On June 14 at 7:30 a.m., we left for Pittsburgh for the PMHCA (PA Mental Health Consumer Association) Conference. En route, when Kathyann told us there were no t-shirts this year due to cut-backs on the conference costs, we almost turned around but Ben returned his focus to the road and on we went. We arrived around 11:30 a.m., checked into our rooms, and then had lunch. I was rooming with Thomas Smith, also a member of Leadership Council. We first went to the orientation session to learn about the workshops and what the hotel had to offer, like van service, the pool, etc.

The workshop on Evidence-Based therapies on Open Dialog Therapy in Finland was excellent. He said a lot of things that rang true with me and my experience. In Finland, they start at the first sign of a disorder, which would have a better result then at a later time in the disorder. Here they tell us we need medication and to treat our disorder like an ongoing disease. We will never be able to have a normal life. I later learned how wrong they are. Also in Finland they take time to talk to you which to me means a lot. To know a doctor is willing to hear you talk to learn the underlying thoughts and feeling is truly a benefit. Here they up your dose or lock you up.

Later we went to another workshop on The Balancing Act: Diabetes and Depression. There I learned another thing that attaches to Diabetes. Being just diagnosed as a type 2, my triglycerides are keeping my sugar high. To get one to lower, the other will go down. I learned more about what to eat and to not stop eating the bad things but to eat them in moderation. (cont. p2)

Summer! What a great time of year. Picnics, swimming, open air festivals, fishing and the PMHCA conference!

At the PMHCA conference, there were people there like myself and others attending workshops, activities and meetings, just relaxing and relating to others where we are all on the same level playing field in life. The other attendees from our group and from our region were really awesome!

This year’s conference was held at the Radisson Green Tree in Pittsburgh. This was a really nice place to spend three days and learn so much about mental illness. (cont p3)
Later on Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., they had an art show with many works turned in by other consumers. The show had many beautiful paintings and drawings. I entered one painting and a wide variety of greeting cards. After awhile I asked Kathyann if she could watch my table while I returned to my room to get more cards. I was totally surprised how well my cards sold. That was the first time it happened. Thank you all who purchased my cards. Later that night, we attended the dance. I watched from a distance. The dance lasted until 12:00 a.m. Needless to say, we were tired the next day.

At the closing event, I stayed for half because I was able to see my daughter. The last time I saw her was at my mom’s funeral a year and a half ago. Those familiar with my past know I missed a big part of her life. I enjoy anytime I get to see her. We were able to go out to eat, and then they returned to my hotel room where her friend bought cards from me. I also was able to give her two frog paintings she asked for. We had a great time and I hope to get out to see her again soon. I want to thank everyone who approved my attending the conference. I learned a lot and met a lot of nice people. We went to the Allegheny chapter of Keystone and eat breakfast before our trip home. It was a great time. Thank you again for the opportunity to go to the PMHCA conference.

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**PA Psychological Mind Body Workshops by Kim Morrison**

This is a free workshop held every year at the Hilton. I’ve been to it several times and the topics are always helpful. For the workshops they bring in psychologists from across the state who are real experts in their fields and yet down to earth as well. After the workshop I have talked with some of them one on one about the ideas they presented, and they have given me some really good tips that have helped me in my life.

Topics this year included dealing with procrastination, self-esteem and anger. There are also topics for helping children to be the best that they can be or on ways to relax. The class sizes are from 15 - 20 people and are very interacting. I always enjoy them no matter what the topic is. Maybe next June I’ll see you there.

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**Walk the Walk By Lynn Thane Chambersburg**

The Walk the Walk sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Franklin and Fulton Counties was held on May 20, 2011 – which was a Friday – on 3rd street in Chambersburg. The event turned out to be very successful and there were over more than 100 people there that day.

The walkers met up at the Chambersburg Recreation Center and walked to the square where several speakers from MHA discussed the different traumas and their life recovery stories. This turned out to be a very good turnout. Then, lunch was provided at the Recreation Center. This year’s menu consisted of hot dogs, macaroni salad, salad, and other related snacks, as well as beverages such as lemonade and iced tea. Afterward, there were the graduates of the 2011 Literacy Council receiving their certificates. This was presented by Barry Munch, a MHA staff member and head person of CSP- Consumer Supports Program.
Allegheny: What a Transformation by KCMHS Harrisburg

It was three years ago when PMHCA Conference was in Pittsburgh that several Leadership Council and CSP members and myself went to check-out the newly purchased Specialized Community Residence in Oakdale. During our visit, we liked the rural setting, the hiking trails, and the bus stop, but from its appearance, the home itself needed a lot of work.

What a transformation three years can make. It is still a rural setting with biking and riding trails. This is now an accessible home with eight residents in personal rooms (not over twenty like the prior owner). The rooms are large with several gathering areas having lots of light and space. There is still construction occurring with the expansion of a garage. Through the yard there was a wrap-around porch looking out to the mountain, and areas were being creating for gardening projects with the residents.

During the Friday morning we had opportunities to speak with residents and staff to hear about doing recovery in residential settings and what people are looking for in a home. We shared as peers personal stories of recovery. We planted seeds of information as we discussed Leadership Council over a beautifully and creatively catered breakfast. Thank you for your hospitality.

What a Conference-Pittsburgh part 2

There was an Art Show with lots of creativity and nice people. The Art Show was far out and my roommate (and friend) displayed his artwork which people could not get enough of with his wildlife paintings and all the creatures of the woods.

The accommodations were really nice and comfortable. The food was great. Wednesday night they had a Mardi Gras dance with a live band and everybody was movin’ and groovin’ to all the funky jams you wanted to hear.

I just can’t write down in words the experience, but I will say this. If you ever have the opportunity to attend a conference (even a one day conference) or any major junction, by all means go for it!! You will learn so much that you will carry with you through daily life.

Thomas Smith
Pure Silence By Chris Bair

The silence of my heart that makes me Thirst for Love within.

Show me how to Love without hurting again.

Love is so hard to feel and too strong to show.

The silence holds my heart

it Builds the wall of loneliness

it Leaves me cold and Dark inside.

Slowly fading into time

Fill the Emptiness that Remains inside

Break the wall so strong within my mind.

It is so quiet without the voices that Lead me away from Love.

Let me feel Love again…in this place of hope…here I can find the help I need…

to break down the wall so strong…

No more to be Dominated by pain and sorrow.

Show me where to go,

in the hope that I may know the peace that I so Desperately need.

Show me how to live…

The wall so strong, comes down slowly…

The pain that I have know so long is gone.

Show me the way home…

Home to the place where I can Love again

in the silence…

so calm….

so pure.

This poem was written while still at Danville and now Chris shares it as he begins his new life journey together with his wife to honor those who still yearn to fill the emptiness
Facing Us Clubhouse DBSA Online Interactive Resource

It is an excellent tool for wellness including features such as:

- Personal Journal
- Wellness Plan
- Electronic e-postcards
- Wellness Tracker

Wellness Book includes personal tips of things that work for you, as well as listings of tips about topics such as recovery, anxiety, and depression, that have been submitted by others that you can use select and create your own wellness book and a book for a friend.

Media room that includes recovery story videos, practice videos of yoga and meditation, audios, art work and radio discussions on mental health.

Creativity Corner (Dave’s Spark) includes Podcasts on Drawing Strength Writing through Memoir Comedy Rx and Music can soothe the Soul; Sparking Creativity in Healing workshops with much, much more.

Good Advice By Vincent Davis

I’m shell shocked like a veteran So I go to see my therapist.

For therapy to analyze my addictive behavior
Help me to identify my road to recovery.

I know that God and my therapist hear all my issues
The ones that are major and the ones that are minor.

I’m anxious for relief and I’m tired I can’t sleep

I hear voices like a boxer
I am fighting for life choices.

I see things following me.
I’m paranoid trusting no one
For my life is a crisis skating on thin ice
I feel the anger leading me to danger.

I’m trusting no one not even the Authority that makes the wind blow
I’m stressing that is why I come to you
Please help me.

Help me to identify my road to recovery.
Grant me Good Advice.
Wellness Tools Festival

KCMHS held its first Wellness Tools Festival on June 24 at 940 East Park Drive with a combination of fun and learning. Prizes were given to the first to arrive, the least and longest number of years using/offering KCMHS services.

The festival built on individual and team wellness tools, encouraging teams to creatively demonstrate wellness tools and propose strategies to KCMHS on how to implement the strategies. Proposed strategies included the areas of walking, active listening and exercise.

We celebrated what keeps us well with a demonstration by several peers of personal wellness tools. This included:

Kim M (Native American chants and Nature Sounds);
Mary H (Inspirational Reading);
Greg J (Colored pencil Animal Drawing);
Linda T (String Art);
Chester G (Spiritual Tools from AA);
Kenny F (Recovery story with Bowling and Family video);
Dennis S (Building airplanes/gliders);
Kathyann C (Scrap booking and Reading from Insight);
Kim M (One Minute Prayer Books and Guided Imagery Meditation).

After everyone enjoyed our pizza, soda and homemade brownies, our teams went back to work. Each team was challenged to create a listing of Wellness Tools that were based on one of the WRAP Key Recovery Principles (Hope, Education, Support, Personal Responsibility and Self-Advocacy).

The winning team identified 17 Wellness tools for Hope and received a small paperback book of recovery stories. It was a close race with 15 Wellness tools for Support; 13 Wellness Tools for Education; 12 Wellness tools for Personal Responsibility and 10 Wellness Tools for Self Advocacy.

Feedback on the Wellness Festival

“I think it was a GREAT time. People learned a lot about what a Toolbox is and what they can put in it and had fun in the process while making friendships.” (KM)

“I liked it. I liked the presentation because I could really understand it.” (MB)

“I liked it because it was so much more than giving me a stack of papers to fill out. I learned a lot about my choices and had fun doing it.” (JS)

“I thought this was really good. I like the way it was set up; there was a lot of good information.” (LT)
2011 CSP Art Show By Lynn Thane Chambersburg

The 2011 CSP annual Art Show took place at The Chambersburg Mall on May 13, 14, and 15, 2011 (Fri, Sat, Sun).

There were an approximate total of 75 art entries this year. There was also a voter’s ballot where different people got to vote on which art entries they thought were the best.

Several individuals from the Keystone Center participated in this year’s Art Show.

There were items using paint, sculpture, photography, and written works. There was a separated booklet with featured poems and stories from local artists and writers.

Making Hope Real by Kim Morrison

CSP Conference of Dauphin and Cumberland Perry Counties gave us a lot of ideas on how to lighten our stress level using humor. We had some great entertainment from the Rays of Hope from Danville State Hospital. The conference demonstrated how much we are all capable of doing.

The theme of the CSP Conference was Making Hope Real and to me that means that I can interact with the world and not just sit back and watch it go by without me.

One workshop that was really great was “Being a HOPE Coach.” In another workshop we did labyrinth, journaling and Telling your Story.

People with Mental Disabilities Have the Right to Vote

Everyone wants to vote, including voters with mental disabilities. If you are a voter with a mental disability, you should know your rights.

You do have the right to vote!

If you are a person with a mental disability and understand what it means to vote, federal law protects your right to vote.


Now is the time to register for the November elections!

Excerpt from Bazelon Law Center: Your Right to Vote
http://www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=NjJhSW3rrW4%3d&tabid=104
Leadership Council Dates
Thursday July 21, 2011
Monday July 25, 2011
Thursday August 18, 2011
Monday August 29, 2011
Thursday September 15, 2011
Monday September 26, 2011
Christmas in July
Thursday July 21, 2011
Fayetteville
Poster Presentation in Philadelphia
September 21, 2011
Wellness Festival
Friday
September 23, 2011

What’s your Baggage?
All of us carry baggage through life our choice is what we do with it.

We are inviting everyone to write a story about what is important to you to be in/on the bag.

Please include a picture of the bag you select.

Select stories and pics will be used in a community awareness exhibit.

Advancing the Human Spirit!

When Do you see the Faces of Recovery?
When I am spending time with my family (3609)
When I am able to trust myself and my family and I am able to ask my sister to be my advocate in my Living Will when in the past we couldn’t even talk (3609)
When I know I have supporters and can give support to others (3609)
When I could teach my counselor from the HELP office how to use a computer as a volunteer at the Y (3609)
When I see people agree to get into rehab, get into a program and then come out and be successful (3609)
When I can remember my past, see my progress and know for myself that I can do it. (3609)
When I see a resident in her bedroom with her sister smiling and laughing and then they both join us for breakfast (Allegheny)
When the caterer comes to our house and engages with our residents, that is how we can build community relationships (Allegheny)
When a woman with a peer support and job coach is able to get a job in retail and regain custody of her children (Gateway)
Being able to go to church and being able to support each other as peers (Williamstown)
Living a life that is successful and satisfying on my own terms. Having family to help me and others to support when I need someone to talk to. (Chambersburg)
When doing a journal exercise people wanted to work on the root system of the tree and how it grounded them in their recovery (Chambersburg)
Finding the courage to date again (Chambersburg)