

Upcoming Opportunities and Events:

Shalom Spring Breakfast

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Crosshill Mennonite Church

Join us to celebrate Shalom's 35th Anniversary!

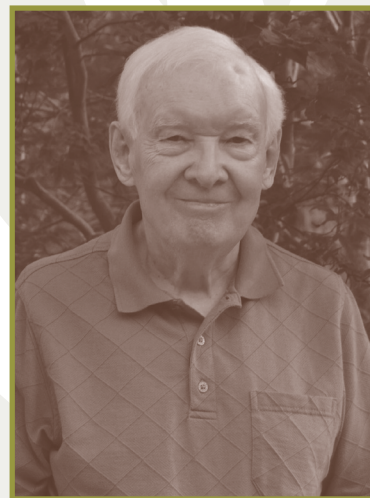
Calm in the Storm: Anxiety and Stress Management Groups for Young Adults

Winter and Spring 2018.
For more information contact Shalom.

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The Loss of a Visionary Man: Ralph Lebold, DMin



We grieve the loss of one of Shalom's key founders, Ralph Lebold, who died on October 31, 2017. Ralph's rich vocational path included the roles of pastor, conference minister, college president, and director of theological education. In addition to his formal roles, Ralph's passion for pastoral ministry, pastoral leadership training, and marriage & family therapy propelled his involvement in a number of initiatives, including the creation of Shalom Counselling.

Informed by his ministry experience, and his belief in the need for counselling services as a resource to the faith community and the community at large, Ralph participated in the initial planning for Shalom. In his reflections at Shalom's 20th anniversary, Ralph noted that in November 1981 he joined with other clergy and mental health professionals to "get the ball rolling." In his master's thesis, he had outlined a model for pastoral counselling centres, and this work informed the establishing of the first Shalom centre in St. Catharines in 1982, in Waterloo in 1983, and in Leamington in 1993.

This visionary man played a significant role in setting the foundation for Shalom's ongoing vision and mission, and Ralph's avid interest in this work has continued through the years. His perspectives regarding Shalom's present and future have been deeply valued.

As we grieve and remember Ralph's life, may we all be inspired by his enacting of faith through his many involvements, his wise insights, and his compassionate consideration of church and community needs.

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10,000 Steps for Shalom



Saturday, September 16, 2017 marked the second *10,000 Steps for Shalom*. A beautiful day enjoyed by more than 60 people of all ages, who walked, biked and ran in support of counselling at Shalom.

Rest stops along the trail were hubs of activity, with lots of water, coffee and snacks to go around. Refreshment donations were graciously provided by City Café Bakery, Wellesley Apple Products, Martin's Family Fruit Farm and Four All Ice Cream.

Participants and Shalom's community of support raised over \$27,000 in support of affordable counselling at Shalom.

We invite you to join us at 10,000 Steps for Shalom in 2018!

Get to Know Shalom: Staff, Intern and Board



Julie Campion began in her role as Administrative Secretary at Shalom in June 2017. Julie brings many gifts from her background in retail to her role in overseeing reception and office functioning at Shalom.



Margaret Andres is a Registered Social Worker with experience in family counselling and mediation. She is a homeschooling parent serving her community through music, outdoor education, theatre, and church work. She joined the Shalom board in October 2017.



Suzanne Cherry, Master of Social Work student at Wilfrid Laurier University is completing her clinical internship at Shalom (September 2017 - April 2018).



(Rev.) John Lougheed is a semi-retired Chaplain and United Church Minister who works part-time as a Presider at the Erb & Good Family Funeral Home, helping plan and lead services. He joined the Shalom board in October 2017.

THANK YOU TO RETIRING STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS...

Cynthia Cober retired as the Admin. Secretary, after 15 years of capable service. We wish Cynthia well in this new stage.

Henry Hildebrand served wisely on the Board and the Development Advisory Committee and completed his term in September.

Lynne Blake-Dickson graciously served for 9 years as Board member and on the Policy and Professional Practice Committee.

Marilyn Leis was a valued member of the Board, serving as Secretary and Executive Committee member during her 9 year tenure.

Embracing our Healthy Selves

By Wanda Wagler-Martin, MSW, RSW

In this past year, I was granted the gift of a study leave, and the opportunity to step back and reflect on 30 years in the field of mental health, including 20 years at Shalom. This was a rich time for reading, thinking and writing, and I found myself considering many things that impact our lives in terms of struggle and challenge. Here are some thoughts on the quest for health and well-being.

We live in a world that has long stigmatized the reality of mental illness in people's lives. Fortunately, through increased education and much awareness-raising, people are becoming more comfortable in naming the reality of this experience. At Shalom we have observed that growing awareness also prompts the seeking of help earlier in the process, which is a good thing.

As I have spoken with groups about mental illness, we have also considered mental health. We have tended to use the words mental health and mental illness interchangeably, but they are in fact separate considerations. When groups are asked to define mental health I hear the following: balance, self-esteem, community, sleep, meaningful work, contentment, friendships, exercise, care of others, giving back, gratitude, ability to see the positive, to name a few.

Freud said that a definition of mental health is to love and to work. This definition names the importance of loving both ourselves and others, and finding ways to meaningfully engage our world. When we are able to do both we can experience much peace and contentment. When this is not possible our health has been disrupted in some way, perhaps by mental or physical illness, or other circumstances that impede our sense of wellness and wholeness.

In further making the distinction between mental illness and mental health, it can be helpful to realize that a person with a mental illness can also be mentally healthy, and that people without mental illness are not necessarily mentally healthy. Consider for a moment a person with a

mental illness who has acknowledged their illness, has sought help, and is working on their concerns. They may have solid relationships and seek to take care of themselves. Contrast this experience with people who do not have a defined mental illness, but neglect self-care, may have strained relationships, routinely see things negatively, or don't acknowledge problems in their lives. If someone has poor mental health, they tend to ignore or deny problems. When someone has good mental health, they acknowledge problems that exist and seek to resolve them.

David Steindl-Rast wrote, "...a healthy personality does not suppress the dark side, the shadow, but accepts it, values it, even embraces it, and so becomes whole." (*Common Sense Spirituality*, p. 108). I think this can be a helpful paradigm for us in thinking about both mental health and mental illness. It can help us realize that whether we have a mental illness or not, it is important to put energy into achieving and maintaining a balanced sense of mental health.

The lens we use to consider our lives impacts much of how we see the world and ourselves. Many things can cloud this lens and cause us to view life as one way or another. Our family history, genetics, and our life experiences, in combination with our personality and temperament, greatly inform our way of seeing things. Sadly many people carry the burden of unresolved pain, be it trauma, abuse, or more subtly experienced disappointments. The lack of resolution of painful stuff in our lives can greatly get in the way of our mental health. It takes courage to face those dark spaces, and much of counselling is about helping people not to fear this darkness but to find ways to acknowledge it, understand it, and eventually move beyond it.

Working through what keeps us stuck can free us to live from a place of deep gratitude for what is, instead of orienting ourselves from a place of what we wish could be. One of my fine colleagues often notes that one part of healing is letting go of the need for a different past.

Continued on next page...

Seedlings

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*The editorial team is
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Peace and Wholeness**

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United Way
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Embracing our Healthy Selves (Cont.)

Letting go can free us to grow into a place of goodness in the present. The ability to be grateful for even the smallest aspects of the now can greatly shift our life perspective.

We don't have a choice about many of the things that happen in life, but we are in control of how we make sense of our experiences. Think of people you may know who have lived a life replete with loss and tragedy but are still able to live from a grateful place. They are an inspiration and we can learn from them.

However, I fully recognize that this ability doesn't often come naturally. It has not always been modeled well, but we can still learn to do this through regular practice. And it must be named that there are also times in life when gratitude cannot be on the forefront due to the immensity of a current challenge. Yet the more we practice being grateful for the small things that life offers, the more we can draw on this perspective when we face hardship and struggle.

May we all find the courage needed to claim our personal movement toward mental health. To do what we know we most need to find a place of balance and well-being. And if we are not sure what that means for us, to give ourselves permission to ask for some help.

You Can Help

Shalom clients come from all walks of life, and many require a fee subsidy to be able to afford counselling. Every donation supports Shalom in providing services now and into the future. This mutual aid, supporting others in a time of need, is central to Shalom's mission, "Helping People Grow Toward Peace and Wholeness."

Shalom is grateful for every gift that is received, and this reminds us of the community of care that surrounds our work. Thank you!

If you are interested in donating to the ongoing work of Shalom Counselling, you can donate in the following ways:

Cheque

Cheques can be made payable to:
Shalom Counselling Services Inc.

Credit Card

Credit card donations can be made online or by phone:
www.shalomcounselling.org
(519)885-9690

Legacy Gifts

Legacy gifts (estates and wills) can be made through Abundance Canada