

TDMHDD Update

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Saving Lives in Tennessee Postvention: Suicide Prevention and Grief Management in Tennessee Schools

“Postvention” refers to providing short-term grief counseling, support, education, and aftercare services to the friends and family of those who have died by suicide (called “Survivors of Suicide”). Survivors of suicide often experience complicated grief with complex emotions such as abandonment, betrayal, rejection, self-blame, shame, guilt, and fear.



The goals of a school postvention is to help a school that is confronting a suicide or a suicide attempt to maintain structure and order, facilitate communication, encourage students and staff to appropriately express feelings, and facilitate the grieving process in an organized and controlled atmosphere. Postventions also serve to identify other students in need of help and assist in the prevention of “copycat” suicides. This suicide “contagion” is minimized by providing students with support (listening to and validating students’ feelings and concerns), control (facilitating group discussions and providing guidelines for school administrators), and structure (consulting with school personnel on maintaining school routine).

School administrators receive tips on ways to avoid unintentionally glamorizing the suicide, inform the student body, maintain security and structure, and interface with the media.

Most importantly, school officials learn how to best assist the students and staff who are mourning a suicide in the school.

Unfortunately, in late January, the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) was called upon to provide postvention services after a suicide attempt at Hardin County High School in Savannah. TSPN worked alongside colleagues from Quinco Mental Health Center, Western Mental Health Institute, Vanderbilt Mental Health Center, Tennessee Department of Education, and the local youth ministerial association, instructing staff members on how to respond to student concerns. Group and individual therapy sessions were also conducted to help students and staff members process the incident in a healthy and therapeutic fashion. Ultimately, TSPN referred over 150 students with suicidal concerns for outpatient counseling, possibly preventing additional suicide attempts.

Currently, TSPN is collaborating with TDMHDD, the Department of Education, and Vanderbilt Mental Health Center on organizing a statewide coordinated postvention effort.

For more information on the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) call (615) 297-1077 or visit www.tspn.org. The Suicide Prevention Hotline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). ■

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Transferred to TDMHDD

Executive Order # 44 was signed on Friday, February 23, 2007, by Governor Bredesen transferring the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services to TDMHDD from the Department of Health. Tennessee is now the 27th state to administratively combine substance abuse and mental health services into a single state department.

Integrating alcohol and drug abuse services within TDMHDD will streamline government and its resources by ensuring that clinical services are coordinated, communication is improved, and incentives effectively aligned for populations in need for which there is tremendous overlap. This transfer will also facilitate the opportunity to expand access to integrated treatment options that focus on the whole person especially for persons with co-occurring disorders.

TDMHDD welcomes the opportunity to work with the current alcohol and substance abuse service staff and values the commitment of the alcohol and drug abuse service providers throughout Tennessee. We will all work together toward our shared goals of high quality, evidence-based services and enhanced access to the service delivery system for persons with substance use disorders. ■

RIP

Program Opens in Memphis

The University of Memphis and TDMHDD recently launched a new program to teach behavior management and discipline techniques to parents of young children. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Regional Intervention Program of Memphis (RIP) was held on Monday, March 26.

RIP is a parenting program that aids preschoolers and their families by teaching behavior management and discipline skills. The program serves families with children under the age of six who have mild to severe behavior problems, including aggression, tantrums, separation anxiety, and bedtime issues.



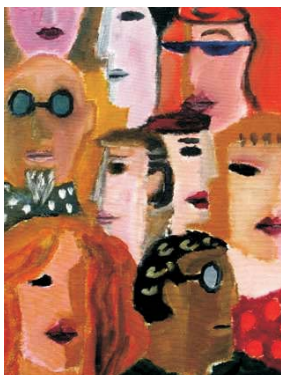
From L to R: Hope, Warren and Larry (our first Memphis RIP family); Robin Stevens, Program Director Memphis RIP; President Shirley Raines, University of Memphis; TDMHDD Commissioner Betts; Dr. Louise Barnes, TDMHDD Mental Health Program Planner; Dr. Freida Outlaw, TDMHDD Director of Special Populations and Minority Services; Brandon Smith, RIP Classroom Coordinator; and Renee Brazell, Assistant Program Coordinator.

Families attend two-hour sessions twice a week. Participants typically stay in the program for six to eight months. There is no charge for families to be enrolled in the program. Adults repay RIP by volunteering to train and support new families who join the program.

The University of Memphis site is the first in a university setting. RIP was established in 1969, and there are currently 13 RIP programs across the state. For more information please visit <http://www.ripnetwork.org/op/mem.htm>. ■

OVERCOMING *Stigma* THROUGH THE ARTS

2007 Art for Awareness Day to Kick-Off National Mental Health Month



Faces by John Butts Jr.

TDMHDD's Overcoming Stigma campaign focuses on The Arts in 2007. The 2nd annual Art for Awareness Day will kick-off National Mental Health Month May 1, 2007. This day is dedicated to mental health consumers and their art. It is the kick-off that allows members of the General Assembly to display the artwork in their offices throughout the month of May.

TDMHDD, Centerstone, Middle Tennessee Mental Health & Substance Abuse Coalition (TMHSAC), NAMI Tennessee, Park

Center, Tennessee Mental Health Consumers Association (TMHCA), and the Mental Health Cooperative all solicited consumer submissions. These organizations also provide opportunities/encouragement for consumers to create and display their work to the public as one way of overcoming the stigma associated with mental illness and co-occurring disorders. One example is TMHSAC's annual *Creative Arts Project* that began in 2004 and which reports a significant increase in self-confidence and self-respect in participants.

Art for Awareness exhibitors will attend a reception in their honor at 1:00 p.m. in the State Capitol, before taking their created items to their state representatives. Exhibitors are encouraged to describe their pieces and discuss recovery through the creation process.

Nashville Parthenon Exhibit April 27 – July 7, 2007 Creative Expression and Recovery: A Path to Mental Wellness



An extended art exhibit, *Creative Expression and Recovery*, opens at the Parthenon in Centennial Park, Nashville, on April 27 and runs through July 7, 2007. The exhibit is made possible by a partnership of the Nashville mental health community, TDMHDD, and the Parthenon. Community sponsors include

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OVERCOMING *Stigma* THROUGH THE ARTS *cont.*

Centerstone, Middle Tennessee Mental Health & Substance Abuse Coalition (TMHSAC), NAMI Tennessee, Park Center, Tennessee Mental Health Consumers Association (TMHCA), and the Mental Health Cooperative. The works on display were selected by the Parthenon curators from community exhibitions and represent major works by persons with mental illness who are seeking paths of creative expression and recovery.

A highlight of the exhibit is TDMHDD's Myrllen's Coat, which is housed among the treasures of the Tennessee State Museum and has been displayed at the American Visionary Arts Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. The coat was the creation of a patient in the 1940s of the Eastern State Hospital (now Lakeshore Mental Health Institute) in Knoxville. The denim coat features some of the most elaborately embroidered scenes,



Myrllen's Coat.

words and symbols ever created on one garment by a self-taught person.

Several other works from the department's private collection include a cloth doll and a working violin made of apple crates and matchsticks. The exhibit represents several mediums, including acrylic, oil, watercolor, and pencil. An accompanying symposium will be held May 15 at 7:00 p.m. as part of the Parthenon's Educational Series. Lecturer will be George Spain, retired CEO of



Man with asparagus walking on pancakes by Thaddeus Tekel.

Centerstone Community Mental Health Centers, Inc. of Nashville. Spain spent his entire career in the mental health field and will lead the symposium on "Progress and Failure in the Development of Mental Health Services from 1796 to 2007: Why We Should Not Be Satisfied." For more information on the upcoming exhibit *Creative Expression and Recovery: A Path to Mental Wellness* please contact the Parthenon at (615) 862-8431. ■

— HAPPENINGS —

• TCMHSAS Hosts Annual Day on Capitol Hill



From L to R: Ben Harrington, Mental Health Association of East Tennessee; Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey; Bob Benning, CEO of Ridgeview Psychiatric Hospital; and Don Redden, chairman of the Developmental Disabilities Council, meet at the TCMHSAS' Day on Capitol Hill.

On March 20, Dr. A. Kathryn Power, M.Ed., Director of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), delivered the keynote speech and, with Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, addressed more than 500 concerned Tennessee citizens at the Tennessee Coalition for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' (TCMHSAS) annual Day on Capitol Hill.



Dr. A. Kathryn Power, director of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services, speaks at the annual TCMHSAS Day on Capitol Hill.

The Tennessee Coalition is an independent coalition of more than 20 public and private organizations that include advocates, providers, family members and consumers dedicated to working toward recovery and reintegration for those with mental health and addictive disorders in our state. The coalition works to ensure that mental health, alcohol and drug treatment and support services are accessible to all individuals, regardless of age, and maintained at a funding level that assures quality care to those in need. The coalition receives funding from its member agencies, private donors and pharmaceutical companies. To learn more visit www.ichope.com. ■

DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATES IN *Yes 2 Kids Conference*



Dr. Freida Outlaw, Executive Director of the Division of Special Populations & Minority Services; Gwen Hamer, Program Director of the Division of Clinical Leadership; and Arvis Wright, Administrative Assistant, participated in the Yes 2 Kids Conference at Cool Springs. Dr. Outlaw, well-known to participants as a national expert in mental health and cultural diversity issues, served the conference by introducing Sandra

McBrayer, Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Initiative of San Diego, and one of two keynote speakers. Hamer served on the conference steering committee. Wright manned the TDMHDD information booth to distribute literature about overcoming stigma and early diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses in children. The two-day conference, held each February in Franklin, Tennessee, provides professional development and networking opportunity for adults who work with Tennessee's youth. To learn more about the annual conference, call Lisa Greene at (615) 279-0058. ■

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

National Nurses Week, May 6-12, 2007

Nursing is often described as an art and a science. It is a profession that embraces dedicated people with varied interests, strengths, and passions. Nurses work in mental health institutes and community centers, emergency rooms, school based clinics, and homeless shelters. They have many roles - from staff nurse to educator to nurse practitioner and nurse researcher - and serve all of them with passion for the profession and with a strong commitment to patient safety.

National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6, also known as National Nurses Day, through May 12, the birthday of Florence



Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. During this week, TDMHDD will honor the 530 nurses who serve Tennessee through their excellent work as health professionals within the department.

Florida Students Take Alternative Spring Break in Nashville to Work with Mental Health Consumers

Twelve students from the University of Florida, Gainesville, were in Nashville March 12-16, to participate in an Alternative Spring Break sponsored by Park Center, Centerstone, the Mental Health Cooperative, and Foundations Associates. The students came to Nashville at their own expense, and Second Presbyterian Church provided accommodations. Corporate sponsors included Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art, the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Gray Line Tours and Walgreen Co.

Orientation for the students included an initial day of training in peer counseling skills with NAMI Tennessee. With client consent, some students attended counseling sessions with Dr. Duhl at Park Center and visited with Foundations Associates clients to provide musical entertainment and assist with craft projects. Students also accompanied groups of area clients on field trips to Cheekwood, the Frist Center, downtown Nashville, and Centennial Park.

The University of Florida Alternative Spring Break (FAB) program seeks to create active citizens through community service, leadership, and social change. The students are undergraduates pursuing degrees in several fields. While here, the students are learning about the variety of mental health jobs in state and consumer agencies. Commissioner Betts met with the students on the last day of their trip to discuss careers in mental health.

"These students are the leaders of our next generation of citizens, and through this exciting experience, will be gaining a heightened sense of awareness for advocacy and social action as we seek to erase the stigma of mental illness in our society," said Commissioner Betts. "I am pleased to meet these outstanding young people, and I applaud everyone who helped make this week possible. What a treat for our whole community!" ■

In Memorial

Al DeHart passed away on Saturday, March 31. TDMHDD is deeply indebted to Al for his years of committed service to the community and the department. His most recent service included his work at Centerstone and the position of co-chair of The Roundtable, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee of the Mental Health Planning & Policy Council.

A Memorial Service to honor his life was held on Saturday, April 21, 2007, at Harpeth Hills Funeral Home. Send condolences to his wife, Mrs. Marti DeHart, 10851 Old Cox Pike, Bon Aqua, Tennessee 37025.

**MAY IS
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH!**

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