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The Key Update

The free monthly e-newsletter of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse

Volume 1 No. 8 – January 2005

<http://www.mhselfhelp.org>

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The Key Update Volume 1 No. 8 January 24, 2005

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS...

All past issues of the Key Update and Key Assistance Report are now available on the Clearinghouse Web site. Please visit the Clearinghouse publications page at:

<http://www.mhselfhelp.org/pubs/publications.html>.

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### Human Rights Conference to Be Held in Spring 2005

An action-oriented conference co-sponsored by MindFreedom Support Coalition International and American University Washington College of Law will take place from April 29 through May 2 at American University Washington College of Law. According to a statement on the MindFreedom Web site, the conference, on the theme of "How the Law Can Support Grassroots Action for Human Rights in the Mental Health System," will bring together "key leaders, activists and advocates in the field of human rights for people labeled with psychiatric disabilities to support grassroots community organizing campaigns for human rights and alternatives in the mental health system, especially campaigns that are led by psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers. The conference will focus on grassroots activism, as well as on how the law can assist these campaigns." To receive periodic updates about the conference, e-mail [office@mindfreedom.org](mailto:office@mindfreedom.org). As it becomes available, conference information will also be posted at <http://www.mindfreedom.org>.

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### New Webcast Helps Consumers Explore Employment Options

"Put Yourself in the Driver's Seat: Getting on the Road to Self-Employment or a Job That's Right for You" is now available on the Web. This series, created by the National Research and Training Center of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), is geared toward people who are ready to work but are not sure how to get started. The sessions address how to begin thinking about using one's talents in getting a job or starting a business. "Highlights include using the Internet as an employment resource, finding the right job, getting help for starting a business venture, and developing a business plan," the Web page introduction notes. "Emphasis is on people with mental health disabilities, but anyone interested in work and entrepreneurship will find useful information in these three sessions." The speakers are Howard Dansky, Margo Covington, and Kamile Kalina.

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Listen to the sessions and download accompanying slides and transcripts, at [http://www.psych.uic.edu/UICNRTC/webcast\\_11\\_16\\_04.htm](http://www.psych.uic.edu/UICNRTC/webcast_11_16_04.htm). The NRTC on Psychiatric Disability, based in the UIC's Department of Psychiatry, is a five-year program of research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities designed to promote self-determination among people with psychiatric disabilities. Visit its site at <http://www.psych.uic.edu/uicnrtc/> for more information.

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### Georgia Peer Specialist Project Is the Model for New CMHS Resource Kit

The Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is completing a Peer Specialist Certification Resource Kit to be used by state mental health delivery systems. The Resource Kit includes a manual for state mental health authorities with detailed information on the steps needed to design, plan, implement, and manage a Medicaid-reimbursable Certified Peer Specialist Program; a guide to the program for consumers and advocates; and one-page fact sheets on the program. The toolkit uses the Georgia Peer Specialist Certification Project as a model and reports on peer support initiatives taking place in other states. The program trains former or current mental health consumers to become Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) who provide peer support services that are reimbursable under the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option. For more information, please contact Chris Marshall, Consumer Affairs Specialist, [chris.marshall@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:chris.marshall@samhsa.hhs.gov).

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### SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF-CARE RESOURCES...

#### Consumer Recovery Groups Focus on Life Instead of Illness

Mental health consumers in western Montana are developing affirmative life-planning and coping skills as part of a new group program. "Mastering your Life" is an open series of workshops to help people develop goals and work towards them in every aspect of their lives. According to organizers, self-direction is the key word in sessions that focus on relationships, employment, and other major life issues, empowering consumers to identify their personal definitions of success and well-being. The program, based in Missoula, is free and open to anyone who wants to participate. "Mastering your Life" is developed by mental health consumers and sponsored by NAMI-Missoula. Learn more at <http://www.missoulia.com/articles/2005/01/16/news/local/news04.txt>

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## RESOURCES FOR CONSUMER-RUN ORGANIZATIONS AND SELF-HELP GROUPS...

### Outreach Programs Soothe Opposition to Group Homes

The Group Homes Mediation Program (GHMP) in Portland, Oregon, was featured in a Psychiatric News article describing outreach and mediation methods for group homes and community services. The article looks at GHMP as a positive example of approaches to the issue, and profiles people from several programs that have been successful in cultivating community relationships. Stressing the importance and effectiveness of communication between the facility operators and their neighbors, GHMP advocates offer advice to consumers seeking to open group homes in their communities. One method suggested is to provide forums where people can voice concerns and address problems early. This article, by David Milne, is available free online from the American Psychiatric Association Psychiatric News Web site:

<http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/psychnews;40/1/19>

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### The Evaluation Center @ HSRI Introduces Multimedia Tours of Technical Assistance

The Evaluation Center @ HSRI has recently developed multi-media introductions to several program evaluation technical assistance products. These “Guided Tours” are slide presentations with sound that can be seen and heard on a computer at <http://tecathsri.org/toolkits.asp#tours>. Each guided tour is between five and 10 minutes long. According to HSRI, the Evaluation Center's toolkits and other materials are “excellent resources for learning about and conducting program evaluation and research.” The guided tours provide information on evidence-based practices, outcomes measurement, performance evaluation, and continuous quality improvement. For more information about services of the Evaluation Center @ HSRI, go to <http://tecathsri.org/how.asp>.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS...

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## Pennsylvania to Close Harrisburg State Hospital

In keeping with statewide efforts to promote recovery, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) has announced plans to close Harrisburg State Hospital (HSH), which serves seven counties. “Being an active part of the community with the possibility of having a job and living more independently is important to quality of life,” said Pennsylvania Secretary for Public Welfare Estelle B. Richman. “That’s why we are committed to community-based care whenever possible.” HSH currently houses 258 patients with a staff of approximately 540. DPW estimates that about 135 HSH residents will be moved into the community; the rest will initially transfer to state hospitals in Montour and Berks counties. With this closing, nine Pennsylvania state psychiatric hospitals will remain, housing some 2,000 people in all.

Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare news release, 1/6/05, and

<http://www.dailyitem.com/archive/2005/0107/local/stories/09local.htm>

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## Doctor Sounds Alarm over Medicated Juvenile Inmates

A former chief psychiatrist at San Diego County’s Juvenile Hall, who was dismissed after reporting to her superiors that children aged 14 to 18 were being over-medicated, won a wrongful termination lawsuit against the county. Juvenile Hall houses male and female teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18 who face allegations ranging from schoolyard fighting to rape and murder. According to an article in the San Diego (California) Union-Tribune, probation officers informed reporters that medication was used as a “first line of defense” for keeping order. Offenders were easier to control with medication, and the daily dispensing of medication became know as “chill pill” time. The lawsuit held that psychiatrists at Juvenile Hall failed to: (1) get parental consent before prescribing psychotropic medications, (2) perform thorough examinations before prescribing potentially dangerous medications, (3) accurately interpret or perform diagnostic tests, or (4) respond to diagnostic tests with appropriate medical action.

Source: <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20050109-9999-1n9juvie.html>

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## PARC CORNER

### Nutrition and Well Being

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“We have all heard that eating well is linked to feeling well. Throughout your lifetime, taking care of your body is an important part of staying healthy, both mentally and physically. Everyone has experienced the negative feelings that accompany a poor night’s sleep or overindulgence in rich foods. Conversely, we have all felt that extra spring in our step after a restful night or an energizing meal. How do you measure up when it comes to nutrition? Take the PARC Eating Well Quiz at [www.positiveaging.org/consumer/popups/nutrition.html](http://www.positiveaging.org/consumer/popups/nutrition.html) to see what you can do to improve the way you eat and feel.”

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#### MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND SERVICES...

##### New Jersey Mental Health Professional Assists with Tsunami Relief Efforts

Debra Wentz, chief executive of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health Agencies, was in Sri Lanka for a friend’s wedding when the massive December 26<sup>th</sup> tsunami hit the coast. Although she and everyone else at the wedding survived the natural disaster, she decided to remain in the country to assist with relief efforts – especially to attend to the mental health needs of the survivors. In addition to finding and distributing food and medicine, she also appeared on Sri Lankan television to discuss the immediate symptoms of post-traumatic stress. In the interview, Wentz also provided information on the signs of psychological distress in children and the importance of returning to regular routines of living. To support her ongoing efforts, she has begun organizing mental health relief workers, including health care practitioners and leaders from the faith community, to fly to the affected region. For more information, access the full article at [http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/new\\_jersey/10668654.htm](http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/new_jersey/10668654.htm)

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#### OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS...

##### Pro International Offers Alternatives '04 Sessions on VHS and DVD

Pro International filmed the plenary sessions at Alternatives '04. To purchase a copy, please visit: <http://www.theprointernational.com/alternatives2004talent.html> or contact Anna Gray, the CEO of PRO International: [ahgray@satx.rr.com](mailto:ahgray@satx.rr.com).

To unsubscribe: <http://www.mhselfhelp.org/contact.html#thekey>

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