



MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Announces the 2018 Champions of Mental Health

OTTAWA, April 4, 2018 – Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) officially announced the winners of the *Champions of Mental Health Awards* for 2018. Each year, following a national open nomination process, CAMIMH selects individuals and organizations as Champions who are recognized for their outstanding contributions to mental health in Canada.

“We had so many incredible nominations this year; inspirational stories from all across the country,” said CAMIMH Campaign Chair, Fred Phelps. “It was a challenging process, and we are thrilled to announce these Champions, all of whom are change-makers in their community, working to create a safe space for discussions surrounding mental health and for those living with mental illness.”

The Champions of Mental Health Awards are a key component of CAMIMH’s annual awareness campaigns and are made possible through the generous support of presenting sponsor Bell Let’s Talk.

“Congratulations to the 2018 Champions of Mental Health for their leadership and commitment to improving mental health and wellness in Canada,” said Mary Deacon, Chair of Bell Let’s Talk. “Bell Let’s Talk is proud to support CAMIMH and the 16th Champions of Mental Health Awards as they commend these outstanding individuals and organizations for increasing awareness and helping to reduce the stigma of mental illness.”

The Champions of Mental Health Awards will be presented at a gala dinner on May 8 in Ottawa. CAMIMH is pleased to welcome special guests the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health, as well as comedian, actor, author and Bell Let’s Talk ambassador Jessica Holmes, who will serve as the gala’s emcee. For more details, please visit www.camimh.ca.

CAMIMH 2018 Champions of Mental Health:

The Sharon Johnston Champion of Mental Health Award for Youth: Armed with an intimate knowledge of the confusion and frustrations that come from growing up with mental health challenges, Kristin Legault-Donkers wrote and published four books, the Children’s Mental Health Series. Kristin then adapted the series into an educational package that has been used at schools in London, Ontario.

Media: Traci Melchor is a true trailblazer in Canadian broadcasting, a single mother of twins, and cancer survivor. With her personal mantra “stay fabulous,” Traci has always been able to boldly articulate her ongoing struggle with mental illness and, through her work with Bell Media, brings her message and narrative “it’s okay to not be okay” to life for people across the country.

Community (Individual): Josée Parent set out to address transitional housing for young people between 18 and 35 who live with mental illness, when she created the *Mon Shack...Mes Choix...Mon Avenir!* organization in 2013. The first organization of its kind in the Eastern Townships where there is a lack of access to resources, Mon Shack provides bilingual services and will open a new building in June 2018.

Community (Organization): The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, (BCANDS) is a cross disability organization that routinely works with individuals and families living with mental illness. This work includes the ongoing effects of residential schools, racial discrimination, addictions, PTSD and other forms of mental illness. BCANDS strives to reduce barriers and bring awareness to the value and contributions that persons living with disabilities, including those living with mental illness, bring to their communities.

Researcher or Clinician: Dr. Stanley Kutcher's work has had a significant impact on improving mental health care for youth and families. His initiatives include the development and implementation of the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide, the first resource of its kind in Canada, which has now been implemented in schools across the country. He also produced *Transitions: Making the Most of your Campus Experience*, the first of its kind to address the transition into post-secondary education, which was rolled out in the Atlantic Provinces in 2017.

Parliamentarian: Majid Jowhari is the Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill and a staunch advocate for mental health in Canada. He drafted and introduced legislation to change the criminal code to taking mental health information into account, and founded and chaired the Liberal Mental Health Caucus, and later, the Parliamentary Mental Health Caucus, reaching across party lines to bring mental health to the forefront of discussion on the Hill.

Workplace Mental Health: A long-time supporter of workplace safety and mental health, Linda Corkum recognized the need to provide mental health education and training through her role as Executive Director at the Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association. There, she brought in The Working Mind Program making it the first trucking association in Canada to implement the program.

CAMIMH would like to thank its generous sponsors who make this campaign possible: [Bell Let's Talk](#), [the Mental Health Commission of Canada](#), [Lundbeck Canada](#), [Innovative Medicines Canada](#), and [Impact Public Affairs](#).

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Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.

To learn more about CAMIMH's campaigns, please visit camimh.ca or contact:

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