



Mental Health Association

of the Heartland

Advocacy, Education and Support in Kansas and Missouri

739 Minnesota Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66101

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 42
Kansas City, KS



The Mental Health Association

of the Heartland

NEWS

Advocacy, Education and Support in Kansas and Missouri

Spring/Summer 2006

April/May/June

Issue 2

Mental Health Association of the Heartland Welcomes United Way Day of Caring Volunteers



Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City: Left to Right: Neelima Gudar, Satish Gudar, Ranga Vadlamudi and Venkat Vallurupalli.

United Way Day of Caring is a community-wide one-day service event that connects volunteers with nonprofit organizations to address social issues through special projects or events in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

This year marked United Way's 12th

Annual Day of Caring; the theme was "I'll be there for you." On Saturday, June 24, Board of Public Utilities employees (BPU) and Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City were there for Mental Health Association of the Heartland.

Marie Bernhard, Special Project Coordinator; Simon Messmer, Residential Counselor at Marion Apartments; Joy Butterfield, Wellness and Support Advocate; and Ann Jones, Assistant to the President/CEO arrived early Saturday morning to prepare for the Day of Caring volunteers. Offices were prepared through out the week to be ready for the tasks of painting, cleaning, entering data, sorting and organizing.

Simon and Joy worked with Charlie Vaughan, Charlie Wright, Chris Cunningham, Frank Liu and Sam DeLeon of BPU and Ranga Vadlamudi and

Satish Gudar of Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City. They rolled up their sleeves and tackled the huge task of putting a fresh coat of paint on six of our offices and steam cleaning the carpets throughout the building.

Ann worked with Venkat Vallurupalli and Neelima Gudar from Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City on inputting school information into our database for our Teen Suicide Prevention Program A.N.S.W.E.R. (Adolescents Never Suicide When Everyone Responds) A.N.S.W.E.R. provides suicide prevention information, education, and resources to adolescents, parents and educators.



BPU employee Frank Liu

Marie worked with Carolyn Sandifer, Susan Allen, Sharon Gilmore, Chris Cunningham, Jackie O'Donnel and James Nave of BPU on labeling, counting, sorting and filing educational materials that Mental Health Association of the Heartland uses in the Mental Health Promotion Program.

Everyone did a wonderful job and over 60 combined hours were volunteered. The board and staff are most grateful to our local United Ways for sponsoring the 2006 12th Annual Day of Caring. We truly appreciate the help given from the volunteers from BPU and Telugu Association of Greater Kansas City.

Volunteer and Make a Difference by Herman Shaffer

I have been a volunteer at the Mental Health Association of the Heartland (MHAH) for over two years. As such, I can easily state the benefits of donating one's time and efforts to a worthwhile cause.

The first benefit is a selfish one. As a consumer suffering from severe depression, volunteering gets me out of the house, leaves me feeling less isolated and gives me the opportunity to focus on something other than myself.

A second and very cherished benefit is the wonderful staff and co-workers I enjoy seeing three times a week. Everyone from the CEO to the other volunteers form the friendliest office environment I have ever worked in. My co-workers truly care about how I am feeling and are always quick to express their appreciation and gratitude for my assistance.

Third volunteering at MHAH allows me to impact the lives of other consumers and the mental health community in general. Assisting the staff with projects relating to housing, advocacy, education, information and referral, police training, community outreach and administration provides me with a deep sense of accomplishment. My

primary contribution to MHAH has been with the housing voucher program. It is exhilarating to see the more than 130 consumers we have helped move from homelessness to homes.

Volunteering at MHAH, whose mission is dedicated to improving the quality of life persons with mental illness, is particularly rewarding for me. Volunteers work 3-30 hours per week. There are a myriad of tasks that volunteers perform that ease the work load of the staff such as clerical, custodian and public relations. There is always a need for extra help. I have learned in my two short years that it is more than a cliché that volunteering can make a difference. It is in fact a reality.

Our Mission

Mental Health Association of the Heartland is dedicated to promoting the mental health of the community, and improving the lives of persons with mental illness, through advocacy, education and support.

Volunteers Lend a Compassionate Ear



Left to Right, Back to Front: Miss Betty Bables, Ilka Wrigley, Mary Barry, Marlene Townsend, Cora Linn, Lois Hohn, Petra Robinson. Not pictured: Tina Streeval

Compassionate Ear is a consumer run warm line that started in February 1999. The line was originally started by a panel of 12 consumers who envisioned the line as an after hours resource for those struggling and in need of assistance, or just a "Compassionate Ear" when traditional services were not readily available.

The Compassionate Ear Warm Line offers consumers not only supportive listening, but the opportunity to become a volunteer. Consistently, we find this line is beneficial in aiding in the recovery of both the caller and the operator.

Over the course of seven years of operation, Compassionate Ear has grown, with significant growth over the last six months. May and June have been record breaking with the number of calls received in a night, as well as throughout the month. Currently, our warm line is averaging nine calls a night, the majority of the nights we receive thirteen to fourteen calls. The call volume over the last year has **doubled!**

What Our Compassionate Ear Volunteers Say

"When I volunteered for the line, I was going through a rough time...I didn't think I could do it. I now volunteer 3-4 nights a week. I enjoy it a lot. Thank you all for giving me a chance to do what I truly enjoy, and that is helping people on the line." - Tina Streeval

"There are many advantages to the Compassionate Ear Warm Line. First, it provides invaluable support and hope to the people who call. Second, the Warm Line gives its volunteers a sense of helping and worth to the people who use the line. And third, the Compassionate Ear Warm Line adds to the quality of life in the communities it serves." - Lois Hohn

individual recovery, and making a difference!

If you are interested in the Compassionate Ear program or wish more information contact Petra Robinson at (913) 281-2221 ext 114 or e-mail: probinson@mha.org

"As a volunteer for Compassionate Ear, my hours of answering calls...have been an informative and rewarding experience for me. My personal mental health has greatly improved from the time I first answered the phone, talking with a total stranger, only to find how much we all have in common. I know that whatever skills I have learned on the line will apply to my own progress in finding employment, pursuing further education, or just being a good friend to others in my life." - Marlene Townsend

"I have encouraged and helped a lot of my callers. I enjoy listening to my callers." - Miss Betty Bables



Funded in part by United Way

Compassionate Ear is expanding its "reach" and service area as well! Our toll free number is in place so anyone can call nationwide. We have offered this resource to the Hiawatha, Kansas area over the last year. This is truly beneficial due to the lack of resources in rural areas.

In late June, we were awarded the *Innovative Practices Award* at the Recovery Conference. This award recognizes those programs that see a need, reach out, and make a change. We are truly grateful for this recognition, and we are proud of the Compassionate Ear program and its wonderful operators and Advisory Panel members. This program (and our WASA Program) are founded on empowerment and recovery for all consumers. We are excited and happy to see the Compassionate Ear program's dramatic increase in service! That, more than anything, shows we are meeting needs, aiding in

President's Message



Susan Crain Lewis,
President/CEO

I am very pleased to be writing the introduction to this issue of the MHAH Newsletter, as it celebrates what I believe to be one of our agency's greatest assets—our volunteers.

As an organization dedicated to expanding the community's awareness of mental health, and to spreading a message of hope for recovery from mental illness, our volunteers not only help us carry out our mission, they become ambassadors of our message.

From our Board members, who dedicate countless hours to stewarding our resources and mission; to the volunteers who are here week after week, helping us to implement our programs; to the people who take a day away from family to paint, clean and do the many other things that staff can't get to; to the people, many of whom are consumers, who come briefly, to get back on their feet in the work world, and then leave for paid employment; to the Ladies Auxiliary, that located housewares and a flag for our apartments; to the consumers who provide compassionate support on our warmline, night after night; we, our clients and the community ALL benefit from their creativity, passion and commitment—and we thank them all.

To get involved yourself, call me, or Ann Jones, at 913-281-2221—we hope to find a place for you here soon!

Sincerely,

Susan Crain Lewis
President/CEO

Mentally Healthy Partnerships: MHAH and Rose Brooks Domestic Violence Shelter by James Glenn, Senior Vice-President, Housing



James Glenn, MSW, Senior
Vice-President, Housing

I have been with the Mental Health Association of the Heartland almost 12 years. I have had the privilege of designing seven programs that have done a lot of good for persons with mental illness, and I am very proud of the outcomes I have witnessed over the years. The Wellness and Support Advocacy (WASA) program, which is part of our Advocacy and Recovery Services department, has afforded me a deep appreciation for the impact volunteers have in the field of social services.

Recently, my family has become volunteers by volunteering one Saturday per month at the Rose Brooks Domestic Violence Shelter to

interact with children during a mother-child playgroup coordinated by MHAH. The experience has been amazing, for myself, my wife and our 4 year old son.

The women at the shelter are in structured treatment during the week. The children spend the majority of their week in day-care, therapy or treatment classes themselves. There is little time during this recovery phase for the mother, who has recently left an abusive situation, to spend real "quality time" with her children.

At the request of Rose Brooks, MHAH hired a WASA to facilitate and coordinate a "play group" every other Saturday, consisting of crafts, activities and games that mothers can do with their children. It is purposely not focused on "treatment". Rose Brooks and MHAH recruit volunteers,

2005-2006 VOLUNTEERS

In the last year volunteers have contributed a combined total of 3,259 hours at a value of \$32,590! Volunteer's tasks include everything from answering Compassionate Ear WarmLine calls to vacuuming the office.

During National Volunteer Appreciation Week, MHAH staff held a party to thank our volunteers. Petra Robinson, Compassionate Ear Coordinator; Tony Terwelp, Peer Advocate and Ann Jones, Assistant to the President/CEO and Communication Coordinator recognized volunteers with certificates of appreciation and volunteer survival kits.

Mental Health Association of the Heartland is truly proud of our volunteers! Their gift of time and effort helps the agency to accomplish our mission and goals.

Susan Allen
Bobby Anderson
Betty Bables
Mary Barry
Brenda Benson
Kate Buchta
Jennifer Buddemeyer
Chris Cunningham
Sam Delend
Bryan Evert
Sharon Gilmore
Mindy Goldstein

Neelima Gudaru
Satish Gudaru
Tam Harsh
Christopher Hitchye
Lois Hohn
James Horne
Mackenzie Howell-Painter
Tina Johnson
Rosemarie Jones
Paul Kuehne
Frank Lin
Cora Linn

Fawn Monaghan
James Nave
Janeen Painter
Pete Sachen
Carolyn Sandifer
Tina Streeval
Tony Terwelp
Marlene Townsend
Ranga Vadlamudi
Venkat Vallurupalli
Charlie Vaughan
Charles Wright
Ilka Wrigley

Thank you all for all the wonderful hard work and time that you give to our agency.

If you are interested in becoming one of our volunteers, please contact Ann Jones at (913) 281-2221 ext. 125 or e-mail: ajones@mhah.org

A True Home - Marion Apartment, One Year Later by Marion Tenant



Sharon Spiker, former president of the American Legion Auxiliary, presents the donated flag and pole at the Marion Apartment Complex.

flagpole. Present at this meeting was a representative from the 1st District American Legion Auxiliary. Sharon Spiker heard our request and set the ball in motion; soon a plan of action came in to existence. Ms. Spiker, Diane Smith, and other ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary spearheaded the project.

Throughout history, flags have been used to unify individuals into a people with common dreams. Flags have been used as standards in time of war to strengthen morale for the common good. In times of peace, they perpetuate our vigilance, that we never forget that freedom at any price is cheaper than tyranny for free.

In this case, the flag reflects not only patriotism, but also Marion Apartment tenants' appreciation for the American Legion Auxiliary ladies and other community groups who have made great efforts to make Marion Apartments a true home.

On the nineteenth of June, Marion Apartments was honored with the presence of KS Representatives Candy Ruff and Marti Crow. They were in Leavenworth to dedicate a flag and flagpole donated to the tenants of Marion Apartments by the American Legion Auxiliary. The ceremony began with a short prayer by Chaplain Cherie Tomas. There was as moment of silence for all the soldiers who have gone before us and died for the freedom we so richly enjoy. Then bugler and American Legion Representative Jim Timmons played Taps. The Colors were flown by the JROTC.

Several months prior to the day, the tenants met and decided that it was necessary for our community to have a

flagpole. Present at this meeting was a representative from the 1st District American Legion Auxiliary. Sharon Spiker heard our request and set the ball in motion; soon a plan of action came in to existence. Ms. Spiker, Diane Smith, and other ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary spearheaded the project.

Throughout history, flags have been used to unify individuals into a people with common dreams. Flags have been used as standards in time of war to strengthen morale for the common good. In times of peace, they perpetuate our vigilance, that we never forget that freedom at any price is cheaper than tyranny for free.

In this case, the flag reflects not only patriotism, but also Marion Apartment tenants' appreciation for the American Legion Auxiliary ladies and other community groups who have made great efforts to make Marion Apartments a true home.



JROTC flying the new flag at the Marion Apartments

Why Do I Volunteer? by Tony Terwelp

Webster's Dictionary defines being a volunteer as someone who performs or gives their services of their own free will.

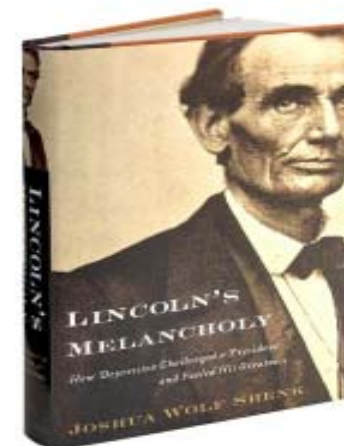
Volunteering at Mental Health Association of the Heartland has rewards for the agency as well as the individual volunteers. When asked "why do I volunteer?" my reply is because of the intrinsic rewards I receive and how it benefits my overall recovery from my Bipolar Disorder.

The internal rewards of increased confidence, self esteem, and an overall sense of achievement well compensate me for my time. Knowing that I am helping others and myself in the process make being a volunteer enriching for both me and my community.

By utilizing volunteers the agency is able to control operating costs, and assess the needs of and for new programs by listening to volunteer input. This allows the Mental Health Association of the Heartland to stretch funding for all programs. There is satisfaction in knowing that without volunteer's efforts, jobs and people served by MHAH may be delayed or not get done. I am able to use my skills and talents in my volunteer capacity.

It is in giving of yourself and from your heart that you receive the greatest rewards. By doing so all will know you have their best interest in mind.

Mental Health Association of the Heartland Book Review by Tony Terwelp



Lincoln's Melancholy:
How Depression Challenged a
President and Fueled His Greatness,
By Joshua Wolf Shenk

It's not often you read a title to a book and can get the basic content of the book within the title. This book does that. Abraham Lincoln has gone down in history as one of the greatest Presidents of our time. This book describes just how difficult his life was and how he learned to overcome obstacles and challenges and remain determined to be the very best.

From the tragedies of losing close loved ones, to experiencing serious physical illnesses and the ongoing extended periods of deep, dark depressive episodes Lincoln's trials make this biography

inspiring reading. It provides insight into how to overcome astronomical life circumstances and ways to inspire and challenge you to be diligent in becoming the best person you can be.

I encourage anyone who doubts their ability to overcome life challenges, especially involving depression, to read this book. After reading it, I came away with a new appreciation and approach to having hope that eventually a depression will pass. Having a positive attitude and remaining firm to goals and dreams are ways that I, too, can achieve some element of greatness.

Mental Health of the Heartland recently renovated its Resource Lending Library. For information on our Resource Library, or to borrow a copy of this great book contact Stephen O'Neill at (913) 281-2221 ext 130 or e-mail: sonell@mhah.org

This book and others may be purchased through our link to Amazon.com on our website www.mhah.org. Amazon will donate up to 15% of your purchases to MHAH. Donations will help provide more education, services, and advocacy to decrease the stigma of mental illness.