



Los Angeles County
Mental Health Wellness Magazine

Minds & Matters

FALL 2015

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GRAND OPENING FOR LONG BEACH APARTMENTS

On Thursday, September 10, 2015, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) celebrated the grand opening of the Long Beach and 21st Street Apartments in Long Beach. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was hosted by Meta Housing in conjunction with PATH Ventures. The apartments are the newest affordable housing development in the city.

LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, DSW, explained to the audience the importance of creating housing like this where people can reach out to one another and be responsible to each other. "People's lives get better because they live in healthy communities."

Located within Service Area 8 in Supervisorial District 4, the housing development consists of 41 total units with 21 specifically funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Coordinated through LACDMH, the MHSA-funded apartments are targeted toward homeless older adults with a psychiatric disorder.

Toni S., a wounded veteran, expressed her gratitude to everyone involved in building the housing that has become her new home. "It is safety, comfort, friendship, love... We're a village here. You've created a community in this building. I feel human again," she said tearfully to the audience of about 100 people. "Thank you so much for whatever part you did in this. We are grateful."

The apartments were financed by LACDMH, the Housing Authority of the City of Long Beach, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, California Community Reinvestment Corporation, California Housing Finance Agency, California Tax Credit Allocation Committee and FHL Bank San Francisco.

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Minds & Matters

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



WHAT WE HAVE DONE

I was asked the other day about what I was most proud of having accomplished during my years as the Los Angeles County Mental Health Director. I said a few things. Then as I reflected on what has happened over the last 17 years, I think the most important thing has not been an accomplishment but rather an honor. It has been my honor to lead a group of people who, for the most part, are completely dedicated to the well-being and flourishing of persons with mental illness and their families more than they are to their personal self-interest. This is, as I often have said in new employee orientations, Ernest Becker's definition of a hero. I have had the honor of leading heroes.

But besides that, we have done a lot. Here is a random list of things that come to mind. We created the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). No, I don't mean we wrote it or pushed it through the initiative process. I mean that the clinical and organizational work that went into the Partners programs, the AB34 pilot program, and then the expansion in the AB2034 program, created the outcomes and the data to show the voters that MHSA was worth a shot. Then, we saved MHSA. Without the outcomes that we collected and the careful processes with the SLT, along with the creativity of the PEI work, MHSA would probably not have withstood the public and media scrutiny about the way the program was implemented. LA's outcomes, clean process and adherence to the regulations saved the day.

Our Comprehensive Community Care community process produced a blueprint for mental health that is valid today. Our law enforcement-mental

health partnership teams have been and are a national model. The new psychiatric urgent care programs we pioneered are now taken for granted as the model for crisis work. Our EPSDT children's programs have the best penetration rates of any large county; our START, GENESIS, STATS and mental health and spirituality programs are all nationally recognized models. Our jail mental health program has reduced suicides to one for this entire year so far. Our pharmacy program has, through the years, saved hundreds of millions of dollars by better managing indigent medications.

Our community engagement processes that give real voice to clients, families, communities and agencies receive statewide recognition. Our diversion programs, operating for decades, have formed a firm foundation for expansion of this concept. Our cultural competence work, spanning both ethnic and special populations, is also a model for others in the County and the State. Our internal inclusion of substance abuse efforts, as a part of the necessary requirements for doing quality mental health work, is now being broadly adopted. Our fiscal creativity allowed our mental health programs to grow even in the depths of the recession when other programs were shrinking. Our commitment to recovery for clients has allowed for true inclusion of those with lived experience in our mental health teams. Our 0-5 intervention programs are now available in most places. Our MHSA housing program is the most effective in the State, creating over a thousand new units. Our health integration programs are the ones that are actually both integrating care now and proving models of how it ought to be done better in the future.

I could go on and on. But the point is, whether prevention, early intervention, intensive treatment conservatorships, long-term care, data, outcomes, financing, contracts, patients' rights and so forth, we do it all and do it well. When heroes put their minds, hearts and backs into things, amazing things happen. I want to thank you, heroes.

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

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Employee Recognition

Retired

July 2015

Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 20 yrs
Ines Gerson, 15 yrs
Lynn Siegel, 15 yrs
Samuel Smith, 30 yrs
April Snell, 16 yrs
Marguerite Van Langenberg, 23 yrs
Marsha Watanabe, 35 yrs

August 2015

Violeta Crisolo, 15 yrs
Suzanne Newberry, 39 yrs
Sean Pakdaman, 21 yrs
Regina Safdie, 36 yrs
Kathleen Tasugi, 35 yrs
Sherry Trujillo, 30 yrs
Jackie Vahlgren, 16 yrs

September 2015

Lynn Barnard, 15 yrs
Nancy Butram, 45 yrs
Emmanuel De La Cruz, 10 yrs
Artrey Johnson, 35 yrs
Terra Mulcahy, 10 yrs
Richard Kushi, 45 yrs

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RECOGNIZES LACDMH FOR RECEIVING THREE NACO AWARDS

By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer



On Tuesday, September 1, 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recognized three different Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) programs and partnerships for receiving awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo): Una Mente, Una Vida; Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC); and Veterans and Loved Ones Recovery (VALOR) programs.

The LACDMH Public Information Office (PIO) received a 2015 Achievement Award in Health from NACo because of its innovative partnership with Spanish-language television network Univision. In total, the County of Los Angeles took home 27 NACo awards this year. The awards were initially presented in July to LACDMH at NACo's 2015 Annual Conference and Exposition in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

The Una Mente, Una Vida (One Mind, One Life) partnership project is an on-going segment on Univision dedicated to bringing awareness and education about mental health to Spanish-speaking communities in Los Angeles County and its surrounding counties. In addition to the featured segment, a live phone bank event was held in May 2014 to give callers an opportunity

to ask for more information about mental health-related topics and resources. The televised event reached millions of residents in Southern California, from Kern County to Imperial County, resulting in hundreds of phone calls and inquiries about LACDMH programs and services.

The phone bank event was made possible with the help of Univision news director Marco Flores, Univision reporter Julio Cesar Ortiz, LACDMH Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D., LACDMH employees (Irma Castaneda, Miriam Brown, Barbara Engleman, Julie Valdez, Jaime Renteria, Vianney Vasquez, and Rocio Ruiz), Luis Garcia of Pacific Clinics, and all the volunteers that assisted that night with taking phone calls and directing them to available resources.

Started in 1970, NACo's annual Achievement Award Program is designed to recognize innovative and effective county government programs that enhance services for residents. Nationally, awards are given in 21 different categories, including children and youth, criminal justice, county administration, environmental protection, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more.



COUNTY SUPERVISORS, DISTRICT ATTORNEY & SHERIFF ATTEND GRAND RE-OPENING OF DMHC

By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer

On Monday, September 28, 2015, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (Second District) and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) co-hosted the grand re-opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Downtown Mental Health Center (DMHC). Located at 529 S. Maple in Los Angeles, DMHC serves the residents of the Skid Row area.

At the dedication ceremony, Supervisor Hilda Solis (First District), District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Sheriff Jim McDonnell joined Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, DSW, and LACDMH Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D.

“As a homeless person recovers, it’s important that they have access to services,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “The Downtown Mental Health Center acts as a lynchpin to services... Our job, our hope is to help them recover. The more they recover, the more we recover.”

“We are at Ground Zero. Nowhere in the County is it like this than here in Skid Row,” explained District Attorney Lacey. “This (DMHC) is an amazing accomplishment that ought to be acknowledged.”

Serving the Skid Row area, Downtown Mental Health Center completed a \$10 million renovation, financed through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Capital Projects Fund. The new 25,000 square-foot center is designed to improve conditions and alleviate overcrowding. Using MHSA funding, LACDMH has implemented new programs in the Skid Row area to address the growing number of homeless persons with mental health needs. The much-needed renovation, which included demolition of the existing interiors, seismic upgrades of the structure, and replacement of the electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, also includes redesigned space that will permit the hiring of additional outreach and treatment workers.

The newly built DMHC will retain Crisis Resolution and Wellness Services, and will now serve 3,000 clients through 75 staff. Other programs and services previously available at the main clinic will be provided at multiple sites throughout downtown to create greater service access to persons who need care.

“This place is an opportunity to work together to experiment and find ways to build community – and for people to get a fresh start,” stated Dr. Southard.



WELLNESS THROUGH ART

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director

Margarita (Mita) Cuaron, R.N., at Northeast Wellness Center tried for three years to get Danny Zapeda to join her painting group. Mita knew that clients like Danny sometimes have trouble verbalizing their emotions and can more easily release feelings in other ways, through painting, storytelling, walking and gardening. One client who could not grieve openly for the family member he'd lived with his entire life and lost was Danny.

Prior to attending the group, Danny was withdrawn and isolated. He was transferred to the Wellness Center in 2009 from Northeast Mental Health. His psychiatrist, Dr. Maria Aguilar, prescribed a group for him and he finally tried it.

Mita's watercolor group was the first group Danny ever attended. The group works on portraits, so Mita posted examples of what she wanted the clients to paint. "Portraits are the windows to the soul," she reasoned. Mita knew that Danny could not cry, so she asked him to paint his tears.

Danny painted a portrait of how he saw a Vietnam Veteran returning from war, with green representing the jungle and an abundance of red tears running from the eyes to the chin.

Mita said, "Through participating, Danny has reached a point in recovery where he can lend his experience to others." He liked the watercolor group so much, Danny now attends walking, gardening, and painting groups at Northeast. "Without going to the groups, my day comes out sour," Danny said. "I feel great after the group."

Last May, as part of Mental Health Awareness month and to support Latinos building healthy communities at the California Endowment, many artworks from the Wellness Center were displayed. Danny, who'd never been an artist before Mita's group, won a special award for his portrait.

Currently, artwork from Mita's group is proudly displayed at the Chicken Boy Art Gallery, located at 5558 N. Figueroa Street in Highland Park, which is open to community projects. Amy Inouye, Los Angeles Art Director, and Artist Stuart Rapeport run the gallery which holds a special place for the landmark giant fiberglass statue of "Chicken Boy," a 22-foot Los Angeles icon that was originally perched on top of a fried chicken restaurant on north Figueroa between Fourth and Fifth Streets downtown.

LACDMH PARTICIPATES IN ANNUAL COUNTY DAY AT THE FAIR



Group photo by Little MC Harris



The annual LA County Day at the Los Angeles County Fair at the Pomona Fairgrounds took place this year on Sunday, September 13, 2015. This was the 11th year for the annual LA County Day.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACMDH) took part in the event, joining several County departments in handing out information about their services and programs as well as handing out giveaways.

Besides LACDMH, the other departments that participated in County Day included the Office of Emergency Management, Parks & Recreation, Beaches & Harbors, Human Resources, Library, Sheriff's, Animal Control, Community & Senior Services, and many more.

LACDMH EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER AT 2015 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES



A group of employees from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) volunteered for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games this year. This year's games took place in Los Angeles from July 25th to August 2nd.

LACDMH's team of volunteers included Katrin Aslanian-Vartan, Yolanda Moli, Cindy Hernandez, Canetana Hurd, Stephanie Booker and Destiny Walker. Known as the "Dream Promoters", the team cheered for the athletes at various track & field events as well as at basketball games being held at the University of Southern California.

This year's Special Olympics World Games hosted 6,500 athletes from all over the world, representing 165 countries. More than 30,000 people volunteered at the games.

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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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**Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health**

550 South Vermont Ave., 6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90020
<http://dmh.lacounty.gov>

Director: Marvin J. Southard, DSW

Editor-in-Chief:
Kathleen Piché, LCSW

Contributors:
Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, PIO II
Kimberli Washington, ITC/PIO
Vienna To, Graphic Arts Aid/PIO

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Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health.
For article ideas and submissions,
e-mail pio@dmh.lacounty.gov
or fax to (213) 383-8234.



A Final Thought



GOODBYE, DR. SOUTHARD

By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director

As Director of the largest public mental health system in the United States for a record-breaking seventeen years, Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., or “Jimmy” as his family and friends call him (middle initial J. stands for James), is leaving the building.

I have had the good fortune of hearing Dr. Southard speak repeatedly over the past seven years and have always been impressed at his ability to fit a just-right message with each crowd at every event. If you’ve seen him in action, you know what I mean.

Sometimes, it starts with a definition. Other times, specific examples are used to illustrate a point. While promoting the Housing First model, he was known to ask, “What good is providing mental health services if a person is living under a bridge?”

In many of his speeches, Dr. Southard has referenced the books and stories of author Malcolm Gladwell to illustrate a point. The story of good health and longevity in Roseto, Pennsylvania, comes to mind. In Roseto, Italian immigrants were studied for their unusually healthy community; there was no suicide, no alcoholism, no drug addiction, very little crime, and nobody was on welfare. People in Roseto died of old age. It is a small town among the hills where residents stopped to speak with each other often, had many civic organizations and downplayed the division of wealth. In short, they helped each other out, especially in times of need. Dr. Southard used the story about the thriving community from “Outliers” to illuminate how we might create a socially inclusive, healthy community here in Los Angeles. His speech describing Roseto was so effective that others started using the example in their own public appearances.

Over the years, Dr. Southard has stressed social inclusion as a path to hope, wellness and recovery. Awareness about the stigma and discrimination associated with having symptoms or diagnosis of a mental health disorder is part of our mission; the first stop on the road to finding resources and getting help. He has quoted Sir Francis Bacon, who said “Knowledge is power,” adding, “because we, at the Department of Mental Health, believe that knowledge about mental illness leads to the power of hope for wellness and recovery.”

I thought it might be appropriate to say farewell to our leader with a few Gladwell quotes I haven’t heard him use publicly. One that might describe what the general public has traditionally assumed about those with mental health disorders might be: “It would be interesting to find out what goes on in that moment when someone looks at you and comes to all sorts of conclusions.”

A Gladwell quote describing the leadership of Dr. Southard might be: “Truly successful decision-making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking.”

One of Dr. Southard’s greatest strengths might be that he’s seen by colleagues as an individual able to connect with anyone on a human level, beyond petty politics. And so, I will leave him with one last Gladwell quote that may describe why so many LACDMH programs have been effective and flourished under the tenure of Marvin J. Southard over the years:

“The values of the world we inhabit and the people we surround ourselves with have a profound effect on who we are.”