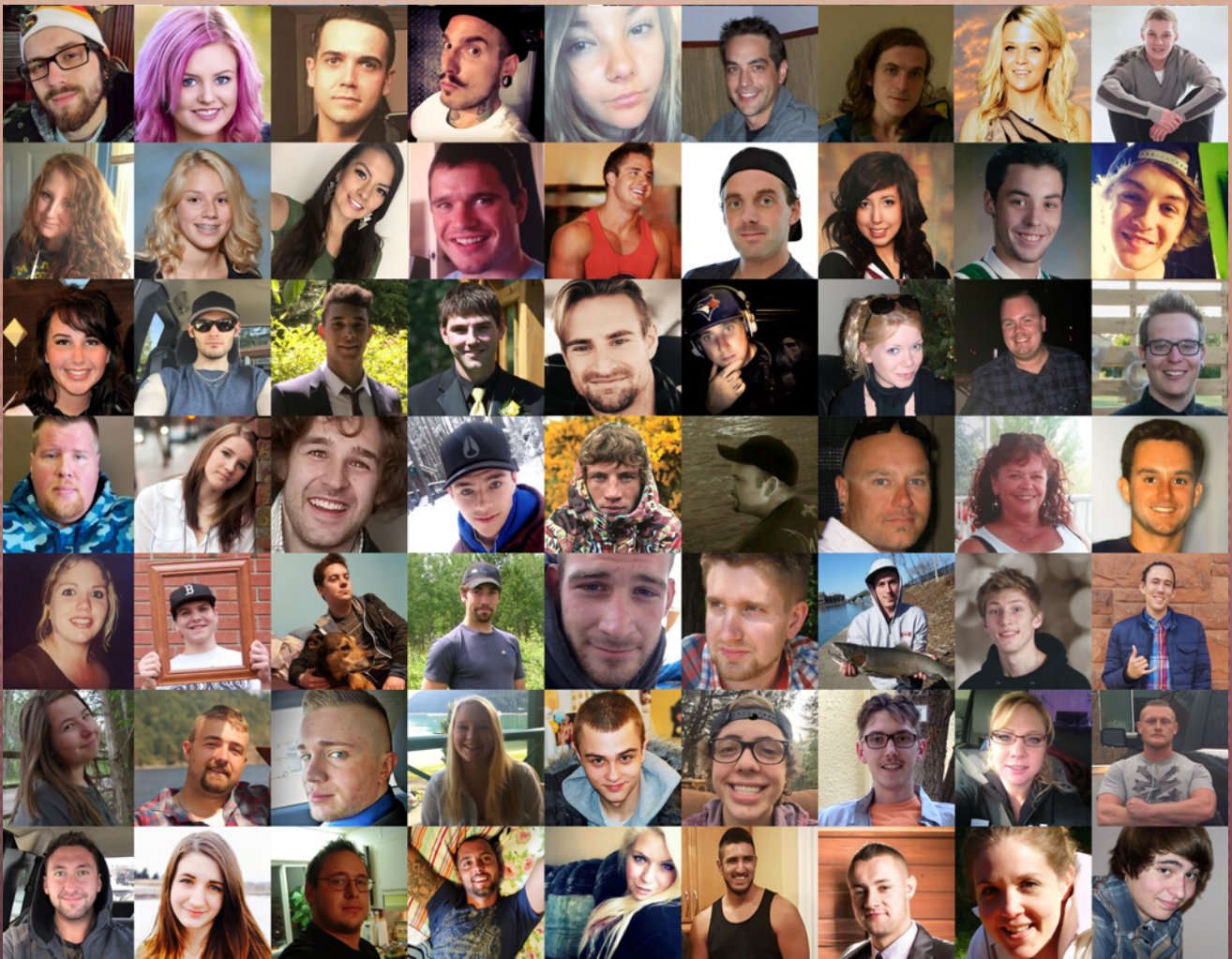




*MOMS STOP THE HARM*

# ANNUAL REPORT

**2019 - 2020**



**EDUCATING - ADVOCATING  
REDUCING STIGMA**

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## OUR DIRECTORS

LESLIE MCBAIN, CHAIR (BC)  
PETRA SCHULZ, CO CHAIR (AB)  
HELEN JENNENS, TREASURER (BC)  
DEB BAILEY, SECRETARY (BC)  
ANGELA WELZ, MEMBER AT LARGE (AB)  
MARIE AGIORITIS, MEMBER AT LARGE (SK)  
SHEILA JENNINGS, MEMBER AT LARGE (ONT)  
CHRISTINE WINGATE, MEMBER AT LARGE (ONT)  
ISABELLE FORTIER, MEMBER AT LARGE (QUE)

## PROGRAM MANAGER

JENNIFER HOWARD





# MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Working Together, Making a Difference



*It is a fact - we are stronger together. We have seen across this past year many of our members being able to find emotional and navigational support through connecting with one another. We have seen our members gain the courage to tell their stories in public, on radio, television and online media. The heartbreak and inequities of our systems come through in our stories and help the public understand what the epidemic of overdose and problematic drug use is all about. We, the “mothers and others” in our network, have the ears of the federal government, many provincial governments, local organizations and large segments of the general public. The way to changing hearts and minds is through our stories, which reduce stigma and garner compassion. Our goal is that you all feel supported, that you are able to find what you need in the way of information, pathways to advocacy, emotional support and connection. None of us need to go through grief or anxiety alone. And when and if you are ready to advocate for our goals and beliefs, we are here to support, guide, and join you if we can. May the coming year be one in which we see the changes that will support our loved ones, support us, and all people impacted by drug harms. We look forward to sharing some of these exciting developments with you during our AGM.*

(Leslie McBain, Chair)



*Our Board worked hard this Spring to meet together to update our Vision, Mission and Who We Are. These statements define the core of MSTH and guide our future advocacy efforts.*

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Moms Stop The Harm calls for an end to the failed war on drugs through evidence based prevention, treatment and policy change. We support a harm reduction approach that is both compassionate and non-discriminatory for people who use substances.

Our vision is that people who use drugs are not criminalized and that their rights are respected. Health care will equitably provide for a safe supply of substances and diverse pathways of support for all those affected. Families are supported and empowered to use their voices without shame, to share their stories and to advocate for positive change.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

We advocate to end substance use related stigma, harms and death.



*"Stories are the most powerful tool in our toolbox"  
MSTH Co-Founder, Leslie McBain*

# WHO WE ARE

Moms Stop the Harm (MSTH) is a network of Canadian families impacted by substance use related harms and deaths. We advocate to change failed drug policies and provide peer support to grieving families and those with loved ones who use or have used substances.



# 2019

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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### MOMS STOP THE HARM SOCIETY

#### Balance Sheet

(Unaudited)

December 31

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 67,108.71	\$ 11,960.71
Prepays	<u>725.00</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>\$ 67,833.71</u>	<u>\$ 11,960.71</u>
 <b>MEMBER'S EQUITY</b>		
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 11,960.71	\$ 0
Excess of receipts & disbursements	<u>55,873.00</u>	<u>11,960.71</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 67,833.71</u>	<u>\$ 11,960.71</u>

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M O M S S T O P T H E H A R M

# 2019

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### MOMS STOP THE HARM SOCIETY

#### Statement of Receipts & Disbursements

(Unaudited)

#### Year Ended December 31

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	\$ 68,930.12	\$ 11,596.48
Fund Raisers	1,635.00	715.45
Grants	2,500.00	0.00
	<u>73,065.12</u>	<u>12,311.93</u>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
Advertising & promotion	1,563.21	0.00
AGM	4,747.80	0.00
Banners	795.18	0.00
Bank charges	602.98	203.82
Design	793.50	0.00
Events	755.65	0.00
Healing hearts - Vic	1,008.67	0.00
Insurance	1,574.00	0.00
Meetings	120.43	0.00
Miscellaneous	100.63	0.00
Office and administration	844.79	0.00
Print material	3,016.52	147.40
Professional fees	1,053.47	0.00
Website	215.29	0.00
	<u>17,192.12</u>	<u>351.22</u>
<b>Excess of Receipts and Disbursements</b>	<b>\$ <u>55,873.00</u></b>	<b>\$ <u>11,960.71</u></b>

# NATIONAL ACTIVITIES



## Conferences & Meetings

- **MSTH AGM in Edmonton** - (planned for May 2020, postponed to 2021) Angela Welz, Petra Schulz and the local Edmonton team were excited to welcome you all to tell you all to Edmonton and we had an exciting program planned, including a panel discussion on safer supply, and a local action. The plans are now on hold and we hope to hold the event in 2021.
- **CCSA Issues of Substance Conference, Ottawa November, 2019.** Marie Agioritis, Isabelle Fortier, Leslie McBain and Petra Schulz attended the conference on behalf of MSTH(<https://issuesofsubstance.ca/>). Petra and Leslie presented a workshop on the work Leslie does with BCCSU and about MSTH, which was well attended and received. Petra also was part of a panel discussion entitled "If I were the Minister of Health".
- **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), School Matters Forum.** (Toronto) February 2020 Sheila Jennings represented MSTH at this event and provided input from the family perspective. The Forum represents "Phase III" in an ongoing program of work led by PHAC to engage school stakeholders in helping to prevent substance use harms amongst youth.
- **Best Brains Exchange** – Measuring structural stigma related to substance use within Canadian health systems Ottawa, March 2020 - Joint initiative by The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Mental Health Commission of Canada. This was a one-time meeting in Ottawa in February 2020. Petra Schulz represented MSTH
- **Stimulus Conference - Gatineau, QC** - September 2020, postponed to 2021. Petra Schulz represents MSTH on the planning committee and Alain Beliveau and MSTH Leader Christine Wingate (both from the Ottawa region) represent us for the local planning team. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 this conference has been postponed to 2021 to a yet to be set date.





## BOARDS, COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

- **Canadian Civil Society Working Group on UN Drug Policy** - Petra Schulz keeps in touch with the CSO working group for MSTH and shares information as needed. We are not actively contributing to the work of the CSO group.
- **Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction Family and Friends Advisory Group** - This advisory group has representatives from various organizations (including MSTH) from across the country that help advise the CCSA (<https://www.ccsa.ca/>) and partner organizations on their work. Isabelle Fortier represents Quebec, Leslie McBain represents BC and Petra Schulz represents Alberta. Other MSTH members on the working group representing their local organizations who are also members of MSTH include Antoinette Gravel-Ouelette (Manitoba).
- **The Regulation Project** - A Canadian and International working group. Petra Schulz and Leslie McBain take turns representing MSTH on calls with the Canadian and the International Group. This working group is sharing information and planning initiatives with other organizations to further the cause of the legal regulation of substances. This initiative is lead by the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition

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*"There was an instant connection.. All these like minded women wanting to inspire change. It's this web of women connecting with broken hearts."*

*Marie Agioritis, Board Member at Large*

M O M S S T O P T H E H A R M

## Educational and Media Campaigns

### *Documentary "Flood" - The Overdose Epidemic in Canada*

Several members of MSTH, including our co-founders, were interviewed for this documentary which explores the impact of the epidemic across the country. The documentary was screened in several cities and is now available for free on **youtube** <https://youtu.be/zdNxcRutMmc> .

## MSTH Membership Update

Sadly due to the on-going crisis, MSTH membership has grown over the last year. While not all members mourn a loved one, most do. Increasingly families with loved ones with lived and living experience join our group. Most of those who join come for the mutual support we provide to those who are grieving. This support extends to those who have a loved one involved in problematic substance use.



## Moms Stop The Harm Membership

1250 members.

The majority of members are located in BC (302), followed by AB (174).



## Social Media Updates

**f** 12,500 followers on Facebook

**@** 1950 followers on Instagram

**t** 2700 followers on the twitter





# BOARD UPDATES

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### **Leslie McBain, Pender Island - Board Chair**

The past twelve months have been intensely busy and not in a very straight line. I will report in a general way. The organizations that MSTH has partnered with on one level or another have been provincial and national. Provincially I am a member of the Overdose Emergency Response Center (OERC) which is under the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. I am in an advisory position and I am asked to meet with the Minister on specific issues.

I have met with Canadian Drug Policy Coalition (most notably for a video), the Canadian Association of People who Use Drugs (CAPUD), the Canadian Center on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), and the opioid response team at Health Canada. I have been on panels around the province of BC on topics of safe supply, family inclusion, decriminalization. Most recently B.C has implemented a safer supply of drugs to keep people safer during the pandemic. Because the roll-out has been only partially successful, I now find myself part of a provincial advisory committee designed to assist with a better outcome for this great new policy. I have participated in several videos produced by independent documentary makers (Flood, Dead Boy -unreleased as yet, Stronger Together). I have been included in press conferences, radio and television interviews. I have attended provincial and national conferences, as noted in this report. I am employed by the B.C. Center on Substance Use as the Family Engagement Lead. We created a program called Stronger Together around nine communities in BC for the purpose of bringing families affected by the drug crisis together for support and education.

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## Deb Bailey, Vancouver - Secretary & Membership

In November, following the lead of Kelowna MSTH, we arranged a photo shoot at Jericho Beach. It was an emotional and powerful day for all of us in attendance. Some had travelled considerable distances to be there that day. In January and March, the Vancouver Community Action team met to discuss Vancouver initiatives. One of the most exciting of these was that a mobile Overdose Prevention Site was launched in an area outside of the DTES. In February and March, MSTH member Kat Wahamaa began hosting several public viewings of 'Flood'- a video about the overdose epidemic in Canada. Some of our MSTH members are featured in 'Flood'. The viewings were well attended and I sat as a panel member at one of the viewings. Also in February, staff from the Overdose Prevention Society arranged a meeting with government officials who worked with the BC prison system. There had been some alarming stats about the high rate of overdose amongst those who were newly released from prison. There was also a concern about the lack of substance abuse programs for those incarcerated for six months or less. We learned about some great initiatives like the Community Transition Teams. These teams meet with those newly released to help them with resources they need when they are released. We also learned that this support was available to only 10 out of the 15 prisons due to a lack of available funding.

We had also been concerned about how quickly (or not) those who were on OAT programs were able to access these once they were picked up on breaches or began their sentence. Once again, there was a good system in place; we received favourable replies and the people running 'the show' were very well meaning. However we knew that the reality 'on the ground' did not match what we were hearing. There is inconsistent access, too few providers, and more work is needed so that all who need the assistance get it.

The BOOST Collaborative was initiated by the BC Centre for Excellence in 2018. Their aim was to improve the retention rate of OAT. I was at BOOST meetings to represent and speak on behalf of families. At the last meeting, as BOOST was officially ending, I once again had the opportunity to speak to the teams.

(Deb Bailey continued...)

I know that their care and dedication has saved lives. However, I wanted them to keep thinking of the reality of what we MSTH members face. I am happy to report that one of the biggest changes reported by BOOST in their work over the past year, was that more families are now more included in treatment and planning. 70% of the teams have found a way to include the family.

“My Safe”, a machine that dispenses safe supply recently began to operate in the DTES. Dr. Mark Tyndall initiated this program. People who use drugs are assessed and then prescription drugs specific to each individual, can be accessed by using a code and a palm print at the My Safe machine. MSTH members began to volunteer at the My Safe location. As people started to get to know some of the ‘moms’, connections were made, people were ‘found’ and reconnected. There is a lot of interest in “My Safe” programs from across North America so we can expect these machines to be part of safe supply options.

In March, when Covid 19 restrictions were put in place, non- profits in the Vancouver area had limited resources to deal with the burgeoning pandemic. I started to call local distillers who were donating hand sanitizer. Parallel 49, Odd Society and Yaletown Brewing all donated. MSTH member May-Lou connected me with Madlab who donated hand sanitizer wipes. We also folded over 2000 wipes for Madlab! So far we have managed to provide supplies to the Overdose Prevention Society, My Safe, WISH, Aboriginal Mother Centre, Culture Saves Lives, Langley Angels and Insite. It is a great group effort.

In March, Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction announced the availability of safe supply in BC. Even though people who use drugs could now get a safer supply, user groups reported that some physicians would provide this, others refused, and some just did not know anything about it. The roll out of safe supply has been problematic to say the least. There is much still to do. Currently a very dedicated and active group of MSTH members is working on a project involving Telehealth, web information and a portal so that a much larger group can access a safer supply. There will be more to come as this group continues its work!

## Helen Jennens - Kelowna, Treasurer

IOAD was once again our August focus. We had an evening event which was well attended by the public. The Bridge Youth Treatment Center, Living Positive and Teen Challenge were all there with information and community engagement. Adapt Pharma sent a rep who trained and gave out 150 nasal naloxone kits. Living Positive trained and handed out an additional 150 injectable kits.

November was Addiction Awareness Month and MSTH was invited to speak at an event hosted by Interior Health. Pam Turgeon and Arlene Howe got their speakers feet wet for the first time and gave an awesome presentation. I also had the opportunity to speak at an overdose awareness event at a Kelowna General Hospital function. With winter setting in, our local group got very involved with the street community. We had multiple blanket and warm clothing drives and delivered the goods into the hands of those living on the streets or The Gospel Mission. We engaged with House of Hope and became a big supporter of the homeless women in Kelowna. We worked hard and generated enough donations to put together fifty-seven purses filled with things the vulnerable need..

We have an active regional group and participated in the following local events:

Penticton's Tree of Hope at the Penticton Hospital, serving dinner once per month at the Celebrate Recovery Program, Naloxone Training for the volunteers working in and around tent city, and involvement with the opening of the The Welcome Inn where I was invited to speak. As well, we are spearheading a walk/demonstration through our city streets, coordinating with the "Walk Across America". I continue to speak publicly at Highschools and the UBCO Psychology classes. We will soon begin our IOAD 2020 planning. Despite the situation with Covid 19, we will be ensuring this global day of remembrance is not forgotten.

In my role as Treasurer for MSTH, I am responsible for all funds both in and out of MSTH. I have some amazing women who are strong advocates in the Kelowna region and must thank them for their never tiring energy and commitment to our cause.

### *Affinity Group*

*"I am so thankful to have found the Affinity group. It's so good to have a place like this to go to." (Anonymous)*

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M O M S S T O P T H E H A R M

## MEMORIAL PHOTO - KELOWNA

*"In preparation for IOAD at one of our meetings we decided to do a photo representing the local MSTH families. Out of this vision, our cross photo came to be and was taken by Nicole Richards in Knox Mountain Park. The photo was so powerful it took on a life of it's own. The Globe and Mail gave it a two page spread with a short bio of all the women in the photo. From there the photo made it's way to the side of ten city buses in Kelowna and two running in Penticton. Our next venture for the photo was a digital billboard. This billboard will be up and running for 26 weeks."*

(Helen Jennens)



# ALBERTA

## **Petra Schulz - Edmonton, Vice Chair**

### **Supervised Consumption Sites Uncertain**

In 2019 a new conservative government was elected and our current premier, Jason Kenny, is not supportive of harm reduction, in particular Supervised Consumption Sites. One of the first steps the government took was a socio-economic review of SCS, that excluded all the evidence of their medial efficacy. Several members of MSTH spoke to the media about this issue. A rally in support of SCS was held in Lethbridge last year in June and many of our members participated in the town-hall meetings that were part of the SCS review process in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Calgary, Edmonton and Grande Prairie. In addition we presented to the review panel during their Edmonton stop. This presentation included data obtained from local members to find out what SCS means to families. In summary they save lives and it helps us to know when our loved ones are safe. In the end the final report did not seem to consider any of this and at this point it seems unlikely that Medicine Hat and East Calgary will get their much needed sites and the other locations in Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton and Grande Prairie are only funded until September 2020 and uncertain after this point.

### **Public Education**

In the fall and before classes moved on-line I continue to share the story of our son Danny and the work of MSTH with nursing, social work, early childhood and special education students at MacEwan University and with Pharmacy students at the University of Alberta. In addition I spoke at several conferences and community groups in Alberta, Manitoba and on the national level and try to keep our issues alive with the media whenever possible.

### **Rally In Support of Safe Consumption Sites**

We joined with other like minded organizations (CAPUD, AAWEAR, CTF in Calgary, Friends of Medicare) and concerned citizens and professionals to form the group Albertan's for Sensible Drug policy and together we organized a large rally, attended by about 150 people in Edmonton and a smaller sister rally attended by about 60 people in Calgary, to demand on-going funding for Supervised Consumption Services. At this rally we staged a "die-in" to remember the many we have lost to the on-going overdose crisis and other substance use related harms. We continue to work with members of that coalition in hope to preserve funding for SCS in Alberta. We are also working with a number of academics who have written and hope to publish a critical scientific response to the flawed SCS review



## MEMORIAL PHOTO - EDMONTON, AB

*"You have all seen the powerful memorial photos taken in BC, AB and ON with Mothers and other family members standing at iconic locations with crosses and other symbols to represent their child. In Edmonton we took our memorial photo in February 2020 at the bank of the Saskatchewan River with almost 40 families, many of whom travelled a long way to participate. Elder Dennis Wolfe from Frog Lake, who also mourns a son, participated in the photo and provided a blessing. Rebecca Lippiatt, volunteered her services as a photographer and also took moving family and individual portraits on the day." (Petra Schulz)*



## Angela Welz, Edmonton, Board Member at Large



The 2019 IOAD event in Edmonton was organized by myself and members of my Healing Hearts peer support group. We had over 250 in attendance on the evening of August 31 just as the sun broke through the afternoon and the rain stopped. It was a muddy and cool evening, but the event was well received. We had activities on hand (ie Flags Of Hope, painting rocks, a Naloxone training station and a food truck and music. The evening ended with a candlelight vigil overlooking the High Level Bridge which was lit up in purple to signify the day.

I was involved in several events that were mentioned in Petra Schulz's report in the Edmonton area. These events also included speaking at the AB Legislature for Overdose Awareness Day and joining Petra for a radio interview as well. I advocate for youth who are struggling with mental health and addiction and continue to voice my concern for a review of the AB PCHAD program ((Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Program) . I contributed a blog post for MSTH about our families experience with PCHAD and the lack of support my daughter received. I am an administrator for several of our FB groups and do what I can to make sure that information is posted in a timely fashion both on our FB public page and the MSTH Instagram account. Social media is critical for MSTH. I ensure in overseeing our social media, that our voice continues to be loud and strong.

I also work on the membership/network joins for the MSTH organization and work alongside Deb Bailey to welcome new members to MSTH. I continued my involvement as a regional leader for Healing Hearts along with Jennifer Howard who oversees the Western Healing Hearts groups.

I also facilitate the Edmonton Healing Hearts group with my partner Angela James, and we try to meet twice a month. One meeting is for a regular more-structured, peer support meeting and the second meeting is more of a social format where we will either go out for dinner or work on a crafting event of some kind.

# Saskatchewan

## **Marie Agioritis - Saskatoon, Member at Large**

It was a year of lobbying and calling the Provincial Government to task. MSTH regional members worked hard to support Aids Saskatoon in their efforts to secure funding for a safe consumption site. The organization was able to buy a building and spent hours on community action to do all that was required to inform and engage the public. It seemed hopeful in the beginning of 2020. However, with the provinces around us changing political parties we saw a significant swing, and ultimately the funding was denied. Within a few short weeks of this announcement Covid hit. Our next action was to support local agencies that serve our homeless population to find shelter. Our role was to use our media connections and bring light to the failed promises made by our social services minister. This effort brought around a minimal amount of funding and a Covid testing site was opened in the core so that our less than mobile community members had access if needed.

I was able to attend a national conference in Ottawa hosted by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction in the fall. I was invited to be part of two research teams with funding from the Saskatchewan Centre (SCPOR) for patient oriented research, and have secured a position as a co facilitator for the agency. The goal is to create and guide patients to be involved in research as the voice of the person with lived experience.

**Meeting with Saskatchewan Health Minister Jim Reiter** - Regina Member and power house moms advocate, Jenny Churchill, met with Minister Reiter in Nov. 2019, regarding ongoing human rights issues at government funded third party detox and treatment services. Saskatchewan Human Right Commission complaints were reviewed. She raised the issue of a 28 day treatment facility not accepting people into their program who are on MAT (methadone). Minister Reiter indicated that he thought the issue had been addressed and instructed his officials to review the matter. We raised the issue of a young man who was asked to leave a detox facility 2 days into his stay because he did not have a valid Saskatchewan Health Card. Twenty-two days following the denial of service, he went missing and was the subject of a missing persons bulletin by the Regina Police Service.

Marie Agioritis continued..

When he returned home, he was suicidal and was hospitalized. Minister Reiter confirmed that the facility was instructed to not turn away anyone because of an invalid or out-of-province health card.

**Saskatchewan Public Complaints Commission (SPCC)** - Jenny Churchill filed a complaint with the SPCC in 2018, against the Regina Police Service regarding alleged systemic stigma and discrimination against people with substance use disorder and their families. The SPCC made a recommendation to the Regina Police Service that it would be best practice for an officer to attend and assess the location where an overdose is believed to have occurred when the formal declaration of death is made elsewhere. All other matters with respect to the complaint were dismissed by the SPCC. In October, 2019, Minister Morgan sent her a letter confirming that his office was looking at potential options to increase transparency and public confidence in the way police oversight is conducted in the province. He indicated he had instructed his officials to review civilian representation for police oversight in other jurisdictions.

Marie in the North and Jenny in the South of the province, attended numerous community meetings and public speaking engagements regarding the opioid/meth/overdose crisis. These meetings included officials from all levels of government, opposition members, police, fire, emergency medical services, medical personnel. Public speaking engagements included visiting students, community meetings and Overdose Awareness Day.

Finally, a special mention to regional MSTH members:

- Chylo Michael - from Saskatoon continues to support our local moms with her leadership in Healing Hearts. Chylo saw the need and championed it for the moms in our community.
- Jenny Churchill - for her extraordinary work advocating for the rights of and dispelling the stigma assigned to people who have problematic substance use.

A small portion of a great band of wonderful women supporting Saskatchewan.

# Ontario

## Sheila Jennings - Toronto, Board Member at Large

My activities this year included:

- Palliative and end-of-life care delivery and experiences among people with opioid use disorders. Project duration: 4.5 years. I am currently submitting re-application for CIHR Grant Opportunity together with collaborators.
- In the summer myself, Irene and Angie were all interviewed for a documentary called "The Flood". We attended a private screening of the film and participated in discussions afterwards.
- IOAD in Toronto was held again at City Hall in October at Toronto City Hall. It was arranged by MSTH leadership member Irene Patterson, from Toronto. There was a ceremony and Flag Raising. It was attended by a good number of people including: MSTH Mary Byberg, MarieMcKenna, Irene Patterson and Sheila Jennings with MSTH and Zoe Dodd (Toronto OPS) and Angie Hamilton (FAR). There was a solid media presence, including television coverage. We all spoke, along with a few others and I shared a reading of my poem.
- I was interviewed by Taylor Thompson, a journalist with The Toronto Observer about harm reduction.
- Connection - I was involved in The Good Shepard 's Harm Reduction Initiative in Hamilton.
- I provided input for a draft statement (letter) from Amnesty International Canada, along with several others who had initiated this endeavour. The 'ask' was that the government of Alberta reconsider its plan to relocate SCS.
- I spoke at Humber College February 19, 2020 to a class of graduate students in public administration on struggles with policy change in this public health crisis.
- I attended the School Matters Forum held in Toronto February 11 and 12. This involved stakeholders discussing strategies to involve schools in Canada in helping to prevent substance use harms.

*"As a new member who is grieving a personal loss, I am impressed by the compassion and support I have received as well as the steadfast commitment to the MSTH's mission of harm reduction for all those surviving the opiate crisis".*  
(MSTH Member, Marilyn Banfield)

# Ontario

## Christine Wingate - Ottawa, Board Member at Large

*(MSTH welcomes our new Board Member at Large, Christine Wingate, who is active in the Ottawa Region. Her contributions are positive as she has a background relevant to our advocacy aims. Christine hits the ground running and is a strong advocate with MSTH leadership.)*

I joined MSTH in February 2019. In January 2020, I became part of the National Leadership group. Since January, I have been on an intense learning curve, researching and gathering pertinent information and data from key stakeholders at the community and provincial level. I continue to actively reach out to various organizations to receive newsletters and policy updates. I have been participating in various webinars regarding substance use. Advocating on behalf of a mom from the Gatineau region to help her navigate the system and establishing myself on Twitter to better connect with key stakeholders and like minded groups.

I was invited to represent MSTH on the local planning committee for the Stimulus Conference that was to be held in September 2020; because of COVID this conference has been postponed to a later date. However, in the meantime I am participating in AIDQ webinars on safe supply. I participated in the Toronto Harm Reduction Alliance safe supply recent video campaign in memory of my son Shane.

### *Healing Hearts Bereavement Support*

*"There is something so helpful and healing in coming together with others that have, like myself experienced the worse loss ever. It is profound hearing others' stories and understanding and feeling not so alone. I so appreciate that this group exists." (anonymous)*

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M O M S S T O P T H E H A R M

# Quebec

## Isabelle Fortier - Montreal, Board Member at Large

*(MSTH welcomes our new Board member, Isabelle Fortier. Isabelle joined Moms Stop The Harm in June 2019 and is a strong advocate out of Quebec.)*

### **Here are some of the activities I have been actively involved with in Quebec. June 2019 - May 2020**

- I was involved in an ongoing fundraiser for SCS Dopamine in Montreal in order to provide essential items to daily users on the services: soap, shampoo, socks etc.
- August 31st 2019: IOAD: spoke on behalf of MSTH on the Overdose Crisis.
- October 8th, 2019: press conference with NDP candidate Catherine Roy-Goyette from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Mercier) regarding affordable housing, SUD and stigma, safe supply and decriminalization of drugs as part of a party program and goals, if elected to Parliament.
- November 2019: attended CCSA conference in Ottawa with Petra, Leslie and Marie.
- December 2019: Safe supply message campaign (picture collage on IG and FB) alongside Lynn Laramée, Tamara Scullion, Anna-Marie Iredale, Charlene Vacon, and some of my family members and friends.
- Letter campaign to PM Trudeau. February 2020:
- Participation as a regional ambassador for the Défi 28 jours sans alcool (Fondation Jean Lapointe), and videotaped a capsule on SUD, stigma and the importance of prevention in youth.
- March 2020: support Point de Repère in Quebec City on their petition regarding the implementation of a SCS in the province's capital.
- March 2020: LLEFF's work group on competencies (CCSA).
- April 2020: letters to Montréal's mayor Valérie Plante, QC PM François Legault, QC Minister of Health Danielle McCann, deputy Alexandre Leduc and chief of the opposition Manon Massé regarding the situation of PPE in SCS and the need for the SCS to re-open ASAP during COVID-19 time.
- May 7th 2020: panelist representing MSTH for AIDQ's virtual discussion "L'approvisionnement sécuritaire en temps de COVID-19 - Discutons-en!"

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M O M S S T O P T H E H A R M

## HEALING HEARTS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

*"October 18, 2018 9:30 PM - My partner gets a call from my oldest daughter in Vancouver asking if he is with me. I freeze, knowing what is coming. I don't really remember the details of the call other than the devastating news – my youngest precious daughter of 23 years has passed away from overdose."*

*Within a week or so, through a mutual connection and in a thick fog of shock and awe, I got a message from Marie Agioritis from MSTH. Bless her for letting me know about MSTH and the Healing Hearts Group – someone threw me a lifeline! I contacted Jennifer Howard who Chairs the Victoria Healing Hearts Group. We set up a time to talk. I do remember the conversation quite clearly after the blur of the previous couple of weeks. Reality was setting in.... not good:( The conversation was warm, understanding and so comforting. Someone understood the tragedy, the loss, the agonizing pain, the chaos of the past and the present. The conversation eased my day.*

*I started attending the monthly support Healing Hearts Meetings and continue to look forward to them each month. The topics for discussion are appropriate and the camaraderie and group acceptance is palatable. We all belong to that damn club we don't want to belong to! Yet, at each meeting I find peace and solace in the people, the topics and what I learn from others. The topics and discussions are always appropriate and meaningful. It has helped me tremendously in dealing with this terrible ongoing pain with people who live it too. We understand each other.*

*The group helps to keep me hopeful for a future of holding my daughter close in a heartfelt way, consciously remembering all the good, and moving forward inch by inch in getting on with my life.*

*Thank you! I am truly grateful to MSTH and Healing Hearts."*

*(Terry McClean, MSTH Member - Victoria BC)*



## Holding Hope Support Group

Victoria, BC

*"Holding Hope has been a godsend for myself. Sadly our group has grown and will continue to grow. But on the flip side, I am so happy to see Moms reaching out during such a difficult journey with loved ones. Holding Hope support group is a place of understanding and compassion, in a non-judgemental environment. It is a place to openly share our stories and receive much needed support. We share in hugs, tears and laughter. Our group has become friends without borders - getting together outside of group meetings for walks, tea, movies and meals as well as offers of help, offers of a safe place if needed, an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on any time, night or day. Holding Hope has had many guest speakers, such as our fearless leaders, medical and self care professionals, including those who have traveled this road and recovered. Holding Hope is a wealth of positive and I am so grateful to be a part of this amazing group."*

Sue MacDonald, MSTH Member, Victoria, B.C.



HOPE





*"This crappy "club" called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one can never leave, yet is filled with some of the best people I have ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship - that we could have met in another way - any other way but this.*

*Alas, these shining souls are the most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving movers, shakers, and healers I have ever had the honor of knowing.*

*They are life changers, game changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior Moms and Dad who redefine the word brave."*

*(Angela Miller)*

*Special thanks to all our donors who continue to support our advocacy work and our support to families.*

*We couldn't do it without you!*

**If you are interested in facilitating a Holding Hope or Healing Hearts Support group in your area, please contact:**

**CanadaHealingHearts@gmail.com  
or holdinghopevictoria@gmail.com**

**For general enquires: info@momsstoptheharm.com**

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