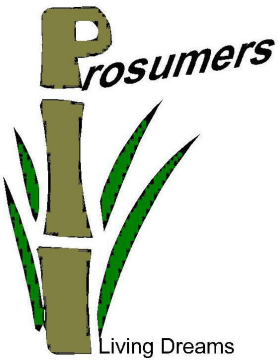


# Recovery is Possible!



PROSUMER—A PERSON WHO IS PROACTIVE IN HIS/HER RECOVERY AND WHO PROVIDES OR GIVES BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.



A Prosumer is not who you are, it is what you do!

## PROSUMER NEWS

April 2006 Janet Paleo—Editor Volume 3, Issue 8

### Prosumer Meetings

The 2nd Friday of the Month  
12 Noon to 3 PM  
at the  
UTHSC School of Nursing  
Auditorium  
All Welcome!

#### April 14, 2006 MEETING

What does it mean to be a Prosumer? How did the Prosumer group form? How do they know that Recovery is Possible? As our group has become larger, I have found that not everyone knows what Prosumer means or why it is working so well in improving people's lives. We will be discussing these issues and much more. The Prosumer meeting is an Empowering meeting, not a support group, although support happens at the meetings. If you are a first timer, come hear what being a Prosumer means. If you are a returning member, come share your experience with others.

#### May 12, 2006 MEETING

“Embracing What Life Hands You” is our theme for this month. We will talk about being OK in the face of anything that life hands you. Some call this resilience and it is a skill that you can learn. We can learn to look at our experience in a way that is energizing and empowering—the opposite of victim thinking. Come join us for this powerful meeting.

Prosumer meetings start with food so please remember to **RSVP to 210-736-5034** so that we have enough food to feed everyone. Remember, first come; first serve. We will see you there!!

You can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you.— Mary Tyler Moore

### Prosumers Welcome our New Office Manager, Donald!

Hello, Prosumers! My name is Donald Bernall Lane, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, blown into San Antonio by Hurricane Katrina. I have been hired as the Office Manager for the Prosumers. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. As the Office Manager, I will be able to give back to a community that has already given so much of itself to me. I have fallen in love with this beautiful city and will stay here to make it my new home. The people of San Antonio have been great in helping me to become established and to accomplish many things. Now it is my turn.

Some of my prior experiences and responsibilities will help me in this position. I have worked as a Database Manager for “United for the Homeless, where I organized and published a directory of services and resources that assisted homeless people with crisis intervention and prevention as well as transition and in dealing with emergencies arising about becoming homeless. As part of that job, I advocated for the homeless or those about to become homeless. I have also been a crisis line counselor.

I worked in construction as an engineer inspector, and coordinated material, manpower and equipment for various jobs. I have been a teacher's assistant for children enhancing their skills through tutoring. I was the Assistant Manager at KFC, where I coordinated scheduling and work teams to give the customer satisfying products.

Through these accomplishments, I have lived with depression. With the support of my therapists, doctor, family and peers, I have been able to remain functional in a positive way.

In San Antonio, I have found Prosumers, a therapist and a doctor, and I have no doubt that with this supporting cast, I will find the inspiration and desire to be the best person that I can be. As the Office Manager, I invite each of you to share your wisdom, resources, needs and concerns with me, so that we can all be catalysts in helping others and ourselves become better people. My desire for the Prosumers and the world is that everyone has peace of mind and everlasting happiness!

### My Story

by Debbie Garcia

My name is Debbie Garcia. As a child I was diagnosed with a mental illness. I also found myself using drugs and alcohol at a very young age. At 18 years of age, when arriving in San Antonio, I started receiving services from the Center for Health Care Services (CHCS). Even though I graduated from high school, I was having a difficult time dealing with my illness. Getting more depressed, I began trying to kill myself. I started going into the hospitals more and more. At about age 32, I was a part of the revolving door system in the hospitals. I lost my self-esteem, my hope, and any idea that I could be a functioning part of society. I heard voices all the time and started cutting on

Continued on Page 6

### REFLECTIONS ON RECOVERY, 2

by Sarah Ho, Kona, Hawai'i

Recovery work is spiritual work. I hear that all the time; I even say it and believe it, but, honestly, I don't know what 'spiritual' really means. I do know that there is within me a yearning for peace. Perhaps this desire for peace is mostly a wish to avoid the emotional chaos and terror of bipolar disorder. But I think it's something deeper. Seeking peace, I do the work of recovery.

In the stillness of real peace, beautiful things start to happen: a feeling of oneness, of belonging; an expansiveness; a sense of trust; acceptance of more and more things; joy; and a feeling of being truly free. That all is enough to make anybody work hard. I think it's a path to God. Yes, I believe this: Recovery work is a path to God.

So, what recovery practices lead to peace? Here are a few that really help me.

#### Search for Truth:

What's inside my head? If I am thinking ill of another person, then I am broadcasting negative energy into the world. That hurts everybody, because everything's connected. The only way to stop putting out the

Continued on Page 7

## How Worried Should We Be??

A recent article in the February/March Issue of the Texas Psychiatrist, a publication of the Federation of Texas Psychiatry, had a profile of Texas Psychiatry for 2006. According to the article, although we have gained 202 new psychiatrists in Texas since 1996, there are only 2,208 psychiatrists for the whole state.

Twenty-eight counties lost doctors, with El Paso County losing the most at 12 doctors. Thirteen counties had the same number of doctors as they had ten years ago. Fifty-five counties gained doctors, with Bexar County gaining the most at 42.

Of the 202 psychiatrists we gained in Texas, the majority, specialize in child psychiatry. In 1996 there were 299 Primary and Secondary Child Psychiatrists and in 2006 there are 490, an increase of 63.9%.

In 2004, the State Data Center estimated that Texas has a population of 22,490,022 people. According to experts, one in every five people has a mental illness, which would mean that Texas has approximately 4,498,004 who would benefit from mental health treatment. With only 2,208 psychiatrists available in Texas, each doctor needs to carry a case load of at least 2,037 patients to meet the demand. Working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks per year with no vacation, each patient could receive about 61 minutes of treatment a year.

However, we know that not everyone receives treatment. Some self medicate, some refuse and some get medication from a family doctor. As alarming as I find these numbers, the thing that really frightens me is the average age of the treating doctors. **Sixty-two percent are over the age of 50.** Twenty-eight point nine percent are ages 50-59 and 33.2% are over 60. In the very near future, we will be looking at a significant crisis in the shortage of care.

And yet, I have heard nothing about people even looking at these facts. I have had friends who could not find a doctor to treat them. I myself, when arriving in Texas, sat with my daughter in the middle of an empty living room with a phone and phone book and called every psychiatrist in town. Not one was taking new patients. That was in 1991. I was told that I would have to run out of my

medications, get sick, wind up in a hospital and then I would be assigned a doctor. Indeed, that is what happened.

For me these numbers signify a wake-up call to consumers. For years we have had to move to find someone to help us and often that help was minimal. We must come together and begin helping each other more and more. We cannot count on a system of care to help us. The system of care in Texas is shrinking more and more. The system of care in our nation is also shrinking. It is imperative that consumers form groups and businesses, and become providers of services. The consumer run organizations will become important to our very survival. It is the consumer organizations that will become a type of safety net that will catch those falling through the increasingly large gaps in the system of care. More importantly, consumer providers, organizations and businesses can truly introduce a working concept of recovery. If you are in recovery and have a job, become involved with other consumer organizations that help consumers. If you are in recovery and don't have a job, get involved with consumer organizations or become a provider of services. If you are in recovery and don't have an organization or want to be a provider, then start an organization to help others. We need every consumer in recovery to help in some form or manner to help others into recovery. It is the only way we will ensure that consumers can find support, hope and recovery. Should we be worried? YES! But we can help be the solution to the problem. Instead of depending upon

"The System," we can create our own system of care. There are state-wide and national consumer organizations that will help you get started.

If you are interested in starting a Prosumer program in your area, please contact Janet at 210-736-5034.

**We are the Evidence and  
We are the Solution!**



Editor's Note: Even though people typically create resolutions on the first of the year, I would say it is time to make a resolution anytime you are not happy with life. Below is an excerpt from an article entitled Long-Range Resolutions which was published in January 06 by Prevention Magazine. I would ask you to look at your life. If you could be happier, then try these suggestions. I have found them helpful and I know you will too.

## Long-Range Resolutions

As you move out of the old year and into a new one, take an hour or two to envision a future in which your true gifts are expressed with grace and ease. Genuine resolutions, based on saying yes to your deepest longings, can help you create a better future for yourself, your family, and the world. These soul resolutions are grounded in a long-range perspective, but they also reveal the practical steps needed to get there. One of the best ways to tune in to your soul's vision is to imagine that you're an elderly person, looking back over your life, taking stock. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What matters most to you?
- What did you learn in your life?
- How do you want to be remembered?
- Are there things you wish you'd done but never got around to doing?

After you've done the "looking back" exercise, take a few minutes to write down your answers. If you record your insights in a special notebook, you can keep tabs on your progress throughout the year and expand your vision as the years go by.

## TIPS FOR CREATING POWERFUL SOUL RESOLUTIONS

- Put aside a quiet afternoon or evening to look back on your life and then write long-range soul resolutions for these areas: Family, Friends, Faith, Finances, Fitness, and Work.
- Share the process of visioning and creating soul resolutions with a friend. It can help bring much more clarity to both of you.
- Once you know what's most meaningful personally, create a resolution that uses your talents to help others. One of the best ways to increase health and happiness is make a positive difference in the world.

SOURCE: Prevention Magazine January 06

## S.A.L.S.A.

San Antonio League  
of Self-Advocates

*An organization of people with  
intellectual disabilities, speaking up  
for their human and civil rights*

All are welcome at our meetings.

**April 4, 2005**

7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Combined  
meeting with San Antonio State  
School 6711 S. New Braunfels,  
Building 674

**April 6**

NO Regular Meeting

**April 18, 2005**

6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at

Brighton, the Center for  
Inclusive Communities  
14207 Higgins

(One-half mile west of Nacogdoches,  
between Thousand Oaks and  
O'Connor)

Judith Laufer, Advisor

**210-828-7125**

### **Mental Health Association in Greater San Antonio Announces New Chair to the Board of Directors**

James Castro, a member of  
the current Board of Directors,  
has graciously agreed to step  
into the role of Chair, effective  
immediately.

His vision, energy and  
commitment to the organization  
provide the Board of Directors a  
solid hope for moving the MHA  
in GSA into the next chapter  
of its life for the benefit of the  
citizens of San Antonio and the  
surrounding communities.

**Phone number for  
Children's Crisis &  
Eligibility/Enrollment is  
299-8139.**

### ***Pediatric Antipsychotic Use Jumps, Especially for Non-psychotic Reasons***

While the number of children who have been prescribed antipsychotic medication jumped from 8.5 per 1,000 to 40 per 1,000 between 1995 and 2002, more than one-half of the prescriptions were written to treat ADHD and other non-psychotic conditions, a new study in the journal *Ambulatory Pediatrics* indicates. According to the study's researchers, physicians sometimes prescribe the drugs to prevent disruptive behavior in children with ADHD, a treatment that many parents say works. However, "given the frequency with which these medications are being used, there's no question that we need additional studies on both safety and efficacy in pediatric populations," said University of Vermont psychiatry professor David Fassler.

### **ADHD Drug Danger**

About a million kids take prescription drugs for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a number that keeps climbing. Now, two new studies suggest that those drugs aren't as safe as experts thought.

In one study, researchers tracked 1,357 children on the drug Strattera for 6 to 18 weeks. They reported five cases of suicidal thinking, including one suicide attempt, compared with zero cases among the 851 patients taking a placebo. As a result, the FDA directed the manufacturer to put a "black box" warning on the drug—the most serious alert. Experts believe that most worrisome periods are during the first few months of treatment and when dosage is adjusted.

In other research, an Australian review of 29 studies suggests that stimulants that are prescribed for ADHD, such as Ritalin and Dexedrine, may stunt growth in developing kids who experience nausea as a side effect. In one study of 97 boys, researchers found that those who felt queasy on the meds ended up 2.6 inches shorter, on average, than those who didn't. One possible reason: If appetite is suppressed, the resulting lack of proper nutrition and calories may affect growth. — AM

Source: Prevention Magazine January 06

**WASHINGTON** -- A Food and Drug Administration review of drugs used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder showed that 81 deaths and 54 non-fatal cardiovascular events like heart attacks were possibly linked to the drugs from 1999 to 2003.

The reports of deaths and serious adverse events included incidents associated with Shire Pharmaceuticals PLC's Adderall, Johnson & Johnson's Concerta, Novartis AG's Ritalin as well as generic drugs. The FDA review was posted ahead of a Thursday meeting of outside medical experts being called upon to make recommendations about studies that should be conducted to determine if the drugs really do increase risks of heart attack and stroke. The FDA said it would present updated data on deaths and non-fatal serious events for all the drugs, including a newer ADHD drug, Strattera, from Eli Lilly & Co.

A memo to panel members from Gerald Dal Pan, the FDA's director of the Office of Drug Safety, noted that case reports of deaths and adverse cardiovascular outcomes themselves "do not establish a causal link between the medications" and the events. Such events could have occurred for another reason.

The FDA has been struggling to characterize the risks associated with ADHD drugs. The agency started safety review of ADHD drugs last year after Canadian health officials temporarily ordered Adderall off the market after reports of 20 sudden deaths in patients, including 12 strokes. The drug was later returned to the market. The FDA is also looking at whether the drugs increase psychiatric problems, and has already said drug labels should be updated to more clearly define the types of problems seen with the drugs. The drugs already carry a warning that they shouldn't be prescribed to patients with heart defects or other underlying cardiovascular problems.

ADHD is a disorder in which people have difficulty concentrating or staying on a task to the extent that it causes impairment in academic, work or social settings. Up to 7% of U.S. school-age children are believed to have ADHD. The disorder is often referred as attention deficit disorder, or ADD, in adults.

SOURCE: www.DowJones.com February 9, 2006 article by JENNIFER CORBETT DOOREN

### **FDA Warns of Possible Psychosis- related Side Effects of ADHD Drugs**

Following a FDA advisory panel's recommendation last month that the agency require warnings on drugs used to treat ADHD about potential risks to cardiovascular health, the agency released a review last week indicating that the drugs may pose an increased risk for the development of psychosis. The agency's review, which was posted to its Web site, comes in advance of another advisory panel's review of the drugs, beginning this week. In a memo to members of the panel, an FDA official wrote that the board members will be asked about how to "best communicate" the potential risks of the drugs to providers and parents. In the Web posting, the agency didn't address whether it will seek a "black-box" warning about the psychosis risk.

SOURCE: The Wall Street Journal, 3/15/06

2006

April

2006

S	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
2	April 3 <b>Doing the Walk, Doing the Talk</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa <b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746	April 4 <b>Wellness Group</b> 1 pm Zarzamora <b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592 DBSA CC #2 6:30 824-1602 <b>Bilingual Consumer/Family Support Group</b> 6-8 S. Presa	April 5 <b>Women's Support Group</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa	April 6 <b>DBSA CC #1-7 pm</b> 824-1602	April 7 <b>Women's Support Group 1-2</b> West Annex 358-3731	4/8 <b>AMHCR</b> 10:30 am Support Group <b>NACA Home Buyers Workshop@New Vision Family Worship Center</b> 10 AM - 2 PM 10050 West Commerce
9	April 10 <b>Doing the Walk, Doing the Talk</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa <b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746	April 11 <b>Wellness Group</b> 1 pm Zarzamora <b>AMHCR</b> 3 pm Business Mtg. <b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592 DBSA CC #2 6:30 824-1602 <b>NAMI</b> 7 pm 510 Belknap	April 12 <b>Women's Support Group</b> 10-11:30 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa	April 13 <b>DBSA CC #1-7 pm</b> 824-1602	April 14 <b>Prosumer Meeting</b> 12-3 School of Nursing <b>Women's Support Group 1-2</b> West Annex 358-3731	4/15
1 6	April 17 <b>Doing the Walk, Doing the Talk</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa <b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746	April 18 <b>Wellness Group</b> 1 pm Zarzamora <b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592 <b>DBSA CC #2- 6:30 pm</b> 824-1602 <b>Bilingual Consumer/Family Support Group</b> 6-8 S. Presa	April 19 <b>Women's Support Group</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa	April 20 <b>Legislative Visit- Call</b> 736-5034 <b>DBSA CC #1-7 pm</b> 824-1602	April 21 <b>Women's Support Group 1-2</b> West Annex 358-3731	4/22 <b>AMHCR</b> 10:30 am Support Group <b>NACA Home Buyers Workshop@Capel Hill United Methodist Church</b> 10 AM - 2 PM 4114 SW Loop 410
2 3	April 24 <b>Doing the Walk, Doing the Talk</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa <b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746	April 25 <b>Wellness Group</b> 1 pm Zarzamora <b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592 <b>DBSA CC #2- 6:30 pm</b> 824-1602	April 26 <b>Women's Support Group</b> 10 am S. Presa <b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa	April 27 <b>Legislative Visit- Call</b> 736-5034 <b>AMHCR Support Group</b> 10 am at SAILS <b>DBSA CC#1-7 pm</b> 824-1602	April 28 <b>Battle of the Flowers Holiday</b> <b>CHCS will be closed</b>	4/29

\*\*\*\* NOTE: Always Call to check on events to ensure correct date and time.

It was easier to say I couldn't do something than to try it and fail. I'd create boundaries based on fear of failure. We do it all the time. Sometimes those boundaries are broken down by ourselves, sometimes they are broken down by a force greater than ourselves. —Martin Short, whose acting career was in a rut until he had the revelation he could channel the way he was funny at parties into his onstage roles.

## CALENDAR NAMES, ADDRESSES and PHONE NUMBERS

**CHCS** - Center for Health Care Services address is 3031 IH 10 West (Central Office) **731-1300**

**MR PAC** - Mental Retardation Planning Advisory Committee

**BHPAC**—Behavioral Health Planning Advisory Committee

for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues

These committees are open to the public and will receive public comment. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees contact: Evelyn Sanchez at 210-731-1300 ext 269

**24/7 Crisis Clinic**—Address is 520 N. Leona 2nd Floor (the Brady Green). **223-7233 or 1-800-316-9241.**

**CHCS Adult Mental Health Intake**—Address is 520 N. Medina **358-5888**

**S. Presa CHCS Consumer/Family Support**—Address is 5802 S. Presa **436-8018**

**Children's Clinic**—Address is 711 E. Josephine 299-8139

**East Burnett Clinic** - Address is 1920 East Burnett **227-3401**

**Palo Alto Clinic**—Address is 2711 Palo Alto Road **533-2577**

**Story Lane Clinic**—Address is 104 Story Lane **533-9515**

**West Annex Clinic**—Address is 1115 West Martin **358-3731**

**Zarzamora Clinic** - Address is 806 S. Zarzamora **434-7001**

**Advocacy Inc.** - Address is Park Ten Blvd. **737-0477**

**SAILS** - San Antonio Independent Living Services address is 1028 S. Alamo Drive **281-1878**

**AMHCR** - Alliance for Mental Health Consumers Rights meets at 230 E, Travis at the Travis Park United Methodist Church Rm. 210. For more info call **886-8076** or **820-3064** or [samentalealth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:samentalealth@sbcglobal.net) or [www.samentalealth.org](http://www.samentalealth.org)

**DBSA** --Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance meets at 8026 Floyd Curl **210-682-2746**

**DBSA CC #1**--Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance Christian Community meets at 2220 NW Military Hwy Call **Barbara 210-824-1602**

**DBSA CC #2**--Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance Christian Community meets at 5802 S. Presa Hwy Call **Barbara 210-824-1602**

**DBSA CF** --Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance Christian Family meets at 210 South Grimes St. Call **Willie 210-683-8592**

**NAMI SA** - National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of San Antonio **210-734-3349**

**Fair Housing Council of Greater San Antonio**- Address 4414 Centerview Drive, Suite 170 **210-733-3247** Office

**NACA**-Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America in San Antonio **210-826-2828** or **1-888-302-NACA** or [www.naca.com](http://www.naca.com)

**Prosumers**— Address is 5802 S. Presa **736-5034**. Main meeting meets at the School of Nursing.

**School of Nursing** -- Main Entrance is 7703 Floyd Curl Drive, but the entrance on Louis Pasteur is closer to the room. Room is the auditorium. Call if you need a map to Janet Paleo at **210-736-5034**.

**VIA Metro Center** — Address is 1021 San Pedro **210-362-2020** Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Call for help with bus schedules and bus transfers



**SENATOR FRANK L. MADLA**, SENATE DIST 19  
1313 Southeast Military Dr., Suite 101, SA, TX 78214  
(210) 927-9464 Closest Bus Route: 42

**SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI**, SENATE DIST 21  
12702 Topperwein, SA, TX  
(210) 657-0095 Closest Bus Route: NO BUS SERVICE

**SENATOR JEFF WENTWORTH**, SENATE DIST 25  
1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 925 SA, TX 78209  
(210) 826-7800 Closest Bus Route: 10

**SENATOR LETICIA VAN DE PUTTE**,  
SENATE DIST 26  
700 N. Saint Mary's St., Suite 1725, SA, TX 78205  
(210) 733-6604 Closest Bus Route: Downtown

**REPRESENTATIVE TREY MARTINEZ FISCHER**,  
HOUSE DIST 116  
1910 Fredericksburg Road, SA, TX 78201  
(210) 737-7200 Closest Bus Route: 92

**REPRESENTATIVE DAVID LEIBOWITZ**,  
HOUSE DIST 117  
P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768  
Closest Bus Route:

**REPRESENTATIVE CARLOS I. URESTI**,  
HOUSE DIST 118  
1114 SW Military Dr., #103, SA, TX 78221  
(210) 932-2568 Closest Bus Route: 46

**REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT R. PUENTE**,  
HOUSE DIST 119  
2823 East Southcross, SA, TX 78223  
(210) 532-8899 Closest Bus Route: 34

**REPRESENTATIVE JOAQUIN CASTRO**,  
HOUSE DIST 125  
6502 Bandera, Ste. 106, SA, TX 78238  
(210) 684-6896 Closest Bus Route: 88

**REPRESENTATIVE JOE STRAUS**,  
HOUSE DIST 121  
P.O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78701  
(210) 828-1411 Closest Bus Route:

**REPRESENTATIVE FRANK J. CORTE**,  
HOUSE DISTRICT 122  
2040 Babcock Rd., Ste. 402, SA, TX 78229  
(210) 349-0320 Closest Bus Route: 520

**REPRESENTATIVE MIKE VILLARREAL**,  
HOUSE DIST 123  
1806 Blanco Rd, SA, TX 78212  
(210) 734-8937 Closest Bus Route: 2

**REPRESENTATIVE JOSE MENENDEZ**,  
HOUSE DIST 124  
7121 US Hwy. 90 West, Suite 240, SA, TX 78227  
(210) 673-3579 Bus Route: 76

**REPRESENTATIVE RUTH JONES MCCLENDON**,  
HOUSE DIST 120  
403 South WW White Road, Suite 210, SA, TX 78219  
(210) 225-2107 Closest Bus Route: 25, 550, 551

## Useful Websites and Links

A website for all Texas government departments

[www.texas.gov](http://www.texas.gov)

The National Alliance for Mental Illness

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

Texas Mental Health Consumers

[www.tmhc.org](http://www.tmhc.org)

Mental Health Association of Texas

[www.mhatexas.org](http://www.mhatexas.org)

Texas Legislature Online

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

Texas Administrative Code where you find the laws pertaining to the running of MHMR Centers <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/>

The Texas Election Division to find voter information, and candidates

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/>

Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration

[www.SAMHSA.gov](http://www.SAMHSA.gov)

SAMHSA's Mental Health Information Center

<http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/clearinghouse/clearinghouses.html>

Website for Medications, Assistance Programs, Discount programs

[www.needymeds.com](http://www.needymeds.com)

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us>

Patient Assistance with Medications

<http://www.phrma.org/>

Free Online Computer Classes through Global Community Foundation a division of Goodwill Industries

[www.gcfleamfree.org/en/main/students.asp](http://www.gcfleamfree.org/en/main/students.asp)

Free e-mail course for Women with Alcohol problems. The home page gives you lots of information on everything from entertainment to health issues. Go to health and fitness and then click on Addiction problems.

[www.about.com](http://www.about.com)

A website designed to provide clients with more information specific to their current situation and the transition to Medicare Rx

[www.texasmedicarerx.org](http://www.texasmedicarerx.org)

## My Story (cont. page 1)

myself to forget the emotional pain. The Center then put me with the ACT team. I was on so many meds that it seemed all there was time to do throughout the day was take pills. My use of drugs and alcohol didn't help much with the meds. I would cut myself and be put in the hospital, only to be discharged in a day or two. Then a couple of days later, I would be right back in the hospital. This was my existence. Everyone had more or less given up on me, including me. It seemed the only thing that kept me going was the attention I got from going to the hospital. Hospitalization became one of my addictions. Everyone was happy if I could stay out of the hospital system 14 days out of a month.

Then one day a caseworker asked me if I would go to a new group that was forming called the Prosumers. Having nothing to lose, I said okay and went to the very first meeting of the Prosumers. I sat at the back of the room. I didn't say anything; I just listened. That was when I met Janet Paleo. She was explaining her hope for this new group and what a Prosumer was. That day, even though I didn't know it at the time, was the day that would change my life. The next time the meeting was announced, I attended again. As I listened that day, I remember I decided to walk up and ask Janet a few questions. To my surprise, she told me that I had the power to be a part of my treatment. She told me I could feel better and that she would help, as well as the other people in the group. We could become a support system. She also told me that I could empower myself with information. Additionally, I could talk to her, and she told me that I was worth something. She also stated that I could help myself as well as others.

So I started asking my treatment team questions. I started talking with Janet, and to my surprise I found that she actually listened to what I said. She helped me find solutions. She didn't talk at me or ignore me or tell me what to do. She helped me find the power I had in me all along. At first, I met with a lot of resistance from my treatment team. It was a different concept to them. I really started questioning what the treatment plans for me were, for to that point, I didn't know I had a say.

I remember the first time I attended a conference. I was like a sponge: I soaked it all up. I hadn't realized there was a lot of concern about my going to the conference. People were worried that I would get sick and go to the hospital or, worse, feel bad, then leave to hurt myself, or finally succeed in killing myself. Well, that weekend I did okay. Even though I still had a few more bad months after that, I remembered what I had learned from the Prosumer meetings. It has been almost three years now since I have had to take any psychiatric meds on a continuous basis. Once in a while I have to take some when things are upsetting. I don't say everyone can get off meds because we are all different; that is something to decide together with your doctor.

Today, I play an active part in my recovery. I know my symptoms and what I need to do when they are present. I am about ready to celebrate two years clean from drugs and alcohol and my one-year anniversary at my full-time job. I was finally able to get a checking account in my name. I am actually able to keep money in the account and balance it. I have an apartment I share with a friend that I haven't run off because of inappropriate behavior. We have two small dogs which I can say I actually help care for. I just financed my first car without having to have a co-signer. Today I take the responsibility to have insurance on the car. I recently received the Bexar County Star Award. I am on the CHCS Planning Advisory Committee. I have not been in any hospital in two years. I am a tax-paying citizen.

But, even though I have all of this right now, I still have days when I wake up and feel bad. I sometimes get depressed and don't want to get up. I was told recently that in a year or so I may need to use a wheelchair for my physical disabilities, on a full-time basis. I am in severe pain daily. Each day I remember that I am in my recovery. Recovery from whatever is happening on any day is possible. I don't know what tomorrow may hold for me, but I know what my past was. Today I am grateful for my past, because it taught me many things, such as, to be strong, to have faith, to take care of and love myself; but, most of all, that RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE!!!!!! To my friends who always believed in me till I could: THE PROSUMERS, Janet, Anna G. Bea C. Denise C. and my family - THANK YOU!

**"Can you reach within yourself for enough clarity, strength, forgiveness, serenity, intelligence, patience, and faith to turn this around? That's the spiritual meaning of every situation: not what happens to us, but what we do ... and who we decide to become because of what happens to us. The only real failure is the failure to grow from what we go through." --- Marianne Williamson**

negative energy is to stop making it. Stopping is very difficult, because it means being aware of what we're thinking, and figuring out what's making those thoughts arise. Once we know the needs and desires that are causing our thoughts, we can fill those needs in other ways, and we can break the pattern apart and cease harming others. We have thus moved closer to unconditional Love.

### **Surrender/Letting Go:**

When a negative thought does arise, we have the choice not to amplify it. Buddhist style, we can mindfully notice what we've thought, and then cut it free, let it go. Many of us Prosumers/survivors have a long-established thinking habit of self-harm. That's that same pattern of creating negative energy, only directed inward at ourselves. Over and over, we get down on ourselves for something and spin our energies into self-loathing. Low self-esteem is a prison created by patterns of thought. The good news is that it can be dismantled, block by block, undoing the steps by which it was learned. Looking and telling the truth will bring about this dismantling when we keep at it, just as any thought pattern can be broken through intervention by our awareness and intention to break it.

But - and this is a big 'but' - mental health Prosumers have to practice another sort of letting go when our illnesses are acting up. At these times, we have to give up, at least temporarily, on being able to 'think' ourselves back into wellness: Cognitive therapy doesn't work during crisis. Rest and submission to feeling lousy are what we have to do. This process is humbling, to say the least, but when the ego/'small self' is struck a blow, more energy can flow through us. In surrendering to how ineffective we are, our ego loses some of its delusion of control; and it weakens! So, I think a mental health crisis can sometimes produce spiritual growth, because the person who emerges from it, Phoenix-style, is apt to be more compassionate than the person who started the journey. This is a good thing to remember when we're feeling awful, because it can give us Hope.

### **Ego-Making and -Breaking:**

We need a healthy ego in order to function in the world. We need it as a tool with which to set personal boundaries, make a strong, clear stand for what is right, or create meaningful relationships. However, as a result of childhood abuse that invalidated our personhood, many of us labeled with a psychiatric disorder never developed a well-functioning ego, so boundary-setting and relationships remain especially challenging to us. Our recovery work, then, must include building a solid sense of self, so we take the risks that produce growth, strive to be genuine, and learn to be trustworthy friends. We build the ego we should have built as we grew up biologically; now we are growing up psychologically and emotionally.

Next, though, I think the competent ego we are developing becomes a tool for spiritual growth. With a solid self, we can have more confidence in our choices. We can do more good in the world. We can learn better and understand more. Because a mental health crisis is synonymous with an unreliable mind, learning to trust our minds again furthers recovery. When we are more confident, we are also less afraid, so we can BE in the Present, where Life happens, more fully, more of the time. As we experience the Present more openly, we see Reality more clearly. We notice more of everything: beauty, nuances of feeling in others and ourselves, and our own minds' processes. We increasingly see the ways our minds spin petty illusions, and how we create our own suffering.

Then we see that our darling egos have to go - except for their essential functional parts - because the path to peace is not paved with self-importance. In recovery work, I sense that many of us are creating our egos and simultaneously letting them go. This is very deep, challenging work which mental health consumers are compelled to do, lest we fall again into darkness. It requires huge courage, patience, and self-love of a tender, gentle sort.

### **Faith/Trust:**

If we've grown up in a frightening, unpredictable environment, we've probably learned that the world isn't safe, or that we personally don't deserve to be well. These beliefs can run very deep, undermining our ability to step forth bravely, to try new things, to speak honestly, or to feel at peace. These beliefs, too, can be changed, when we strive to change our habits of thinking. If we believe the world is safe, don't we in fact make it more so?

### **Discipline:**

This word literally means 'learn.' In recovery, we urge ourselves to stick to personal wellness practices that we've learned do work: meds, if we choose them; exercise, to

oxygenate those nerve cells; rest, when a manic lift-off threatens; pursuit of joy, even semi-joy; refusing to indulge negative thought patterns; and so forth. We are carving new pathways through our brains, working our way out of the Dark and into Light. We have to believe we can make it, and behave as though we can. If we believe recovery is possible, do we not in fact help make it so?

**Recovery is possible.  
We make it so.**

### **Alternative Conference Scholarships Now Available**

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Support Technical Assistance Resource Center (STAR Center), a CMHS funded consumer supporter technical assistance center, are providing financial support to consumers of mental health services who wish to participate in the 2006 Alternatives meeting. The meeting "Blazing the Trail to Recovery through Transformation" will be held in Portland, Oregon. Hosted by CONTAC, a CMHS funded consumer technical assistance center. This important conference promotes recovery, self-help, and empowerment. Alternatives will be held at the Marriott Portland Downtown Waterfront, October 25-29, 2006.

In order to give more newcomers the opportunity to attend Alternatives 2006, more partial scholarships and less full scholarships will be provided than in previous years. That is, rather than receiving the full scholarships assistance for airfare, lodging, ground transportation, registration and meals, scholarship recipients will be expected to pick up part of the expenses. Consumers who are awarded scholarships are expected to find additional funding support to help pay for their attendance to the conference. Also, those who have never previously attended Alternatives will be given a higher priority in the selection process.

Other criteria for scholarship recipients will include quality and completeness of application, stated reasons for wanting to attend, plans for disseminating conference information, current involvement in mental health and consumer organizations along with considerations for diversity, race and ethnicity, and geographic representation. A selection committee will be formed with consumer representatives. Applicants will be notified promptly on the status of their applications.

**Scholarship applications for  
Financial Support is available at  
[www.alternatives2006.org](http://www.alternatives2006.org)  
and has a deadline of May 19, 2006**

# Upcoming Conferences

## 2006 Joint National Conference on Mental Health Block Grant and National Conference on Mental Health Statistics

### "Sharing the KEYS: Knowledge to Empower You as a New Driver"

The Renaissance Mayflower Hotel  
1127 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036

**May 30-June 2, 2006**

Consumer and family driven mental health care is already a mainstream effort and a central pillar of the entire mental health field (1). The major goal of the Conference is to create a recovery and resiliency oriented care system focused on the goals of the consumer. The recovery informed environment is one which is coercion free, trauma informed and emphasizes taking personal responsibility. [www.Mental-healthcommission.gov](http://www.Mental-healthcommission.gov)

## Breakout IX National Mental Health & Deafness Conference June 15-17, 2006 Hilton Hotel at Easton Columbus, Ohio "Cultivating Recovery"

"Cultivating Recovery", the theme for the 2006 Breakout conference, illustrates the vision of the Ohio Mental Health and Deafness Advisory Council. "We recognize and promote that all Deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind consumers are able to access and receive a full continuum of quality, culturally competent mental health services.

Email [vwalker@c-s-d.org](mailto:vwalker@c-s-d.org) for more information or to register.

## Alternatives 2006 October 25-29, 2006 in Portland, Oregon

The next national Alternatives Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon - October 25-29, 2006 at the Marriott Portland Downtown Waterfront. CONTACT (Consumer Organization & Networking Technical Assistance Center) in Charleston, West Virginia is pleased to host this major educational event which is planned for and by consumers, survivors, and ex-patients with a focus on recovery, self-help, and empowerment. Alternatives is made possible through funding from the federal Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information on this conference call 1-800-776-1286

**Scholarship applications for Financial Support is available at [www.alternatives2006.org](http://www.alternatives2006.org) and has a deadline of May 19, 2006**

Earn money to go to this conference by participating in Prosumer Fund Raising Events. Call 210-736-5034 for more info.

## Fifth Annual Bridges Conference May 31 – June 2 San Antonio Holiday Inn Riverwalk National Forum About Employment Issues & Latinos with Disabilities

Proyecto Visión's annual Bridges to Employment Conference is the premiere event on employment and Latinos with disabilities in the United States. Each year recruiters, vocational experts and jobseekers from around the country convene to participate in trainings and exchanges on occupational issues, and collaborate to increase job opportunities for Latinos with disabilities. Scholarships are available for unemployed or low-income Latinos with disabilities to cover the registration fee. Scholarship awards are based on financial need and strength of the application. Call (866) 367-5361 toll-free for scholarship information, or visit [www.projectvision.net](http://www.projectvision.net) to register to attend and/or apply for a scholarship online.

## Eliminating Disparities: Multicultural Strategic Summit

**June 28-July 2, 2006  
NAMI National Convention  
in Washington, DC**

NAMI's Multicultural Summit will bring together advocates from across the nation to address the current disparities in mental health care that affect communities of color and to present viable solutions to address the myriad of barriers to access and quality of treatment.

**There are a limited number of scholarships of up to \$600 now available to attend the Multicultural Strategic Summit at the 2006 NAMI National Convention in Washington, DC, June 28-July 2.**

To apply, please download the application form available at [www.nami.org/summit](http://www.nami.org/summit).

**All scholarship applications are due by Friday, May 5, 2006.**

## Social Justice - The Time Is Now NARPA's

(The National Association for Rights, Protection and Advocacy )  
**25th Anniversary Conference  
to be held in Baltimore, MD  
November 16 - 19, 2006**  
[www.narpa.org](http://www.narpa.org)

## NMHA's 2006 Annual Conference June 8-10 in Washington, D.C. "Building the Movement"

At the NMHA's 2006 Annual Meeting, more than 500 mental health advocates and thoughtful leaders gather to share best-practices and develop the tools they need to advance education, advocacy, research and service in their and local communities. Themed *Building the Movement*, the 2006 Meeting places a particular emphasis on strategies to grow the reach, power and effectiveness of the nation's mental health movement. **Questions?** Call Diana Looney, Sr. Director, Event Planning at 703-838-7504 or email her at [DLooney@nmha.org](mailto:DLooney@nmha.org)

## The Bexar County Consumer/ Family Conference August 24-26 Crowne Plaza Hotel, San Antonio

This year's theme is "Uniting Our Voices: Wellness and Personal Empowerment in a Time of Transition". Contact Lupe Torres at 210-731-1300 ext 352 for more information.

## 2006 National Rural Mental Health Conference November 16-18, 2006 Westin Riverwalk Hotel San Antonio, Texas

This year's theme is "A Transformational Journey". Expanding the agenda for Rural Mental Health Services Research: Focus on the Rural Woman. [www.narmh.org](http://www.narmh.org)

## South Texas Consumer/Family Support Conference June 6-8 Details Coming Soon.

## Fourth World Conference on Promotion of Mental Health & Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders Oslo, Norway, October 11 - 13 2006

This is the fourth in a highly successful series that is building up support for a public health approach to promoting mental health and preventing disorders.

The conference is organized by the World Federation for Mental Health, The Clifford Beers Foundation, The Carter Center, and Voksne for Barn. It is sponsored by the Norwegian Directorate of Health and Social Welfare, and is co-sponsored by the World Health Organization.

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