



The ANSWER

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration's Newsletter

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FCBHA CLOSINGS

Good Friday
April 22, 2011

Memorial Day
May 30, 2011

Fayette Celebrates Intellectual Disabilities Awareness



Pictured from the left: Lynn Orawiec, FCBHA, Commissioner Vincent A. Vicities, Ray Luckey, Commissioner Vince Zapotosky and Commissioner Angela M. Zimmerlink.

By proclamation of the Board of Commissioners at their February 24, 2011 public meeting, Fayette County, Pennsylvania celebrated **Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month** throughout March to promote a better understanding and acceptance of people with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities.

Representing Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration for the reading of the proclamation by Commissioner Vince Zapotosky was Lynn Orawiec, Developmental Programs Director, and Ray Luckey, an amazing man that we have had the pleasure of knowing for many years. Ray participates in a program called Lifesharing. Through the Lifesharing program, Ray lives with a wonderful family and truly thrives. He is very athletic and loves to dance. He plays Wii a lot and recently scored a hole in one in golf and a 289 in bowling, but what he really loves are the Special Olympic Games. He competes in basketball, swimming, and bowling (recently winning a Gold Medal).

At the Commissioners meeting, Ray gave a heartfelt thank you to those in attendance and was thrilled to have been able to help spread the good word. Many activities take place in observance of Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month, and every year is more fun and rewarding than the year before.

Mission

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration enriches lives by providing access to and assuring choice among the best behavioral and developmental resources that promote recovery and resiliency.

Kid Talk

Helping Kids Deal With Bullies

Each day, 10 year old Seth asked his mom for more and more lunch money. Yet he seemed skinnier than ever and came home hungry. It turned out that Seth was handing his lunch money to a fifth-grader, who was threatening to beat him up if he didn't pay. Kayla, 13, thought things were going well at her new school, since all the popular girls were being so nice to her. But then she found out that one of them had posted mean rumors about her on a website. Kayla cried herself to sleep that night and started going to the nurse's office complaining of a stomach ache to avoid the girls in study hall.

Unfortunately, the kind of bullying that Seth and Kayla experienced is widespread. In national surveys, most kids and teens say that bullying happens at school. A bully can turn something like going to the bus stop or recess into a nightmare for kids. Bullying can leave deep emotional scars that last for life. And in extreme situations, it can culminate in violent threats, property damage, or someone getting seriously hurt.

If your child is being bullied, there are ways to help him or her cope with it on a day-to-day basis and lessen its lasting impact. And even if the bullying isn't an issue right in your house right now, it's important to discuss it so your kids will be prepared if it does happen.

What is bullying?

Most kids have been teased by a sibling or a friend at some point. And it's not usually harmful when done in a playful, friendly, and in mutual ways, and both kids find it funny. But when teasing becomes hurtful, unkind, and constant, it crosses the line into bullying and needs to stop. Bullying is intentional tormenting in physical, verbal or psychological ways. It can range from hitting, shoving, name-calling, threats, and mocking to extorting money and treasured possessions. Some kids bully by shunning others and spreading rumors about them. Others use email, chat rooms, instant messages, social networking websites, and text messages to taunt others or hurt their feelings. It's important to take bullying seriously and not just brush it off as something that kids have to "tough out." The effects can be serious and affect kids' sense of self-worth and future relationships. In severe cases, bullying has contributed to tragedies, such as school shootings.

Why kids bully?

Kids bully for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they pick on kids because they need a victim - someone who seems emotionally or physically weaker; or just acts or appears different in some way - to feel more important, popular, or in control. Although some bullies are bigger or stronger than their victims, that's not always the case. Sometimes kids torment others because that's the way they've been treated. They may think their behavior is normal because they come from families or other settings where everyone regularly gets angry, shouts, or calls names. Some popular TV shows even seem to promote meanness - people are "voted off," shunned, or ridiculed for their appearance or lack of talent.

Signs of Bullying

Unless your child tells you about bullying - or has visible bruises or injuries - it can be difficult to figure out if it's happening. But there are some warning signs. Parents might notice kids acting differently or seeming anxious, or not eating, sleeping well, or doing things they usually enjoy. When kids seem moodier or more easily upset than usual, or when they start avoiding certain situations, like taking the bus to school, it might be because of a bully.

If you suspect bullying but your child is reluctant to open up, find opportunities to bring up the issue in a more roundabout way. For instance, you might see a situation on a TV show and use it as a conversation starter, asking "What do you think of this?" or "What do you think that person should have done?" This might lead to questions like: "Have you ever seen this happen?" or "Have you ever experienced this?" You might want to talk about any experiences you or another family member had at that age.

Let your kids know that if they're being bullied - or see it happening to someone else - it's important to talk to someone about it, whether it's you, another adult (a teacher, school counselor, or family friend), or a sibling.

(This information was provided by [Kids Health](#), one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more information like this one, visit [KidsHealth.org](#) or [TeensHealth.org](#) © 1995-2009. The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.)

NOTE: Please look for upcoming articles on Bullying in future editions of "The Answer."

Excellence in Public Service Recognized



Tammi Stuck, Dr. Denise Martin, Irmi Gaut, Adrienne Wilson, and Commissioners Vincent A. Vicites, Vince Zapotosky and Angela M. Zimmerlink.

The Fayette County Board of Commissioners and Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR) Advisory Board President, Dr. Denise Martin, presented the Board's 15th Annual Community Recognition Award to Adrienne Wilson at the monthly Commissioner's Meeting on January 27th. This award is given to an outstanding community leader who has made a difference in the lives of individuals in recovery, with mental health needs, and/or intellectual disabilities.

Since 2005, Adrienne has worked at City Mission as a PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) case manager with clients who struggle with a variety of issues. Irmi Gaut, Executive Director for City Mission, nominated Adrienne for this award commending her for "loving the people she serves, caring about their lives, timelessly advocating for them, and sparing no cost, personal or otherwise, to help them. For many of them she is a lifeline of hope, help and inspiration!" Adrienne understands that for a person's life to be meaningful, it must include more than therapeutic services.

At the same meeting, Lisa Ferris-Kusniar, Chief Executive Officer of FCBHA, and the Commissioners also thanked and acknowledged Board member Tammi Stuck for 20 years of service to the MH/MR Advisory Board. Ms. Stuck was appointed to the Board in September of 1990 and has served through 20 of the most formative years of the program without interruption and with outstanding attendance. She is currently on both the Executive and Human Resources Committees. Her experience as a Registered Nurse for the Pennsylvania Department of Health and her awareness of the public state of mind has made her a valuable contributor to the development of a wide range of services currently available to residents of Fayette County.

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration offers congratulations and thanks to both Adrienne and Tammi for their outstanding leadership, community contributions and dedication to their fellow citizens of Fayette County.



Tammi Stuck, Commissioners Vincent A. Vicites, Vince Zapotosky, Angela M. Zimmerlink and Lisa Ferris-Kusniar, FCBHA CEO.



Here's the Buzz...

Baseball League Registration

The Fayette County Champions Adaptive Baseball League is a special league designed for youngsters with varying levels of ability. Each player is assigned a volunteer who helps with all aspects of the game (hitting, fielding, running, etc.) based upon the skill and abilities of the player. Registration has begun for this season so please go to www.championsadaptiveleague.com as soon as possible if you would like your child to play.

Mental Health Awareness Month

FCBHA invites you to join us in recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month. This celebration will begin with an official proclamation from the Fayette County Commissioners and will be followed by an array of activities. A complete calendar of events for the month will be available on our website at www.fcbha.org in mid April.

Disabled Veterans Initiative

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has begun a new initiative to assist honorably discharged veterans with disabilities with services toward competitive employment. If you know a veteran with a disability who is interested in training or employment, or is in need of assistive technology or accommodations to maintain employment, please contact Eric Wellman at 724-223-4430 extension 235 or ewellman@state.pa.us

Director Named

On February 1st, at a community awareness event, Amanda Freger was introduced as the Director of the Center for Autism at Highlands Hospital. Ms. Freger spoke in detail about the new program and reviewed the progress being made at the site of the new school located at 323 Breakneck Road in Connellsville. She also informed the group of the "one stop" diagnostic services now available through the Diagnostic Center that opened at Highlands Hospital on January 27th. For more information, call 724-603-3360.



Mats for the Homeless

FCBHA recently took part in a Green Initiative along with Uniontown Hospital by collecting plastic grocery bags. These bags are then woven together by the residents of Atria Senior Living to make sleeping mats for the homeless. Taking 900 bags to complete one mat, the volunteers were thankful for the donations they received.



George Anderson and Tina Pahula

Ray of Hope

Believer in the Steelers and an avid Hines Ward fan, George Anderson waited anxiously for Super Bowl Sunday to arrive. Unfortunately, a Steeler's seventh Super Bowl title was not in the cards this season. Steeler fans take great pride in their team and George is no exception. George has been living with Ed and Tina Pahula since 2001 through Laurel House, Inc.'s Lifesharing Program. This program offers individuals with intellectual disabilities an opportunity to live with a family of their choice and become involved in active day programming or community employment.

George has always been interested in helping others so he combined his love for doing crafts and his Steeler pride to create a bracelet that is being sold to raise funds for Ray of Hope, a local American Cancer Society Relay for Life team. Mostly comprised of family members, Ray of Hope was formed in 2008 to honor Tina's sister-in-law, Kathy Constable, who is a two-time cancer survivor.

Each year, Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration (FCBHA) employees choose organizations they would like to help support through voluntary dress down days. When Tina, a Developmental Program Specialist for FCBHA, told her coworkers about George's creative fundraiser and his personal goal of becoming the top 2010-2011 individual fund raiser for his team, they immediately knew they wanted to support George and his cause. Each employee who made a donation towards his goal was given one of George's Steeler bracelets.

Thanks to FCBHA and other local businesses, George has raised over \$750. Over the past three years, Fayette County's Ray of Hope team has raised over \$60,000 for the American Cancer Society, but looks forward to the day they won't have to relay because there will be a cure for cancer.



Offering Parent Trainings

Six Fayette County school districts are combining efforts to provide parent training programs, in the hopes of reaching more families. Albert Gallatin, Brownsville, Connellsville, Frazier, Laurel Highlands and Uniontown School Districts have formed a new initiative called "Community Connections - Fayette County Public Schools Helping Students Succeed". The topics at each session will deal with issues most associated with special education, but are open and free to all parents in the community. FCBHA is pleased to have been asked to join this partnership and assist in offering free trainings:

Post High School Options
March 29th

**Presentations by The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
and Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration**
April 26th

Both trainings will be held at FCBHA, 215 Jacob Murphy Lane, Uniontown from 6-7:30pm. For more information call Robyn Brady at 724-430-1370.

Fayette Resident Leads Forensic Peer Support Program: An Interview with Liz Woodley

Liz Woodley, a Certified Peer Specialist was recently hired to lead the Forensic Peer Support Program by the Pa Mental Health Consumers' Association (PMHCA) located in Harrisburg. Originally from Fayette County, Liz was one of our first Peer Specialists. In a recent interview with a FCBHA staff member, Liz shares her experiences and the road she took that enabled her recovery and provided her with the strengths to accept the opportunity she is now embarking on:

What is a Certified Peer Specialist? How does it differ from a Forensic Peer Specialist?

“Peer Specialists work alongside individuals who have mental health and/or co-occurring problems and are traveling their own individual journeys in recovery. Brainstorming and problem solving are used to identify choices and supports in their own path of recovery. Peer Support is based on five key factors; hope, shared responsibility, education, self-advocacy and support. Forensic Peer Specialist services are offered to individuals with mental health and/or co-occurring disorders who are also involved with forensics, from the initial contact with law enforcement through re-entry into the community from incarceration. Forensic Peer Specialists offer support by understanding the criminal justice system and the resources needed for successful re-entry and integration with the hope of reducing recidivism and the revolving door syndrome.”

How did you become a Peer Specialist and what kinds of positions have you held?

“I started my own recovery journey in August of 2004 after finding myself in a Greensburg hospital for drug possession and a DUI charge. The arresting officer heard me say that I was “sick and tired of feeling sick and tired” and he gave me the phone number for Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, Inc. (CRCSI). I began seeing a therapist, psychiatrist and also attended the Mental Health Substance Abuse (MISA) group. I took recovery seriously and attended 12 Step meetings regularly. After a year, I had a dream to go back to school to be a MISA consultant. Shortly after that, my MISA therapist came to me and advised me that they wanted to hire me as a Peer Specialist. I applied and interviewed for the position as a Peer Specialist for the Young Adult Community Treatment Team (YACTT) and was hired, working under John Connors. Eventually, I moved over to the Mobile Psychiatric Rehabilitation program, working closely with Jim Wommeldorf and his team. Through my work at CRCSI, I continued to educate myself on recovery, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and other psychiatric rehabilitations, and was certified as a Peer Specialist in 2006. I attended a train the trainer course in Mental Health Psychiatric Advanced Directives and completed Peer Specialist Supervisor training, was involved in the local CSP group Partners for Recovery and attended conferences. After working for CRCSI for 3 years and 3 months, I began to see that recovery had become my life.”

How did you hear about your current position?

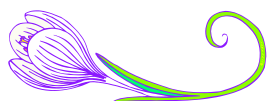
“I started developing relationships with other Peers and was offered a position with Westmoreland Peer Support Program. Rick Yaksic hired me for a full time job which I held for a year and a half and was then offered a supervisory position as the program expanded. I received an e-mail about Forensic Peer Support Specialist position at PMHCA. I became aware at a five day WRAP training, that I was eligible for the job based on my life experiences. I applied for the position, received an interview and then was hired.”

What kinds of work are you involved with now?

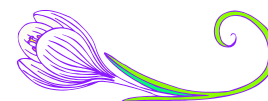
“The PMHCA is located in Harrisburg but is a statewide membership association so there is travel involved. My current position is Forensic Peer Support Specialist and I am involved in establishing Forensic Peer Support Trainings across the Commonwealth. PMHCA obtained a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and is working collaboratively with Drexel University, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Pennsylvania Center of Excellence to develop and establish the trainings.”

What would you recommend to others who dream of becoming a Peer Specialist?

“Any person can make their dreams a reality. They need to become involved and educated. They can do a lot to learn about recovery through websites, networking and other people who are on the path to recovery. I am blessed and grateful and always willing to give support to others, and today, I know I have made the right choice.”



Recovery Corner



“I was in a bad relationship for five years and decided I couldn’t live that life anymore. I was staying with my mom and wouldn’t leave the house. I would only talk to my mom and online to friends. After much coaxing from my mom, who basically forced me and my best friend, I agreed to go to Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, Inc. Kelly is an awesome counselor who always found time to see me when I was going through a difficult time.

During this time, I connected with an old friend who took me to church. The people were “golden”. They supported me at every turn and prayed for me. I started going to Oak House and met others in similar situations. I got hooked up with Helen as a case manager and Eric from TEC, Transitional Employment Consultants. Eric never gave up; helping me with my resume, job applications and support when I didn’t get a job. I had a job interview with Laurel House and got called back for a second interview. Within two hours, I received a call that I had gotten the job.

From there, many things fell into place. I got a vehicle, a steady income, and felt much better about myself. I no longer felt I had to have a significant other in my life to make it.

I have been employed for one year and love my job and the individuals I work with every day. I wouldn’t have made it without my mom, my best friend, all the people along the way who got involved in helping me turn my life around and the Lord.”

~Karen

Pennsylvania Mental Health & Justice Cross-Systems Mapping

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration and the Treatment Court Planning Committee hosted a workshop on December 14th and 15th as part of an ongoing process of developing collaborative systems of support and diversion for individuals who have mental illness and who come in contact with the criminal justice system. The workshop entitled “Cross-Systems Mapping” provides an opportunity for participants to visualize how mental health, substance abuse, and criminal justice systems intersect, reflecting how individuals move through the local criminal justice system. Patricia Griffin, a consultant from the Pennsylvania Center of Excellence facilitated the two day workshop creating a local cross-systems map that indicates points for intervention or diversion and also gaps in services.

One of the top priorities identified during the workshop was the development of systems cross-training for first responders, or Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. It was recommended that Fayette County utilize the Laurel Highlands Crisis Intervention Team from Somerset and Cambria Counties as a possible model. As a result, Laurel Highlands CIT presented their model at a workshop on March 14th at FCBHA. For more information about CIT, please contact Clinton Anderson at 724-430-1370.

Erie County Visits Fayette Model

On September 23rd, Chief Executive Officer Lisa Ferris-Kusniar, Deputy Mental Health Administrator Carol Over, and Chief Financial Officer Harry Franks, at the request of the Erie County Council, presented the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration HealthChoices model for their consideration and re-design of the Erie HealthChoices Program. After a brief historical overview, the discussion focused on addressing the concerns of County Council relative to Program Integrity, Fiduciary Controls and Operational Strategies which have proven successful for Fayette County’s HealthChoices Program. Since our presentation, Erie County has selected a Managed Care Organization partner to facilitate their HealthChoices model conversion effective July 2011. We wish the Erie County Administrator Shari Gross and the staff all the best with their new Managed Care Model!

The ANSWER

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April 14, 2011 10:00AM-12:00PM
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

at FCBHA

Register at:

www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com

Free

May 17, 2011 1:00PM-3:00PM
Digestive Disorders: Upper GI

at FCBHA

Register at:

www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com

Free

The ANSWER is a publication of the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration.
Any comments, questions or suggestions may be submitted to the Newsletter Editor at Editor@fcbha.org or
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