



TRANSITIONS – MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Reaching Out

Helping Children and Adults Live, Work and Grow in Our Community

FALL 2006 - VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SUCCESS!

Homeless Outreach earns participant a diploma and hope. *Page 2*



DROP-IN CENTER

Peer-run Lompoc Drop-In Center fits the needs of this northern Santa Barbara County community. *Page 3*



RECENT EVENTS

Opening Minds art show did just that! *Page 3*



HELP NEEDED!

Contributions of service, equipment and money fuel the Transitions Mental Health programs. You too can help. *Page 4*

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Growing Grounds Downtown features fresh plants, flowers, and produce while providing retail training and work opportunities for clients.

Growing Grounds Downtown

If you are looking for a refreshing experience, come visit our new retail store, Growing Grounds Downtown, nestled just across the street from the Mission in downtown San Luis Obispo. This charming shop is a delight to the senses, featuring plants, cut flowers and produce grown at both Growing Grounds Farms as well as garden essentials and gifts. It also provides work opportunities and training for our clients, particularly those who are interested in retail experience and working with the public.

The store is located at 956 Chorro Street and is open seven days a week at 11:00 am. Consumers of mental health services who are primarily referred to us by San Luis Obispo

County Department of Behavioral Health are eligible to work there.

Please join us for our Open House on Friday, December 1, from noon to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Lesta Travis at (805) 544-4967 or ltravis@t-mha.org.

Now open daily from 11 a.m. across from the Old Mission in downtown San Luis Obispo



LET US INTRODUCE YOU TO...

Supported Employment Program

Our Supported Employment Program (SEP) is a collaboration between TMHA and the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). SEP acknowledges that people with disabilities aspire to work because employment is an important source of dignity, purpose and identity. Successful employment brings increased self-esteem and social connections, financial independence and meaningful participation in our community.

The opportunity to have a regular job is an important part of the recovery process. SEP identifies local employers who would like to hire trained, motivated employees and matches them with consumers of mental health services who seek jobs. Other program services geared towards assisting adults and transitional age youth (ages 16-25) in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment are:

- Job Seekers Club
- Vocational Assessments
- Work Adjustment Programs
- Job Placement Assistance
- Job Coaching
- Follow-up Services

The Supported Employment Program also provides assistance with vocational and educational exploration, job development and linkage to Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

For further information, please contact Deanna Graziano at (805) 541-5144, ext. 167, or e-mail dgraziano@t-mha.org.



COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Homeless Outreach Program

The Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) is a collaborative between TMHA and the SLO County Department of Behavioral Health, funded by Assembly Bill 2034. Homeless adults with mental illness receive mental health rehabilitation services, case management, housing, vocational development, and referrals to other health and human services. The HOP program focuses on those individuals who have not been able to access services in traditional ways. TMHA employs three Outreach Workers to cover SLO County, connecting with clients and providing needed items such as clothing, tents, sleeping bags, basic food items, and referrals to other health and human services. Three Outreach Assistants provide transportation, donation coordination and food distribution to the clients. One Residential Case Manager works with the 14 residents in three HOP residences to address activities of daily living, communication and mental health rehabilitation. In addition, one Vocational Case Manager works with clients to develop job skills and progress toward employment within the community. Also working from our HOP location are several SLO County employees who provide case management support, medication management and drug and alcohol counseling.



HOP currently has 80 clients enrolled in the program, with 70 of those clients housed within the county. Of those 80 clients, 52 are involved in vocational training activities and 26 have secured paid employment.

A True Success Story...



M.R. is a 49-year old client who had been homeless for more than 25 years. He has had several run-ins with law enforcement

agencies throughout the country, often resulting in extended periods of incarceration. During his periods of homelessness, M.R. did not take medications to address the symptoms of his mental illness (schizophrenia, paranoid type,) and often used drugs and alcohol to self medicate when his symptoms became more intense. M.R. has been enrolled in HOP for approximately 2 years. Currently he is working as a delivery driver and is responsible for maintenance of the work vehicles. He has recently moved into his own studio apartment in SLO after more than 1 year of successful residence within the HOP housing. M.R. has also recently graduated from Cuesta College with his A.A. in business management and is planning to return to Cuesta to complete another degree in mathematics. M.R. stated that he is very proud of being the Treasurer of his A.A. group. We are very proud of M.R. and his accomplishments!

For further information, contact Joe Madsen at (805) 541-5144, ext. 179, or e-mail jmadsen@t-mha.org.

RECENT EVENTS

Peer-To-Peer Training

Transitions-Mental Health Association has a new Peer-to-Peer Education Course – developed by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. This is a nine week, experiential education course on the topic of recovery for any person with serious mental illness who is interested in establishing and maintaining wellness.

Sessions are led by teams of three trained “mentors,” or peer-teachers, who are experienced at living well with mental illness. The diversity of experience among participants affords for a lively dynamic that leaves everyone with a little more knowledge



Mentors completed the TMHA hosted training

and support about living with mental illness.

In August, 2006, TMHA hosted training for the mentors of Peer-to-Peer Courses. Eighteen people from Bakersfield, Salinas, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Nipomo, and Santa Maria completed the training.

For fall schedule and more information, contact Carlos Rusnak at (805) 544-2678 or e-mail crusnak@t-mha.org.

2006 Opening Minds Art Show

In May, TMHA held its 10th annual Opening Minds Art Show at the San Luis Obispo Art Center. The show encourages local community members who have a mental illness to artistically express their thoughts and feelings. Opening Minds was designed to stimulate the inclusion and acceptance of the mentally ill, so that they are not defined in terms of their disease but by their strengths, creative gifts, and by the contributions they make to the



2006 featured work by Rebecca Carroll

community. Approximately 500 community members visited the show to view over 150 works of art created by adults and children with diagnosed mental illness, who reside in SLO and Santa Barbara Counties. In addition, “Journeys,” an audio exhibit featuring the spoken life stories of twelve community members who have a mental illness, was presented with funding from the California Council for the Humanities.

Kiwanis Unity BBQ

On July 20th, over 150 TMHA staff and clients from Paso Robles to Santa Maria enjoyed a delicious Santa Maria-style BBQ prepared once again by the SLO Morning Kiwanis Club. This annual event



held at Cuesta Park is a highlight of the summer, filled with food, games, crafts, live music and lots of opportunity to visit. A fun time was had by all. Thank you once again Kiwanians for a job well done!

NEWS FROM NORTHERN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Lompoc Drop-in Center

The Lompoc Drop-In Center is proving to be a nice fit in the community. Opening doors for consumers of mental health services in June 2004, the peer-run center offers relaxing quarters in an easygoing environment.

Each day, members sign in and choose a chore to do that day. Food is available at the



center thanks to a Lompoc Human Services grant. Dinner is prepared three times a week with interested consumers planning the meal, preparing the food and taking care of clean up. In addition, members can and do prepare themselves meals and snacks throughout the day, every day the center is open. There is also a washer and dryer available for use to wash clothes at no charge.

A recreation space includes ping-pong, foosball, exercise equipment, use of on-line computers and TV with VCR and DVD players. Those enjoying music may use a piano, play guitars or play a CD on the sound system. Trained peer staff members provide support and guidance such as helping with job searches and referrals to available community resources. In an average week, 32 consumers use the facility.

The Lompoc Drop-in Center is located at 916 North I Street, and is currently open Monday thru Saturday.

For more information, please contact Mike Iman at (805) 736-7611 or miman@t-mha.org.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hope is fundamental to our success at TMHA. It helps to guide our extraordinary clients toward success – it fuels our dedicated staff, and then touches all of you as an educated and accepting community. With this first issue of our new newsletter, “Reaching Out,” my hope is that each of you finds inspiration in these pages and learns just a bit more about your friends, neighbors and family members who live, work and grow in our community. Thank you for your continued generous support.

Jill Bolster-White, Executive Director



TRANSITIONS Mental Health Association

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How You Can Help...

Volunteer

Volunteers are always welcome in our programs as well as at our fundraising events. One or two hours of your time each week can make an enormous difference.

Donate

Donations of money, service, vehicles or other needed items are both appreciated and vital to continuing the quality programs we provide.

Funds are used to purchase equipment for the farm, essential household items for our supportive housing, and clothing for homeless adults and teens.

- Please include TMHA in your year-end tax planning
- Program “wish lists” can be viewed on our website at www.t-mha.org
- Youth Programs need gift certificates to Target, Best Buy, and other teen-friendly stores

If you would like to donate your financial support or time, please visit our website:

www.t-mha.org

or contact us at:

Transitions Mental Health Association
Post Office Box 15408
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
(805) 541-5144

Thank You!

Looking Ahead

Annual Poinsettia Sale Fundraiser

TMHA is offering beautiful poinsettia plants for the holidays. Order now to receive your plants the week after Thanksgiving. If you have questions, or to place your order, contact Shirl Freed at (805) 541-5144, ext. 120.



Kiwanis Auction Fundraiser

The Kiwanis de Tolosa Auction will be held at the SLO Vet's Hall on Saturday, November 11, 2006. Enjoy silent and live auctions, great refreshments and lots of fun. \$50.00 admits two people and tickets are currently on sale. Proceeds will be shared with TMHA. Please contact Lesta Travis at (805) 541-5144, ext. 115.



Brewers Dinner Fundraiser

This magnificent presentation of gourmet food and imported and domestic beers is being held on Sunday, February 18, 2007. Advance tickets are a must and the event sells out *very* quickly. Rick Wolfe coordinates this event, and he can be reached at (805) 541-5144, ext. 116.



Antique Treasures Fundraiser

Our annual antique and collectibles appraisal and sales event will be held at the Alex Madonna Expo in San Luis Obispo on Saturday and Sunday, March 17 & 18, 2007. You won't want to miss this gathering of over 40 antique vendors plus professional appraisals of your own pieces. Please watch our website for further details, or call our Antique Treasures Hotline at (805) 541-5144, ext. 140.



Newly Updated TMHA Website

Our TMHA website has a fresh new look. Please visit www.t-mha.org to find information about our programs, events, job opportunities and more.



Atascadero Housing Project

TMHA is partnering with the SLO Housing Authority and SLO County Behavioral Health Services to purchase a 9 unit housing project located in Atascadero. More information to follow as the project moves forward.



Lompoc Housing Project

In Lompoc, we are working on a joint project with a local developer to provide 19 units of mental health housing combined with 18 units of workforce housing. We will keep you posted on our progress!

