

# connections

## HEALTH·WELLNESS·ADVOCACY

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Connections: Health•Wellness•Advocacy 24200 Chagrin Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122  
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### CEO Corner

Community behavioral health centers are facing serious challenges to their long-term sustainability. An increase in need, coupled with significant governmental funding cuts, places critical pressure on community behavioral health providers to create innovative cost-savings solutions and to provide more services with fewer dollars. Consequently, many local behavioral health providers have begun to closely track and control utilization management, individual worker productivity and operational costs. However, providers implementing these cost savings solutions individually, will not ensure long-term agency financial viability. Historically, local behavioral health providers have worked in individual silos with little or no interaction or collaboration between them.

In response to these challenges, we are attempting to harness the power of the local behavioral health community. Connections, in partnership with Hitchcock Center for Women, Magnolia Clubhouse, Mental Health Services, Inc., Neighboring, Orca House, and Stella Maris are in the process of forming the Northeast Ohio Behavioral Health Shared Services Organization (NOBHSSO or SSO) to:

- Improve processes and service delivery models;
- Enable technology investments;
- Create opportunities for additional revenue streams;
- Reduce costs;
- Create a solid foundation for continued sustainability; and
- Ensure future provision of critical services to the area's individuals living with behavioral health issues.

This first planning step was made possible through the generous support of the Woodruff Foundation.

(cont'd on page 2)

### The Connections Experience

Hello Staff, from the Connections Experience Committee.

The Connections Experience Committee was developed last year as a result of the agency's Strategic Plan. The goal was to have staff from each department within the agency work together to identify ways in which the agency culture can be transformed in such a way that each staff member would feel GREAT about their experience from entry to exit.

Now fast forward. Since the launching, the committee has participated in the following:

1. We were provided and assigned to read a book entitled "The Serving Leader" to help broaden our understanding of aspects and characteristics of effective leaders, recognizing that leadership opportunities exist in each job role. I recommend the book. EASY READING.
2. A series of interactive LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT sessions were held at Cleveland State & COSE. Committee goals were developed; staff from each site participated in sharing various experiences and feedback.
3. Leadership Development sessions involved training in SOMO (Acronym for Social Emotional Leadership), which is born out of the field of Positive Psychology. This movement aims to cultivate Social Emotional Leaders. These sessions have been facilitated by Adele DiMarco Kious, MBA and Louis Alloro, M.ED., MAPP. Both of these individuals were introduced at the Strategic Plan Launching. Adele is a principal and a partner with Currere, Inc. Her passion is inspiring people to live and lead from their heart and soul. She lives this passion professionally by co-creating and facilitating experiences that inspire people and organizations to more clearly see and honor who they are, what they want, and

their path to attainment. She brings extensive experience in researching, designing, and delivering projects and programs that result in increased organizational vitality, adaptability, and effectiveness. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked with more than fifty organizations, helping them to increase their social capital and manifest their authentic power. Using frameworks and processes grounded in systems thinking, Gestalt organizational theory, and Appreciative Inquiry, these projects range from organizational assessments, to new project/program feasibility studies, to the design and delivery of leadership development and culture change initiatives. Louis Alloro is a change-agent (Founder of Louis Alloro + Associates) whose background and training places him at the intersection of Education (teaching & learning) and Positive Psychology (the science of optimal functioning, success, and happiness). He is one of the first hundred people in the world to earn a degree in Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Louis works with individuals and organizations of all kinds in facilitating positive growth. He is frequently invited to speak at organizational, community, academic or trade events on topics pertaining to Positive Psychology, wellness, success, happiness, and leadership. He is a Fellow at George Mason University's Center for Consciousness and Transformation.

The committee has also held onsite meetings to further brainstorm ideas intended to enhance staff's CONNECTIONS EXPERIENCE. As part of this process, on April 5<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the Indians' season opener by having staff wear Indians' garb and serving hot dogs for lunch at each site. There will also be a picture of the team displayed at each site so all staff will be able to identify who is involved in the CONNECTIONS EXPERIENCE committee. Finally, a survey has been posted on the intranet to enable staff to provide the team with feedback about their own Connections experience and the type of experience they would like to see become the ULTIMATE Connections Experience.

As the committee continues to work towards leadership development, further announcements will be made to identify the progress we are making towards meeting our goals.

The committee extends its thanks to each of you for the meaningful comments shared. Your input is recognized as vital towards OUR goal of crafting the Connections Experience for everyone who walks through our doors. Remember, we are all connected together we just need to see the glue. ❖

*Ron Harris, LSW, LCDCIH Program Manager.*

## **CEO Corner** (cont'd from page 1)

Five planning meetings were held with Adele DiMarco Kious as facilitator to help develop the confidence necessary to secure our vision, mission and goals. The SSO protects the individuality of each organization. This project does not involve any mergers or acquisitions. Each organization's mission and Board of Directors remains intact. As the health care landscape becomes increasingly complex, the need for integration and cross-collaboration has become increasingly more important as a means to a more cost-effective and holistic approach to the delivery of health care. The SSO will use the strength of collaboration to create an integrated approach to the delivery of behavioral health and human services for the consumers and families we serve. Reduced availability of both public and private funding resulting from years of a poor national economy; anticipated changes in the industry brought about by health care reform; and an industry desire to achieve enhanced treatment outcomes has set the stage for new, innovative and integrated approaches for the delivery of care and services.

This is one approach to the consolidation of systems and operations into a service-oriented organization. The proposed SSO offers substantially improved operating efficiencies by eliminating duplication and streamlining processes. The collaborative partners of Northeast Ohio Behavioral Health SSO share the same goals in developing an SSO. The goal is to create a platform that can support new funding models to accommodate potential alternative revenue streams, improve access to care, and integrate behavioral health and primary care services into a single continuum in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, the SSO will bring added value to the partnering organizations by leveraging existing resources and garnering new ones to achieve cost savings that may transcend common and overlapping operational domains such as pharmacy, human resources, information technology, and financial services.

Once the formal structure has been defined, we are hopeful that other agencies may see the benefit to joining the SSO; even if only for one of the shared services. ❖

*Esther Pla, RN, BC, President and CEO.*

## **In Memorium**

Donations were received in memory of Mary Watts, mother of Carolyn Watts Allen, a Connections Board Member. Mrs. Allen passed away on October 28, 2011. ❖

## Meet our Board

Ethel Robitson, Interim Chair William H. Stevens, Vice Chair Rochelle Lipson, Interim Treasurer Giovanni DiLalla, Interim Secretary	
Hinda T. Apple	Donald S. Dalton
Dinorah Bialostosky	David M. Dobranic
Jeanette Brzoska	David M. Kribel
Joanne E. Cooke	Molly Wright



**Jeanette (Jay) Brzoska** is a retired Accounts Receivable Manager. She has 30 years of Accounts Receivable management and medical billing experience. Ms.

Brzoska worked with Northeast Ohio Health Services (now Connections) for 15 years as the Accounts Receivable Manager. Prior to working at NEOHS, she worked with the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center, Glasrock Home Health Care and Cleveland Orthopaedic Association. Ms. Brzoska is a past Treasurer of St. Therese School PTU in Garfield Hts., Ohio. She is a past Chairperson for the Benedictine High School German Club Fund Raiser, as well as assisted with the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Fund Raiser. She believes that her years of experience in behavioral healthcare is a great asset to her position as a member of the Board of Directors of Connections Health•Wellness•Advocacy. ❖

## SAMHSA-HRSA Learning Collaborative: Update

We are one of only 15 agencies in the country awarded the opportunity to participate in SAMSHA's Learning Collaborative. The purpose of this opportunity is to integrate best practices for consumer care into our Agency. This involves a process called "rapid cycle change" which is an approach that allows an organization to implement large changes in a very short period of time. In order to accomplish this task we have an internal team including: Esther Pla, Mark Johnson, Jim Nagle, Dorothea Galloway, Jan Matz, Sue Boehringer, Barb Krasner, Ron Harris, and Jim Vernon. This team meets on a bi-monthly basis with our consultants to learn new strategies and best practices, review our goals and to gain insights into overcoming any barriers to successful implementation. The following are current updates to our progress:

- 1) **Establish Collaborative Documentation as a Primary Means of Clinical Documentation.** This past December, we conducted a study of the amount of time the clinical staff spent on post-session documentation. This was the first step in achieving the goal of Collaborative Documentation. We are currently working on providing training to all staff on this model.
- 2) **No-Show Management.** A new no-show policy has been established and an Engagement Specialist, Kim Howell, has started the process of engaging the chronic no-showing consumer in treatment. Another component of this goal is the adoption of Centralized Scheduling. As a result, we have been able to schedule Psychiatry, Counseling and CPST appointments at the time of intake. This affords the consumer the opportunity to know, on their first day, who their clinical team is and when all of their appointments are. In July, 2011, the average wait time for a first appointment was 41.8 days. By February, 2012 that wait time was reduced to 9.8 days. Central scheduling will also help us fill empty clinical slots and the adoption of Open Access (no intake appointment needed) will further improve consumers' access to our services.
- 3) **Establish Walk-In Models.** The Doctor walk-in model has been established in Beachwood. Other walk-in models for counseling and CPST are in development.
- 4) **Establish an effective Level of Care System.** We are in the process of reviewing tools to assist in establishing a level of care for all of our consumers and creating an associated benefits package. This would enable more consumers to receive our services.
- 5) **Integrate a Coordinated Primary Care Service Within our Agency.** We are working closely with community partners to make this a reality. We have also been involved with the Ohio Department of Mental Health's initiative to establish Health Homes as a best practice. A Health Home integrates physical health, mental health and substance abuse treatment across the lifespan under one roof.

More information on the Learning Collaborative will be given in the upcoming months. ❖

*James Vernon, MPA, PCC-S, LICDC, Performance Improvement Manager.*

# Planned Giving

Planned giving is a way to include Connections: Health•Wellness•Advocacy in your overall estate and financial plan. Depending on your giving strategy, there could be immediate or future tax benefits for you.

## Planned giving options

- gifts of cash
- wills and bequests
- gifts of stock
- charitable remainder trust
- life insurance policy

## Wills and bequests

Bequests can be made in a new will, or an existing will can be easily amended to include a bequest to Connections. An unrestricted bequest is one that allows Connections to direct your gift where it will have the greatest impact. A restricted bequest allows you to designate what you would like the gift to be used for.

## Gifts of stock

Gifts of stock can be made in two ways. You can call your financial advisor and transfer shares of stock directly from your account to Connections: or you can give stock certificates. You will receive a tax deduction for the full amount of the current value of the gift on the day on which the gift was given, and if the stock has appreciated significantly, you will avoid paying the capital gains taxes due if you were to sell the stock.

For more information, please call 216.831.6466 ext. 241 or email [iruch@connectionsleveland.org](mailto:iruch@connectionsleveland.org).

# Share Your Gift



You can help us provide a better life for those we serve with your gift. Your donation will help support Connections: Health•Wellness•Advocacy programs and continue to make our services available to all who need them. Simply complete the form below and mail to: Connections, Development Department, Attn: Ivette Ruch, 24200 Chagrin Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122.

Please accept my tax deductible donation of: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other

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Please enter your method of payment:

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Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Thank you in advance for providing your email address for our records to save on postage.*