



# Turtle Creek Valley News



## TCV MH/MR, Inc. Agency Newsletter

### Board of Directors Annual Dinner Meeting

The Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors was held Monday, December 12, 2005, at Banquets Unlimited in Wilmerding to thank Board members, staff, guests and volunteers for their continued dedication to our Agency.

<i>10 years of service</i>	<i>15 years of service</i>	<i>20 years of service</i>
Mike Langan	Cynthia Dawkin	John Doyle
Lee Majewski	Gina Gibson	John Gregor
Rosalyn Price	Carrie Johnston	Frank McMillan
Linda Schardt	Jean Miller	Sandra Mehalik
	Richard Prior	Margaret Reefer
	Ronald Rodman	Mimi Silinski
	Michelle Thomas	
	Donna Williams	<i>25 years of service</i>
	Joni Zezza	Kathy Proctor



### MR Valentine's Day Dance

MR Residential is sponsoring a Valentine's Day Dance for Mental Retardation clients at St. Robert's Gymnasium, East McKeesport, on Saturday, February 11, 2006 from 4 pm to 8 pm. Please contact, **Peg Williams**, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue CHIMR at 412-461-8837 for further info.



**Go Steelers!!**

### Donate your vehicle to TCV MH/MR, Inc.!!!

The success of TCV MH/MR, Inc. depends on extraordinary philanthropic giving. We could not exist without the generosity of individuals and organizations who donate vehicles, money, and time. We are asking you to consider donating used vehicles to our new vehicle donation program.



### General vehicle preferred guidelines:

- Car in running condition with valid title and inspection.
- Minimal rust penetration (we have no body shop).

*The rules are not set rules, but preferred guidelines.*

We are generally not interested in "parts/salvage cars," as storage space is limited.

**WE DO TAKE ALL CARS! Pick up is free. Your donation is tax deductible.**

We can also accept trucks, boats, campers, and motorcycles.

We are partnering with Community Auto, a 501c3 PA nonprofit and licensed auto dealer to process your vehicle. Community Auto's mission is to sell reliable vehicles to needy persons for transportation to work.

75% of the vehicle proceeds, after expenses will be returned to TCV.

**To donate a vehicle... Call us at 412-351-0222 x420.**

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## **HIPAA security reminders:**

~*Martha Zucco*

- Remember to wear your Agency ID!
- Do not email any PHI. This includes the client's name so always use the system ID number.
- Do not allow anyone to use the computer under your log in.
- If anyone else knows your password, it is your responsibility to change your password.
- Log off and shut down your computer when leaving your work site.

## **News from the Human Resources Department**

~ *Olivia Zitelli*

### **Tuition Reduction**

**Did you know that you can receive a tuition reduction at Carlow or Chatham colleges because you are a TCV employee?** These schools offer reduced tuition to employees of non-profits and TCV has signed contracts to extend this benefit to our employees. To participate, contact the financial aid office of the school and tell them you work for TCV, who participates in the Tuition Reduction program. You will be asked to have HR verify your employment, which we will gladly do. Reductions vary depending upon your status and graduate or undergraduate levels.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

Our EAP program is now offered through PERSOMA. PERSOMA partnered with FSWP to administer the FSWP EAP program. Now all records, appointments and services will be offered and coordinated by PERSOMA. Certain locations will continue to be staffed by FSWP therapists, however, most local offices will be PERSOMA staff only. Please be assured that we regard confidentiality as the primary success of the EAP, and with the ability to have six FREE sessions, this is a great benefit for our employees. EAP is available to employees and their immediate family members for free. Call **1-800-825-5327**.

### **Wellness program**

This year, TCV is encouraging our employees to participate in some method of becoming or sustaining their good health. Several methods have been identified and now offered to our employees. Not all employees are eligible to participate in every program but we are trying to find things that everyone could find at least one thing to participate in. So far, TCV is offering:

1. Periodic massages at our sites for stress reduction
2. Healthy Lifestyle Returns for TCV participants of Highmark insurance. Go to [www.highmarkbcbs.com](http://www.highmarkbcbs.com), register to enter the website. Go to my Blue Link, then Lifestyle Returns. This is a 5 step program, and employees who complete this program before October 1, 2006 will receive a gift certificate for \$100 to either Giant Eagle or Target. HR also has brochures available regarding this program.
3. Braddock Steps Up To A Healthy Table. This program is available to employees living in the 15104 zip code. This program has a 4 part nutrition class, and offers a FREE Braddock YMCA 6 month membership. Call 412-636-5107 for details and enrollment. Space is limited.
4. Diabetic Screening Program. This program offers a free screening for Diabetes risk factors, a 12 week health coaching program, and a FREE 6 month membership to the Braddock YMCA. Employees who are screened in to this program will be able to use one hour of sick leave for each health coaching session that they attend.

Employees must request that the instructor sign a statement that the employee attended each class and present that note to their supervisor for their time sheet.

5. Stress Reduction through Music. Music and instrument lessons are discounted. This is a really special opportunity for people to tap into new dimensions of themselves. Music can be so grounding in a time of such flurry and scatterdness. Tom holds a Masters in Psychology as well as a Music Degree. Call 412-242-4314 or email [touchamuse@aol.com](mailto:touchamuse@aol.com)
6. Employees with other opportunities or suggestions should contact HR so we can offer more programs.

## Tobacco

~ *Anthoni Fabian*

The Prevention Department offers tobacco education and tobacco cessation services for elementary, middle and high school students and adults. This fall, 850 elementary students and 95 middle school students received Life Skills Training at 9 elementary schools and 1 middle school in 6 school districts. Life Skills Facilitators generally spend one hour per week per class over an 8 week period for elementary students and 16 weeks for middle school students. The Life Skills Training Program is designed to change attitudes of elementary and middle school students. It has proven to be successful in respect to cigarette smoking, drinking and marijuana use and the potential for reducing the risk of violence, delinquency, teenage pregnancy and AIDS.

TCV Prevention staff also provides the American Lung Association's *Alternative to Suspension* Program to high school students as a mandatory alternative to disciplinary action given to students who violate school rules regarding tobacco use. It is generally conducted in four sessions after school. Another tobacco cessation program is the American Lung's *Not On Tobacco Program*. It is a voluntary program for youth who wish to quit tobacco use. It is generally conducted in 10 sessions after school.

The schools currently receiving these services are East Allegheny High School and Steel Valley High School. Three students who completed the NOT Program, quit using tobacco, and another student still did not use tobacco after three months. These same services will also be offered to West Mifflin High School and Woodland Hills High School, starting in January.

Also starting in January, TCV will be offering tobacco cessation services to all staff in six school districts.

### Welcome to new employees!

Whitney Brady - Community Link  
Dr. Safdar Chaudhary -MH Psychiatrist  
Uzoma Chibundu - CRRS Munhall Apts.  
Diana Davis - SV COG PSR  
Deborah Gershanok - MH Therapist  
Andrew Gleason - HH - ICM  
Guinnevere Hebrank - SS D&A  
Thomas Izydorczyk - SV COG PSR  
Turahn Jenkins- SV COG Family  
Ned Johnstone - CHI MR Lynda Lane  
Michelle Kennedy - Community Link  
Martin King Smith - SV COG Family  
Margaret Porton - SS Drug & Alcohol  
Robin Roberts - SV COG PSR  
Julie Spieckerman - CHI MR Brinton  
Jonathon Williams - SV COG TSS



### Goodbye and Good luck!

Augustina Adekanye - CHI MR Crestview  
Michael Bandola - CRRS Next Step  
Christopher Mbewe - CHI MR Crestview  
Richard Prior -HH ICM  
Nicol West - SS Drug & Alcohol  
William Williams - SV COG ATF  
Valorie Wiss - SV COG Family

## Great American Smoke Out

TCV MH/MR, Inc. participated in the Great American Smoke Out on November 17<sup>th</sup> by conducting activities at several schools and community locations in the valley area. The Great American Smoke Out is a day celebrated across the nation, that tries to encourage smokers to quit for at least one day, in hopes they will quit forever. The event challenges people to stop using tobacco and raises awareness of the many effective ways to quit for good.



*Anthoni Fabian and Janet Carroll passing out literature at the GAS event*

TCV conducted health fair tables at the entrance of the Steel Valley Council of Governments building (1705 Maple Avenue) and Turtle Creek Human Services Center (519 Penn Avenue). At the tables participants were offered a chance to win a \$20 gift certificate to the Waterfront by either surrendering a tobacco product, promising to quit for the day or promising to maintain a smoke free home and vehicle. The giveaway was called "Tickets for Tobacco".

By the end of the event, TCV reps got 30 people to sign a smoke free home and vehicle pledge and signed up 12 people for cessation services, gave Quitline information to 20 people, and handed out 100 pieces of tobacco-related information.

## Tri Boro CTC honors Woodland Hills High Honor Students

~ Contributor Tracy Shultz - Southwest Regional CTC Consultant

The **Tri Boro Communities that Care (CTC) Project** would like to applaud these very special Woodland Hills School District students who have made the high honor roll. Congratulations to Shaiheim Smith, Dakotah and Cheyenne Lewis from Braddock; Kavonna Lucas from Rankin; and Cordae Daye, Amanda Hamilton, Nick Prodanovich, Danielle Colquitt and Steven Hines from North Braddock.

The Tri Boro CTC, along with the help of TCV MH/MR, Inc and Woodland Hills School District recently unveiled a new billboard campaign that recognizes positive youth development and academic achievement. Starting in December, three billboards were erected in Rankin, Braddock and North Braddock displaying WH school students of varying grade levels. Woodland Hills school principals were asked to nominate children from each town to be on their community's billboard. The Tri Boro CTC plans on posting billboards every quarter of the school year in each community.

Recognizing youth for positive achievements has always been a priority for the Tri Boro Prevention Board. In the past, they have held recognition events for youth enrolled in their prevention programs. The idea of promoting positive youth achievement is one of the underlying principles of the CTC Research-based framework. To develop healthy, positive behaviors, young people must be immersed in environments that communicate healthy beliefs and clear standards for behaviors at home, at school and in the community. These environments must create strong bonds to those who hold healthy beliefs and clear standards. To create these bonds, youth need opportunities to be involved in meaningful ways, the skills to be successful at those opportunities and recognition for their efforts and accomplishments.

This community awareness activity has been funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency under the Tri Boro Communities That Care Sustainability Grant. With the help of our valued community partners, we all come together to access greater resources and offer greater benefits to our children. The list of our community partners continues to grow. Become one today! If you or your company would like more information about participating in the Tri Boro Communities That Care, please call **Lisa Freeman**, 412-464-1522 x500 or by email [LFreeman@tcvmhmr.org](mailto:LFreeman@tcvmhmr.org).

**Tri Boro CTC Community Partners include:** \* TCV MH/MR, Inc. (Lead Agency), \* Allegheny County \* Department of Juvenile Probation, \* Apostolic Faith Church, \* Attorney Lena Henderson, \* Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh, \* Braddock Music Art's Center, \* Calvary A.M.E. Church, \* Carnegie Library of Braddock, \* Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh – Family Care Connection in Braddock, \* Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh – Injury Free Coalition for Kids, \* Congressman Mike Doyle, \* Dept of Human Services – Office of Children, \* Youth and Families, \* District Justice Ross C. Cioppa, \* First Church of God in Christ, \* Fourth Street Methodist Church, \* Girl Scouts – Trillium Council, \* Hill House Association's Out of School Youth – Braddock Office, \* Heritage Health Foundation, \* John Fetterman, Braddock Mayor, \* Local Parents and Residents, \* The New Pittsburgh Courier, \* Partnerships for Youth Transition, \* Pauline Abdullah, former Mayor, \* The Pittsburgh Mediation Center, \* Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God, \* Rankin Christian Center, \* Representative Paul Costa, \* Resurrection Power, \* The Salvation Army – Braddock, \* Senator Sean Logan, \* Union Baptist Church, \* UPMC Braddock Hospital, \* UPMC Avenue of Hope, \* UPMC Braddock House of Hope, \* UPMC for You, \* Woodland Hills School District, \* Youth in Braddock



## Centralization of Closed Medical Records

~ Anita Gunkle

Over the past two years, the medical record department has been working hard on centralizing the closed medical records for the entire Agency at the 723 Braddock site. Through the efforts of the medical record staff including: **Sally Prosser, Kim Mintus, Jeannine Drnevich, Julie Duch, Anita Mascuch Gunkle**, the **maintenance department, students and contract employees** the centralization of the closed medical records has been made a reality. At first, the medical record centralized storage area consisted of one storage room on the second floor of Braddock. It soon expanded to include additional storage rooms in the basement of Braddock. At present, all closed mental health and mental retardation records are stored alphabetically on open shelf filing units and storage boxes. The closed drug and alcohol records are stored in locked file cabinets in the basement. This project has resulted in the ability to rapidly retrieve requested closed medical records.

## TCV Farm Stand

~ Amy Sljva-Blystone

TCV MH/MR, Inc. and Action Housing had the opportunity to participate in the 2005 Farm Stand project sponsored by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The project began on October 12, 2005 and ended on November 16, 2005. The hours were from 12-3 but we often closed early because we sold out of items. We were located in the courtyard at the Turtle Creek Human Services building (519 Penn Avenue). Even though we started towards the end of the season, we had a lot of sales and ended on a positive note. Everyone had the opportunity to purchase great fruits and vegetables at a great price while receiving excellent customer service by our volunteers. We all had a great time and got to learn about the different types of produce and recipes we could try. Individuals in the community as well as at the Human Services building were happy to have the Farm Stand available to them. A special thanks to the volunteers and all who supported this project and stopped by to see us. We look forward to seeing you again in June. For more information about this project, please contact **Amy Sljva-Blystone** at (412) 461-4100 ext. 714.



*Farm stand volunteers*

## Family Tradition

~Linda A. Miller

As noted in previous articles, the individuals and staff at Breezewood Drive CHIMR were blended from the Electric Avenue and Payne St. CHIMR's. This was our first Christmas together. We decided to adopt a lovely tradition which **Joanne Batyi** initiated while working at the Electric Avenue site. We held our First Annual Family Tree Trimming Party at Breezewood on December 8, 2005. The individuals were excited that their families would be coming to visit.

Despite snow warnings, we had almost 100% turn-out. Seven family members and **Lila Wilson**, Training Specialist, joined **Camille, Helen, Lagretta, Joe** and the staff of the home for the evening meal and tree trimming.

It was wonderful to see the interaction between the families and the individuals. The beginning of the promised snow storm ended the party, but the warm feelings lasted the entire season. The families expressed their happiness with being included. All shared an interest in having another get together in the summer.

Much preparation went into the gathering. Special thanks to **Marg Reefer**, who took the idea and brought it to fruition. She made the phone calls, planned the menu, assisted with choosing ornaments, picked up food, etc. This event would not have occurred without her special touches.

Thanks to **Linda Perris**, who assisted with choosing ornaments, shopping and preparing the food for the party. Joanne Batyi, Camille and Helen did a great job with cleaning up afterwards. It was a true team effort.

This is a great tradition which will be continued in the years to come.

## Vera - Age is Only a Number

~Janet Yniquez

An individual, who lives at the Crestview CHIMR, has proven to be an amazingly strong woman. Vera, who just celebrated her 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, has been supported by TCV since 1976. She enjoys singing and socializing with her friends. She loves to go out, anywhere, just as long as she's out! Everyone who knows Vera enjoys her beautiful smile, sense of humor and gentleness.



Vera

In September, Vera was hospitalized for what was to be a routine procedure. It ended up being anything but routine. She had a reaction to the preparation for the procedure, was admitted to the ICU and soon needed to be put on a ventilator. TCV staff were told by the doctors that due to her condition, previous health issues and her age, there was very little chance for a recovery. This was devastating news to everyone who knows her. TCV staff were by Vera's side every day, giving her words of encouragement, love and prayers.

Vera proved to have a strong will to live. She went through many struggles, but after a month, she recovered enough to be transferred to a nursing home for rehabilitation. All shared the hope of Vera returning to her home in time at Crestview site. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the dream was realized! She was so excited to be home in time for the holidays and her birthday, which she celebrated with close friends.

A highlight of the holidays was when Vera attended the Adult Training Facility's annual Christmas party. She blessed everyone with a lovely rendition of her favorite song, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". She was given a huge round of applause by all of her friends.

Vera continues to surprise everyone, even her doctor with her recovery. She is an amazing woman who offers each of us a lesson.

## Kudos!

~ Veronica Meriwether

**Benita Todd**, Acute Case Manager/ICM has recently received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (CCBHO) for her energy, commitment, professionalism and dedication in serving Allegheny County's Health Choices members. Benita has been providing Intensive Case Management services to consumers since Jan., 2005. In Apr. 2005, Benita transferred to the position of Acute Case Manager where she continues to provide ICM services to consumers. In her position as an Acute Case Manager, she assists consumers that have substance abuse issues along with the mental health diagnosis and repeat hospital admissions. These individuals are referred to her directly from CCBHO. Benita seems to really take pride in providing ongoing services to those in need. She has been resourceful in locating housing and or treatment facilities for clients who have exhausted all other resources. It is a pleasure to have her on our team.

## Business Do's and Don'ts

- If you walk into a room and a meeting is in progress, please excuse yourself and exit the room. If you needed to talk to someone who is in the meeting, or need something out of the meeting space, you may come back after the meeting is over.
- If someone is on the phone or talking to someone in their office, please do not stand in the doorway until they're done, please excuse yourself and come back at a later time. The person may be talking about private matters.
- If you visit an Agency site outside of your own, please sign in and sign out.
- Please fill up copy machine when empty. If there is a paper jam, please clear it before you leave.
- Please do not use an ALL USER email when you are going to be out of the office or going on vacation, it takes up fellow staff members inbox memory. Please use the out of office assistant instead, they will receive a response email automatically that you have set up, saying that you are not there.

## Donation Thank You's

Thank you also to the following people who have made donations to TCV MH/MR, Inc: **Judy Monahan Grystar, Mr. and Mrs. Drummond, the Homestead United Presbyterian Church and Mimi Priselac** (TCV Board Member) to the Agency's client emergency fund. Thank you also to **Tickets for Kids** for the donation of tickets/passes to: the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh Penguins and Pitt Football games. The children and families truly had a great time.

## PennMap Sessions Begin at the C.O.G.

~Sandra K.

With great excitement, the PennMap (Pennsylvania Medical Algorithm Project), sessions began at the Steel Valley C.O.G. on Monday January 23, 2006. The Adult Mental Health Outpatient staff and consumer co-facilitators, who were chosen for the pilot program, were excited to start the seven sessions with consumers.

All sessions are open to Adult Outpatient and the Psychiatric/Social Rehabilitation Program consumers. The sessions will be conducted on Mondays for seven weeks. The sessions are two hours long with a 10 minute break.

Sessions are on various topics, such as: learning about your diagnosis; learning about your medications; staying on your medications and side effects; relapse and crisis planning; communicating with your doctor; and getting support from family and friends, your treatment team, peers, other agencies, clergy and other sources.

The sessions include open discussions, viewing overheads and obtaining valuable information about your symptoms. The consumers will enjoy sharing personal experiences, connecting with a peer person and learning coping skills to keep them well. The consumers will also get a chance to converse with a doctor about the medication algorithm and why certain medications are prescribed.

Consumers are given handouts and will receive a certificate of completion after attending six required sessions of PennMap. The consumers will find the sessions to be very informative, inspiring and fun!

Since the PennMap sessions at Homestead House have been a great success, we know this new pilot program will prove to be a great asset to consumers and the Agency, as well.

## Children in Need of Tutors

~Rick Williams

Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR Inc. has partnered with the Braddock Salvation Army to provide after school services that focus on homework help, youth prevention, parent involvement and cultural enrichment activities to children who live in the communities of Braddock, Rankin, Swissvale, North Braddock and East Pittsburgh. The Salvation Army /TCV MH/MR, Inc. after school program runs 5 days a week from 3:00-7:00 PM at the Salvation Army facility in Braddock (300 Holland Ave). Currently there are 30 elementary and middle school youth enrolled in the program.

The program is in need of caring adult volunteers who have a strong backgrounds in math, science and reading. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact **Laura Halaszynski**, Program Coordinator, at (412) 461-1004 ext.541



## Employee Spotlight

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

**Employee Name:** Rachelle Coburn

**Site Location:** "New Beginnings" ATF in East McKeesport

**How long have you worked here?:** 6 years

**What is your position?** Training Specialist

**What do you like best about working at TCV?** The teamwork of my co-workers and the relationship with the individuals.

**What was your very first job?** Playground supervisor

**What is your favorite movie of all time?** Pretty Woman

**If you could have dinner with anyone (living or dead) who would you choose?** My brother Monray Carrington

**What three things can always be found in your refrigerator?** Butter, eggs, Miracle Whip

**What is your favorite vacation spot?** Niagara Falls, Canada and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

**What accomplishment would you say that you are most proud of?** Giving birth to my son

**Whom do you most admire and why?** My family for it's togetherness



## Center for Recovery Excellence

~Darlene Karpaski

Allegheny Health Choices Inc (AHCI) sponsored a pilot called the Recovery Centers of Excellence. Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc. was selected to join with Mercy Behavioral Health, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Mon Yough Mental Health, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic and Residential Care Services to pilot the program. There are three Executive Staff and six Persons in Service that form TCV's Recovery Steering Committee. There are also large Center of Excellence meetings with AHCI once a month to report on progress being made.

The goal of the Centers of Excellence program is to work with other agencies and Allegheny Health Choices to provide more person centered services. Our goals are to involve consumers in more planning and implementation of Best Practice Services.

TCV's RECOVERY ACTION PLAN and GOALS:

- Communicate survey results to consumers, staff and family members
- Provide recovery oriented resource information to consumers and family members
- Develop recovery training curriculum to include consumer facilitators
- Improve consumer participation in treatment
- Increase consumer involvement throughout Agency programs and processes.
- Provide wellness and recovery action planning for consumers via trained consumer facilitators.

## Safety Message

~Jerry Potts

Some household cleaning products can burn or cause permanent damage to skin or eyes. Look for "danger" or "poison" on product labels. Oven cleaners, drain cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, ammonia and bleach are among the products most likely to be hazardous.

*Here are some ways you can reduce your risk:*

- Read the label; understand what you are using.
- Follow label directions for safest use. Reading the fine print will tell you about products not to mix (like ammonia and bleach), safe clean up and storage, and how to avoid water pollution or environmental harm.
- Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) (gloves) when using household chemicals
- Use the least toxic product you can find that works. (Do not buy other cleaning products at local markets. By submitting an approved requisition with a work order, the agency will provide you with your cleaning products that are purchased from an authorized vendor).
- Products marked "danger" or "poison" are more hazardous than those marked "caution" or "warning."
- Scented products add a variety of chemicals that may be challenging for children and people with respiratory ailments or sensitive skin.

**SAFEST: Does not have "Caution, Warning, Danger, or Poison"**

**MODERATE HAZARD: "Caution, Warning"**

**HIGHEST HAZARD: "Danger, Poison"**

Children, seniors and pets are particularly sensitive to household chemicals and using less toxic household products can keep your home healthier and protect the environment.

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

**December 2005:** Bruce Cooper, Amy Sljva-Blystone,  
Phil Ionadi and Sharon Kostelnik

## Tri Boro Prevention Network completes first semester of Life Skills Training at community based centers within the Woodland Hills School District service area

~ Rick Williams

The Tri Boro Prevention Network (TBPN) has completed its first cycle of programming at two community based sites located in Rankin and Turtle Creek. Over 52 students completed the level 2 curricula, developed by Dr. Gilbert Botvin. Life Skills Training (LST) has over 30 years of research and teaches social competence, personal self management and refusal skills to drug and alcohol. The curriculum has proven to be effective during its three years of existence because the TCV staff of the Tri Boro Prevention Network is dedicated to the Life Skills Training guidelines.

This nationally recognized program (LST) is endorsed by the Center of Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and our current project funder, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

The project is in its second year of collaboration with the Woodland Hills School District in providing interactive enrichment programming and facilitation to youth who are enrolled in the Students Hooked into Neighborhood Education (SHINE) academic enhancement initiative. The district's primary focus is on improving Pennsylvania System of School Assessment scores in reading and math for underperforming elementary and middle school students. TBPN is making preparations for our 2006 spring campaign to deliver direct service to two additional sites in Braddock until May and conclude the semester with a special awards program geared toward family involvement and district wide participation. We hope to continue providing this and other community based services in the future.

### New Orientation Procedure

Supervisors are asked to schedule new employees into Orientation classes on the first day of employment, a Monday. All new employees, including Regular, Contract and Peer staff must have evidence of General HR, Compliance, HIPAA privacy and HIPAA Security provided by TCV before they can be given access to any TCV network, computer or client file. Regular employees must also have HR benefits orientation. These orientation classes will be scheduled every Monday, and scheduling can be completed when sending the New Hire pack to HR for the Background check. HR will then provide the start date and the schedule for the training when the background check is completed. **Additional general computer and Qualifacts trainings will be offered for new employees on the second Thursday of every month from 9 AM until approximately 1 PM.** The scheduling requests can be found on the G drive in the New Hire Folder. Supervisors are asked to provide this information to candidates at the interview to be sure they can plan to attend these Monday orientation trainings.

#### Monday Orientation Schedule:

<b>9:00 - 9:45</b>	HR Benefits	<b>12:00 - 12:30</b>	Lunch (Please bring bagged lunch)
<b>10:00 - 11:00</b>	HR General	<b>12:30 - 1:30</b>	HIPAA Security
<b>11:00 - 12:00</b>	Compliance	<b>1:30 - ?</b>	HIPAA Privacy

### January is National Mentoring Month!

Only a fraction of the Woodland Hills area school age children benefit from a mentor. TCV MH/MR, Inc. and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh needs your help. Being a Big Brother, Big Sister or Big Couple doesn't take a lot of time. Just a few hours each month can spell the difference between a child seeing the possibilities for their future or falling victim to negative activity such as crime, drugs and gangs. Mentored kids are 73% more likely to reach their goals, 59% more likely to get better grades, 46% less likely to start using drugs and 37% less likely to skip class. Call 1-877-YES-BIGS during National Mentoring Month in January or log onto [www.BBSPittsburgh.org](http://www.BBSPittsburgh.org) to become a mentor. Please ask for your match to be in the Woodland Hills area. Now more than ever, we need your support!

Congratulations to **Christina Romeo** and **Mary Spencer** from the Children's Outpatient Team for becoming Licensed Professional Counselors and for becoming credentialed with Highmark this month. Way to go!!!

## Honoring

~*J.R. Brenner*

We need to honor each other for the effort to bring about change in an individual, system and the world. Since we are all born equal but unique may we share and respect that uniqueness with partnerships. Only in partnerships can we overcome anything coming down the pike. The world is a brighter place because of us. As we begin this journey of transformation and a new year may we continue to find the uniqueness in others and form more partnerships. I realize change is scary but I promise you that with partnerships we will make it. During this time, we need to share our concerns and know others share your same concerns whether staff or consumers. May we begin to trust one another for a better Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR, Inc.

## MR Christmas Party

The Steel Valley and New Beginnings (St. Roberts) ATFs invited staff and consumers to join them at their Annual Christmas Party on Thursday December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 11 am – 2pm. All enjoyed the fun and festivities. The event was catered by Conrad's and included a variety of food and goodies. Santa came on his sleigh to give all individuals in attendance presents. Everyone had a great time singing Christmas Carols. Thank you to the very talented family member who played the piano for everyone to sing along.



*Christmas party attendees*



*Santa passing out presents*



*Kenny and his mom enjoying the fun*

## Go Steelers!

~*submitted by Pam Zaccagnini*

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Homestead House held a Steeler Tailgate party for Mental Health consumers at Homestead House, Rankin House and Munhall Apartments. Everyone received a Steeler T-Shirt and had a great time socializing and singing Steeler songs. Tailgaters had ribs, hamburgers, hot dogs, fruit salad and Steeler cake. Surely all of the attendees will be cheering their Steelers on at the "Steelerbowl!!!"

## Holiday Blues

~ *Chris W.*

I have a very hard time from the months of September through December. As it gets closer to Christmas, the harder it gets for me. When I was at Wellspring Center in 1990, there were two staff who helped me with the holidays—they were **Jack B.** and **Janet F.** They helped a lot of people by spending time with them.

To me, Christmas time should be spending time with people less fortunate—that's a safe place to be. It makes me so happy to be part of TCV's Psych Rehab. As a part of Psych Rehab, we took a van load of people to the nursing home to spend time with people there. We gave out cookies, spread Christmas cheer and everyone had a good time. I hope we do this every year.

## Get to know the new Office Manager at the Turtle Creek site

**Lou Ann Bucco** started on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005. She used to work as a Project Coordinator for a company by the name of IDL, Inc. a division of Matthews International based in Pittsburgh. IDL is a Point of Purchase (POP) merchandising solutions company.

Lou Ann is a mom of three (3) boys, ages 16, 11 ½ & 6. One of her sons has been diagnosed with ADHD so she really can relate to some of the struggles that parents who visit the TC site must also deal with.

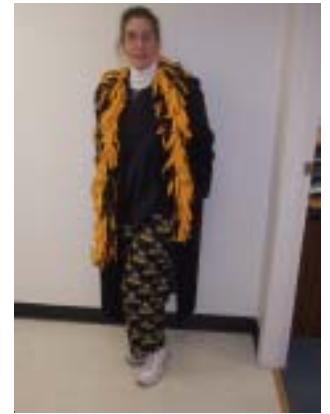
She is the youngest of 6 children born and raised near Latrobe, PA. Lou Ann finds herself to be pretty grounded and loves having that much family around.

She is an avid sewer and has been for most of her life. Sewing is her “therapy”. She also enjoys the outdoors by camping and gardening, the theatre, music and like any girl, shopping.

Lou Ann has a very varied background having worked in several different types of businesses. She has been in the business field for over 25 years. She welcomes the opportunity to use all the skills she has acquired over the years to help an organization.

As the Turtle Creek site’s new office manager, she hopes to change the way things are run as well as keep things the same. She says, “As the atmosphere of the field (MH/MR) changes, requiring both business-like and clinical expertise, I think community-based agencies like TCV can benefit from the knowledge I have learned in the business, organizational end. On the other hand, I can learn from the staff that is here and have been for some time, hoping “not to fix what is not broken.”

Welcome to TCV Lou Ann!



*Lou Ann modeling her Steelers gear*

## Do you want to quit smoking?

**TCV** conducts ongoing sessions for adults who want help in trying to cut down or quit using tobacco. The sessions are a combination of class and group. The program is based on the Freedom from Smoking Program of the American Lung Association. It is a highly structured program which focuses on behavior change. **We offer qualifying participants vouchers for free nicotine patches.**

In November and December, tobacco staff met with 5 Psychiatric/Social Rehabilitation consumers who wanted to cut down or quit smoking. They met for an hour a week for 8 weeks at the Steel Valley COG building. Tobacco staff found that a high percentage of TCV’s consumer population use tobacco products.

All participants of the program learn about the dangers of tobacco and ways to change their tobacco use behaviors. Professional instruction and group sharing are great benefits to the program. TCV cessation classes are scheduled according to demand and staff availability. Scheduled classes are publicized within the Agency. The Family Services Department welcomes ALL self and other referred candidates who have an interest in the TCV Freedom from Smoking program. You do not need to be a client of TCV, to participate in TCV Family Services Smoking Cessation classes. Please call **Arlene** at 412-464-1522 x500 for further information on the program.

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

~Amy Sljva-Blystone

**TCV’s** Employment Services Department 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 a minimum of 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.

## Note from the Editor

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the January edition of Turtle Creek Valley News. This is our longest edition yet! People said that the newsletter would never last when we first started it four years ago, but you all have really helped it to continue to grow and grow! Thank you!

It may seem early, but we hope that everyone can participate in our **8th Annual Toward a Brighter Future Golf Benefit**. It is going to be held on a Tuesday in August at Southpointe Golf Club in Canonsburg. We hope to see you there!!!!

*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.

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