

ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERISM

“A Step on the Road to Recovery”



50TH ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 22, 2009

RMHA will be hosting its 50th Annual Meeting on Thursday, October 22nd at 7:30 p.m. in the Andrea Simon Conference Room, 5676 Riverdale Avenue, 2nd floor. All members of RMHA and the general community are invited to attend.

A highlight of the meeting will be the program, “A Step on the Road to Recovery” about volunteerism at RMHA, featuring a unique collaboration between the AFYA Foundation and 12 Volunteers from the RMHA Continuing Day Treatment and Vocational Programs. AFYA founder and director, Danielle Butin, will participate in the program along with several volunteers and RMHA Staff.

AFYA, which means “good health” in Swahili, is a non-profit organization based in Yonkers which provides unopened excess medical supplies to countries in Africa and to Haiti. These unused supplies, originally designated for surgery cannot be used by the hospital according to federal health regulations.

RMHA clients, many of whom have been unable to work for many years because of the severity of their mental illness, are gaining the experience and the confidence needed for their return to full or part-time employment, as well as the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping others. In August, AFYA selected them as their “Volunteers of the Month.”

The meetings’ agenda also includes the election of directors for the Board

and awards to staff with landmark service anniversaries. Recognized for 20 years of service will be Joseph Brightman and Marcus Daugherty who have served as counselors of our residence for 20 years and Janice O’Brien of the accounting department who has also served for 20 years. Dr. Barbara Russek, psychologist, who has served as a consultant to early childhood facilities will be honored for 15 years of services. A ten year award will go to Lynn Acevedo of the billing department and a five-year award to Dr. Daniel Koblentz, child psychiatrist.

For more information about our Annual Meeting, please call 718-796-5300

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK IS OCTOBER 5-11, 2009

Be Sure to Reach Out to Others and Spread the Word

Help and Healing is Out There for You or Someone You Know - Just Call RMHA - 718-796-5300



Volunteerism at RMHA Where Clients Shine

As we the clients of RMHA venture into the unknown perhaps the only way to nurture ourselves is through our inner strength and resilience and the compassion of the others. We have found that the manner in which we perpetuate this cycle is by giving back.

Fortunately, RMHA has provided a forum for us to volunteer, as we aid others within our community. Whether we prepare meals, job coach, or help in groups we have quickly learned that service is a “two-way street”, allowing us to uncover our value and purpose. More than being simply a product of mental illness, at RMHA, we have found a way to gain personal and professional gratification.

As volunteers, we contribute a voice that might otherwise be silenced. Some of us have been out of employment for years, trying to enter into the workforce in an unstable economy, in school, etc, and we are allowed to donate (continued inside...)



Also Inside...

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- CDT Program Shines with New Staff Appointments
- Education and Training at RMHA
- Notable News
- A Creative Way to Donate





A Message from Our New President...

Dear Friends of RMHA,

I am the incoming President of the Board of RMHA. I took on this role because RMHA is a unique organization that is near to my heart. You know, I am sure, of many worthy organizations helping those in need, so I thank you for letting me tell you why RMHA deserves your support.

I grew up with RMHA, as my mother, Dr. Helen Meyers was the longtime Director. I learned from her that the therapists and staff here are uniquely and intensely committed to providing the highest quality treatment, rooted in a psycho-dynamic perspective and a deep understanding of best-practices in the field.

Over its 50 years, RMHA has grown from an intimate neighborhood clinic into a regional institution serving the North Bronx, establishing a national reputation for excellence. No other organization of its size offers the same breadth of services, integrates those services so fully, and delivers them with such high quality. Constantly innovating, RMHA works with children, adolescents, adults and seniors, as individuals and groups, in day treatment, schools and residential programs and provides substance abuse treatment and vocational training. It has won numerous awards and accolades, but the real reward comes in the results RMHA achieves with clients. Below are just two comments among many that I have heard and read from our clients, these regarding our ReSolve Center for Recovery,

"After struggling with addiction for 23 years the ReSolve program gave me my life back."

"I have tried other programs and always continued using [drugs]. I want everyone to know that this one works."

Now, as the economy wreaks havoc with the lives of our clients, and with the resources of our supporters, we need ask for your help. Funding sources, both public and private, are strained just as the need for RMHA's services increases, so our job is to fill the gap. Please consider contributing to our Annual Fund drive, coming to our 50th Anniversary Gala and participating in our Annual 5K Run/Walk and Family Fair.

Thank you for supporting this necessary and unique organization,

Andrew Meyers
President



Volunteerism at RMHA (cont)

(continued from front page...) our time without passing through red-tape. Our efforts, thoughts, and suggestions are deemed vital. For clients, this is a huge stepping-stone to future endeavors and careers.

When asking for comments, many volunteers, H.D., in particular remarked that the work he does at RMHA gives him a place to be with no pressure, allowing for flexibility and something to pique his interest. A.S. believes that the most rewarding part of the experience is the "thank you" she receives from clients. She further stated that even when there is a bad day, she must shrug-it-off because of the importance of the work she does.

Before concluding, I suppose what should be noted is that the volunteering we as clients do has allowed the gap between the proverbial "us" and "them" (the clinicians) to be bridged. The chain of command is moot and we can all proudly boast that we are all in the same profession, that of learning and serving.



Clients from RMHA donate their time to the AFYA Foundation, at right. (photo credit: Janae Simmons)

...From the Desk of the Executive Director



Welcome to the Fall Edition of RMHA's Newsletter.

First, I want to welcome and congratulate our new Board President, Andy Meyers. Andy has had a long and vigorous association with RMHA and, since being elected President in June, has immersed himself in becoming familiar with every aspect of the agency and with the current environment in behavioral health care. RMHA will certainly benefit from Andy's energy and dedication as we move forward. I want also to personally thank Sandra Lerner for her strong support and unflagging commitment in her tenure as President of RMHA's Board.

I hope you will find the accompanying articles informative and interesting. Especially in this time of fiscal uncertainty, your support of RMHA's programs and services is critical in helping those who live in the community develop the skills and capacities to live more independent and healthy lives.

You will soon be contacted for a contribution to our Annual Fall Fund Raising Appeal. We hope you will respond as generously as you are able. Thank you.

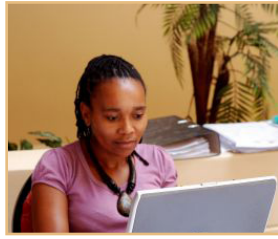
Robert M. Brewster

Please Support Our Annual Fund Drive
September 15th through December 31st
Your Donation Counts!



Elected Officials Come to Our Aid

Thank you to our elected officials who can always be relied on to come to our aid in times of exceptional need: Congressman **Eliot Engel** who helped secure funds to develop our electronic health record; State Senator **Eric Schneiderman** whose legislative grant will enable us to make capital improvements; Assemblyman **Jeffrey Dinowitz** who continues to support our operating needs; and Councilman **Oliver Koppell** who has provided valuable funding for Innovative Services for Seniors.



Notable News

Congratulations to **Ellie Argilla, LMSW**, Staff Social Worker since March 2007, on her Summer marriage to Samuel Vargas. Best wishes!

Board Member **Marie-Jeanne Gwertzman** was recently recognized by the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York 10 years of "dedicated service in Catechetical Leadership" as the Coordinator of Sacramental Programs at St. Gabriel Church in Riverdale.

Staff Member **Joyce Pilsner**, Director of Special Projects, was re-elected Secretary of Community Board 8. Mrs. Pilsner is one of the longest serving members of the Community Board.

Board Member **Deborah Pines** recently won the Stephen A. Mitchell Author's Award for her paper entitled "An Analytic Love Story: The Experience of Love—and Hate—in the Analytic Relationship" presented at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

Staff Social Worker **Nathaniel Smith, LCSW**, graduated from a 3-year training program in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy at the William Alanson White Institute.

Board Member **Jane Stevens**, as President of KEEN NY, is proud to announce their first major fundraiser on October 15, 2009. KEEN was honored by the Mayor's office for their work with disabled children.

Clinic Plus Program is Back to School

This will be the third year that RMHA is conducting the "Clinic Plus" Program in eight local schools. RMHA was selected as the designated agency for these Northwest Bronx schools by the NYS Office of Mental Health and the NYC Department of Education. Clinic Plus is a unique program, based on public health principles. It brings mental health services directly into the schools.

According to Program Director Arlene Klingman, a clinical social worker, the focus of the program is early identification of mental health problems and the provision of services in the school setting which is more convenient for both the child and the parents. Two additional social workers, Esther Levy, LMSW, and Desiree Balbuena, MSW, complete the full-time team. In addition, Dr. Renee Abt, a child psychiatrist is available one day a week.

The program has three components: an initial screening to identify children who may have a mental health problem; a comprehensive assessment to identify the nature and seriousness of the problem; and treatment if indicated.



A Creative Way to Donate

- You can make your charitable gift to RMHA directly from your IRA if you are 70 years or older, your IRA gifts are \$100,000 or less each year, and you transfer funds directly from your IRA to your charity of choice.
- This method of donating benefits you by counting towards your minimum required distribution amount AND the amount transferred is not taxed.
- Be sure to contact your financial advisor or IRA administrator if you are considering a gift under this law.

Education and Training at RMHA



Training has always been an integral part of our work at RMHA in order to maintain the high quality of our services. This training is provided by our senior staff and by experts from a variety of professional programs. It is mandated for staff, interns and volunteers.

This past Spring, training included a "Workshop on Cultural Competence" lead by Ana Gil, LCSW, Program Director of Innovative Services for Seniors. Our Medical Director, Dr. Alan Felix discussed assessment and de-escalation when working with a patient who becomes overly agitated or violent.

Dr. Robert Muller, Clinical Psychologist and former member of our staff, returned to discuss "Countertransference". Another former staffer, Sylvia Steinert, LCSW, spoke about "The Psychological Meaning of Fees". And at the end of May, Dr. Beth Haase, psychiatrist, a frequent speaker at our training sessions, discussed "Marital Therapy". The early childhood team has been trained by Hilary Mayers, LCSW, and Liz Buckner, LCSW, in the use of video intervention in work with infants and very young children and their caregivers.

These trainings are planned in addition to the ongoing regular supervision offered by senior staff members.

All services require parental permission. Home visits are available to accommodate parents who cannot come to school and for situations that are better addressed at home.

The eight schools in the program are: MS 80, PS/MS 20, Marie Curie H.S., John F. Kennedy H.S., Marble Hill School for International Studies, Bronx Theatre H.S., Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy, and Bronx High School of Law and Finance.

Last year ending in June 2009, the program had a total of 793 contacts with children. Twenty-eight percent of children screened were deemed to be at risk.

Problems requiring services range from depression and oppositional, defiant behavior to teen pregnancy. Mrs. Klingman emphasized the importance of early identification of mental health problems particularly in younger children to avert more serious problems later. She also stressed the importance of working in close coordination with each school's principal in order to understand and meet the needs of each student.

CDT Program: New Leadership, New Goals

As of this Summer, RMHA's Continuing Day Treatment Program has transitioned to new leadership, with Sandra Triggs as the Program Director and Dr. Paul Rosenfield as Medical Director. Together, with therapists Margaret Seaman, Jillian Landau and Wanda Feliciano, the program has been reconfigured to provide individualized, recovery-oriented care for clients in our community with severe and persistent mental illness.

As Dr. Rosenfield explains, "This means we listen carefully to our clients' needs and goals and provide care based on these. We believe in our clients' capacity to reclaim their lives with a sense of hope and purpose. We respect their autonomy and help them both individually and in groups to reach for their goals."

We have identified five domains of recovery based on client feedback, including social relationships and community functioning, a sense of productivity and creativity, empowerment and independence, emotional wellbeing and physical health."

The core of the program is a wide selection of groups focused on attaining and maintaining emotional and physical wellbeing, including a state-sponsored education and recovery program called Wellness Self-Management. In addition, clients are able to volunteer weekly at Afya, a nonprofit organization that collects unused medical supplies to ship to Haiti and Africa.

As one client reports, the Afya experience is "very, very refreshing, something totally different and brand new. Not only is it a great place to be, but emotionally it's incredible for

me to know that I'm helping somebody, someone who really needs it."

Clients are also encouraged to consider competitive employment with the assistance of RMHA's Vocational Services, using an evidence-based model of supported employment. A number of clients are enjoying a private grant-funded membership to the local gym and are getting into good shape. An art exhibit opening September 24th at the clinic will feature one client's art work.

RMHA's dedicated staff provides comprehensive services that address the psychological, behavioral and social difficulties affecting individuals of all ages. We provide high quality, affordable care to those who may otherwise be unable to receive essential services.

**By healing individuals,
we strengthen communities.**



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