



TCV MH/MR, Inc. Agency Newsletter



Models winning prizes

MR Fashion Show

The first annual Community Link Fashion Show sponsored by Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. was held at St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in East McKeesport on Saturday, April 9, 2005. There were 23 models from the Agency's day and residential programs, who walked the runway dressed in clothing from Marshall's Department Store at the Waterfront. Each also received professional assistance from Donna, a hairstylist from Turtle Creek.

The event started at noon with a lunch prepared by Community Link staff.

The menu included fresh fruit, chef salad, croissants, a dessert and beverages.

Members of the St. Robert Bellarmine's youth group, who were professionally dressed in black and white, served the meal to 130 attendees. **Mrs. Emily Belchick** coordinated the efforts of the wait staff whose help in setting up for the event and serving was outstanding and greatly appreciated.

The audience included **Father John Oesterle** and parishioners of St. Robert Bellermine, as well as the models' family members and friends. The largest group in attendance was from Emmaus Community of Pittsburgh, who were there cheering on two of the models.

The fashion show was emceed by our own **Tina Wimbs**, Site Supervisor of the New Beginnings ATF. The models were truly the highlight of the afternoon. Each added their own special flair to the outfit they presented. They received a well deserved standing ovation for an excellent presentation. Also, special recognition was given to an individual who worked tirelessly making centerpieces and favors, which added to the beauty and success of the show.

Susan Anastas, mother of one of the models, coordinated with Marshall's in outfitting the models. She volunteered much time and effort as a member of the Fashion Show Committee. She created twenty decorative hats that adorned the tables which became door prizes.

During the event there was a Chinese Auction which was made possible by donations from 29 local businesses and individuals. The donations were combined to create 17 beautiful baskets! **Mary Ann Benton**, parent of a model, single

handedly solicited 6 baskets and a hand-made wooden rocking horse. Arts and crafts made by participants of the Wednesday Craft Group were also available for purchase by guests.

Many people contributed positively to the event, which provided the models with a wonderful feeling of accomplishment, success and satisfaction. They truly enjoyed their roles as Super Models!



Modeling the Marshall's Fashions

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Special Olympics

On Saturday, March 12th, the Mon Valley Special Steelers participated in the Special Olympics basketball tournament at the University of Pittsburgh's Fitzgerald Field House in Oakland. Most of the Special Steelers attend day programming at TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s Steel Valley Adult Training Facility.

The Special Steelers won a gold medal for the 3 on 3 competition and a bronze medal in the 5 on 5. Coaches **Lindsey Considine** and **Craig Goughnour** are proud of their teams accomplishments and would like to extend a special thanks to all of the athlete's family and friends who made the day possible. The team is looking forward to their next competition in track & field, which will take place sometime in May.

A Breeze of a New Home

~ Gail Burner

April 1, 2005 was move in day for four individuals who receive residential support from TCV's MR Department. **Camille** and **Helen**, who had been living in the Payne Street CHIMR, were joined by **Joe** and **Lagretta**, who previously resided at the Electric Avenue site. The four moved into a beautiful four bedroom ranch style home located in West Homestead.



The home has something special for each of the individuals. Camille immediately found a cozy niche for her private office. Joe has his easy chair and big screen TV in the sun room. Lagretta continues working on decorating her room with a large array of music boxes, pictures and knick-knacks. Helen enjoys sitting in the back yard, which is perfect for lounging on a sunny day. However, she may have to share it with the deer, which also enjoy the home's back yard!

The move marks a significant change for TCV, as well as for the individuals. Electric Avenue has been home for individuals supported by the agency for over twenty five years. It once served eight individuals, but with changes in regulations the number has decreased to three, too few to maintain the cost of the building. The Payne Street site was a leased property.

Camille, Helen, Lagretta and Joe will soon be extending invitations to an open house. They hope that you will be able to join them in celebrating their new home.

MR Services Recognizes Adam Stump

~ Tom Bach

The Mental Retardation Services of Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR would like to recognize and highlight the work of one of our newest Residential Advisers. **Adam Stump** began working for TCV in October 2004 and in that short period has come to display all of the attributes, abilities and commitment that TCV values and strives to instill in our employees. Adam came to TCV with a background in Youth Ministries and a commitment to listening to individuals in order to fully understand their needs and thus to be able to assist in advancing them to their full potential. He works at our Lynda Lane site where he is responsible for four individuals. He brings a vibrancy to the job that is refreshing and it shows when he works one on one with individuals. He is creative and unique in his approach to individuals and looks for ways to make even an ordinary outing or chore fun as well as instructive. Individuals react to his methods positively and both seem to genuinely care about each other.

As an employee Adam is easy to supervise, gets along well with his peers and always is looking for ways to improve on TCV's services. He has volunteered for the Orientation Committee and already his input has been valuable as the group attempts to improve training and orientation for all new employees.

Overall Adam has demonstrated skills and attitudes that far exceed his experience with TCV. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our residential team.

New Employee Recognition Program

~ Olivia Zitelli

As a result of the focus groups assigned late last year, there is a new program rewarding our very best employees. The Outstanding Employees of the Month were chosen for the month of April, and the first winners were **Mary Jo Napolitano**, **Larry Maraini**, and **Jean Gersna**. Each employee had a beautiful certificate displayed at their work site, which they got to keep at the end of the month. Their other gift was a small painted ceramic turtle.

Congratulations, and heartfelt thanks to April's winners!

In order to nominate an outstanding employee on your team, or Agency-wide, please complete a nomination form which can be found in the Outstanding Employee policy in the Human Resources-Personnel Policies file on the G drive, and submit it to the employee's supervisor. If you nominated an employee for an award, and they were not chosen for the month, you can re-nominate them, simply by sending a note to the employee's supervisor stating you would like them re-nominated. There is no limit to the number of times an employee can be nominated.

Springtime Activities and Growth in the Psych/Social Rehabilitation Program

~ Carol Roebuck

There's a lot happening in the Psych/Social Rehab. department this spring. Consumers are getting more involved in advocacy. They have been writing letters to their state senators and representatives about the state budget cuts, and several are planning to go to Harrisburg on May 4 to learn more about advocacy and how the state government works.

Some consumers attended the Mayview State Hospital Service Area Planning Meeting and the CCBHO Conference. Consumers also hosted a Consumer Workshop on Recovery on April 20 at the SV COG. We are also looking forward to the Recovery Fair in Market Square on May 11-14 and the Day of Self-Discovery at the University of Pittsburgh on May 18.

We are really proud of peer staff, **Sandy Kogut**, who will be doing a presentation at the NAMI Conference on April 30 and **J. R. Brenner**, who will be receiving the ESPRIT Award on May 6. J.R. will also be a presenter with **Judy Monahan** and **Darlene Karpaski** at the national USPRA conference in May.

Meanwhile at the program itself, we are providing consumers the opportunity to write their own Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP). Several consumers are participating and finding the WRAP to be a very useful tool to recovery. We also hosted a Tobacco Cessation class and are proud to announce that 4 consumers quit smoking and others are interested in taking the next class which will start in May. We have also been having monthly dialogue meetings with consumers and staff to promote open communication, consumer input and ideas for improvement. In addition, we have been having some fun, too, especially during the very popular consumer-staff pool tournaments, and we've been enjoying the good food and baked goods at the monthly Bake Sales run by the Consumer Advisory Board.

Welcome to new employees!

Gina Binnix - Turtle Creek OP
Daniel Brown - Homestead House
Kelly Ferron - CHI MR Stock St.
Rebecca Filer - SV COG Family
Yolanda Henry - Homestead House
Benita Todd - Homestead House



Goodbye and Good luck!

Augustina Adekanye - CHI MR 17th
David Becinski - SV COG ATF
Tracy Beck - CHI MR Electric Avenue
Jeffrey Bennett - CRRS HH
Mary Ann Bland - SV COG RC
Michele Blazina - 723 BSU
Kelly Cicco - CHI MR Electric
Cindy Cwiklik - St. Roberts
Brian Johns - SV COG RC
Lou Ann Kostyak - Supp. Housing
Rayna Macko
Regina Obiekezie - CRRS HH
Carmella Pickle - St. Roberts
Margaret Stump - CHI MR Crestview
Dan Vallus - SV COG RC

Profile of Kim - MR Consumer

~ Tom Bach

Kim is a 42 year old woman who has mental retardation and has been receiving services from TCV for about 3 years. Before attending our facility she had never worked. Just prior to coming to TCV something changed Kim's attitude and motivation. She went on a diet and lost over 150 lbs and decided she wanted to work. TCV was able to support the latter through our enclave program. She has had great success in our cleaning program both at our internal sites as well as at our enclave at Institutional Linens. Today, 3 years later, she is one of the most successful participants in this program. She is dedicated to the work, very friendly with everyone she encounters and by everyone's standards does an excellent job with the work assigned to her. She initially needed the help of a job coach to learn the routines of her job but today she is independent in her work and very proud of her accomplishments. She is looking forward to continuing her work and even aspires to a competitive job in the future.

Kick Butts Day Event

~ Anthoni Fabian

On Wednesday, April 13th, National Kick Butts Day, an event was held at East Allegheny High School/Middle School. The event was put on by TCV Tobacco Prevention Program and students. There were two live video presentations, visual displays, pamphlets and giveaways. Approximately 400 7th-12th grades attended and approximately 300 pieces of information was disseminated.



Anthoni distributing info to EA students

Finding Meaning and Purpose

~ Sandra Kogut

In the beginning of my recovery, I focused on staying out of the hospital, seeing my therapist and taking my medication. That was a full time job to begin with. I also went to therapy groups at TCV's Homestead House. I enjoyed the groups, but after a while I became bored.

As I began to feel better, I wanted to do something more with my time. I was tired of watching TV, sitting around and feeling lonely and worthless. I thought about volunteering, taking different classes at the SV Valley COG or maybe even working a full time job.

I decided to go to the COG and do an intake and sign up for their Psychiatric and Social Rehabilitation classes. As I was talking to the coach, I mentioned that I was thinking of getting a part time job, just 5 to 10 hours a week. She immediately told me that the department was looking for a part time secretary. I filled out an application and had an interview. Much to my surprise, I was hired about 2 weeks later.

I was pretty nervous and scared, because I hadn't worked for a couple of years. I wasn't sure I could handle it. With the reassurance of staff and fellow consumers, I made it day by day. I started to feel more comfortable. I found myself doing more and more. A year later, I was asked if I would like to facilitate peer classes. I enjoyed the classes, learning about the consumers and having fun. I felt I had a reason to get up in the morning, that there was a place I could be myself and be accepted.

Two years later, I was asked to work for the Employment Service Department on a special grant project for the Department of Welfare to educate employers on "Working With Disabilities". Afterwards, I was asked to stay on with the Employment Services Department to help prepare consumers for employment and find jobs in the community.

Each step along the way was a challenge. At first I wasn't sure I could perform, stay focused and do what was expected of me. My supervisors were very flexible and understanding. Because of my mental illness and physical problems, I missed days of work. I tried to make up for lost time and do my very best.

Now I have come to the part of my recovery where I want to advocate for myself and peers on consumer rights, needs and concerns, locally, statewide and nationwide. I have met with local politicians, gone to Harrisburg and Washington D.C. I have also begun to speak at local conferences. For the first time in my life, I feel that I am making a difference in people's lives and I am being heard.

I believe that working, volunteering and being involved in different organizations makes a world of difference to your recovery. You feel valued, useful, recognized and you gain a sense of self-esteem. All these feelings are very important in personal recovery. And remember, you don't have to do it alone.

There are many support groups, agencies and organizations that will help you get started and support you along the way in whatever you would like to do. It might be volunteering at a local food pantry, working a part-time or full-time job, or joining an organization in your community. One of those supportive agencies is Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. Don't be afraid to take a step toward a more fulfilled life; you will be so glad you did.

Partial Hospitalization

~ Susan Crist

The Partial Hospitalization Program is working in conjunction with Community Care Behavioral Health Organization and Peer Staff to provide education in PennMap (Pennsylvania Medication Algorithm Project). PennMap is held at the first floor of Homestead House at the Partial Hospitalization Program on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for two weeks and is repeated every four weeks. Each participant is given a workbook to use during the six-session course. Discussions, hand outs and overhead slides are used to aid the educational course.

The educational course is being conducted in order to give consumers a better understanding of the importance of medication compliance, communication with physicians, medication side effects, advance directives and algorithm and the negative effects of drug and alcohol use.

The consumers were encouraged to ask questions and interact with both therapist facilitators and peer staff facilitators. During one of the sessions, a psychiatrist presented information to consumers on algorithm and its use. The consumers who participated said they learned the importance of taking medication as prescribed. They also liked the session on communicating with the doctor and some said it gave them encouragement to strive for open communication with the physicians.

SHINE

TCV's Tri Boro Prevention Network will be holding an event to commemorate another successful year with SHINE (Students Hooked Into Neighborhood Education). SHINE program participants and their families, WHSD personnel, program directors and peer tutors will attend the event. It will be held at Renzie Park in McKeesport on May 14th from 12-4 PM. Various activities will be held throughout the day.

Kick Butts 3 on 3 BBall Tourney

About 90 youth participated in the TCV MH/MR, Inc. Kick Butts 3 on 3 Basketball on Friday April 22nd at Woodland Hills West Junior High. Teams were split into three brackets: 10-12 years, 13-14 years and 15-16 years. Due to time constraints, the 13-14 year old division had co-winners. Each of the participants on the winning teams received gift certificates.

Winners of the 10-12 division weres: Kwame Reid, Corey Reyes, Caulin Edmonds, Armani Davis and Taylor Crowde.

Co-winners of the 13-14 division were: Greg Harbison, Ryan Alm, Robbie Nystrom, Jerome Moore and coach Collus Cosby.



13-15 co-winners



Nathan Zgola, Zack Jessel & Jesse Pruchnitzky - West 7th Graders

Winners of the 15- 16 division: were Calvin Connors, Dan Holmes, Twizzy, Jon Grandy, Blane Jefferson and DeAndre Douglas.

TCV MH/MR, Inc. staff and Youth Coalition Against Tobacco members and teams who won their division, played the WAMO 106ers at 7:30. Unfortunately, the TCV lost to WAMO, but had a good time.

The basketball tournament was sponsored by Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. through Tobacco Free Allegheny and the PA Department of Health as a part of National Kick Butts Day.

TCV would like to thank all who participated, especially WAMO and the youth and parents in attendance. We would also like to thank Woodland Hills SD for the use of their facility. Interested in the tobacco cessation project? Call 412-464-1522.

Career Day

~ Sandra Kogut

On Tuesday, May 24, 2005, the Employment Services is hosting a CAREER DAY for all consumers at TCV. We would like to invite staff, employers and consumers to be a part of this event. Anyone who would be interested in talking about current or past occupations such as clerical, service, medical, labor, child care, working with the elderly, or any other occupation, give us a call. Please help us in making this event a success. For more information and to participate, please contact **Sandra Kogut** at (412) 461-4100 Ext. 719 or **Emily Rankin** at (412) 461-4100 Ext. 779.



Employee Spotlight

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

Employee Name: Michelle Stockunas

Site Location: Rankin House CRR

How long have you worked here?: 9 years in October

What is your position? Team Leader

What do you like best about working at TCV? I like seeing the people we work with reach their goals and having a part somehow in that accomplishment – also using my people skills

What was your very first job? I worked at Hank's Frozen Custard in New Brighton, PA I began working at 15 years old. I can still scoop up the best cone!

What is your favorite movie of all time? All About Eve – Bette Davis – I love the old stuff!

If you could have dinner with anyone (living or dead) who would you choose? Marilyn Monroe (and I want to find out what really happened!)

What three things can always be found in your refrigerator? Ketchup, Diet Coke and Cheese

What is your favorite vacation spot? Sunset Beach – North Carolina

What accomplishment would you say that you are most proud of? My 2 children – Mya and Mason

What are your pets, and their names? 1 dog "Bailey" - a Bichon Frise and my daughter's Beta Fish "Old Blue"

Whom do you most admire and why? My mother – the most unselfish person I know. She's always thinking of her children and others first.



Employment Services Highlights

~ Sandra Kogut

Congrats goes out to the 4 individuals that successfully obtained employment during the month of March. Way to go!!!!!!

The TCV MH Employment Services provides services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities who have a high school diploma, GED, special training and/or work experience, and higher level educations to achieve the types of employment they envisioned during their vocational development. The service aim to assist individuals to choose, get and keep a job by applying the necessary skills required for positions and developing and utilizing supports in order to maintain the position for as long as they desire. We believe mental illness is not a barrier to employment; and individuals receiving mental health services have strengths, skills and talents that are valuable in any workplace. If you would like more information about our services, please contact **Amy Sljva** at (412) 461-4100 ext. 714, **Emily Rankin** at (412) 461-4100 ext. 779 or **Sandra Kogut** at (412) 461-4100 ext 719. We look forward to hearing from 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.

Judy Monahan Grystar, LSW

Turtle Creek Valley

MH/MR, Inc.

Executive Director

***Turtle Creek Valley
News Staff***

Kimberly Mroziak

Editor/Layout

Contributors

Tom Bach

Gail Burner

Lindsey Considine

Susan Crist

Anthoni Fabian

Sandra Kogut

Marci Laskey

Carol Roebuck

Olivia Zitelli

7th Annual TCV Toward a Brighter Future Golf Outing

It's time to start getting ready for the 2005 TCV Golf Outing. This year we will be holding the outing at a new location, **Southpointe Golf Club** in Canonsburg!

As in previous years, we need the help and support of golfers and sponsors. Please join us by sponsoring at a level that best represents your support of the Turtle Creek Valley mission!

Sponsorship levels include: Title - \$5000, Platinum - \$2,500, Gold - \$1,500, Silver - \$1000.

There are also foursomes - \$600, individual golfers - \$150, lunch only - \$50, table sponsorship 1 (display your company's literature)- \$350, table sponsor 2 (lunch table for 8 people), program ads - \$250 and hole sponsors - \$125.

This year we have two new sponsorships: Beverage cart sponsor - \$500 and Putting Contest Sponsor - \$500. The Beverage and Putting Contest each comes with one free golfer!

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL! If you send in your paid registration by May 31st for a foursome or individual golfer, you get **10% off!** That means instead of a \$600 foursome, you get a foursome for \$540! Instead of \$150 for an individual golfer, you get to golf for \$135!

All golfers will receive green fees, cart, locker and bag service, free drinks on the course, two meals (breakfast and lunch), door prizes and awards.

If you have any further questions, or would like to participate, please contact me, Kimberly Mroziak at **412-351-0222 x420**. A golf brochure can also be downloaded from the News and Events section of our website, www.tcv.net.

This is a very tough year for TCV financially, with the Governor cutting our budget in several areas. We hope that you will be able to support us so that we can continue providing well needed services to our clients so that they can continue to strive *Toward a Brighter Future*.