



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



Lagretta receiving her award

### Individuals Honored

~ Linda A. Miller

A luncheon, titled the "Celebration of Success", sponsored by the Conference of Allegheny Providers (CAP), was held on March 28, 2007, at the Greentree Holiday Inn to honor individuals with mental retardation for their achievements. Several of TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s individuals from the MR day and residential programs and their supporters attended. Participants included **Kathy F., Ron D., Rose B., Francis H., Norman K., Lagretta V., Bob G.** and **Doug N.** They were accompanied by TCV staff **Tina**

**Wimbs, Manaya King, Jill Pawlowski and Linda Miller.**

**Tom Bach**, TCV's MR Services Director, presented the individuals being honored with lifetime achievement awards. TCV's honoree was Lagretta V. Lagretta is 74 years old and works full-time at Goodwill Industries on the South Side. Lagretta has no interest in attending a senior program but would rather work and earn a pay check. She has many great memories of growing up in Munhall and the time she has spent with everyone at TCV MH/MR, Inc. Lagretta does well telling her needs and desires. She also has a great energy and work ethic!

Bob G., from TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s Supported Living program, was honored through Allegheny East MH/MR. He was recognized for the great work he does with their mobile work crew.

Twenty other provider agencies and their nominees attended the luncheon, totaling 215 individuals. Everyone enjoyed the lunch, the awards and the festivities in general. Hopefully it is the first of many.



Bob showing his award to the attendees

### Kick Butts Day

~Anthoni Fabian

National Kick Butts Day was held on Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, to encourage people of various ages to quit using tobacco products and not to start using tobacco products (including cigarettes, chewing tobacco and snuff). TCV conducted a number of activities during that day. Bess Pepe presented a table display at Keystone Oaks Middle School in the cafeteria the entire school day. She spoke to approximately 250 kids and 10 adults. Seven people signed a pledge to maintain a smoke-free home and car, and one person signed up to take a smoking cessation class. Anthoni Fabian conducted another table display at the Westinghouse Human Services Center in Turtle Creek from 1:00-5:00 in the lobby. He spoke to about 30 of the 100 or so people who attended. The center is visited by people of all ages who go to the various agencies based in the Center, including TCV MH/MR, Inc. Both of these events have been held the past few years for Kick Butts Day. Free tobacco classes are provided on an ongoing basis at the Steel Valley COG in Homstead and Westinghouse Human Services Center. You can start the classes at any time. Please call 412-464-1522 x500 for further information. **TCV MH/MR, Inc. provides tobacco cessation and information through a contract with Tobacco Free Allegheny.**

**Turtle Creek Valley  
MH/MR, Inc.**

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## **HR Reminders:**

~ Jennifer Brannigan and Olivia Zitelli

### **Orientation Reminder:**

After the background check has been completed on a new hire, all of the remaining new hire paperwork must be turned in the Wednesday before a new hire's start date for them to be able to come to orientation on Mondays. The orientation schedule is every Monday beginning at 9 am. Drug testing will also be conducted on the orientation day. Please remember that the new hire will be responsible for transportation to Quest Diagnostics on Murray Ave in Squirrel Hill.

All new hires that will be using Qualifacts must also attend the Monthly Mandatory Qualifacts Training the second Tuesday of every month from 9 AM -2 PM. Supervisors, please make sure to schedule your new hires with Jennifer @ ext 406 in order for them to attend.

### **Hepatitis Vaccines:**

Employees who fall under Categories I and II of the Blood Borne Pathogen Corporate Policy **MUST** have their Hepatitis B Vaccination and provide proof of vaccination to HR. If an employee does not wish to receive the vaccine, they must contact HR to sign a waiver. Co-pays will be reimbursed by the Agency for required employees. TCV MH/MR, Inc. will pay for the hepatitis shots if the required employees do not have TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s health insurance and their insurance does not cover the shot series, but the employee must get the vaccination at the Allegheny County Health Department.

The vaccine is a 3 shot series and when completed these vaccinations are good for 9 – 10 years. Employees who already have the shots may want to check on the expiration of the series. New hires that have recently had their vaccines are asked to please remember to provide documentation to HR. We are required to keep documentation of these shots on file for each employee for 30 years.

### **Picnic Reminder :**

Friday July 6<sup>th</sup> 2007!!! 1 pm Riverplex Picnic Area at Sandcastle in the Waterfront  
Ticket Information and additional details coming soon!!!

### **Act 33 & 34 Clearances :**

In the near future, mandatory Criminal and Child Clearances will be required for **all current and new employees**. Supervisors, please remember that when scheduling new staff, they **CANNOT** work alone until their clearances are returned to HR.

## **Nutrition Class**

~ Kelsey Werth

The Nutrition class at the PSR program started new curriculum on Thursday, March 8. The material is developed by Eli Lilly and includes information on topics like eating wisely on a limited budget, eating a variety of foods, maintaining or improving weight, the role of water in good nutrition, and setting goals toward a healthy lifestyle. We have been learning a lot about the importance of nutrition in overall wellness.

We put some of our new knowledge to the test on March 29 and April 5. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, we spent time planning a healthy lunch for others in the program. We considered nutrients, calories, fat, and sugar, as well as food expenses, preparation time, and multiplying quantities for a large group. We decided on whole-wheat pasta with stir-fry vegetables and mozzarella and feta cheeses, a tangy fruit salad, and Crystal Light to drink.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, we tested our cooking skills. We worked as a team and had to make a couple emergency substitutions. We served almost 30 people a delicious, healthy meal and had great reviews on the food! We fed other program consumers, staff, and even people from other departments. We had a great time cooking together. Our very dedicated Nutrition class plans to do this again the first Thursday of every month.

## PAPSRS Conference

~ Catherine Hewitt

The PAPSRS conference was held April 10-12 at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College, PA. PAPSRS is an organization dedicated to the promotion and improvement of the range of services and approaches that facilitate the recovery of persons with psychiatric disabilities. This year's conference theme was "Cultivating Recovery Through Psychiatric Rehabilitation" and highlighted wellness on a variety of levels; physical, behavioral, spiritual and social. There were stimulating keynote speakers, such as, Joe Marrone, a well-known and controversial speaker on employment and Joan Erney, J.D., Deputy Secretary of the OMHSA, who spoke about her own journey from crisis worker to her current position. The workshops were forward thinking in exploring social issues such as "The system experience for a Trans-woman", and inspired such as telling a recovery story through the use of "Art as a Tool in PsychoSocial Rehab".

Conference goers were treated to nourishing food for the mind and body, including healthful meals and snacks, chair massage and Tai Chi. Everyone was kept busy from morning to night with workshops, networking and special after-hours sessions of poetry reading and round table discussions of the needs of Certified Peer Specialists in PA.

I look forward to being one of the newest members of PAPSRS.



Catherine and Joan Erney, J.D.,

## How to Manage Anger

~ Adapted from Top Health Newsletter

Frequently losing your temper not only alienates others, it can contribute to health problems, including headaches, upset stomach and heart attack.

### To take control:

**Count to 10** - When something angers you, give your body time to defuse before you react. Take three or four deep breaths. *Ask yourself:* "Will this really matter a week or a month from now?"

**Walk it off** - Go for a short stroll until you calm down. *Helpful:* Find a quiet place where you can think things through calmly and take a second look at how you're reacting to the situation.

**Distract yourself** - *Example:* Instead of pounding on the horn in a traffic jam, play soothing music or listen to an upbeat program. At work, dive into a task to turn negative energy positive.

**Keep a log** - Monitor hostile thoughts to discover how frequently your temperature rises. *Benefit:* You'll help sort out the real causes of your anger, which are often things over which you have no control.

**Ask for help** - If managing outbursts seems impossible, don't be afraid to try counseling, meditation, lifestyle changes or other kinds of ongoing psychological help.

## Welcome to new employees!

Diane Bauer - SV COG Family  
Carlene Carney - SV COG Family  
Nathan Coley - St. Roberts ATF  
John Coma - CHI MR Lynda Lane  
Christine Dario - SV COG Prevention  
Michael Dietz - St. Roberts ATF  
Pauline Giles - CHI MR Tioga  
Kara Hoban - After School Program  
Mubarik I smaeli - CRRS Munhall  
Sandra Johnson - SV COG PSR  
Jessica Kadlec - CHI MR Tioga  
Raymond King, Jr. - CHI MR Tioga  
Judy Laird - St. Roberts Soc. Rehab  
Curry Long - SV COG Family  
Peggy Matthews - CHI MR Tioga  
Jeffrey McFadden - HH - ICM  
Phillip Moses - St. Roberts - Soc. Hab.  
Richard Prior - Homestead House - ICM  
Asia Shabazz - SV COG Family - TSS  
Kathy Skinner - CRRS Rankin  
Donna Solomon - SV COG PSR  
Elaine Treubel - SV COG PSR  
Beth Toth - 723 SCU  
Patricia Vendetti - 723 Floater  
Vernon Webb - CRRS Munhall  
Rochelle Williams - Homestead House  
Tameka Wills - CHI MR 16th Street  
Barbara Yessler - SV COG PSR  
Aneesha Young - HH



## Goodbye and Good luck!

Sandra Brown - Turtle Creek Adult  
Regis Conley - ATF - Driver  
Nancy Crawford - CHI MR Lynda Lane  
Laura Glenn - SV COG Family - RC  
Nicholas Laffrey - SV COG Family - RC  
Eric Morris - CRRS Rankin  
Larita Price - St. Roberts  
Constance Reilly - 723 SCU  
Linda Schardt - Homestead House ICM  
Adrienne Williams - CHI MR Tioga

**Thank you to Amy, Mark and Phyllis Rosenfield for their kind donations to TCV MH/MR, Inc. in the name of Mary Ryabik.**

## What Does the Word “RECOVERY” mean? *Who Cares!!*

~ Terry Moore

So many programs today have the word “Recovery” in it. We all define recovery differently; personal, individual, on-going. To me, “Recovery” means having to need the least amount of professional treatment, i.e., therapy, medication, rehabilitation, to lead a physically & mentally healthy, happy life style.

There are a lot of trainings and educationals out there, and most of them are quite good. Sometimes the difficulty can be putting those into practice, for providers as well as consumers. It often reminds me of New Year’s resolutions. Initially the excitement, motivation and discipline are high, but by February or March, interest has waned. Like so many best intentioned exercise programs, the hard part is not getting started, but keeping at it.

So how can someone accomplish that? The answer is, learning how. So what is the next step? It’s all about “*Education, Implementation and Maintenance*”. The philosophies are present in trainings but where does a person start and how do they stay on that road. A lot of people have already started, but some have stalled. This is where people need the most help. Encouragement, support, and recovery are words that are tossed around. What consumers need are direction, instruction, education, motivation and a place to practice. To me, this is Psych/Social Rehabilitation. PSR is the driving force behind the recovery process and is the umbrella under which all trainings and workshops reside. It’s the place to learn, practice and maintain the changes needed to have good mental health. Using again the analogy of a physical exercise plan, PSR is the mental health gym. And like going to the gym, a mental health fitness plan needs a goal, a plan, instruction, a place to practice, resources & information and people to help, people to inspire, motivate, educate, support and direct.

Newly developed MH trainings need to include the basics of PSR The “new” recovery movement is not about throwing out traditional treatment, but reestablishing the effectiveness of established successful programs and integrating them into trainings that provide understandable information, practical steps, hands-on instruction, and attainable goals. Instead of “Recovery”, maybe the term, “Good MH Attainment” is more accurate.

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## TCV MH/MR, Inc. Tri Boro CASASTART Happenings

~ Laura Schuchert

TCV MH/MR, Inc.’s Tri Boro CASASTART is a prevention program of Turtle Creek Valley Mental Health/ Mental Retardation, Inc. aimed at preventing substance abuse and violence among youth between the ages of 8 and 13 years old. CASASTART seeks to build resiliency in the youths, strengthen families, and make neighborhoods safer for children and their families. Currently, there are 18 youth enrolled in the program. All participants attend one of the Intermediate Schools within the Woodland Hills School District, including, Ben Fairless, Dickson and Rankin. CASASTART youth and their families are provided opportunities to participate in activities that promote positive family relationships. CASASTART participants partnered with members of the Tri Boro CTC and TCV MH/MR, Inc./Salvation Army After School Program while attending an Underground Railroad Tour at the Heinz History Center. Youth participated in guided tours which examined the institutionalization and economy of slavery, the rise of the abolitionist activism and the roots of the Underground Railroad. After the tours, youth also had the opportunity to view other exhibits with topics including sports teams, “9-11” and the First Ladies.

Other activities included an “Eat-n-Greet” on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> hosted by CASASTART staff. Families networked over lunch and participated in several games facilitated by the CASASTART Case Managers throughout the afternoon.

The CASASTART youth and family members also attended field trips to LoKay Bowling Lanes, Carnegie Science Center, Carnegie Sports Works and the Heinz History Center.



*Shaun Baker explaining the historical items to a CASASTART child*

## MR Fundraising Committee Need Your Help!

~ *Patti Ferron*

The MR Fundraising Committee has just completed a few fund-raising events but have many more projects upcoming this year. Currently, we are still selling Sarris' Chocolate Covered Pretzel Rods for one dollar; supply is limited.

A Spring Fling Vendor Show was held on Sunday, April 22, 2007 at the St. Robert Bellarmine School Gym from 2 P.M. to 6 P.M. There were at least 25 vendors who participated, including: Avon, Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Pasquale's Pizza, Party Lite Candles, Cookie Lee Jewelry, House & Garden, Tastefully Simple and Dee's Bakery Delites as well as other local crafters offering their home-made wares for sale. TCV's Community Link Program also had a table at the show with hand-crafted items that the consumers have made. All proceeds from Community Link's sales will be donated to the agency. We were pleased at the number of staff and clients who attended; everyone seemed to enjoy the afternoon with good food and fun things to purchase. We would like to thank the vendors for their time and effort and hope they agree to come again next year.

The committee will also be representing TCV MH/MR, Inc. at the McKeesport "Good Neighbor Day" on Thursday, June 21. Our food booth will consist of home-made Gyros and BBQ Sandwiches. Please come and bring the family. It will be a great time!

Please remember that on Friday, May 11, CiCi's Pizza in Monroeville is donating 10% of receipts from that day (your receipt must be put in the special box to be counted) to TCV. Again, please make a note of this date take your friends and family to enjoy their pizza buffet.

AND, we would like to thank everyone for their participation in the Phoneraiser Campaign. The old cell phones we collected brought in a total of \$273.50 for 426 phones!

We would like to thank all of you who helped us raise much needed funds for the MR program. We appreciate all of your support. If anyone would like to volunteer their time to participate in any of our fund-raising projects, please feel free to contact: **Patti Ferron** -412-823-0600 x 102 or [pferron@tcvmhmr.org](mailto:pferron@tcvmhmr.org).

## Steel Valley ATF News

~ *Lindsey M. Considine*

The Steel Valley ATF has recently started to go on weekly outings. So far we have gone to the Carnegie Science Center, Century III Mall, movies at Loews Theatre and the Shrine Circus.

We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the nice weather so that we can attend outdoor activities like, Pirate games, visits to the park, the Pittsburgh Zoo and Gateway Clipper.

The staff and clients would like to thank everyone who made these activities possible. We are looking forward to many more to come.

## Quick Hands-On Stress Relief

~ *Adapted from Top Health Newsletter*

**Got a minute?** Get a massage – a self-massage, that is. These moves can help relieve tension around your head, neck shoulders and hands

**The scalp soother** - Place thumbs behind your ears and spread your fingers on top of your head. Move your scalp back and forth slightly by making circles with your fingertips for 15-20 seconds.

**The eye easer** - Close your eyes and place your ring fingers directly under your eyebrows, near the bridge of your nose. Slowly increase pressure for five seconds, then gently release. Repeat 2-3 times.

**The shoulder saver** - Place your left hand on the right side of your neck by your shoulder. Press fingers firmly into the muscle while tucking your chin in toward your chest. Hold this position for 10 seconds, release, and then repeat on the left side.

**The palm pleaser** - Lace your fingers together, leaving thumbs free. Slowly knead your left thumb into the palm of your right hand for 20-30 seconds. Then repeat on your left hand.

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The Centers of Excellence's Training Sub-Committee is developing training for staff and consumers that will hopefully identify, address and educate people involved in the recovery process. The training will not solely supply information, but by provide methods and techniques that everyone can actually put into practice. The Outline of the Training Curriculum will address Communication Skills and Recovery Principles (as selected priorities):

**Part 1. Applying Recovery Principles to Negotiating Care**

- Consumer: How do you let the Dr./Therapist know what you want to achieve?
- Staff: How do you partner with Consumers? How do you listen differently and mutually set goals? How do deal with what appears to be an Unrealistic Goal?

**Part 2. Accessing Recovery Resources**

- How can we access the resources within individuals/staff?
- WRAP, PennMAP, RMP
- How do Crisis Planning and Advanced Directives change the dynamic of power?

**Part 3. Waking Resources Within**

- How can people tell their story?
- How can change agents facilitate the person telling the rest of the story (Hope, Strength, Resilience)
- Using Solution Focused Skills to bring recovery principles to life

(If you would like to participate in the Training Sub-Committee or have any feedback, please contact Terry Moore at [tmoore52@msn.com](mailto:tmoore52@msn.com))

## **Pat Deegan's Coping with Distressing Voices Training**

~ *Jacki Coates*

As part of TCV MH/MR, Inc.'s ongoing commitment to excellence and quality improvement, **Darlene Karpaski, Catherine Hewitt and Rose Foerster** trained other staff on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> on how to present *Patricia Deegan's Coping with Distressing Voices*: self help strategies for people who hear distressing voices. Some of the information covered included how to help people ground themselves in the here and now, how to shift your attention away from voices and onto new behaviors and walking a mile in someone else's shoes. Many historical figures have had voices in their heads, including: the psychiatrist, Carl Jung; the philosopher, Socrates; and the classical composer Mozart.

As trainers, we hope to reduce the stigma of hearing voices and embed the training skills into a staff best practices orientation manual, supervision policies, and group and individual therapy.

## **Steel Valley ATF Science Center Field Trip**

~ *Melanie Milko*

Winter finally arrived but the weather did not keep the fifth group of MR individuals from attending a fun filled day at the Pittsburgh Science Center.

Everyone enjoyed the hands-on exhibits, took turns being a weather announcer, experienced what an

eathquake felt like and laid on a bed of nails. Everyone enjoyed a view of Pittsburgh while eating their packed or purchased lunch at the Riverview Café. All who attended hope to continue to make frequent trips to the museum in the future.



*Individuals looking at the gravity balls*

### **Congratulations Outstanding TCV MH/MR, Inc. Employees!!!**

**March 2007:** Denice Scherrbaum and Debi Kovarik

**April 2007:** Jason Pingor and Jill Pawlowski

## A Warm Welcome

~ Marci Laskey & Janet Yniguez

The ladies and staff of the newest TCV supported house, Dix Drive, celebrated their move by opening their home to family, friends and neighbors. The event was quite a success with 71 guests in attendance! The ladies were able to meet several of their new neighbors – a few even brought housewarming gifts. It is a rarity to have so many neighbors attend these gatherings. We suspect the ladies made a smashing impression! Guests were treated to a tour of the beautiful residence, good company and a delicious dinner. Most of the dishes were home cooked by **Margie, Kisa and Janet**. A good time was had by all!

**Lori, Jackie and Vera**, along with the staff, Jumper, the kitty, and Erma, the fish, thank everyone for helping to make their new house a home.



Staff and attendees enjoying the new house

## 9th Annual TCV MH/MR, Inc. Toward a Brighter Future Golf Outing

It's time to start getting ready for the 2007 Amcom Office Systems, TCV MH/MR, Inc. Golf Outing. We will be holding the outing at **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 TCV MH/MR, Inc. mission!

### Sponsorship levels include:

**Title** - \$5000, **Platinum** - \$2,500, **Gold** - \$1,500, **Silver** - \$1000, **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 ad** - \$250 and **hole sponsors** - \$125, **beverage cart sponsor** - \$500 (includes 1 free golfer) and **putting contest sponsor** - \$500 (includes 1 free golfer).

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 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](http://www.tcv.net).



## Employee Spotlight

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



**Employee Name:** Christina Smouse

**Site Location:** Homestead House ICM

**How long have you worked here?:** 11 months

**What is your position?** ICM

**What was your very first job?** Arby's cashier

**What is your favorite movie of all time?** Steel Magnolia's and 200 Cigarettes

**If you could have dinner with anyone (living or dead) who would you choose?** Kevin Aucoin, the best makeup artist ever!

**What three things can always be found in your refrigerator?** Cheese, bread and Turner's Diet Iced Tea

**What is your favorite vacation spot?** Still searching

**What accomplishment would you say that you are most proud of?** Graduating from college and marrying my husband

**What are your pets, and their names?** 2 cats: Chloe and Garfield and 1 dog: Einstein

**Whom do you most admire and why?** My husband, because he's my best friend



## Looking to hire qualified individuals to fill positions at your company?

~Amy Sljva

The Employment Services department at Turtle Creek Valley 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** at (412)461-4100 ext. 714.

*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](http://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**  
TCV MH/MR, Inc.  
Executive Director

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Turtle Creek Valley News

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