



THE VOICE

May 2008

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN
CVAB

Volume 2, Issue 11

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	CVAB is a consumer-run non-profit organization.

The Voice welcomes all original contributions related to your recovery experience that you may want to share with our community. We'll treat each with respect and we'll try to print them as submitted but may need to edit for space. Our deadline is the 15th of each month. Thank you.

Recovery Initiative Update

On April 10, 2008 Andrew Keller once again came to the Center of Community Health to review progress made since the October Mental Health Recovery Stakeholders meeting. The objectives included the promotion of understanding of recovery from mental illness; to share information on ideas gathered from Clark County Stakeholders regarding the further promotion of recovery in the community; and, perhaps most important of all, to get input to refine and endorse findings to give a Work Group that will guide their implementation.

After introductions from approximately 15 people at the meeting, Andrew started by acknowledging phone interviews with the leadership of the Clark County Regional Support Network (CCRSN) and the four partner organizations leading the initiative: the Clark County Mental Health Advisory Board (MHAB), Consumer Voices Are Born (CVAB [you are here!]), Clark County Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Mental Health Ombuds Program. The results of all of this?

The CCRSN has emerged as a leader within the state in recovery-based initiatives. Andrew explained that this was exceptional due to the fact that Washington State itself is one of the top states in the country in these fields to begin with.

Peer support was a big topic. According to the report, Clark County has served more Medicaid members with peer support than any other RSN. Not

only that, but Clark County requires by contract and currently has in place certified Peer Support Counselors in all its network provider agencies and numbers a total of 25% of peer counselors in the state; and last but not least, Clark County funds peer support beyond Medicaid through good 'ol CVAB, using mental health federal block grant funds (not to mention our outstanding volunteers).

It was the mention of where the RSN would fund next that got everyone involved. An uneasy truce stood between everyone in the room that, as a county, it was clear that employment for consumers was important to many on the panel, and most agreed that the mental health system as it stands right now is still very much medication-and agency-oriented rather than services that give this kind of empowerment. But Melodie Pazolt from Clark County Department of Community Services was quick to point out that even today there are models out there that are working. Pat Roe included that peer support is "often not as appreciated as it should be" and "should not be an entry or stair-step level." There were both agreements and disagreements with these statements on the panel.

A few things that Andrew brought to the table were peer support options for youth transitioning to the adult system, a 24-hour "living room" drop-in center that everyone admitted was not foreseeable soon, supports for the homeless making the entire transition back to a normal, functioning lifestyle and expanded payee alternatives that would offer those that have payees more choices. **V**



KESSLER'S KOLUMN

Kessler's Kolumn by Nick K.

As you may know, I have been attempting to host trips to Portland. There are many purposes behind this, but the biggest one I can name is *exposure strategy*. The fact that we live twenty minutes away from downtown Portland and that so few of us with disabilities of one kind or another ever go over there. Exposing ourselves to a different, stimulating environment is always good for us, in my opinion. I have a book that is a low/no budget guide to Portland. I think this is especially helpful for making decisions on where to go in (what I perceive) to be a

beautiful city, warts and all. Vancouver may be your "anywhere USA" type of town, but its surrounding areas are not. Each community meeting at CVAB, we plan where we're going next. I plan on this being a long-term project for me, and I hope as many people as possible will participate in the decision-making. Even if you don't, there's a sign-up sheet at the front window for the additional 2 weeks before the event takes place.

Many Travels, Nick

V

Visions of Recovery

The 2008 Visions of Recovery Poster Contest, presented by the Clark County Regional Support Network, was a huge success! A big "Thank You" goes out to everyone who submitted artwork, as well as those who took the time to vote for the People's Choice Award. Over 30 pieces were submitted—each representing someone's unique and individual vision of recovery.

The five winning posters will be announced at the Mental Health Advisory Board meeting on Wednesday April 30. The meeting takes place at the Center for Community Health, Conference Rooms C210-B and C and begins at 5:30 pm. As always, the public is welcome to attend.

The artwork submitted for the poster contest will be on display for the next year at the Center for Community Health and throughout the community, including at provider agencies and special events. Reproductions of two of the winning entries are being printed and will be available free of charge.



If you haven't had a chance to view the artwork, you will have another opportunity on **Wednesday May 14, 6:00 – 8:00 pm** at the **Visions of Recovery Celebration**. As part of Mental Health Recovery Month, this event will showcase

what mental health providers in Clark County are doing to promote recovery, provide materials about recovery and stigma reduction, as well as serve as an opportunity for individuals to share their own stories of recovery.

Clark Vancouver Television (CVTV, channel 23) will be on location to report on the event. They will also be available to film anyone who is interested in sharing 3-5 minutes of their own recovery story. Selections from these stories will then be combined to create a recovery video that can be used for educational and inspirational purposes throughout our community.

If you have any questions about the event, or about recording your story, please feel free to contact Pat Roe or Melanie Green at (360) 397-2130. Please join us on May 14! V



Serenity by Carolyn

I recently visited with the mental health doctor. I wasn't doing very well and I had gotten very nervous. The doctor and I visited for awhile. The doctor asked me if I knew what the serenity prayer said, and I would like to share it with you.

Serenity prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

V

Recovery Concepts

Recovery has become the most recited word in mental health. Often used, yet not always understood, the word and the ideas it represents inspire us and cause us to have hope.

For too long, those of us with mental illness have been viewed as having a problem without solution, reduced to being a diagnosis. Soon, our entire world is focused on being mentally ill and the messages of everyone and everything around us reinforce this.

We need to hear recovery, to believe that the ideas behind it are true and that we can experience it. We want to be on the journey of recovery. Our minds are powerful and if we believe and hope in recovery, we will show how resilient we are.

CVAB is committed to the reality of Recovery. Each month we post and discuss the National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery and focus on one of the 10 supporting concepts. We encourage you to look for a Recovery Concept posted each month and enter into the dialog we enjoy around the new theme at each CVAB Community Gathering.

May's theme is **Respect**. Accepting and believing in one's self is vital to the recovery process. Individuals in recovery also benefit from genuine acceptance and appreciation by the community and larger society. Eliminating discrimination and social stigma help to ensure that an individual in recovery will achieve his or her goals. **V**



Yoga and Meditation

Cynthia, a new member at CVAB will be volunteering every Monday morning to help you get your week started off right. You will enjoy 40 minutes of hatha yoga followed by 20 minutes of guided meditation on the breath.

Bring your own floor mat for yoga and cushion(s) for meditation. Cynthia will address what makes a good mat and cushion at the first class. Since comfort is a primary concern for meditation some people may choose to use chairs.

Cynthia will introduce hatha yoga exercises each week building upon the previous weeks' exercises beginning with The Cleansing Breath and The Complete Breath. Other exercises to

be introduced include but are not limited to The Cow, The Arm and Leg Stretch, Side Bends, The Standing Twist, The Knee and Thigh Stretch, The Cobra and The Locust, each of which stretches and relaxes various muscles.

Yoga and Meditation is a healthy wellness activity and we hope you will take full advantage of this opportunity. Thanks Cynthia for getting involved. **V**



**STRETCH YOUR BODY
STRETCH YOUR MIND
MONDAY'S 9-10 AM**

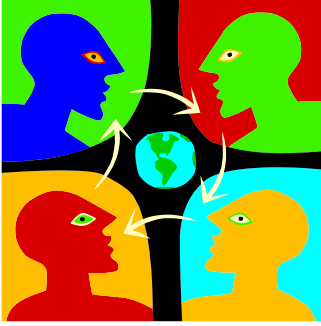
Yoga and Meditation

Monday's 9-10 AM

CVAB Living Room

DO YOU DESIRE TO LEAD A GROUP, CLASS OR VOLUNTEER AT CVAB?

ATTEND A CVAB 101 CLASS AND FIND OUT HOW YOU TOO CAN GET INVOLVED.



CONSUMER SUMMITS PLAN

1. GATHER INFORMATION
2. PUBLISH RESULTS
3. SUMMIT #1
4. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN
 - #1
5. SUMMIT #2
6. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN
 - #2
7. KEEP GOING...

Consumer Summits

CVAB's name says it all; this is a place where Consumer Voices Are Born. In addition, CVAB is committed to building a better community and part of that commitment is being the primary community resource for recovery and wellness. The sum of these two realities is CVAB hosting and facilitating, in conjunction with others, a series of regional Consumer Summits.

The plan is to gather information provided by you on what needs to be improved, created or just changed to build a better community for all, and then have a summit to thoroughly discuss the issues getting the most votes, develop action plans and enlist implementers of the plans; then we'll have another summit within a few months to get an update on the previous plan, thoroughly discuss the next issue and

develop action plans and enlist implementers of the plans and then repeat again until we have addressed all of the topics on the list.

These summits will involve as many as who want to be involved as we address matters in the mental health system and beyond to greater community issues. Our individual voices and collective efforts will bring about positive changes for a better community.

To get things started, we have provided a survey in this newsletter for you to fill out and return as soon as possible. We'll tabulate the results and schedule the first Consumer Summit this summer so we can talk, plan and act. We look forward to hearing your voices as they give birth to new solutions. ✓

Recovery Interfaces

The Members Advisory Council (MAC) meets once a month and they have planned an exciting Mental Health Awareness month-long event. Each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month of May we will be hearing from one of our CVAB community participants as he or she shares their journey of recovery. We are calling it Recovery Interfaces. You can participate in one of two ways: sign up at CVAB to tell your story; and come

for about a half hour to hear the story tellers. Either way, bring your lunch and be here at noon on Tuesday's and Thursday's throughout the month of May.

Come by CVAB to sign up to tell your story. Recovery Interfaces begins May 6, 2008 at noon and continues throughout the month on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The whole community is invited. ✓

**“RECOVERY IS
REMEMBERING WHO YOU
ARE AND USING YOUR
STRENGTHS TO BECOME
ALL THAT YOU WERE
MEANT TO BE.”**

LORI ASHCROFT, AZ



CVAB by the Numbers

<u>Jul 2006-Mar 2007</u>	<u>Jul 2007-Feb 2008</u>
388 First time Visits	919 First time Visits
5393 Total Visits	8464 Total Visits
30 Daily Visits Avg.	45 Daily Visits Avg.

Equaling a whole lot of Recovery!

M is for Recovery

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. That's a lot of M's. Its purpose is to raise awareness about mental illnesses and the importance of mental wellness for all. It is our opportunity to focus on the reality of mental health recovery.

At CVAB, we want to focus on the strength and courage of each participant in our community so we celebrate Mental Health Recovery Month. You have many opportunities throughout the month to participate.

Once again and back by popular demand, we invite each of you to come in during the month of May and share your story of recovery by writing it on one of our colorful Mental Health Recovery Month forms. As we collect them, we will again create a colorful Recovery Wall that tells the positive message of hope, wellness and well being.

The Members Advisory Council (MAC) has planned an exciting month-long event. Each Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month we will be hearing from one of our CVAB community participants as he or she shares

their journey of recovery. We call it Recovery Interfaces. You can participate in one of two ways: sign up at CVAB to tell your story; and come for about a half hour to hear the story tellers. Either way, bring your lunch and be here at noon on Tuesday's and Thursday's throughout the month of May.

Another opportunity is the You Can Work WITH Benefits workshop. This free one-day workshop will provide information to help you with employment. This event is May 7, 2008 and you only have until May 2, to register. Look for the registration form at CVAB or at www.cvabonline.com.

Our Community Gathering on May 19 will include food, fun and frivolity. We will also be introducing a new award at this gathering. Plan to participate as we talk about recovery, honor volunteers, plan another Portland trip and introduce our new award.

You have options! We hope you opt to participate often in May as we support the reality and hope of mental health recovery. V

RECOVERY AT CVAB

RECOVERY WALL

STORIES

ALL MONTH.

RECOVERY

INTERFACES

TUESDAYS &

THURSDAYS AT

NOON.

YOU CAN WORK

WITH BENEFITS

MAY 7

COMMUNITY

GATHERING

MAY 19

“The Bucket List” a review by Nick K.

Starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. Rob Reiner, Director .

I saw this movie at the Avalon Theater in Southeast Portland with my brother. I thought I would be treated to a comedy, which is partly what this movie is (there was a miscommunication between depressing at times, and almost tragic. It's about two old-timers of very different personalities (Nicholson and Freeman) who acquire extremely serious forms of cancer, their lives put in jeopardy by a very short amount of time to left to live in the same hospital room. They soon, however, come up with an idea (initiated by Freeman) that they should make a “bucket list”, a list of things to do before “kicking the bucket.” There's some really great scenes in here with shtick from both actors, doing things such as climbing the great

pyramids, driving race cars, and skydiving, amongst others.

What profoundly struck me about this movie (which I don't recommend to anyone who's mentally ill due to the hospital scenes, etc.) is that these two brave souls, fictitious or otherwise, take advantage of the time they have. Just three days before seeing this movie, I had gone to the emergency room on suicidal conditions. I rehabilitated well during these three days, but this movie in particular was humbling due to the above concept. In short, I was forced to think outside the box about mental illness and realize that although we are all self-destructive at times, it's definitely worth it to know just how many activities in life we can take advantage of. We aren't perfect, but the whole idea is “working with it.” V



A PERSON-CENTERED, RECOVERY-ORIENTED, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Consumer Voices Are Born
CVAB

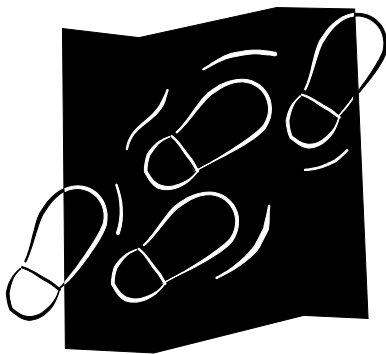
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Executive Direction from Brad Berry

Looking through this issue of The Voice (or any issue for that matter) will quickly reveal CVAB's commitment to wellness and recovery. Due to May being National Mental Health Awareness Month we have a few extra opportunities to voice our hope and provide evidence of our recovery. We encourage you to get involved in as many of the activities as possible to share your story and offer support to others, this is part of being a supportive community.

A significant contributor to our wellness and a guiding value of CVAB is respect, the Recovery Concept we are focusing on in May. We enjoyed an enriching discussion about respect at

the April Community Gathering with just about everybody contributing and all of us learning from one another. Our discussion ranged from the importance of self-respect, including some great insights on how, to our need to gain respect from others by giving it to them; this will help reduce stigma. We'll be having another community discussion in May on a different concept of recovery and as usual, our recovery-oriented supportive community will rise to the occasion through responsible discussion and respectful action. **V**