



NEW DIRECTIONS

Volume 1, Issue 3 “By, for, and about consumers of behavioral health services.”

August-September 2004



SMART COMMUTE 2004, 10th ANNUAL

This year NLCMH (Traverse House) entered into the Smart Commute, keeping track of those who participated on a daily basis. Congratulations go out to Traverse House as they beat out Gourdie Fraser and won with a 70% overall participation score. Pictured above is the bike they won.

Jeremy and Martin joined Tamra and John at the festivities Friday at noon. Martin rode their bike in a 1-mile loop celebration and then back to the clubhouse.

The bike is now available for club members to sign out.

Regional Consumer Forum

The Regional Consumer Forum met in Cadillac on June 23rd, they plan to meet again August 19th, 2004. They will be meeting in the Baldwin office of West Michigan CMH. The consumers represent the Northwest CMH Affiliation, covering 9 counties. The forum also tries to have representatives for all of our services.

The meeting was bittersweet as we gave awards to those who had served for 2 years and would be leaving us, had a moment of silence for Jim Daniels who is no longer with us and welcomed new representatives.

There was a great deal of information to take in: Affiliation updates, follow-up on the 7 consumer concerns, approve the Customer Service Plan, go over the network plan summary, updates on local consumer meetings, and discuss and review this year's conference with thoughts for next year's.

The day wasn't finished after adjourning. Everyone enjoyed the lunch break, which was followed by an interview with MDCH (Michigan Department of Community Health).

If you would like more information on the Regional Consumer Forum contact CMH Customer Service. They are able to talk with you or can arrange for you to speak with one of our representatives. These meetings are open to the public.

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If you would like to contribute to New Directions please contact The Editor, Leslie Sladek-Sobczak, at 231 933-4907, or email Leslie.Sladek-Sobczak@nlcmh.org.
Submissions in this issue: Ernie Reynolds and Jerry Ingram.

Did you know?

There's a new electronic quarterly newsletter focused on self-help and recovery for people with mental illness published by the STAR Center and Peer-To-Peer Resource Centers (which are funded by Center for Mental Health Services). Consumers and their supporters can subscribe by going to the Internet and entering Recovering Together at www.consumerstar.org.

Great Movies: Shattering Stigma

A Beautiful Mind (2001): Featuring Russell Crowe's stunning performance in the lead role and produced by Ron Howard and Brian Glazer, the story of Nobel Prize laureate John Nash's decades-long struggle with schizophrenia won critical praise, box-office success, and ultimately, four Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

The film provided a source of connection for people whose lives are affected by schizophrenia, both consumers and their loved ones. It also did a great deal to counter the myth that people with the disorder can't lead fulfilling lives or make important contributions to society.

From the vivid depiction of Nash's hallucinations and elaborate delusions, to the frustration and anger experienced by wife, to inspiring ending, *A Beautiful Mind* remains a gold standard of films dealing with mental illness.

The Caveman's Valentine (2001): Samuel L. Jackson plays Romulus Ledbetter, a homeless man with schizophrenia who lives in a cave in New York City's Central Park. Jackson's character discovers a frozen body in the park and ultimately helps the police—the object of much of his paranoia—solve the murder.

Most of the movie is shot from the perspective of Ledbetter's character, replete with the hallucinations that haunt him. Jackson and the film's cinematography won praise from reviewers, while mental health advocates hailed it as a first major-studio release featuring a person with schizophrenia as a sympathetic lead character. — *David Staba*

*This excerpt taken from Schizophrenia Digest magazine, Spring 2004 edition.

Happiness is elusive – the moment we seem to enter the happiness state we begin to falter, like a horse refusing to jump a hurdle. Is it our fear of not achieving happiness or do we fear happiness itself?

Regional Consumer Forum

RCF met August 19th in Baldwin. One of the main items of focus was their agenda for the upcoming year. A lengthy discussion about the Governors Mental Health Commission, Performance Improvement Project on recidivism, scores from Northwest Michigan's exit conference, (we are still waiting on the final results) and a possible exchange for an upcoming meeting with the CMH Clinton-Eaton-Ingham and their RCF.

Report to CMH Board of Directors about the Consumer Forum

The preliminary report of the Consumer Advocacy Council (CAC) was given on June 17th to the board of directors of Northern Lakes Community Mental Health. The Chair, Ernie Reynolds, presented the report.

The Northern Lakes CMH board was pleased and showed a great interest in the results and said they are looking forward to the next report of the Council in October. The chair presentation was about 10 minutes with questions following. The board asked questions about the goals and the interest of the consumers and how they liked the forum. Additional questions followed for 10-15 minutes. The President of the CMH board said that he has always felt that there were some areas missing between the board and the consumers and was pleased at this time to be able to ask questions.

Ernie was pleased when several members of the Advocacy Council came along to give encouragement. Ernie was very pleased that the combined board showed so much interest in the Forum and the Council. The positive involvement by the board shows their interest in the Consumer needs and how they could also help to improve communication with the consumers directly or indirectly.

~ *Ernie Reynolds*

CONSUMER FORUM - Held by CAC

On May 12th the first consumer forum was held on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Council. There were assigned moderators at all 4 locations: Cadillac, Traverse City, Houghton Lake and Grayling. Consumers were urged to bring their issues to discuss and the Council offered 5 main questions to ask. Consumers did not have to give their names either when speaking or on the questionnaires.

While we did not have as many consumers attend the turnout was very informative. Many issues were discussed. Issues ran from communication with the staff to how the consumers could help Northern Lakes Community Mental Health to better improve services. Personal issues and issues that the Advocacy Council could answer were addressed at the forum. Those issues or questions asked that could not be answered were brought to the attention of appropriate services, then the answers were given back to the consumers in a confidential manner. The moderators handled most questions and the consumers seemed to be happy with the information.

The preliminary question seems to be one of communication between the consumer and the Community Mental Health, including staff. The results will be presented to the complete Consumer Advocacy Council for final consideration and the results will be brought forward in the coming months. The information will be coordinated with the forum results in October, to celebrate Mental Health month. The consumers seemed to also wish to have issues more often to the Council for explanation or representation to CMH.

~ *Ernie Reynolds*

SAVE THE DATE: The 2nd Consumer Forum will be held Wednesday, Oct. 6. More info coming at a later date...

Tips for a Better Future

Self-Esteem

In the past we covered your Natural Supports, and your Daily Routine. Today let's look at Self-Esteem. In utilizing items from your daily routine, I hope these assist you in having a positive view of yourself. As you began with basic items you needed to attend to in your life, I hope that you have started looking farther afield at other items that make you feel better about yourself.

There are many things you can do to build your self-esteem. Negative talk can be your downfall. Make a collage of things you do well, write lists of good things about yourself and read them to remind yourself of what a great person you are. We are all special individuals and have talents that make us valuable people to our community.

Change the way you talk to yourself. If you often say or think things such as: I'm no good, I never do anything right...try to rephrase those comments. I'm good at _____, it's okay to make a mistake-everyone does sometime. Learn from those mistakes. I can work at doing _____ better. I do many things well. I'm smart. I'm a valuable person. This takes time and practice. The key is to keep trying. It will get easier and at some point you will begin to do it without thinking about it. Positive self-talk will become a natural habit.

Make a list of affirmations and include: 5 of your strengths, 5 things you admire about yourself, 5 of your most positive achievements. Add life accomplishments, ways you can positively reward yourself, and things that make you happy and laugh. Once again, if you have a hard time, seek out your natural support people to assist you in this list.

This is just the beginning to raising your self-esteem. We all need to remind ourselves of our good traits, even when we are doing well. It is a lifelong habit. Wishing you well until next time.

Leslie Sladek-Sobczak

Traumatic Brain Injury – TBI

By: Michelle Roberts, Advocate

Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. is finishing up year two of the TBI Grant Project. Self-Advocacy training has been a major focus this year and there is still time to attend a **FREE** workshop in your area. You will learn different methods of self-advocacy, what public services are available to Assist individuals with TBI, and how to access those services. If you are interested in more information or would like to register for the training in Kalamazoo on August 31st, contact Michelle Roberts at 1-800-288-5923.

Additional will be scheduled, check www.mpas.org



Grand Opening

There was a large attendance for the Grand Opening of Kandu Island held July 24th. One of the main highlights was a performance by James Gordon and his guest fiddler. James, a folk singer/song writer, performed some very moving songs from his CD 1 in 5, released last year about people dealing with a mental health issue. His folk songs and some very comical songs, were enjoyed by all. Staff & Board Members from NLCMH and a NAMI representative were in attendance along with other community members. Channel 7&4 (NBC) and the Record Eagle interviewed Assistant Operations Manager, Duane Fox. Kandu Island also offered a lunch to attendees as well as holding a 50/50 drawing. A good time was had by all.

Club Cadillac Host Meetings with Politicians

The importance of MAC (Michigan Association of Clubhouses) is often underestimated. The value of this organization is that it serves as an advocate for mentally ill people. Many important legislative issues that impact what happens to this group are openly discussed. In this year of elections it has become even more important to maintain contact with those that are running for office. Several Clubhouses have hosted breakfast meetings with their local politicians to discuss mental health issues and their impact on the local community. Club Cadillac has hosted several meetings recently with local politicians to gain their perspective on mental health issues. It has become clear that we as an organization need to educate our elected leaders about the stigmas attached to those with a mental illness, and how much of a struggle it really can be just to achieve what most take for granted on a daily basis. ~ Jerry Ingrahm

Michigan DD Council to Meet in Gaylord

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council will kick off a series of public hearings with a meeting at the Best Western in Gaylord (833 W. Main) on August 23, from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. Interested partners, consumers, families, and advocates are invited to attend. Information gathered will be used to plan the DD Council's future action toward changing the systems that support people with developmental disabilities. The meeting will have three 25-minute sessions with refreshment breaks in between. Meeting topics will include community supports, health, transportation, employment, housing, education and family support. For accommodations, contact the Council one week prior, at (517) 334-6123 or email vincentr@michigan.gov.

CERTIFIED ADVOCATE

In May of this year, Ernie Reynolds, Drop-In Center director, attended an Advocacy Training Seminar in Dearborn. The training was held and sponsored by Collari Communications Group. Ernie completed the course and was given a certificate of completion of training. Many areas were covered, including issues of consumer to consumer, consumer to CMH and to the Legislature. Ernie looks forward to using his added skills as Advocate to those of Chat Room director to help the consumers he represents both privately and on behalf of the consumers at the Drop-In center. Please feel free to call or email Ernie with any questions. Call 989-366-1101 until the Chat Room gets into their new location. ~ *Ernie Reynolds*

Help Prevent Suicide and Improve Treatment Following an Attempt

In the U.S., 400,000 individuals attempt suicide each year, many end up in the Emergency Room of our hospitals. A suicide attempt is the biggest risk factor for suicide in the future. Yet few resources have assisted E.R. staff in effectively and compassionately communicating with consumers and family members and steering them toward the appropriate treatment and support. NAMI is trying to bridge the gap by developing a resource for E.R. staff to improve communication. **If you or a loved one has attempted suicide and been treated in a hospital's E.R., please share your experience to help us create effective materials for suicide prevention by taking an online survey at www.nami.org/suicidesurvey.** If you have any questions, email suicidesurvey@nami.org.

Ongoing Events

If you know of other ongoing events that could help other consumers, please contact the Editor of New Directions.

- **NAMI Support** second Monday of the month at 6:00pm Munson Medical Center-Doctors Dining room.
- **Schizophrenic's Anonymous** every Friday at 1:00pm Traverse House, 105 Hall St. Traverse City.
- **Support group** for parents of children with ADHD, Third Thursday of the month 6:00-7:30pm. Child Guidance Inc, 947-2255.
- **Survivors of Suicide Support Group** third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., at Mercy Hospital 2nd floor Wexford Room, Cadillac.
- **NAMI-C.A.R.E.** Support group for people with a mental illness. 2nd Monday of the month, 6-7:30pm. Grace Episcopal Church, Corner of Washington and Boardman, TC.
- **DBSA** (Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance) meets every Tuesday 7-8:00pm Club Cadillac. Contact Betty Clark at 775-5638.
- **Our Kids** support group, for parents/caregivers of kids with bipolar disorder, 7:00pm fourth Tuesday, Traverse Area District Library. 941-9128.

Upcoming Events

- **August 19, 2004** NLCMH Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. Traverse City Office
- **August 26th,** 2004 Michigan Consumer Conference
- **September 2nd** 3:30pm-5:00 pm. Recipient Rights Advisory Committee. Video Conference - Traverse City, Houghton Lake, and Cadillac Offices. Open to the Public.
- **September 8-10, 2004** Mid-State Conference (Club House) For more information check the bulletin board at Traverse House.
- **September 8-12** NAMI 2004 Convention. *A Quarter of a Century of Changing Minds.* -Washington D.C.
- **September 16, 2004** NLCMH Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. Elmwood Township Hall
- **September 20-21, 2004** Person Centered Planning Conference. Lansing, MI
- **October 6, 2004** 2nd Consumer Forums by CAC

Internet Site Check them out!

northernlakescmh.org
NWCMMH.org

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