

The Pipeline

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Volume 1 Fall 2016

Upcoming Events

Georgia Consumer Council Memorial Service

Central State Hospital
Milledgeville, GA
October 2, 2016

GMHCN Board Meetings Face to Face:

Helen, GA
October 20 - 21, 2016

CPS Trainings

Savannah, GA
October 17 - 27, 2016

Atlanta, GA
December 5 - 15, 2016

Georgia Peer Support Institute

St. Simon's Island, GA
November 9-11, 2016

GMHCN Annual Conference

St. Simon's Island, GA
August 22-24, 2017

Here's to 25 Years!

From August 30th until September 1 over 600 people joined together at Epworth By The Sea in St. Simon's Island, GA to celebrate the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network's 25th Annual Summer Conference. While there were a few showers no rain fell on the recovery parade. Whether it was their first or 25th conference everyone on hand had a great time. Attendees were treated to a goody bag full of GMHCN 25th Anniversary swag and more workshops than had ever been offered before.

One of the highlights was a keynote address by Larry Fricks, CPS who outlined the history of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and the progress we have made as an organization and our influence on the recovery movement in the state of Georgia. All keynotes are available to view in their entirety on the GMHCN website as well as photos from all three days. An exhibit of recovery through art was a big hit with attendees as every year more peers wish to have their art seen as an expression and part of their on-going recovery. Everyone in attendance at the dance on the second night had a great time moving to the music and mingling with peers from across the state. GMHCN hopes that in the future we can get even more members of the recovery community to the Conference as it is truly a unique experience to be

surrounded by so many peers. As always, the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network suited up and showed up to make sure that the event went off without a hitch. See you next year!

*Larry Fricks, CPS
pictured right.*





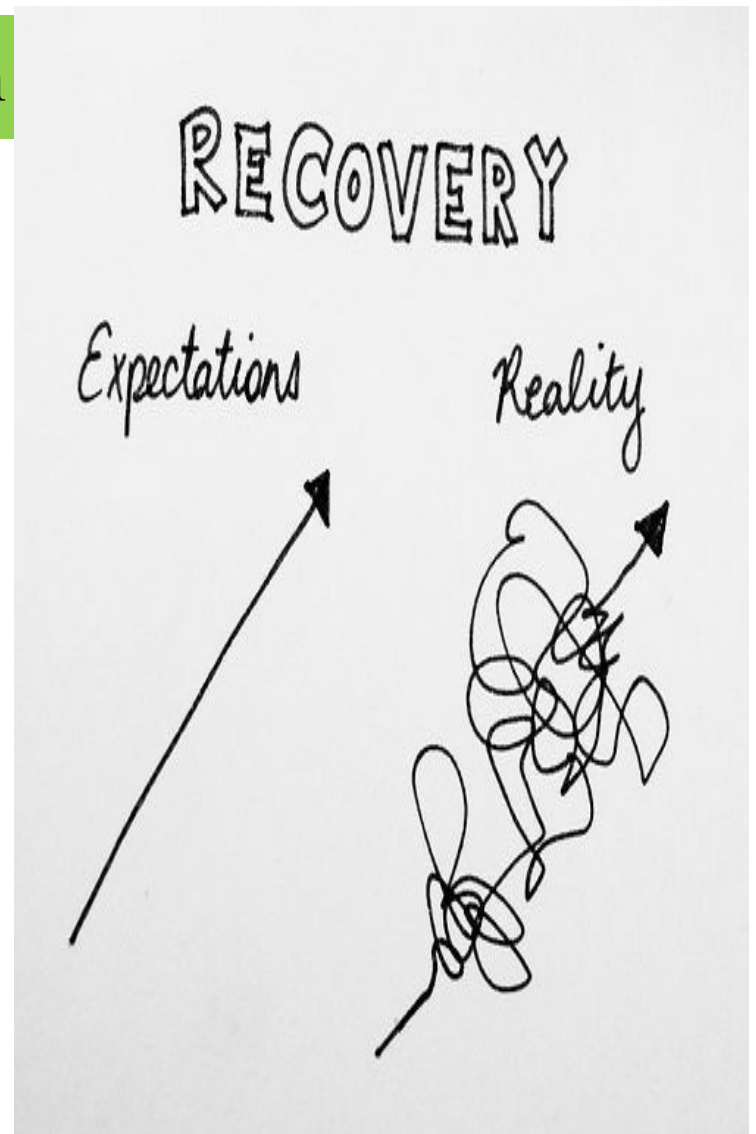
COMING DOWN THE PIPELINE

- There are lots of great opportunities for peers to work with GMHCN and other organizations. Check them out on the CPS Jobs page of our website.
- Remember we love to see your artistic expressions of recovery. Submit them to nick@gmhcn.org with the subject line "Artistic Expression"
- The Colquitt County Peer Support, Wellness and Respite Center will be celebrating their second anniversary October 7th at the Center from 12p - 3p
- The Respect in Recovery 5k will be held in Grant Park on October 14. Call Jill Mays @ (404) 651-3688 for more information.
- There will be a community conversation called "Combating Mental Health Stigmas in the African American Community" on October 15 from 12p - 2p at Fulton County's Southwest Arts Center.

Donations In Memoriam

The following people/organizations have made donations:

- The Market (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- CSA Farms (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Family Bank (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Gene Willis/Willis Painting (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- King's Colonial Ford (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Adelaides Paint & Décor (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Mitch County Chrysler/Dodge/Ram/Jeep (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Timothy & Lauren Veal (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Southern Eagle Distributing (Ken Whiddon Memorial Fund)
- Donna McRae (In Memory of Betty Williamson)



Longtime GMHCN Staff Member Sees Recovery Coming Full Circle

Gail Herrschaft is the Project Director for Double Trouble in Recovery meetings in Metro Atlanta. She is currently the longest serving staff member at GMHCN and a few weeks ago she approached The Pipeline about sharing something that she has seen in our recovery community here at the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network.

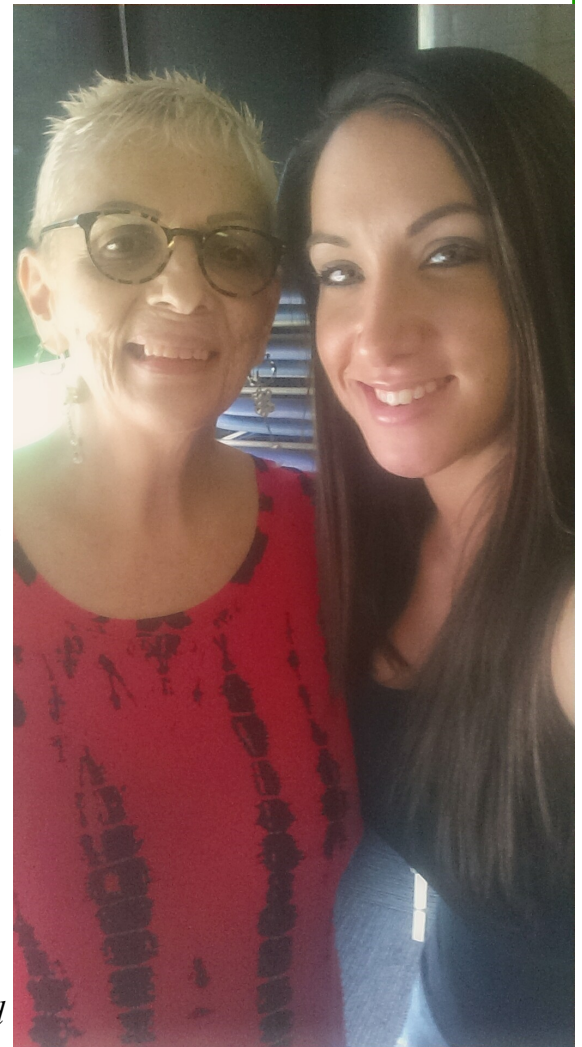
Gail says that she was introduced to recovery 18 years ago and the organization saw something in her that she did not see in herself. She says that GMHCN has “taught me the importance of taking care of myself, mind, body and spirit” as well as about stigma and how to combat it. She is grateful for the opportunity to be herself that GMHCN has provided. It was through her work at GMHCN that she met a peer named Lindsey and sees the continued success of GMHCN through her peers.

Gail met Lindsey Sizemore in the Dekalb County Jail. She says that Lindsey “seemed different; she wanted recovery and a new way of life.” Lindsey spent a total of 33 months in jail and was released to a half-way house. During this time she worked two jobs and became one of the first peers to participate in the Forensic Peer Mentoring Project through GMHCN. It was through that first introduction to GMHCN in the Dekalb County Jail that Lindsey really started to utilize the many recovery offerings of GMHCN. After completing the Forensic Peer Mentoring Project she went on to attend and graduate from the Georgia Peer Support Institute, the RESPECT Institute of Georgia, and Certified Peer Specialist Training. In addition to her trainings through GMHCN she has also become a Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist through The Georgia Council on Substance Abuse.

For Lindsey she ended up somewhere she says that she thought she would never be: A GMHCN staff member. Earlier this year Lindsey accepted a position with the RESPECT Institute of Georgia as an Outreach Coordinator. She continues her recovery and facilitates the recovery of others by arranging for peers (herself included) to tell their stories across the state. These stories influence policies and public perception about the recovery community and keep the ripple of hope going.

Gail says, and Lindsey agrees, that GMHCN “has become a symbol of hope for those of us who have been stigmatized by society... into thinking we will never recover.” Gail has a message for peers “who have been hospitalized or even gone to jail. There is hope. GMHCN does not discriminate as they see the potential in all of us. Remember there is always hope. We can and do recover. Please go to our website www.gmhcn.org and see if you are interested in our organization and what it has to offer.”

The Pipeline would like to thank Gail Herrschaft for her service and her input on this story.



Gail Herrschaft (L) and Lindsey Sizemore (R)

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GMHCN Takes On San Diego

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network was well represented as a large contingent of staff attended the Alternatives Conference in San Diego, CA this year. In addition to our Executive Director Sherry Jenkins Tucker other attendees included staff from the RESPECT Institute team, the Georgia Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Committee, Recovery Foundations Trainings, the Peer Mentoring Project/Forensic Peer Mentoring Project, as well as the Peer Support, Wellness and Respite Centers.

The Alternatives Conference is a conference held annually around the country organized for/by peers through Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center via a grant from SAMHSA. This year's conference, held September 19 - 23 was the 30th year that it has been held. Attendees were able to participate in workshops, caucuses and see keynote speakers from across the country as well as participate in artistic expressions such as an open mic night. GMHCN's own Sherry Jenkins Tucker, CPS and Jackie Wolfgang, CPS presented a workshop on making WHAM more effective at agencies.

All of the GMHCN representatives did an exemplary job of representing the peers of Georgia and they would love to see you at next year's conference to help further raise Georgia's national voice of recovery.