

the



GrapeVine

Lenawee Community
Mental Health Authority

Vol. 9 Issue 3
September/October 2008

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A Word With Our Director



By the time this edition of *The Grapevine* goes out Labor Day will have come and gone...and summer fashions will no longer be "acceptable". The sun has already moved a little further south, the corn and beans and trees in Lenawee County are starting to change, football practice has started and folks are beginning to anticipate cooler days, chilly evenings, warm cider, doughnuts, hayrides and that "crunch" when biting into a crisp Michigan apple...and then fall changes to winter....*not* a change that I am looking forward to.

Change is predictably inevitable, often unwelcome and seldom comes at a convenient time in our lives. However, this November our country will experience a change in which we can participate. Every American citizen who is a registered voter will have an opportunity to help choose the next president and vice-president of the United States of America. And, when all the votes have been counted *this*

election will prove to have been one of the historic moments in the life of our country. There are also state and local elections that are significant to us as individuals, as a community and as a human service organization. These are opportunities to participate in change.

I urge you to make sure you are registered to vote, read, discuss and debate the candidates and issues as you prepare yourself to exercise one of your most important rights as a citizen of this great country....**VOTE on November 4.**

VOTER REGISTRATION

As noted in Roger's article, this is a truly historic vote—the likes of which none of us has seen. If you are not yet registered to vote, it's not too late. We can help you. Join us in September. LMCHA in partnership with Dept. of Human Services, Goodwill, Community Action Agency, and the County Clerk will be holding a voter registration. For more information contact Customer Services at 263-8905.

DID YOU GET AN ECONOMIC STIMULUS CHECK?

State Representative Dudley Spade (D-Tipton) announced that, according to data compiled by the Michigan League of Human Services, 1,411 Lenawee County residents who are eligible to receive an economic stimulus check have not filed a tax return for 2007. Lenawee County is among the top 20 counties statewide in the total number of eligible residents who have not yet claimed their stimulus checks. The group includes disabled veterans, other persons with disabilities and low-income seniors who otherwise would not have to file a tax return. To receive the \$300 stimulus payment (\$600 for a married couple) a tax return is required. The deadline for filing has been extended to October 15, 2008.

If you have questions, contact Representative Spade's office at 517 373-1706 or for other local resources contact LCMHA Customer Service at 517 265-8905.



LCMHA Staff Updates

Patti Studnicka—5 years as of September.

Kay Ross—20 years as of September.

Joint Commission

By Melinda Perez

Beginning in 2006, the Joint Commission began unannounced surveys for continuing accreditation. Previously, organizations that were to be surveyed were required to publish an announcement in the community that the Joint Commission was coming to survey the organization and request that the public report any concerns about the organization in regards to safety or quality of care to the surveyor while they were conducting the survey. Now that we no longer know when the Joint Commission surveyor will be here to conduct the survey, LCMHA is required to notify all LCMHA consumers, parents, guardians and community members who have concerns about the safety or quality of care provided in the organization may report these concerns to the Joint Commission. Your care as a LCMHA consumer, parent or guardian of a LCMHA consumer or a community member or provider for a LCMHA consumer will not be affected in any manner if you choose to report safety or quality of care concerns to the Joint Commission.

If you, as a consumer, parent or guardian, or community member would like to make a complaint about safety or the quality of care offered by Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority, you may do so by contacting the Joint Commission at: E-mail: complaint@jointcommission.org, Fax: Office of Quality Monitoring (630) 792-5636, Mail: Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint

Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.

You may submit complaints with your name and contact information or anonymously. The Joint Commission will treat your name as confidential information and not disclose it to any other party; however it may be necessary to share the complaint with the subject organization in the course of a complaint investigation. If you have any questions regarding submitting a complaint, please contact the Joint Commission at (800) 994-6610 8:30 to 5 pm, Central Time, weekdays.

Moments of Light and Dark

By Trudi Grossman

We all have those kinds of days, whether we are dealing with a mental illness or just trying to muddle through life's messy and unexpected curve balls. Most people usually take those curve balls and let them bounce off, like small annoying little pests and move on with their day. When you have a mental illness, repelling those pests can sometimes be more difficult and require much more coping skills than someone else.

I call them the days of darkness. A once sunny day that seemed to flow and ebb throughout the river of our lives can drastically change with a single incident or a course of several. As with most mental illness sufferers, our first sign of the train going off the tracks sends us into isolation and symptoms flair up causing panic in our minds. A day that was once bright and sunny has darkened into storm clouds, and our coping shields weigh heavily in our hands. What has taken weeks or years to build, can be pushed down or splintered in a matter of minutes. This is where we learn resiliency and find the strength and coping mechanisms to turn darkness into light once again.

Every one of us has some degree of resilience, something that urges us to heal, or we wouldn't have made it this far in life. We

have to utilize our coping skills by learning about ourselves and finding both inner and outer resources. It may mean finding a recovery group in your area or turning to a close friend for help. It takes great strength to fight a dark day. Yet we have stood and fought these enormous battles when even the smallest of courage fluttered throughout our minds and hearts.

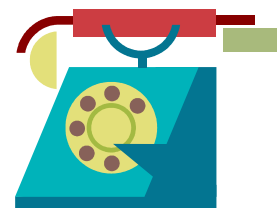
These dark days are merely tunnels. While in the beginning when it feels as if the darkness is all consuming, remember there is light at the end of this tunnel and the need and commitment to push through these hard times is much stronger than the darkness itself. There is a vast assortment of community resources for help when the problems seem to be insurmountable. Light breaks where no sun shines, when we feel the touch and guidance of another human being reaching out in our darkest hour. Please contact your local Community Mental Health for help in your time of need.

Stay Tuned for Official Launch of 2-1-1 in Lenawee!

By Amy Palmer

Progress is moving forward to officially launch 2-1-1 in Lenawee County! **2-1-1** is a confidential helpline that offers supportive services and connections to the social services you need. 2-1-1 makes the connections that can help you find solutions – in just one call!

Watch the local media for more information about **2-1-1**. If you have any questions, please contact Lenawee United Way at 263-4696 or visit us online at www.lenaweeunitedway.org.



The protest of Tropical Thunder

by Mary Metz



This movie defines the person portrayed as a "retard". Mental advocacy groups are outraged because of the usage of the term to describe the disabled. It's a stigma the mentally disabled just does not need. We strive for someone's abilities, not what we cannot do.

Protesters held up signs saying, "Call me by my name, not by my label."

Ban the movie, ban the word.

Discrimination against any population happens because people are uneducated about mental illness. We are not "crazy," We have a chemical imbalance in the brain, which should be looked at like any other illness such as diabetes, high blood pressure or any other condition that requires medications to regulate stability. We struggle every day, sometimes just to get out of bed in the morning, suffering from depression and mania, trying to have a "positive attitude" about life in general. From what I've heard this movie doesn't do the mentally disabled a bit of good to be discriminated against. My solution to solve this problem would be to invite anyone to call Daybreak, Community Connections, Hope Community Center, or New Focus Clubhouse all in Adrian, Then schedule a tour and see for yourself what mentally disabled individuals do just to make one lunch a day (New Focus) and work together to run the different rehabilitation organizations throughout Lenawee County.

Come on and Get Happy!!

By Trudi Grossman

Statistically Denmark is considered to be the happiest country in the world and down the scale is the United States which ranks 16th. Often down the road in recovery from a mental illness or even a physical illness, one unearths the unbelievable easy notion of being happy. It seems like such a simple task, but under the microscope it becomes apparent that happiness eludes all of us at one time or another. The question, "What makes YOU happy" is often met with an eerily awkward silence or that eye roll to the ceiling effect, which shows you have to think about that question. But happiness is always within us, it's not out there somewhere, its in our soul and when unleashed to dance it can shine brighter than any star in the sky.

When recovering from a mental illness you learn to dismiss all the excess baggage and rubbish in your life and dig down deep to your inner happiness. Back to the time when as a child, we were just plain happy, we did not have to work to reach happiness. As children, amusing us was so carefree and simple. Little things like chasing a lightning bug in the front yard, or chalk drawing on the sidewalk on a lazy summer day were fun for almost any kid. A simple joy we never had to pursue, as it pursued us in so many wonderful ways.

As we got older and had to assume responsibilities at an alarming rate, we lost our ability to truly enjoy the people and simple things around us. We lost our inner child to a world of cell phones, paying the bills and assignments at work. When you enter the world of mental illness and finally get beyond "being" the symptoms, some of our inner child starts to emerge again. In recovery, which is always a process, you start to reexamine what truly makes you



happy. Recovery slowed me down enough to let me see happiness in the most smallest of ways. While my symptoms were on the mend, I learned that I can be as innocent as a child again and smile into the sun just for the sake of feeling the warmth on my face.

Today I have progressed enough to look into my heart and pull happy moments out of it like a rabbit out of a hat and it feels glorious. Things that make me happy: Cotton Candy, Shrek movies, the smell of a summer barbecue, snuggling with my dog, a refreshing pedicure, a great song from an incredible memory and seeing my children laugh for absolutely no reason at all.

"The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance; the wise grows it under his feet!"

LCMHA Informational Meetings

Starting Wednesday, October 1, 2008 Customer Services will be holding an Informational Meeting each month to inform consumers and their families about LCMHA, and answer any questions you may have.

Who should attend these meetings? You should attend a meeting if you are new to the LCMHA system and would like to know more about what we are about. Also, anyone who has any question about their services, providers, complaints, or general questions about mental health or developmental disabilities should also attend.

Why should you attend? The mental health field is constantly changing. It is best to know as much as you can about the services you receive and what is available to you. The more knowledge you have about your services and what is available, the better your recovery will be.

When: The first Wednesday of every month, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the West Wing of LCMHA offices.

If you have any questions about this meeting or about your services

Lenawee County Fair

This year, LCMHA was happy to share our Lenawee County Fair Booth with other local groups like Inter-Connections Drop In Center, New Focus Clubhouse, Goodwill/Workers On Wheels, American Cancer Society/Tobacco Reduction Coalition, the Domestic Violence Task Force and Lenawee Safe Kids. All our partners displayed their information for a day as well as helping to spread the word about LCMHA. What a great community collaboration this was! Thanks to all our partners for their support in making this year's Fair a success.



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK SEPTEMBER 7-13, 2008

Did you know that, in the United States, more people die by suicide (50% more!) each year than by homicide? One person completes suicide every 16 minutes?

Or that it's estimated that more than 5 million people in the United States have been directly affected by a suicide?

Experts believe that most suicidal individuals do not want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing. Experts also know that suicidal crises tend to be brief. When suicidal behaviors are detected early, lives can be saved. There are services available in our community for the assessment and treatment of suicidal behaviors and their underlying causes. We have trained Gatekeepers to help identify individuals at risk for suicide.

September 7 through September 13 is National Suicide Prevention Week. Please join Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority and the Lenawee Suicide Prevention Workgroup in supporting

suicide prevention. Together we can reduce the number of lives shaken by a needless and tragic death.

Lenawee's own Representative Dudley Spade will be presenting a Resolution to the Michigan House of Representatives on September 9 declaring the week September 7, 2008 as Michigan's Suicide Prevention Week.

If you or someone you know is at risk for suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-800-273-TALK. (www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). If you or someone you know needs immediate help contact LCMHA at 800-664-5005 or go to the nearest emergency room.

For more information or Gatekeeper training, contact Kathryn Szewczuk at 517 263-8905.

FOSTER YOUTH & HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE Western Michigan University

In April 2007 Western Michigan University joined more than twenty other Michigan colleges and universities at the Foster Care – Higher Education Summit, co-sponsored by the Michigan Campus Compact and the Department of Human Services. The purpose of the meeting was to share information and begin post-secondary educational planning for youth formerly in foster care in Michigan who have aged out of the system. Planning for the WMU Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative began in the months following the initial summit meeting, but accelerated during the fall, 2007 semester after the planning team received support from WMU's President, Dr. John Dunn, to move forward with planning efforts.

The overall goal of the WMU Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative is to increase opportunities for foster youth to pursue higher education and to provide supports

that promote success and well-being throughout the undergraduate experience at WMU. The initiative aims to create a *community of scholars* among WMU students who "aged out" of the foster care system. More than providing these students with an undergraduate education, we are developing a strategy to help former foster youth transition into adulthood through the experience of higher education.

The Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative is a comprehensive effort that involves multiple partnerships across departments and units within our campus community, and between WMU and other community constituents, such as child welfare agencies and local colleges. The initiative has three major components that include:

Student Outreach and Recruitment: The WMU Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative will specifically target and encourage youth who are aging out of foster care to apply to WMU as freshmen or transfer students. We want foster youth who qualify for university-level education to consider WMU as their first choice for higher education. **Student**

Retention: The WMU Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative is designed to send foster youth the message that they are welcome on campus and to promote a sense of belonging that is sometimes absent in the foster care system.

Student Career Planning: The WMU Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative is not only concerned about the success of former foster youths at school but also in preparing youth to move on from school after graduation. Since these youth do not have the opportunity to "move back home" while considering career options, efforts toward career planning will begin early in their academic careers. For more info about this program contact Western Michigan University, Admission—Penny Bundy 269-387-2010, or www.wmich.edu/fyit.

Lenawee Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC)

By Mary Harman

I'm very excited to be writing about the Lenawee Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC)! I'm inspired by the members of the RICC, which encourages membership of those with disabilities to join, contribute, form partnerships and take on leadership roles. I highly respect and value their opinions and unique insight.

This year, Lenawee's RICC Work Plan is off to a great start, concentrating on action in the areas of transportation, healthcare and information....while reaching out to others with disabilities, families, friends and the community. The RICC strives to affect positive change in the many systems that people with disabilities must contend with every day of their lives – which for most with disabilities is often on their own with negative or questionable results.

Together, we can ALL make a difference! In my position as our local RICC's Public Policy Coordinator and as a mother and advocate of a minor child with severe, multiple disabilities, I'm learning a lot. I'm finding out what all the issues are....at the local, state and national level. I'm beginning to form questions that require thoughtful answers....and action. I know that there are steps to change and that the formulating of solutions must be reasonable and compassionate.

How do we get there? We get there together! Remember, that even one person can affect change; even one person can make a difference. Be a part of making that difference and attend a meeting of the Lenawee RICC or join today! Everyone is welcome!

COMMUNITY FORUM

In August, the Michigan Department of Community Health (DCH) released its Concept Paper,



“Focusing a Partnership for Renewal and Recommitment to Quality and Community in the Michigan Public Mental Health System”. The title is a long way of re-introducing the Department's commitment to improving local and regional partnerships. An important part of the Mental Health System is realizing the “community benefit” that can only come from increasing and strengthening local partnerships. As we often do, LCMHA is again asking consumers, their families, advocates and other community stakeholders to participate in a community forum to help guide our planning for next year (and into the future). Your input is critical for our success in serving Lenawee County and will help us make recommendations about the future of Michigan's Public Mental Health System. Please join us on October 29th (6pm-8pm) for a light dinner with about an hour of discussion to follow. For exact time and location, please call Customer Services at 263-8905.

Drop In Center Board News

The center is looking a few good women and/or men! Do you fit that criteria? Want to be a part of a group who have the desire to see the Drop In Center run smoothly and efficiently for everyone? This is your chance. Your commitment of at least one meeting a month will help ensure the continuation of this facility for all to participate in. Not sure what this position means? Contact Michelle and she will fill you in with all the details. You can reach her each day, 2:00 pm—5:00 pm at 265-9588 if you would be interested in becoming a member of the Inter-Connections Drop In Center Board.



Domestic Violence and the Bible Workshop

Domestic Violence and the Bible Workshop presented by the Lenawee County Domestic Violence Task Force will be October 6, 2008 at Siena Heights University, Dominican Hall. Call Candy Taulton at 265-6776 or Joyce Faulhaber at 266-8525 for more information.



7th Annual Sharing Hope Registration Form

Registration deadline – 10/13/08

NO CHARGE

Registration a must

Please fill this section out and mail to:

WCHO

ATTN: Customer Service

555 Towner

Ypsilanti, MI 48197

or

Call 877.779.9707

e-mail (preferred) to

customer-service@ewashtenaw.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

County: _____

Breakout Sessions

*Please check a breakout for
Session 1 & for Session 2*

Session 1 Session 2

- Ask the Experts MI
- Ask the Experts DD
- Self Esteem
- Microenterprise

Lunch is provided – however, no special diets will be available.



**October 17, 2008
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

1ST ANNUAL FOCUS HOPE FUN FESTIVAL

At the

**The HOPE Center
431 Baker St, Adrian**

Games

food

skits

music

**More information to come
Contact Trudi or Kay at 517-263-8905 with
questions, and offers of help**

OPEN AUDITIONS!

Come one come all!

Auditions will be held September 17, 2008 at LCMHA for the Sharing Hope Talent Show. The 3 top winners at the local level will participate in the Talent Show on October 23rd in Ypsilanti Michigan as part of the 7th Annual Sharing Hope Conference.

Talents can be singing, playing an instrument, reading a poem that you wrote or that you enjoy, dance, juggling, jokes, demonstrating a craft you do like ceramics, needlepoint, photography.

Don't feel like demonstrating a talent, then come cheer on your friends. Again, it's Wednesday, September 17th, 2:00 p.m. at LCMHA.

Scrapbook



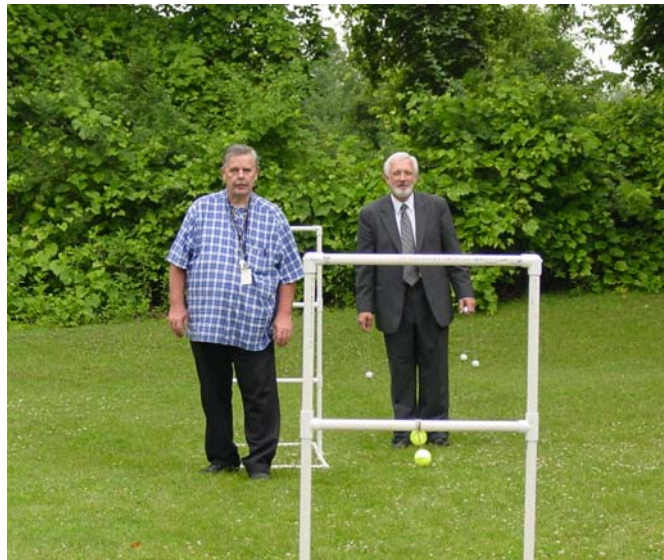
Voter Registration/Project Fresh at Community Action Agency



Roger Myers receives a certificate from LCMHA Board Chairperson, Judy Ackley for 35 years of service



LCMHA Board celebrated Linda Feeney's retirement from 30 years of service to LCMHA.



WHO IS DIRECTING WHO?

Roger Myers, Exe. Director of LCMHA plays Ladder Ball with Richard Fronce, Director of New Focus Club House at the Annual Field Day held in June.



October 29—Community Forum—Adrian

October 30—LCMHA Board Meeting



WORTHY WEBSITES

- Foodstamphlep.org
- Michigan.gov/dhs
- <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>
- http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6569_34491_00.html
- http://www.frac.org/html/resources/site_map.html
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

Do you have something interesting you would like to share? Contact Customer Services with your ideas, poems, stories. You might just get published!

Has your address changed recently? Don't forget to contact LCMHA with your new address.

If you do not wish to have future newsletter mailed to your home, please notify:
Customer Services
263-8905

September 17—Talent Show Audition for Sharing Hope Conference

September 25—LCMHA Board Meeting

October 6—Domestic Violence and the Bible Workshop

October 1—LCMHA Informational Meeting 10:00 a.m. at LCMHA

October 17—Focus Hope Fun Fest at HOPE Center

October 23—Sharing Hope Conference in Ypsilanti.

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