

# More Hope & Recovery

from Mental Health Resources, Inc.

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### *Mission:*

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



**Mental Health Resources, Inc.**  
[www.mhresources.org](http://www.mhresources.org)

## Amazing Things Happen: Housing for People with Mental Illness

*By Kelby Grovender, Housing Director*

Most tenants with psychiatric disabilities are too poor to afford housing at market rates, and some property managers are unwilling to rent to them. As a result, local mental health agencies began developing housing programs in the 1990's, even though many had little or no experience in the housing field.

MHR developed its first housing project at Ramsey Hill Apartments in 1996. This program provides apartments in St. Paul to persons recovering from mental illness. Over the past decade, MHR has created eight housing projects in partnership with groups such as the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Stevens Square Associates, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hearth Connection, RS Eden, Alliance Housing, and BDC Management. These partnerships are essential as MHR does not own the properties where it provides staff and/or housing subsidies. We now provide housing with supports to over 200 clients a year at various sites in three counties, and our subsidized housing voucher program will expand in 2008 to serve an additional 400 people.



*Jon and Debbie, two clients served by Project Homeward, which provides housing for people who have been homeless.*

In mainstream housing, tenants are required to meet basic responsibilities. This includes paying rent, complying with a lease, living at peace with neighbors and keeping the

property in good condition. Our staff helps tenants with mental illness and/or substance abuse to meet the basics of being successful tenants, in addition to helping them cope with symptoms, learning or maintaining independent living skills, building friendships and connecting to vocational opportunities. Our number one priority is to help tenants maintain their housing and to never be homeless.

**What works and what doesn't?** People with psychiatric disabilities generally want the same kinds of housing that you or I want. They want housing that is affordable, safe, clean and attractive. Many express a preference to live on their own and not be grouped with other people on the basis of mental health needs. Others like knowing that some tenants in their building share similar backgrounds.

Most tenants meet with staff on an as needed basis. Services are often informal and happen as tenants are cleaning their apartments or paying their bills. MHR staff aim to understand each tenant's needs and ask what they want to work on first. We find that if staff work with the choices of tenants and stick with them, amazing things happen. It is effective to listen and comment on what is working well and what is keeping a tenant from getting what he/she wants. It is not effective for staff to make assumptions about what a tenant should or should not do, or to take a tenant's decision personally. Living in the community implies the room to make one's own decisions (and mistakes) and to learn from experience. For instance, some substance abusers end up reducing their use, some may periodically have problems because of substance use, and others achieve sobriety.

*continued on page 2*

## BOARD MEMBERS

Dave Chapman, PsyD, <i>Chair</i>	Jeffrey Huggett
Bret Byfield	Bev Lamb, RN
Jon Christianson, PhD	George Stone
Catherine Hartnett	Michael Trangle, MD
Shannon Hoagland	Katie M. White, EdD, MBA
Chris Holm, CPA	Jim Wyman

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

Nancy Abramson, LICSW <i>Executive Director</i>	Jim Mattson, BSW <i>Human Resources Director</i>
Robert Berg, CPA <i>Finance Director</i>	Helen Raleigh, LICSW <i>Development Director</i>
Bill Calmbacher, MPA, BSW <i>Operations Director</i>	Cindy St. George, LICSW <i>Clinical Director</i>
Kelby Grovender, MDiv <i>Housing Director</i>	

## PROGRAMS OFFERED BY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

### ***Core Services in Ramsey, Dakota & Hennepin Counties***

- Assertive Community Treatment Teams
- Targeted Case Management Teams
- Mental Health Outreach Clinic
- Metro Intensive Treatment Team serving subscribers from Medica, HealthPartners and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of MN

### ***Living Skills Services***

- Seward Community Support Program
- ARMHS in Ramsey County

### ***Supportive Housing for Homeless***

- Central Avenue Apartments
- Dakota Supportive Housing
- Haralson Apartments
- Project Homeward
- Project Restore
- Stevens Square Supportive Housing

### ***Other Supportive Housing***

- Housing Choice — A Section 8 Program for People with Disabilities
- Ramsey Hill Apartments
- Scattered Site Housing in Ramsey, Dakota and Hennepin Counties
- Trinity on Lake Apartments

### ***Partnership with a Pharmacy***

- Genoa Pharmacy and Care Coordinators

## Amazing Things Happen... (continued from page 1)

Staff strives to trust the people they are serving. If staff help explore situations and options, tenants make the choices they need for themselves. The choice may not be the ones staff wishes they would make, but the choice will be the tenant's choice.

Some of our housing sites offer monthly communal meals. Sharing food has the power to inspire, sustain and improve health, and fulfill deep social and cultural needs. It builds a sense of belonging together. Staff ensures that all tenants are welcome and part of the community, that they are respected and that their existence is important to those around them.

**Jessica and Leonard created their own homes through MHR housing services.** Jessica endures schizophrenia and was homeless when she was referred to MHR. A housing counselor helped her find an apartment and obtain a Section 8 subsidy. Unfortunately, someone attempted to rob her apartment and she discovered the apartment was infested with roaches. These problems caused an increase in Jessica's symptoms and it was clear the only solution was to move. Her housing counselor helped her apply for "reasonable accommodations" that allowed her to relocate. MHR provided funds to move her belongings to a safer residence. In her new space, her symptoms improved and she graduated from services a few months later, confident that she could maintain her home.



*Leonard lives at Central Avenue Apartments.*

Leonard completed treatment for crack cocaine addiction in 2003. He was unemployed and homeless. Then he moved into Central Avenue Apartments in Minneapolis which offers permanent, supportive, sober housing for 60 other people, over half of whom also have mental illness. Today he works at another nonprofit that specializes in housing, employment and gaining self sufficiency. At times, Leonard has received gas money from MHR to attend self help meetings and get to his job. In April 2007, Leonard was in a terrible car accident. While trying to warn other drivers, he was hit by a car and thrown over a freeway bridge, which resulted in him breaking bones in his pelvis, wrist and face. MHR helped Leonard maintain his apartment throughout his recovery and during the time it took for his disability income to get worked out. He credits living at Central Ave. Apartments with being able to maintain his housing and sobriety through everything he has been through.

After a decade of providing housing subsidies and supports, MHR is convinced that individuals who have psychiatric disabilities and/or substance addictions can successfully secure and maintain independent homes of their own. Living in apartments with assistance from supportive staff teaches tenants the skills and provides the necessary supports to succeed in the community. ■



*It's good to relax at home.*

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Nancy Abramson  
Miki Bedard  
Helen Raleigh



## Is the Mental Health System Broken?

*By Nancy Abramson, Executive Director*

When people don't get the services they need, when and where they need them, and when seriously ill people fall through the cracks, we have a "broken system". Minnesota has struggled with this issue since the early days of deinstitutionalization in the 1970s.

Mental health advocates, leaders from county and state government and community providers recently have had significant success in raising this complex issue to the governor and the state legislature. Public and private sector groups are making progress on how to work together more effectively. We know that all parts of the system must work with each other; no one sector of our society can do this alone.

Through the current thrust in the state and counties, I believe that the mental health system will emerge with better coordination of care, the lives of people we serve will improve and scarce resources will be used more efficiently. And...I believe it is happening now, "slowly by slowly," a phrase from Uganda that I learned this year.

At MHR, we are aware of the many ways in which our services have gaps and flaws and we also are aware that what we do to foster hope and recovery for those affected by mental illness routinely creates positive outcomes. Our clients experience success when we:

- Provide housing to homeless clients before they are fully engaged with mental health services. MHR will house over 375 people this year and keep them from living in shelters, on the streets, or remaining in group homes or state hospitals.

- Send licensed therapists and staff from our Metro Team into the homes of people insured by Medica, Health Partners and Blue Cross/Blue Shield so that we meet clients literally where they are most comfortable.
- Engage care coordinators from Genoa Pharmacy to help stay on top of adjustments to medication doses, complications between psychotropic and health medications and obtain lab work required to monitor some medications.
- Assist clients to take care of health issues such as completing a colonoscopy or cataract surgery, getting regular blood pressure checks and monitoring diabetes.
- Help clients with emergency needs like a rent deposit, a bus pass to get to a new part-time job, or tuition for GED or computer classes at the Science Museum.
- Offer holiday meals that recognize the traditions of people from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds at our Seward CSP.
- Provide high performance Case Management and ARMHS services.
- Utilize a "harm reduction" model to work with clients as they set their own goals for recovery.

As Beverly Sills once said, "There are no shortcuts to anyplace worth going." While the mental health system still needs improvement, I am proud of the work staff and clients do to remove barriers and find solutions for the parts of the system that don't work. I look forward to MHR continuing to collaborate with other organizations to build a system worthy of our clients. ■

## A SMILE SAID IT ALL

*by Ray S.*

A smile said it all  
 Someone whistled  
 A smile said it all  
 An unexpected tear  
 A smile said it all  
 Someone waved  
 A smile said it all  
 Unexpected encouragement  
 A smile said it all  
 A birth  
 A smile said it all  
 An unexpected phone call  
 A smile said it all  
 A walk in the garden  
 A smile said it all  
 A full moon lighting the  
 landscape  
 A smile said it all  
 In the hospital you  
 visited me  
 A smile said it all



## Feeling Lonely During the Holidays?

By Elizabeth Scott, MS, from an article at About.com

The winter holidays are thought of as a happy time, but for many people it's a time of loneliness. Some people live far from their loved ones; others are alienated from family members or don't have close friends. Many people dread spending a holiday alone or avoid going to holiday celebrations and end up staying home. For those who feel lonely, this time of year can be stressful. If you're experiencing loneliness that causes you stress during this season, the following suggestions can help:

- 1. Be Good To Yourself:** You may still feel lonely, but taking special care of yourself can help you feel better and enjoy your solitude more. Start a new hobby, make yourself a special meal, or find a good book to read or great movie to watch.
- 2. Understand That You're Not Alone:** The holidays can be a lonely time for many people. Many of us wish we were with family, want closer connections with friends, or wish for a supportive romantic relationship but find ourselves feeling isolated during the holidays. Even though it's uncomfortable to feel lonely, remember it's still okay to feel this way. Talking to others who may share your feelings can help you feel less alone.
- 3. Rethink Your Expectations:** Our society has big expectations for this time of year. The absence of family or a romantic partner seems more uncomfortable during the flurry of social activity when we're all "supposed" to be going to parties, exchanging gifts and enjoying time with loved ones. One way to deal with loneliness is to re-think your expectations. Very few people's lifestyles measure up to "movie standards" of a perfect life. Shift your focus to the good things you have in your life.
- 4. Make Connections:** It's harder to feel lonely when you're reaching out to others. Say hello to neighbors you usually avoid, call an old friend you haven't spoken to in a while or speak to people where you shop. You can give to others by inviting someone to meet you for coffee, talking with someone new at a drop-in center or self help meeting, finding a group that needs volunteer help, or writing a thank you note to someone that has been kind to you this past year. ■

## Please SAVE this date: March 5, 2008



### Mental Health Day on the Hill

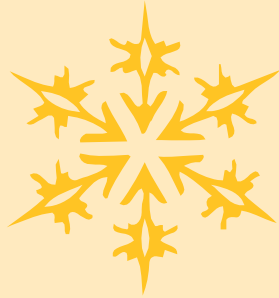
**10:00 a.m.** Briefing at Christ Lutheran Church 105 University Avenue West in St. Paul

**12 noon** Rally in the State Capitol Rotunda

**1:00 p.m.** Visit with your legislators

The legislature plans to examine policies that may impact adults living with mental illnesses and their families. Make sure legislators hear from their constituents by making an appointment ahead of time.

Look for a flyer from MHR in February 2008 about where to meet and how to join us for lunch that day. To learn more about parking and the key issues, please visit [www.namimn.org](http://www.namimn.org) or call NAMI Minnesota at 651-645-2948.



## Staff Participates in Housing Institute

by Helen Raleigh, Development Director

On September 21, the Corporation for Supportive Housing announced it has selected a team led by Kelby Grovender, Housing Director at MHR, as one of 10 teams to participate in a Supportive Housing Institute scheduled for October 29, 2007 through April 2008. The Institute is a comprehensive initiative that includes project development and capacity building for supportive housing providers throughout Minnesota. MHR is partnered with Project for Pride in Living as a developer for this project.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing selected 10 teams that represent a variety of permanent supportive housing models. Based on estimates provided in the applications, teams will begin planning and developing over 200 units of supportive housing during the Institute.

Nancy Abramson, Executive Director of Mental Health Resources, Inc., states that, "We are excited at this opportunity to work with Project for Pride in Living and other groups from across the state. Our intention is to develop a supportive housing project in Hennepin County for persons who live with mental illness. This fits one of our strategic goals to help people with mental illness find safe and decent housing and to never be homeless."

MHR offers an array of housing for clients, from subsidized housing vouchers with minimal support needed from staff to congregate supportive housing programs with 24 hour staffing. The housing programs encourage independent living balanced with the appropriate level of support needed so each client can maintain safe, affordable stable housing in the community. ■

## ON OUR WISH LIST...

### For Seward CSP

- New futon or foam mattresses until clients can access agencies that donate beds
- Gift cards for Cub and Target for clients moving to new apartments
- Softball equipment — especially gloves
- Six basketballs and six volleyballs
- Kitchen items like utensils, draining racks, pots and pans, measuring cups, etc.
- A new sturdy stationary bicycle
- Donation for the 2008 trip to Camp Koinonia

### For All MHR Clients

- Gift certificates for new shoes, boots and winter clothing
- Donations for medication co-pays
- Bus passes
- Gift certificates to barber or hair salon
- Gift cards to coffee shops
- Gift cards for groceries, Target, Kmart, Walmart or hardware stores
- Memberships to health clubs or YM/YWCA
- Pro bono dental care and veterinary services
- Donations to cover rent deposits

## Special Events at Seward CSP

November 29th — Thanksgiving Meal

December 20th — Holiday party  
*(celebrating all holidays happening in December)*

December 27th — Christmas dinner

Early January — Kwanzaa meal

## WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING 2007 DONORS TO DATE:

### ***Individuals:***

Susan Abderholden  
Nancy Abramson  
Glen Andis  
Jane Birks  
Maddy Cohen  
Marty Hamlin & Cathy  
Bosworth  
Colleen Hansen  
Lynn & Melissa Lindsay  
Anne J. McBean  
Kathleen Muench  
Ken & Mary Newton  
Denny & Judith Peterson  
Helen Raleigh  
Elizabeth Streich  
Dr. Walter Rush  
Susan Searle

Christine M. Smith

Rolf Westgard

### ***Memorials:***

Rebecca Hirdman in  
memory of Paul Otis Lee  
Toni Ponce in memory of  
Rita Van Buren

### ***Businesses, Foundations, Corporations & In Kind Contributions:***

Abdallah Candies  
Michael Armel  
Chanhassen Dinner  
Theatres  
Cliquot Club Café  
Crown Video  
Cub Food—Lake Street

Edina Reality Foundation

Sandra Gerhartz-Wolf &  
John Wolf

Ann Gunderson

Genoa Healthcare

Grandma's Restaurant  
Company

Great Clips

Greater St. Paul Are North  
Star Chorus

Holy Trinity Lutheran  
Church

Barbara Huwe

Kowalski's Market

Mall of America Manage-  
ment Office

McDonald's Corporation

Michelle McGaughey

Memory Lanes

Milio's Sandwiches

Minnesota Twins Baseball  
Club

Minnesota Vikings

Ben Premack

Seward Community Co-op

St. Paul Saints

Subway

Sunsets Woodbury

Target Stores

Treasure Island Resort &  
Casino

TwinsCare Ticket Program

Shirley Torkelson

Welna II Ace Hardware

Welsh Title & Real Estate  
Services



### SEASONS GREETINGS FROM EVERYONE AT MHR

Please share this issue with someone you know. We welcome your feedback, comments, questions, even complaints. Call Helen Raleigh, Development Director at 651-659-2923. Do you prefer email? If you would like to receive our newsletter by email, please send a message to [mbedard@mhresources.com](mailto:mbedard@mhresources.com).



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