

Florida Peer Network, Inc.

An independent organization of and for people who are recovering from psychiatric disabilities and co-occurring disorders

December 2010 Newsletter

Volume 4, Number 3

Note from the FPN Board Chair

Dear Members:

With the holidays approaching, this is the perfect time to reflect on those things that matter most. Now, more than ever, consumers of mental health services in Florida need a place where individuals can come together and dare to be hopeful about the future. We know that there are vast numbers of people throughout the state with great passion and a myriad of ideas. We also know that many of you feel alone, disconnected, and that your voice has not been heard. But the pieces are coming together, and I feel strongly that we have something special in the making. Rose Delaney, our Executive Director, and the board of the Florida Peer Network have been working diligently to create an organization that can bring together individual voices in order that we might assist each other in our road to recovery and our quest for a vital and dignified life in our communities.

There is so much work that needs to be done, but our prime focus right now is engaging and expanding our membership. We have exciting plans for a statewide conference next spring and will be calling each of our members to get ideas and feedback. Please spread the word to your friends about the Florida Peer Network. The application for free membership is on the FPN website, or interested individuals can call our office.

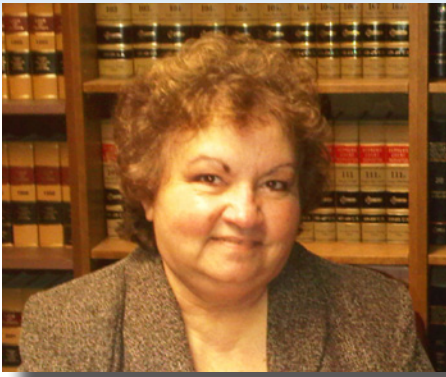
You hear so much in the media these days about how angry, afraid, and uncertain we all feel. But a heart that is grateful has no room for these feelings. I love the quote from playwright Thornton Wilder: "We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures." Happy Holidays!

- James Winarski



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A Message from the Executive Director

By Rose Delaney - rose@floridapeernetwork.org

I find it hard to believe it has been a year already since I have taken this position. How time flies, as they say. I want you all to know I have thought about this for some time as to whether or not I wanted to make my message a personal one or just send information on what we have been up to.

After much thinking I thought it would be fair to those of you I don't know personally and to those of you I do, I think you will know why I have decided to send a personal message.

As I said, it has been a year since I was hired by the FPN in the Executive Director position, and what a humbling year it has been. Two months before I was hired, I lost a very dear friend and her loss was a total shock. We had spoken only two days before her passing and as usual she was asking how she could help me with some of the work I was doing. You see, anyone that knew Peggy would say, "yes that's Peggy." She would always help in anyway she could. Peggy was both a peer and family advocate in every sense of the word. It has been over a year since her passing and I still find myself wanting to call her for advice. She will always be in my heart and I know in the hearts of the many lives she has touch.

The week I was hired for this position my father passed away. His passing has been devastating to my family and me, and we are still reeling from it. My father was one of my strongest supporters. He would always tell me not to worry, I will be OK, everything will work out. It saddens me to know that as I was traveling the road to Recovery, my father was traveling the road to darkness from Alzheimer's disease. He never got to see that, yes, everything did turn out right. There isn't a day that goes by that I do not think of my dad and usually the tears follow. You are probably wondering why I am telling such a depressing story. Well you see if this would have happened a few years earlier I would have been placed in the hospital from major depression and not being able to handle the loss. From support from my family and my peers I have been able to survive this time. On my road to recovery I was not alone I had many of you on that road with me and that is what helped me reach the point in my life that I am at now.

This is one thing we must remember especially at this time of the year with the holidays around us. If you know someone is having a hard time, contact them. See how you can help support them, knowing they would do the same for you. With the peer support from all of us, you would be surprised how the Road to Recovery becomes a little less hard to travel.

The Florida Peer Network has had a great year and I only see bigger and better things to come our way. We should all be proud of what we do and the support we give one another. I wish you all a blessed holiday season and Happy New Year.

The Florida Peer Network Newsletter is funded in part by the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc., through the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) grant from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

DEPRESSIONRECOVERYGROUPS.COM OFFERS a Unique Online SOLUTION TO RECOVERY

Agoura Hills, CA – November 23, 2010 – “Online support groups are the next evolution in depression recovery,” according to Vince Caimano, Ph.D. Caimano founded DepressionRecoveryGroups.com to meet the growing demand for peer support and self-help education.

Caimano personally realized the need for greater access to support group meetings during his recovery in 2002. At that time there were very few groups available to help him so he founded DBSA Conejo Valley – a local face-to-face group.

In fact he found only a handful of groups in place attempting to serve the over 2 million people living in the 50 mile area from Ventura to the San Fernando Valley, California. This experience led him to discover that there are many rural, less populated places in the U.S. where there aren't any resources at all.

The solution to greater accessibility became clear to Caimano - offer structured, facilitated peer support and self-help groups online. Online support groups are a confidential and convenient option for those suffering with depression, while providing access that overcomes geographical location. Similar to traditional face-to-face meetings, participants can offer support and share experiences and resources.

Plus the groups are anonymous - addressing the negative stigma still surrounding depression.

“Although there are many websites that offer mental health chat rooms and forums, none of these groups offer live audio, computer interaction, video streaming of the group leader and an educational component. Our meetings are much closer to a

face-to-face meeting and are great help to those who are just beginning their depression journey”, states Caimano.

“Unfortunately, the problem of depression is on the rise,” Caimano said. “Online groups offer greater access to valuable meetings. They allow individuals to participate from their homes via computer and telephone. Participants can be involved at a level that is comfortable

for them– they can even choose to just listen. “

Caimano started Depression Recovery Groups in November 2009 and can already see the impact of the online groups. Feedback from participants has been very positive, citing the high level of commitment and compassion of the Group Leaders.

According to one participant, “the website is a great resource for people for those “in between” times when they are unable to meet with their



local support group or therapist. I felt comfortable with the host and will definitely return again for her insight into tackling my depression.”

The meetings are limited to 12 people and last up to 90 minutes. Only the Group Leader is visible to the participants. The meetings utilize education, research and confidential discussion. Each meeting includes a set of ground rules, a brief check-in time, a self-help educational segment, peer support, and a “looking forward” wrap-up time.

DepressionRecoveryGroups.com features trained, experienced Group Leaders who facilitate each meeting. With diverse backgrounds in education, counseling, theology, research, personal development, social work - and sometimes personal experience with mental health issues - each leader offers a unique perspective to depression recovery. However they all share the passion needed to help others. These Group Leaders provide the same self-help education and peer support that is the foundation of Depression Recovery Groups.

The meetings target all demographics while offering specific groups featuring -Women’s Group, Faith Based Group and Career Issues. Groups for Men, Bipolar and Post Partum people will be added soon.

These online meetings can easily be accessed through www.depressionrecoverygroups.com. There are currently meetings offered every day of the week. Caimano’s vision is to have meetings around the clock so that no sufferer needs to wait very long to find caring and helpful support.

DepressionRecoveryGroups.com also offers excellent mental health resources including tips for healthy living, helpful products and links to other important mental health sites. Depression Recovery Groups is a member of the International Society for Mental Health Online.

Contact:
Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D.
vcaimano@DepressionRecoveryGroups.com

Wellness Tips

Wake up and fill up

Even we are tired of saying “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” But research shows that morning noshers tend to eat less fat and cholesterol and more fiber throughout the day and have healthier body weights.

Ruining your appetite

Noshing on healthy fats (like pistachios, olives, or peanut butter) about 20 minutes before a meal helps your stomach digest food more slowly, so you’ll feel full longer. Foods like these may also help your body absorb fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K

Application for Membership

The Florida Peer Network is an independent organization for people who are recovering from mental health and co-occurring disorders.

Please cut out form and return to:

Florida Peer Network, Inc.
400 Capital Circle SE Suite 18316
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-3839

Or email: info@floridapeernetwork.org

Attn: Rose Delaney, Executive Director

Name:		
Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Work Phone:		
Email Address:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Consumer <input type="checkbox"/> Non-voting Associate <input type="checkbox"/> Peer-run Program <input type="checkbox"/> Provider		

WELLNESS CORNER

Apple-Cheddar Stackers

- prep time: 15 min
- total time: 20 min
- makes: 2 doz. or 12 servings, two topped crackers each

What You Need

- 3 oz. KRAFT 2% Milk Cheddar Cheese
- 1 small apple, cut into 24 slices
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 24 TRISCUIT Crackers



Make It

- PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Cut cheese into 12 slices; cut each slice crosswise in half. Cut each apple slice in half. Mix sugar and cinnamon in medium bowl. Add apples; toss to coat.
- PLACE crackers on baking sheet. Top with apples and cheese, alternately layering cheese slices between apple slices.
- BAKE 3 to 4 min. or until cheese is melted. Serve warm.

Cranberry-Pineapple Minis

- prep time: 10 min
- total time: 2 hr 40 min
- makes 24 servings

What You Need

- 1 can (20 oz.) DOLE Crushed Pineapple, in juice
- 2 pkg. (3 oz. each) JELL-O Raspberry Flavor Gelatin

- 1 can (16 oz.) whole berry cranberry sauce
- 2/3 cup chopped PLANTERS Walnuts
- 1 DOLE Apple, chopped

Make It

- DRAIN pineapple, reserving juice. Add enough water to juice to measure 2-1/2 cups; pour into saucepan. Bring to boil. Add to gelatin mixes in large bowl; stir 2 min. until completely dissolved.
- STIR in pineapple, cranberry sauce, nuts and apples. Spoon into 24 paper-lined muffin cups.
- REFRIGERATE 2-1/2 hours or until firm. Remove desserts from liners before serving.

Catalina Cranberry Chicken



- prep time: 10 min
- total time: 1 hr
- makes 8 servings

What You Need

- 4 lb. bone-in chicken pieces (breast halves and/or thighs)
- 1 can (16 oz.) whole berry cranberry sauce
- 1 bottle (8 oz.) KRAFT CATALINA Dressing
- 1 env. onion soup mix

Make It

- HEAT oven to 350°F.
- PLACE chicken in 2 (13x9-

inch) baking dishes.

- MIX remaining ingredients; pour over chicken.
- BAKE 50 min. or until chicken is done (165°F).

Nilla Apple Crisp

- prep time: 20 min
- total time: 55 min
- makes: 12 servings, 1/2 cup each



What You Need

- 4 large Granny Smith apples (2 lb.), peeled, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar, divided
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon, divided
- 1/3 cup old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) cold margarine
- 25 Reduced Fat NILLA Wafers, crushed (about 1 cup crumbs)
- 1-1/2 cups thawed COOL WHIP LITE Whipped Topping

Make It

- HEAT oven to 350°F.
- TOSS apples with 1/4 cup sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon. Spoon into 8- or 9-inch square baking dish.
- COMBINE oats, remaining brown sugar and cinnamon in medium bowl. Cut in margarine with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in wafer crumbs; sprinkle over apples.
- BAKE 30 to 35 min. or until apples are tender. Serve topped with COOL WHIP.

Holiday Thoughts by Clint Rayner

I do not like holidays! Especially those times of the year when all of society focuses around family gatherings and reminisce about past holidays. I think the common emotion most of us share is the fact holidays result in days of depression, possible loneliness and revival of deep seated memories. However as survivors and strong people in recovery, that does not and should not be the case. We must move on and push forward and we can do that by developing new, happier memories to fill the pain in our hearts. Look around you; at your support group, your new friends and family, and your new lease on life. There are plenty of things to be thankful for and many people who would love and need to share your warmth and happiness. My gift to you this holiday season is something from an old profane, nasty, hold nothing back comedian, George Carlin. He made us think about the importance and power of words but more importantly he made us laugh. This was written and practiced by him, believe or not. "Fall down seven times, stand up eight". Happy Holidays my friends and family.

A wonderful message from George Carlin shortly after the death of his wife.

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less. We buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees, but less sense, more knowledge but, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to our life not life to our years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a neighbor.

We conquered outer space not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are the days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw away morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or just hit delete.



Remember: spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember: say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember: to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart that doesn't cost a cent.

Remember: to say "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember: to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

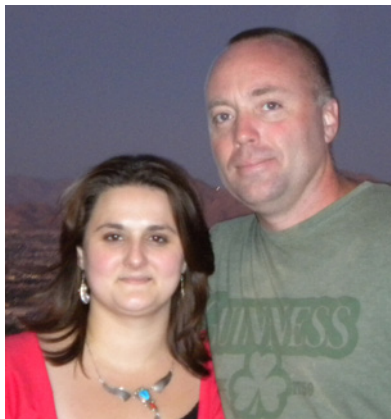
Give time to love, give time to speak, and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

Veterans' Corner

George Ellis

My name is George Ellis, a veteran, and I am currently employed as a PEER Support Specialist at the PRRC at James A. Haley Veteran Hospital, Tampa FL. I have PTSD that I manage. I am glad to have the opportunity to share with you what we PEER Specialist do here at our center and how we assist our veterans. First, let me say that we are valued here by the Staff and peers that attend our program, we carry a full work load, and we also give care Coordinator service to veterans. I facilitate classes, and also co-facilitate the Family Support and Education group held after hours once a month. We do not perform clinical assessment, psycho social assessment, and initial intake. We assist our veteran with realizing that their mental illness is not a death sentence. We help veterans establish Individual Recovery Plans, set their goals, and support them throughout their recovery by one on one sessions, problem solving, and helping them transition through the stages to recovery. This work is rewarding for me, because I am able to help someone just like me. I have the opportunity to share my military experience and mental illness at the same time, be a role model, a coach, a mentor, an advocate, and a fellow veteran that helps veterans. I am a true Peer Specialist and you can be too.



Elizabeth Jackson

I am a mother, wife, Veteran, consumer, and advocate for my fellow peers and their families. I was deployed to Iraq with the Army in April 2003 to November 2003. I have been involved in the community, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), Peer Network, local Veteran Clinics, DCF, and Veteran Advocacy Councils, and others since 2005, when I was diagnosed with Combat related PTSD, and major Depression. I looked around the community and realized that there were many other people and their families that needed not just a helping hand, but also a personal connection to others who shared similar stories.

I currently work at the Daytona VA Outpatient Clinic, and have traveled across the U.S., sharing my family's story with other consumers, family members, providers, clinicians, and law enforcement officials. I look forward to continuing to help educate the community on how it is possible to live a happy, productive, and well-balanced life even with a diagnosis, with the right family and community support.

I am also married to an Iraq War Veteran who has been diagnosed with PTSD and Moderate TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury). We have three wonderful boys, ages 12, 8, and 7. I have worked and volunteered in the community thru the Veterans Administration and thru NAMI, where I have facilitated programs such as Peer-to-Peer, In Our Own Voice, and NAMI Connections Support Groups.

I have previously presented at the following events: OEF/OIF Evolving Paradigms VA Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada; DOD/VA Mental Health Summit in Washington DC; NAMI's 1st Annual Consumer Conference 2010; Florida Corrections Association Conference; and Volusia County Community OEF/OIF Conference.

Bruce T. Roberts

- Served in the US Army from 1994 to 2008 as an Bomb Tech 89D.
- Awarded the Purple Heart and The Bronze Star for service in Iraq.
- Was sent to Iraq 3 times and once in Afghanistan.
- Was medically retired in Feb 2008 which I had several injuries to include PTSD and TBI.
- I attended the University of Maryland where I obtained my Associates Degree in counseling.
- I applied at the VA Hospital in Tampa, Florida, in 2009, and have since been working as a Peer Specialist serving Veterans with Mental Illness and Homelessness. I am a member of the Social Work Committee at the VA and have been in my position going on 2 years.



Florida Peer Network, Inc.

Mission Statement

The Florida Peer Network, Inc. is an independent organization of and for persons with psychiatric disabilities and co-occurring disorders. Our mission is to promote recovery, quality of life, advocacy, education, mutual support, peer directed services, and participation in mental health policy design for consumers throughout the state of Florida.

Membership Information

Join Online

floridapeernetwork.org/application.htm

Join by Mail

Florida Peer Network

400 Capital Circle SE, Suite 18316
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-3839

Phone: 850-922-0090

E-mail: info@floridapeernetwork.org

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400 Capital Circle SE - Suite 18316
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-3839

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