

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

An anthology or a glass menagerie of notes and vivid creative thoughts. This is how I would describe the collection of writings here presented to the readers. They all are interesting and show how inspirational the White Picket Fence has become and is standing out for peers. As time goes by we will succeed in having an ever greater number of regular contributors to the White Picket Fence. The underlying message in this newsletter is that there is hope in recovery!

MENTAL STIMULATION

Research has indicated that in optimal circumstances the brain can continue to grow, improve, and essentially regenerate. Conversely, with psychotic episodes accompanying serious mental illness the brain experiences loss of grey matter. However, memory and cognitive functions can improve if we exercise our brain muscles as we get older. It is important to build brain resiliency which may diminish or impede brain damage that comes with aging. To do this we must make being organized a priority. Activities for resiliency include keeping a calendar, lists and planners to aid memory; pushing ourselves to think, plan and remember; processing new data with such tools as scrabble, crossword puzzles and games; and taking up new activities such as creative activities, hobbies and sports, which are not only good for developing our brain, but are also entertaining. Researchers advise to join a class, a choir, and pursue other hobbies so as to increase our talents.

Both diet and exercise affect the brain and other critical organs. Thus, we need to develop a diet with valuable nutrients that are good for the brain (and the heart) and to avoid cholesterol producing foods such as red meat. Fish, beans, fresh fruits and vegetables should be on our diet list. And let us not forget to exercise and drink plenty of filtered water, as appropriate water intake is important for the brain. We should attempt to drink half our body weight in ounces every day. —Cristina

Sometimes I experience "overstimulation", which consumes me and cripples my mental state. If you can imagine

all five of your senses being felt at any moment in full force, that state leads to overload. Consider for example, you hear the traffic outside, you see the sunlight coming through the window, you taste the coffee you are drinking, you smell the perfume you put on this morning, you feel the ring on your finger that you have a habit to play with. Now, experience them all bombarding you at one time! It may lead to "overstimulation". So, what do you do? Eliminate one sense at a time...and breathe. —Lori Jo

MARIJUANA AND THE EARLY INCIDENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

The "link between using marijuana and developing serious mental illnesses" has recently been found by researchers at the University of South Wales in Sydney, Australia to be "strongest in youngest smokers — 12 to 15 years old, or kids even younger". The study has led the researchers to announce that the onset of schizophrenia had come nearly three years earlier when preceded by marijuana use.

The extra three years are so important for teenagers! The implications are that with an extra three years teenagers could thus "achieve important developmental milestones of adolescence," finish school and obtain skills that would reduce their chances of having a disability for the rest of their lives.

This message is important since anti-marijuana campaigns focus on older groups and not on pre-teens and adolescents who often obtain their drugs "from older siblings and peers."

From msnbc.com article "Pot Linked to Earlier Onset of Mental Illness." —Cristina

I believe that spirituality forms the basis for the development of mental health. Having faith in a higher power allows us to think and feel more positively about ourselves and the challenges that we face daily. —Jason

WALKING, WATER, WELLNESS

One of the most important things I do for my wellness is to walk near lakes, canals or the ocean. The calm, reflective surface of lakes helps clear my mind, and the colors the lakes take on reflect the colors of the sky. Wading along the Atlantic shore is very energizing—the energy of the waves lifts my energy, and the breeze, or sometimes stiff wind, makes me feel freer and stronger. I am aware of my body's innate abilities as my bare feet carry me across wet sand and splash through moving water. The birds and fish I see seem like my companions on this earth, though they seem to feel less than relaxed in my presence as they fly and swim away in case I'm a predator. They also seem to enjoy the fresh, oxygen-giving water. Nature always gives me a lot and never asks anything in return. —Caroline

Just as the moon moves the tide in the ocean, so do other forces of nature affect our wellness. The sun gives us light to renourish our bodies. Our bodies are close to 90% water. If the moon can move the vast oceans of the world, what do you think it does to us—only a speck in the vast universe. So the point is all things in nature affect our wellness. —Tony

HOW TO BALANCE YOUR- SELF WITH NATURE

Nature is an ever present accessible way to recharge your spirit and life. When you lose yourself in nature you will find that it has a healing effect on your emotions. By centering yourself in a sunset, a body of water, or flowers, you will find that you are calmer. Place your attention on the landscape and keep it there – it is very refreshing for the mind. Try deep breathing. Connect with an animal and feel its presence soothe you. And if you can paint or draw, let nature inspire you. All the Great Art Masters have done that. —Cristina

RECOVERY

Recovery to me means the ability to stand up for myself and be unafraid of disclosure of my illness. Sometimes I am in recovery and sometimes not. At work I choose very carefully to whom I reveal my illness to and to what

extent. Some of my carefully chosen friends know all. Recently I told my supervisor that I suffer from chronic depression and that some of my health is compromised by the medication I have been on for over 28 years. I was unable to voice that I am also schizoaffective and bi-polar. Recovery comes in stages. Like the petals falling off a flower, to expose the center and be vulnerable is a slow but healing process. —Yvonne

I wake up each day with a positive thought and encourage myself to take on life's challenges that day and so help myself be well and positive. I look outside and see the birds, white, and lake, for mental stimulation. May God bless me in all that I accomplish. Florida has many blue sky days. —Joan

Recovery has been a long process. I also am well aware I have much further to go on my recovery. My therapist has been "my wonder." I would not have gotten this far without his sincere caring, knowledge and constant time with me. —Deborah

FRIENDSHIP

MY FRIEND, RUTH

Ruth joined the team at work several years ago and I have deemed her the "Seamless Experience" in all of her endeavors...highlighting our friendship. She is utmost professional in her role as Lead Clinician with the Henderson FACT Team and at the same time is an ace, devotee to our comradeship.

Ruth is kind and sensitive as she validates my feelings when no one could possibly "get it". She is level-headed when I'm all about a buffet of emotions. She is calming when my balance seems overwhelmed by ebbs and flows. She verbalizes that I have something to offer this world when I feel invisible or like dirt. What a super Friend!

I like to "pay it forward" to Ruth whenever possible as friendship works that way. My specialty, I believe, is making her laugh, laugh over nonsensical matters. I tell our boss in as many opportunities that present themselves to give exclamation points on Ruth's distinguished performance on the job. Ruth plays "Words with Friends" on her iPod, as I share my favorite friend, Steve, my husband, in the play.

We bond with sharing new, delectable foods we en-

counter. Ruth is #4 on my cell phone Speed Dial after Voice Mail, my husband and my Father, for quick access.

I can't be more effusive in my recognition of Ruth on a regular basis, telling her how much I love her in my life especially as my friend and confidant. She is soooooo "seamless"... —Lori Jo

Good friends are like seasons of the heart. They stand by you when the rain clouds of depression sweep through you and then cheer you on when the blossoming of spring opens all of your petals. —Allison

I couldn't imagine living with mental illness without the help of friends to see me through. —Terri

Acknowledgements

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UMI Thrift Store – A Store to Remember

Centrally located in Lake Ida Plaza in Delray, The UMI (United for the Mentally Ill) thrift store showcases high end gently used clothes in its large window. Inside, second hand designer clothes feature prominently, but more serviceable apparel fills the neatly arranged racks. Every item has to be laundered or dry cleaned, and wrinkles on clothes are smoothed away with a hand steamer. The store is a tribute to the moral standards and ideals of thriftiness, savings and charity underscored by these overreached economic times. Donations come in from the nearby country clubs and residences and all items are fairly priced, while some are phenomenal deals.

Molly Cooper, the manager on Thursdays, UMI board member and ex-sculptor, has a firm eye for beauty and utilitarianism which keeps the whole store ticking. Diane, her daughter, expertly assists Molly.

Proceeds over the years, have gone to the Oakwood and South County mental health centers and to Jeff Industries. NAMI/PBC is proud to state that recent contributions have also gone to its organization.



NAMI Palm Beach County

PROUDLY PRESENTS...

**JEFF INDUSTRIES
AND THE
SERVICES THEY
PROVIDE**

Presented by

**Claudia Roberts
Executive Director
of
Jeff Industries**

TUESDAY

MARCH 8, 2010

6:30 - 8:00 PM

**United Methodist Church
of the Palm Beaches
900 Brandywine Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33409
(Chapel)**

***NAMI/PBC General Meetings Are
Free & Open to the Public***

**National Alliance on Mental Illness/
PBC**

***PALM BEACH COUNTY'S
VOICE ON MENTAL ILLNESS***

National Alliance on Mental Illness of Palm Beach County
1520 10th Avenue North, Suite D
Lake Worth, FL 33460

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33460
PERMIT NO. 1327

Or Current Resident

Sufferers of brain illnesses require high doses of respect, dignity and compassion, as in the case of other illnesses. However, the good news is that people do recover. People can proceed to more productive, happier and healthier lives where they can contribute to society. There are many factors involved in recovery, the most important one being hope. Medication, counseling, group therapy and self-help, all benefit people with brain disorders. NAMI/PBC brings many avenues for recovery to the table. Please see NAMI's website at www.namipbc.org

PEER-TO-PEER RECOVERY PROGRAM

This empowering program teaches people to live well in their recovery. Taught by 2 mentors and 1 volunteer, it teaches people to cope through stress reduction, interrelationships, relapse prevention and advance directives for hospitals. It is a life changer.

NAMI CONNECTIONS

Currently, 2 NAMI/PBC facilitators offer this lively self-help support at South County Mental Health Center in Delray Beach, which is well attended and instrumental in drawing people out and solving their problems.

PEER COUNCIL

Originally named Consumer Council, this association has recently been renamed "Peer Council" in honor of the strong relationship existing amongst peers. The Peer Council supports friendship, networking, education, and advocacy; and is in an expansion stage. You can join the Council through the Open Door policy by contributing \$5.00 to NAMI/PBC.

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY COURSE

NAMI's Family-to-Family course teaches families how to assist family members with brain disorders. You can inform

your family members about the course.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

These groups offer people with loved ones who have brain disorders the monthly support they need.

NEWSLETTERS

As a NAMI/PBC member you receive "NAMI's White Picket Fence" newsletter which is produced by the Peer Council and covers fun topics for peers. You also receive the "Voice" newsletter from NAMI/PBC which covers information concerning topics, activities and events on brain disorders.

GENERAL MEETINGS

These monthly meetings offer hope and information on mental health issues and recovery topics of interest to persons affected by brain disorders. Flyers are sent to the main mental health centers.