

# THE VOICE

May 2009

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN  
CVAB

Volume 3, Issue 11

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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.

## May Raises Reality of Recovery

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Its purpose is to raise awareness about mental illnesses and the importance of mental health and 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.

We invite 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 forms. As we collect them, we create a colorful Recovery Wall that tells the positive message of hope, wellness and well being. If your story is already there or you're curious about how others view recovery, take time to read the stories on the Recovery Wall.

Our Community Gathering is on May 18. Plan to participate as we

talk about recovery, honor volunteers, and discuss how things are going at CVAB.

As you look at our calendar you will see all kinds of activities, old and new, for you to participate in your wellness and recovery.

Begin with Monday where you can experience a week's worth here alone! In addition to the regular morning lineup, you can take a

walk with the new Walking Group and get back just in time to talk about working in the Employment Support Group.

Tuesdays add variety to the schedule. If you have completed one of the 16 or so WRAP groups that CVAB has offered in the past, you can Re-WRAP in the present as you move into the future. There's also a Sex Talk forum for women and an Advanced Directive workshop later in the month (I wonder if there is a connection?). Tuesdays also offers



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## KESSLER'S KOLUMN

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**"ALONE IS A  
CHALLENGING, YET  
EASY PLACE TO BE."**

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## Normally Insane by Nick

Most people dictate that no one's "normal". I would agree with that as "normal" being a social status: it doesn't exist. But there is definitely something to be said as normal being an emotional/mental status. There are a lot of things in life that drive us insane, or more mildly, nuts. Obviously, some of us go through these instances a lot more than others. This "some of us" (I hate to say it) tends to be the typical mental health consumer. I remember a counselor from the old H.A.S. program saying that the group

was "the survivors". I really like that. I'm reminded of the quote by Teddy Roosevelt: "It is not having been in the dark house, but having left it, that counts." Yes, we are the survivors, and it took survivors to start CVAB, "maintain" it, and it will take survivors to continue to "maintain" it, to continue our conspiracy of hope and wellness and recovery. So, it is normal for us to have a certain amount of insanity in our lives. We can reserve our needs for CVAB when push comes to shove - it often does. We'll be here. V

## Dusty Road by Heidi H.

"Oh," she said as she walked down the dirt road after leaving the café. It would have been in a movie, but thi9s was real: no worries, no cares, no authority; just her and her thoughts. Purposely she kicked up dirt - dust to be Queen of the dirt road: all of the alone places where loneliness could never grow.

He saw her walking from a distance; it was only natural to ask her if she wanted a lift. (And she did). Some guys are just like that: nice. They probably got some engine piece in the back seat and some girly magazine on the back floor. Never hurtin' nobody, just nice guys.

He kept talking about country music and the flag and how when he gets this engine working he'd offer her a test ride; she could care less if it was a Harley (Yamaha 800, Yamaha 800) knowing it would never happen she was happy to be asked. They went down the road a piece when he said, "I don't even know your name."

Neither mentioned it again, they were merely committed to the practice of it all; it seemed there would be other dirt

roads, long paces, and invisible days. Days where a dog could be seen playing Frisbee where there was even enough water for a dog to have.

Alone is a challenging, yet easy place to be. Anyone can find a rift - but it's the alone times I save: one billion Chinese don't give a rat's ass, so it's those times I am free to dream - without judgment. I believe eighteen year olds (old enough to go to war) should not have to raise their hands to go to the bathroom in school. I also believe if an eighteen year old is old enough (to go to war) they are old enough to buy alcohol and drink. I also believe run-aways or throw-a-ways should not have to be forced to go home - ever! That dirt was mine.

Had he not stopped, she would have never known she was alone. She only noticed that the beatings and the noise were gone. She looked at her feet and danced. Finding herself closer to a main road, she said, "Thank you," to the driver and was off. She said something like "I matter," even though no one heard the "I matter." Looking back it had mattered. It had all mattered. V

## Work Incentives To Help (WITH) Benefits

I know some of you know all of this but I am still seeing people that haven't received good counsel on how everything works. It is very important that you know what kind of benefits you are getting!

You can work and keep your medical or buy-in to Medicaid program. If you are working or planning to go to work, failure to know how money affects your benefits can result in over payment or loss of benefit checks. Work incentives are designed to help you earn money for greater independents and self-sufficiency.

(Reporting your wages is a requirement of SSI and sometimes for SSDI. You need to report when you start or stop

working by calling 1-800-772-1213 Social Security and after that each program is different.)

As an Employment Support Specialist at CVAB, I am responsible and have been trained to help people understand SSI, SSDI and other benefits and how work incentives help you. I can provide individualized planning and guidance on an ongoing basis with each consumer to ensure well-informed and optimal decisions regarding Social Security, health insurance and other benefits.

Please contact me, Cindy Falter, at CVAB if you have questions or need information. *V*

## CVAB as Your Employment Resource

Finding a job in today's shrinking market is difficult. Every available type of help is worth trying.

- CVAB has a lot of resources including:
- Computer Lab with Internet access
- Computer assistance and classes
- Job Ready Self-Help Notebook (all about resumes, cover letters, interviewing ideas, etc.)
- Job Leads notebook (We print out every Monday a list of job leads from several web sites: Work Source, Craig's List, Hotels, Clark College, Vancouver City, County and Monster.com)
- Some excellent books that are available for you to check out and use at the center including: Magic of Resumes, Cover Letters and No One is Unemployable.

In addition, CVAB is now offering:

### Employment Support Group

Monday's

4:30 to 5:30

There are new topics every Monday and there is no need to RSVP, just drop-in on any Monday.

This group is for anyone working, not working, thinking about working or wanting to start slow and try volunteering first.

Speaking of volunteering, CVAB is now working to find more and more avenues for you to volunteer so keep your eyes open for that.

CVAB is here to support and empower you in whatever way we can. *V*

*"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

20<sup>th</sup> World Congress Rehab International in Oslo Norway, June 2004

## Interview Questions

How will you answer these?

- What is your greatest weakness?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What would you like to avoid in your next job?
- What can you tell me in five minutes that would persuade me, you should have the job?
- How competitive are you?
- What recent achievement are you most proud of?
- What mistakes did you make in handling a difficult situation?
- If I called your last boss, what would he or she say about you?
- What motivates you?

"...ANYONE

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## Art Strategy 101

### What is Art Strategy 101?

It is a gathering of artists of any level looking for ideas on presenting, promoting or gathering art.

Angela Baumgartner, a professional artist and instructor, will host this event.

**When?** May 26 at 1 PM

**Who?** Open to everyone, especially fine arts artists interested in marketing their wares. Interested participants will be interested in presenting their art professionally and sharing they're at in the process.

What a unique opportunity and we hope you get the word out to all you know who may be interested! V



**"YOU CAN COUNT  
ON CVAB BEING  
YOUR PLACE FOR  
PEER SUPPORT."**

## May Opportunities *(continued from page 1)*

the Poetry Group for those experienced or looking to become so in the artistic voice. A new offering on Tuesdays is the Diabetic Support Group at 2 PM; we care about one another's good health. Finally, the final Tuesday of the month offers artists an opportunity to gather and discuss the marketing of their materials (see article above for more).

Wednesdays include the standard fare of Support and WRAP groups plus the ever popular Computer classes.

Thursday's new addition is the Weight Loss Support Group. This is another wellness group that supports the holistic recovery.

Friday's are packed but if you're looking to get out of the Center while enjoying good company, try joining Nick on their monthly adventure into Portland.

The final day of the week, Saturday, has the new Men's Support Group. It is also a more "quiet" day at CVAB.

Beyond all this, you can still count on CVAB being your place for peer support. We'll also keep you up to date on all the other community activities in the month of May.

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



### Jailbird by Paul M

When I was on probation  
 I was nervous about my  
 situation just all the time.  
 I didn't have enough money  
 to do my laundry, let alone  
 pay my court fines and fee's  
 on time.  
 And my homelessness and lifestyle  
 it laid heavy on my heart and mind.  
 Oh, how the time just fly's  
 and yet so poor I am  
 that to do the more important things  
 in life I never seem to have enough  
 time.  
 And yet no matter what happens I  
 should know by now  
 that every little thing  
 it will turn out just fine.  
 No matter what happens  
 it just turns out for the best.  
 Life is about facing your fears  
 just don't let this situation  
 turn you into tears. V

### Now 9:20 AM (still February) by Heidi H

I keep working Acrostics like they're  
 crossword puzzles and running out for  
 a cigarette. This prose keeps me busy  
 like the lipping I never learned.  
 Brown, brown and a touch of aqua  
 color we run near water and I hope.  
 Hope for the return of snow on a  
 sunny day, hope for this reoccurring  
 nightmare to end; the one about the  
 bumble bee flying overhead chasing a  
 creature the size of a dog. Damn Star  
 Trek. Eat 'em for breakfast then wake  
 up on some train. It's all bout trust  
 and the Lord: I need a lawyer for so  
 many things. I haven't worked since  
 1990 and have been homeless like  
 these purple fields for almost a year. V



### Untitled by Author Unknown

Love ever gives,  
 Forgives,  
 Outlives,  
 and ever stands  
 with open hands.  
 And while it lives,  
 it gives.  
 For this is love's prerogative:  
 To give, and give, and give. V

**"LIFE IS ABOUT  
 FACING YOUR  
 FEARS...."**

### 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. The May theme is *Hope*. V

### CVAB by the Numbers

<u>Jul 07—Mar 08</u>	<u>Jul 08—Mar 09</u>
919 First time Visits	997 First time Visits
8464 Total Visits	12263 Total Visits
46 Daily Visits Avg.	60 Daily Visits Avg.

**Equaling a whole lot of Recovery!**



**YOUR RESOURCE FOR WELLNESS  
AND RECOVERY**

**Consumer Voices Are Born  
CVAB**

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**CVAB**

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*CVAB Hours!*

9–7 PM Monday through Saturday

*Please enter the Building on 1st Floor on  
Saturdays.*

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## Executive Direction From Brad Berry

Much has happened over the past couple of months at CVAB. The list includes: temporarily adding 3 part time staff; beginning Evaluating CVAB's Effectiveness Project and temporarily adding 4 staff from the Center to conduct interviews; adding all kinds of groups, just look at the calendar; averaging close to 80 people a day in the Center; the usual extraordinary peer support activity around the Center; and the list goes on.

This has presented many rewarding challenges. One of the things I am constantly reminded of is that we are not perfect and not everything is going to be to everyone's liking and that's okay. The important thing is we approach it as any person approaches their own recovery, one day at a time

and giving it the best effort possible. Our committed staff really rises to the challenge and deserves our thanks.

On a personal note, I have received a couple of nice surprises lately. First, I was installed in the Clark County Mental Health Hall of Fame...thanks to those who nominated me. Finally, I just completed my third year at CVAB (a bit of a surprise) and received a framed certificate signed by many of you along with a gift card to one of my favorite stores; this was a huge surprise. I wanted to express my gratitude to all of you for making it possible. I know my imperfections are covered over by the abundance of your patience and perseverance... Thanks! V

