

Recovery Zone:

A system in transformation.

Chuck Hughes, Editor ■ Spring 2008

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS OFFER HOPE, IMPROVE LIVES



Partners in Hope (Left-to-right):
Silvia Perez, Debbie Hunt, Maureen Mina

Thanks to the **Partners in Hope Program**, mental health clients are now working full time at the Santa Maria, Lompoc and Santa Barbara outpatient clinics. These peer support specialists are playing a crucial role in implementing peer recovery programs and supporting ADMHS clients.

Peer support groups have been initiated around a variety of topics, including goal-setting, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), dual diagnosis self-help, movement, and overcoming clutter.

In Santa Barbara, **Maureen Mina** has brought her energy and talents to

creating a number of support groups. In Santa Maria, **Silvia Perez** provides much-needed outreach to Spanish-speaking clients. In Lompoc, **Debbie Hunt** is nurturing the recovery process for clients and planting the seeds for successful living. Under the leadership of **Bob Quinn**, the consumer-run HopeLine offers sensitive peer support and referrals four hours on weekdays.

Partners in Hope is funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and administered by the Santa Barbara County Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS).

The blossoming of peer support activities in Santa Barbara County is an important step towards the transformation of the mental health service delivery system. For more information, please contact **John Truman**, ADMHS Division Chief, Special Projects and Interim Consumer Empowerment Program Manager at 689-1269.

Consumers are invited to e-mail chas96099@yahoo.com comments, letters and articles for consideration for publication in future issues.



**The HopeLine
is Open!**

Monday-Friday • 3-7

**Toll-Free/Llame Gratis
866-778-0822**

Se habla español.



Consumer Leader Addresses Prop 63 4 Me



Members of the Santa Barbara consumer advocacy organization, Prop 63 4 Me, sponsored a presentation by Andrea Schmook held last December at the Independent Living Resource Center.

Since her recovery from diagnoses of acute paranoid schizophrenia, schizoid affective disorder, and manic depression, Andrea has been involved in promoting recovery. Currently, she is the Director of Consumer Directed Services at Anchorage Community Mental Health Services.

In June 2005, she was appointed by Governor Murkowski to serve on the Alaska Mental Health Board and in October 2006 was voted to be Chairperson. From 2003 through 2005, she was on contract with the Alaska Psychiatric Institute to establish the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs.

Previous to that she served six years as Director of Consumer Affairs and Development

for the Illinois Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health. Prior to that, Elgin Mental Health Center in Elgin, Illinois contracted with her as a consumer advocate. She worked in this capacity for 16 months, providing patient sensitivity training. Additionally, she was involved in interviewing patients on all units, including Forensics, regarding patient's opinions about services.

In 1985 during her first year in recovery, Andrea was appointed by Alaska Governor Sheffield to serve on the Governor's Mental Health Advisory Council and later appointed by Governor Cowper to serve as the first consumer representative on the Alaska Mental Health Board. Additionally, she served on the Board of Directors to the Alaska Mental Health Association; the Board of Directors and Advisory Board to Advocacy Services of Alaska (currently known as Disability Law Center) under the Federal Protection and Advocacy Act; and the Board of Directors of the Alaska Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

More about Andrea appears on the next page.

Recovery Toolbox

We asked consumers the following question, and present their feedback below: "Along your road to recovery, what is the most effective tool that you've learned to use?"



- "Having someone or something to love." — EB
- "Being connected with a higher power." — JB
- "Having a life with meaning and purpose." — Anonymous
- "Having clearly identified supports." — Anonymous
- "Going to the beach, camping, lessening to music and exercising," — Helen T.
- "Exercise and going to a movie with a friend." — Cathy

What is Recovery?

By Andrea Hercha Schmook

(An excerpt from an article appearing at <http://akmhweb.org/recovery/whatisrecovery.htm>)

One area where people seem to have the biggest problem is in the spiritual part of recovery. Many people confuse this part with religion. It really doesn't have anything to do with religion. Spirituality is simply a way of living. It's the basis of moving from the negative to the positive. This means moving from fear to trust; self-pity to gratitude; resentment to acceptance; dishonesty to honesty. It helps us define the patterns in how we relate to ourselves, others, and the world we live in. These patterns guide our lives to be positive, healthy, fulfilling and life-giving or negative, self-defeating, and destructive.

Promoting a view of mental illness as incurable tends to promote the idea of disease and it becomes a process of negativity, self-defeating and destructive. For recovery to begin, people must hear and know that other people with mental illness recovered. They must understand that one does not start with even a profound desire to recover, that others first began to nurture the recovery process within them. Additionally, one must realize that it's not necessary to have a college degree or a high school diploma to recover. This also includes knowing that if others have done it then it's possible

for anyone to do it.

Anyone given an opportunity to recover and who acts on it, stands a good chance of recovering. The recovery process includes the encouragement of others who have been through it and recovered and supporting those who are trying.

Additionally, families and professionals need to provide support whenever a person



This is Andrea in July 1976, six months after she came out of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. As you can see by her expression, Andrea was angry. Anger is one of the stages a person goes through on the way to healing.

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with mental illness falls short in the process.

The end result of recovery from mental illness is no longer seen with shame and stigma. It is viewed with a grateful and humble heart for having experienced it. Recovery is a process that brings with it pain and healing. It can't be forced. It needs to be directed and influenced with truth. It must be nurtured as you would nurture and care for a tiny seed that has been planted. It must be watered with understanding and love. It must be given the sunshine of kind words and enthusiasm. It must be allowed to grow and develop as a beautiful flower.



This is Andrea in 1985, the first year she had gone without an episode of mental illness.



This is Andrea in 1994 fully recovered after her healing journey. an episode of mental illness.


Recovery Gone

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:

Consumer Leaders from Around the World Unite in Canada

By Daniel Fisher, National Coalition of MH Consumer/Survivor Organizations, United States, August 2007

What an exciting and inspiring meeting I attended in Canada. Meeting consumer leaders from six other countries, I felt the strength of a truly international movement. In our voices I feel the growing spirit of recovery that is spreading around our world as an inspiring breath of life to encourage each person in his/her journey. When we raise our voices together, there is nothing we can't do.

United States:

Daniel Fisher was the representative of the National Coalition of MH Consumer/Survivor Organizations. The Coalition presently consists of 27 statewide consumer/survivor groups (states whose combined population is greater than 200 million people) and the three National Consumer-run Technical Assistance Centers. Organized in the last year, this newly formed group for the first time is giving consumer/survivors a national voice in the decisions made by the federal government.

Niagara Nutters in Action

Participants had a variety of opportunities for bonding and informally getting to know each other. That afternoon we were shown the surrounding countryside, with some going to see Niagara Falls. From that experience, the New Zealanders named our group the Niagara Nutters. That evening we learned more of Canadian culture by seeing "Oh Canada, Eh," a musical highlighting the multiculturalism of Canada.

The primary principles of the Coalition are:

- **Recovery** is possible for everyone. To recover, we need services and supports that treat us with dignity, respect our rights, allow us to make choices, and provide assistance with our self-defined needs. This range of services must include consumer-run and -operated programs.



Niagara Nutters, from left to right: Emma de Tasmania, Australia, Anne Beale, England, Noreen Fitzgibbon, Irish Republic, Jenny Speed, Australia, Dan Fisher, US, Susie Crooks, New Zealand, Louise Forest, Canada, Shaun MacNeil, Scotland, Karon-Anne Pasons, Canada, and Roy Brown, New Zealand

"The Coalition was able to educate legislators regarding the importance of consumer-run organizations.."

- **Self Determination:** We need to be in control of our own lives.
 - **Holistic Choices:** We need choices, including a range of recovery-oriented services and supports that provide assistance with housing, education, and career development.
 - **Voice:** We must be centrally involved in any dialogues and decisions affecting us.
- Personhood:** We will campaign to eliminate the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illnesses.

This article was originally published by the National Empowerment Center:

www.power2u.org/