paul handling the finances; other staff... all did drop-ins – a close group - the government didn’t like this. (Quinn interview) – but note that another psych survivor was not hired during 7 years that Pat worked there.¹⁹

¹⁷ “Ex-mental patients face housing hell, *Toronto Star*, date?

¹⁸ “? May closing of rooming house leaves 60 ex-mental patients homeless,” *Globe & Mail*, 25 June 1981.

¹⁹ Pat Capponi interview, March? 2010, Toronto.

SLIDE 11**MEGAN:**

“We didn’t put ourselves as staff above the people. We felt that we were part of them – that this was their place and we were just put there to help them make it their place.” – coming from a human rather than a professional perspective – sig that Quinn not a health prof and Pat C was a survivor – stress on friendship and willingness to trans professional/friendship divide, i.e. help members negotiate/advocate with boarding home operators (Quinn interview)

- NOT a medicalized space – EVER – never distributed meds, that happened at the ARCHWAY DROP-INS – shift in programming from programming “for the staff so they could feel like they were doing something” to “getting things going that members wanted” note different language here – so less bingo, cribbage tournaments to women’s discussion group, I am guessing he is maybe also talking re writing group here
- I argue that over time PARC emerged as a kind of therapeutic space for survivor/consumers within Parkdale – a place where they had ownership – where they could find safety, community – and a way to be artists, writers, cooks, political people – put in a plug for the LIVING ARCHIVE PROJECT –
- Paul Quinn began working at PARC in 1981 and continued there until he left for the Gerstein Centre in 1989 – noted that because staff numbers were so low, they HAD to rely on the support and help of members to run the drop-ins – in the first part of his tenure at PARC, Quinn often staffed drop-ins and even dances solo. * nice clip here from interview – “good people, real people – jokes + issues – the people at PARC were most important because they invested in the place.”
- As a “living room” for people who didn’t have such a thing, PARC operated as a kind of therapeutic or safe space for the psychiatrized of Parkdale – place where people could go and not be judged, could potentially find work (voluntary or waged) – could pursue creative projects – Hume Cronyn wrote about the longterm PARC writing group in the introduction to Kiss Me You Mad Fool, a collection of pieces from the groups

published in 1991 – began in a sporadic fashion around 1985 – eventually found a set time, space, process – 7-8 people - coffee and a selection of chocolate bars purchased by Hume and John Mallory from across the street, pens and pads of paper – set exercise which might be anything from a description of a photograph to a topic like poverty or dreams – would write for a set time and then go around the table taking turns to read out loud what they had written and discuss the pieces. – clearly a creative space, “To write without the workshop is like having a shower without water.” Doug Foot, quoted by Hume in intro.²⁰

- “Each of our lives is gifted by potential, and, given the chance, each of us can flower in unexpected ways. Through the act of writing and discussing each of us is able to reclaim a part of ourselves. And by reclaiming a part, we become stronger and more able to reach out.” Hume Cronym, *Kiss Me You Mad Fool*, introduction.²¹

SLIDE 12 – HORRIBLE PARKDALE HOUSING SLIDE

HOUSELINK COMMUNITY HOMES:

MEGAN:

- Historically and currently housing is arguably the most critical issue facing people whose lives have intersected with the mental health system – no surprise that the newspaper clipping files of this library are full of pieces from the 1970s onwards about housing in Parkdale – more on this subject than any other in these files
- – so, housing big story re deinstitutionalization - and Parkdale was the place in the media eye re housing for marginal peoples – Parkdale had available housing stock – declining area – housing picked up by small investors, eastern European, est rooming houses – 1981 Phoenix Rising theme issue on housing - editorial titled “What community support?”, directly referenced Parkdale “Over one thousand poor ex-patients are

²⁰ Hume Cronym, *Kiss Me You Mad Fool*, introduction.

²¹ Hume Cronym, *Kiss Me You Mad Fool*, introduction.

being dumped & ghettoized in disgraceful boarding homes in Parkdale...”²²

- by mid-1980s shift, rooming houses fewer in number – different kind of housing crisis
- Pat Capponi quoted, “Most of the boarding houses are enormously large. If you’re on welfare, you’re allowed two, three, four, five to a room. Most of the places don’t have a dresser. Generally, you get one blanket which is kind of threadbare. And it gets cold in those houses, ‘cause they’re old and the heat doesn’t rise in the winter. The bathroom is shared by nine or ten people. There is a central dining room with institutional-type tables and chairs. There’s usually a poor, frightened lady working in the kitchen. Breakfast is cereal, toast, sometimes jam or peanut butter and tea. Lunch is a sandwich, soup, tea. Super is hot, with lots of starch – heavy on potatoes, heavy on the spaghetti, heavier on the rice. Medication makes you very hungry especially the younger men. They can’t appease their hunger on what they get. They wolf it down, go back in line and try again. Sometimes there’s a TV room, two couches; sometimes it’s a little more elaborate – three couches. A lot of places don’t have proper smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. People get up and go for breakfast, which starts at 6:30 or 7:00 AM, go back to bed, get up at lunch, nap ‘til supper, and then they play cards or watch TV until they go to bed.”...”some people get very comfortable in the boarding houses, which is frightening. Some people get angry, which is more reassuring, but frightening for you because you don’t feel very good. How can you feel very good? You feel the world has really written you off. You know it in everyone’s face when they look at you, or don’t. And you know it when people are walking by and staring at your house.”²³

SLIDE 13 – HOUSELINK SLIDE

DAVID

²² PR VOL 3, NO 2, P.2

²³ PR VOL 3, NO 2, PP.7-9 “Housing – not warehousing,”

- Just as Parkdale becomes known for bad boarding houses, also becomes known as locale for housing solutions – Houselink = metaphor for supportive housing, began in Parkdale
- Houselink – referred to as “one ray of hope and stability”²⁴ in Toronto housing market for psych survivors - began in 1976, incorporated the following year, charitable status in 1978²⁵ – started by a “group of concerned individuals” who wanted to do something re people being released from asylum to community without housing or support.²⁶ – emerged as rights-based group, focus on right to housing, right to choice re housing, right to safe, good housing, quality of life – tenants = members of Houselink Organization.²⁷
- Approach that evolved at Houselink rooted in right-based understanding of power dynamics of housing for psych survivors – need for support & choice “If you give people a decent place to live and control over their living space, the results will be astonishing.”²⁸ - like the MPA in Vancouver, model of resident-controlled housing
- In 1981 Houselink operating 11 co-ops incl 6 houses and 5 apts – rented directly from landlords/ “residents are solely responsible for the management and upkeep of the premises” i.e. paying rent & household bills, cleaning
- rule incl no physical violence, no illegal activities, no abuse of drugs or alcohol – no max stay – each co-op has non-prof Volunteer House Co-ordinator who is house advisor, attends weekly meetings where issues/problems are discussed
- applications go through professional worker (social worker or psychiatrist) – co-op members + applicant decide
- open meetings held to discussion issues, make policy recommendations – Board of Directors = 14 people incl 7 ex-patients, board elected yearly at annual mtg

²⁴ PR, vol 3, no 2 (Nov 1982), p.18.

²⁵ <http://houselink.on.ca/whoweare/history/> accessed 1 November 2010.

²⁶ Irit Shimrat and Ryan Scott, “A Boarding House Renewed: The Houselink Takeover of Shannon Court, *Phoenix Rising*, vol 7, no 1 (Oct. '87), pp. 11-13.

²⁷ <http://houselink.on.ca/whoweare/history/> accessed 1 November 2010.

²⁸ Irit Shimrat and Ryan Scott, “A Boarding House Renewed: The Houselink Takeover of Shannon Court, *Phoenix Rising*, vol 7, no 1 (Oct. '87), pp. 11-13.

- Began with rented accommodation, and then in 1981 began buying housing with support from Canada Mortgage and Housing – most famous/mythical = Channon Court - DAVID EXPAND
- Habitat Services, which provides a per diem to private landlords if they maintain particular levels of care, says that today there are about 400 roomers benefitting from their program in South Parkdale.
Habitat Services, by the way, was established in 1987. It's one of the agencies that Pat had a part in creating and is no longer so sure about. [Now, May 28-June 3, 1998] By 1984, community mental health workers were starting to worry about the decrease in the number of rooms available. "In the last month, 100 beds for former mental patients have been wiped out as the renovation boom and high interest rates hit Parkdale." "Ex-mental patients face housing hell." Leslie Scrivener, Toronto Star. Today there are about 80 licensed rooming houses and about 60 bachelorettes.

SLIDE 14 - BUT WE AREN'T GOING TO TALK RE THIS PARKDALE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES – sorry!

SLIDE 15:

CUCKOO'S NEST: "THE NEST"

MEGAN:

- First issue came out in November 1979 – Pat Capponi was the editor, but John Thain, David Milne and Mike Johnson also took that role and Cameron Stewart, Linda Mackenzie and someone called Eve are listed as additional staff members. – by the Sept 1980 issue they had 21 contributors listed on their masthead. – published for 6 years "on and off"²⁹
- Early help from the Archway has been noted, but close links between the Cuckoo's Nest and PARC meant that later volumes

²⁹ Pat Capponi interview, March? 2010, Toronto.

note donation of supplies for the publication from PARC's writing program for members.³⁰

- Capponi's vision, motivated by an earlier apprenticeship in student politics and student journalism, was to use the voices of patients for multiple political purposes:
- 1) to alleviate some of the distrust and unease that characterized local attitudes of longterm residents toward ex-patients this is not an element that she emphasized in retrospect during her interview– "In this and following issues, we will attempt to acquaint you with our element of society, to remove barriers of fear, and difference." Editorial, *The Cuckoo's Nest*, November 1979
- 2) to politicize Parkdale's psych survivors – to motivate – to foster change.³¹ "We're not leaving. We won't be driven away again. We're here. We want to live, too. We want peace too. We want acceptance, too. We want you to hear us, to know us, and if you won't help us, we want you to let us be." *The Cuckoo's Nest*, November 1979
- Vehicle for this for Capponi was using *Cuckoo's Nest* to call out survivor voices, "It seemed like people were coming and telling me the beginning and end of these stories... and what was I supposed to do with these stories?"³² "I can understand the prejudices sometimes," Pat Capponi told a *Toronto Star* reporter, "The patients who live in some of these homes look and act differently sometimes. But listen to them. Talk to them. They aren't scary. They're sad."³³
- *Cuckoo's Nest* = voice of anti-psych within Parkdale – unlike *Phoenix Rising*, which began publishing in the spring of 1980, *Cuckoo's Nest* was *LOCAL* - first issue included an article about pill-pushing Parkdale doctors, critiqued psychiatric hospitals for giving meds instead of offering real help with life-problems³⁴ - February 1981 issue encouraged readers to join

³⁰ See for example, CN, Feb 1982, p.2

³¹ Pat Capponi interview, March? 2010, Toronto.

³² Pat Capponi interview, March? 2010, Toronto.

³³ "Home Residents: Where do you want us to hide?," *Toronto Star*, 19 Nov 1979.

³⁴ CN Nov 1979, n.p.

the Committee for Forceful Action in its moratorium on psychiatric medication in Parkdale.

- “Mental patients have long been the victims of abuse, both physical and psychological. The abuse continues, in different and sometimes more subtle forms. The time has passed when such abuse would be accepted passively. We will fight to be accepted, not as second class citizens, not as useless welfare bums, nor as raving psychotics, but as individuals of worth who require fair and just support. We will not be kept down, put down, anymore. Not by Ward 2 Ratepayer’s associations, not by hospitals, not by anyone. Not quietly, anyway.” The Cuckoo’s Nest, March 1980

SLIDE 16 – I AM SURE YOU CAN DO SOMETHING COOL HERE

CONCLUSION: GOOD & BAD –

DAVID

GOOD STUFF in Parkdale

- OCAB – located in Parkdale in space rented from PARC – creating knowledge workers – Grassroots Consulting – Voices from the Street
- Green Thumb Enterprises – and their partnership with Parkdale businesses in local beautification scheme - 2000 genesis at the PARC drop-in where a group of Parkdale psych survivors decided to form a business – got the help of the Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses (OCAB). When Diana Capponi, client employment coordinator at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, was asked for her opinion on the program, she stressed the potential for fighting stigmatizing attitudes and finding empowerment - healing modalities that exist well outside the medical model of treating mental distress and she located this process within the Parkdale. “It is very exciting, Capponi continued, “Now these people are an active

part of the community. It eliminates the fear and puts a face on mental illness.”^{35 36}

NOT SO GOOD – OR WHATEVER...

- Growing gentrification of Parkdale - pushing people out of Parkdale - there will be another Parkdale somewhere else – have we learnt anything?
- Point re mental health being on the agenda right now – opportunity for a conversation re what needs to be done.

³⁵ “Beautification program offers a hand up,” *Village/Annex Guardian*, 4 June, 2004, p.18.

³⁶ Toronto Enterprise Fund Website:

http://www.torontoenterprisefund.ca/_bin/resources/Featured_enterprise/Parkdale.cfm Accessed 22 October 2010