

The Pipeline

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Winter 2005

Current & Up-coming Events

Mental Health Day at the Capitol
Underground Atlanta
Atlanta, GA
February 28, 2005

Certified Peer Specialist Training
Epworth by the Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
March 14-17 (Part 1)
March 21-25 (Part 2)

Peer Support Institute
Unicoi State Park
Helen, GA
April 26, 27 & 28, 2005

Walking in Recovery
GMHCN 2nd Annual Fundraiser
Decatur, GA
May 10, 2005

2005 Rosalynn Carter Georgia Mental Health Forum
Carter Center
Atlanta, GA
May 19, 2005

US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
30th Annual Conference
Omni William Penn Hotel
Pittsburgh, PA
May 23-26, 2005

National Mental Health Association Conference
"Justice for All"
Washington, DC
June 9-11, 2005

The GA Certified Peer Specialist Project will hold its 12th! Certification training

March 14 – 25, 2005. We will break for a long weekend on the 17th at noon and return at 1:00 on March 21. Many if not most of you have already come in contact with Certified Peer Specialists. Many of you have been supported by the CPSs who work in the agencies in which you receive services. I hope that your encounter with GA's CPSs has been one of great hope and has also provided you with a new sense of the possibilities in your own life. Certified Peer Specialists are helping many consumers create the lives they want to live. Recently I have been happy to talk to a number of you who are trying to find sources of funding so that you too may train to assist others on their road to recovery. Although the CPS Project does not offer scholarships, we do have many CPSs who have utilized various agencies and organizations to come to the trainings-- , including Voc Rehab and local NAMI chapters. But what if you aren't a Voc Rehab client, or there isn't a NAMI chapter in your area? What if you aren't currently working for an agency that needs to send you in order for you to get certified? What about those of you who are still in services but have demonstrated real leadership and you're ready for the challenge Certification Training provides? Your community is made up of a few to a lot of organizations, clubs, and churches. According to the 1999 Surgeon General's Report, 1 out of 5 people in the United States has or will develop some type of mental illness. There is great need for education on recovery and great need for people like you who are evidence that recovery is real, and that despite the diagnosis, we do go on to live meaningful lives with new purpose and goals. Organizations and civic groups as well as churches may be looking for someone like you right now to bring the message of recovery to the people they serve. You might approach civic groups and the churches in your community about funding your training in exchange for services you will be able provide to them and the people they serve once you've completed the full 9 day certification course. Your Chamber of Commerce will provide you with a list of the organizations that serve people and care about helping people. Make appointments to talk about the Certification Training with these civic leaders. Tell them that the training to become a Certified Peer Specialist will prepare you to assist other consumers who may be isolated, or afraid to identify themselves as a person with a mental illness. If you were to speak at a church about your own struggles—and of course your victories, you will shatter **Continued Pg 2**

You can Help by Going to the Capitol!

Every year important legislation is introduced that relates to Mental Illness, Individual Choice and Recovery. Ellyn Jaeger has offered some helpful suggestions, if you go. We need your help, as consumers are often seriously under-represented. Please contact the GMHCN if you want your voice heard this year and can possibly attend. We can also help you get information on contacting your representatives and senators, or if you would like particular issues to be publicly addressed.



Training Continued . . . the silence so many maintain about their diagnosis. Too many of us live in fear that we are the only one experiencing a mental illness. Tell the church you hope will sponsor you, or the civic group you hope will fund your training that, Yes! You can bring unimaginable relief to so many through your own openness about your journey AND the tools the certification training will expose you to. To learn more—or if you are simply interested in working from the perspective of your own experience with mental illness and recovery, check us out. For those of you who have online access, you can reach our WEB Page at www.gacps.org. From there you will be able to review location for the training, cost, qualifications, and also download your application and pre-test. You will want this information before you approach a potential funder. If you do not have access to the Internet, please feel free to call me or the Office of Consumer Relations and Recovery at 404-657-2103 and we will be happy to mail out an information packet to you. I hope that our roads cross very soon! Beth Filson, Certified Peer Specialist and Project Manager for the GA CPS Project.

What you should know if you are planning on going to the Capitol:

Do not drive to the Capitol. There is nowhere to park. Take MARTA. Be flexible. Committee meetings could change at the last minute. Check the "Boards" on the third floor for Senate and House Committee meetings. The Boards are located on both ends of the corridors. LOB is not a secret code. It means Legislative Office Building. This building is located across from the Capitol and many committee meetings are held there. If it does not say LOB but you see the number 5 or 6 in front of the room number it is LOB. The Capitol only has 4 floors. Be comfortable. Wearing shoes that look good but are not comfortable is a big mistake. The floors at the capitol are marble, and very hard to stand on for long periods. Seating is limited so you might end up standing. Be prepared for large crowds. The day you go to the Capitol may also be the day many large organizations will be there. Trying to get through the halls, especially on the 3rd floor, can be quite a challenge. Bring snacks. Really. You cannot count on the Senate or the House to break at noon. In fact, some days lunch is brought to them. There is a snack shop on the ground level, but the selection is limited. If you are going with others, pick one location to find each

other if you get separated. The bathrooms are located on the 1st and 3rd floors. You will need to fill out a "call out slip". Both the House and the Senate have their own slips used to reach the legislators while they are in session. They are located near each chamber. If you are planning to talk with your legislator, call in advance, that way when they see your name on the call out slip they will remember they agreed to talk with you. Be brief. When possible give the legislator, in writing, what you came to see them about. Remember, you are not the only person that day they will talk with. If they have written comments, it will help them remember. Do not plan to use a cell phone at the capitol. Hearing anyone is almost impossible. You can watch the Senate and House in **action** on the 4th floor. You may not read the newspaper while in the Gallery. If you are standing near the elevators on the 3rd floor and you see a band setting up, move, quickly. It will take you hours to hear again once the drums and symbols start playing. Have a sense of humor. If you do not have one, borrow one from a friend. You will need it.
Ellyn Jeager,
National Mental health Association of Georgia

Drug Firms Join to Help Uninsured

Eleven pharmaceutical companies launched a card program that will offer discounts on prescription drug purchases for 36 million uninsured Americans. The Together RX Access Card program, which begins in February, will provide savings of 25 percent to 40 percent off the retail price of more than 275 brand-name drugs offered by the companies. The drugs treat ailments including diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure and arthritis. Legal U.S. residents who are uninsured, under age 65, ineligible for Medicare, and have no public or private drug coverage are eligible for the card if they meet program income guidelines. The guidelines vary depending on family size. Application information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-444-4106 or at www.TogetherRxAccess.com. Together RX Access is an umbrella group of 11 drug companies: Abbott Laboratories, AstraZeneca P.L.C., Aventis Pharmaceuticals Inc., Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., GlaxoSmithKline P.L.C., Janssen Pharmaceutica Products L.P., Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical Inc., Pfizer Inc., Takeda Pharmaceuticals Co. Ltd. and TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc. At a news conference, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson drew laughter when he said he hoped the program would enlist "so many people... that companies will almost regret starting it." Cost may be negligible and benefits large for the industry. Sena Lund, a drug-company analyst at Cathay Financials, said firms began expanding discount programs in recent years in response to public anger over drug costs. With Americans taking billions of dollars worth of drugs, the cost of discounting is relatively small. David Brennan, CEO of AstraZeneca's Wilmington-based U.S. operation, said drug discounts could help needy patients without a significant effect on company profits. Pfizer said it did "not anticipate that this will have a material impact on the company, although we are taking a hit," said spokeswoman Michal Fishman. <http://www.togetherrxaccess.com/>. For more news or to subscribe, please visit <http://www.philly.com> Copyright ©2004 Philadelphia Inquirer. All Rights Reserved. Christine P. Fisher, Pfizer Regional Advocacy Coordinator, 850/224-1401

In Memory of Rev. Carl Brigety, Jr. May 5, 1942 – December 25, 2004

When he returned home from prison infected with AIDs, a Hancock County resident was shunned by family and roamed the streets during winter without a coat. Though on social security and living in a nursing home, upon learning of the former inmate's desperate plight, Rev. Carl Brigety gave his own overcoat to the stranger.

Born in 1942 in Daytona Beach, Carl was a 1965 graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta where he received a degree in Political Science. Carl also earned a diploma in Sociology from the International College of Copenhagen and a Masters degree in Political Science from Case Western University. In 1990 he received a Masters degree in Sociology/Religion from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, moved to Milledgeville with his wife and taught political science at the state university. Carl was an avid reader and book collector and was renowned for his scholastic skills and dedication.

In recovery from mental illness himself, Carl emerged as a leader in Georgia's mental health movement, serving on the Board of Directors of the 3,000-member Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and on staff of a state-funded mental health center in Milledgeville. He was also active in the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and a member of the Georgia Consumer Council. The Council is nationally renowned for restoring the cemetery at Central State Hospital (CSH) in Milledgeville which triggered similar projects in 18 other states and will be featured in a PBS documentary released this year. CSH was once known as "the largest insane asylum in the world" with some 25,000 patients buried there.

"He taught us how to love one another and forgive one another," recalled Willie Lester, a Deacon at the Oak Grove Baptist Church in Milledgeville where Carl served as an Associate Minister. Willie was one of many who shared insights into Carl's deep compassion, wisdom and wit at a church memorial service held January 2nd.

Delois Scott, former executive director of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and a member of the Consumer Council recalls Carl's spiritual leadership with the cemetery restoration efforts, providing invocations for the work and ceremonies held since the project began in 1997. "He would speak so eloquently, his prayers flowing like the words of Dr. Martin Luther King."

Mary Wilcher, a CSH employee and member of both the Council and the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network credits Carl and his gift of tutoring her when she returned to college and struggled with mathematics. "Carl Brigety got me through that math class," says Mary. "I got a C."

In deep gratitude for Carl's service to others and leadership in promoting faith that helped guide the successful CSH cemetery restoration, members of the Georgia Consumer Council and the Board of Directors of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network voted that the 2005 reprinting of the book entitled ***But for the Grace of God – Milledgeville! The Inside Story of the World's Largest Insane Asylum*** be dedicated to the Rev. Carl Brigety, Jr. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the continued restoration and upkeep the CSH cemetery.

Godspeed, Carl.
Larry Fricks

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Walking Alone
walking alone
the storm following
the wind unforgiving
the rain bone chilling
shivering and broken
in a fetal position
hugging knees
rocking and keening
the sun emerges
the cloud overhead
remains
the silent foreboding
the heaviness of the

heart
breathing labored
sensation smothered
drowning in emotion
sinking in passion
love afraid
love unreturned
love remains
love lost
plunging into the
unknown
rocket fast
heart in hand

POETRY CORNER

arms open
unfulfilled
void of emotion
retribution
payback
vengeance everlasting
knees bending
forgiveness abounds
worship naturally still
above
full of love
Gail Herrschaft

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POETRY CORNER

Winter Poem

When Winter slaps your face
with cold and clammy hands,
her icy fingernails tear at your coat,
her cold breath steals beneath your clothes,
as if not content 'til she touches your very bones,
Then is the time to laud the Spring,
who somehow spreads her own days
deep within Winter's realm,
loosening winter's grip, gently,
with the strength of a child.
Spirit surrounds,
Beauty abounds,
Love resounds,
Life rebounds.
Benton Randall

Olmstead Plaintiff Dies

Elaine Wilson, one of two plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case, *Olmstead v. L.C. and E.W.* died in Atlanta on December 5th, 2004. She was a champion in the civil rights movement, displaying great courage, grace and humor in spite of the injustice and abuse she suffered during her inpatient care. Elaine wanted to spend her life encouraging more people with disabilities to fight for their rights and avoid institutionalization. Alas, she only had 5 years after achieving her freedom to pursue her personal goals. The *Olmstead* decision challenged the right of individuals to live their lives outside of institutions which deprived them of their personal liberties and choices, and often resulted in neglect and abuse. Elaine enlisted the aid of lawyers and brought her case to the U.S. Supreme Court. She eventually won her freedom, and helped countless others achieve their freedom and right to determine their own care. She left a lasting impression on fellow disability rights advocates, state and national legislators, disability agencies, service providers and Mental Health Consumers, among others. Elaine's death reminds us that recovery and change is about individual human beings and has a personal face. Well loved and respected, Elaine will be greatly missed. We are confident her legacy will live on.

REPORT EXPLORES CREATING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

A new report from the National Council on Disability describes how communities can improve the quality of life for adults with disabilities, as well as for the growing population of seniors who may develop disabilities later in life. The report is organized around six key goals: 1) providing affordable, appropriate, accessible housing; 2) ensuring accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation; 3) adjusting the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility; 4) providing work, volunteer, and education opportunities; 5) ensuring access to key health and support services; and 6) encouraging participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities. A number of model programs in the South are highlighted, including Georgia's EasyLiving Home Program, Nashville's Comprehensive Sidewalks Program, and the JAUNT Regional Public Transit Agency of Central Virginia. Access Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities at <http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2004/pdf/livablecommunities.pdf>

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The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network now has the capability to send to you by e-mail our quarterly newsletter. But we need to know who you are! Send an email to office@gmhcn.org and request your e-mail address be added to our list. You will receive the latest editions of The Pipeline to archive, print or send to your friends! You'll be glad you did.