



Transitions Mental
Health Association

Reaching Out

INSPIRING HOPE, GROWTH, RECOVERY AND WELLNESS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Darryl Elliott
Stephen K. Hall
Chris Richardson
Lisa Thornhil

TMHA BOARD MEMBERS

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Success in Service

Phil Strahl's motto is "Success in Service." It defines him.

He's found a niche at Growing Grounds Downtown, but it hasn't been a direct path.

After graduating from Cal Poly, Phil nabbed a good job at Hewlett-Packard as an information designer. Over time, he noticed increasing symptoms of (and was diagnosed with) Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, an anxiety disorder in which people have unwanted and repeated thoughts, feelings, or sensations that make them perform rituals compulsively.

"The OCD caused me to check things over and over again... doors, faucets, text I had written at work. I didn't trust myself or feel capable. My work suffered." Depression and stress from his job and life in the Bay Area debilitated him and accelerated his symptoms. He was eventually laid off from ten years at HP and moved back to San Luis Obispo County in 2005. "I did not believe in myself at all. I had low self-esteem and no self worth and an abundance of fear of failure."

After starting cognitive behavioral therapy with an OCD specialist, Phil enrolled in a Peer-to-Peer class developed by the National Alliance for Mental Illness. "This was such an empowering episode in my life.

...I didn't know others could have empathy for me, or share my experiences and struggles."

Also, through the San Luis Obispo Department of Rehabilitation, Phil developed an individual service plan, which included his goals for employment, and was introduced to the



Phil at a busy Thursday Night Farmer's Market in SLO

Supported Employment Program at TMHA. "I made a decision that, by working again, my quality of life would improve and would lead me to wellness. SEP works with consumers to find something that fits for them... They helped to completely remove the stigma that I had felt."

Phil was nervous at first, fearful of facing stigma from employers and of being ostracized by co-workers. His fears were resolved when he started work at Growing Grounds Downtown. "My job coaches helped me to grow in an unexplored environment and encouraged me on a daily basis, making me feel part of a team. They also asked me how they could help me

overcome barriers like locking the safe and front gate. I had a built-in support system in place at work."

Today Phil is a TMHA job coach, guiding new employees from the SEP program. He sees this as a way to give back, coming full circle in his own journey. "I feel like I have a partner for life in TMHA, as long as I am willing. Recovery is an ongoing process and their support helps me to continue on my journey."



Tending shop at Growing Grounds Downtown Store



SLO the Stigma

We've unveiled the latest phase of our campaign to demystify mental illness, reduce stigma and educate our community about local recovery resources. TMHA is proud to reveal how achievable wellness can be.

Mission, Restated

What's the most informative phrase about TMHA a new client or community supporter might encounter? What sets the tone and path for programs and services and guides our use of resources? The mission statement.

The breadth and depth of TMHA's priorities weren't quite captured in the old version. So, after seeking input from the TMHA Board of Directors, staff and clients, the marketing committee crafted a new mission statement and complimentary tagline. Join with us as we work to achieve it!

Mission Statement: *Transitions-Mental Health Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating stigma and promoting recovery and wellness for people with mental illness through work, housing, community and family support services.*

Tagline: *Inspiring hope, growth, recovery and wellness in our communities.*

Board Member Spotlight

Leadership in Action

Lisa Thornill has witnessed first-hand the need for greater mental health services in North Santa Barbara County. A registered nurse, Lisa has committed the last 22 years to case management at Marian Medical Center, helping patients navigate the medical system, guiding them to financial and social services. She's seen many patients with psychological challenges, but found too few mental health services available in Santa Maria.

Lisa joined the TMHA board of directors, after her mother, Nancy Johnson, stepped down following 5 years of service. "TMHA does a wonderful job communicating with its board members and making it easy to participate and have regular dialogue with staff and administration," she said.

As a new board member, Lisa has partnered with TMHA to directly address mental health issues that correspond with her own passions. TMHA's mission to erase the stigma of mental illness is a top priority for Lisa. She is dedicated to implementing a campaign like SLO the Stigma in her community and believes many more people would pursue treatment if the options were clear. As a board Member of the League of



Lisa in her natural element, guiding the ship.

Women Voters in Santa Maria, Lisa is helping to organize a TMHA-led community education presentation, and she is already planning follow-ups for the coming years.

Another priority: increasing available services. Lisa has championed the Rancho Hermosa project as quintessentially TMHA... a holistic combination of housing, on-site supportive services, a new home for the Recovery Learning Community (RLC) of Santa Maria, and a retail enterprise that will serve the community and be staffed by consumers. This is "action around mission," she said, words truly spoken by someone who lives them.

Restoring Homes, Lives at Nipomo Street Studios

The promise of a new start for someone who is homeless begins with helping them find a home. Replacing insecurity and uncertainty with a roof and a bed – especially for someone with a severe mental illness – provides the stable footing that gives all other recovery efforts the possibility of success.

Creating a home is not only a question of providing living space, but of developing a livable, nurturing environment. "After two years of looking for the perfect property and location, this opportunity came up, and it was just what we were looking for," said Denise Rea, TMHA Adult Services, Housing and Support Division Director. "It has such a nice historic look, and we intend to keep it that way."

Restoration will begin in early 2012 on a newly-acquired, 1925-era home on Nipomo Street in downtown San Luis Obispo. The location offers walkable access to services, shops, restaurants, the bus stop and employment. The structure will retain the vintage architectural design of the area, remaining visually complimentary with its immediate neighbors.

Plans for Nipomo Street Studios meet the recommendations set by the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) Housing Steering Committee for the City of San Luis Obispo and include eight new, single-occupancy apartments for adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a diagnosis of severe mental illness.

COMMUNITY

A Wellness Evolution

For over three decades, TMHA has developed community-based social rehabilitation programs, providing much-needed encouragement and support. "It gives me a chance to get out, and be around people that I know are going to support me," said a member.

Unsurprisingly, programs like Hope House in San Luis Obispo, Safe Haven in Arroyo Grande and the PEP Center in Atascadero have grown exponentially. To accommodate demand, and to offer effective and proven resources to members, this year the programs have been re-organized and unified into SLO Wellness Centers. Hours have been increased from 20 to 30, with more weekend availability in the works.

Each program now offers much more than just social rehabilitation. Members have access to peer

support and advocacy, links to community resources, assistance in education, vocational assistance, wellness and skills workshops through the Live Well program, and more.

SLO Wellness Centers perpetuate wellness by promoting members as leaders. From heading up skills workshops to planning activities, the leadership team ensures that each Center is a place to learn to live well. Said a member, "Coming to the group really makes a difference. It means a lot to me in my life."

Members on a Wellness Center trip to Monterey



"I'm excited about the possibilities for an expanded Wellness Center in the heart of downtown SLO," said Barry Johnson, TMHA Rehabilitation and Advocacy Services Director. "It will provide an even greater amount of visibility and access to our mental health support services." The main building will be divided into two



Rendering of Nipomo Street Studios by Joel Snyder and the team at Caron Architecture

studio units and a community room, which will host the THMA's SLO Wellness Center (a veritable hive of mental wellness services). A second structure with six additional studio units will be built at the rear of the lot.

"We're looking forward to the promise of this project: creating a safe place to rediscover wellness," said Jill Bolster-White, TMHA Executive Director. "We're grateful for our partners who are helping us create eight new homes at Nipomo Street Studios." Funding is provided by Affordable Housing Funds from the City of San Luis Obispo, Rabobank, and MHSA through SLO County Mental Health Services.

Seeking Wellness Support Programs?

Call to find nearby programs. New members welcome.

SLO: 805-541-6813

Arroyo Grande: 805-489-9659

Atascadero: 805-464-0512

Meghan Walters, Wellness Center Program Manger: 805-540-6577 or mwalters@t-mha.org

Expanded Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday — 9:30-3:30

Wednesday — 2:30-7:30

Planned activities and groups on Saturday & Sunday

SEP Expanding

Supported Employment has expanded to Northern Santa Barbara County and will be participating in the Co-Operative Program with the County Department of Rehabilitation and Department of Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health Services. Ready to join in? Know someone who may benefit? *Contact Deanna Graziano, SEP Program Manager, at dgraziano@t-mha.org.*

COMMUNITY



Rancho Hermosa is nearly complete! 47 apartments and 2,000 feet of office space will be available in the fall in Santa Maria. The Santa Maria Recovery Learning Center will move to its new location at Rancho Hermosa in late 2013.

Prop. 63: Ballast in a Stormy Economy

The nation's recession and resulting state budget crisis have strained every part of our safety net, including mental health services. Providers are doing their best with fewer resources to meet the needs of clients, and the need for quality mental health services is greater than ever. Community mental health providers have witnessed firsthand the decades of inadequate fiscal resources that make it difficult to adequately help people with mental illness and their families. Many have cycled through emergency rooms, jails, and life on the streets before walking through our doors.

We were encouraged in 2004 when voters agreed that up-front investments in mental wellness make more sense than constantly responding to crises. Because of Proposition 63 (the Mental Health Services Act), we have been

able to develop successful programs that bring together the necessary ingredients – from housing to employment – that are critical to mental recovery and wellness.

Although intended to expand the availability of services, state budget cuts to mental health services have made Prop. 63 the backbone of our mental health delivery service system. Unfortunately, it also means that mental health services are still not available to everyone who needs them.

With the state's safety net tattered and a slow economic recovery predicted, we are relying more now than ever on Prop. 63. It is a vital part of a community mental health system that benefits all Californians, and improves the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people with serious mental illness every day.



Transitions
Mental Health
Association

805.540.6500
www.t-mha.org

SLO Hotline 800.549.4499

Suicide prevention and mental health support. Confidential, free and available 24 hours of every day.



HOW YOU CAN HELP...

Volunteer

Volunteers are always welcome in our programs and funding 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 farms, essential household items for our supportive housing, clothes for adults and teens and more.

- Please include TMHA in your year-end tax planning
- Stay updated by visiting our web site at www.t-mha.org

If you would like to donate your financial support or time, please contact us at:

Transitions Mental Health Association
Post Office Box 15408
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
(805) 540-6500
www.t-mha.org

Thank You!

LOOKING AHEAD

Celebrating six years in business, drop by the annual **Growing Grounds Downtown Open House**, Friday, December 2nd from 2 to 7 p.m. for refreshments, door prizes, poinsettias and handmade wreath demonstrations. 956 Chorro Street in Downtown San Luis Obispo (across from the Mission).



Tickets always sell out quickly for the **Brewers Dinner**, so act now! The 2012 event will be held again January 15. The price is \$100 per person inclusive.

Journey of Hope 2012 will be held the evening of Wednesday, February 1 at New Life Church in Pismo Beach. A community forum on living mentally well, the event offers an opportunity to interact with mental health and community leaders, learn about local resources and, best of all, celebrate hope.



For over 30 years **Bowl-A-Thon** has been a tradition in our community. Join us to help "Strike Out Stigma" and start to build your team! The 2012 Bowl-A-Thon dates are: March 2, 3, & 4; March 9, 10, 11, & 12; and March 16, 17, & 18. Bowling Locations include Pismo Bowl, Paso Bowl, Cal Poly, and Santa Maria Rancho Bowl. Location schedule to be announced soon.

OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION

Every year, the **Morning Kiwanis** provide a BBQ at Cuesta Park for TMHA program members and staff. We look forward to this hallmark of summer and sincerely appreciate it!



Per Bacco Winery hosted the fourth annual **SLO Wine and Grill Affair**, held this year in August. Our thanks to the wineries and vendors who generously participated, and everyone who came to enjoy the day.

Sponsored and held at Edna Valley Vineyard, **Ten Trunks of Treasure** featured a gourmet lunch by José de Et Voilà Restaurant, wine by Edna Valley, music by Café Musique and – of course – great prizes!

A Harvest of activity, from music, specialty booths, and good food provided by Santa Maria Noontime Kiwanis BBQ team, the **4th Annual Harvest Festival** at the Growing Grounds Farm in Santa Maria was fun for all! All proceeds support Growing Grounds Farm and the people who depend on it for employment and horticultural therapy. Our sponsors include Santa Barbara Foundation, Spencer's Market of Santa Maria, and FoodMax.

