

# SACRED

SPRING 2007

*You are invited to*

## *A Gallery Moment*

SACRED's Annual General Meeting, June 13, 2007 6:00-7:30pm

Art Gallery of Alberta (100-10230 Jasper Ave, Edmonton)

Mingle over mocktails & appetizers, visit the new location of the Art Gallery of Alberta, peruse the collection of art created by program participants and bid on great items. Invite friends & colleagues to this evening in the Gallery!

RSVP to [admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com](mailto:admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com) or call 780-903-3300 by June 1.

## THANK YOU!

The Alberta Lottery Fund Community Initiatives Program has generously donated \$34,000 to SACRED's Recovery Day Program!

## Welcome to our Newest Team Members!

**SACRED is pleased to welcome the following staff and board members to our team:**

### **Our Administrative Team:**

**Joelle Fawcett-Arsenault, PHEc** and **Jacqueline Rishaug** have recently been hired to share the administrative responsibilities of our organization, Joelle as Executive Director and Jacqueline as Assistant Executive Director. Joelle is a Professional Human Ecologist and has had a long and passionate association with SACRED as one of its founding members and Past President. She brings valuable experience as Capacity Building Manager with Volunteer Alberta. Joelle's responsibilities include external relations, fund raising and staff relations. Joelle is joined in the position by Jacqueline Rishaug, who brings her experience in operating a family business as well as several years of experience doing contract work as a bookkeeper for various companies. Jacqueline's responsibilities include office management and bookkeeping.

### **Our New Directors:**

**Kerry Bjarneson, BSc LLB** - Kerry has over twenty years of experience in the practice of law, including management of her own law firm. Kerry is strongly committed to supporting agencies which help families, women and children at risk, and has held volunteer positions with a number of Edmonton organizations including: the United Way (chair), the Board of Big Sisters and Big Brothers, Edmonton LIFE, the Pastoral Institute, and the Wings of Providence Women's Shelter.

**Martha Schiel, MBA** - During her career Martha has dealt with strategic and operating issues in government relations and issues management with Imperial Oil, marketing management in the oil and telecommunications industries and strategic planning in public sector corporations.

**David Feldman, BSc** - David has worked as Executive Director of the Campus Food Bank, U of A, where he gained experience in personnel management, fundraising, financial management and media relations.

**Audrey Lack, BScN** - Audrey is an experienced health care professional with expertise in clinical nursing, management and administration. As well, Audrey has considerable volunteer experience with her children's schools, dance organizations, and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.



SACRED will again participate in the **Roy Financial Mayor's Walk for Charity**. The event will take place in Lion's Park, St. Albert on **June 23**. Sign up your colleagues, friends and family and collect pledges on behalf of SACRED for your participation in the 3 km walk or 8 km run. There is **no registration fee** for participants and **SACRED will receive 100% of all pledges raised**. For every \$125 in pledges, you will be entered for the Grand Prize of a trip for two to any destination in North America! Additional prizes for the three individuals

with the most pledges and a **free lunch** is included! It's easy! Call 780-903-3300 or email [admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com](mailto:admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com) and complete the registration form and start collecting pledges today!

Visit [www.sacredeatingdisorders.com](http://www.sacredeatingdisorders.com) for more information.



## *A Participant's Story of Despair and Triumph*

I am a daughter, a sister, a friend, a Social Worker...and I am an anorexic, a compulsive overeater and a binge eater. From a very young age my eating disorder took hold of me to the point that I was nothing but my eating disorder. My eating disorder started with my belief that I didn't belong, not in my family, not in my community, and certainly, not in the world. I felt different from those around me. I didn't quite fit in. There was something wrong with me. And what was wrong with me was that I was too fat. I believed that if I could control my food and my body, lose weight and be thin, I would belong, be acceptable and worthy of love.

I initially used food as a way of coping with the stress, chaos and violence in my home. Food became my comfort, my solace and eventually, my best friend. I would steal food, sneak food and hoard food. If I felt scared, I would eat. If I felt sad, I would eat. If I felt lonely, I would eat. I would spend hours fantasizing about what I was going to eat, how I was going to get the food I wanted and how wonderful it would be to feel full and finally, satiated. Unfortunately, the satiation only lasted a short time and I would have to start again. I hated myself for doing what I did, but I couldn't stop myself.

By the time I reached elementary school I was 30 pounds overweight, sad, lonely and scared of everything. My feeling of not belonging grew and I started to isolate from my peers and my family. Statements like "If only you lost a little weight, you would be as pretty as your sister," fueled my self hatred, drew me further into my disease and was a constant reminder that I was fat, should be ashamed of my body, and that if I wanted to be loved, I needed to be thin.

In high school, I was completely withdrawn, isolated and mortified by my weight. The boys would line up in the hallways and 'moo' at me when I walked past. I remember thinking that if I stopped eating in front of people they wouldn't know I was fat. This is when my restricting began. I wouldn't eat all day and then when I would get home I would be starving and I wouldn't be able to stop eating once I started. This pattern lasted through two university degrees and invaded my work life and what little social life I had.

By my late 20's, I was a hundred pounds overweight, restricting all day and bingeing all night. I would feel extreme shame and self-loathing after bingeing, but nothing could stop me from doing it all over again the next day. I tried every diet, every fad and every exercise program to stop gaining weight and to alter my body. Nothing worked!

In 1997, I determined I needed to stop gaining weight and I decided the only way I would stop was through surgery. In May of 1997, I was admitted into the hospital and underwent a complex, potentially fatal, four hour surgery to have my stomach size and function altered. Initially the procedure seemed to work and I lost 50 pounds within five weeks. With the surgery, I could only eat two tablespoons of food. Anything more than that and I would be in excruciating pain and would involuntarily vomit. I couldn't control or stop the pain or the vomiting, but I had to binge. Eventually I found that if I drank a carbonated beverage, I could binge without vomiting and I was back to restricting all day and bingeing all night.

Toward the end, my disease had progressed to the point that I was bingeing all day and all night, hoping to find some reprieve from the self hatred and self-deprecating thoughts in my head. I wouldn't leave my house except to go to work and to pick up my binge food. I wouldn't answer the phone, meet friends, or even open the blinds in my home. I was completely and utterly lost in my disease.

In October of 2005, I decided to have another stomach surgery, since the first surgery hadn't worked. I was so desperate to have the pain of being me, being fat and being completely out of control come to an end, I was willing to undergo another complex, invasive, lengthy and potentially fatal surgery. It was after my visit with the gastroplasty surgeon that I finally hit my bottom. A few days after my appointment with the surgeon, I bingeed to the point that I thought I was going to die from the pain. It was then that I realized another surgery was not going to stop my insanity, and in that moment, I decomposed into a puddle of despair, desperation and hopelessness. I knew I was defeated...my disease had won. The only thing I had left to do was to either kill myself or call Dr. Johnston. For some reason I called Dr. Johnston and within two months, I was in SACRED.

I have been in SACRED for fifteen months and 'sober' in my eating for the first time in my life! It has been fifteen months since I have had to restrict or to binge, something I have done everyday for 25 years of my life. I am able to eat three meals and three snacks a day. I am able to live life instead of hiding from it. I have a place to share my struggles and triumphs with people who completely understand and who only want the best for me. The staff at SACRED have loved me until I was able to love myself. They have walked the path of my recovery with me. They have cried with me and they have laughed with me. Without them, SACRED would not be the safe haven it is. I will be forever indebted to the staff, board members and donors of SACRED. Without SACRED, I would probably not be alive today.

## A Remarkable Woman

Dr. Joan Johnston, founding member and Medical Director of SACRED, has gained recognition for her expertise in the field of eating disorders. Dr. Johnston approaches eating disorders from both a professional and personnel standpoint. Since her own recovery from anorexia nervosa she has spent 25 years of her medical career treating patients with eating disorders.



Dr. Johnston's approach to the treatment of eating disorders is revolutionary in Canada, and indeed in much of the world. She is in high demand as a speaker on eating disorders as addictions. Local audiences have included junior and senior high, college and university students (in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, nursing, dental hygiene, psychology, and sociology), other professionals, and members of the public. Upon invitation, Dr. Johnston has traveled to a number of other provinces, including Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec, speaking to both lay and professional audiences. Dr. Johnston has gained international recognition for her expertise in the field of eating disorders, resulting in many requests for consultations and presentations. Recent travels have taken her to Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Luxembourg.

Dr. Johnston's publications on eating disorders include her book, "Feast of Famine: A Physician's Personal Struggle to Overcome Anorexia Nervosa", a profoundly moving account of her own recovery.

Dr. Johnston is highly regarded and much appreciated for her devotion to her patients and their families. Dr. Johnston walks the journey of recovery with those who come seeking a way out of their hopelessness and despair. **"Thank you for your eternal compassion for our pain" (patient).** She reaches out to her patients with the love and understanding of someone who has walked in their shoes, and understands their suffering on a deeply personal level. **"Her love for the suffering addict is a love that came to me as I learned to love myself" (patient).**

Dr. Johnston has profoundly affected the lives of many and one cannot help but be struck by her humility and deep spirituality. She responds to expressions of gratitude and recognition with the conviction that she is a vessel of her Higher Power and is honored to have the opportunity to serve in this way. **"Dr. Johnson's gift of compassion and her insight and understanding of eating disorders are true blessings from our Creator" (patient).**

As one of her colleagues put it: **"Dr. Johnston has boundless love and compassion for those who suffer from eating disorders. It is evident by her sacrifices that this is her life's work."** SACRED is, indeed, privileged to have someone of Dr. Johnston's expertise and dedication as our Medical Director.

## Our Creative Birthright

By Kim O'Leary, BSW RSW, Art Therapy Intern

In the past few months I have been part of a creative healing circle. I have been touched by the stories, wisdom, pain, and laughter of a group of women participants in SACRED. Through my internship with SACRED, I have the privilege of facilitating a weekly art therapy group and working individually using art therapy with some of the women as part of my Master training in Pastoral Psychology and Counselling at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton.

The art process provides another form of language to explore, identify and express feelings, images, dreams and memories that the participant may not yet have words to communicate. Art therapy provides a container to hold these expressions. Participants determine their own level of engagement in the art process work.

My role as an art therapist is to foster an environment that supports creative expression. I provide art process experiences and facilitate integration and, ideally, assimilation of the participants' learning and healing. I also act as a witness to the participants' creation and expression of their personal world. I have been deeply touched by the many explorations and discoveries that each woman's journey has involved.



The art group has strengthened the sense of community and reinforces the mutual support and healing created by the SACRED program. It adds a further creative expression and opportunity to integrate their experiences of hurt, isolation and pain.

I have a great depth of gratitude to the women at SACRED who have invited me into their inner world and I look forward to continuing to work with them and with SACRED on their journey in recovery.

SACRED would like to thank the  
**Livia Stoyke Foundation**  
for their generous contribution of funds for art supplies  
used in the art therapy component of the  
Recovery Day Program!

Society for Assisted, Cooperative  
Recovery from Eating Disorders  
[www.sacredeatingdisorders.com](http://www.sacredeatingdisorders.com)

SACRED's Office: (780) 903-3300  
[admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com](mailto:admin@sacredeatingdisorders.com)

## Volunteer Opportunity!

Are you seeking to gain more experience in the non-profit realm? Do you have time now that you have retired from your profession? Are you seeking a meaningful way to give back to your community? SACRED has opportunities for individuals to join the Board of Directors, to work on committees & to assist on an as-needed basis in our programs. Experience in finance, fundraising, promotion an asset.

For more information, please contact our Executive Director, Joelle at 780-903-3300.

*You make a living by what you get, but you  
make a life by what you give.  
Winston Churchill*

## Words of Farewell and Gratitude from Program Participants and Staff to Marianne Lightfoot

Her title is Cook/House Manager, but she is much more than that. She came to us on the wings of a prayer, bubbling with enthusiasm, energy and compassion, and passed that love to all of us through feeding us both physically and spiritually. Her many acts of kindness and thoughtfulness nursed us back to health when we were sick, fatigued and overwhelmed. She made our home beautiful with flowers inside and out, planted vegetable gardens, took care of house repairs, and provided us with a sympathetic ear when we were frazzled to distraction.

The time and attention she took preparing food helped us heal from the ravages of this disease, one meal at a time. She spent time making special deserts for celebrations, each one a work of art. Her love of her craft was obvious to anyone who sampled her culinary delights. Never one to punch a time-clock, Marianne more often than not arrived early and worked late, taking time from her busy kitchen to shovel snow, de-ice the sidewalk, or mow the lawn and weed the garden. She nursed our colds with fresh garlic, parsley, hot lemon tea, and treated us to made-from-scratch chai on blustery winter days. She warmed our hearts, nourished our souls and blessed us with her smile. Seldom did we ever hear an unkind word, although there were times when we heard a few cupboard doors slam, especially if she overheard our disease say we weren't hungry, didn't want to eat, hated red meat, and complained that all we ever had was soup for lunch! From our deepest core we appreciated all she did for us. We shall miss her more than words can say, and although we know that when God closes a door He opens a window, we sometimes fear He shall never be able to replace her. There are times, after all, when God outdoes Himself. Thank you Marianne!

## Unique Ways to Contribute to SACRED's Vital Work—How might you contribute?

SACRED is always grateful for the contributions made to support our work, be it gifts of time, financial support or gifts in kind. Some of our members have found unique ways to contribute:

- A friend of **SACRED** donates monthly, automatically off his paycheck, to **SACRED** through the United Way and his employer then matches his contribution! Check to see if your employer donates through the United Way and request that your contributions are directed to **SACRED**.
- Another friend of **SACRED**, on a significant birthday, requested that her friends, in lieu of gifts, donate to **SACRED**! Not only do they honour her, but they also receive a tax receipt for their contribution. Brilliant!
- A **SACRED** volunteer and her family have decided to reduce the amount they spend on Christmas gifts for each other and make donations to charities that are important to their family members. For the past two Christmases the volunteer's family have made donations in her name to SACRED.

Consider how you might support **SACRED** at your next gathering of family or friends, asking for contributions to **SACRED** in your honour!

Charitable tax receipts will be issued for membership fees and donations of \$20 or more (or on request).

**DID YOU KNOW: You can now donate online! Check our website to contribute by credit card!**

Please make cheques payable to SACRED and send to:

Society for Assisted, Cooperative Recovery from Eating Disorders  
#182 - 10654 - 82 Ave. Edmonton, AB. T6E 2A7

SACRED's fundraising goal for 2007-08 is \$100,000.00. Less than \$2,000 will be spent on fundraising.  
100% of donations received will go directly toward SACRED's Eating Disorder Services.

For further information call Joelle at 780-903-3300  
Charitable registration number: 88816 8063 RR0001