

# MENS SANA TIMES

## A word from our Director

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the premiere issue of 'Mens Sana Times'. In keeping with our desire to provide safety, respect and community through services for individuals with mental health needs, we are turning our attention directly to engage our Members and their families. You are a critical, integral part of Mens Sana, and it is therefore fitting that we establish a medium to keep you current about what we do, especially in terms of Member needs, plus establish a forum for dialogue and commentary.

I want to take this opportunity to let you know that if you feel that there is an issue that needs escalation, you can get in touch with me anytime. Please feel free to email me [here](#) or call me at 416-749-6234 ext. 243.

These are early days for 'Mens Sana Times' and we're looking to publish 2 times a year. Once again, thank you for your support. And, I look forward to your feedback.

Dunja Monaghan  
Director of Transitional, Mental Health & Support Services

## Who We Are

We are a non-profit charitable organization started by families of adults with chronic mental illness. We deliver a quality service to our Members through the following programs that helps our members to integrate with the community:

- Mens Saa Drop In
- Alamosa Home
- Indian Road Home

## What We Do

We are a team of dedicated professionals, who have a deep sensitivity for Member needs and a passion for creating a united community where people truly care for each other. Here are some of the people who make Mens Sana:

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### **Program Supervisor:**

- Oversees the staff and day to day operation of Alamosa, Indian Road, and the Drop-in program
- Addresses issues and concerns faced by staff, members and families
- Coordinate with the various internal departments including maintenance, finance, human resource, administration and intake for all three programs
- Work with external partnerships including CAMH and CMHA

Lori Hamilton can be reached by emailing her at [lhamilton@vitacsls.org](mailto:lhamilton@vitacsls.org) or calling any of the programs she oversees and leaving a message for her to call you back.

### **Residential Counsellor at Alamosa:**

- Ensure the medical needs of members are met including attending appointments as needed
- Educate members and communicate with families regarding medical information
- Order and check medication to ensure it is available for administration
- Works with members on goals they want to achieve including self-care and leisure activities

### **Counsellor's Aid at Alamosa**

- Prepare and facilitate meals for the residents
- Ensure all needed groceries are available
- Cleaning the common areas of the residence
- Work with members on goals they want to achieve including self-care



### **Evening/Night and Weekend Staff**

- Help prepare meals for residents
- Assist with the cleaning of common areas of the residence
- Monitor the residents to ensure their safety and well-being
- Administration of medication as needed

### **Day Program Staff**

- Promote a supportive, safe environment for people with mental health issues to connect with others
- Facilitate and coach member's participation in the operation of the program such as cooking and cleaning
- Work with members on goals they want to achieve including life skills, leisure activities, employment and education



## A day at our Drop-In program

A typical day at our program starts between 9-10 am. Arriving individuals are greeted by tea, coffee and other goodies as settle and socialize with others. The first meeting is at 10:30 am to discuss the day's agenda; exercise and meditation are also part of this meeting. Various topics are discussed to promote positive mental health and recovery. Members can choose to participate in the operations of the day program such as cooking, cleaning, and other administrative tasks. At times, when community members (individuals that live outside of Mens Sana's residential programs) decide to opt out of contributing, they can pay a small fee for lunch (up to \$2) as a courtesy to members that work, and this money goes towards group outings. Group recreational activities such as bingo, art, board games and exercise group are organized in the afternoon. We also have staff from CMHA run a weekly group called Social Circle which emphasize recovery and peer support. There are many self-directed recreational and social opportunities at the program including, but not limited to cards, pool, ping pong, foosball, computer use, musical instruments, craft or just generally relaxing while talking to others.

The program's success is largely due to the involvement and participation of the members and over the past few years membership in the drop-in has increased significantly.

## Connect with the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) & determine eligibility for funded services

Do you want to determine eligibility for funded services? You can do so by getting in touch with a DSO associate. Dial 1-855-372-3858 press 1 for English, the operator will direct your call to the appropriate department (ask for determining eligibility for funded services). An agent will be available to help you with your query, however, please remember you might not speak with anyone if you call them outside their regular hours. In that case, make sure to leave a voice message, so that DSO can call you back.

DSO staff will let you know the documentation needed, i.e., psychological assessment, or an assessment from a psychiatrist, if neither is available a letter from a family doctor is acceptable if it indicates that there is a suspected developmental disability. They can also make a referral for a free psychological assessment that is done through Surrey Place. DSO staff will provide you with any additional guidance that will lead to a completion of the application package. Please contact Bruna Bertoni Mens Sana's support service worker/family support group facilitator at 416-749-6234 ext.246 or via email at [bbertoni@vitacils.org](mailto:bbertoni@vitacils.org) if you need any support to go through this process.



## Get Involved - BINGO support

Mens Sana receives no funding from the government and depends on the generosity of its donors to help us run our programs. Staff at our programs organize Bing session to help us get some additional funding, however, organizing the event requires a lot of effort and time. We are always looking out for volunteers, who are available for 4-6 hours once or twice per month, and can help run our Bingo sessions. We do provide training and support and a six month advance schedule. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lori Hamilton at any of the Mens Sana's programs or via email at [lhamilton@vitacls.org](mailto:lhamilton@vitacls.org)



## Review of our services

The project to renovate the Alamosa program has been approved. The staff and the Board have been working diligently to make sure that we are able to upgrade the residence to suit our Member needs. In the coming days, work will start on the main floor, the kitchen areas and the lower floor. Our contractors have been advised of our Members' privacy, and needs. They will work with our Members and their families to make sure that disruption to Alamosa programming is kept at the minimum. We request your full cooperation while the renovations are underway.

Help us HELP our Members serve better. Let us know what you would like to read in the next issue of Mens Sana Times. And, do not forget to share your feedback with us at this address.

