

THE VOICE

December 2007

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN
CVAB

Volume 2 Issue 6

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The VOICE is a monthly newsletter produced and distributed by CVAB, Inc.

The content of articles are the opinions of the writers and are published in the Voice so they may exercise their right to say something, and for your reading pleasure

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.

The Survey Says...

CVAB provided over 500 chances for our community and readers to exercise their individual and collective voices in the month of October. The Board of Directors charged the staff with developing a survey and distributing it. The first survey of its type in the history of our agency was distributed through The Voice, made available at CVAB and online. The primary objective of the survey was to hear what is going well and what needs to go better with CVAB.

The survey asked 20 questions across four different areas—Self-Help Recovery Center, Warm Line, *The Voice* Newsletter and CVABonline.com—plus one “wish list” question. Although we cannot know how many surveys were actually handled or reviewed by CVAB participants and others, there were twenty-five (25) returned via mail or hand delivered to office. Our estimate is this represents a 5% return rate. Generally, the results were positive and reflect CVAB's putting into its values of respect, responsibility and recovery into action.

Perhaps the most important question on this assessment relates to CVAB supporting a person's journey of wellness and recovery. 86% re-

sponded they think CVAB supports their wellness and recovery “quite a bit” or “very much.” The results indicate that CVAB is succeeding as a person-centered, recovery-oriented supportive community.

Another good indication of CVAB being a supportive environment is the responses to questions about the Warm Line. Of those who have called the Warm Line, they considered it helpful, easily accessible, and supportive with friendly and listening volunteers.

There are many suggestions referring to longer hours and more locations which comes as no surprise and is in line with future plans. When examining the survey as a whole, there emerge desires in four general areas: more funding; longer hours and open more days; multiple sites; and more volunteer, employment and activities opportunities.

At the writing of this article, there are no definitive strategy on how to proceed but action plans will include expanding hours early in 2008 and continuing the values based approach—respect, responsibility and recovery. **V Note:** A copy of the results summary will be available December 10, 2007 in the CVAB office.

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 dia-

log we enjoy around the new theme at each CVAB Community Gathering. December's theme is **Empowerment. V**

I'm Not Doing Too Good



KESSLER'S KOLUMN

It's one thing to know this sentiment deep in one's heart and try to do something about it. It's an entirely different thing to go off other peoples' advice (or judgment) and get down on yourself about it. I include both "judgment" and "advice" in a somewhat negative context because when people do these things, especially professionals they are judging your life.

And that ain't right. I think a lot of consumers (including myself) try to take too many peoples' advice from start to finish in the mental health system, rather than step in at the appropriate time. This is understandable—the people (professionals, at least) know what they're talking about, and often have good intentions. I just want to remind consumers that your own advice is often

your best advice. Of course you should listen and consider the voices of those around you. Just don't believe everything you hear. At this point in the game, we should know ourselves and believe in ourselves first and foremost. In my opinion, it's one of the best ways to approach the "I'm Not Doing Too Good" approach. Peace. V

Poetry Shared from CVAB community members

A Christmas Wish Poem by Sara

What would the Lord say if at his return Found all religions getting along?

I'd think he'd be thrilled and

Teach us a new praise song!

Blessed are the peace makers!

Blessed are the poor!

Blessed are the tender hearted!

Oh yet I forget Blessed are the Staff at CVAB For they will not want for one thing Some day that is for sure!

So what if one keeps Sunday and

One keeps Sunday or Perhaps Monday

Does it really matter.

Some days I wake up not knowing

Which day but my heart shows me the way!

What if one says Rapture the other resurrection And other one believes in another direction!

So don't you worry there's a merciful God above That will judge you by how you GIVE And how much you LOVE!

who am i...

i am a woman of God

i am a woman who will make her own decisions

i am a wife

i am a mother

i am a daughter

i am an sister

i am an aunt

i am a 'nana'

i am faithful

i am capable

i am dependable

i am reliable

i am trustworthy

i am kind

i am loving

i am compassionate

i am respectable

i am confident

i am spunky

i am funny

i am helpful

i am smart

i am responsible

i am empathetic

i am talkative

i am a good friend

i am strong willed

i am willing to learn healthy changes in my life

i am a woman who has a mental health illness

i am me

anonymous



The Family View of Recovery by Pat Roe

At the last CVAB community meeting, Brad asked us to ponder the question, “What is your view of recovery?” I used to equate my recovery with that of my son. When he was having a bad time, so was I. When life was going okay for him, I could get on as well. Whether he liked it or not, our recovery journeys were so intertwined that I couldn’t envision a time when I could go through a day without connecting with him to see how we were. And then at a meeting one night someone introduced me to the word “detach” and I started a whole new journey of my own.

There are really two components that went into my family and personal recovery. The first was being able to let go of my son and allow him the room to recover, and the second was having the resiliency to keep on trying when things weren’t working out the way they should.

Resiliency comes into play whenever we need to look beyond the struggles of today to the hope for what tomorrow may bring. Pennsylvania State University has a web site dedicated to Family and Youth Resiliency and they state that “resiliency is the ability of a family to

develop and or maintain healthy functioning and successfully adapt to life’s challenges and risks.” Sounds a lot like recovery, doesn’t it?

“RESILIENCY COMES INTO PLAY WHENEVER WE NEED TO LOOK BEYOND THE STRUGGLES OF TODAY TO THE HOPE FOR WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING.”

I was speaking with another mother the other day and she described their life with her son as a roller coaster. One day things are going well and the next they are in crisis. It can be truly overwhelming. I understood her analogy because I had used it myself. For many years, I too was on that roller coaster. The worst part of it all was that I never bought a ticket for that ride, it just grabbed me and off we went. When I made a conscious decision to stop riding, I got better and was able to get out of my son’s way so he could take control of his journey through recovery.

Getting back to Brad’s question, “What is your view of recovery?”, I would have to say that my view of recovery is wrapped around everyone in my family choosing to live purposefully in a healthy environment while growing and adapting to whatever life throws at us. And, as we each find and define our personal recovery, our family as a whole recovers and we can stop the roller coaster forever.

WHATEVER YOUR BELIEFS, I WISH YOU PEACE, JOY, AND COMFORT.

I WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS IN WHATEVER IT MEANS TO YOU.

Holiday Time by Carolyn McCord

It’s the holidays and it means different views from people all over the world. It can mean gifts, and toys for kids. Some people don’t have much. There are gift baskets from churches and different agencies. There is Thanksgiving that helps us be thankful for what we have. There is Christmas where stars shine on everyone. To some the holidays mean Jesus’

birthday, and for some it is family and friends. Some people are Jewish and celebrate Hanukah, burning of beautiful candles. I’m thankful for what I have. I’m thankful for family and friends on Christmas Day I am reminded to attend church every Sunday. I do not have to have gifts for a happy day. Happy days come everyday and peo-

ple reach out and share and help others.

If you feel down and depressed try CVAB. There are many activities to choose from. You can socialize and make friends. CVAB is a safe place.

Whatever your beliefs, I wish you peace, joy, and comfort. I wish you happy holidays in whatever it means to you.



A PERSON-CENTERED, RECOVERY-ORIENTED, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

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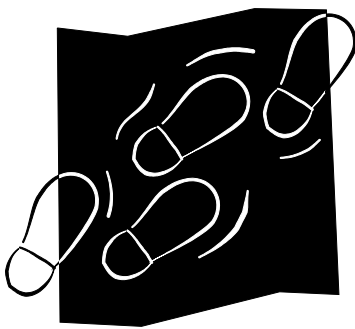
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CVAB

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Executive Direction from Brad Berry



This time of year is a celebration of anticipation and hope. We are coming to the end of one year and looking forward with expectations to the next. In two of the major faith communities we find celebrations using lights that signify hope during the darkest time of the year. So it is fitting that we at CVAB are looking forward to the New Year with hope and great expectations but not without one last look back at 2007.

During the past year CVAB settled into our new home here at the Center for Community Health; added new board members who are helping to shape the future of our agency; averaged nearly 800 visits a month; added staff, groups, classes and opportunities for involve-

ment; participated with other county and state agencies in moving the transformation of the mental health system forward.

More importantly, we have witnessed individuals living their version of recovery as they secure stable housing; find jobs; gain new insights and skills, take new and healthier risks; celebrate a day, week, month or year of sobriety; and so much more. We've also seen some encounter setbacks as we've strived to be resilient with them.

Ultimately, CVAB was a person-centered, recovery-oriented supportive community in 2007. When the present looks this bright it is hard to imagine but the future looks even brighter. **V**

I MISS THE WAY THE LEAVES WOULD FALL
A MEMORY EACH ONE
WALKING THROUGH THEM FALLING DOWN
I PICKED ONE JUST FOR FUN
GOLDEN MOMENTS IN MY HAND
I WATCH THEM FALL AND CRY
I TRY TO HOLD THEM "PUT THEM BACK"
WHY CAN'T I SAVE THEM WHY?
THIS MEMORY WAS SOMEONES PAIN
AND SO I PICKED AGAIN
THE NEXT ONE MADE ME WISH TIME STILL
THE NEXT ONE NEEDS A FRIEND
THE NEXT ONE CAUGHT THE WIND AND FELL
RIGHT INTO MY HAND
A WARMING LOVE AND PEACE WITHIN
MADE ME UNDERSTAND
MEMORIES ARE MADE FO LIFE ALL THROUGH
THE RISK IN THE GOOD AND BAD
THE GREEN THE GOLD AND THE BROWN "THIS LEAF"
REPRESENTS MY DAD
I LET IT FALL AND WALKED AWAY
THE LEAVES THEY FELL ONCE MORE
IT'S NICE TO KNOW THAT NO ONE KNOWS
WHAT THE FUTURE HAS IN STORE
I MISS THE WAY THE LEAVES WOULD FALL
THEY KEEP ME COMPANY
REMINDING ME THIS TIME OF YEAR
OF ALL THE MEMORIES IN ME



BY ARCHIE K
11/14/07

Federal and State Benefits!

SSI, SSDI, MEDICARE, MEDICAID, HWD and MORE

Do you want to work and keep your benefits?

You can!! Come and learn how!!

For providers and consumers

WHAT: Informational Presentation:
Question & Answer Time

WHEN: Monday December 10th, 2007
1:00pm



WHERE: Consumer Voices Are Born (CVAB)
Center for Community Health 1601 E 4th Plain Blvd
Building 17, Suite A114 Vancouver WA 98661

A Person-Centered, Recovery-Oriented, Supportive Community

CVAB is working to provide a
safe and sober place for all
consumers of mental health
services, either past or present.

We offer self-help classes, recovery groups, a variety of trainings, access to computers, volunteer opportunities, social activities and much more.

Phone: 360-397-8050 Fax: 360-397-8059

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