

# The Pipeline

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Volume 1

## Upcoming Events

GMHCN Board Meeting  
Conference Call  
July 8, 2010;  
St. Simon's Island, GA  
August 23, 2010  
Pine Mountain, GA  
November 10-12, 2010

CPS Training  
The Lodge at Simpsonwood  
Norcross, GA  
August 2-6 & 9-12, 2010;  
Epworth by the Sea  
St. Simon's Island, GA  
October 25-29 & November  
1-4, 2010;

APSE National Conference  
Atlanta, GA  
June 8-10, 2010

Mental Health America's  
2010 Annual Conference  
Washington, DC  
June 9-12, 2010

USPRA  
35th Annual Conference  
Boise, ID  
June 14-17, 2010

GMHCN Annual Conference  
Epworth by the Sea  
St. Simon's Island, GA  
August 24-26, 2010

NARPA 2010 Annual Rights  
Conference  
Hilton Atlanta  
Atlanta, GA  
September 8-11, 2010

Alternatives 2010  
Hyatt Regency Anaheim  
Anaheim, CA  
September 29-October 3, 2010

National Federation of Families  
for Children's Mental Health  
21st Annual Conference  
Atlanta, GA  
November 5-7, 2010

Georgia Peer Support Institute  
Unicoi State Park  
Epworth by the Sea  
St. Simon's Island, GA  
November 16-18, 2010

## Delois Scott: October 3, 1941 - December 27, 2009

By Larry Fricks



Delois Scott

The Willie Watkins Funeral Home in Atlanta was packed on January 2nd by family and friends celebrating the remarkable life of Delois Scott who nurtured the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) from seeds to national prominence.

At her funeral she was remembered for her wit, wisdom, and flair for colorful clothes and jewelry that created a regal presence, no doubt inherited from her flamboyant grandmother, one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Atlanta. Her grandmother - Carrie Cunningham - was born of freed slaves near Fitzgerald, GA and rode to Atlanta on a white horse from a circus show. On Sweet Auburn Avenue she founded the Royal Hotel and Royal Peacock Club. The "Peacock" became a southern landmark known as the "Apollo of the South" where the greatest black entertainers in the county rocked the house integrating blacks and whites drawn to the soul-stirring music. Delois was driven by chauffer to school and in the evenings hung out with celebrities like Nat King Cole, Marvin Gay, Ray Charles, James Brown, Little Richard, Gladys Knight, Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis.

Delois also survived tough economic times and crushing depression and despair. Her musician father died from alcoholism; her mother succeeded at suicide. Those personal valleys forged deep transformation and compassion to serve others. Testimonies given at her funeral provided insight into how many lives she saved working at an Atlanta substance abuse treatment center, sharing hope and the healing power of "one-day-at-a-time" that she walked herself. "She got along with everybody," says Willie Woods, GMHCN President. Willie was on the interview team in 1994 when Delois applied to be the first GMHCN executive director. He recalls how she showed up late for the job interview because of a flat tire. "Even though she had a flat tire, she got there," says Willie, explaining how her perseverance and integrity impressed the interview team.

Many recall how Delois brought the crowd to their feet at the annual consumer conference, playing the song *I Believe I Can Fly* accompanied by arms uplifted and swaying, and the following words sung in unison: "*I believe I can fly; I believe I can touch the sky; I think it about it every night and day; spread my wings and fly away...*"

Delois served as the GMHCN Executive Director from 1994 until she retired in 2004. During the decade of her leadership the GMHCN went from a non-profit with meager assets, to full-time staffing and thousands of members, funded by federal and state grants and contracts. Perhaps one of her greatest accomplishments was the "Ponce Project," the GMHCN response to the dire need for peer support services for people with dual diagnoses (mental illness and addictive diseases) in metro Atlanta. The GMHCN seeded Double Trouble in Recovery (DTR) support groups that have now sprouted to 62 statewide sites showing impressive outcomes of keeping DTR attendees out of state hospitals.

"Delois was a remarkable person, very open about her own dual recovery, full of great stories and is loved and missed" says Sherry Jenkins Tucker, the GMHCN Executive Director. Thanks Delois, for sharing your life, saving lives, and spreading the belief that we can fly.

## Health care reform: Now that it has passed, what does it mean for you?

### 1. You have insurance through your employer

Almost 60 percent of Americans are insured through their employers, and the law doesn't change their coverage. And insurers will not be able to limit—for a year or a lifetime—how much they will spend on you if you are ill. If you lose your job or change jobs, you will have more protections and options for buying affordable insurance.

### 2. You're on Medicare

The government has guaranteed that basic benefits will not be cut. Next year, all Medicare preventive services, such as screenings for colon, prostate and breast cancer, will be free. Annual wellness visits will also be free starting in 2011.

### 3. You fall into the Part D prescription drug "doughnut hole"

This year you will receive a one-time check for \$250 to help pay for your medications in the coverage gap. In 2011, you will get a 50 percent discount on brand-name and biologic drugs. The law gradually reduces expenses in the gap until 2020, when the gap will disappear entirely. According to an analysis by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the average person who falls into the "doughnut hole" will save \$700 in 2011 and \$3,000 in 2020, when the gap will be eliminated.

### 4. You have a preexisting condition & are unable to get insurance

By July of this year, people with a health condition that has made it difficult for them to get privately purchased insurance—from high blood pressure to cancer—can get coverage from the government until 2014, when no coverage can be denied on the basis of preexisting conditions. It's not yet clear how much you will have to pay for this insurance, but it cannot be more than \$5,950 annually for an individual and \$11,900 for a family. This insurance will be available only to people who have been uninsured for at least six months. By July 2010, insurance plans can no

longer deny coverage to children under age 19 with preexisting conditions. Children can remain on your insurance until age 26.

### 5. What about small business owners?

Small businesses that employ fewer than 50 people are not required to provide health insurance for workers. Companies with fewer than 25 employees—whose average wage is below \$50,000—can get tax credits to help buy insurance. That means the smallest companies with the lowest-wage workers get the most help. Starting in 2014, small businesses—or their employees—can purchase competitively priced insurance through the state-run insurance exchanges.

### 6. You are self-employed and have private insurance

Within a year, private insurers cannot cancel your coverage because of illness. Lifetime limits on your coverage are prohibited. Insurers must create standardized websites to help you compare coverage options before you purchase. In 2014, you will be able to purchase insurance through the state-run exchanges, which should make health care more affordable. And insurers will no longer be able to deny coverage based on preexisting conditions or gender. Moreover, they may only charge older Americans three times what they charge younger people. Subsidies are available for moderate-income families to help them purchase private insurance.

### 7. You don't make enough money to afford health insurance

Depending on how much money you make, in 2012 you may be eligible for Medicaid, the insurance program for low-income people. Anyone with an income below 133 percent of the poverty level—about \$14,400 for an individual and \$29,327 for a family of four in 2009—can enroll in Medicaid. Also, doctors who treat Medicaid patients will receive higher payments, so more may be willing to treat people in the program. There will be subsidies for those who don't qualify for Medicaid.

## A New Set Of Players By Linda Neiheisel, CPS

*"The process of personal transformation begins in the place of our greatest loss, our deepest grief and our most abject fear."*

Within each of us is a miracle. At the Peer Support and Wellness Center we acknowledge each others personal stories as we come together in a "community of intentional healing." We know from our deeply lived experience that sometimes a **breakdown** can be the beginning of our greatest **breakthrough**.

What does that look like in a trauma-informed environment? Peers realize that the rigors of daily life can "trigger" old psychological wounds acquired in childhood and that the community becomes the stage in our "theatre of re-enactment." Old hurts surface in our lives and, when compounded by hardships, can manifest in actions that recycle our traumas or repeat self-defeating patterns. This is what the world at large defines as a crisis. *In a community of intentional healing something new and different happens.*

As the peer in crisis knocks on our door at the Peer Support and Wellness Center they encounter **a new set of players**. Just as that person in "crisis" is about to spiral into depression, choose self-destruction, or even move to another state to start over, we offer up a miracle called the deconstruction of trauma. We engage each other in our grief and loss and sit with one another in horrific discomfort and anxiety. We even go as far as to validate each other's despair and after we have embraced the cruelty and injustice of what happened and the sorrow it imposed ---we affirm ourselves. We reclaim the knowledge that we still possess, of who we were intended to be and what our lives were intended for.

*This is the place where transformation begins.* It begins the moment we choose to engage in creating and recreating the lives we want to live in relationship to ourselves, each other and to the human spirit. At our house we believe in personal transformation. It is a consequence of using all that we are and all that we have ever been in every one of our experiences. Come with us as we heal together.

**Poem** by Gail Herrschaft, CPS

Me and my pain remain the same  
 Whether mental or physical  
 It's really quite quizzical  
 Is this all in my mind  
 Am I delusional  
 The voices are unusual  
 Telling me what I should or shouldn't  
 Please shut up  
 I knew they wouldn't  
 Do what they tell me  
 Quiet is the key  
 I'll tie myself into a knot  
 And lay here on this tiny cot  
 Pulling the covers over my head  
 Are they still there  
 Did you hear what they said  
 Saying things that are taboo  
 All of this is so new  
 What would happen if I told another  
 Would they duck and run for cover  
 Would I wake up in a mental institution  
 Is that the only solution  
 Going on meds  
 That mess with my head  
 Listening to psychobabble  
 My brain is like a game of scrabble  
 Letters falling out my ear  
 Articulating here and there  
 None are coherent  
 It's all I can bear  
 Now I sit in a room and stare  
 The sounds are mute  
 My mind can no longer compute  
 This white thing that's wrapped around me  
 Keeping me from being free  
 When I scream  
 Can anyone hear  
 Destined to be institutionalized  
 I can no longer cry  
 The tears are dried  
 The soul is lost  
 Keeping me under control  
 At any cost  
 Is this how it feels to be dead and alive  
 My body still strives  
 But the intellect is paste  
 Unglued  
 What a waste

**FaithWorks: Called to Lead the Way** ----- By Branko Radulovacki

**FaithWorks is a grass-roots initiative designed to galvanize the faith community to help address the needs of those with mental illness and their families.** As a psychiatrist and a man of faith, I felt a spiritual call to act on behalf of those who couldn't or wouldn't act to help themselves. At the time, most mental health advocates had given up on addressing the mental health crisis. Hope for change was ebbing, and the state was moving quickly to privatize state psychiatric hospitals. Two years ago, in response to Georgia's state mental health crisis, I founded FaithWorks. God stirred my heart to care about the suffering of those under the state's care, and I responded by meeting with leaders of several mental health advocacy groups. A cohesive mental health coalition, focused on meaningful reform to the state mental health system, began to find its voice and sense its unified purpose. The cumulative efforts of that mental health coalition—and of FaithWorks' supporters—have resulted in remarkable changes, including halting for-profit privatization of the state's psychiatric hospitals, funding for a mental health ombudsman, a new behavioral health department and \$70 million in additional funding for state mental health programs during an economic downturn.

**FaithWorks' focus is now broadening to include building partnerships between mental health advocacy organizations like GMHCN and faith communities throughout Georgia.** The purpose of fostering these relationships is to minister to all those with unmet mental health needs -- with education and advocacy through resources and services, by reducing stigma, and empowering any who suffer with mental illness to seek and find help through their faith community. Last fall, FaithWorks organized a Mental Health Conference for faith leaders. The conference heightened faith leaders' awareness of mental illness, and educated them about numerous resources which can help them address congregational and community needs. Over 150 clergy, lay ministers and mental health advocates attended the day-long event. The conference was an unqualified success, and it highlighted the need for more collaboration between mental health advocates and faith communities.

**This is where you come in.** In order for us to reach as many faith leaders as possible, we need your help. First, let GMHCN's leaders know you care about FaithWorks' initiative. Second, get the contact information (name, telephone number, or email address) of one clergy member in your house of worship with whom we can communicate. Third, forward your information to Sherry Jenkins Tucker at office@gmhcn.org or call 1-800-297-6146. Our goal is to build a database of faith leaders to partner with in order to help those with mental illness and their families. It is exciting to be at the forefront of improvements to our state's mental health system, and at the helm of initiatives like the one to educate and empower faith leaders to better serve those with mental illness. I invite you to join me in all that FaithWorks is doing to lead the way. It is a moral call for me; I urge you to make it yours, too. Together, we can change things for the better.

\*To learn more about FaithWorks, please visit our website at [www.FaithWorksGA.com](http://www.FaithWorksGA.com)

**Natural Support**

We all go through different things in life,  
 And sometimes we need that special friend to guide us right.  
 A mental illness can affect anybody,  
 Regardless of gender, age, background or race;  
 But natural support can help the individual keep up the pace,  
 And succeed in winning the race.  
 Sometimes we need one another,  
 Sister, father, mother, or brother,

To help us achieve the road to recovery.  
 Sometimes we need a friend when we're feeling depressed from within,  
 To help us overcome a situation when we think there is no end.  
 I thank God for sending living and caring people my way,  
 To help me see a brighter day, and supporting me all the way,  
 We never know when we will need support one day.  
 If you haven't experienced it yet, keep on living,  
 And accept it when the time is right.  
 By Nugent Henry

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## Rise of the Phoenix

We shall rise again, to face another day,  
Through all the chaos and obstacles in the way.  
We will bond together and overcome it all,

With every ounce of our will, we will not stall.  
Head first we will dive, into the pool of energy,  
That will thrust us ahead, with fists of fury.  
We will break through this veil of darkness,

With the light inside us, that brightly harkens.  
Our lights will blend together in one giant ray,  
Yes! We shall rise again, to face many more  
a day! ----- Renee Black, CPS

## **Autobiography in Five Short Chapters** By Portia Nelson

I walk, down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in. I am lost...I am helpless; it isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it; I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in the same place.  
But it isn't my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there. I still fall in...it's a habit.  
My eyes are open; I know where I am.  
It is my fault. I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

I walk down a different street.

## **Announcing:**

## **Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network's 19th Annual Summer Conference**



**RESILIENCE:**  
*Moving Forward with Recovery & Wellness*

**August 24th, 25th & 26th, 2010**  
**Epworth by the Sea, St. Simon's Island, GA**