



## Breaking the chains of stigma

*An Initiative of Janssen Research & Development, LLC and Museum Dr. Guislain*

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### **Matrika Devkota Named Winner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award**

*Belgian Museum and Janssen Research & Development, LLC, Honor Transformative Advocacy Work of Devkota*

**GHENT, Belgium** – 10 October 2013 – Matrika Devkota, the Nepalese founder of the organization Koshish, has been selected as the 2013 winner of the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award for his tireless work to fight stigma by empowering those suffering from mental illness to serve as self-advocates. The Dr. Guislain Award program is a joint project of the Museum Dr. Guislain and Janssen Research & Development, LLC. Janssen provides financial and in-kind support for the program. The award winner receives a \$50,000 prize that must be used toward further work to reduce societal stigma about mental health and disorders of the brain.

“The Dr. Guislain Award represents the work done by mental health advocates worldwide to fight the often unseen consequences of stigma,” said Siri Hustvedt, jury member of the Dr. Guislain Award selection committee and author of a book about her own neurological illness. “Devkota is a luminous example for all of us who hope to end stigma, and we are happy to honor his important work in the mental health community.”

Mr. Devkota founded Koshish in 2004, after he recognized the need for a community support organization that promoted the rights of mental health patients. The word "koshish" means "making an effort" in Nepalese and the organization makes an effort to mainstream mental health and psychosocial disabilities. The organization frequently serves as a lobbyist on behalf of those suffering from mental illness, and seeks to improve policy and public perception surrounding these conditions, while empowering patients to act as self-advocates.

“It has been rewarding to work on behalf of patients facing significant stigma as a result of mental illness,” said Devkota. “Through our various efforts, we have seen the beginning of substantial changes made to Nepal’s mental health infrastructure and policy. I look forward to continuing my work and advancing the rights of those facing stigma as a result of mental illness.”

Koshish emphasizes community level support, including a clinical, psychological and social approach to treating mental illness. The organization provides a variety of services for patients, including a community based self-help program, transit home services and a peer support program. Koshish also

utilizes social media to spread their messages of advocacy and acceptance for patients affected by mental illnesses.

Koshish is a nongovernmental organization registered in the District of Kathmandu, with the approval of the Nepal Social Welfare Council in 2008. NGO support for mental illness is crucial in Nepal, as less than 1 percent of government spending is allocated for mental health treatment.

“Mr. Devkota’s passionate advocacy for those with mental illness has made a tangible impact for patients living with significant mental illness in Nepal,” said Brother René Stockman, general manager of the Museum Dr. Guislain. “His work has allowed patients the ability to advocate for themselves and contributed to increased public knowledge of mental illness.”

The Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award is named for and honors the legacy of Dr. Joseph Guislain (1797-1860), the first Belgian psychiatrist to provide scientifically based treatment for patients with mental illness and a staunch patient advocate. Both Museum Dr. Guislain and Janssen are organizations with a rich heritage and long-standing involvement in the field of mental illness research, treatment and education. For more than 25 years, the Museum has existed to educate the public and rectify the misunderstandings and prejudice associated with treatment for mental illness.

Janssen’s sponsorship of this award reflects its more than 50-year commitment to helping find solutions for patients with mental illness. The Award is an important component of the *Healthy Minds* initiative of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, which aims to encourage collaboration among biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and public-sector partners to accelerate the discovery of new therapeutic solutions for diseases and disorders of the brain, as well as support the mental health community and various advocacy organizations and projects.

“Janssen is pleased to recognize the outstanding educational and advocacy work of Matrika Devkota and his commitment to combating mental health stigma throughout Nepal,” said Hussein K. Manji, M.D., Global Therapeutic Area Head for Neuroscience, Janssen Research & Development, LLC. “Mr. Devkota exemplifies the best qualities of advocates worldwide who work continuously to help people living with brain disorders, a goal that is aligned with our work at Janssen.”

The accomplishments of Mr. Devkota will be celebrated today, World Mental Health Day, in a ceremony at The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai, India.

The ceremony will include a special showing of the traveling exhibition *Breaking the Chains of Stigma*. This exhibit contains a global overview of the history of mental health and a selection of art composed by mental health patients.

Museum Dr. Guislain issued the [call for nominations](#) for the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award on January 24, 2013. More than 40 nominations were received from across the globe, after which a jury of international mental health advocates and renowned authorities in the field deliberated on the winner.

#### **About the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award**

Individuals, organizations or projects all over the world that have made an exceptional contribution in dealing with, or promoting the awareness of, mental health care are eligible to receive the Dr. Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award. The Award is given to an individual(s), organization or project that:

- has made an exceptional contribution to mental healthcare in the broadest sense on a cultural and/or social level;

- has provided a genuine contribution to decreasing stigma around mental health conditions;
- has promoted attention for mental health care; and
- has done all this with passion, creativity and innovation.

The jury is comprised of:

- Lisa Appignanesi – London-based author, former president of English PEN, chair of trustees of the Freud Museum in London
- Siri Hustvedt – Essayist, novelist and poet
- Dr. Steven Hyman – Director of the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, chair of the One Mind for Research scientific advisory board
- Patrick Kennedy – Former U.S. Congressman and the co-founder/co-chairman of One Mind for Research
- Dr. Alan Leshner – Chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Dr. Bernard Sabbe – Professor of medical psychology and psychiatry at University of Antwerp, and psychiatrist/psychotherapist at Sint-Norbertus Psychiatric Hospital in Duffel

### **About Museum Dr. Guislain**

The Museum Dr. Guislain was founded in 1986 in Ghent, Belgium, and its exhibits address the history of psychiatry in a permanent collection and through a series of half-yearly changing thematic exhibitions. The Museum features an array of psychiatric photographs, two centuries of comprehensive archives and an extensive library chronicling the history of psychiatry. Comprehensively, the Museum seeks to educate the public and rectify the misunderstandings and prejudice associated with treatment for mental illness. The Museum Dr. Guislain attracts 65,000 visitors each year.

### **About Dr. Joseph Guislain**

Dr. Joseph Guislain (1797-1860) was a driven activist for patients with mental illness and the first Belgian psychiatrist to provide scientifically-based treatment for these individuals. As a passionate advocate for those with mental illness, Dr. Guislain worked tirelessly to stand up for the rights of patients and help improve their social position. He lectured and published extensively about mental illness and enjoyed considerable recognition by his contemporaries.

For more information, about the Dr. Guislain Award, please visit [www.drguislainaward.org](http://www.drguislainaward.org).

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