



NEW DIRECTIONS

“By, for, and about consumers of behavioral health services”

Volume 2, Issue 6

February-March 2006

Parents & Families of Children with Disabilities

I have recently been wandering, on the web mostly, although I should get out and wander a bit more. My wanderings started with a few choice web sites about and/or for children with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities, and I found a wealth of information. The site that I was extremely intrigued with was Bridges for Kids www.bridges4kids.org. Who are they? A statewide, non-profit parent organization dedicated to building partnerships between families, schools and communities to help promote developmental and educational success for all children. They have information by state and county. When visiting the site, after choosing your county and state there are phone numbers and web sites of your local agencies that may be of assistance, an excellent resource.

Here are some other sites well worth the visit:

- The Arc Michigan www.arcmi.org 1(800) 292-7851.
- Project Perform, Providing Education and Resources to Families and Others Residing in Michigan. www.wash.k12.mi.us/perform 1 (800) 552-4821.
- Cause, Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education, www.causeonline.org 1(800) 221-9105
- Michigan Special Education Mediation Program, www.cenmi.org/msemp 1 (800) -8RESOLVE
- <http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/index.html> This site is a PBS site for kid's ages 9-12, containing both safe entertainment and helpful information and ideas.
- <http://www.fvkasa.org/index.html> KASA Kids as Self Advocates, for kids with disabilities.

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Wellness Tips... TOP₂₀

1. **Support groups** are safe, welcoming, confidential understanding gatherings.
2. **Music** has the power to help us calm down or motivate, whether we are listening or performing
3. **Healthy eating.** Avoid fats, sugars, cholesterol and salt; drinking water and balancing food groups can improve mood.
4. **Exercising/walking/movement** can get us through depression or use up extra energy if mania seems close at hand.
5. **Pet therapy.** Our pets offer us unconditional love, a shoulder to cry on when needed, and they never get tired of us.
6. **Journaling.** Setting aside time each day to think through what has occurred and write about it can help us look for patterns and better understand ourselves.
7. **Sleep.** It's impossible to overestimate how important regular sleep and wake times are for people living with mood disorders.
8. **Creative writing and poetry** allow us to process information in artistic ways that can be healing and safe.
9. **Meditation** can help us become more calm and focused. It isn't complicated; just sit quietly and do your best to clear your mind. It gets easier with practice.
10. **Arts and crafts** can help us explore issues non-verbally. Pick your favorite and try it. Don't worry about the end result.
11. **Mood tracking.** Taking 60 seconds a day to track our moods can alert us of problems early and help us address them.
12. **Friends and family** can be our shelter from the storm.
13. **Work.** Having a job that forces us to get out of bed every day helps our self-esteem and self-discipline.
14. **Education** about our illness empowers us to make decisions with our health care providers, so we can say, "Don't work on me, work with me."
15. **Spirituality.** Belief in and reliance on something more powerful than yourself is an important aspect of wellness for many people.
16. **Volunteering.** Whether you are working or not, taking on a volunteer job helps you to give back as part of your recovery journey.
17. **Yoga.** Combining the benefits of exercise and meditation, yoga is a beneficial wellness strategy irresistible to many of us.
18. **No drinking/substance use.** Getting clean and/or sober can work wonders on your moods and treatment effectiveness.
19. **Gardening.** The combination of exercise, beauty and being outdoors makes the wellness strategy irresistible to many of us.
20. **Tracking triggers** (predictable actions or situations that destabilize moods) and preparing for them can help us avoid severe mood episodes. ~Top 20 Wellness tips reprinted from Outreach-Summer 2005 a DBSA newsletter.

Remember – I'm a Person

Because words are powerful, they can also be controversial! Some people who have a mental illness prefer the words “mental health challenges” instead of “mental illness.” There are a variety of opinions about the word “consumer,” which is commonly used to describe people who have a mental illness and receive services from the public mental health system. Here is what some of the people who receive services or work in the public community mental health system in Michigan have to say on the issue:

Barb Robertson from Jackson County said, “I would like to get away from the word ‘consumer.’ This word is very negative in my opinion. In other circles, ‘consumer’ is a generic term meaning anyone who buys something. I believe ‘consumer’ is a label/jargon in the mental health field only to separate ‘us’ from ‘them’. People do not need labels – they are ‘people’ plain and simple.”

Mary Beth Evans from Roscommon County said, “Look up the word ‘person’ in the thesaurus and you will get ‘human being, self, individual, one, someone, anyone, character, individual, quality, ego, personality and persona.’ What do you think about that?”

Ingham County resident **Melinda Matthews** said, “For myself, I don’t think the word “consumer” holds a positive or negative meaning. To me it is just a word to define my position in the world of mental health. I have had many people come to me and tell me that they do not like the word ‘consumer.’ If it were up to me, I would/do choose ‘participant,’ because I participate in my mental health services.”

Steve Ruskin, OCCMHA Board member said, “Call us people with a mental illness or most of all just refer to us as ‘people.’ The key is not to focus on the labels, but to focus on our actions to better the community and the world for ourselves and others.”

“What’s in a name? Call me whatever you want, just don’t disrespect me!” commented from **Gerald Butler** from Wayne County.

“I like ‘clients’ much better than ‘consumers,’ when some delineation is necessary,” was feedback from **Bill Woodstock**, resident of Oakland County. “There’s less stigma,” he said. “Everyone is a client of some sort of business or other. No label is best though. ‘People’ is the best word.”

In conclusion, I must say that I personally feel much better as a frequent conference presenter when I eliminate the word “consumer” and use the word “people” instead. Remember ~ I am a “Person”! ~ Written by Sherri Rushman, BS, SW Oakland County CMHS

Sherri attended the Peer Support Specialist training. Sherri teaches the WRAP Recovery model. WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is a recovery program developed by Mary Ellen Copeland. It is being used in many parts of the United States and more recently in Michigan. **Mary Beth Evans** and **Shannon Secord** from NLCMH teach WRAP as well.

"Lend Me Your Hope"

Author Unknown

Lend me your hope for a while,
I seem to have mislaid mine,
Lost and hopeless feelings accompany me daily.
Pain and confusion are my companions,
I know not where to turn;
looking ahead to future times does not bring forth
images of renewed hope,
I see troubled times, pain-filled days, and more
tragedy.

Lend me your hope for a while,
I seem to have mislaid mine,
Hold my hand and hug me;
listen to all my ramblings
recovery seems so distant.
The road to healing seems like a long and lonely
one.

Lend me your hope for a while
I seem to have mislaid mine.
Stand by me, offer me your presence, your heart and
your love.
Acknowledge my pain,
it is so real and ever present.
I am overwhelmed with sad and conflicting thoughts.

Lend me your hope for a while;
a time will come when I will heal
and I will share my renewal,
hope and love with others.

Club Cadillac

Club Cadillac has been very busy with all of the activities going on at the clubhouse. They have the new windows in and received the new refrigerators.

Members helped at First Night in downtown Cadillac. Their job was selling pizza, pop, and cookies. They will be assisting in more fundraisers in the future, working with the Cadillac Leadership Council, who made the improvements to the clubhouse possible.

Club members will be hosting a Valentines Day party in February; Traverse House members have been invited to attend.

They recently made presentations to high school Psychology students in Cadillac Area Public Schools.

The clubhouse will be enjoying the presence of 4 nursing students from NMC who are doing their mental health rotation and 1 Ferris State senior working towards their degree in Social Work.

Members continue to work with consumers from Traverse City on the May Consumer Conference. Most recently they began working on the table centerpieces. All who helped had an enjoyable time.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AT NLCMH

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health offers a variety of services for Children with Developmental Disabilities and Emotional Impairments.

The Family Support Subsidy Program is funding that comes from the Department of Community Health to families who have children living with their natural or adoptive families or Legal Guardians. The children are under the age of 18 and if the family meets the criteria, there is a simple application they complete and receive assistance every month. The Family must renew the application each year at the time of the child's birth date. It is very important that families let their case manager know if there are any changes throughout the year.

We also offer the Family Friend Respite Program. This program is intended to relieve the families of the stress of caring for their child with disabilities. The family can use whoever they feel comfortable leaving the child with – an adult, a sibling, aunt, neighbor or friend. We also will pay for camps or classes for the child to attend. We cannot pay the parent or stepparent for this care. The child must be living with their parent or guardian and have a Developmental Disability or Emotional Impairment. If the child is on Medicaid there is no co-pay for this service. If the child is not on Medicaid, we will assess the family a co-payment based on their income. This is usually not a very large amount of money that the family will pay for this service. At this time we are allotting the families \$50.00 per month for 1 child and more if they have more than 1 child with a disability.

We offer Case management services for children, in which we help to link and coordinate services for children. We attend IEP's at the schools, we help advocate for a child to have appropriate placement and services with in the school. We also will help coordinate services with Department of Human Services, Social Security Administration, Public Health Department, or any other services a family needs for their child.

We occasionally have children who come into our service who may need to be placed in a Children's Foster Care Home and we will assist the family in finding an appropriate agency to work with them on the placement. If a child is placed in foster care we immediately start the process for Permanency Planning. This is the plan to have the child reunited with their family or for the family to release their parental rights of the child to be adopted. It is very important for all children to belong to a family and be loved and taken care of by that family.

We have several Children Worker's within Northern Lakes CMH, in the Northwest the workers are Gail Goldsmith and Heather Flannery and the Southeast is Cathy Best, Deb Getty, and Margaret Wojay.

As Children's workers, we work very close to the different schools in our areas. The schools provide many more services to support parents of children with all disabilities.

The **Traverse Bay Area ISD** has a bi-monthly **ASD newsletter** and a **Forum** that meets once a month. The next **meeting is February 23, 2006 from 7- 8:00 pm** at the TBAISD Conference Center, 1101 Red Drive, Traverse City, for **more information call (231) 922-6385**.

The **Wexford/Missaukee ISD** has a **ASD Support Group** meeting the **third Thursday of each month from 6 - 7:30pm**, at the ISD building. For **more information contact Tammy Britnell at 231-825-4103**.

CHILD GUIDANCE has changed hands and is now PINE REST – Traverse City Clinic. Emotional Impairments and Psychiatric Services for Developmentally Disabled Children will now be at Pine Rest as well as Behavioral Services.

Kandu Island

Kandu Island Udnaks have been keeping busy. There are several participants from Traverse City and Leelanau assisting Club Cadillac in developing, planning, and hosting a consumer conference.

CVM, Inc. staff has been asked to facilitate the internship of three NMC nursing students for the winter 2006 semester. The three students are six months away from graduation. The internships are an opportunity for the students to ally themselves with the human in the Human Service field for which they have embarked.

The Third Meal Food Pantry remains productive and is an ongoing source of participation in the Drop-In. Their assistance is appreciated.

The Diabetic Support Group continues to meet every third Monday of the Month. For more information call (231) 922-0903.

The Social Recreation activities for the rest of the winter include bowling, movies, bingo, painting and additional arts and crafts.

Houghton Lake Happenings

Love & Logic Parenting Class ~ Every **Wednesday**, from 1-2:30pm at the Houghton Lake office. **Class is open to all!** CMH clients and the public too, parents, prospective parents grandparents, foster care...Classes run for seven weeks. For more information contact Sharon Andre at 989 366-1112.

Depression Support Groups ~ The **1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday** of the month and the **1st, 2nd and 3rd Tuesday** of the month from **3-4:00pm**. by Julie Weiss and Brenda Preteroti. **Please call prior** to class as occasionally they need to be rescheduled 989 366-8550

Upcoming Events

February 7 Recipient Rights meeting in Traverse, (videoconference to other offices) 3-5:00PM

February 8 CAC- Consumer Advocacy Council, in Traverse City, (videoconference with Houghton Lake) 1:30-3:15

February 16 Regional Consumer Forum 10-12:00pm in Traverse City.

February 16 Northern Lake CMH Board Meeting in Grayling at 6:00PM.

March 8 CAC Consumer Advocacy Council in Traverse City (videoconference to Houghton Lake) 1:30 pm- 3:00pm

March 16 Northern Lakes CMH Board Meeting in Traverse City, at 6:00PM.

Save the Dates... A Look Ahead

Northwest CMH Affiliation Regional **Consumer Conference** will be on Wednesday, May 17, 2006.

Walk A Mile In My Shoes Rally in Lansing will be on Thursday, May 25, 2006.

Traverse House News

Club members have begun to interview candidates for the Director position. Six members attended the MAC meeting in Detroit at Phoenix House. Members were impressed with Phoenix house, and their facilities, which had "washers and dryers" as well as a retail clothing store. There were approximately 100 attendees from 18-20 clubhouses. The next MAC Meeting will be in Petoskey. MAC is planning a camping trip for clubhouses to be held in July. There will be no MAC conference this year due to a spending issue with another clubhouse. Members are organizing to meet with elected officials concerning this matter.

Looking ahead, members have been invited to a Valentines Party by Club Cadillac and are looking into a sleigh ride in February.

Email subscriptions!

Receive *New Directions* through the email. If you would like to receive *New Directions* electronically please submit your email address to Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org writing "New Directions" in the subject line. Your address will be used solely for distribution of *New Directions*. It will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Contributions!

If you would like to contribute to *New Directions* please contact Leslie Sladek, at 231 933-4907, or email

Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org.

Contributors to this newsletter: Chat Room, Club Cadillac, Traverse House, Kandu Island, Sherri Rushmore, & guests, CMH children workers.

Ongoing Events

If you know of other ongoing events that could help other consumers, please contact the Editor of *New Directions*.

- **NAMI Support** for families, friends and consumers the second Monday of the month, at 6:00pm Munson Medical Center-Doctors dining room.
- **Survivors of Suicide Support Group** third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., at Mercy Hospital 2nd floor Wexford Room, Cadillac.
- **DBSA** (Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance) meets every Tuesday 7-8:00pm Club Cadillac. Contact Betty Clark at **775-5638**.
- **Bereavement Support Group**, available to the public through MMC's Hospice and Palliative Care program. Mondays at Hospice house 6:30pm or Tuesdays at the TC Senior Center 10:00am. For more info 935-8491
- **Support Group fro Teens (13-19)**, For Bipolar disorder and Depression. This peer-led group meets every Thursday at the First Presbyterian Church, 221 East Harris St., Cadillac, from 3:15-5:00 pm.
- **Healthy Choices-** This group meets to discuss and share **diabetic** friendly recipes. Meeting the fourth Monday of the month at 3003 S. Garfield (Kandu Island), from 11:00 am – 12:00 noon. Information call Jeremy Wolf at 922-0903, or 645-4884.

Attention Parents

- **Our Kids support group**, for parents/caregivers of kids with **bipolar disorder**, 7:00pm fourth Tuesday, Traverse Area District Library. 941-9128
- **Support group for parents** of children with **ADHD** Third Thursday of the month 6:00-7:30pm. Pine Rest – Traverse City Clinic (former Child Guidance, Inc.)

Consumer Advocacy Council

The CAC met on January 11, 2006. They went over outcomes that were presented to the Northern Lakes Board as well as outcome tools identified by the State. A discussion of how to better communicate/inform consumers was discussed.

They also had a presentation on Guardianship and Alternatives to Guardianship by Jonathan Bennett, Recipient Rights Officer.

The next meeting will be February 8, 2006 from 1:30-3:15pm. Traverse City with video to Houghton Lake.

CHAT ROOM

Chat Room members are planning to visit other drop-ins in February or March. This will be an overnight visit for them due to a generous donation from their landlord.

In February the Chat Room will have their quarterly birthday party for members with birthdays in January, February or March. A fun day will be had by all.

The Houghton Lake Resorter newspaper has written an article about the Chat Room, this will be printed very soon