

About Dreams2Heal



Shana MacDougall

Born in Chilliwack BC to two serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces Shana spent much of her childhood moving from base to base. Her parents instilled the pride of serving your Country as well as the fortunate life we are able to experience as Canadians and the importance of hard work and dedication to help those in need. Whenever Shana's father; retired Warrant Officer John MacDougall would leave for tour he would always say he was deploying to help keep our country safe. Throughout the years Shana became close friends with many serving members of the military some of whom were not lucky enough to come home.

In 2007 Shana's brother Scott MacDougall followed in his father's footsteps and joined the forces. In May 2010 their family received a call informing them that Scott had been wounded in Afghanistan. Their Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) had hit an IED and Scott was wounded. Scott refused to leave his unit and come home after his injuries, once recovered Scott returned to finish his mission. Scott suffered from PTSD and fought a long hard battle with it. On April 4th, 2018 at 6:37pm on a Wednesday night, Scott's family received the most earth shattering news a family could ever receive, he was gone, he had lost his battle with PTSD. Shana herself did not join the forces but now wants to do her part and help the people who have given so much for us.

"I myself did not serve my country but I would like to help those who did. I want the conversation to be able to flow as if we are talking about high blood pressure or a heart attack. I want those who are suffering to have the resources available to them. Also, I feel like no one seems to talk about the impact PTSD has, not only on the person suffering but also the families, friends, communities that are affected and that are left behind heartbroken, shattered and not knowing where to go and or what to do. Every penny from Dreams2Heal will go to helping anyone or any family who is in need and or need support. I know it sounds cliché but if I can help one person whom is suffering or prevent another family from experiencing what we have, I feel like Scott would be proud. No matter how much pain he was in himself he was always helping and wanted to help others in pain."

Meghan Beals

Meghan was born and raised in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia. Throughout high school she developed an interest in helping others; Meghan was a lifeguard and Volunteer Fire Fighter for three years before pursuing post-secondary education at Holland College for Primary Care Paramedicine. Meghan worked for a year in Prince Edward Island for Island EMS and then moved home to work for EHS in Nova Scotia. During her time as a paramedic she developed a passion for medicine and learning about humanity in general.

Meghan decided to continue her education at Dalhousie University within the Respiratory Therapy program. Once completing she went on to work at the IWK Health Centre as a Respiratory Therapist.

While at Dalhousie University Meghan continued to work as a paramedic and continued to learn about the inequities within healthcare; the passion to advocate and make a change inspired Meghan to apply to medical school. Meghan started her first year in September 2017 at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay. While in her first year at medical school Meghan saw the impact of PTSD from the sidelines and how it affected families, co-workers and communities as a whole.

“I felt so helpless watching my friends, family and communities going through such tragedy and loss. When I was a paramedic and respiratory therapist I relied on my friends, family and my co-worker community during the tough times. I can still remember the first cardiac arrest I attended, the first child that passed away, without my support system I don’t think I would have recovered from seeing such tragedies over and over again. I want Dreams2Heal to become a community for persons who need peace, hope and healing. A community for everyone to tell their stories openly and together we can recover through our dreams”

What is Dreams2Heal

The vision for Dreams2Heal begun this spring when Shana’s little girl, Ella wanting to be free of bad dreams after the loss of her uncle as a result of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As a first year medical student Meghan was visiting an Indigenous community in the spring and promised Ella she would make her a Dreamcatcher. During this placement Meghan was reminded how much PTSD can affect families and communities as a whole. Upon conversation with Shana the vision of Dreams2Heal was formed with the main purpose to increase awareness, create a platform for dialogue and share stories from persons, families and communities affected from PTSD. We reflected upon Ella’s request and soon realized that the Dreamcatcher’s healing affects could benefit not just the person experiencing PTSD but also family members, friends and co-workers.

Recurrent nightmares and insomnia are part of the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria of PTSD. Nightmare distress can predict reduced psychological functioning and suicidality. Insomnia is the most common symptom following trauma exposure with a reported rate of 70% of individuals diagnosed with PTSD (Miller et al.)

Miller, K., Brownlow, J., Woodward, S., & Gehrman, P. (2017). Sleep and Dreaming in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Current Psychiatry Report, 19, 1-10.