Mental Health Association of San Mateo County

OUR MISSION

The Mental Health Association of San Mateo County (MHA) works to improve the quality of life for people in our community who suffer from mental illness. MHA seeks to ensure accessibility to adequate resources and works to guarantee that each person can live as independently and productively as possible.

Mental Health Association of San Mateo County
2686 Spring Street
Redwood City, CA 94063
Phone: 650-368-3345
Web: www.mhasmc.org

MHA CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

As the end of 2006 approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals and groups who have provided critical support and assistance to the Mental Health Association this year and in years past.

The MHA has now celebrated 60 years of service to the community. Our Spring Street Shelter program has just celebrated 20 years of providing emergency services to individuals in need. The agency has grown to meet existing and emerging needs and all of this has been done as a direct result of people in the community, our Board, staff and volunteers. These individuals have committed themselves and their resources, both personal and professional, to make a difference, to make San Mateo County a better place for the people we serve, their families and the community at large.

MHA Board and staff extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our many partners, and we look forward to continuing in our efforts to improve programs and services to and for our constituency in 2007.

Melissa Platte
Executive Director

OPERATION REINDEER 2006

Help us put gifts under the tree at our 32nd Annual Friendship Center Party. You can be Santa’s helper by making a generous donation to MHA Operation Reindeer.

With a caring community’s support, MHA staff will purchase 300 gifts for Friendship Center members, and for residents of our shelter, transitional and permanent housing programs.

Because this party will be the only holiday celebration for many of the mentally ill adults in our community, we make it a traditional observance with a holiday meal and all the trimmings. There will be a disc jockey for dancing and Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive to distribute gifts to each person. A $25 donation will buy five gifts or feed five members holiday lunch.

Please support Operation Reindeer with a tax-deductible contribution today:

By Mail:
MHA Operation Reindeer
2686 Spring Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

On the Web:
www.mhasmc.org/donate

Inside ...
• Redwood City Proclamation
• Teaching in Schools about Mental Illness
• Staff Profile: Susan Miller
• MHA Programs
• Kitchen Tour in May 2007
Susan Miller is a registered nurse who works with residents in MHA’s Belmont Apartments and at the St. Matthew Hotel thanks to a three year grant MHA received from the California Wellness Foundation. She is trained in The Feldenkrais Method and uses her training and experience to address the health needs of residents.

What does your job entail at MHA?
I establish connections with residents that will help them to feel safe and comfortable in discussing their personal health issues with me. I have provided stress-reduction techniques, information about foot care hygiene, and answered various questions about medications. I taught movement classes in response to residents who have balance issues and pain in the joints, neck and shoulder. I am currently working on helping residents at the Belmont Apartments develop a taste for more nutritious foods that are simple to prepare. I also provide in-service training for MHA staff, such as responding to medical emergencies.

What is rewarding about your job?
I find the unexpected things that happen as a result of something I’ve offered (advice, encouragement) are the most rewarding. One resident that I’ve been working with for a long time at the St. Matthew Hotel has been depressed lately. I encouraged him to play his guitar again and started strumming a few cords in front of him. When he realized I wasn’t getting it right, he took the guitar and started playing it.

What is challenging about your job?
I find the time it takes to build trust with residents challenging. People express a desire to improve, but follow-up is difficult. Clients are not much different from the general public in terms of losing weight, quitting smoking and eating healthier foods.

What are your hopes for MHA in the next five years?
Lives have changed for the better because of the housing and support MHA has provided to people who have lived on the streets. It’s nice for the people we serve to have a home in the community.

On Monday, September 25, 2006 the Mental Health Association and nine other Redwood City-based organizations received proclamations from the City Council of the City of Redwood City, honoring them for their dedication, humanity, compassion and ongoing good works on behalf of the community of Redwood City. All agencies were cited as exemplary drug and alcohol recovery organizations that selflessly serve our community and region. The Proclamations were given as part of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. The other organizations honored include Bridges Program; Cordilleras Mental Health Center; Daytop California Adolescent Program; El Centro de Libertad; Mental Health Association of San Mateo County; Redwood Center; The Sequoia Center; Service League of San Mateo County’s HOPE Houses and In-Jail Programs; The Children’s Place Program of the Legacy Foundation; Youth and Family Enrichment Services’ Archway and Insights Alcohol & Drug Service Programs.

Spring Street Shelter Arts & Crafts Class
On Saturday, October 7, 2006, Naty Gomez, a community volunteer, began a weekly arts & crafts class at the Spring Street Shelter. So far, the Shelter and Transitional Housing residents have painted with watercolors, drawn with colored pencils and crayons, made soap, and created lanterns out of paper-mâché. All participants are having fun, while enjoying the opportunity for creative expression. The class is free to all residents and is held every Saturday at 10 am. Underwriting for the supplies needed for the projects is funded by a generous contribution from Gaila Murphy.

Jayne, a Transitional Housing resident, recently attended one of Naty’s classes. “I enjoyed working with Naty. It was relaxing,” said Jayne.

Naty Gomez attends John F. Kennedy University. Naty brings both skill and enthusiasm to her volunteer work at Spring Street Shelter and the residents have benefited tremendously.
Friendship Centers offer social and recreational opportunities for adults with mental illness during the week. There are 5 sites in the county and a calendar of activities and outings is produced monthly. New participants may drop-in.

The Spring Street Shelter provides temporary shelter by referral only for homeless adults with mental illness. Clients are offered meals, donated clothing, laundry room access, skills groups, and support services.

The Transitional Housing Program helps Spring Street Shelter residents move from homelessness into long-term, stable and permanent housing. Residents work with a case manager to achieve their goals and plan for the future.

The Housing & Client Assistance Program provides short-term assistance to low-income, HIV positive residents to help them acquire and maintain permanent housing. The program also helps pay move-in costs and other housing-related items, and connects people with community resources.

The Shelter Plus Care Program provides subsidized housing and support services to help adults with mental illness live successfully in the community. The CHRIS Program offers Living Skills Assessments and training for Spring Street Shelter residents, Transitional Housing and community clients by referral only. Provides recommendations for housing options that match client skills, interest, ability and needs.

The Community Friend Program offers a companion/support network for isolated individuals so they can participate in community activities.

The SAYAT Program (Support & Advocacy for Young Adults in Transition) helps stabilize homeless young adults and facilitate their transition into permanent, stable housing.

The St. Matthew Hotel Support Services Program provides on-site support for the 56 low income residents of the St. Matthew Residential Hotel in downtown San Mateo.

The “14 Slots” Supportive Housing Program works to stabilize chronically homeless, dually or triply diagnosed individuals into permanent supportive housing throughout San Mateo County.

The Belmont Apartments offer stable, affordable, supportive housing for 24 homeless adults with mental illness and/or who are dually or triply diagnosed.

The Housing Support Program provides 90 units of housing and support throughout the community for seriously mentally disabled adults, and provides an Occupational Therapist to perform independent living skills assessments and assist clients become oriented to the community.

Breaking the Silence (BTS) is a free community education program available to upper elementary, middle and high schools to help students learn about mental illness and to recognize the warning signs of mental illness and the importance of seeking treatment.

High School Students Learn About Mental Illness

Between May 2005 and November 2006, MHA staff member Arlene Aquino, made presentations to a number of high schools in the area to “break the silence” about mental illness.

More than 200 high school students from Stanbridge Academy, Sequoia High School, Carlmont High School, and Woodside High School participated in the presentations. BTS was developed by three veteran teachers from NAMI Queens/Nassau who are also family members of people who have a mental illness. BTS is currently being used in 50 states and parts of Canada, Mexico, Ireland and Armenia.

Teachers may contact Arlene Aquino at (650) 839-1961 to schedule free presentations in their classrooms.

For more information about BTS visit www.btslessonplans.org
SUPPORT THE BELMONT FUND

The Belmont Apartments is a new beginning for 24 individuals living with mental illness. These individuals will continue to need our help to live independent and productive lives. That’s why we’ve created The Belmont Fund to provide ongoing support services such as counseling and coaching. Please support The Belmont Fund with a tax-deductible contribution today.

By Mail: MHA The Belmont Fund
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COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAGUE
KITCHEN TOUR IN MAY 2007

Save the Date!
Friday May 18, 2007

Each year, the Community Service League hosts a Kitchen Tour that raises thousands of dollars to benefit MHA and Youth and Family Services (YFES) clients. The next Kitchen Tour will be held on Friday, May 18, 2007. Five homes in Hillsborough will be open for touring. Guests will see state of the art kitchens, elegant family living areas, and beautiful gardens. There will also be demonstrations by artists and home décor specialists. For tickets and information, contact Angela Bruno-Castro at 650-368-3345 ext. 102.

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