



Thao Nguyen Foundation Inc. Newsletter

Sixth Issue July 2015

TOGETHER, WE BRING LIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

IN THIS ISSUE

Greetings from the President

by Nhung Hendy, Ph.D.

Welcome to another issue of TNF newsletter. I hope this newsletter finds all of you in good mental health. First, I'd like to share with you that I recently got married to Ted Hendy, hence my name change to Nhung Hendy. Second, we have moved and our new address is 8403 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City MD 21043. Our phone number remains the same, so if you ever have a question or would like to volunteer, please give us a call at 410-663-0207. We'd love to hear from you.

In this issue, you will find a report on our Third Annual Thao's Into the Light Race. If you missed it this year, don't worry. Please join us next year. Our Secretary, James Manley has been busy updating our Facebook page and he has increased substantially our likes on Facebook. If you have not done so, please like our Facebook page.

Continuing with the mission of promoting mental health awareness, you will find that we included in this issue two recent articles on bipolar disorder reviewed and summarized by Mike Biderman. I hope you'll enjoy a thought provoking essay that Marcie DiMarco wrote for us. In it she expressed her disappointment on how much we have let

technology and television take our place in the home as parents.

Last but not least, I am happy to report that I was nominated and selected to serve on the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association of Maryland, the Public Education Committee. It is a great honor to serve and I hope that through my service with the Board our Foundation will receive more visibility and hopefully we will be able to reach out to more people with mental illness that need our help.

Please join me in thanking the Mental Health Association of Maryland, especially Linda Raines, Executive Director, for her unwavering support to our Foundation. We look forward to a long-lasting relationship with the Association.

In closing, I wish all of you a very happy and healthy July 4 weekend.

Greetings from the President

An update on Thao Nguyen Foundation's activities. Read more....

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Third Annual Thao's Into the Light Race 2015 Summary

By Nhung Hendy, President

Thao's Into the Light Race aims at promoting mental health awareness and suicide prevention. We want to give a hopeful voice to all currently affected by mental illness. The event is held annually and includes a 5K run and 1 mile family walk. For more information, please contact nhung@tnscholarshipforthearts.org

It is my pleasure to report that the Third Annual Thao's Into the Light Race was a success. The trail was beautiful and the weather could not have been nicer. It was so nice to see many runners and walkers who have participated since our first Race in 2013 came back this year. It was also good to see new faces, those who joined us for the first time. Thank you all for your support. I'd like to express our sincere thanks to all volunteers for giving of your time and help.

With the funds raised from the Race, we were able to sustain Thao Nguyen Memorial Scholarship Fund. Two \$1,000 scholarships were awarded one each to Loch Raven High School and Drexel University, English Department. On May 21st 2015, my husband Ted Hendy attended the Senior Award Ceremony at Loch Raven High school where our third recipient of Thao Nguyen Memorial Scholarship was named (Miss Bekeum Jeon). Thank you all for your donations and support without which we would not have been functional.

Photo credit:
Steve Rosasco



An Essay from a Mother

By Marcie DiMarco

Kids today are speeding up. Most of them have been plugged into computers, televisions, and video games their entire lives. This tends to make them nervous and lower their attention spans.

Nothing can replace a Mother's love. This generation needs more nourishment. Many have been formula fed, dropped off at daycare at six weeks of age; fed fast food, and packaged food (fresh fruit has been replaced by a colored, corn syrup product). Meals made from scratch from your garden eaten together as a family would be more enjoyable. "Nothing says love like something from the oven." Some have been mostly kept indoors as often times parents are too paranoid to let them run free outside with so many news cast showing child abductions. Many are bombarded overhearing adult problems, and some are medicated for simply being energetic.

Take them out in nature and let them run. Recently a nine year old told me, "I don't like going outside; there aren't any electrical outlets." The daily diet of television teaches them how to be rude and disrespectful with so many programs using foul language, sexual innuendos, and showing poor role models. In the past fifteen years numerous tragic events have everyone on edge, 9-11, tsunamis, hurricanes, school, mall, and movie theater shootings, terrorist, climate change, war, bombings, kidnappings, and the list goes on and on....

Parents are so busy trying to make money that consequently children are raised by day care, schools, and programs. Often children live in two homes since the parents are divorced. Parents are exhausted and have little time to care for their children or shop and prepare healthy meals. Children are raced around to school, babysitters, second homes, and activities where they are often allowed to eat whatever, watch

whatever, and speak however they want without being corrected. Many parents are trying to relieve stress by drinking, smoking, and doing drugs (both street and prescription) which prevents them from being emotionally available.

The days of sitting and facing the blackboard are over. Teachers are complaining about the bad batches of students year after year, thinking it will get better but instead it is getting increasingly worse. When you read to them or ask them to write they squirm and chat, misbehave, and sneak onto their phones and iPods. It appears that soon the Schools will all teach with electronic pads. Classrooms have lists of problem children, ADHD, autism, Asperger, diabetes, allergies, bipolar. Teachers act like doctors when they indicate to parents that a child is hyper and not sitting still which implies medication is needed. Plug them into a computer and they will sit still. This is what they are used to. The computer has become the parent. The television has become the babysitter.

Adults are the bullies. Children are born perfect and the adults teach them how to bully. We are so stressed out with our jobs, paying bills, keeping up with our own lives that when we finally see our children we do not have any patience left.

My solution is to learn to live with less, give children the nourishment they need by feeding them a home cooked meal, reading to them, playing outdoors with them. Get off your sofa, unplug yourselves, stop partying, pay attention to and listen to your children. They did not ask to be born. In my opinion if you are the selfish type then don't have children at all.

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IF YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE

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Hypomanic experience in your adults confers vulnerability to intrusive imagery after experimental trauma: Relevance for Bipolar Disorder

Summarized by Mike Biderman from Goodwin et al., 2014; Clinical & Psychological Science

Distressing mental imagery has been associated with many psychological disorders, including anxiety. Despite the fact that anxiety has been reported in 90% of cases involving bipolar disorder, research on mental imagery and bipolar disorder is scarce. This study compared persons who scored high on the Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ) – a measure of frequency of occurrence of hypomanic (mood elevated) experience with those

scoring low on the same measure. All participants were shown a film depicting distressing graphic images. Over a period of six days after viewing the film, participants reported via text messages the frequency of occurrence of intrusive visual images from the film.

The study found that persons who scored high on the MDQ measure – who had experienced greater amount of mood elevated experience - reported twice as many intrusive visual images from the film than did those scoring low on the MDS. The difference was statistically significant.

The authors suggest that hypomanic experience may be associated with development of more frequent imagery of stressors, that such imagery may contribute to bipolar mood instability, and may offer a cognitive treatment target.

Regulating the high: Cognitive and neural processes underlying positive emotion regulation in Bipolar I Disorder

Summarized by Mike Biderman from Park et al., (2014); Clinical & Psychological Science

In this study, the authors explored the cognitive and neurophysiological mechanisms associated with positive emotion regulation in Bipolar Disorder I.

They compared three groups consisting of 1) 25 persons diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder with a history of psychosis, 2) 16 persons diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder no history of psychosis, and 3) 20 persons with no clinical diagnosis of any mental disorder.

As EEG recordings of the prefrontal cortex were made, participants were asked to recall an experience from their past in which they felt extreme joy and happiness and to reflect on the emotions they experienced during the event being recalled.

Following the recall period, participants rated the extent to which they adopted the perspective of an immersed participant from “as if they were right there” (rated 1) to “predominantly as if a distanced observer” (rated 7). They also rated how far they were from the scene being recalled on a 1 (very close) to 7 (very distant) scale. These two ratings were averaged to create a “self-distancing” index.



Kimberly Roberts, First place, Third Annual Thao's Into the Light Race

The Bipolar Disorder group who had experienced psychosis was found to exhibit lower average self-distancing than either the Bipolar Disorder group with no psychosis or the Healthy control group.

From the EEG recording, it was found that the Bipolar Disorder group who had experienced psychosis showed stronger signs of positive emotional reactivity than the other two groups.

The authors suggest that these results are consistent with the suggestion that persons with Bipolar Disorder who have a history of psychosis may represent “. . . a distinct clinical phenotype characterized by dysfunctional emotion regulation.”

TN Foundation Board of Directors:

Nhung T. Hendy, President
James Manley, Secretary
Michael Biderman, Director

Summarized by Mike Biderman

A recent article in *The New Yorker* (June 29, 2015) describes a 2015 film written and directed by Maya Forbes about growing up with a parent, her father, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The film is called “Infinitely Polar Bear.” It stars Mark Ruffalo as the father with bipolar disorder, Zoe Saldana as Maya’s mother, and Imogene Wolodarsky, Maya’s real-life daughter as Maya at a young age. According to the web site, Fixster, the film has received 79% positive reviews from critics and 76% positive reviews from viewers. That site says the film concerns the father’s attempt to rebuild a relationship with his daughters and his wife after a breakdown forced him to leave his family and move into a halfway house.