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CAF America receives nearly 2,000 grant reports each year from charities representing a multitude of causes. Each report is a compelling narrative detailing how contributions were used to make a difference: computers purchased, children vaccinated, animals rescued, wells dug, etc. The numbers in these reports paint pictures of lives changed. It is far more difficult for mental health charities to portray how counseling, suicide hotlines and anti-stigma campaigns help piece lives back together.

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Twenty percent of Canadians will be directly affected by mental illnesses at some stage during their lifetime. But the entire population is likely to be *indirectly* affected by the same illness through a family member, friend or colleague according to *A Report on Mental Illness in Canada*.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,



Welcome to the Fall issue of the CAF America e-Newsletter.

Mental health is an issue that touches the lives of so many people yet most of us are completely unaware of the real extent of the problem.

In our increasingly mobile world, there are now more people living outside their country of origin than at any other time in history. An estimated 200 million people, 3% of the global population, are now classified as international migrants. Given such mobility and cultural diversity, it's hardly surprising that many people are unaware of the extent to which culture can impact the mental health of others.

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BasicNeeds works to bring about a lasting change in the lives of mentally ill people around the world. It achieves this by helping governments integrate mental health care into primary health care services by improving services at the local level. This involves establishing outreach clinics and training primary health care staff as well as traveling psychiatrists to offer treatment and medication. In addition, it collaborates with traditional local healers and actively involves the mentally ill, their caregivers, and community volunteers.

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and cultural diversity, it's hardly surprising that many people are unaware of the extent to which culture can impact the mental health of others.

It may surprise you to learn that globally, one in four people will develop a mental illness in their lifetime and that depression is the biggest cause of disability in the world. The World Health Organization estimates that each year approximately one million people die from suicide.

Recognising these issues, the World Federation for Mental Health has chosen ***Mental Health in a Changing World – the Impact of Culture and Diversity*** as the theme for [World Mental Health Day 2007](#). Celebrated every year on the 10th of October in more than 100 countries, this year's event will attempt to highlight the issues facing transcultural mental health services and treatment.

By making mental health the theme of this e-newsletter, I hope that CAFAmerica can in some small way help to raise awareness of these issues. At the same time, I'd like to highlight some of the problems facing charities and not-for-profits around the world working in this field. Such organisations have a vital role to play in supporting and sometimes delivering the work undertaken by governments to combat mental health problems. But they are subject to the same problems caused by a pervasive lack of awareness.

Charities founded for maladies such as heart disease, cancer, and HIV/AIDS increasingly receive generous worldwide support. But charities dedicated to combating mental illness too often struggle to raise much needed funds, even in countries with a developed and extensive charity sector.

There is no doubt that greater awareness is the key, especially in addressing the stigma that is all too often attached to mental illness. [BasicNeeds](#), one of three mental health charities profiled in this e-newsletter, and one of many such organisations facing a chronic shortage of funds, suggests that this stigma may even extend to mental health professionals. If this is the case, the challenge facing those who work to improve mental health services is immense.

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SKE Saxon-Harrold

If you would like to help, please forward this e-newsletter onto friends and colleagues that you think might be interested in

learning about these issues.

Best wishes,

Dr. Susan K.E. Saxon-Harrold
Chief Executive Officer

Hurdles to giving in the mental health arena

In 2001, the World Health Organization (WHO) published an entire annual report dedicated to the problem of mental illness worldwide called *Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*. However, despite ever increasing awareness of the extent and impact of mental illness, mental health charities struggle to capture donor attention commensurate with the international problem of mental illness. Why is this?

CAF America receives nearly 2,000 grant reports each year from charities representing a multitude of causes. Each report is a compelling narrative detailing how contributions were used to make a difference: computers purchased, children vaccinated, animals rescued, wells dug, etc. The numbers in these reports paint pictures of lives changed. It is far more difficult for mental health charities to portray how counseling, suicide hotlines and anti-stigma campaigns help piece lives back together. Contributions to mental health charities fund efforts that require sustained giving for problems that do not yield immediate and tangible results. Contributions, however, *do* lead to effective treatments and acceptance and make a profound difference for individuals and communities.

Personal experience - one's own or that of a loved one - is often the impetus for individual giving. Personal experience also often propels donors to advocate on behalf of the charity they support. Donors with a compelling personal story provide a powerful voice to raise awareness and funds. Limited public understanding and acceptance of the mentally ill too often constrains people affected from telling their story, and makes all of us less aware of the universal problem of mental illness. The stigma surrounding mental illness also dissuades potential community and corporate sponsors from supporting the fundraising efforts of mental health charities.

As evidenced by the WHO report, mental illness is a worldwide problem. And the misunderstanding and stigma that surrounds mental illness is also a worldwide problem. Perceptions that mental health charities throughout the world struggle to correct include: there is no biological basis for mental illness; mental illness is imagined or self-inflicted; treatment for mental illness is a "luxury"; and suffering from mental illness is a sign of weakness or laziness.

A [recent article](#) by IRIN, an online news source for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, highlighted increasing levels of mental illness in Zambia and how the problem is compounded by the stigma those afflicted face in their communities. Zimbabwe has seen a similar rise in mental disorders. [IRIN reports](#) one in three suffer mental health problems, in large part due to economic hardship.

However, the problem is not isolated to developing countries. In the United Kingdom, mental health charities often find themselves expending limited resources to raise funds from a public that is poorly informed about mental illness. This reality prompted the Mental Health Foundation to call for more funding for the voluntary sector. A recent [BBC News story](#) drew attention to this issue stating that "mental health charities spend too much time begging for money instead of focusing

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their time on helping people.”

We, the staff of CAFAmerica, hope that you will take a few minutes on October 10, to observe World Mental Health Day. We want to thank the many donors who are supporting the mental health charities highlighted in this e-newsletter. We invite your suggestions on how we can all better support international philanthropic efforts to overcome mental illness.

BasicNeeds – building a better world with mentally ill people

BasicNeeds works to bring about a lasting change in the lives of mentally ill people around the world. It achieves this by helping governments integrate mental health care into primary health care services by improving services at the local level. This involves establishing outreach clinics and training primary health care staff as well as traveling psychiatrists to offer treatment and medication. In addition, it collaborates with traditional local healers and actively involves the mentally ill, their caregivers, and community volunteers.

By working with mentally ill people, rather than just for them, BasicNeeds has created an innovative approach that tackles poverty, as well as mental illness. This *Model for Mental Health and Development* gives mentally ill people access to regular, community-based treatment and subsequently helps them to start to earn a living, largely through micro-credit plans and horticultural projects.

Consultation with mentally ill people is at the heart of everything BasicNeeds does. This enables it to work with communities to overcome stigma and abuse.

From its base in the UK, the charity has a truly global reach, with sixteen programs currently running in 7 countries: India, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Laos PDR and, most recently, Colombia. With the support of contributors worldwide, BasicNeeds has so far helped build better lives for approximately 42,000 mentally ill people.

But the need for care, treatment and education still far outstrips the capacity of the available mental health services in these countries; and the statistics are sobering. In Tanzania, there are six public sector psychiatrists for the whole country; in Ghana there are four. In Laos, where BasicNeeds is only just beginning to develop its program, there are only two psychiatrists for the whole country, both based in the country's only psychiatric hospital.

In Columbia, the vulnerability of people to mental illness is exacerbated by poverty, violence, substance abuse and high numbers of migrant and internally displaced people. At the same time, the access to mental health services for many people is inadequate. In a pilot project, BasicNeeds has begun to adapt its model for Community Mental Health and Development in Usaquén, a poor northern suburb of Bogotá, responding to a local request on behalf of people with mental disorders. Initially this work has focused on research and the provision of two training workshops in the diagnosis, treatment and socio-economic needs of people with mental disorders.

BasicNeeds has also implemented a number of livelihood projects, including a leather crafts workshop in June 2007 with 80 participants, 50 people with mental illness, 20 family members and 10 community volunteers.

The project has achieved much, but BasicNeeds would be the first to admit that more could be done, given the right funding. The impact of

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A leather crafts workshop organized for people with mental disorders in a suburb of Bogota, June 2007

mental illness is set to escalate in the coming years. Depression alone, for example, accounts for 12.3% of the global burden of disease and this is set to rise to 15% by 2030. The need for organizations like BasicNeeds is clear and, as a relatively newly eligible charity with CAFAmerica, we hope that it continues to succeed.

For more information about other work being done by BasicNeeds please [click here](#).

MindCare New Brunswick – It’s time to take depression seriously

Twenty percent of Canadians will be directly affected by mental illnesses at some stage during their lifetime. But the entire population is likely to be *indirectly* affected by the same illness through a family member, friend or colleague according to *A Report on Mental Illness in Canada*. As in other countries, mental illness is one of the most significant, yet least understood and poorly funded, health issues.

MindCare New Brunswick works to raise awareness of these issues throughout the province of New Brunswick, Canada. To combat stigma and improve delivery of services for the mentally ill, it funds workshops and seminars, community outreach activities, and research projects. It also raises funds for the purchase of equipment and awards eleven scholarships annually, including a scholarship for a post-graduate student in a mental health related field.

To highlight the fact that around 75,000 people in the province are affected by depression at any one time, the charity has recently launched an education campaign that aims to increase awareness. The trustees at MindCare are keen to get the message across that while there are not many forbidden subjects today - mental illness remains one for many people.

Such work will also help to underpin the charity’s fundraising efforts, especially its annual winter fundraising event, Skate to Care. In the past twenty years, this popular sponsored event has raised over \$2 million CAD to support mental health programs and services. Like many other mental health charities, MindCare needs to work very hard to secure the support of generous donors in order to promote better understanding of mental illness.

MindCare is another newly eligible charity and secured its first CAFAmerica grant less than one month after gaining eligibility. For more information about the work of MindCare New Brunswick please [click here](#).

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Samaritans was established in London in 1953 as an emergency phone hotline for people contemplating suicide. Though not a religious organization, the charity was promptly dubbed “Telephone Good Samaritans” by the *Daily Mirror*. More than fifty years later, Samaritans now has branches in over 200 locations throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom. In addition to its 24-hour telephone helpline, Samaritans offer face-to-face support through

some branches, as well as support by e-mail, and through the post.

Samaritans also works to raise awareness through a program of visit to schools and prisons, and participation in local festivals. It also partners with local health services to develop suicide prevention initiatives.

Recent CAFAmerica grants to Samaritans of Drogheda will be used to recruit and train new volunteers. This training will include sessions on understanding deliberate self harm and the effect of suicide on friends and family. CAFAmerica grants will also be used to purchase a new computer to launch a text messaging service—yet another way for Samaritans to provide 24/7 support to those in need!

The charity was recently awarded a grant of \$2500 from CAFAmerica as a result of a grant suggestion from the BD Corporation. As a whole, though, Samaritans needs to raise over £10m in voluntary donations each year to fund its activities. If you’d like to find out more about this organisation please [click here](#).

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Tips for the Smart Donor

As the giving season in the United States approaches, charities and non-profits world-wide begin to fundraise in earnest. And such is the volume and scope of this activity that donors often feel overwhelmed, especially when faced with a multitude of worthy causes. Here are a few key tips to consider during the giving season:

1. Give safely. CAFAmerica performs a due diligence review of all suggested non-profits to ensure that your gift is used for charitable ends.
2. Do you always give to the same non-profit? To enrich your giving experience, consider other worthwhile causes deserving of your support.
3. If you do give to many non-profits, consider occasionally donating larger sums to single organizations. This typically enables that organization to have a greater impact on the issues that it is addressing.
4. Consider donating stock or bonds instead of writing a check. CAFAmerica accepts donations of checks/wires, bonds, mutual funds, and publicly traded stocks. For a copy of CAFAmerica's FAQ about giving stocks and the tax implications please contact info@cafamerica.org
5. Don't limit your contributions to the holiday season. Regular donations are also crucial, especially for many smaller non-profits, and enable them to plan more effectively.

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CAF America News & Updates

- CAF America is pleased to welcome certified public accountant Jeff Doyon to its growing staff. Jeff brings over twenty years of experience, including leadership roles with Fortune 500 companies and not-for-profit organizations, to his role as Director of Finance and Administration. Jeff holds a B.S. degree in economics from the College of William and Mary and a M.S. degree in accounting from the University of Virginia.



- We are in the process of revamping our website but for the moment please continue to use www2.cafonline.org/cafamerica
- The end of the calendar year is fast approaching! Please note that CAF America will close at 5pm Friday, December 21, 2007 and re-open on Wednesday, January 2 so that our staff may spend the holidays with friends and family. All donations post-marked on or before December 31, 2007 will be eligible for a tax deduction in 2007.
- For a copy of CAF America's recently updated gift form, please [click here](#) or send an e-mail to info@cafamerica.org.

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