

THE VOICE

Volume 4, Issue 1

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Friends
and Heroes
Among Us

by Ben Ashley-Wurtmann, Policy
and Outreach Associate and Tom
Johnson, Client Advocate

When dealing with a disability, it is critical to have people in our lives who can help us. Whether they are family members, friends, or community members who care, their help can make all the difference.

A serious mental illness can be very isolating for people without these connections. Judy McCormick, a peer support specialist from the Winona area, used her passion for reaching out to help start a drop-in program called the Peer Support Network (PSN). When MHAM staff attends events in Winona, we get to see the program participants' support for each other firsthand. Members of the PSN check in with each other as they arrive at events and ask one another about the progress they are making toward their goals. Whether their goal is taking a walk outside or reducing tobacco use, the PSN members know they have people rooting for their recovery. We see a genuine community that encourages each other to speak up and looks after the folks who are having a tough day.

Knowing that the holidays can be a lonely time, the PSN hosted special events and welcomed back some people who had not attended in awhile. "Once they see what is there, they return," Judy says. In 2012, her big goal is to get more feedback from members. When we help people, the first step is listening to and

respecting what they need. "This is their center," Judy told us.

Drop-in centers are just one form of support. Support can also come from friends and family. Recently, MHAM heard from a client that had a medical emergency and only the timely help of her friend, Mark, kept her alive.

When the young woman began feeling that something was wrong, she called Mark and expressed her concern. Mark thought she

Friends and Heroes continued on page 7

Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance (DBSA)
Support Group Starting
in Minneapolis

by Tom Johnson, Client Advocate

MHAM is sponsoring a new DBSA group in south Minneapolis. DBSA is a national support network, merging with MHAM in Minnesota, for people affected by depression or bipolar disorder. The new group will reach out to individuals, families, significant others, and caregivers by offering support, education and information through the peer led group.



The group will meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm at All God's Children MCC, 3100 Park Ave. S. in Minneapolis. For more information contact Steve through MHAM at 651-493-6634 or visit mentalhealthmn.org.

DBSA continued on page 7

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Ben Ashley-Wurtmann,
Outreach and Policy Associate

After last year's wrenching negotiations over closing the budget deficit, what can we expect from the 2012 session? It might just be short and quiet. According to current projections, Minnesota will end the current biennium with a small surplus. This could change when revised numbers come out in February, but for the moment we have good news. The Senate leadership team has changed and Sen. Senjem has become majority leader. Many observers have predicted he will strike a more collegial tone than was set by his predecessor.

Quiet might be better than more cuts, but the Mental Health Legislative Network will still be active. There are several issues we feel need urgent attention. A 10% payment cut for low-needs individuals on CADI waivers has a disproportionate impact on people with mental illnesses. The current assessment process doesn't reflect the ways in which mental illnesses can affect someone. For instance, the scoring system for markers of emotional health currently gives equal weight to being in severe crisis and having trouble sleeping. We need to find ways to fix this problem, but we will also need to find the money in the budget to pay for restoring these services.

Long term, we still face serious challenges. There is no discussion of putting more money back in the system, even though we know it is stretched to the breaking point. Over the last two sessions, we have lost millions in funding. Right now, the state projects a 1.3 billion dollar deficit in 2014-2015. How do we change the conversation so that we don't keep losing the services that keep people independent and healthy?

First, you should remember that a lot could change in 2012. Our legislative districts will be redrawn, and every Minnesota legislator will be up for re-election. There's no better time to learn about who is running for office, ask questions, and to vote.

Secondly, you change this equation by educating your policy makers. We want to give a special thank you to the people who came out to the town hall events held around the state, and to the legislators who understood that it was important to learn more and explain their choices at the Capitol.

We are getting ready for Day on the Hill on February 14th. Last year was our biggest event ever. Will you join us that day and expand the impact we make together?



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SAMHSA Announces a Working Definition of “Recovery” from Mental Disorders and Substance Use Disorders

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a new working definition of recovery from mental and substance use disorders. The definition is the product of a year-long effort by SAMHSA and a wide range of partners to develop a working definition of recovery that captures the essential, common experiences of those recovering from mental and substance use disorders, including major guiding principles that support the recovery definition. SAMHSA led this effort as part of its Recovery Support Strategic Initiative.

For further information about the new working recovery definition and the guiding principles of recovery please visit: <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/> or <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112223420.aspx>

SAMHSA and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Collaborate with Facebook to Help Those in Crisis

Facebook is announcing a new service that harnesses the power of social networking and crisis support to help prevent suicides across the nation and Canada. The new service enables Facebook users to report a suicidal comment they see posted by a friend on Facebook using either the Report Suicidal Content link or the report links found throughout the site. The person who posted the suicidal comment will then immediately receive an email from Facebook encouraging them to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or to click on a link to begin a confidential chat session with a crisis worker.

For more information, visit the SAMHSA website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112125820.aspx>

ADHD Medications and Risk of Serious Coronary Heart Disease in Young and Middle-Aged Adults

A recent report conducted by a collaborative network of research centers that reviewed over 440,000 young and middle-aged adults aged 25-64 years, including over 150,000 users of ADHD medications, found little evidence of an increased risk of heart disease associated with current ADHD medication use when comparing to non-use or to remote use of ADHD medications. The study also found little evidence of an increased risk for current use of any of the specific medications examined (i.e., methylphenidate, amphetamines, or atomoxetine), or for an increase in risk with increasing duration of current use of ADHD medications.

The report can be accessed at: <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/search-for-guides-reviews-and-reports/?pageaction=displayproduct&productid=884>

Letter from the Executive Director



Thursday, January 5, 2012

I'm having heart surgery tomorrow. By the time you read this I should be almost fully recovered. Of course recovery is different for everyone. I am lucky to be surrounded by family and friends who support me. This came about following a routine physical. An echocardiogram showed I was in atrial fibrillation and my mitral valve was leaking. This all happened in a period of two weeks.

My surgery, after a period of rehabilitation, should put me back in good health. A change in diet and exercise should become part of my recovery.

What I have been thinking about in the past three weeks is how much more complicated my life has become. I have trouble breathing when I walk, I am taking medications that I never took before, and there is uncertainty in regard to my health.

I understand better how chronic illness can affect people. The constant pain, the effects of the illness on normal activities, and the dependence on medications all change the normal routine, and a new norm develops.

Over the last few years I have spoken with many of you about your chronic health concerns and how they impact your life, yet you work to not let them define you.

How much I admire you and your view of life. How hard you work toward recovery and acceptance. How well you support others in their recovery and independence.

Many of you have shown me what wonderful people you are. You are kind, caring, non-judgmental people who look at the best of life.

Your illness doesn't define you, but it does allow you a life good and worth sharing. You have allowed and encouraged me to look at all life as precious, and I am thankful to have you as friends.

Be kind to one another.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed".

2012 Day on the Hill – February 14

Join MHAM and the Mental Health Legislative Network on Tuesday, February 14 for Mental Health Day on the Hill. We will meet in the morning to give you information on

the issues facing individuals living with mental illnesses. At noon we will go to the Capitol rotunda for a rally. Participants are encouraged to schedule a meeting with their representative and senator in the afternoon. Come help us emphasize the needs of individuals living with mental illnesses in Minnesota. For more information and a schedule of the day's events, please visit mentalhealthmn.org or call 651-493-6634 or 800-862-1799.



3M Provides Grant to MHAM on Behalf of 3M Volunteer Brian Doran

The 3M Foundation has donated \$250 to MHAM, in recognition of Brian Doran's commitment to the community.

Brian has donated countless hours to MHAM over the past seven years. Brian serves as the Vice President of MHAM's Board of Directors and gives presentations on preventing crisis and managing mental health. Brian also volunteers in the MHAM office on Monday and Friday mornings. He answers incoming calls, assists callers in finding resources, and helps schedule appointments for the client advocates. The MHAM staff loves working with Brian. His contributions to our vision of improved lives for people with mental illnesses are invaluable.

"3M employees and retirees generously give their time and skills to help others," said Robin Torgerson, vice-president, 3M Community Affairs. "We are pleased to recognize their commitment to their communities."



As part of the 3M Volunteer Match, the 3M Foundation will donate \$250 to eligible non-profit organizations for which a 3M employee volunteers 20 hours or a 3M retiree volunteers 25 hours or more per calendar year. For more information on this program, please contact 3M Community Affairs at 651-733-0144.

2011 Memorial and Honor Gifts to MHAM

IN MEMORY

Jan Bienhoff

Raymond and Audrey Gay Geist
Jean Grams

Debbie Cook's mother Leah

Ellen Joseph

Susan Gall

Frank and Janet O'Neill

Patrick Graves

Audrey Baker
Colin and Karen Graves

Daniel Steven Hegler

Janice M. Hegler

Leslie Carole Johnson

Willard Shapira

Gerald (Jerry) Krieger

Steven and Karen Crouch

Mark Lehman

Bonnie and Duane Boring

Jami Alanna Marks

Jill Ann Marks

James R. Meyer

Benjamin and Arden Ashley-Wurtmann

Timothy Norling

Jerry and Carol Norling

Felipe Padilla

Bonnie Braun Padilla and the Felipe Padilla
Memorial Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
Ellen Joseph

Ryan Plante

Anne Gullion

Marge Ramsey

Paula Seeger

Patty Rubbelke

Carol Jernberg

Mendon F. Schutt

Mendon F. Schutt Family Fund of the
Minneapolis Foundation

Gloria Segal

Dr. Martin A. Segal

Rossy Shaller's wonderful husband, Dick

Ellen Joseph

Kathy Van Beck

Carol and Herb Inderrieden

John Weber

Mike and Kay Weber

IN HONOR

Mr. and Mrs. Alt

Gregg Towley

Brett Dumke

Relieve Care, Inc.

Jane Elsass Barman

Susan Elsass

Kelli Forsman

Sally Forsman

John Froom

Sally Forsman

Chris Graham

Tom Graham

Thomas Heidal

John Heidal

Tom Johnson

Clare and Jerome Ritter
Sandra Williams

Ellen Joseph

Bonnie Braun Padilla and the Felipe Padilla
Memorial Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
Ann R. Jackson
Lisa Weisman

Kim Lutes

Dianne Lutes

Bobby Nemer's Special Birthday

Edwin and Marjorie Agranoff
Jerry and Janice Alch
Sandra Alch
Mel and Ronnie Burstein
Paula and Arvin Cohen
Peter and Gloria Cooper
Carole Epstein
Lois Epstein
Mark and Lucy Rose Fischer
Renee Gainsley
Linda Gilfix
Dr. Leslie and Bernard Goldblatt
Elaine and Larry Hallfin
Dorothy Herman
Susan and Tom Kafka
Eric and Roxie King-Smith
Genni and Stan Maisel
Marjorie Modell
Ella Mogilevsky
Allan and Marcia Oleisky
Fredda Pink
Gerald and Eileen Siegel
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Singer
Peter and Joanna Sussman

Cheryl Newell

Ellen Joseph

Joan Novak

Gregory Novak

Margaret O'Neill Escabí

Anonymous

Nancy Paul

Sally Forsman

Anna Raudenbush

Ruth Hauff

Andrea Scott's Birthday

Margaret O'Neill Escabí and José Escabí

Martin Segal's 91st Birthday

Susan Segal and Myron Frans

David Snyder, RN

Jennifer Grosen

This list is current as of December 31, 2011. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If you note an error or omission, please accept our apologies. You can notify us of changes by calling Nancy Paul at 651-746-8584, ext. 9.



Friends and Heroes continued from page 1

sounded very different, so he went in person to see how she was doing. Something was wrong, and a short time after Mark arrived, the woman went into convulsions. She had a severe seizure, but Mark made sure she did not hit her head, called 911, maintained an airway, and stayed on the line until EMTs arrived. Her condition required a stay in the hospital. When the client's condition stabilized, the attending physician told her that if Mark had not been there to help her in the emergency, she probably would have died alone in her apartment.

A tragedy was averted because this young woman had a dependable and caring contact in her life, and she asked him for help. When the call for help came, Mark did not ignore it, but checked it out. Mark was a hero and we are all thankful that when this client recognized that something was wrong, she had someone on whom she could rely.

In ways big and small, it is our support networks that make recovery possible. A person's experience of an illness may change day to day, and the people who stand with us through it all can take real pride in knowing that they have made an impact.

DBSA continued from page 1

MHAM welcomes the new Minneapolis DBSA group and thanks the volunteer facilitators as well as All God's Children MCC for providing the group with a room for its meetings.

The new Minneapolis group joins with DBSA groups in Eagan, Eden Prairie, Maple Grove, Mounds View, St. Louis Park, St. Paul Highland Park, Woodbury, Albany, Rochester, and St. Cloud in offering support to people dealing with depression and bipolar disorder. Please see page eight for a full list of DBSA support groups.

Otto Bremer Foundation Awards 92 Grants Totaling 4.1 Million

The Otto Bremer Foundation awarded 92 grants totaling \$4,078,690 in November 2011. Seventy-two grants totaling \$3,151,327 support programs and organizations in Minnesota; 12 totaling \$648,594 in North Dakota; and 8 totaling \$278,770 in Wisconsin.

MHAM is one of the agencies that received funding from the Otto Bremer Foundation. For the second year, MHAM received a \$20,000 grant to provide assessment and training for mental health Local Advisory Councils (LACs) throughout Minnesota. Our goals are to increase participation by individuals living with mental illnesses and to improve the delivery of mental health services.

Created in 1944, the Otto Bremer Foundation assists people in achieving full economic, civic, and social participation in and for the betterment of their communities. The Foundation's work to help build and maintain vibrant communities is based on the vision and legacy of Otto Bremer, whose commitment to Bremer Bank communities and to those working to make their lives better continues to guide the Foundation.

The Voice Gets a Makeover

As you opened this issue of *The Voice*, you probably noticed a few changes in the layout, printing, and paper. In our ongoing effort to be good stewards of the funds we receive from our generous donors, we worked with The MPX Group to redesign the newsletter so that we don't spend quite as much. We are only printing in color on one side of each sheet, hence the black and white pages. We changed the paper choice to one that the printer purchases in bulk so that we save a little money there. We are not inserting donation envelopes in every issue. We will continue to provide envelopes in the May annual report and the December end-of-year issues. And, as always, we encourage you to receive the newsletter via email to save even more. MHAM thanks The MPX Group for their flexibility and commitment to our mission and needs.



Support Groups

DULUTH SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, 5 – 7 pm, Miller Dwan Medical Center, Meeting Room 1 – 3, Lobby Level, East Side, *For more information, call MHAM at 1-800-862-1799.*



DBSA SUPPORT GROUPS

For people living with depression or bipolar disorder and their family members and friends

TWIN CITIES

Dakota County/Eagan	1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7pm	Audrey Weiner	651-454-8329
		Jonathan Moerschall	612-210-1704
Eden Prairie	1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday, 7pm	Beth Bell	612-722-4185
Maple Grove	1st and 3rd Thursday, 7-9 pm	Steve	763-425-6505, ext. 515
Minneapolis	2nd and 4th Monday, 7:30 pm	Steve	651-493-6634
Mounds View	2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7 pm	Pam Karls	612-867-6863
St. Louis Park	2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 pm	Bobby Nemer	952-938-8941
St. Paul	1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday, 7 pm	Mary Richards	651-636-4012
Woodbury	2nd and 4th Wednesday, 7 pm	Carol Treague	651-735-2345

GREATER MINNESOTA

Albany	Every Monday, 6:30pm		320-845-6104
Rochester	1st and 3rd Monday, 5:30 pm	Sandy (daytime)	507-282-8372
	2nd, 4th and 5th Monday, 7 pm	Jonathan (evenings)	507-292-9679
St. Cloud	Every Monday, 1 pm	Mary	320-980-6589
	Every Thursday, 6 pm	Lynn Keller	320-240-3324



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