

THE RECOVERY JOURNAL



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Peer Companions

Deb Hite

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Recovery Institute

Peer run — Peer delivered!
Incorporated in September
of 2006,

The Recovery Institute of
Southwest Michigan
is funded by Kalamazoo
Community Mental Health
& Substance Abuse
Services.

Recovery Journeys (Continued from Spring Issue) By Rodney Chastine

In the last issue I wrote about how others helped me on the road to recovery. Now I would like to let you know what I'm doing to help myself in my recovery.

I'm an active member of the PoWeR Group (Peers for Wellness and Recovery). I'm on the Recipients Rights Advisory Council (RRAC) with Roann Bonney. I was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors for Recovery Institute.

The PoWeR Group has let me express myself in a way that's hard to explain. Here I am, a person who has been down and out. By undergoing a simple lifestyle change, I'm now going out and providing education to the community about my depression and how

serious and traumatizing this disease can be.

My depression was like quick sand. I kept slowly sinking into a rut with no way to escape. But now I'm out

here educating others.

I'm gaining my self and my self-esteem back by sharing my life struggles with police officers, judges, nurses, students of social work, nursing, psychology and other notable vocations.

Providing this service makes me feel so good about life by being able to help someone else out and give insight on how to help turn someone else's life back around.

I haven't found my life's calling yet, but this is a very good start. I can see the difference that I can make in someone else's life.

Thank you so much! §

Living in Recovery

Living in Recovery Team recently completed a 6 week session of Money Smart . Credit portion of Money Smart will begin in January. Pathways 4 U is underway with an enthusiastic class!

January will bring more class options, so be sure to check our website or call RI at 343-6725.

Visit our Web Site:

<http://recoverymi.org>

Our newsletter is now on the web!

RI, KVCC and MRS Collaborate to Provide Peer Education

Recovery Institute (RI) is pleased to announce a key advancement in the role of peer support specialist education. A new class, *Principles of Peer Support*, begins Nov. 2nd at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), and is formally recognized as an academically valid course of study.

Sean Harris, Ph.D., Deputy Director of RI, is the originator and driving force behind this curriculum. He is laying a grass roots foundation in the recent discipline of peer support specialists within the mental health system.

This cutting edge class has academic depth; it encompasses a self help approach and incorporates information from evidence-based practices. It also relies heavily upon the wealth of Dr. Harris' experience working in mental (continued on page 4)

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We foster recovery through our work and our example. We aim to give HOPE where there is little or no hope. Recovery is a dynamic and active movement that brings about a meaningful change in lifestyle and habits.

Welcome New Board Members
By Sean Jennings

The Recovery Institute held its 2009 Board of Directors Election on Sept. 18, 2009. We are pleased to report the voter turnout doubled from the previous election, and thank all who participated and helped out in the election process.

As an agency, we've been fortunate to have excellent board members the past year, and we thank them for their great work! We're also privileged to have strong candidates in this election.

Vacant seats have been filled as follows: **Wendy Novak** was reelected for another term, and is an asset with her experience.

Doug Dougherty was key in helping to develop RI in its early days. He states "Recovery is a growing process in a positive direction, from one place to another."

Tina Lauer was a prior member of the Community Living Options Board. To her, recovery "is not an absence of symptoms and urges, instead it is learning to cope with and manage [them] in a healthy manner.

Tammy Thompson has past experience on three boards, & offers invaluable knowledge. To her, "recovery means striving to build and maintain a life worth living."

Rodney Chastine looks forward to making RI a "stand out organization...locally and state wide." He believes recovery is "facing the problems and overcoming obstacles dealt to you".

Lori MacGregor served on several committees while employed with Bronson Hospital. She looks forward to being able to

"help others discover the things I have, and to see their recovery blossom."

Melissa Walden is a long standing member of RI and is an active member of several community organizations! §

RI COMPUTER LAB
By Steven Goodyke

The Computer Lab is now open and available for R I members to use. Instruction is offered by appointment on Tues. & Fri from 12 -3 pm; and Wed. & Thur. from 1-4 pm.

There are 3 networked computers for use, including internet and wireless access. Software includes Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, Access and Power Point.

Please call Steven at 343-6725 to schedule an appointment.

Happy Thanksgiving.



STAFF FOCUS
By Tricia Shaff

New beginnings, restoration, and recovery, a way of life for me now. Hi, my name is Tricia Shaff, and I work at the Recovery Institute as a Peer Support Specialist.

My life has slowly been changing since I was diagnosed in 1991 with bipolar. Having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is what has brought me through the darkest days of my life.

When I was 15 years old I had my first episode. I experienced deep depression and mania on the other end. Depression for me was hearing voices, experiencing tormenting thoughts that I couldn't shake on my own, sleeping my days away, crying and being numb to the world around me, losing weight, and withdrawing from life.

With the help of my husband, family, friends, doctor, and church family, I've

slowly been able to rise above my circumstances with bipolar.

A huge testimony is that I had a healthy baby boy a year ago. There were no complications, despite being on medication during pregnancy. The doctor lowered the amount of lithium realizing it could of caused a hole in the baby's heart. My husband and I prayed and the baby's heart was completely normal. We are thankful and give Jesus the credit.

My appointments with my psychiatrist have been encouraging. He has shared with me that it could be possible to decrease and come off medication in the future. He has had patients that have done this and risen above their illness. It would mean work on my part, but it would be worth it. The way I could make this happen is if I learn coping skills, train myself to balance life's ups and down by riding the waves, and by letting the Word of God heal and transform my mind with God's medicine - scriptures.

Recovery is hard work but is well worth living a better quality life. Just like anything that is worth obtaining, its work to get there, but when you do, it is worth the struggle.

The sting of experience is on the way,

Act now my beloved while you still have strength,

Act while love is not yet a myth,

Discover these things through someone close,

That someone close is you—

By Philip Royster

Creative Angles

Depictions

There is a time when one really doesn't know which way to turn

Mental Fatigue begins to reign

And you're wondering how can I go on?

Oh how deep this wound you try to hide

But your eyes reveal the climaxing violence,

As the pain oozes by the membrane of your soul

You cry silently, but you cry,

You need a chance that only you can give

You need an opening in the world we live,

You need a faith so desperately,

You need a love to set you free,

Discover these things through someone close

Perhaps not me but do,

Act quickly sweet one don't delay,

The sting of experience is on the way,

Act now my beloved while you still have strength,

Act while love is not yet a myth,

Discover these things through someone close,

That someone close is you—

By Philip Royster

Creative Angles
(continued from pg 2)

My Father is Oil

By Paula Chomis

My Father is oil. He slid and slithered between...
My Father is oil. He kept things running smoothly.
My Father is oil in his dirty covered pants.
My Father is oil. He worked underneath the lube rack at Sears. He took us there as kids. That was the dirtiest place I had ever seen, and yet it held such possibilities. Who ever thought one could have a job getting so dirty and get paid for it?

My Father is oil. There is a whole universe under there that I had never seen. Little places to put dark smooth, slippery oil.

My Father is oil. It was always on his clothes, in his hairs, under his finger nails, and embedded into the palms of his hands.

My Father is oil. He kept our family running with two jobs, and whenever I smell oil, I think of my father. He has been gone thirty-three years. My father has kept me going. I am oil too.

Recovery Family

By Lori Vliek-Horace

You've always been there for me, you're like an angel that I see. I have loved you with all my heart & soul all my years with you. A three way connection with God and Holy Spirit, the spirit that binds us together. You and the world of discovery are beginning to be blessed.

Employee Chronicles
By Rosie Corliss

Steven Goodyke, joined Recovery Institute (RI) staff, as a Certified Peer Support and Computer Lab Specialist.

Steven was first introduced to the idea of recovery in 1980 from substance abuse, becoming familiar with the basic concepts. When diagnosed with a mental illness in 1985, Steven applied recovery principles, as he understood them, to his life. He adopted a wellness concept which included identifying people, places and things that were detrimental along with physical exercise to establish a healthy body and mind.

Steven actively participated in fitness with the exercise community, making many friends. Unfortunately, he explains, he lacked strong supports in mental health and eventually went off medication and relapsed. Life became a "ping-pong ball", as he vacillated between illness and health. Lacking emotional and physical supports, he relapsed every time difficult events occurred.

Steven again entered recovery in 1989; experiencing an extended period of recovery, and completed his Associates Degree in 1992. He then entered Grand Valley State University, and his doctors, thinking he was doing so well, took him off medication. Thus began another relapse, when he bounced back and forth and ended a 13 year relationship. In 2005 he moved to Kalamazoo to attend WMU. He began experiencing symptoms, but was able to complete a semester.

January of 2007 was followed by a year of homelessness and unemployment, and a 5th hospitalization. This resulted in referral to a local case management agency and introduction to the mental health community.

Steven explains, "That was key to where I am now", after meeting Peer Support Specialists and learning support concepts.

He was hired as a peer companion in August of 2007 and became involved in Power Branch, a then local peer organization. In 2008 he became a Certified Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) facilitator for InterAct.

He had set a 2 year goal to become a Peer Support Specialist, which he realized in June of 2009 when receiving state certification. Steven began work with RI in July, assuming responsibility for the Computer Lab. He is excited about the opportunity to utilize technical skills gained from his engineering degree and in offering recovery supports.

Future plans include maintaining recovery, making amends to family and friends, while reestablishing some relationships. Steven intends to return to college to complete a social work degree. Interests include computers, exercise, music and his cats!

Access & Outreach Team
By Cathleen Hursh

The Access and Outreach team would like to welcome two new individuals to their team; Deb Hite and Trisha Trimner! Deb and Trisha are Peer Companions and do all of their work out in the community. Peer companions provide company for those people who need someone to talk to; attend events or activities related to wellness.

Bill Jones and Marcia Probst are having great Success with the "Role Modeling Recovery" program at Borgess Hospital. Patients have been really excited about

Words of Wisdom

"Our connection with the world around us is a contributing factor in our wellness We have so much to offer the world and we gain so much in return....."

Recovery Innovations

"I've decided to be happy because its good for one's health."

Voltaire

"Laughter is as good as jogging for our heart, lungs and brain."

Gail Grenier Sweet

"Have the courage to live. Anyone can die."

Robert Cody

"Wherever you go, there you are."

Ernie Larsen

Carry the torch of hope - someone else may need the light!



recovery which has given the facilitator's plenty to do. They offer follow up contact with them when they leave the hospital. They also introduce them to programs in the community that will help to strengthen their recovery.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION

By Tina Lauer

What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination (Self-D) is a method of using the funds a person is eligible for in a different way. It emphasizes freedom of choice; control over one's own life; personal responsibility and access to services and supports. It is a process through which one can have greater control over his/her life. Eligible people have the chance to hire their own staff to provide necessary support or to change services.

What can I do with Self-D?

By working with case management and Recovery Institute staff, you can decide how you want to live life and the best way to reach your own recovery goals. Services can be directed specifically toward one's own needs and not the needs of a diverse group. This may include hiring staff or altering services.

How can I get involved in Self-Determining my services?

The first step in Self-D services is to meet with a self-determination specialist to review the amount of money Kalamazoo Community Mental Health pays each agency for any services they provide you. Then your current goals are discussed along with how Self-D can help you achieve those goals. The next step is to revise your person-centered-plan to include any new goals.

After requesting and receiving budget approval from KCMHSAS, your case manager can request authorization for the desired service from KCMHSAS. The Self-D team assists you in selecting and hiring the person of your choice to provide support.

What do others say about Self-D?

To one, "Self-determination means ...choosing one form of supported employment over

another." That choice made the difference to become "a productive member of my community rather than ... waiting on a check every month."

How has Self-D helped?

One lady hired staff to help with household activities, medication and social interaction. She was able to leave a group home and buy her own house. She is now employed as a peer support specialist.

A gentleman who lived in adult foster care was able to move in to his own apartment with direct hired supports. He now lives independently with a roommate.

Another lady hired a micro-enterprise assistant to support her jewelry making business. She has enjoyed the process of hiring her own staff and likes being in charge.

Peer Education

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health along with his comprehensive academic background.

Principles of Peer Support introduces peer employment training currently offered through Recovery Innovations of Az. (RIAZ), and the Appalachian Group in Georgia. The latter is the only current source of peer specialist training formally acknowledged by the state of Michigan. The state grants certification following training completion and a satisfactory score from a comprehensive written exam.

This three (3) credit hour course provides students with principles from the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), offering students with psychiatric disabilities better insight into their own recoveries and increasing awareness of their roles should they become

peer support specialists.

Dr. Harris has selected a group of certified peer support specialists to give input and structure to the curriculum as well as to facilitate class sessions. The peers have first hand knowledge from being on both sides of the mental health system and are able to provide unique perspectives.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) has allocated funds for eligible student peers to cover tuition and books. Interested applicants may attend an orientation with MRS held on Tuesdays. For additional information call 269-337-3700.

People interested in taking *Principles of Peer Support* in the winter semester may obtain an application from RI and will need to complete a KVCC application and take the Compass Test at one of the campuses.

**Transformation Group
By Houston Horace**

The Transformation Group consists of volunteer peers who unite for support, wellness, advocacy and peer counseling. It's fostered upon concepts that peers helping peers (empowerment), is the best recipe for sound mental health. The goal is to assist people in transforming their lives in recovery from mental illness and substance abuse.

The group's foundation is based on the belief that recovery is fostered through hope; and by virtue of peers who have been there are best qualified to offer that hope.

The group meets every Tuesday from 3 to 4 pm at RI, which is located in the Park Trades Bldg.

**Creative Angles
(continued from page 3)**

ILLUSIONS

by Doug Adams

When our illusions become a reality, time ceases to exist. The same is true with any form of addiction, as any and all types of addictions are an illusion. They are not real unless you choose to give the negative illusions of addictions control over your daily existence. Its as if we are listening to a record repeating itself over and over again—never changing—its an endless cycle of failures, disappointments, mistakes.

There is a reason we are born, and a reason we die. There is a reason why we plants our seeds and a reason why we reap what we sow. There is a reason we breakdown in the face of our reality and a reason we heal and build ourselves up.

There is a reason why we love and a reason why we hate. There is a reason we go to war and a reason why we make peace. There is a reason why we experience inner pain and a reason why we experience inner peace. There is a reason why we are filled with all this negative energy.

Everything we have experienced—the good and bad—in our life, happens for a reason. We learn from our bad mistakes, choices we've made—thoughts, emotions, are there for a reason. We can be our own worst enemy and we can be our own best friend. Most people choose to live in a world filled with illusions and addictions. What is sad, is they don't know it.

Newsletter Questions or Comments?
Call Rosie at Recovery Institute
269-343-6725