

MindFreedom Oregon Flies Over the Cuckoo's Nest!

by David W. Oaks, Aciu Institute, LLC

Of course, Eugene is a perfect place to support a local affiliate of MindFreedom.

Oregonians often support independent living and thinking. For example, this July we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of one of the main counterculture gatherings in the world, Oregon Country Fair. The motto of this gathering of thousands in a nearby wooded area is "Psychospiritual Rejuvenation for All!"

Patch Adams, MD, one of the leaders in the movement to change the medical system lives in Illinois. You may have seen the well-known movie starring Robin Williams about Patch. Each year, Patch speaks at OCF and he will once again. This year, I have the incredible honor of speaking with Patch. Our topic: JoyUs Living! (Friday, 7/12/19, 5 pm, Community Village.)

So it is natural that Eugene, Oregon would have two amazing author-connections to mental health human rights:

First, this area is where Opal Whiteley (1897-1992) was born and raised in this area. Opal was a nature mystic raised in a logging camp who went on to become an author. Unfortunately, after a wild life, she ended up in a psychiatric institution in London where she died.

We at MindFreedom Oregon have created an informal coalition, Opal Network, for local mental health consumer empowerment. For more than a decade, we have helped unite almost all the mental health agencies in our county to gather about four times a year to promote self-determination in the mental health system.

Second, author Ken Kesey (1935-2001), who wrote the book *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, lived in nearby Pleasant Hill. Ken was a legendary leader of the counterculture movement, and he was a personal friend of mine. Here in downtown Eugene, the center little square is named after him, Kesey Square. A statue of Ken reading to his grandchildren graces the area.

So you see, this is a wonderful area for liberation in mental health.

For example, our local affiliate, MindFreedom Oregon, sponsored an "Electroshock Protest" a few years ago, and we ended up in the Kesey Square for a photo.

While we meet in Eugene, we invite everyone who supports this effort, especially Oregonians, to connect. Our email address is at the bottom of this.

We aim for a grassroots planning meeting each month on the first Friday. A local nonprofit that supports recovery, Trauma Healing Project, provides our meeting space here in downtown Eugene.

Recently, we sponsored a visit by John Bola, PhD, who is an electroshock survivor who has gone on to teach in Los Angeles and China. Dr. Bola has co-produced many scientific papers about alternatives in mental health and the need for change.

A few of our wonderful local participants include:

TC Dumas, PhD: Survived electroshock, and went on to win a PhD at the University of Oregon. TC has been a leader in our psychiatric survivor movement for many years.

Gail Roberts: Psychiatric survivor and world traveller. Gail is very interested in empowering alternatives.

Christina Peirsol: Has provided many years of leadership as a young psychiatric survivor.

Megan Swan: Peer support leader and facilitator of hearing voices group.

Sarah Smith: Mother of a psychiatric survivor who has provided many years of support for MindFreedom International, which has its office locally.

Chuck Areford: Retired mental health worker who has risked his career to support human rights in mental health. Now he focuses on supporting the Opal Network.

And of course, there are others, but this gives you an idea of the great folks here.

MindFreedom Oregon is an informal affiliate, but we have been discussing filing for formal incorporation.

If you would like to participate in the MindFreedom Oregon First Friday grassroots meetings at 2 pm, please email us your interest to mf-oregon@aciu.info. You can also find us on Facebook.