

Imagine...

Mental Health for All

A New CEO for CMHA HKPR: Introducing Ellen Watkins

On February 11th, the Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (CMHA HKPR) welcomed new CEO, Ellen Watkins!

Watkins has been with our organization since April of 2021 in her role as Director of Corporate Services and has been a driving force behind moving the organization to a new level of engagement through a variety of projects and initiatives. Watkins has been instrumental in leading projects such as the Strategic Plan Art Project, restructuring the Crisis program and launching 9-8-8 locally, reevaluating and reviewing finance processes in the organization, and much more.

Prior to her role with CMHA HKPR, Watkins worked at PRHC in Quality and Process Improvement, designing and launching the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic and Assessment Centre, and various other quality projects. She has a wealth of experience in the private sector, working in managerial roles at Kraft Foods, PepsiCo, Frito Lay and Quaker.

The news of a new CEO for CMHA HKPR comes after Mark Graham announced his plans to retire after a 32-year career back in June of 2023.



Photo by Clifford Skarstedt, Peterborough Examiner

Graham started with CMHA HKPR back in 1992. At the time, the organization had three programs, 28 employees, and an operating budget of \$1.2 million.



Photo by Clifford Skarstedt, Peterborough Examiner

We now have over 20 programs and services, over 200 employees, and an operating budget of over \$17.6 million.

Graham was instrumental in growing the organization to where it is today, in building partnerships in the community, and breaking down stigmas surrounding mental health.

Following the announcement of Graham's plans to retire back in June, the Board of Directors began the search of his successor. They conducted a nationwide search, which included over 100 initial conversations and applications. Watkins accepted the role in January of this year and is eager to lead the organization.

"I look forward to the opportunity to continue to grow and develop our team from the solid foundation built by Mark Graham over the past 32 years. I appreciate each member of our CMHA HKPR community, who demonstrate daily, the capacity to think about our system in new ways, with the courage to shift to maximize our potential. We are a dynamic, passionate, client-focused, and brilliant agency with the capacity to continuously improve community mental health. I am extremely proud to be selected to lead our team," says Watkins.



Canadian Mental Health Association
Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge
Mental health for all

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"Just Take the Help"

The Impact of One AOSP Worker on a Family in Need



"Just take the Help", said Amy, a family member who received support through CMHA HKPR's Assertive Outreach for Suicide Prevention (AOSP) program's Family Support, when asked what she would share with other families struggling.

AOSP provides support and follow-up to individuals who have made a serious suicide attempt. The program also includes family support, to support the loved ones of the individual who made the attempt.

"One might think that you don't personally need the help but it is an additional support that is not just centred on the person who attempted the suicide but those around them who are greatly impacted by it," says Amy.

Suicide is a difficult subject, for some, even a difficult word to say, but for Amy, it was a stark reality she had to face head-on when her son attempted to die by suicide last year. While Amy has worked in the healthcare industry for years, nothing prepares one to be in this position as an individual or a mother. To support her and her family through this, Amy was connected with a Family Education and Support Worker, Andrea Delaney, from the AOSP program.

The role of the Family Education and Support Worker is to work directly with the families, friends and loved ones of the individuals referred to the AOSP program. Andrea helped Amy and her family gradually emerge out of these tough times together.

One of the most important ways Andrea helped Amy's family was assisting with some of the more practical things, like engaging with medical professionals, deciphering complexities of the discharge, while also grasping the gravity of the situation emotionally.

Amy realised that it was not a one-day process and even after a month of being out of the hospital, when her son was not feeling any better, it meant making the decision to take him to the hospital again.

That's one of the times when Amy remembers Andrea being a huge support. Amy and her husband both met with Andrea to learn more about what to do after their son was discharged from the hospital, this was important for them in order to be able to work towards creating a safe space for him, as well as getting on the same page and being there for each other. "Andrea's role was pivotal," says Amy.

In sessions with Amy and her husband, she facilitated a shared understanding, fostering unity amidst their emotional turbulence. Andrea's impartial perspective enabled them to synchronize their support for their son and each other, helping the family grow stronger.

Amy expresses the gratitude she holds for Andrea for coming into their lives when she did and assisting their family during this time. "The support we received from the AOSP program and Andrea helped my family cope with the situation and come out of it stronger," says Amy.

The End of an Era: How 4CC Evolved into 9-8-8



Fall 2023 signaled the end of an era for a mental health name that has been synonymous with crisis care in the region for the last 25 years. On November 30, 2023, the Four County Crisis program was rebranded and restructured as a part of the 9-8-8 National Suicide Crisis Helpline, a suicide and emotional distress line. This restructure was aimed to enhance the program's visibility and accessibility, making it easier for individuals in crisis to reach out for help. The 9-8-8 service design provides immediate assistance to anyone in need, offering a lifeline for those experiencing suicidal thoughts, crisis, or any other form of emotional distress. The restructure included a new logo and name, a change which caused many to reflect on Four County Crisis and the essential supports it provided the community over all these years.

Launched in 2005, Four County Crisis, often locally referred to as 4CC, was a significant initiative aimed at providing immediate crisis intervention services to individuals in need. 4CC operated as a collection of programs within the Canadian Mental Health Association, Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge. The initiative was designed to offer a comprehensive response to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, ensuring they received the necessary support and care within a short timeframe. The importance of crisis care in mental health service provision cannot be overstated. It is a critical component of mental health care that ensures individuals experiencing acute distress or crisis receive immediate assistance, reducing the risk of harm to themselves or others.

4CC's programming included a variety of unique, creative and forward-thinking services that helped to reshape the mental health service delivery model in the communities we serve. One such program, the Assertive Outreach for Suicide Prevention (AOSP) Program, initiated in the summer of 2016, was instrumental in saving lives by providing support to individuals who had attempted suicide.

Likewise, the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (M.C.I.T.) is a critical program that operates in collaboration with local police services across the four counties, including the Peterborough Police Services (P.P.S.), the Peterborough County Ontario Provincial Police (O.P.P.), the City of Kawartha Lakes O.P.P., and the Haliburton County O.P.P. The team is composed of mental health workers who accompany police officers to respond to calls involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. This integrated approach ensures that individuals in need receive timely and appropriate mental health support, reducing the likelihood of unnecessary police involvement and ensuring that mental health concerns are addressed effectively. These supports and many more like Hospital-to-Home, the Dual Diagnosis Crisis Case Management and even the Safe Beds program all operated under the Four County Crisis umbrella of programs.

Four County Crisis (4CC) has been a cornerstone of our community, providing essential care and support to those in need. The introduction of the new 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline marks a significant step forward in mental health crisis response, offering a three-digit dedicated line for those in need of immediate assistance. This initiative is designed to provide a more accessible and efficient way to connect individuals in crisis with trained professionals while expanding our capacity to help more individuals. While Four County Crisis will be remembered fondly for its contributions to the community, its legacy will live on through the programs it helped to establish. These programs, carried on through CMHA HKPR, will continue to provide care and support to our community for years to come, ensuring that no one is left without the help they need during a crisis.

Proud partner in

9-8-8

Check out these Upcoming Mental Health Events!

Mental Health Week

Join us in celebrating CMHA's Mental Health Week happening from May 6 - 12. This year's theme is 'A Call to be Kind,' which encourages compassion.



Change the Cycle

Join us for our second annual Change the Cycle cycling event taking place on June 15 at Nicholls Oval in Peterborough. This year's event will support Youth and Family Mental Health Services. Register and learn more at changethecycle.net.



Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be taking place on September 25th at 5:00 p.m. at the Lindsay Golf and Country Club in Lindsay. More details to come this summer!

Volunteer Opportunities!

We are always looking for volunteers to assist with events as well as our Delta Bingo program.

If you are interested in becoming a CMHA HKPR volunteer, please email cmorris@cmhahkpr.ca.



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Please send completed form to: CMHA HKPR Manager of Community Engagement 415 Water Street, Peterborough, ON K9H 3L9.
Inquiries can be directed to Jack Veitch at 705-748-6687 ext. 1015 or jveitch@cmhahkpr.ca. Charitable Registration No. 10686 3889



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