

## Art and Recovery is the Theme for Special Week

*Four art forms are helping to celebrate Yukon Mental Illness Awareness Week, which began last Tuesday and runs until Friday.*

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Photo by Vince Fedoroff

*SHARING HER EXPERIENCES – Marilyn Avient performs in Dirty Laundry at The Old Fire Hall last Friday and Saturday evenings. Avient shares her story of her personal experiences with mental illness. The show was part of the Out of the Shadows presentation for Yukon Mental Health Awareness Week.*

Four art forms are helping to celebrate Yukon Mental Illness Awareness Week, which began last Tuesday and runs until Friday.

The territorial mental health services branch has planned a play, stand-up comedy, an art show and a film screening.

“These events show how art can be used to both support recovery and teach others about mental illness,” said Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart.

“The Dirty Laundry play, Stand Up for Mental Health comedy, and The Soloist film provide different perspectives on stigma, prejudice, and discrimination regarding mental illnesses that are touching, humorous, and educational.”

“For too long, Canadians with mental illnesses have been in the shadows,” said Marie Fast, the clinical manager of mental health services.

“Too few Canadians know about the burden of mental illness on our society, and too few sufferers seek help when they need it.

“The goal of Mental Illness Awareness Week is to provide information to the public about living with – and recovering from – mental illness as a normal part of life.”

Performances of Marilyn Avient’s Dirty Laundry were held in Whitehorse last Friday and Saturday evenings, and the show will be performed in Dawson City this evening.

Dirty Laundry is described as an engaging, poignant, and sometimes humorous tale of a woman’s intimate struggle with, and eventual triumph over, a mental health issue that affects thousands of Canadians.

David Granirer will perform his stand-up comedy routine at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre on Thursday evening and in Haines Junction tomorrow evening.

Stand Up for Mental Health is a look at the lighter side of taking medications, seeing counsellors, getting diagnosed, and surviving the mental health system.

The Out of the Shadows art show is a display of visual art created by clients of mental health services and their families in the recovery process.

The Soloist, which was screened last Tuesday evening in Whitehorse, is an award-winning film that captures the true life story of Nathaniel Ayers, a former cello prodigy whose schizophrenia landed him on the streets.

Journalist Steve Lopez befriends Ayers and supports him in his plight with mental illness.

Admission to all events is free, and everyone is welcome.

More information and a schedule of the week’s events can be found at <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca>.