



Los Angeles County
Mental Health Wellness Magazine

Minds & Matters

Summer 2011

TRANSITION AGE YOUTH CONFERENCE SUCCESS!

In This Issue

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2011

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The Transition Age Youth (TAY) Division of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) presented the first Transition Age Youth Conference entitled *Promoting Hope, Wellness & Self-Sufficiency* on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, at the California Endowment.

Attended by over 300 clinicians, para-professionals, case managers, providers, stakeholders and consumers, the conference offered an opportunity to gather, network, gain skills and competencies and share expertise when relating to Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) and Severe and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI) youth, the young adult population and the people who care for them.

LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, D.S.W., opened the conference stressing the importance of social inclusion in teen and young adult populations, stating "No one should be left out, least of all teens."

A panel of experts opened the morning session, speaking about the challenges of youth housing. Featured were: Maria Funk, Ph.D., LACDMH District Chief, Housing and Adult Justice; Tod Lipka, Executive Director of Step Up on Second; and Amber Roth, Housing Supervisor, Pacific Clinics.

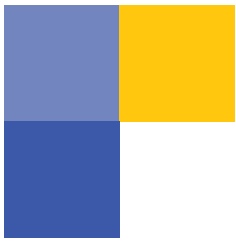
Three-time world boxing champion, Mia St. John, amazed the crowd as the morning keynote, telling her journey of addiction, mental illness, recovery and advocacy. Mia believes that her diagnoses of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and anxiety disorders are a gift because they made her who she is. An afternoon keynote from Thomas Alvarez provided a multi-media approach to treatment with TAY. Thomas created a program called Beats, Rhymes and Life which uses Hip Hop music as a strategy for hope, wellness and recovery for TAY.



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Minds & Matters

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



This is not a movie review, but my son and I saw *The Tree of Life* and it has been on my mind every day since then. The film put me in touch with the beauty and fragility of life as well as the choices we make about how we use the time we have. All of this introspection gave me an enormous appreciation of the work that is done at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH).

We are going through a difficult, challenging and inspiring time. Right now, we are putting in place the 1115 Waiver Low Income Health Plan which is serving a need that has not received any attention for a very long time, and, by doing so, we are preparing for our future viability in a competitive environment. We are making these and other changes while we are still under-resourced for doing our basic work of providing care for those who are in crisis or who are disabled by their mental illness. We are also coping with changes coming from the State regarding the 3632 program and Public Safety Realignment as we also put in place the remaining pieces of our Prevention and Early Intervention and Innovations strategies. Despite the lack of resources and the myriad of challenges, most of our workers are enthusiastic about their mission and are dedicated to helping clients achieve wellness and recovery as they have ever been.

I have recently had the chance to visit some wellness programs, and also some of our juvenile justice and housing programs. The impression that I came away with was of a workforce that really deeply cared about the clients they were trying to serve, and that their jobs were not just jobs to them - but vocations.

I am very proud of the work you do in this department, and I sense that your work contributes to creating the kinds of connections that make the tree of life healthier and more likely to flourish.

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

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wellness
recovery



Employee Recognition

Retired

April 2011

Patricia Littleton
Maria Acosta
Donna Warren-Kruer

May 2011

Ronna Siegel
Deborah Edmond
Leslie Jones
Elvira Colabella
Norma Fritsche

June 2011

Gurubanda Khalsa
Hamid Cheraghi
Mina Eide
Elaine Powell
Elsie Haltom
Marsha Gullage
Carole Lutness
Nickolas Elsner

LACDMH RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING NURSES OF THE YEAR

The annual Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Spring Gala, to honor the women and men in the field of nursing, took place on Tuesday, May 10, 2011. This year's "LACDMH Outstanding Nurse of the Year" award was given to Sung Yu, R.N., from Hollywood Mental Health Clinic.

The recognition ceremony, honoring Yu and the other nominees, started in the morning with a presentation of scrolls at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting. The Spring Gala luncheon followed at the Proud Bird Restaurant with Yu and nine other nominees from LACDMH being given certificates to acknowledge their significant contributions, including:

Christopher Chibolu, R.N., EOB/PMRT, SA IV
Annette Desta, R.N., West Central MHC
Ann Guertin, R.N., Antelope Valley MHC
Barbara Hollis, R.N., EOB/PMRT, SA I
Guadalupe Robles, R.N., Edelman Westside MHC
Chantall Ruiz, R.N., Urgent Care Community Services Program
Celestine Swain, R.N., AFH Mental Services (in memoriam)
Marsha Watanabe, R.N., Managed Care Division
Vivian Watts, R.N., Compton FSP



BESS CRAWFORD AND TOM TUONG GIA PHAN WIN 2011 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Two LACDMH volunteers, Bess Crawford and Tom Tuong Gia Phan, were honored on Monday, April 11, 2011, at the 29th Volunteer of the Year Recognition and Awards Ceremony, sponsored by LA County as part of National Volunteer Week. LACDMH Volunteer Coordinator, Karla Ruvalcaba, nominated both winners.

27 youth and 53 outstanding adult volunteers were honored to the theme of *Volunteers: Sparks of Light* for the important role they played in the lives of many community residents. These individuals carry out the motto "to enrich lives through effective and caring service." Last year, 41,687 volunteers donated more than 3 million hours to County programs. Based on calculations by Independent Sector, a national organization, the volunteer hours have a value of 64.8 million dollars.

Crawford has volunteered more than 1,000 hours at San Pedro Mental Health Center over the past two years, leading Wellness meetings, helping with movie time activities and assisting staff when needed. Staff members say she is a positive role model, demonstrating professionalism, respect for diversity and compassion to the clients.

Phan has donated over 1,200 hours in 16 months at the Hollywood Healthcare Partnership Homeless Program where he listens to patients' needs and refers them to appropriate services. He speaks both English and Vietnamese, using his skills to serve Asian Pacific Islanders. Phan developed a database to track constituent complaints referred by the Board of Supervisors. He also records and prepares minutes from Spiritual Care Program meetings.



In Their Own Words



ALL-NEW PROFILES OF HOPE 2011 DEBUTED IN MAY ON PBS/KLCS TV

BY KAREN ZARSADIAZ, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER II

After several months of hard work, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Public Information Office's original series, *Profiles of Hope*, made its broadcast premiere in Los Angeles in May on PBS/KLCS-TV, Channel 58.

Taping for the continuing series of *Profiles of Hope* began in February. The set of 10-minute inspirational stories spotlights individuals who talk about how they overcame stigma and various obstacles to live successful and productive lives. This latest series features high-profile individuals sharing their own stories of achieving *Hope*, *Wellness* and *Recovery*.

Joseph Greco produced and directed the latest *Profiles of Hope* series, with additional assistance from Caren McCaleb and Oliver Lynch. Greco is known for his award-winning feature film, *Canvas*, inspired by his own experience of living with a schizophrenic mother.

hope wellness recovery

"It's quite possible to have a disability and go on and have a life," he said. "Bad stuff happens. And if it happens to you, you have to feel what you're going through."
-Robert David Hall

The new *Profiles of Hope* includes:

Mia St. John, three-time international female boxing champion. She spoke about her struggles as a child, teen and adult. "I think I felt something was not quite right in my brain when I was three or four years old," said St. John.

She revealed her first experiences with drinking and drugs at an early age, and admitted to overdosing at 13 years old. She also shared how she handles living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Panic Disorder and General Anxiety Disorder. "I know I suffer from all of these... I try not to focus on the label but on the symptoms."

Robert David Hall is an actor and musician who most people recognize as the coroner, Albert Robbins, M.D., from his role on the hit CBS television show *CSI: Las Vegas*.

As a successful actor and musician, even he has had his share of ups and downs. Hall shared how he became a double amputee, losing his legs in a fiery crash in 1978 when a drunk driver of an 18-wheeler slammed into his car. He was trapped and pinned in his car, suffering burns on more than 65% of his body. "I was certain this was the day I was gonna die," he recalled. But it was from that day on that his life changed.

"It's quite possible to have a disability and go on and have a life," he said. "Bad stuff happens. And if it happens to you, you have to feel what you're going through."

Mariette Hartley is an Emmy Award-winning actress who has starred on the stage, in movies and on television shows for more than forty years. She has had guest-starring roles on *M.A.S.H.*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Peyton Place*, and most recently, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Big Love*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Cold Case*.

But it's her behind-the-scenes story that truly grips your heart.

Hartley is the co-founder and national spokesperson for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). As a mental health advocate since 1987, she co-facilitates survivor groups through Didi Hirsch. It's a cause near and dear to her since she knows firsthand what it's like to lose a loved one through suicide. Almost 50 years ago, her father committed suicide while she was in the next room with her mother.

Stephen Peck, M.S.W., is President and Chief Executive Officer of the United States Veterans Initiative (U.S. Vets). Peck leads the nation's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to helping veterans transition into civilian life by offering support and a variety of programs to assist with housing, counseling and career development.

During the interview for *Profiles of Hope*, Peck revealed what it was like growing up as the son of Academy Award-winning actor, Gregory Peck. He also spoke about serving time in the Marine Corps after graduating college in 1968. After his time in Vietnam, he was faced with post-war emotions. Looking back, he suspects he might have experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) even though he didn't seek help. "I pretty much got back from Vietnam and I pretty much avoided it. I just shut the door."

Clayton Chau, M.D., Ph.D., is a medical doctor, psychologist and psychiatrist. He works as the Associate Medical Director of Behavioral Health for the Orange County Health Care Agency. When he's not at work, Dr. Chau continues to bring awareness to mental health issues as a co-host for a weekly television show, "Viet View", which is internationally broadcast on Vietnamese television (Little Saigon TV).

Chau's story is an inspiring, emotional journey of *Hope, Wellness and Recovery*. Born in Vietnam during the war, he and his family escaped and remained at a refugee camp in Malaysia for 13 months. At the camp, he contemplated his first suicide attempt after being assaulted as a teenager.

"Because of my personal experience, I'm in tune with my patients and am sympathetic. I understand what they go through," explained Chau.

Maurice Benard is an Emmy Award-winning actor who is best known for playing mobster Michael "Sonny" Corinthos, Jr., on the ABC soap opera, *General Hospital*. He's portrayed that role since 1993. Before that role, he jumpstarted his soap opera career as Nico on *All My Children*. And, Benard appeared in the 1991 CBS TV movie *Lucy & Desi: Before the Laughter*, where he played Desi Arnaz.

A psychiatrist diagnosed him with bipolar disorder at 22. Benard has now been taking Lithium for 17 years. "I've had no manic episodes," he proudly admits. "The thing is... I didn't get better right away but eventually. When I stay on my meds, I do well. When I don't, I don't. I get tempted to go off because I think I'm doing good – but that's false. So, I stay on them... Yes, it's an on-going thing. But I've been able to prove, with medication, I can be productive and live as normal as you can be."

Accompanying public service announcements with all the individuals featured in the *Profiles of Hope* are scheduled to air on the LA County Channel. The *Profiles of Hope* are available online for viewing on the LACDMH website.

LACDMH UNVEILS AN ALL-NEW LOOK TO ITS PUBLIC WEBSITE



On Tuesday, June 28th, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) was the fourth County department to reveal its brand-new internet look. With the same address (dmh.lacounty.gov), the newer website promises to be more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

"This is part of the push to standardize the user experience when you log onto a County website. Regardless of the website, the look and the feel should be similar across County departments," stated Mark Cheng, LACDMH Manager, Enterprise Project Management Division, Chief Information Office Bureau. "The new LACDMH website will offer enhanced functionality, like improved search features, for constituents who visit."

With the collaboration of the Internal Services Department (ISD) and the County Chief Information Office (CIO), Los Angeles County departments and agencies will eventually roll-out updated websites that will all have a similar look and feel. This was an effort that took the collaboration of many. In all, it took about two years to create, approve and implement the new layout. Members of the LACDMH Web Governance Committee (WGC) were credited for their involvement in the process.

Unlike the former website, the newer, brighter, user-friendly website will have new features such as visitor feedback, an enterprise calendar, easy-to-use search capabilities for resources and improvements on allowing providers/contractors to conduct business with LACDMH.

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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 every aspect of our performance.



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



A Final Thought

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION SPARKLES WITH NIGHT UNDER THE STARS

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

Over 160 Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) staff, clients, advocates and Commissioners gathered at Catalina's Jazz and Supper Club in Hollywood on May 26, 2011, to enjoy the *12th Annual Profiles of Hope, Wellness and Recovery Mental Health Commission Recognition and Volunteer Awards*.

The program commenced with John Hill, former Chief of Staff for retired Los Angeles County Board Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke. John served as Master of Ceremonies, introducing Dr. Larry Gasco from the Commission, who presented a very special tribute and farewell as well as the first award of the evening to Helen Wolff, M.D., M.P.H.

Next, Delores Huffman presented the *Outstanding Consumer Advocate Award* to Roberta Burkenheim. A break was taken for dinner while the Straight Ahead Jazz Quintet entertained the crowd.

As part of a new tradition, the Mental Health Commission Awards themselves were re-named the Isaiah, to honor the image of "logo man" (or logo person) that former Transition Age Youth (TAY) client, Isaiah Hinnerichs, created for the department last year.

The awards presentations continued with Phil Fontile, founder of Let's Erase the Stigma (LETS), winning the *Outstanding Youth Advocacy Program Award*, followed by Susan Rajlal, who presented Fred and Theresa Zullo with the *Outstanding Family Member Award*.

Next, Dr. Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., LACDMH Director, presented Debbie Innes-Gomberg, Ph.D., District Chief, MHSA Implementation and Outcomes, with the *Exemplary Service Award*.

The last award of the evening went to Mia St. John, three-time world boxing champ, who accepted the *Personal Legacy Award* after the crowd watched her segment of the new LACDMH anti-stigma television series *Profiles of Hope*.

