

Recovery Connections

Quarterly Newsletter of Orange County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Office

Summer 2008



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MHSA's newsletter is back with a brand new look. It is published quarterly and will reach County Behavioral Health Services staff and consumers. Congratulations to Kymberli Kercher-Smith, winner of the Name Our Newsletter contest. Kymberli's winning entry, Recovery Connections, was judged the most appropriate name by a panel of judges and the Consumer Action Advisory Committee.

MHSA OFFICE AND MHSA TRAINING PROGRAM HAVE MOVED!

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) office and MHSA Training program have a new home now. They are located at 600 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Their new contact information is listed below. The phone numbers for the staff have also changed. Please make a note of these changes.

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HOPE TO TRANSFORM LIVES

By Kate Pavich, MHSA Coordinator



The faces at our last community meeting expressed one clear message – hope. Hope that there would be answers and their lives would get better. Hope that they would find support and they would be able to earn a living. Hope that the darkness was ending and there really was light at the end of the tunnel. The mission of the MHSA Office is to ensure that individuals and families experiencing mental illness have the hope they need to transform their lives. Through our Community Action Advisory Committee, stakeholder meetings, and recovery training, consumers and family members have offered their stories, their dreams and their hearts to change our mental health system. We have been given a clear vision about the kinds of services that are needed and the programs that must be created to support recovery and encourage resiliency. We are excited about our new Workforce Education and Training Plan, our Capital

Facilities project on Tustin Avenue, and the 2009 MHSA art calendar. We are looking forward to developing permanent supportive housing, establishing a workforce of peers and family members, and designing critical prevention and early intervention programs. Together we are creating a community that embraces possibilities for healing and wellness.

If you would like to get involved in MHSA activities or have any questions, please call (714) 667-5620.

Consumer/Family Member Vocational Training Program

Pacific Clinics and Santa Ana Community College have collaborated with the Orange County Health Care Agency to implement a training program for mental health consumers and family members. The goal is to enable these individuals to work in the public mental health system and become service providers or operators of consumer-run services. As of June 2008, approximately 75 consumers and family members will have completed the classroom portion of the program. In September another 25 students will participate in the program.



Program participants have been very positive about the quality of this program and have enthusiastically recommended the program to others who might be interested. For further information about the program and registration for future sessions, please contact the Program Director, Steve Bush, at (714) 712-8346.

CONSUMED! STORYTELLING AND THE FINE ART OF DISCLOSURE

By Richard Krzyzanowski, Consumer-Employee Advocate



I participated in a training a while ago, the purpose of which was to better inform HCA staff and contract providers about the "ins and outs" of working with consumers, specifically in the contracting process. In general, I thought the content excellent, although I always feel a bit strange to be part of such conversations in which consumers are discussed in the third person, all the while being hyper-aware of the fact that, for me, consumers are not a "they," but a "we." Looking back, I wish I had disclosed, but the situation made me feel rather circumspect, and I suspect I allowed another small opportunity to educate my colleagues slip past. The decision to disclose is always a very personal one. It is always a calculated risk and an act of courage.

When I was in the midst of a severe, life-changing mental health crisis several years ago, I shared my predicament more readily and fully with my close friends and some coworkers before I did the same with members of my own family. I felt the bonds which tied me to those special people were more flexible --more forgiving-- than were my baggage-laden family ties. I was often surprised by the reactions I received. Some to whom I disclosed obviously were very uncomfortable with the specter of mental illness passing so close by, while others stepped up to the plate to reaffirm their friendship and offer their support. Many times, the reaction was not what I had expected from that particular person.

Calculated risks. One observation offered at the training I mentioned earlier was that consumers often feel it valuable to share something of our personal stories, especially at the beginning of a relationship or collaboration. There are myriad reasons for this, often having to do with the stigma and lack of validation many of us have experienced both in the course of our treatments and in society at large. We also offer our stories by way of explanation, especially in a professional, behavioral health setting, because we know that our roles and relationships are changing significantly and we hope our experiences and insights will contribute to a profound transformation of the environment we all now share.

On another level, as a former journalist and newspaper editor, I was engaged for 20 years in the great game of being objective when I relayed the news. Ultimately, I failed, eventually concluding that there is no such animal as "objectivity." I decided that we all have our own experiences and points of view, and the best we can do is to share these openly with others so that, at least, they can judge our information in light of our honest disclosures. It is in this spirit that I share these few thoughts with you, as I work to develop the Office of the Consumer-Employee Advocate, dedicated to supporting fellow consumer-employees who, like myself, find themselves working "on the inside." Yes, it can be a little strange at times but, in my experience, it's not a bad place to be at all.

Richard Krzyzanowski is the Consumer Employee Advocate for HCA's Behavioral Health Services. He can be reached at (714) 667-5607, or at rkrzyzanowski@ochca.com. He welcomes your comments and suggestions, and is available to assist all consumer employees, their coworkers and supervisors

Multicultural Community Art Fair

On March 29, 2008 consumers and family members participated in their first community art fair at the Delhi Center in Santa Ana. Over fifty artists of all ages and cultural groups enjoyed a day of fun, music, poetry and of course, art. The artwork included painting, sketching, photography, multi-media pieces, ceramics, glassware, and jewelry. Authors also showcased poems, songs, and inspirational thoughts. The art and writing entries were judged and finalists will be included in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) 2009 calendar. The event drew a crowd of over one hundred artists and visitors. The art fair was sponsored by the MHSA Office, Mental Health Association, National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Multicultural Art Guild. We want to thank all those who made this event such a wonderful success, especially Judy Adams, the driving force behind this project. The finalists for the MHSA 2009 calendar are listed below.

Finalists of Arts Competition (listed in alphabetical order)

Judy Adams	Mark Doyle	Jane Park
Lan Arms	Robert Fuhrman	Joni Penn
Brian Atkin	Patrick Jackson	Victor Romo
Tina Basgall	Maricela Looreza	Fred Snider
Theresa Boyd	C. L. McElroy	Tim Swift
Chris Dovey	Mildred Nicholson	Alvino Uribe

Finalists of the Writing Competition (in alphabetical order)

“A rainy day tradition” by C. L. McElroy
 “Bipolar Disorder” by KJ Anderson
 “Esperanza” by Maricela Loaeza
 “Hope Deferred No More” by Karen L. Manna
 “Internal Fire” by Kymberli Kercher-Smith
 “Life is a Quilt” by Vivian De Leon
 “Prism” by Batyah Prock
 “Reclamation” by Kathy Clink
 “Remembrances” by Khe Ngo
 “Thank You” by Patrick Lindsey
 “The Black and White of It” by Judy Adams

Finalists of Crafts Competition (listed in alphabetical order)

Judy Adams	Lan Arms	Tho Be	Tim Swift
Joanna Amaro	Larry Baldovin	Beth Hodson	



C. L. McElroy

INTERNAL FIRE

By Kymberli Kercher-Smith

Where did I learn my ingrained belief that if I benefit from or feel good about something that I do or say that I am being a bad selfish person? Who says? When I reminisce, I can create a long list of influential, book-smart people in my life that contributed that perception of my intentions. But who they are and why they verbalized that are not what I question. Instead, I question why I am so willing to allow myself to believe other people’s biased opinions over my own first-hand experiences, feelings, and innate knowledge of my true, pure motivations. Since I have an intense desire to alter my misguided self-image, belief of who I should be and am, I once again ask... who says I’m a bad selfish person? Not me! Not anymore! If anything, I am selfish in a positive, life-giving way...I take care of myself, and in doing so fuel the fire within me that can spread to give new energy to a flickering flame of another, or re-ignite or give first fuel to fires lying dormant within others.

Network of Care for Behavioral Health By Anthony Perera, MHSA Office



Network of Care is an Internet based community resource for consumers, County staff, and providers. It also offers important information on diagnoses, insurance, and advocacy as well as daily news concerning behavioral health. It also features a **Community Calendar** to post local community events, a **Message Board** to communicate with peers and a **My Folder** to securely store personal health information and if desired, share them with a trusted friend or relative. To set up a **My Folder** simply create a new user ID with a password. Inside **My Folder** you can create and print out an **Emergency Card** containing your emergency contact information. You may also request a wallet-size plastic emergency card be mailed to you at no charge to you. If you’re a provider, you can also build your own free web page. Click on

For Providers link on the bottom of the home page to take you to the Providers section. Visit Network of Care today and learn what it has to offer! Network of Care home page <http://orange.networkofcare.org> E-mail: networkofcare@ochca.com



Jane Park

INSIGHT

By Sarah Moss

Some things we cannot control, and focusing where we can control – the attitude we choose and our actions enriches our self.

If you do not think much of yourself, then you will find someone who doesn't think much of you and agree with them.

RECLAMATION

By Kathy Clink

What do you do as the mania ends, when the images fade and you've lost all your friends?

Filled with pain beyond words, a life frozen in time. What do you do when you find a lost mind?

HOPE

(English Translation of ESPERANZA)

Wait for hope for love waits don't leave your soul for life ends...

Don't go away in the house There are white irises that bring life to the purity of those that love

You are the well being, the hope of those that no longer have anything

KITES, KITES

By Margarita Noguera

Kites, where are they? I saw them this morning, Blue, red and yellow Dancing in the air, Though one got loose to a far away place...

I know the children Are behind the moon Watching, waiting.... Hoping home become safe again, No fire, no violence, no fear.

Kites, higher than the clouds Are waiting for them It is not time for games And the kites dance a lonesome waltz

Did you see the kites this morning? A whispered voice answered, "They are gone Behind the moon"

LOVE FORCE

Judy Bonin

Love is a force Where did mine go? He took not the love I intended It came searing back With fire and fury Branding me, upended!

ESPERANZA

By Maricela Loaeza

Espera Esperanza, el amor aguarda no te salgas del alma que la vida se acaba...

no te vayas; en la casa hay lirios blancos que avivan la pureza de los que aman...

Tu eres el bienestar, la esperanza de los que ya no tienen nada.



Tim Swift

MHSA OFFICE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY

- 1 11:00 am CAAC* Meeting
- 7 1:00 pm MHSA Steering Committee
- 10 7:30 am Mental Health Board Study Meeting
- 9:00 am Public Hearing on Capital Facilities & Technological Needs Component Proposal
- 15 11:00 am CAAC Meeting
- 23 9:00 am Mental Health Board Meeting

AUGUST

- 4 1:00 pm MHSA Steering Committee
- 5 11:00 am CAAC Meeting
- 14 7:30 am Mental Health Board Study Meeting
- 19 11:00 am CAAC Meeting
- 27 9:00 am Mental Health Board General Meeting

SEPTEMBER

- 2 11:00 am CAAC Meeting
- 8 1:00 pm MHSA Steering Committee**
- 11 7:30 am Mental Health Board Study Meeting
- 16 11:00 am CAAC Meeting
- 24 9:00 am Mental Health Board General Meeting

*CAAC = Consumer Action Advisory Committee

**Due to Labor Day Holiday on September 1, MHSA Steering Committee meeting will take place on September 8

Public Hearing on Capital Facilities and Technological Needs Component Proposal will take place on July 10, 2008 at 9:00am at Orange County Hall of Administration 333 W. Santa Ana Blvd. Santa Ana, CA 92701

A draft of the proposal is available for public review at Orange County Public Libraries and online at <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/mhsa/>

FAITH

By Minh-Ha Pham, Psy.D.
MHSA Training Program

Call it whatever you would please;
Faith isn't anything any science could touch or measure.
But you can feel it in the heart.
It is what keeps hope going,
people trying and trusting
to believe in the goodness of life and others.
It is often greater than any sum of its parts,
and beyond the wonder of genetic blueprints.
Faith provides the gift of resilience to weather the storm,
the courage and strength to bridge dividers
and overcome adversity.
It has a sibling named "compassion," with the ability to seek
understanding,
to embrace the true meaning of goodness,
where people's souls can find
a place of safety
to rest their cares on the gentle softness of inner peace...

CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

By Tho Be



Before, we always stayed home. We did not want to have contact or to talk with anyone. Pacific Clinics recommended that I participate in a ceramics group. I only made ceramics but did not talk to any one. Then some of the consumers were invited to attend an MHSA meeting. We were afraid to go but the MHSA Office urged us to participate. They picked us up and took us home, translated everything into Vietnamese and encouraged us to share ideas and listen to ideas from other consumers. We felt respected; we believed in ourselves and did not feel the stigma of mental illness. We went to the Westminster Clinic and began to invite Vietnamese consumers and families to participate in MHSA meetings. Little by little, we began to feel happy, to believe in ourselves and to contribute to the mental health field with our hearts. My English has improved and now I am the Vice-President of the Community Action Advisory Committee. I want to say thanks to the MHSA Office and their staff.

(Vietnamese Translation)

Trước đây, tôi thường hay ở nhà. Tôi không muốn tiếp xúc hay nói chuyện với bất cứ một ai. Pacific Clinics đã đề nghị tôi nên tham gia vào nhóm làm đồ gốm. Tôi chỉ ngồi chăm chú làm, mà không chuyện trò với một ai. Sau đó, một số bệnh nhân được mời đến tham dự buổi họp do Văn Phòng Đạo Luật Dịch Vụ Sức Khỏe Tâm Thần tổ chức. Chúng tôi rất sợ đi họp, nhưng Văn Phòng MHSA đã thúc đẩy chúng tôi nên tham dự. Họ đã đưa đón chúng tôi tận nhà, dịch lại tất cả sang tiếng Việt cho chúng tôi hiểu, khuyến khích chúng tôi chia sẻ những ý kiến, những kinh nghiệm và lắng nghe những ý kiến của chúng tôi. Chúng tôi cảm thấy được tôn trọng, chúng tôi tự tin và không còn mặc cảm về bệnh tâm thần của mình. Chúng tôi đã đến Bệnh xá Westminster để mời những bệnh nhân và thân nhân của họ đến tham gia những buổi họp do MHSA tổ chức. Dần dần, tôi bắt đầu cảm thấy vui vẻ, tự tin và đã đóng góp một cách tích cực vào lãnh vực tâm thần. Khả năng Anh văn của tôi có tiến bộ và hiện tại tôi là Phó Chủ Tịch của Ủy Ban Cố Vấn Hành Động Cộng Đồng (CAAC). Tôi muốn nói lời cảm ơn đến Ban Lãnh đạo và toàn thể nhân viên Văn Phòng Đạo Luật Dịch Vụ Sức Khỏe Tâm Thần (MHSA).

To contribute an article to Consumer Perspective, send your article to mhsa@ochca.com

Recovery Connections is published quarterly by the Orange County Mental Health Services Act office. If you would like to contribute an article, have questions/suggestions or would like to subscribe to this newsletter please contact the MHSA Office at:

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CONSUMER ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAAC) ELECTS ITS NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

CAAC was established to advise HCA Behavioral Health Services on issues related to the delivery of the Orange County mental health services funded through the MHSA. CAAC also assists HCA in ensuring that MHSA funded services are of high quality, accessible, culturally competent, client-driven, cost-effective and consumer/family/recovery/resiliency focused.



CAAC members elected their new executive board members on June 17, 2008. A sincere thank you goes out to the outgoing executive members (Robert Reid – President, George Nguyen – Vice President and Kymberli-Kercher Smith – Secretary) for their dedicated service during the past term. New executive board: (pictured from left) Kymberli-Kercher Smith - President, Tho Be - Vice President and Joy Torres – Secretary.

Consumers/Family Members, communicate with your peers using the Message Board on Network of Care.
Visit: <http://orange.networkofcare.org> and click on **Message Board** link



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