



Official Publication of the New Hampshire Nurses' Association

PRESORT
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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 85
Elkton, Maryland

Nursing News

Quarterly Circulation 19,000 to Registered Nurses, LPN's, LNA's, and Student Nurses in New Hampshire.

Vol. 26

No. 4

Nov 2002

Musician/Advocate- Why? Michael Skinner

Psychiatric nurses had the great honor and pleasure of meeting Michael Skinner at the Seventh Annual Regional Psychiatric Nursing Conference sponsored by NH Hospital and St. Anselm College on Sept. 19-20, 2002 at The Inn at Mill Falls.

Michael has contributed much to advocacy for the mentally ill both by his musical performances (He has a new album called "Train of Tears") and by his personal presentations at workshops.

He has donated his time and self to such organizations as Community Walk-a-Thons, The Art of Healing Conference, R.E.A.C.H. (Rape Education and Crisis Hotline), Trauma Forum, The Healing and Arts Outdoor Festival, NH College, the NH Division of Behavioral Health, the Disability Rights Center, the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), and more recently, to the Lee Artisans and Craftsman Fair, "Hope, Healing and Recovery," and to the Boston "Concert in the Park."

Through my music, lyrics, songs, and performances, I feel blessed to be able to convey my thoughts, ideas and feelings to the countless hundreds I have met in my life-

time. These wonderful and unique individuals have suffered abuse that defies description. Their strength and perseverance help guide me.

Equally important are the many great organizations dedicated to advocating for those who have felt the sting of discrimination and stigma pertaining to mental illness/health and the sheer horror and impact felt by those who have endured childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.

I am forever honored to have worked with and met so many of you. God has indeed blessed all of you.

One of the messages Michael Hopes to get across is the importance of how all health-care professionals can assist the mentally ill with recovery and wellness. Too many healthcare professionals unintentionally retraumatize these valuable human beings through ignorance and callousness, when they could be giving them hope and new direction. Michael also has a website where he can be reached, along with details of his album and many useful resource links for anyone desiring more information about mental illness and/or trauma. Contact: <http://www.mskinnermusic.com>

