



TCV MH/MR, Inc. News



Turtle Creek Valley Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Inc. Agency Newsletter

Board of Directors Annual Dinner Meeting

The Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors was held Monday, December 10, 2007, at Banquets Unlimited in Wilmerding to thank Board members, staff, guests and volunteers for their continued dedication to our Agency.

The following employees received years of service awards:

10 Year

Rose Batyi
Gary Boyle
Susan Crist
Patricia Ferron
Patricia Kosko
Sharon Kostelnik
Michelle Saldutte

15 Year

Ruth Ann Bertolo
Robin Brown
Janice Burruss
Darlene Karpaski
Dan Kostyak
Lori Maggio
Kevin McCain

15 year (cont.)

Frederick Mintus
Karen Pruey
Jane Stadnik
Martha Zucco

25 Year

Linda Holt
Yvette Pickett

30 Year

James Biagini

20 year

Bernard Galanko
Catherine Hlavac
Tina Wimbs

Welcome to the Decision Support Center!

~ Barb Yessler

March 3, 2008 is scheduled as the official "Go Live" date for the newly re-designed medical services at the SV COG Adult Outpatient site. This will be the start-up of the Decision Support Center (DSC), which will extend psychiatric appointment time to allow a person in service to organize and focus thoughts and questions prior to each visit with the psychiatrist or Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP). TCV is honored to have been chosen to begin this center, only the second of its kind and based on CommonGround, a program created by Patricia Deegan, Ph.D., that supports shared decision-making in psychopharmacology. Dr. Deegan, who is providing training to TCV staff, has lived her own recovery journey and is an advocate for consumers.

Look for more details of this exciting new best practice in future newsletters.

Turtle Creek Valley
MH/MR, Inc.

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TCV MH/MR, Inc. Farm Stand

~ Gina Nemetz

Since 2005, TCV MH/MR, Inc. has sponsored the farmstand at the Human Services Center in Turtle Creek. A program of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, the farmstand provides fresh, PA grown produce at affordable prices to low income neighborhoods that have limited access to farmstand markets. The farmstand runs from June through November. Volunteers **Sandy, JR, Joe, Loretta, Carrie, Joanne, Omar, Jackie** and **Diana** helped customers throughout the season learn about different kinds of fruits and vegetables and how to incorporate these foods into their diets. The volunteers were knowledgeable, friendly and always ready to share recipes.

Under the leadership of **Amy Sljva Blystone** and **Gina Nemetz** and with the help of the volunteers, the farmstand enjoyed another successful season. We look forward to your patronage when the farm stand reopens in June.



Farm Stand Volunteers

Benefits Fair

~Jennifer Brannigan

This year's Open Enrollment Benefit Fair took place at 723 Braddock on November 28, 2007. Vendors such as **Colonial Supplemental Insurance, Omega Federal Credit Union, Ameriserv Financial, United Concordia Dental, Highmark, Vision Benefits of America, Sprint/Nextel** and **Pre-Paid Legal Services** were all on hand to give TCV MH/MR, Inc. staff further information on all of the benefits that they can receive as an employee of the Agency.

Each of the vendors was asked to bring a prize to be raffled off to all staff that attended. The following lucky employees who attended won these great prizes:

Pre-Paid Legal	\$50 VISA Gift Card	Melissa Brown
Sprint Nextel	Clark Haggans Autographed Football	Robin Brown
Omega Credit Union	\$50 VISA Gift Card	Gibby Mehalik
Vision Benefits of America	\$25 Olive Garden Gift Card	Rosemary Gregg
Vision Benefits of America	\$25 Olive Garden Gift Card	Linda Holt
Concordia Dental	\$50 Home Depot Gift Card	Martha Zucco
Highmark	Duffle Bag/ CPR/First Aid	Jason Walsh
Highmark	Fit Ball	Christine Dario
Colonial Supplemental Insurance	\$50 Target Gift Card	Shannon McCleary
Ameriserv Financial	\$50 Eat-N-Park Gift Card	Janine Hansen



Vendors waiting for TCV staff to arrive

TCV MH/MR, Inc. After School Program is in its 3rd Year of Operation!

~Laura Schuchert

Congratulations to the children who attend the TCV MH/MR, Inc. After School Program for exceeding in and out of school! They have a fantastic attendance record and over 85% return each year to the program. This year, two who graduated from the program returned to work as youth program aides. The TCV MH/MR, Inc. After School Program relocated to the Braddock Carnegie Library this year. "I like our new location better because we have lots more space," said a student, Age 11, Grade 6. The After School Program provides academic support, life skills lessons, recreational/athletic activities and cultural enrichment activities to 35 Woodland Hills students in grades 1-9. The program operates daily from 3-7 PM. Youth receive assistance completing homework and studying for tests, participate in daily physical fitness activities, life skills lessons and arts/crafts. Students are transported home by program staff at the end of each day. Youth participants also have the opportunity to participate in alternative programming, including: the Girl Scouts, First Tee Program at the Schenley Golf Course and the Gigapan Workshop.

All of these relationships have assisted them in improving their communication skills and learn conflict-resolution/decision-making skills. Many of the youth said that these programs helped them to grow in many ways.

After School staff also work with family members to link resources that meet their family needs, such as referring the child to mental health services that provide support in managing difficult behaviors and improving family member relationships.

We would like to thank **UPMC Braddock** and the **PA Department of Food Program** for providing dinner every night for the participants and the **TCV golf outing** for donating the proceeds to the program. We are also seeking donations to provide nutritional snacks to the children before dinner. Please call 412-464-1522 x 500 if you can help.



After School Program Homework Help



After School Program Team Building Exercise

Rankin Christian Center Open House

TCV MH/MR, Inc. held an open house on November 9th to celebrate the addition of Children and Adolescent Outpatient Services at the Rankin Christian Center (230 Third Avenue, Rankin). Attendees had a great time socializing, touring the new offices and getting to know TCV staff while being treated to pizza and baked goodies.

TCV MH/MR, Inc's Department of Children and Family Services provides mental health treatment and support to children and their families, as well as mental health and substance abuse prevention services. Services provided at the Rankin Christian Center include: assessment; psychiatric evaluations; treatment planning; medication monitoring; and family, individual and group therapies.



TCV Staff at the new Rankin site

In addition to the new Rankin location, TCV MH/MR, Inc. will continue to provide children and family services at the Steel Valley COG in Homestead and Westinghouse Human Services Center in Turtle Creek. Please call 412-351-0222 for information, assessment or to schedule an appointment.

Under Construction!

~ Barb Yessler

TCV MH/MR, Inc's Maintenance Crew has been hard at work over the last few months renovating space in the Westinghouse Human Service Center in Turtle Creek. Just down the hall from the Adult Outpatient Unit on the second floor of the building are the soon-to-be completed offices of the Mobile Medication Nurses and Mental Health Employment Services. Right next door will be a second location for Psychiatric and Social Rehabilitation (PSR) services.

PSR and Employment Services are also provided at the SV COG in Homestead. Staff will work at both locations and consumers will be able to participate in classes and activities at one or both sites.

The Mobile Medication Nurses will relocate from cramped quarters in Braddock with a little more office space and shared reception and conference rooms with Rehab (PSR and Employment) Services.

We're hoping to settle into our new space in February or March so look for updates and invitations to visit in the coming weeks! We will be sure to toast the Maintenance Crew and IT staff who made this all possible!

Looking to qualified individuals to fill positions at your company?

The Employment Services department at TCV would like to hear from you. We develop community employment opportunities for people with mental health disabilities while helping employers to fill essential positions. We work with adults who are at least 18 years of age, have at least a high school diploma or GED and have work experience or the motivation to be competitively employed. To qualify for recruitment assistance employers must 1.) Be willing to meet with an employment specialist to discuss job functions and preferred work hours and 2.) Interview pre-screened candidates to fill your employment needs. All of our services are at no cost to you. To learn more about all of the services we provide, please contact **Amy Sljva Blystone** at (412)461-4100 ext. 714.

Welcome to new employees!

Victoria Blosser - TC Adult OP
Anne Clark - TSS
Angela Cuniak - CHI MR Glasgow Dr.
Cheryl Dawson - After School Aide
Brian Deming - CHI MR Lynda Lane
Jeannette Gossman - Homestead House
Janine Hansen - 723 Braddock
Kathryn Kabana - Floater
Lisa Lenz - Homestead House
Maria Martin - SAP Liaison
Vanessa McFarland - Homestead House
Stephanie McKee - 723 Braddock
Joanne Martin - MH Partial Hospital
Dr. Susan Morine - Child Psychiatrist
Nancy Ritsko - SV COG OP
Judy Schuetz - 723 Braddock
Christopher Titus - St. Roberts MR
Candace Whindleton - After School



Goodbye and Good luck!

Theresa Bahnemann - Floater
Saiphin Carswell - St. Roberts
John Coma - CHI MR Lynda Lane
Laura Ford - CHI MR Dix Drive
Rose Gamrat - SV COG ATF
Tawanda Jennings - TSS
Jim Kidd - Turtle Creek OP
Kathryn Kabana - Floater
Harry Robson - Homestead House
Cheryl Salary - Psychiatrist
Steve Senick - St. Roberts
Julie Spieckerman - CHI MR Brinton
Terri Suhre - TSS
Jason Walsh - St. Roberts
Rochelle Williams - 723 Braddock

S.O.S! Help for Parents

TCV MH/MR, Inc. provides parenting classes to all parents to teach the fundamentals of parenting, behavior management, effective instruction and methods of discipline. The classes started on October 5th and have been operating every Saturday since.

The classes stem from a video series that teaches parenting solutions for common everyday behavior problems by Lynn Clark, Ph.D. The classes in the two series sessions include: This Behavior Management and Parenting Workshop is for you! What Did I Say?! – Effective Instructions, Fundamentals of Behavior and Improving Behavior and Student Graduation.

This Behavior Management and Parenting Workshop is for you! - Are your children's arguments and problem behaviors getting you down? Maybe your child's behavior is fine but you would like some help in motivating him or her, or making sure that your child is growing up to be a responsible, self-confident adult. At these parenting meetings you will meet other parents and together, you will increase your confidence and learn how to effectively manage problem behaviors, such as: aggressive behavior, temper tantrums, talking back, whining, a child who is not listening, self-esteem problems, sibling conflict and many other problem behaviors. You will meet other parents and together will learn new ideas and methods for helping to improve your child's behavior. Your child will be better behaved and happier and you will be a more confident and effective parent.

What Did I Say?! – Effective Instructions - Everyone has to learn to live within limits and it's best when children learn living within limits at a young age. In this session parents will learn how to give clear and effective instructions and commands. Parents must also be able to "back up" their commands. A command is a request to immediately start or stop a behavior. Children have many manipulative techniques to challenge a parent's request by whining, "falling-out" or arguing. If you see these bad habits in your kids, this session will show you exactly what to do to bring about the change both you and your kids need.

Fundamentals of Behavior and Improving Behavior - Six categories of consequences will be discussed to offer parents the tools they need to work on methods for stopping bad behavior. Also included in this session is the highly effective, but often overlooked, "*Grandma's Rule*". Practice these methods and you'll teach your children how to process mistakes now and for the rest of their lives.

Student Graduation - Congratulations! You are the proud parent of a "once-troubling" adorable baby girl or boy! Now you are fully equipped and capable to handle any bad attitude by putting all your newly learned skills into practice. The proud parents will share their experiences with the class during a special graduation ceremony.

Michelle Wangler, TCV's Child and Adolescent Outpatient Supervisor thought of the idea for the parenting classes when she realized that parenting skills were the cause of most of her client's problems. She coordinates the classes with **Lisa Freeman**, TCV Employee and Tri Boro Communities That Care Community Mobilizer.

Lisa believes that these classes are successful because they are informal. She said, "It gives them an opportunity for real people to talk to other real people. I told them we're not here to beat up parents. We're here to support parents." The class is also so successful because there are no requirements for registration as other parenting classes offered by CYF and magistrates require.

The parenting class program was also profiled in an article written by a reporter from the Post Gazette on February 21st for instilling hope during one woman's recovery.

For further information or to register for the classes, please call 412-464-1522 x570.

Thank You Donors to TCV MH/MR, Inc.!

- The MR department received a \$50,000 award from the **Edith Trees Foundation** to purchase 2 new vehicles and for remodeling projects at our residential homes.
- Thank you to **Mr. and Mrs. Charles Drummond** for their kind donation to the Agency.

TCV MR Department Purchases a New Home!

~ Tom Bach

The MR department is very happy to have at long last purchased its final home!! After months of searching and inspecting numerous houses but having little luck in finding the ideal house to replace our current one on 16th Avenue in Munhall, the housing gods finally smiled on us late last year. We found a great three bedroom house on Ball Avenue in West Mifflin. It was extremely well taken care of and had virtually all of the requirements we needed in a house. As the saying goes, it is in "move in condition". The timing was just right for us on this house. Our thanks to the **Edith Trees Foundation** for providing the down payment through an award they gave TCV last year. In January we will move three consumers to the new house. TCV MH/MR, Inc. now owns all of its MR homes, which is helping to build equity. They are all in integrated, suburban neighborhoods and are modern and accessible. All of our consumers are benefiting from these purchases. The new house has a very large back yard, so look for an outdoor open house some time in the spring. Everyone will be invited.



New Ball Avenue home

Psych and Social Rehab Family Night

~ Barb Yessler



Front Cover of Calendar & Annual Report

What better way to spend a chilly November night than in the company of family and friends? On Tuesday, November 13, 2007, TCV staff along with participants of the Psych and Social Rehab (PSR) Program and their families enjoyed an evening of sharing good food and fun at the Steel Valley COG building. The evening's highlights included the singing and poetry talents of a number of PSR consumers and Judy Monahan Grystar, Executive Director, awarding certificates to some of the artists whose work is showcased in the 2008 TCV calendar and Annual Report. We also took time to discuss the PSR program and the soon-to-be opened Outpatient Decision Support Center (DSC). After a delicious dinner was served, there was time for more singing and picking raffle prize winners. And the only question left at the end of the event was: When can we do this again?!

TCV MH/MR, Inc. Tobacco Prevention School Programs

~Shannon McCleary

In order to better serve the students at Rankin Intermediate, TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s Department of Children and Family Services offers two types of prevention programs. **Sean Baker**, TCV CASASTART Case Manager, holds small group sessions at Rankin to help strengthen social and life skills among youth. **Shannon McCleary**, Tobacco Prevention Specialist, provides Tobacco Prevention/Education programs for area schools and communities.

Recently, Sean and Shannon collaborated with Jamie Kuhn, Guidance Counselor at Rankin Intermediate, to bring a tobacco education presentation to 39 sixth graders at the Woodland Hills School. The program focused on the dangers of secondhand smoke. A smoke damaged pig lung created a lot of interest and discussion among the students. The visual display shows how over time exposure to secondhand smoke can damage the lungs of a non-smoker and, in some cases, can lead to death. Each student guessed the answer to a trivia question, and the student with the closest answer won a t-shirt. The question was: "On average, how many people die each year in Pennsylvania from other people's smoking (secondhand smoke and pregnancy smoke)?" The correct answer is 2,555. Congratulations to Kieshawna H. for guessing the closest with 2,500!

Another presentation is scheduled for the fifth graders at Rankin Intermediate in the spring of 2008.

This program is funded by Tobacco Free Allegheny and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Edward G. Rendell, Governor.



Anti-smoking posters created by two youth participants

Beginner's Mind and Recovery

~ Stephanie Vargo

"I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know." Mark Twain

Josie Ulrich, the Deputy Director and my immediate boss, asked if I would write something on Drug and Alcohol services at TCV for this newsletter. Certainly, after working as a D&A therapist and D&A outpatient supervisor for going on a quarter of a century here at the Turtle Creek Ranch (my affectionate "pet" name for TCV), I was certain that I would have no difficulty imparting my "great wisdom" based on daily inundation with the mysteries of the 12 Step philosophy for recovery from chemical dependency. "Just keep it simple," I repeated like the sacred mantra that it is. Feeling like an old timer, I thought about recent trends in treatment approaches based on the recovery model. In particular, I focused on Mindfulness Practice which integrates the benefits of ancient Eastern meditation with 20th century cognitive and behavioral treatment strategies. Old school theory in the treatment of chemical dependency centered on confrontation, out and out yelling when the therapist deemed it necessary, to blast through an addict's massively impenetrable wall of denial. This theory came from the same handbook that instructed Sister Mary St. George the Dragon Slayer to instill fear and obedience in 3rd graders by wielding her ruler of doom. I thought perhaps, in this context, I would write about Beginner's Mind.

Beginner's Mind is at the heart of mindfulness practice and at the center of the recovery model. The key to cultivating beginner's mind is to realize that the more you think you know, the less you know—or that you really don't know much of anything when you get right down to it. Most of what we think we know is made up of long held biased assumptions to which we tend to get very attached. We become so attached to these unquestioned assumptions that we don't even know they are assumptions at all—to us they are truths. Because we cling to our horde of truths there is no room for change, insight or new information. We can believe we are experts at understanding human behavior, giving advice and expect others to be amazed at our skills at diagnosing their problems and telling them what to do about it. I am not just referring to therapists here.

Mindfulness practice suggests that we approach others, ourselves and the world with a beginner's mind; that we question and identify our assumptions, send them packing and see and discover with the wonder of the beginner.

I practice not knowing anything every chance I get, every day. Striving to not know, I have learned more from the individuals who seek treatment for chemical dependency than from all my years of education and from all the books I've read. When I wake up in the morning, it's a brand new day, and I don't know anything all over again. This keeps me humble and helps me keep it simple. Waking up with new eyes and an open heart each day makes life irresistible. This is what I've learned about chemical dependency treatment and recovery after all these years.

Milton Erickson, one of America's greatest psychiatrists, stated that his goal with clients was to help clients get more flexible in places where they were too rigid. He also wrote that all human behavior is shaped by belief and expectation. Likewise, Mark Twain declared, "It ain't what you don't know that's the problem; it's what you know that ain't so."

TCV MH/MR, Inc. Internal COE Lunch

~ Terry Moore

On January 9, 2008, TCV MH/MR's Internal Centers of Excellence Steering Committee held their annual luncheon at Bravo's restaurant at The Waterfront in Homestead. The *ICOE* meetings are held quarterly at the Psych/Social Dept. at the COG Building. The committee was formed to develop programs & projects coming from the main COE committee, led by Allegheny Health Choices, Inc., then implementing these programs within the agency and the community. Some of the projects have been trainings, educationals, mental health recovery plans, as well as establishing mental health resources in and around Allegheny County. The committee members include (from left to right) Sandra Johnson, Josie Ulrich, Loretta Burroughs, Terry Moore, Mark Mariaskin, Jacki Coates, and Amy Sljva-Blystone. Not pictured are Darlene Karpaski and Judy Monahan Grystar.



Guest enjoying the fantastic meal that TCV staff prepared

PSR Christmas

~Diana Omeis

TCV MH/MR, Inc. shared a sense of family tradition when members of the Psychiatric and Social Rehabilitation Department spent Christmas Eve together. The Steel Valley COG was alive with laughter, conversation, good food, a Christmas movie and some board games. The highlight of the evening was when Santa made a visit to the department! Every person attending helped to make this evening special.



Highmark Lifestyle ReturnsSM

~ Olivia Zitelli, Jerry Potts and Judy Stump

TCV is pleased to introduce an innovative approach to wellness. As part of your Highmark health care program, **Lifestyle ReturnsSM** can help you take control of your health and lead a healthier lifestyle. This is the third year TCV has participated in this program, but this year, it will be open to employees **and their spouses** that purchase Highmark coverage through TCV.

With this comprehensive wellness program, you will learn how to reduce your individual risk factors by utilizing Highmark resources, empowering you to take a healthier approach to life. Learn to eat more sensibly, reduce stress and even make more informed and appropriate health care decisions for yourself and your family through **Lifestyle Returns**.

In the upcoming weeks, you will receive information outlining when and how to enroll, as well as details regarding participation and rewards. Lifestyle Returns is easy, convenient and offered at no additional cost to you. Take the pledge and commit to learn more about your health status and how you can improve or maintain your level of wellness. Complete an online Wellness Profile. Get preventive exams. Participate in Health and Wellness programs. Log onto your member Web site for a healthy education and discover an exceptional range of online health information and tools, you will want to take full advantage of these resources.

Discover how Lifestyle Returns can help you with daily lifestyle choices that impact your health and well-being. And there is more! Employees that complete the online Wellness Profile will each receive a \$20 Giant Eagle gift card. Spouses that complete the online Wellness Profile will be entered into a drawing to win one \$100 Giant Eagle gift card. Employees that complete all steps in the program will receive \$130, and the spouses completing all five steps will be entered into a drawing to win one \$250 Giant Eagle gift card. Of course, personal wellness rewards and satisfaction will last a lifetime. You cannot lose!!

TCV is thrilled to offer this innovative program to our employees. Judy Stump (PSR x713), and members of the TCV Wellness Committee will soon be scheduling meetings and sending information of Lifestyle Returns and encourage you to join us when we "Take the Pledge" to commit to wellness.



Employee Spotlight

Every newsletter will randomly profile an employee. Who will be in the next issue??

Employee Name: Rico Dillard

Site Location: SV COG B3, Children and Adolescent Department

How long have you worked here? Since September 5, 2006

What is your position? Child & Adolescent Resource Coordinator

What was your very first job? Hawkins Village Learning Center

What is your favorite movie of all time? Bronx Tale

If you could have dinner with anyone (living or deceased) who would you choose? My grandfather (deceased)

What three things can always be found in your refrigerator? Eggs, bacon, milk and water

What is your favorite vacation spot? The beach

What accomplishment would you say that you are most proud of? Graduating college

Whom do you most admire and why? My grandfather. He was a great person.



What time is it??? TEE TIME!!!

We have set the date for our **2008 Toward a Brighter Future Golf Benefit** and hope that everyone will save the date and participate!!

The golf outing will be held at Southpointe Golf Club on Monday, August 11th! The format will be the same as the past; Registration at 8 AM, Shotgun Start at 9 AM and Lunch at 2 PM. Please feel free to contact Kym at 412-351-0222 x420 or kmroziak@tcvmhmr.org if you would like to register early, or if you have any questions about the day. Last year's profits enabled TCV to provide After School programming to 30 children living in Braddock, Rankin and North Braddock. We thank you for your support!

A huge thank you goes out to AMCOM Office Systems for already committing to be the Title Sponsor again this year!! We thank you!!!

Please remember to ask your family and friends to designate Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. as the recipient of their United Way gift through the Contributor Choice option when completing the United Way form, or donate online at www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org.

TCV's United Way code is #136.

A copy of the official registration and financial information of Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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Turtle Creek Valley News

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