

# 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

May 2006

Janet Paleo—Editor

Volume 3, Issue 9

### Prosumer Meetings

The 2nd Friday of the Month  
12 Noon to 3 PM

at the  
UTHSC School of Nursing  
Auditorium  
All Welcome!

7703 Floyd Curl—Enter at the Louis Pasteur  
entrance near Babcock.  
Buses 91,92

**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. It is a skill that you can learn. We can learn to look at our experiences in a way that is energizing and empowering—the opposite of victim thinking. Come join us for this powerful meeting.

**June 9, 2006 MEETING**

Have you wondered what other community groups and organizations do that might be able to help you? We are inviting other mental health organizations, such as the Alliance for Mental Health Consumers' Rights, Our House, NAMI SA, Home Comforts, and the three DBSA organizations, to come discuss what they have to offer you to aid you in your recovery. If you know of another organization that our members might be interested in, please call Donald Lane at 210-436-8018 ext 302.

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!!

### Prosumers Going Forward

#### Legislative Thursdays

The Prosumer Program has so much to offer, as many of us know, and it keeps growing. Thanks to our Office Manager we have dates and places for Legislative Thursdays. If you are interested in participating, please call Donald at 210-436-8018 ext. 302.

#### Learn to Meditate

Now available to our community is software that teaches you to get in touch with your body through meditation. Meditation:



- Encourages imagination and creativity
- Focuses the mind
- Increases concentration
- Helps resolve issues that can cause nightmares
- Helps with hyperactivity
- Creates a sense of wholeness
- Opens one to the interconnectedness of the universe
- Helps deal with loss
- Develops a healthy sense of self

A meditation program called the Wild Divine and produced by Deepak Chopra, M.D. It works with biofeedback sensors that you place on your fingers to measure your heart rate, your breathing rate and your perspiration. It is these sensors that control the software program to ensure that you are learning the techniques correctly. It is a great program that you can use for free at the South Presa Office. Although the meditation room needs refurbishing, you are welcome to come to our office and practice your meditation.

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**The Alliance for Mental Health Consumer's Rights** has set up a Drop-In Center five days a week at the South Presa Center that has lots of activities and other events for people. They are publishing a newsletter quarterly. If you are interested in the Drop-In Center or wish to be on the mailing list for The Alliance for Mental Health Consumer's Rights, you can contact them at the South Presa Office at 210-436-8018 ext 307.

### PROFILE IN COURAGE:

#### JULIE RUSSELL

- A Recovery Story  
by Sarah Ho

My friend Julie has a way with words. While interviewing her for this article, I asked if there have been any benefits resulting from her clinical depression, and she replied, "It's made me get real about who I am." I agreed: We have to get real because we don't have enough energy for anything else. Julie said, "Mental health consumers have a low tolerance for b.s." Her astute humor is paralleled by her courage. She endured 13 years of suicidality after her 1990 move to Hawai'i Island. That's 4745 mornings of waking up and wanting to be dead, but of choosing to go on living, despite the yawning abyss of depression as her constant companion.

Like most survivors, Julie felt she was "extremely different ... and never good enough.... from the get-go," but couldn't say exactly how or why. Her father was a rage-aholic who frightened and emotionally bludgeoned his wife, four sons, and two daughters; her mother was a controlling, narcissistic figure who was unable/unwilling to participate in unraveling the sexual abuse Julie endured from her father from ages 11 to 21. One of the profound consequences of these dysfunctions is Julie's ongoing struggle to hold intimate relationships with others and to set clear personal boundaries.

In her youth, she carefully built a 'false self' that functioned exceptionally well in every visible way: college degree, success at every job she undertook, a quick wit, and enough intelligence to fool the whole world into thinking she was fine. But the 'false-self Julie' was drinking excessively, enjoying hallucinogens, stringing along in a skeletal marriage, and fighting bulimia. Something had to give, and the Universe delivered.

On a river rafting trip in '83, Julie was tossed out of the boat into the frigid white waves, hit by an oar, and "...when I emerged from the water, every fear that

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We are seeking donations to help refurbish the meditation room. Needed are a desk, a comfortable chair and beautiful, soothing items for decoration. We are not allowed to hang anything from the walls, but light items can be velcroed on the wall. Please contact Janet with any items or to help at 210-736-5034.

### **10 Tree Challenge**

May 9 is the grand kick off for our 10 Tree Challenge at the CHCS Palo Alto Clinic. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and we will be using this month to join approximately 60 other organizations in planting 10 trees each to better the air quality in our community. Under each of our trees we will have a plaque stating that "Recovery is Possible! Come grow with the Prosumers". If you are interested in helping us nurture trees until they are grown, please call the Prosumer Office.

### **Fundraisers**

We are raising money through the Prosumer Program with travel expenses for conferences or other things that help empower consumers. Conferences are a great tool to educate and empower consumers. However the expense of going to conferences is great even if you are able to get a partial scholarship. The money raised will be put into an account that will be divided by all who participate in the fundraising. If you are interested contact the Prosumer Office.

### **Big Birthday Party Bash**

I am turning 50 this year, a feat my doctors and others never thought possible. One of my birthday wishes is to have everyone that I know and love come to San Antonio and help me celebrate my birthday. My other wish is to continue empowering consumers to live their dreams. So for my birthday I am having a big party with free cake and ice cream. If people wish to give me gifts, I am asking for that to be a donation to the Prosumer Program to help empower other consumers. We will have a carnival type fundraiser at my party so there will be games, food and fun for everyone, with the proceeds going to the Prosumers. If you would like to help plan this event or participate in the fundraising party, please contact Donald at the Prosumer Office.

### **Louisiana, Here We Come**

We have been invited by Meaningful Minds of Louisiana to share with them our Prosumer Program. They are sponsoring a one day statewide conference on May 25, 2006, in Lafayette, Louisiana. We will have the afternoon of that day to explain what the Prosumers are about and how our program works.

## **Prosumers in Recovery**

Thanks to our wonderful members, we have a 30 minute video where various members talk about their recovery through the Prosumer Program. If you would like a copy of this video it is available for a \$10.00 shipping and handling fee. Contact Janet Paleo for more information 210-736-5034.

### **A Profile in Courage** (cont from page 1)

I'd been fighting down emerged with me." A breakdown came after that, gradually but relentlessly. She descended into darkness that didn't budge for those 13 years, until the addition of a second antidepressant shifted her inner biochemistry. "Very disappointed with my progress and seriously bruised by 'consumer help systems,' in 2000 I made the decision to take personal responsibility for my healing, do whatever it took to get better," and "enlist god's guidance in doing so." Years of traditional talk and cognitive therapy had not brought full healing: "My brain proved adept at regrouping defenses and blocking access to pain." So, Julie's quest for wellness included finding a different kind of therapist, one who could work at non-verbal, bodily, subconscious levels. She found the person she needed and now pays for her three-hour sessions out-of-pocket, because those who accept her low-income insurance offer only those more traditional therapeutic modalities. I feel proud of Julie when I write this about her, because it demonstrates both her informed understanding of her individual treatment needs and her unflinching pursuit of recovery.

I asked Julie what her ongoing recovery strategies are. With typical Julie humor, she first responded, "I tell myself, 'Don't kill yourself today.'" Then she said she practices the "drudgery of getting well": taking her meds, striving daily to block emotional eating, getting enough sleep and water, keeping appointments. Though she used to be a runner, exercise is hard for her these days, because it releases anger; this, she realizes, may be related to the traumas of her early life (trauma is remembered in the body). Her absolute number-one priority is "staying in my body" and "being aware of what my needs are at any given time and meeting them - no more victimization!"

Many times we are reminded that courage isn't the absence of fear, but rather the capacity to act even when we are afraid. Julie has known deep and paralyzing fears, she has been down and out, but she always gets back up. Today, she is a support group co-facilitator and graduate

of the BRIDGES recovery course. She marks the beginning of her true recovery to the days of her first close contacts with fellow consumers in support groups which "did me more good than hours of talk therapy"; group participation keeps her on track in the substance-abuse arena, too. She has helped a lot of people get better - sometimes in the past at the expense of her own self-care. Her ethics are admirable; her honesty and generosity well-known in the Kona community where we both live. I know that advice from Julie will be measured and considered. She finds non-humans both safer and kinder than people, and harbors a deep love of live theater and of art (she draws skillfully).

As a final question, I asked Julie what her goals and dreams are. "I don't set goals right now," she said ..... except that she'd like to work with animals, act on the stage again, live beyond the clutter of her hoarding, "see the earth from space," get better acquainted with the new, genuine being she's becoming, and, above all, "I'd like to feel pleasure and happiness again." My throat catches at those words, for they remind me how downright awful depression can be.

A gifted psychopharmacologist I saw in California once told me that "pleasure is the last thing to come back." My heartfelt wish for brave and persevering Julie is that pleasure and happiness do come back - and soon.

## **\$3 MILLION CHIP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN MAY**

AUSTIN – Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Albert Hawkins announced that a new \$3 million outreach campaign for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) will begin in May with a series of statewide radio ads in English and Spanish.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) also is surveying CHIP families to learn more about the reasons for a recent decline in enrollment. CHIP enrollment for April is 292,681, down from 302,020 in March. About 5,000 children were disenrolled from the program because their families failed to pay a new enrollment fee.

"CHIP remains an excellent value for low-income Texans, and we want to make sure families understand how to apply for CHIP and how to renew their coverage," Hawkins said. "We also will continue our efforts to determine why fewer families are completing the re-enrollment process."

## 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.

**May 1, 2005**

Regular Meeting

6:30-8:00 p.m.

**May 15, 2005**

Regular Meeting

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**

# Save the Date: 2006 Texas Advocates Annual Conference

The 2006 Texas Advocates Conference will be held in Grapevine, Texas on August 4-6.

Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center

1800 Highway 26 East

Grapevine, Texas, 76051-9641.

Tel: 1-817-481-8444 Fax: 1-817-481-3160

Please visit the Texas Advocates website for more information: [www.txadvocates.org/ta/](http://www.txadvocates.org/ta/)

Hotel Room Rate: \$85 per night plus tax (single, double, triple, quad) Registration Fees: \$80 per person (includes registration fee and Saturday Breakfast, Lunch, Awards Banquet

and Dance and Sunday Breakfast) Fun Night Fees: \$30 per person (includes Friday Dinner and Fun Night Entertainment (Tentative: Elvis and Karaoke)

Stipends: Applying for stipends from the Texas Developmental Disabilities Council.

Tentative Workshop Topics/Tracks: -Self Determination -Leadership/Public Speaking - Independent Living/Housing -Employment -Transportation and -Public Policy/Advocacy

The Arc of Texas: 1-800-292-9729 [www.thearcoftexas.org](http://www.thearcoftexas.org)

San Antonio Contact:

Judith Laufer

Advisor to S.A.L.S.A.

San Antonio League of Self-Advocates 210-828-7125

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

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is pleased to announce that National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day 2006 will take place on Monday, May 8. National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day presents an opportunity for communities across the nation to promote resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

## The State Needs Your Comments

Scheduled hearings are to be held around the state on the Health and Human Services Commission's strategic plan. This is a great opportunity to let policymakers know the direction you believe they should go in the delivery of supports and services for people with disabilities. For instance, expand community-based services, fund more Medicaid waiver services, reduce spending on large congregate care institutions, etc. You can participate in this by coming to the hearing on:

### May 16 - San Antonio

Norris Conference Center (inside Crossroads Mall)

Red Oak Ballroom

4522 Fredricksburg Rd., Suite A-100

San Antonio, TX 78201

Phone: (210) 738-0040

The last plan only had a **paragraph** on planning for people with mental health problems. This was for children and adults. When we had an MHMR, their strategic plan was a huge book on planning for services. That we have been reduced to a paragraph is unconscionable. We know that the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is concerned about the overall health of Texans, but mental health is such a huge part of physical health that more importance and attention needs to be paid to this important aspect of health. Look at your life and find what has helped you and then go advocate that money and resources be put in these areas. **Don't let this opportunity pass our community by. Speak out for all the things we need to be in recovery because**

**Recovery is Possible!**

**Check out the Prosumers New Website at:**

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

2006

May

2006

| S      | MON   | TUE  | WED   | THUR   | FRI  | SAT   |
|--------|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|        | May 1<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 11:30 am Zarzamora<br><br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746  | May 2<br><b>Wellness Grp</b> 1:30 Zarzamora<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 2:30 W. Annex<br><br><b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592<br><br><b>DBSA CC #2</b> 6:30 824-1602<br><br><b>Bilingual Consumer/Family Support Group</b> 6-8 S. Presa        | May 3<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 10 S. Presa<br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><b>Peer -2-Peer</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><b>Poetry/Writers Round Table</b> S. Presa 1:30  | May 4<br><b>Co-Occurring Disorders #1</b> 10 am CHCS<br><br><b>Men's Sup Grp</b> 4pm S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA CC #1-</b> 7 pm 824-1602        | May 5<br><b>Celebrating Cinco de Mayo S. Presa 10:30</b><br><br><b>Solutions for Wellness</b> 2:30 W Annex     | 5/6<br><br><b>AMHCR</b> 10:30 am Support Group<br><br><b>NACA Home Buyers Workshop @</b> Jefferson United Methodist Church 10 AM - 2 PM 758 Donaldson Ave |
| 7      | May 8<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 11:30 am Zarzamora<br><br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746  | May 9<br><b>Wellness Grp</b> 1:30 Zarzamora<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><br><b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592<br><br><b>DBSA CC #2</b> 6:30 824-1602<br><br><b>NAMI</b> 7 pm 510 Belknap                                     | May 10<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 10 S. Presa<br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><b>Peer -2-Peer</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><b>Poetry/Writers Round Table</b> S. Presa 1:30 | May 11<br><b>Co-Occurring Disorders #2</b> 10 am CHCS<br><br><b>DBSA CC #1-</b> 7 pm 824-1602  | May 12<br><br><b>Prosumer Meeting</b> 12-3 School of Nursing<br><br><b>Solutions for Wellness</b> 2:30 W Annex | 5/13  |
| 1<br>4 | May 15<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 11:30 am Zarzamora<br><br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746 | May 16<br><b>Wellness Grp</b> 1:30 Zarzamora<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><br><b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592<br><br><b>DBSA CC #2-</b> 6:30 pm 824-1602<br><br><b>Bilingual Consumer/Family Support Group</b> 6-8 S. Presa | May 17<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 10 S. Presa<br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><b>Peer -2-Peer</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><b>Poetry/Writers Round Table</b> S. Presa 1:30 | May 18<br><b>Co-Occurring Disorders #3</b> 10 am CHCS<br><br><b>Legislative Visit-</b> Call 736-5034<br><br><b>DBSA CC #1-</b> 7 pm 824-1602 | May 19<br><b>Burnett Clinic Open House</b> 10-2<br><br><b>Solutions for Wellness</b> 2:30 W Annex              | 5/20<br><br><b>AMHCR</b> 10:30 am Support Group<br><br><b>NACA Home Buyers Workshop @</b> Harlandale Community Center 10 AM - 2 PM 7227 Briar Place       |
| 2<br>1 | May 22<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 11:30 Zarzamora<br><br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746    | May 23<br><b>Mental Health Month Picnic</b> Call S. Presa for more info<br><b>Wellness Grp</b> 1:30 Zarzamora<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 2:30 W. Annex<br><br><b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592<br><br><b>DBSA CC #2-</b> 6:30 pm 824-1602     | May 24<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 10 S. Presa<br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><b>Peer -2-Peer</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><b>Poetry/Writers Round Table</b> S. Presa 1:30 | May 25<br><b>Co-Occurring Disorders #4</b> 10 am CHCS<br><br><b>AMHCR Sup Grp</b> 10 at SAILS<br><br><b>DBSA CC#1-</b> 7 pm 824-1602         | May 26<br><b>Solutions for Wellness</b> 2:30 W Annex   | 5/27  |
| 2<br>8 | May 29<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 11:30 Zarzamora<br><br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><br><b>DBSA</b> 7 pm 682-2746    | May 30<br><b>Wellness Grp</b> 1:30 Zarzamora<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><br><b>DBSA CF</b> 6 pm 683-8592<br><br><b>DBSA CC #2-</b> 6:30 pm 824-1602  | May 31<br><b>Women's Sup Grp</b> 10 S. Presa<br><b>Arts &amp; Crafts</b> 1-3 S. Presa<br><b>Peer -2-Peer</b> 2:30 West Annex<br><b>Poetry/Writers Round Table</b> S. Presa 1:30 | June 1<br><b>DBSA CC#1-</b> 7 pm 824-1602  | June 2<br><b>Solutions for Wellness</b> 2:30 W Annex   | 6/3<br><br><b>AMHCR</b> 10:30 am Support Group  |

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

It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power. – Alan Cohen

## CALENDAR NAMES, ADDRESSES and PHONE NUMBERS

**Prosumer Office**- 210-436-8018 Ext 302 or 210-846-0280 or 210-736-5034 [www.ProsumersInternational.org](http://www.ProsumersInternational.org)  
5802 S. Presa, San Antonio or if you are sending mail please address it to: PO Box 120394 San Antonio, TX 78212;  
**24/7 Crisis Clinic**—Address is 520 N. Leona 2nd Floor (the Brady Green). **223-7233 or 1-800-316-9241.**

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

**MR PNAC** - Mental Retardation Planning & Network Advisory Committee

**BHPAC**—Behavioral Health Planning Advisory Committee

for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues

**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**

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

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

**Burnett Clinic** - Address is 1920 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

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### News Release

## COMMISSIONER BARNHART UNVEILS NEW SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS

### Useful Websites and Links

The Prosumer website

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

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.gcflearnfree.org/](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/)

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)

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, issued a final rule establishing a new disability determination process. The new process, built upon Social Security's electronic disability claims process, will shorten decision times and pay benefits to people who are obviously disabled much earlier in the process.

"The changes we are making in the disability process will greatly improve the quality of service that Social Security provides to millions of disabled workers and their families," Commissioner Barnhart said. "The new process uses 21st century technology and creates accountability at every step. It reflects my goals of improving the accuracy, consistency and fairness of our process and ensuring that we make the right decision as early in the process as possible."

The new disability process provides for:

- A quick disability determination process for those who are obviously disabled. Favorable decisions would be made in such cases within 20 days after the claim is received by the state disability determination agency.
- A new Medical-Vocational Expert System (MVES) to enhance the expertise needed to make accurate and timely decisions. The MVES will be composed of a Medical-Vocational Expert Unit and a national network of medical, psychological and vocational experts who meet qualification standards established by the Commissioner.
- A new position -- the Federal Reviewing Official -- that will review state agency determinations upon the request of the claimant. This will eliminate the reconsideration step of the current appeals process.
- Retention of the right to request a de novo hearing and decision from an Administrative Law Judge if the claimant disagrees with the decision of the Federal Reviewing Official.
- Closing the record after the Administrative Law Judge issues a decision, with provision for certain good cause exceptions to this rule.
- A new body -- the Decision Review Board -- to review and correct decisional errors and ensure consistent adjudication at all levels of the disability determination process. The current Appeals Council will be phased out gradually.

Social Security plans to phase in the new process on a region-by-region basis beginning with the Boston Region this summer. The Boston Region is comprised of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

In conjunction with the changes in the disability determination process, Social Security is conducting several demonstration projects aimed at helping people with disabilities who are interested in working. These projects support the President's New Freedom Initiative and provide for work incentives and opportunities earlier in the process. In these demonstrations, the Agency will test providing cash supports, various forms of medical benefits and employment supports such as transportation assistance. Social Security will look at how making these available will help people with disabilities successfully work.

"From the beginning, I have been committed to developing a disability determination process that provides the level of service the American people expect and deserve," Commissioner Barnhart said. "I am confident that this rule will do just that."

### Medicare Part D Information

Enrollment for Medicare Part D was extended until May 15, 2006. The extension is to give people time to find out if their medications are covered in the drug formularies of the plans they are considering. For those whose medications are not listed on formularies, the extension is to give people time to work with their physicians to find medications that will work for their needs and that are on the formulary. This time can also be used to file appeals or negotiate with plan managers to include specific drugs in the formularies. These are important issues, please do not wait until the last minute to find out what will work for you.

## Embracing Change: How to make the leap to a richer life

Until recently, my home office felt like a scene from a horror film – the kind where the walls move in to crush the heroine. Stacks of books and papers make hard to feel creative, but after years of being squished, I'd simply grown used to it. Then I visited my friend Karen's new home and was stunned by her gorgeous workspace. She'd taken over the whole top floor! Our third floor – the largest space in the house – was just a guest room. I immediately traded spaces, and now it's my dream office. The question that the belated Great Office Shuffle posed to me was this: **Why is it so hard to make a change when your life would obviously be much better if you did?**

The reasons are usually pretty simple. You're comfortable enough -- and change is scary. I know a woman who was fired from her long-term job as an assistant to a mortgage broker. At first she was afraid she wouldn't be able to make a living. She missed her predictable life. But within a year, she opened her own brokerage firm and now she's the boss. We've all heard of similar instances where life changes for the better after someone is evicted from his or her comfort zone. If you want to overcome fear and inertia, and embrace change more willingly, here are a few suggestions.

### Don't just sit there, do something

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." This famous quotation of the German philosopher Goethe is a great bit of advice. There's something about making a commitment and putting yourself out there that invites success, even though it may not come instantly or through the obvious channels

### Don't just do something, sit there

Meditation teacher Sylvia Boorstein wrote a wonderful book by this title. It's great for tuning in to your best self at any time, but particularly when you feel stuck. Maybe you know that something has to give, but you're not sure what or how. Or perhaps other people are pushing you to do something but you need to search your heart and determine if it's their dream or yours. I believe we all know in our hearts what to do – we just have to listen. Setting aside an evening for journaling and reflection can help you tune in to your deepest wisdom. Turn off the phone and arrange to be undisturbed. Take 10 or 15 minutes to quiet your body and mind through meditation, yoga, or deep breathing. Then ask your inner advisor, *What is needed for my best life to emerge?* Or any other question that feels appropriate to your situation. Sit quietly for a few more minutes and then jot down whatever comes to you. You might do this once, or daily for a period of weeks or even months. Be prepared for the light to dawn in unexpected ways – say, through a dream or conversation. You can't force insight, but it certainly favors the prepared soul.

## Be brave and keep your goal in mind

If you wait until everything in your life feels safe and predictable, you may lose your opportunity. Courageous people aren't fearless. They just take action in spite of their fears. Last January, my husband, Gordon, and I published our first book together, *Saying Yes to Change*. For a lone wolf like me who was used to holing up in solitary to write, collaboration was a difficult shift. What if the project was a disaster? What if it ruined our fledgling marriage? But we kept the goal in mind, and the risk was more than worth the effort. Completing the project brought both of us, and our marriage, to a new level of trust and intimacy. Change expands the territory in which you live and lets your fullest potential shine.

### Enlist an ally

Once you've announced your plans to another person, you're more likely to follow up – because if you don't, someone is there to hold your feet to the fire. Earlier this year, due to months of heavy travel, I'd stopped exercising. Then my friend Annie and I had a heart-to-heart about the lack of balance in our lives. Through we both wanted to start exercising again, neither one of us had managed to make the change alone. We agreed to meet for several brisk walks each week to inspire ourselves to get back to track. The effect was immediate. We started walking more, both for each other and for ourselves.

The best motivation for change is a heartfelt desire to live your best life, not only for yourself but also to make the world a better place. That's important for friends and loved ones to understand, because when you start your transformation, they might fear that you'll leave them behind. But good change isn't a selfish thing. It's a validation of the fact that all people continue to grow throughout life, and that our potential for both work and love is much vaster than we might ever have dared to imagine.

SOURCE: Prevention Magazine April 2006 Issue

## Tips for getting support to change

**Shake up your routine** That way, no one can ignore your new plans. Move the treadmill into the living room or start driving your friends and family past the house you want to buy. When loved ones see you've made an effort, they're more likely to offer encouragement.

**Talk about your plans** Use the present tense: "I am starting my own business" instead of "I will." Friends will soon want updates on your goals, and you'll be more likely to honor your word.

**Don't keep a stiff upper lip** If you're unhappy with your life now, seek counsel from friends about what's wrong – and how you can change it.

**Plan your reward** Tell others you'll throw a party when you've accomplished an important goal. Pick a target that's reasonable to accomplish in 6 months and set the date. That gives your friends incentive to keep you focused.

\*Editor's Note: **Join the Prosumer Program!**

# Upcoming Conferences

**Conferences are a great way to become empowered.** Meeting new people, getting new ideas and being inspired to do more, help more and be more. I know that conferences can make the difference in people's lives. This is one reason PRO International tries to bring the conference to people who can't go. The following will try to give you a ready resource of upcoming conferences dealing with mental illness and information about scholarships if they are available. PRO International encourages you to participate in conferences and then to take the knowledge that you learn back to your community.

## **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.

## **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)

## **South Texas Consumer/Family Support Conference**

**June 6-8**  
Kerrville, Texas

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## **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.

## **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.**

## **The Bexar County Consumer/ Family Conference August 17-19 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.

## **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.

## **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)

## **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)

## **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.