



Los Angeles County  
Mental Health Wellness Magazine

# Minds & Matters

Winter 2011

## LACDMH COMMEMORATES 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) commemorated fifty years of nurturing hope, promoting wellness and supporting recovery with an impressive list of speakers, education and exhibits from 7:30AM -1PM on May 20, 2010.

*Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Present, Transforming the Future* was held at the California Endowment and focused on Prevention and Early Intervention and a historical perspective of our department with speakers highlighting problems in our Veteran and active military community. **Featured Speakers included:**

- Supervisor Michael Antonovich
- Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director, LACDMH, Master of Ceremonies
- Steve Peck, M.S.W., Community Director for US Vets (son of actor Gregory Peck, Vietnam veteran)
- Carol Graham, wife of Army Major General Mark Graham, the highest ranking military leader who openly speaks about suicide prevention.
- Joel Braslow, M.D., Ph.D., U.C.L.A., Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences.



LACDMH hosted five rooms of exhibits, including a 30 minute screening in the Sierra room of *Profiles of Hope*, a video created by the LACDMH Public Information Office showcasing three people diagnosed with mental illness and how they came to function independently in the community. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with the participants: Isaiah Hinnerichs, who was homeless from ages 14-16, an artist who is legally blind; Myra Kanter, RN and Patients' Rights Advocate in Orange County, who is hearing impaired with multiple previous mental illness diagnoses; and Gary Gougis, client, volunteer and now LACDMH peer advocate at South Bay Mental Health. They are all powerful, determined people.

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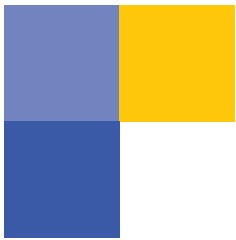
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[www.dmh.lacounty.gov](http://www.dmh.lacounty.gov)





# Minds & Matters

From Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director  
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

## *HABITS OF THE HEART*



One of the opportunities connected with living through times of change and crisis, such as the ones we are now experiencing because of the advent of things like the State budget cuts, Health Care Reform, the 1115 Waiver, the potential realignment of State functions (like parole) to local government, and the general pressure on our system caused by greater levels of need due to the economic downturn, is the chance – no, the necessity -- of re-examining our core principles.

As I have been doing this, both as a person and as the leader of this public mental health system, I have been reminded that the core principle of the public mental health system is that we are trying to do good. We hope to do good for persons with mental illness and their families, and good for our society as a whole. But “good” as an abstract concept is not helpful. Good always means “good for something.”

At least, that was the view of Aristotle and many others who have thought of these problems through the years. We are “good” athletes, therapists, musicians, public speakers, video game players, etc., if we have the skills to excel in that particular arena. But all of these skills don’t just happen, no matter how innately talented we might be. We need to practice to be “good” in this sense. We need to develop habits that allow us to easily and naturally do the skill we are building.

There are many who say that this same principle applies to being a “good” or generous person. We don’t become good or generous by merely deciding to be so. Rather, that decision needs to be enacted in repeated actions or “habits” of being kind or giving. The newer neurobiological research confirms the observations of age-old wisdom: We make ourselves who we are by the habits we cultivate or adopt.

I think the same principle that applies to individuals also applies to organizations. The “habits” (sometimes referred to as culture) that organizations cultivate are the ones that make them what they are. These are the same habits that make them succeed or make them fail.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and the public mental health system in Los Angeles have, through the years, cultivated some very good habits. We care deeply about the wellness and recovery of the people who come to us with mental illness. We are very committed to a collaborative approach with community agencies and others with whom we need to partner. We value our employees and their contributions.

There are other habits that we are in the process of forming that are not yet truly second nature to us. For example, we are getting better about attending to the substance abuse complications faced by our mentally ill clients, and we are getting used to greater degree of fiscal accountability at all levels through our STATS process.

We need to keep the good habits and practices that we have or are developing, and, at the same time, develop a new set of habits and practices that will respond to the new situations in which we will be finding ourselves. As we do so, we, as individuals and as a system, will be challenged.

As we are challenged, we need to fall back on the habits of our heart and treat each other – whether we agree or disagree – with respect, patience and concern. As with all habits, this attitude does not happen with a one-time resolution, but rather with repeated individual actions that re-wire the brain and heart of our system. So, that even in times of stress, crisis and pressure, respect, patience and concern are what we what we habitually experience. In the successful development of these habits lies the future success of LACDMH, and the chance for us to really and truly do good things.

*Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.*

**hope**  
**wellness**  
**recovery**



# Employee Recognition

## Retired

### July 2010

Ellen Satkin, 29 years  
Cornelia Stone, 18 years  
Olivia Waddell, 37 years  
Anthony Holguin,  
39 years  
Richard Mack, 17 years  
Susan Yamashiro,  
37 years  
Jon Ericson, 19 years  
Darkas Barry, 30 years  
Orlando Jimenez,  
11 years

### August 2010

Sandra Dominguez,  
10 years  
Barbara Johnson,  
42 years  
Marilyn Seide, 10 years  
Sharon Chiappe, 9 years  
Shirley Crawford, 8 years  
Kim Thoa Nguyen,  
5 years

### September 2010

Bettye Thompson,  
43 years  
Jerome Costa, 12 years  
Sol Sakul, 21 years  
Elizabeth Percy, 10 years  
Yvonne Clements,  
14 years  
Linda Opai-Tetteh,  
37 years  
Florine Irvin, 21 years

### October 2010

Joan Calton, 37 years  
Janice Williams, 33 years  
Carol Vernon, 25 years  
Robert Woods, 38 years  
Tuyet Chen, 29 years

### November 2010

Monagayle Sparks,  
33 years  
Adele Katz, 41 years  
Dennis Sorenson,  
37 years  
Sharon Golub, 4 years

### December 2010

Angerla Atkins-  
Moringlane, 23 years

## LACDMH RECEIVES TWO NACO AWARDS

During the November 23rd Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board recognized the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) for receiving two prestigious awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

In the category of Human Services, a 2010 NACo Achievement Award was given to LACDMH for Crisis Resolution Services at the Downtown Mental Health Center.

And in the category of Information Technology, LACDMH's Innovative Technology for Medicare Part D was also honored with a 2010 NACo Achievement Award.



Congratulations to LACDMH for these two award-winning programs and their continued success!

## LACDMH WINS 2010 QUALITY & PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS

On October 20th, the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission hosted its 24th annual awards luncheon at the Performing Arts Center in downtown LA. This year's theme was "Winning with Teamwork".

Here are the awards LACDMH received.

### Top 3 Award Category Winners:

**The Top Ten Award:** General Relief to Supplemental Security Income (GR-to-SSI) Project

**The Best Teamwork Award:** Los Angeles County Co-Occurring Disorders Court

**The Mega Million Dollar Award:** Cost Savings without Compromising Services







## ACTRESS AND SURVIVOR MARIETTE HARTLEY INSPIRES HOPE, WELLNESS AND RECOVERY

**Mariette Hartley has lived a complex life of opportunity, privilege, terror, and personal recovery. She spoke with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Public Information Office about growing up with two mentally ill alcoholic parents, hitting bottom herself and ultimately recovering.**

Mariette openly discussed her father's suicide, co-founding the *American Foundation of Suicide Prevention* (AFSP) and her passion for helping friends and family members survive suicide. She currently co-facilitates a suicide survivor group through Didi Hirsh.

Mariette and her mother were

making breakfast in the kitchen one morning when they heard a "pop" from the bedroom, where her father had shot himself. She didn't speak of her father's suicide for 26 years.

"I can't even describe it," she said about the pain of her father's death. "We didn't talk about it. "Nobody knew about

my experience with Dad because Mom swore me to secrecy," Mariette said. My mother forbade me to mention it." Mariette's way of coping with the tragedy was to stay distracted and keep working. "I was powerfully disciplined," she said.

"I knew if I didn't get into therapy, I would die."

# hope wellness recovery

*“Writing is extremely healing for me.” Mariette has used writing as a healing tool; she has journaled all her life....*

She saw a therapist following her father’s death.

A better understanding came to Mariette when she was asked to do *Silence of the Heart*, a movie for television about a mother whose son (Chad Lowe) commits suicide. “In 1985, nobody wanted to talk about this stuff,” she said. “You could see it in people’s eyes. People pull back and shudder when they find out someone in your family has committed suicide.” She proudly notes that there was no record of any calls to a suicide hotline after *Silence of the Heart* aired. The show was the beginning of her life speaking publicly about suicide.

Mariette admits that shame, stigma, and survivor’s feeling of responsibility are factors that need to be death with. “People don’t understand how others could take their life—how could they hurt their family? That’s what I’ll hear in group tomorrow. Some people feel such an excruciating pain that they think it’s the only way. But we can’t shuffle it under the rug; we have to deal with it.”

While she was in New York doing *The Morning Program* on CBS, Mariette was contacted by a young woman who was trying to start an organization to research suicidology. Mariette let them know that she’d do any-



For more info: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

thing to let others know that she was a survivor. 1987 was the first fundraiser—where she told her story for the first time. “I will never ever forget it,” she said. “At the end of it—they were all therapists—they were all applauding. The fundraiser marked the beginning of the *American Foundation of Suicide Prevention*. “There was a tremendous need for people to tell their truth,” she said, “and a need for research.”

It wasn’t until the 1990’s that Mariette was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and ADHD and fully realized that it’s a biochemical disorder. She’d been sober for seven years and realized there was still a terrible stigma about medications (psychiatric). “People have taken their lives because they felt they couldn’t take medication (in recovery).” It took a year for her to find the right medications.

“Writing is extremely healing for me.” Mariette has used writing as a healing tool; she has journaled

all her life. Her book, *Breaking the Silence*, has been re-issued and is now available.

“People are out there in the universe and can have a profound effect on others—you can listen to them if you choose to. So, I believe in hope. I have a therapist I can always call. You’ve got to reach out for help. Find safe places to talk, write, and/or paint, to communicate your pain.”

Emmy award-winning actress Mariette Hartley is the third person spotlighted in the continuing series of *Profiles of Hope*. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s (LACDMH) Public Information Office taped the segment on February 18th at her home in the San Fernando Valley.

The *Profiles of Hope* series is made up of 10-minute inspirational stories, featuring individuals who share how they overcame stigma and various obstacles to eventually lead them to a road of Hope, Wellness and Recovery. Joseph Greco is directing the series. He is best known for his feature film, *Canvas*, inspired by his own experience of living with his schizophrenic mother.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH & LOS ANGELES LAKERS CHAMPION ARTEST TEAM UP TO PROMOTE HOPE, WELLNESS & RECOVERY

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and the 2010 National Basketball Association (NBA) Los Angeles Lakers World Champ, Ron Artest, officially launched a new public service announcement (PSA) on Tuesday, December 21st, 2010.

The all-new PSA, entitled *You Can Do It*, premiered at the Grammy Museum at L.A. Live, right before the Lakers v. Milwaukee Bucks game at the Staples Center. Artest, Hollywood movie producer Gary Foster, Los Angeles County Supervisors Michael Antonovich (Mayor) and Zev Yaroslavsky, and Marvin Southard, D.S.W., Director of LACDMH, were on-hand to kick-off the PSA's official debut. Artest and Foster each received scrolls from the Board of Supervisors, and were recognized for their dedication and commitment to the mental health cause.

At the podium, Artest talked about his reasons for supporting this particular PSA campaign: "I'm humbled and honored to be here. I bring my passion to mental health awareness, and it feels good, to give others a chance for *Hope, Wellness and Recovery*. I have two family members in psychiatric wards. I'm trying to get them to that *Hope, Wellness and Recovery*, too."

The PSAs are part of LACDMH's social inclusion efforts aimed at combating the stigma of mental illness, and promoting education and awareness about mental disorders. LACDMH supported the PSAs with an informational Web site, [www.LAMentalHelp.com](http://www.LAMentalHelp.com), for individuals interested in seeking resources or help.



# hope wellness recovery

## LACDMH Mission

*Enriching lives through partnerships designed to strengthen the community's capacity to support recovery and resiliency.*

## Our Values

**Integrity:** We conduct ourselves professionally according to the highest ethical standards.

**Respect:** We recognize the uniqueness of every individual and treat all people in a way that affirms their personal worth and dignity.

**Accountability:** We take responsibility for our choices and their outcomes.

**Collaboration:** We work together toward common goals by partnering with the whole community, sharing knowledge, building strong consensus, and sharing decision-making.

**Dedication:** We will do whatever it takes to improve the lives of our clients and communities.

**Transparency:** We openly convey our ideas, decisions and outcomes to ensure trust in our organization.

**Quality and Excellence:** We identify the highest personal, organizational, professional and clinical standards and commit ourselves to achieving those standards by continually improving very aspect of



Los Angeles County  
Department of Mental Health is  
dedicated to partnering with  
clients, families and communities  
to create hope, wellness and  
recovery.



<http://dmh.lacounty.gov>



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# Calendar of Events

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY-DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
PRESENTS  
TRANSITION AGE YOUTH (TAY) CONFERENCE 2011  
Tuesday, May 17, 2011**

*Promoting Hope, Wellness and Self-Sufficiency*

California Endowment  
Center for Healthy Families  
1000 North Alameda Street  
Los Angeles, CA

This conference will provide valuable information on multiple areas that impact the lives of Transition Age Youth!

**ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION AWARDS  
Thursday, May 26, 2011**

Details to follow.

Awards are given for Outstanding Peer Advocates, Lifetime Achievement and many other categories.

*A Final Thought*

## **LACDMH BEGINS FIFTY-FIRST YEAR OF HOPE, WELLNESS AND RECOVERY**

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Information Office Manager

If LACDMH were a client in one of its own programs, it would be located in Adult Systems of Care, planning a transfer in the not-too-distant-future to Older Adults. In 2010, LACDMH commemorated fifty years of existence and now looks forward to the challenges and growth to come in 2011.

The Public Information Office (PIO) premiered "Profiles of Hope," a video series of persons well on their way to hope, wellness and recovery. You can view the videos online via the LACDMH Web site: [http://dmh.lacounty.gov/News/press\\_room.html](http://dmh.lacounty.gov/News/press_room.html). Additionally, the PIO created a resource page to support LA Laker Ron Artest's Public Service Announcement "You Can Do It" at <http://lamentalhelp.com/>. The Partners in Suicide Prevention Task force was created and got to work developing their own Web site: <http://preventsuicide.lacoe.edu/>.

What's in store for 2011? Many things, including the 1115 Waiver and healthcare integration, innovative services, and partnering with other agencies and counties in delivering anti-stigma messaging, to name a few. As we turn the page, we look forward to a challenging and productive fifty-first year of reaching out, connecting with others and creating a better community.

