

# THE VOICE

April 2008

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN  
CVAB

Volume 2, Issue 10

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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.

## You Can Work WITH Benefits!

*"It is nearly impossible to make your own future when you are not part of the economic fabric of the culture you live in."*

Patricia Deegan

Patricia Deegan has shaped the mental health recovery movement and continues to be a leader through her ideas, words and actions. The above statement provides a challenging backdrop for an agency like CVAB seeking to be a recovery-oriented supportive community.

The ability to "make your own future" or self-direction is important to everyone on the journey of recovery. Self-direction is one of ten recovery concepts supporting the National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery. The ability to make your own future requires being proactive.

Unless independently wealthy, making your own future as "part of the economic fabric of the culture" usually includes some form of meaningful employment. For many in our community, the desire to move toward employment can be uncomfortable due to the uncertainty of losing the monthly benefit check or insurance coverage.

CVAB has high regard for self-direction as a supporting concept of our recovery value and we have a responsibility to provide the best information possible for you to make educated and informed choices about participating in the economic fabric of our community. In an effort to support you making informed choices about your future, CVAB is offering a one-day seminar explaining work incentives that support employment.

CVAB is hosting *You Can Work WITH Benefits* on May 7, 2008 at the Center for Community Health. This all day seminar for individuals on SSDI or SSI will provide encouragement, information and direct connection to supports that will assist you with making your own future.

You can register for this event by contacting CVAB! See the *You Can Work WITH Benefits* registration form inside. V

## Recovery Theme

CVAB is committed to the reality of Recovery. 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. April's theme is *peer support*. V



## KESSLER'S KOLUMN

### Taoism and Intervals by Nick K.

The rebelling Eastern philosophy of Taoism says we should look at life as a series of intervals. I find this especially relevant to aspects of recovery, ones that probably all of us are familiar with: “One day at a time, one hour at a time, one (blank) at a time.” According to Deng-Ming Dao, in his book “EverydayTao”, this is a method of living that has been around for thou-

sands of years. I almost feel like we’re being a bit cliché by only using “One day at a time,” etc. when so many deep ways of understanding this can be conceived by looking at the subject. We really could say instead: “This is another interval of my life, just something I need to take care of right now,” or something to that effect. Let us try not to forget such sage advice. V

### Thanks!!! From Michael

Hey gang! Would like to thank you all for the letter of hope-n-love, you all sent (via Cathy Bowen), while I was incarcerated in Salem. Thank you all, Michael B

## THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE!

### The X-Files by Nick K.

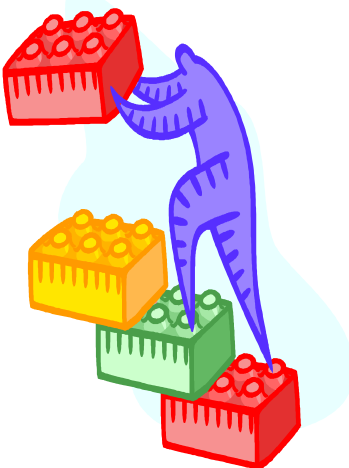
*The X-Files, Complete Second Season.* Starring David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson amongst many, many others. Created by Chris Carter. Is it pure coincidence that the X-Files and Generation X both came to age? My hypothesis is no. I remember my days as a teenager back in the ‘90s as both thrilling and frustration with this show. Thrilling, on the one sense, because there was a new, fresh, completely bizarre episode on nearly every weekend; and frustrating, because I didn’t own a TV and my brother did, and he didn’t allow me in his room. When, at age 18, I finally got my own TV, the series was

in it’s “dregs” and had almost got a bad reputation as being trendy. But the bottom line is: this is a great show. The music is appealing, the acting is top-notch, the plots keep you guessing until the very end, the *style* of the show in all its weirdness, is something so original that you have to witness it at least once. If you want to start with a one-shot experience, rent or buy the X-Files Movie, “Fight the Future”. But if you want to explore the culture of the show in its entirety, you should buy one of the seasons, preferably the first or second (since these were the best). The Truth is Out There! V

### The Three R’s by Carolyn

1. Respect: Community, systems and social acceptance and appreciation of consumers, including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination and stigma are crucial in achieving recovery
2. Responsibility: Consumers have a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Taking these steps toward their goal may require great courage.

3. Recovery and self direction: Consumers lead, control, exercise choice, and determine their own path of recovery by their own independence and control of resources to achieve a self determined life. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life (beyond the illness and disability). V



## Dances With Dogs by Bill

*dedicated to Joanne my teacher.*

People like dogs and cats for different reasons:

Dogs live in packs.  
Cats are independent.

Dogs can protect you.

Cats are curious.

Dogs can help the blind see.

Cats play with strings.

Dogs play with Frisbees.

Cats can be fussy.

Dogs have a good sense of smell.

Cats take cat naps.

Dogs like the water.

Cats like climbing trees.

Both dogs and cats have similarities:

You can dance with a dog or cat.

Dress them up in clothes.

Both can be loyal.

Petting them is good for stressful days.

They both love attention.

They both are furry and warm.

They both can be big or small.

They are both cute when they are young.

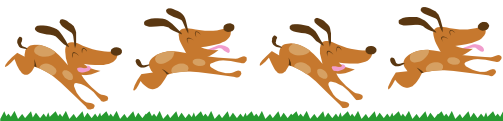
They both can be a handful.

They don't judge you as long as you treat them right.

They make us happy.

Studies have been done that cat people and dog people don't agree what spaghetti sauce they like.

I guess that dog people and cat people are entirely different and if you like both cats and dogs let me know which spaghetti sauce you like, maybe we can figure it out. V



## Strengths Based Recovery by Pat R.

I love attending the CVAB Community meetings; we always have such great discussions. This month Brad introduced the topic of strength based recovery and it brought up some interesting questions for me.

How do I see myself? Is it through my capabilities or my limitations? How do I think of myself? Do I think first of strengths or weaknesses? Do I base my vision of myself on what I know of myself, or what I hear from others? What about you? How do you view yourself?

I have many talents and also many different challenges. Often I let the challenges get in the way and identify with my failings instead of my successes. Sometimes the people around me put me into a box that is defined by a role they think I should play and I let that get in the way of who I am. A huge part of my personal struggle with recovery is remembering that I am a good and valuable person simply because I am.

As a peer support, I am often called upon to share my story, and it is not always positive. Sometimes recounting negative experiences triggers negative thoughts and I begin to doubt myself. My journey in-

volved parenting and I begin to blame myself for things that happened years ago, dropping into the "woulda, shoulda, coulda" mind frame. I beat myself up for decisions I made that didn't turn out well. At that same time, I am always reminding the parents I work with that we do our best with the information we have at the time. I can be forgiving of them...just not myself.

**THIS IS WHERE  
HOLDING A  
STRENGTHS BASED  
CONCEPT OF  
RECOVERY IS VITAL.**

This is where holding a strengths based concept of recovery is vital. I have developed coping skills for those times when things look darkest. I surround myself with things that make me smile and remind me of the positives in my life. I have pictures of my family on my desk and have created a successes file. When I find myself failing, I pick up the phone and reach out to my supports, my husband, my son, my friends. I recognize emotional danger zones and either avoid them or prepare in advance for the experience. And, finally, I take advantage of opportunities to build new alliances like all the new friends I have made since starting this job, not the least of which are my new friends from CVAB.

Thanks for becoming a part of my recovery team! V

### CVAB by the Numbers

<u>Jul 2006-Feb 2007</u>	<u>Jul 2007-Feb 2008</u>
321 First time Visits	799 First time Visits
4558 Total Visits	7298 Total Visits
29 Daily Visits Avg.	44 Daily Visits Avg.

Equaling a whole lot of Recovery!



**A PERSON-CENTERED, RECOVERY-ORIENTED, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY**

Consumer Voices Are Born  
CVAB

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**C V A B**

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## Executive Direction from Brad Berry

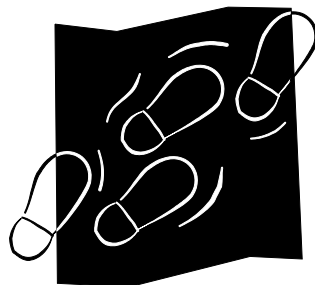
I began my journey of recovery somewhere in 1989. Many things before and after are a blur but I remember stopping self-medication through narcotics early that year followed by total sobriety beginning December 13, 1989. Somewhere in 1991 I began seeing a counselor over a couple of years to deal with matters of my past and present. More importantly, I began regularly meeting with a couple of groups of people and individuals to deal with my present and future (I didn't participate in AA or NA but many of my peers did and I benefited from their experiences). Our groups were very eclectic, mixing and matching anything that seemed to help, with different one's taking turns facilitating. These were my first experiences with a supportive peer group and a few of these people are still my closest friends and supports. Because of the profound impact on my recovery, I have been a huge advocate and participant of peers supporting peers both formally and informally through groups and one-on-one or two or three....

I think this is what makes CVAB so successful. We are a community respectfully and responsibly supporting one another—what I like to call “genuine peer support.” Due to similar experiences,

someone (or many someone's) at CVAB will have the ability to connect with others on a core level to listen, empathize, understand and caringly confront when necessary.

We are focusing on the *peer support* as the recovery concept during the month of April. CVAB respects and appreciates those who have chosen to become peer support specialist through taking specific classes and getting certified by the State of Washington; we know they can help make a difference. We also think that CVAB being a recovery-oriented supportive community of peers (with or without certification) will make the bigger difference; that respectful and responsible peers offering support will lead to greater opportunities for recovery.

First among CVAB's goals is being the community resource for recovery and wellness through scheduled activities and accessible peer support. Formally or informally, in groups or one-to-one, CVAB will be a community of peers supporting peers, people supporting each other, individuals supporting one another, for as long as it is needed so that each person can move forward in his or her recovery. V



*Do you want to work and keep your benefits?*

*Do you want help in developing your plan?*

**Who should join us?**  
*Individuals receiving  
Federal or State Benefits  
needing information about  
Work Incentives*

SSI, SSDI, MEDICARE,  
MEDICAID, HWD and MORE

**Where will it be?**

Center for Community Health  
1601 E Fourth Plain Blvd, Vancouver  
Main Conference Room, 2nd Floor

**Guest Speaker:**

Mary Jadwisiak is a well respected, recognized public speaker, teacher and advisor. She brings honest dialogue and thoughtful insight to her work to improve the lives of people who experience psychiatric distress.

**Planners:**

Cindy Falter and Brad Berry are trained as Work Incentives Planners.

# You Can Work WITH Benefits

*A Free One Day Workshop*

# CVAB

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN, INC

## May 7, 2008

**8:30-9:30**      **Coffee Shop\***

**9:30-12:15**    **Intro, Planners &  
Speaker**

**12:15-1:15**    **Free Lunch**

**1:15-4:30**      **Groups/Workshop**

*\*Coffee Shop is informal gathering time.*

**Please pre-register by May 2, 2008.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Dietary Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

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