

More Hope & Recovery

from Mental Health Resources, Inc.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wish List	2
Dad and Son to Reunite	2
Determined to Recover	2
Bury Stress by Gardening	3
A Long Time Ago	3
Board Members	4
Management Team	4
Newsletter Staff	4

Mission:

Mental Health Resources fosters hope and recovery for those affected by mental illness.



Mental Health Resources, Inc.
www.mhresources.org

Change is in the Air

by Nancy Abramson, Executive Director

Mental Health Resources has a proud history of being able to respond nimbly when our clients or other stakeholders need us. We have stayed true to our mission of fostering hope and recovery for those affected by mental illness. There are many changes in our external environment that affect our clients and our organization, and as we accommodate those changes, we continue to keep the focus on our clients. Even as we learn to work well with health plans, now beginning to partner with counties, we keep the needs of our clients at center stage.

The recent addition of 430 housing vouchers which we administer for mental health clients in Ramsey County is an example of a new opportunity totally aligned with our mission. This mission-driven focus is one of the accomplishments of MHR of which I am most proud.

These and other thoughts flood my mind as I prepare to retire in June from my role as Executive Director of MHR, a position I've held since 1996. I came to this organization after serving on its Board during the 1980's when I taught at the University of MN in the School of Social Work. Upon learning of the Executive Director opening in 1996, I was immediately drawn to it. I stand on the shoulders of those who preceded me dating back to the inception of MHR in 1976: Don Schmidt, Pat Crain, Mila Amundson and Gary Haselhuhn. Each leader contributed exactly what was needed at the time.

Our Board of Directors diligently acts in the best interests of MHR. They



think about long range strategies and make policy decisions looking forward over the next 3 to 10 years and beyond. The Board and its Search Committee are at work to find just the right leader for now and into the future, and I am confident they will do so.

My wish for MHR, our clients, our staff, and our Board is that they cultivate fertile ground for new ideas and services, always being open to better ways of reducing the effects of serious mental illness. Our clients deserve to experience hope and recovery, and our staff members to know they are engaged in amazing, life-giving work.

Change is healthy and it takes many good minds working together to adapt and flourish during periods of major change. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by so many fine people with creative minds and compassionate hearts throughout my career. I applaud and thank each of them and I will carry memories of MHR with me always. ■



DETERMINED TO RECOVER

by Helen Raleigh

Determined to cope with disturbing thoughts, you
Are always on time for meds, grateful for the relief they bring.
Recovery is a mighty struggle yet offers great rewards like
Reconnecting to your baby, now transformed into a boy.
Imagine the leap when he sees his reflection in your face.
No hesitation. He knows that you're his dad.



ON OUR WISH LIST...

Please consider donating items on our wish list. You can make a difference in the lives of MHR clients.

For Clients throughout MHR

- Gift cards to Rainbow, Cub, Target, Kmart or Wal-Mart
- Donations to cover medication co-pays
- Monthly bus passes
- Pro bono dental and veterinary care
- Donations to cover rent deposits
- Gift certificates to shoe stores
- Memberships to YMCA
- Gift certificates to coffee shops

For Seward CSP

- Donations for trip to Camp Koinonia in August 2008
- A new sturdy stationary bike
- Softball equipment, especially gloves
- Six basketballs and six volleyballs
- Gift cards for Cub and Target for supplies to welcome client moving into new apartments
- Futon or foam mattresses until clients can obtain beds
- Cooking pots and baking pans, measuring cups, draining racks

Dad and Son to Reunite

by Tara Inveen, Case Manager

After years of turmoil, Darrin is feeling optimistic about life. Darrin explained, "I've looked forward to the day when I can see my son again for a LONG time." His son was a toddler when Darrin last saw him. Later this summer, Darrin plans to visit his son, now an 8 year old that enjoys soccer and PlayStation.

Darrin enlisted in the military and saw tours of duty around the world. He married a native of Holland in 1998. Darrin and his wife relocated to Minnesota, where their son was born in 2000. That same year, Darrin started drinking heavy to cope with anxiety and paranoia. This contributed to Darrin and his wife divorcing. She returned to Holland with their son in 2002.

The divorce and losing contact with his son intensified Darrin's drinking and symptoms. He was sent to detox a few times and hospitalized for symptoms of mental illness at least yearly. In 2003, he was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, reflecting a combination of problems with his thoughts and emotions. When his anxiety and paranoia increased, Darrin couldn't manage to shop for groceries or even put gas in his car. Unable to work, Darrin was honorably discharged in 2005. Shortly after that, he was evicted from his apartment and had to move in with his parents.

Every few months, Darrin would discontinue taking his prescribed medications, resume abusing alcohol, and need to be hospitalized. During a hospital stay in 2006, Darrin was



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referred to a Case Manager with MHR in Dakota County. For many months they talked about his life, the need to take prescribed medications, and benefits of attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. It was clear that Darrin was searching to find meaning again. His Case Manager helped Darrin to monitor his symptoms, budget his disability income, apply for Medical Assistance, and find an apartment.

In 2007, Darrin found hope. After searching for an A.A. meeting where he felt accepted, Darrin found one that he attends weekly. He found a sponsor that he speaks with almost daily. He celebrated a year of sobriety on March 10, 2008. Darrin has also found relief from a medication called Resperdal that helps him think more clearly and controls paranoia.

What's changed for Darrin since he's been sober and discovered a medication that helps? He hasn't needed to

continued on page 2



A LONG TIME AGO

by Mary L. and Antonio

People had a better way a long time ago.
The old become young and newborn become old.
Everybody has equal opportunity.
And the whole world becomes friendship.
No more hate, no more jealousy, no more war.
Just all friendship and happy ever after.



Bury Stress by Gardening or Try Meditating

by Michelle Gricus, Program Manager, and Robin Stahlberg, CSP Counselor

Nestled in the heart of south Minneapolis, the Seward CSP provides an array of activities through which its members build skills and work toward recovery, including gardening and a spirituality group.

Each spring and summer, Seward CSP members tend a beautiful flower garden in front of the building at 2105 Minnehaha Ave. South. Members enjoy picking out flats of annuals and larger pots of flowers from the greenhouse at Bailey's Nursery, thanks to an annual gift from The Minnesota Horticulture Society. Planting, weeding and watering give members a chance to let go of stress and watch small plants grow into blooming colors. Members who live nearby often

volunteer to water our garden during hot summer weekends. We also grow some leaf lettuce and tomatoes in pots and look forward to enjoying salad later in the summer.

The spirituality group is another way that the CSP members grow hope. The group meets twice each month to discuss subjects like fear, anger, forgiveness, gratitude, and the connection between self-esteem and self-compassion. Meditation plays an important part in the spirituality group, and is a ritual that helps members to cope and find peace.

The gardening program and spirituality group at Seward CSP help members let go of stress. ■



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Dad and Son to Reunite

(continued from page 2)

be hospitalized in over a year. He made friends through A.A. and spends time with them fishing. Darrin moved into an apartment and made a home for himself.

These days, he has weekly phone contact with his son and ex-wife. He sends his son several care packages each month that include clothing, books and games and his son writes him back. Darrin's ex-wife recently invited him to visit his son in Holland later this summer.

Great things are possible in recovery. ■

Join Us for a Farewell Tea

To Honor Nancy Abramson

Executive Director

Mental Health Resources

1996-2008



Wednesday, June 11, 2008

2:00 to 4:30 p.m.

At the University Club

420 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN

Brief program at 3:30 p.m.

Instead of gifts, please consider donating to MHR in Nancy's honor.

BOARD MEMBERS

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ABOUT *More Hope & Recovery* FROM MHR

Please share this issue with someone you know. If you have feedback, questions, even complaints, call Helen at 651-659-2923. If you prefer to receive our newsletter by email, contact Miki at mbedard@mhresources.com. We welcome creative writing and articles by clients. View more writing by clients at www.mhresources.org.

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