



Rooted In Recovery

NOTEWORTHY

News from the Metro Suburban Recovery Learning Community

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Growing In Community

May 2011

METRO SUBURBAN RECOVERY LEARNING COMMUNITY

"OFFICIALLY" OPENED IN FRAMINGHAM

The Framingham RLC Open House was held on March 31st from 3 pm -7pm and it was a huge success! Peers, supporters, area RLC's, members of Advocates and community members gathered to celebrate this great event. Having the Metro Suburban RLC in Quincy and Central Mass RLC in Worcester means that peers in the Framingham area don't have to travel 20-30 miles just to get to an RLC. Thanks to Advocates for gifting us a space in their suite at 1881 Worcester Rd in Framingham, local peers have a new RLC to help aid in their recovery process.

The Open House began with a ribbon cutting, signifying our official opening. Afterwards we enjoyed fresh snacks and refreshments, talked with other peers and event goers, checked out the new space, and eventually made it over to the dessert table where we shared a delicious cake with the words "Celebrate Recovery!" on it.

After satisfying the sweet tooth, we made our way into the conference room where the very talented Michael Mack performed a one man play for us. In his show entitled "Hearing Voices (Speaking in Tongues)", he acted out his life as a boy whose mother has schizophrenia. His intimate portrayal of his own experience was touching and intriguing. He walked us through her life as well and gave us a real look inside his family struggle and triumphs. Michael was such an amazing performer that, even though it was a one man show, he did a fantastic job at telling the story from many angles. At the conclusion of his performance, he did a question and answer segment. Hands across the room were waving in the air wanting to ask their question and give him praise. His performance was the perfect ending to a terrific Open House.

The Framingham RLC is open every Tuesday and Thursday from 12-6. We look forward to meeting more faces and hosting many more recovery focused events.

By Lindsey Vezina

Note: Visit the Metro Suburban RLC website or call the Framingham site office at 508-751-9600 for more information about ongoing support groups and special events in Framingham!!

WORKING ON OUR PHYSICAL 'RECOVERY' and FITNESS !!!!!

Individuals “diagnosed with a mental illness” (not my term!) die, on average, 25 years younger than the “general population”. Many of the causes of earlier death, according to Rob Walker, a member of the newly formed DMH Wellness Initiative, are preventable. These causes include smoking, weight gain, “unhealthy” eating habits, and reduced physical activity. However, we are not alone in being overweight and sedentary. It is becoming a huge problem, especially for children, in this country.

“If I’m going to be healthy,
I need to think healthy!”

Rob Walker visited the RLC on April 14th to introduce the Wellness Initiative and to share in a discussion of challenges and possible solutions around physical fitness.

The challenges we face around physical fitness are very real and not always simple to fix. Two challenges many face are isolation and motivation. For example, exercising all by yourself can get really stale, really fast! We all agreed addressing some of our challenges in a group and/or with a “buddy” would be very helpful. Not only would it help with motivation – we all have a lot of knowledge we can share with each other.

“If you want to feel good about yourself, do something hard!”

Some of the other challenges mentioned were: buying “healthy foods” on a limited income, changes in appetite and energy level from medications and/or as part of our “illness” (sometimes getting out of bed in the morning is an act of heroism we don’t always give ourselves enough credit for), and weight gain directly related to certain medications.

While food banks do provide food, they are not always the healthiest choices. However Food Banks do rely on donations so one suggestion was raising community awareness about the most beneficial types of food individuals and others could donate.

Another suggestion around food shopping was workshops and even field trips to supermarkets around the best ways to maximize our “food dollars”.

Don’t Forget – the RLC offers free one month group memberships to the YMCA and we periodically host other types of workshops (Yoga, Meridian Tapping, Tai Chi to come soon!)

AND

We are also starting a “**biggest weight loser**” campaign on May 1. Everyone who signs up for this one month campaign will put money into a pool and be assigned to a team. The **team** that loses the most combined weight divides the pot. Contact Rhiannon for more details and to sign up.

“Staying well, and physically fit, is my first job.
Otherwise everything else in my life can get off track.”

UPCOMING EVENTS & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Lunch With Senator Keenan – New Date – New Date – New Date!!!

Please ignore all previous dates for lunch with Senator Keenan. The latest date is
May 9 at 12 noon – Please RSVP by May 4

Following several years of public service in Quincy, Senator Keenan was elected to the State Senate in 2011. Not only does he represent all the members of his district, he also serves on the Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

This is a very important committee for us, especially in these times of financial difficulties and budget cuts.

“It shall be the duty of the committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse to consider all matters concerning behavioral health, drug detoxification, homeless mentally ill, Mental Health Department oversight, mental illness, mentally ill services and such other matters as may be referred. “

Be Prepared To Ask Questions And Offer Suggestions!

In preparation for the lunch with Senator Keenan we will be having a discussion of ‘How a bill gets written’, the content of several bills currently being discussed that will have impact on mental health services, and the current budget proposal.

We will be meeting on **Thursday, May 5 from 12pm – 1pm**. See you there!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

FINANCIAL PEACE WORKSHOP

Learning To Live With Our Income

It's not always easy to "Stretch" Our Income Enough To

- * pay for "essentials" *
- * allow for "extras" *

AND

- * set aside for savings *
- * reduce credit card and other debt *

Start Spring With A Fresh Start

The Next Financial Peace Workshop Will Be Starting

Monday, May 23

1:30 pm – 3 pm

Space Is Limited – Sign Up Now!!!

During this 4-6 week workshop we will:

- Identify current expenses and spending habits
- Develop financial priorities and goals
- Explore ways to modify and/or reduce our current spending
- Create a realistic spending plan or budget

Contact Deb at 617-472-3237 or dwebb@metrosubrlc.org

Peer Facilitator Training

There is still time to apply for the next Peer Facilitator training. We are still accepting applications for this training session from individuals available to start and/or facilitate support meetings at all of our current sites: Quincy, Arlington, Norwood, and Framingham.

The training will be held in Framingham on

Thursday, May 12 10 am – 5 pm

Friday, May 13 10 am – 2pm

You must attend both days!

For more information and/or to request an application

Contact Rhiannon at 617-472-3237 x 301 or by email rkimball@metrosubrlc.org

Deadline for submitting applications is May 2.

UPCOMING EVENTS & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WRAP Facilitator Training Opportunity -

From Marina Colonas and the Transformation Center Training Team

With the recent changes in mental health services, it has been exciting to see a growing interest in WRAP. In order to ensure that each region of the state has fully trained WRAP Facilitators, we are offering this WRAP Facilitator training.

WRAP Facilitator training provides education on the facilitation skills needed to provide effective group leadership. Each person is given the opportunity to work with and experience the Values, Ethics, and WRAP Plan (Red Book) and the ways in which we can use this experience effectively in a group process.

Our hope for the upcoming WRAP Facilitator training is to increase the number of trained WRAP facilitators in the state. More important, we are committed to ensuring that the values and ethics included in the Mental Health Recovery section of WRAP are fully understood as the foundation of WRAP because it is these very values and ethics that make WRAP an effective tool, and an evidence based practice.

To qualify for the training you must show that you have completed one of the following within the last 18 months:

WRAP Correspondence course

- Seminar 1 WRAP training Mental Health Recovery and WRAP classes (8 -12 weeks)
- Seminar 1 WRAP training Mental Health Recovery and WRAP classes 2 or 3 day all day training

All applicants must be currently employed within a mental health provider agency or peer-provider agency (for example, RLC, etc.).

The dates for the 5-day training are Sunday, June 19 through Friday, June 24, 2011.

The training, hotel and food are free.

THE ONLY COST IS \$129 FOR THE COPELAND CENTER FACILITATOR BINDER.

We look forward to this exciting training event, and hope to see you there !!

Applications are available at the Metro Suburban RLC office OR by contacting

Marina Colonas

Transformation Center

98 Magazine Street

Roxbury, MA 02119

Toll-free: 877-769-7693 x 305/Fax: 617-442-4005

marinac@transformation-center.org

**** All applications must be returned to the Transformation Center ****

UPCOMING EVENTS & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Bruce Levine

Clinical psychologist and author of 'Get Up, Stand Up!'

Wednesday, May 5 6 pm – 8 pm

Arlington Town Hall

730 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington

See the included flyer for more details!



THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU

Just a quick thank you to all of our members who regularly come in to answer phones and help out as well as those who come for Friday Volunteer Collaboration.

This month we would also like to give special recognition to:

Jay and Laura for representing the RLC at the South Shore YMCA Discover Your Y event.

Julia for collaborating with other RLC members in writing a letter protesting the proposed budget cuts.

All of the individuals who have stepped up and served as Discover Recovery ambassadors. You have helped make the Discover Recovery meetings a welcoming environment and an ongoing success!

We would also like to thank the members of Central Mass RLC in Worcester for joining us in celebrating our new site in Framingham.



YOUR VOICE



Recovery IS Real.... It's Happening to Me!!!!

Have you ever felt like you've had this "VOID", this "EMPTINESS" like a "no one's home" emptiness, or maybe you could describe it like a "BIG BLACK HOLE", just empty deep, down in the depth of your soul? It hurts, it burns, it's lonely, it's sadness, it's heavy, it's a million things. You try to do everything you can think of to stuff the hole like excessive shopping, years and years of therapy, CBT, DBT, meditation, going to the gym, denial, and using any other of the hundreds of coping skills that we've become so familiar with. The black hole is so deep, so lonely and painful, it seems like nothing can ever satisfy it.

I've learned over time.... over a *very, very long* time, that I had the tools to fill the black hole in me all along. The answers to my recovering were buried **so, so** deep, how could I begin to recover or reach out for any type of support? So I backed in a few dump trucks, did some extremely deep (and pretty traumatic) soul searching, all the while learning to share and listen to my peers for their valuable feedback (and how valuable their feedback was!). Boy did those dump trucks come in handy! As I worked out issue by issue, into the dump trucks they went! It was then, that I began to really understand the **power of peer support**. One on one therapy is a totally different dynamic. You only have one other person's perspective and they probably can't relate like your peers can. Peers are invaluable. We carry special knowledge that enables us to help one another. We have the "lived experience". **RECOVERY IS REAL, IT'S DEFINITELY POSSIBLE, IT'S ATTAINABLE, IT'S WITHIN YOUR REACH AND IT'S EXCITING ONCE IT BEGINS TO HAPPEN TO YOU.**

As each dump truck drove away with some of my burdens, issues, pains, loneliness, trauma and lots and lots of fear, my black hole began to *fill up* and now I can safely say, my hole is covered with a beautiful piece of shiny fabric and glued closed **with love, from me** with pink glitter!

For me, the beginning stages of recovery were a little wobbly, but so exciting. On one hand I felt like I was unzipping this tattered, old, beaten down, jumpsuit, exposing a brand new sparkling.... *Me* and I'd have to get to know her/me all over again. I had no idea who this happy, laughing person was, but I actually liked her, I liked her a lot! Today I can say I love her. On the other hand, you sort of feel like you're trying on roller blades for the very first time. You're so excited to get them on and just **fly**, fly anywhere, not remembering that you *will* fall sometimes. When you fall, you've got your helmet and your knee pads to cushion the blow and that cushion is your peers, your friends that you've reconnected with, perhaps support groups, your community, your church whomever you chose, but most importantly.... **YOU!** So go... **fly!!!!**

Jenn Fellenz

Metro Suburban RLC Quincy

For those of you who haven't already met her – Jenn joined the RLC office staff in March and quickly became an important and valuable member of our office team!!

YOUR VOICE

If you're depressed, or even weak
I hope the lord is the one you seek

There is hope through counseling or prayers
It's good to know there is someone who cares

When I first got here I felt like poo
With thoughts of suicide nothing else will do

I met some friends here that know how I feel
Some went through the same ordeal

There are books to read, and games to play
It may help you through that stressful day

I came here with lots of depression
Until I walked in a room with a really good session

They gave me hope and knew how I felt
It's the game of life and the cards that dealt

There's people here to help you get by
So raise your head up...please don't cry

So if your addiction is alcohol or drugs like crack
There's a better way to get it off your back
With drugs like this your brain will bake
With faith in the lord that it all it will take

So come in at 10:30 for coffee and speech
Give a hand to someone and they will reach

With stories that are sad but true
Some feel there is nothing to do

So come in for a tear or a smile
Things will get better it just takes a while

With friends like these and prayer it takes
It will help you through your troubled states

Ronald Harpin

REMINDERS – UPCOMING CONFERENCES

“Creating Connections through Dialogue”

A Weekend to Learn Together, Deepen Connections, and Expand Our Vision of a Healthy World

Endicott College (on the ocean), Beverly, MA

June 10-12

For more information visit the National Empowerment center website at www.power2u.org

USPRA Conference To Be Held In Boston This Year

The conference will host more than 70 workshops as well as keynote speakers **Patricia Deegan** and **Representative Patrick Kennedy** (Rhode Island).

If You Would Like To Attend the Conference:

The Transformation Center is offering scholarships for the registration costs. Contact Dennis Torres by phone at the centers toll free number 877-769-7693, by email at dennist@transformation-center.org or by fax, 617-442-4005.

USPRA is looking for volunteers to help out at the conference. For one day of work the volunteer will receive a free pass to the next day

Visit www.masspra.org for more information and “links of interest” about the key note speakers as well as information on workshop topics