



# THE CLIENT'S Voice

Newsletter of The Royal's Client Advisory Council  
Summer 2018

## Vision, Mission, Values and Philosophy

### Vision

Mental health care transformed through partnerships, innovation and discovery

### Mission

Delivering excellence in specialized mental health care, advocacy, research and education.

### Values

We are guided by innovation and a passionate commitment to collaboration, honesty, integrity and respect.

### Philosophy

- We believe in a client-centred approach to care.
- We believe that patients have the right to voice their concerns.
- We believe that input from patients should be welcomed, encouraged and responded to in a timely manner.
- We believe that patients have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We believe in advocating for changes in the system.
- We believe in valuing people and humanizing the system.
- We believe in open communication between care providers, consumers and their families.

## The Three Amigos



*The Three Amigos – Kathy Cogan, Gale Hamilton and Rachel Love*

About a year and a half ago, Rachel Love was referred to The Royal and was very reluctant. As many others in this community, the idea of needing the help of a mental health facility is very daunting. At the same time, Kathy Cogan and Gale Hamilton were being referred to the same day program in geriatrics. All three women have extended families but in addition to living with mental illness have had to deal with being widowed, giving up pets due to downsizing, the loss of young family members, spouses who are on the road for extended periods of time, caring for very elderly parents and the loneliness that this stage of life brings. All three enjoyed the day program very much and were all referred to the WRAP group in the women's centre and contributed a lot to these groups. They showed up with a sense of style and were soon nicknamed the Three Amigos. Along with learning tools to help in their

recovery, they were also known for getting off topic, chatting and laughing a lot and providing pearls of wisdom. They were looking for more groups to take and found a journaling group in the women's centre and a drop-in group for their age group in the community.

The three all had much in common and soon began seeing each other outside the hospital, going on outings together, having dinner together and calling to check up on one another. One would help the other revamp their cable package to save some money. Recently Rachel was sick and called Kathy to say she didn't want to be alone. Kathy set her up on her couch a pillow, a blanket, toast and The Birdcage movie.

Rachel translated her fondness for The Royal and need to fill her days into a volunteer position. She can be found greeting people

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*...Cover continued*

at the Winter Garden Café in her lovely Scottish accent on Wednesdays. The women are always looking for more groups to join to expand their tools for living with mental illness. Having exhausted the groups that were available to them, they pushed for a drop-in group in the women's resource centre. It meets once a week and includes many friends from their groups but has also welcomed members from elsewhere – just a group of women sharing with one another and helping one another.

In talking to the Three Amigos about their friendship, Gale said “all I wanted was a friend to go to coffee with”. Looking over at Kathy, she had a tear in her eye. It seems as though the Three Amigos found what they were looking for and what they needed.

## The Women's Group

*“A friend is one who overlooks your broken fence and admires the flowers in your garden.”*

— Anonymous



*Shanara Nafe, Gale Hamilton, Rachel Love, Laureen Reynolds, Kathy Cogan with Glenda O'Hara seated*

Two of the five key concepts of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) are personal responsibility and support. The women of the latest WRAP group offered by the Women's Resource Centre took personal responsibility to create a group that would be a support for them.

The women met one another in WRAP and journaling groups ranging in age between 24 and 74. They made friends with one another

and began to connect on social media and provide tech support for one another among other things.

When the groups ended, they still wanted something that they could still come to every week to support the recovery of themselves and their friends. They got permission for a drop-in group that meets once a week in the resource centre. They check in with the

group, laugh, share resources and encourage one another.

There is talk of maybe in the future invited guests to come and discuss topics of interest to the group. Who knows what this little group will morph into. This is an example of clients getting the help they need at The Royal and then advocating to continue their recovery together.



## Music and Photography as Wellness Tools

I live with mental illness. I came to The Royal on a doctor's referral. My doctor at The Royal suggested I take some classes that are offered in the Women's Resource Centre. It was the best advice I ever received. I took a few classes and then found myself training and then co-facilitating the same classes that helped me. I currently co-facilitate Journaling and WRAP and get to share the tools I use to stay well. Specifically, I will describe music and photography as wellness tools.

Scary things happened to me as a child and music was my great escape. I started with piano, at 5 and later, the recorder followed by the flute. As a young teenager, I attended private flute lessons and took up the guitar. I even joined

the orchestra in high school. I LOVED music. I could sit on my own and play for hours. Then I started to rebel against the system. Yes, drugs and alcohol. What a BLAST!!! In the beginning anyways. I started to get scared of my friends and my surroundings. I no longer felt safe, even with the drugs. I missed the security of being grounded and having to stay home. Alone in my room. Playing flute or guitar. At peace. Totally safe, in my little bubble.

As an adolescent, I also started to express myself with art and photos. I attended Algonquin College and took every art and photo class I could take. Some I took more than once as it allowed me to work in the labs. I soon discovered

*continued on page 4*

*All photos by Alexis Milne*

## Music and Photography continued

that photography was a great way to get out and about but still stay at a safe distance from others. I love shooting alone. I get lost in the composition, the exposure, the speed of the film and the depth of field I'm looking for. I could also play in the darkroom. Different exposure, different film temperatures and re-framing. The list is endless. The more creative I became, the more lost I would be in my thoughts. All positive thoughts. Artistic thoughts. Happy thoughts. I started loving black and white and even started to paint in my own colours, directly on the photos.

I believe that music and art are some of the greatest wellness tools available. You can be creative in your own mind and block out thoughts that are hurtful or scary. A few minutes of something mindful can help your whole day. Go to an art gallery or a live music venue. Get out there and be artistic. I still participate in a music group. We meet once a month to play music, visit and have tea. I can't think of a better way to get well and stay well.

*Alexis Milne*



## Sacred

Just a little breath  
Of sparkling light  
In a body  
- That's all we are,  
You and I:  
- Some dust,  
Some water  
- A vehicle

For our DNA  
To populate  
The galaxy.  
And yet...  
I long to touch your face,  
And kiss your lips.  
Oh, Sacred Light...  
Precious dust

- In my favourite  
Molecular arrangement.  
- Unique in all  
The universe...  
I love you.

*Twi*

*“I would rather  
walk with a friend  
in the dark, than  
alone in the light.”*

— Helen Keller

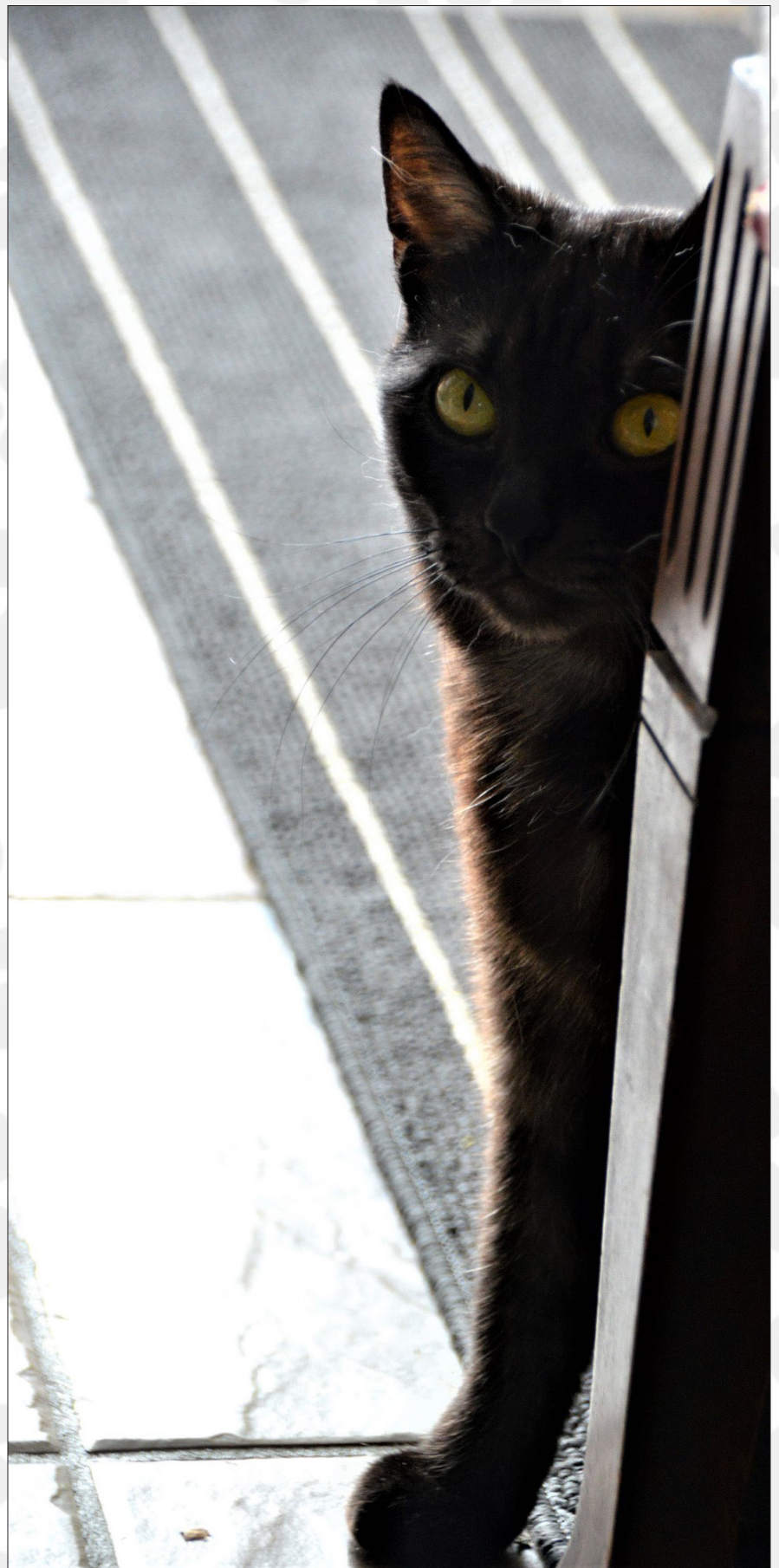
# Black or White

I'm not going to spend my life being a color  
Don't tell me you agree with me  
When I saw you kicking dirt in my eye  
But, if you're thinkin' about my baby  
It don't matter if you're black or white

*Michael Jackson*



*White Cat by Glenda O'Hara*



*Black Cat by Alexis Milne*

When two givers indulge in  
connection, it's like  
magic. ... I water you, you  
water me, we never drain  
each other. We just grow.

# The Story of the Pink Flowers

Shortly before her death, my mother decided to tell me about her Aunt Carrie whose painting of pink flowers hung in Mom's dining room. I think she believed that with my history of living with mental illness, that I would be most interested in her story.

Caroline (Lusk) Smale was born in Luskville, QC in 1890 to James and Alice Jane Lusk. With my mother being a genealogist, we had heard of Alice Jane a lot since she was aboriginal and my mother always said it made us belong here.

Caroline was born to a large family with ten siblings and married and had two sons.

At some point Carrie was institutionalized and virtually forgotten by her family. Years later, someone in the family went to see her and it was discovered that she had either recovered or perhaps was never mentally ill to begin with.

Carrie was removed from the institution and returned to Ottawa, living downtown and worked hard the rest of her days and died at age 80 in 1970. I was a very young teenager then and although I don't remember her, my mother always remembered her fondly.

This of course was how mental health was dealt with years ago. What it does reinforce



*Pink Flowers by Carrie*

for me is that the women in my family are strong for Carrie survived against all odds. Also so many people living with mental illness are artistic as her pink flowers remind me and we all need the support of our families as Carrie did not have for so many years.

The Pink Flowers are now on a wall in my home reminding me of how far we have all come,

to be strong, to follow my artistic side and to make sure I use my family as a support in my recovery.

*G. O'Hara*

## The Golden Lion

He flies to me on gossamer wings,  
My love.

- The golden lion, my love  
- In my dreams, my love.

He lays his fine brow 'gainst my head,  
My love.

- Every night, my love  
- In my dreams, my love.

He purrs such tender songs,  
My love.

- Every night my love  
- In my dreams, my love.

He wraps his paws 'round my waist,  
My love.

- Every night my love  
- In my dreams, my love.

His mighty heart pounds through my soul,  
My love.

- But, I'm not afraid, my love  
- For the lion is you, my love.

The lion is you

*Twi*



# Untitled



Before you speak, listen carefully for  
A question pertaining to how to become  
More genial and calm  
Dualism vanishes in happiness  
Focusing absolutely on the positive  
Leaving me always with gratitude  
To be so alive in an ecstatic way  
Take everything you hear with  
Seven billion million grains of saltines  
Saying we have nothing to fear but fear itself  
Be intensely skeptically decisive  
Never ever panicking anymore  
I am at peace with myself  
I am at one with the universe

*Judy Evans*

DON'T  
BE ASHAMED  
OF YOUR STORY,  
IT WILL INSPIRE  
OTHERS.



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*Sugar Skull And Roses by Alexandra Carr Moores*

# Message from the Editor



This September will bring a change to *The Client's Voice*. I will be stepping down as Editor and Alexis Milne will be taking my place as I step

into the position of Chair of the Client Advisory Council. My time as Editor has been an absolute joy – sharing so many stories of hope, poems, photos and art from clients.

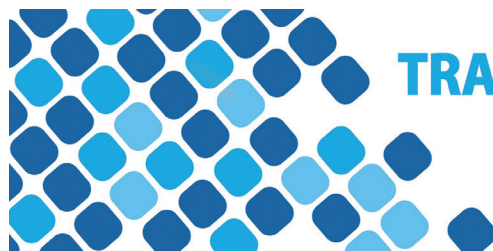
My final issue includes an enchanting story of friends made at The Royal and efforts to continue supporting one another and others. Poems and a painting are shared by some of my favourite contributors and information on Transforming Care that will start ramping up this fall is also provided.

I have chosen to introduce you to our new editor by including her story of music and photography as wellness tools along with a selection of her wonderful photos and contrasting her black cat photo to my white cat one. Finally, I have included a small personal story of pink flowers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chair, Debbie McFarlane for her tireless efforts as Chair these past three years – you are a tough act to follow.

Finally, accept all help that is offered you, learn everything you can, find people to support you, take responsibility and always have hope.

*Glenda O'Hara*  
Editor, *The Client's Voice*



## TRANSFORMING CARE at The Royal

best practices • new partnerships  
• advancing technologies

### What it is

- A Mental Health Information System partnership between The Royal and two other Ontario mental health facilities
- Working together to develop clinical standards and implement evidence-based best practices
- Changes will be supported across the 3 organizations by a shared Electronic Health Record

### What does this mean

- The Royal is standardizing clinical practices, internally and with their partners
- Some forms, documents and processes will change
- The Meditech system will be upgraded

### Timeline

- September 2018 documentation standardization → June 2019 Go Live

### Why

- To improve quality, safety and patient outcomes

**For more information  
or to become a  
member of the  
Council, contact:**

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The :Le  
**Royal**

Mental Health - Care & Research  
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## Contact Us

We would love to hear what you have to say about *The Client's Voice*. Feel free to call, write or email your questions and comments to:

### Client Advisory Council

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