

Prosumer Action Center
First Quarter Report FY '13

In September, there was a high level of activity at the Prosumer Action Center. We had 178 people come through our doors. We offered classes in skills training, art, journaling and other support programs for peers. Our computer lab was available for job searching, writing resumes, learning how to use computers, and research. We were notified that we lost a majority of our funding and our building in September. The Prosumer meeting was also held at the Action Center during September.

October was spent in packing up our stuff and in strategic planning. We did acquire a new office space at 806 Zarzamora. It is smaller than what we are used to, but it is an excellent opportunity to engage with consumers as this is a major clinic. Our door is the first one they see. Our COSP grant is no longer for a job readiness program, the contract now is designed to keep the Prosumer meeting available. We were able to negotiate a small contract with the Center for Health Care Services to pay a wage stipend to keep the Prosumer Action Center open two days a week. This person would also have at least one Recovery 101 class a month and a Focus for Life Study group at least once a month. We were able to put four computers at stations in our new area for consumers to be able to continue to learn computer skills, do job searches and check their email. We continue to give out referrals and assist consumers the best we can.

In October we were also able to bring consumers the Focus for Life Class. We had 14 participants including people from California, Houston and Dallas. We also held the October Prosumer meeting at the Action Center.

In November, we have struggled to bring our Action Center together. It has been a process learning who we need to get permission from, how to book rooms to meet in and finding all the stuff that got lost in the move. We delivered 320 Empowerment Quote boxes to Pati Rangel at the State Hospital for distribution during the holidays. We also have Holiday cards, if we can find them, which have a personal note in each of them.

Recovery 101 classes were held at the Crisis Transitional Unit (CTU) in September and in November. We plan to continue classes at the CTU and begin the Recovery 101 classes at the Action Center this month.

The Focus for Life Study classes while still under development, are near completion. We will start offering these classes on Thursdays at the Action Center. The classes will give the basic Focus for Life skills for living an empowered life in a ten week study group. The individual classes are designed to have a person start anywhere in the process as they don't necessarily build on each other. So if a person misses one class they can come back and take that class at any point.

The November Prosumer meeting was held in the Boardroom of the Center for Health Care Services. Our December meeting will also be held here and our January meeting will be held at the San Antonio Clubhouse, through an arrangement that we are able to develop.

Members of Prosumers were involved with the Via Hope Advisory Committee, the State Local Area Planning Advisory Committee (LANAC), the Bexar County Behavioral Health Planning and Network Advisory Committee (BHPNAC) and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Committee for Disability Rights Texas. Prosumers also presented at the Bexar County Consumer and Family Support Conference held in October. Additionally Prosumers were well represented as one of their members was the Master of Ceremonies for the event.

Additionally, Prosumers fulfilled our responsibilities for Bexar County Consumer Family Conference management team. The conference was held on October 5, 2012 and was a huge success.

Prosumers hold monthly meetings designed to inspire and empower consumers with tools to live their life. Our September meeting was on “Bringing Happiness into Your Life”; October was “Going Back to Work”; and November, “The Power of Declaration”. The week of the meeting, we provide the service of calling our members. These calls not only serve to remind people of the meeting, but letting them know they are missed and often peer support is done on these calls to support the individual. During the quarter we made approximately 570 of these calls.

We also send out our newsletter the Friday prior to the monthly meeting as a reminder as well. The rest of the newsletters are delivered around the first of the month to clinics, organizations and others. During the quarter we mailed or delivered 6610 newsletters. Additionally, another 525 newsletters were distributed electronically during the quarter.

During the month of September, Prosumers continued to publicize recovery, community and mental health related events, both in our newsletter and at the Action Center. A bulletin board with community announcements was set up in our lobby. These announce health screenings, free legal services, opportunities to volunteer as a Big Brother or Big Sister, and the like. Our job bulletin board was updated with new postings whenever they are received. We are looking to develop an area like this at the Zarzamora clinic.

A total of 2627 services were provided during the month of September, 2012. Of those, 27 were unduplicated services. In October, we provided only the Focus for Life training, but had lots of volunteers working in packing. Total services between the training, outreach and the Prosumer meeting were 228. In November, total services were 223. A total of services for the first quarter of FY '13 is 3078. Of those at least 27 were unduplicated. With the changes we did not keep good records on duplicates. We are working on an improvement plan to better capture that data.