

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

As founder of the *Hearts Linked by Courage* series, and contributing author and creator of the first book, I am truly humbled by the belief that CMHA Director of Programs, Neil Howard, and the Speakers' Bureau, had in my vision.

None of us are spared hardships in life. When it comes to mental illness, most of us have been affected in some way, or know of someone who has been gripped with the challenges associated with depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, addiction, and so on.

I have always been moved by those who seem to go through such tragedy and upset in their lives, yet find a way to look at the bright side, such as what they learned, how they grew, and who they helped along their path. This has always motivated me to do the same as much as I possibly can. It's also what contributed to the dream I had for the *Hearts Linked by Courage* series.

Other people's stories move and encourage us. I wanted the *Hearts Linked by Courage* series to echo this message, that we're all in this life together to help one another, and that there is much more to learn and become through the dark times in our lives versus the easy, more predictable times. It's not that we want or wish for those difficult circumstances, but when they're upon us, we have a choice.

The stories from the CMHA York and South Simcoe Speakers' Bureau both educate and inspire, and address the many choices and turning points in each journey. They instil confidence and belief that, no matter the circumstance, we are strong enough to rise above the most challenging situations life can dish out. They have opened their hearts, bared their souls, and bravely revealed to us the light at the end of the tunnel.

Much gratitude also goes to the amazing support Gayle Clarke has given this project and the series as a whole. Her thoughtful assistance throughout the editing process, incredible compassion, and life experience, made a tremendous difference to all involved.

Again, I am indebted to Neil and the story contributors whose words have brought to life the second book in this series. Perhaps they've even sowed the seed and example of how other groups can benefit by using the *Hearts Linked by Courage* series to share their own stories of education and hope.

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