When I was a small child growing up, I often dreamed of what I wanted to be when I got older. I would dream of becoming a singer, a nurse, a teacher, maybe even an entrepreneur.

Never once did I dream of becoming an addict or having mental health issues. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in my late 20s. For the first year, I felt like a guinea pig, with all the different medications that the doctors were trying me on. In the beginning I didn’t want to accept the diagnosis, partly because of sheer embarrassment and also the many stereotypes that come along with it. I imagined seeing myself all doped up walking around drooling like a zombie, carrying a brown paper bag with alcohol inside, homeless and dirty.

This was not the dream I had for my life. Yet these thoughts constantly crossed my mind, not allowing me to see that with the proper guidance and medication I could learn to live a productive life.

Someone very close to me explained it like this: “Bipolar disorder is like any other disease. If you had high blood pressure, diabetes or heart troubles, you would take the medication. Won’t you? There is nothing to be ashamed of. It will help save your life.”

Continued p.3

Helpful Websites

For additional information on depression, bipolar disorder, and/or anxiety disorder, we recommend visiting the following helpful websites.

- Depression and Bipolar Alliance -- www.dbsalliance.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) -- www.nami.org
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) -- www.nimh.nih.gov
- Psych Central -- www.psychcentral.com
- National Mental Health Information Center -- www.mentalhealth.org
- Mental Health America -- www.nmha.org
- Esperanza Magazine -- www.hopetocope.com
- The Bipolar Advantage -- www.bipolaradvantage.com
Creative Persons in Recovery

Creativity comes in the most unexpected moments and ways, yet it can be part of us everyday.

Every one expresses their creativity differently, using a wide variety of forms and formats.

Join us on October 18 (and every 3rd Tuesday) from 4-5 p.m. in the Allfirst Room as we explore our creativity and look to build community linkages using our unique peer leadership skills.

The Waning Years

Will you love when I am old and gray
And my hands and feet are gnarled?
...help me count the scars that tell the story of my life
“I’ve been collecting them since I was a child!”

Can we sit on the porch and neck and hold hands
By the light of the silvery moon?
Will you squeeze my hand and blow in my ear
To make me swoon, baby swoon!

This was a little love poem.
Do you like to write?
Are you looking for ways to share your story and artistic skills with others?

Join us on October 18

If you would like more information please contact Kathyann (717) 558-8450 x131.
Birthing a Miracle (cont.)

It didn’t take me long to find out that without medication I kept ending up in the same familiar places—jails and institutions. My next step would have been death.

My process took me eight years to come out of denial. All the while my drug use continued and worsened. You see, I would always tell myself that I could go out for Ladies Night and stop taking my meds (because we all know that you can’t drink and take meds) and then restart them the next day. For me, the next day never came. It always led to full blown mania and insanity, doing the same things while expecting different results. At this time I became very confused and paranoid. I isolated myself from everyone close to me and hit a rock-bottom. Even then my disease cried out for more, and that’s when I discovered that my bottom had a basement. My disease has one goal which is to kill me, Nothing pretty and nothing cute. That was the last day I used, August 28, 2002. It is not your story or anyone else’s that keeps me clean and sober. It is my own.

By God’s Grace and Mercy I still remember. The last time I used I went to jail. Only this time was different, I was finally tired and ready to surrender. Surrendering was the beginning of my recovery process. While locked up I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous and also received the long overdue treatment for my mental health issues. I can truly say that jail helped save my life.

Today God has blessed me with nine years clean and sober and I have stayed consistent with my medications. I am a productive member of society. I do what I need to do to maintain my recovery. I have good days as well as bad but I have no desire to pick up a drug or a drink. If for any reason this thought should cross my mind, I remember to use the tools that I have been taught. I pick the phone and call my sponsor or run to a meeting. I am able to love and be loved today.

I am a Miracle! Sonja Green Johnson

Website aims to reduce Stigma in Black Communities

Atlanta — According to statistics, only 1 in 3 black people who need mental health care receive it. This exemplifies the well-known fact that the black community faces significant barriers to mental health care. While issues such as racism, institutional mistrust and lack of insurance are major obstacles, the barriers posed by stigma and misinformation are some of the most prohibitive.

BlackMentalHealthNet.com is designed to empower the Black community by promoting mental health and providing a safe place to learn about mental illness, discuss mental health issues, connect with other individuals and families dealing with mental illness, and find treatment.
Your Choice: Complementary and Alternative Supplements
The Use of Lavender

What Lavender Is Used For
- Historically, lavender was used as an antiseptic and for mental health purposes.
- Today, the herb is used for conditions such as anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, and depression.
  Lavender is also used for headache, upset stomach, and hair loss.

How Lavender Is Used
- Lavender is most commonly used in aromatherapy, A therapy in which the scent of essential oils from flowers, herbs, and trees is inhaled to promote health and well-being., in which the scent of the essential oil from the flowers is inhaled.
- The essential oil can also be diluted with another oil and applied to the skin.
  Dried lavender flowers can be used to make teas or liquid extracts that can be taken by mouth.

Side Effects and Cautions
- Topical use of diluted lavender oil or use of lavender as aromatherapy is generally considered safe for most adults. However, applying lavender oil to the skin can cause irritation. There have been reports that topical use can cause breast growth in young boys.
  
- Lavender oil may be poisonous if taken by mouth.
- When lavender teas and extracts are taken by mouth, they may cause headache, changes in appetite, and constipation.
  Using lavender with sedative medications may increase drowsiness.

Tell all your health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you may be using or thinking about using.

Christmas in July

The 2011 CSP Christmas in July Picnic sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Franklin and Fulton Counties was held at Norlo Park in Fayetteville on Thursday July 21, 2011 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

There was a dance contest, individuals with mental illness sharing their life recovery stories during the CSP meeting, elections for CSP Secretary and CSP co-chair for 2012, Bingo, and softball. This year’s lunch menu consisted of hamburgers, hot dogs, potato chips, pretzels, brownies, cookies, and watermelon. There were also beverages available such as Lemonade, Iced Tea, and bottled waters. Everyone that was there seemed to have a wonderful time and the picnic turned out to be successful this year as well.

Lynn Thane
Study Group for Mothers with Mental Illness

Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion is conducting a study of Internet education and social support for mothers living with mental illness.

The Collaborative is looking for mothers who are interested in participating in an online parental education course designed to enhance parental knowledge and skills in the following areas:
Child development, stress reduction, parent-child communication, promoting resiliency in your child and wellness planning.

The program involves the Internet social support through LISTSERV which will be co-monitored by a parent with a psychiatric disability and a mental health professional. This group can connect mothers with other mothers with similar experiences 24 hours a day 7 days a week in your home or anywhere you can access the Internet.

Mothers are eligible to participate in this study if they:
- Are above age 18 with a serious mental illness (Major Depression, Schizophrenia or Mood Disorder)
- Currently have primary or shared custody of at least one child (biological, adopted or step) under age 18
- Would consider using the Internet for support and information
- Are United State resident
- Are fluent in English

Participants selected in the study will be compensated for their participation. For more information about this research project please email: momsup@temple.edu

You Have the Right to Vote

You have the right to get help from a person you choose.
If you can’t read or need help voting because of your disability, you can have someone help you vote.
You can bring a friend, family member or someone else you trust to help you.
You can ask the poll worker to help you if you didn’t bring anyone with you.


Opportunity
For Moms
With Mental Illness for Education and Empowerment By Participating In Research

ELECTION DAY!!!!
November 8 2011
My Ongoing Recovery Story: The Hidden Secret

I came from an era where many parents did not understand anything about learning disorders; so many disorders were not addressed. I am not aware of any family history of learning disorder, although there may have been some cultural and educational shortfalls, which in my opinion added to the problem.

I found out recently that I was dyslexic, which is the difficulty of connecting the sounds of language to the letters of words. I would say for the most part, I am of normal intelligence, which means that this disorder is a specific information processing problem that is not connected with the ability to think or comprehend complex ideas. However, I do have problems sounding out words and understanding sentences. My teachers and family have helped me out tremendously, but it is still an ongoing journey. Because I’ve found out about this at this late stage of my life, getting through some assignments in work and college have been difficult, but that does not stop me from continuing.

I was born in the 40s. My life was pretty calm up until the time I started school. As I look back on my life, I realized now that there was something wrong with me, something that was not my fault. From the time I reached fifth grade and well into high school, my life was a circle of anger, depression, anxiety, and isolation. I believe the beginning of my isolation from my surroundings started when my parents came to my junior high school on Parents Day and was told by my sixth grade teacher, and I quote “Not to worry because negro children were not capable of reading as well as white children.” From that day on, I felt less than a person. No one knew or understood the reason why I could not learn like the other children. I began to believe that I was different in a bad way and did not possess the intelligence of other children.

If one can remember the old adage “if you call someone stupid long enough they began to believe it,” my class behavior started to change. I would no longer sit in the front of the classroom. I tried to become invisible; unfortunately, most of the time it did not work. The teacher would call on me, even when I did not raise my hand to read. When I began to read the other children would smirk and laugh. This would cause me to go into a deep depression. When I got home I would go into my room and just close the door. High school was not that much better. I created a technique to cover up my learning disability, which was I started looking at the history channels so that I could be knowledgeable in conversation with others. My retention of information, at least at that time in my life, was pretty good. However, memory is not the only thing one needs to be a good reader. I even lost a job because I had gotten orders mixed up, because I could not read properly. It was not until I started college, late in life, but nonetheless, that I got the help I needed with my dyslexia.

My spelling has improved, but still needs work. When I am writing an essay, writing out reports and thinking of content, sometimes it is difficult to think of the correct spelling of the words that I want to put in my work. Sometimes I simplify the words I want to use or just use incorrect ones. Sometimes I use the spell checker on the computer, but there are times that the misspelled word is not close enough to correct. So, I am working on spelling the words the way they sound – phonetically. I try to focus on one or two aspects of my writing at a time – neatness and content, which reduces the stress of writing.

I have learned that revision is a key ingredient in writing. Revision gives the opportunity to correct the mistakes I make in my writing. Revision has been extremely helpful in my writings. I feel the only way to get a piece perfect is to revise it as many times as necessary – till I am satisfied with what I have written. This technique is important to me because of my dyslexia.

I have even been able to learn and see the early signs in some young adults and direct them in the right path, so they will not have to go through the changes I went through before I found out about this disorder.

Thomas Spruill
Chambersburg
Unlisted

At the Monday night September Leadership Council meeting we had the opportunity to view a profound and provocative movie entitled: "Unlisted" The movie is about a daughter (who is a physician) reconnecting with her father who is a person with schizophrenia. The movie documents their journey toward each other and is an honest portrayal of the many hurdles they faced in their relationship.

This movie "Unlisted" will be featured at the MHA of Dauphin, Cumberland/ Perry’s Vision of Hope Awards Ceremony in 2012 and is a must see for all. It is important in viewing this film to have time for meaningful discussion afterward in both processing the content and the many layers of issues that are discussed.

The Impact of Training on People Lives

In September, Kim M, Kathyann and Dr. James Heck represented KCMHS at the International Conference on Community Integration in Philadelphia, PA. There were excellent workshops and we had the opportunity during the poster board session to present our poster on “The Impact of Training and Education on People’s Lives.” The poster board depicts graphs demonstrating the increasing participation rates in educational activities and the increasing opportunities for leadership/presentations. There are also three case studies illustrating the impact that a variety of trainings have had on people’s lives. Some of the trainings featured in the case study included: Leaders in Recovery, NAMI Connections training, CPS trainings, CSP conferences & WRAP trainings and the varied journeys taken by each person.

PPR Supportive Living Annual Recovery Picnic

Keystone Services of Maryland held its annual picnic this year on Monday August 15, 2011. This year’s picnic was held at the Bennet Cerf Park located in Westminster. This was a new location this year which provided a variety of activities to participate in. We had the grill, plenty of food, the cooks, the people, and “liquid sunshine.” Though the number of participants was smaller than anticipated, fun was had by all. We had a pavilion along with restroom facilities. The pavilion was next to a creek and along side of a nature path. Many participants brought their own individual specialties for side dishes and KSM supplied the burgers, chicken, and hot dogs. There was no reason for anyone to leave hungry.

This was a special picnic day because it was also the last day for our Targeted Case Director Martha Rickert. Martha was the very first employee of Keystone for Maryland and many of our participants wanted to thank her for all the service and help she has provided them through the years. Many attribute the success of where they are today to assistance through Martha and Keystone Services. We look forward to next year’s picnic!
Leadership Council is an advisory board to the Keystone Community Mental Health Services Management Team. It includes people in recovery from Central PA, Allegheny and Maryland.

Leadership Council is directly involved in working with the Management Team in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Keystone Community Health.

Leadership Council Activities are peer driven and geared towards

- Empowering peers to develop their own voice
- Educating peers about the choices they have in the delivery of services

Upcoming Opportunities

October

Friday October 14 WRAP Wellness Festival Keystone East Pk Dr 10am
Tuesday October 18 Creative Person in Recovery 4pm
Thursday October 20 Leadership Council Telecom 10 am
Monday October 24 Leadership Council 6pm
Wednesday October 26 HACC Presentation 5pm

November

Thursday November 10 Leadership Council Telecom 10 am (*Note Date Change)
Tuesday November 15 Creative Persons in Recovery 4pm
Wednesday November 16 “It’s a WRAP” Graduation 3 pm
Thursday November 17 CBHNP Provider Fair State Farm Show 10am (pre register if manning the KCMHS table)
Monday November 28 Leadership Council 6pm

December

Thursday December 15 Leadership Council (Activity to be determined)
Monday December 19 A Time to Remember and Candle lighting 6pm
Tuesday December 20 Creative Person in Recovery Holiday Festivities 4pm