



Florida Peer Network, Inc.

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

March 2011 Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 1



2011 Florida Peer Conference

A Vision of the Future: Learn, Advocate, Spread the Word

Youth Conference: May 7 - 9, 2011

Adult Conference: May 9 - 12, 2011

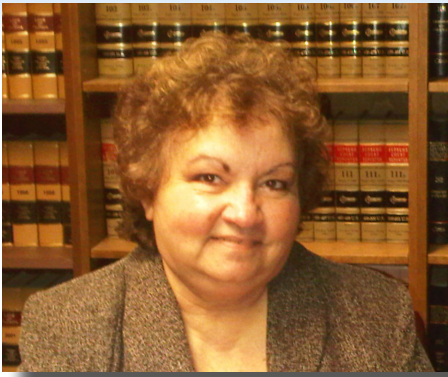
The Adult Conference begins on May 9th in the evening. Tonier Cain, internationally known speaker on Trauma, will be the Keynote speaker at the reception on the opening night. David Wilkens, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, David Sofferin, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and Clint Rayner, Chief of Consumer and Family Affairs, will be speaking at the conference. Workshops available to all attendees include: Rights training; overview of NAMI programs; Peer Specialist workshop; Leadership training; Baker Act Workshop; Mental Health Court; a presentation on Service animals; and an open forum to ask a doctor about treatment options. There are many more workshops offering options for diverse interests.

The Youth Conference begins on May 7th in the afternoon and features Reno Williams doing a lecture on Autism and Aspergers Syndrome. Obadiah Payton, an expert in the field of Transitioning youth, will be doing a workshop and a panel. Other workshops include: Suicide Prevention for youths; Independent Education Plans and how to understand your IEP; a workshop on Anxiety; a presentation on protecting yourself from Bullying; and many more. This will be a fun as well as a learning and networking experience. There will be drawings for prizes at all workshops and a grand prize drawing on the final day for those attendees who participate in 80% of the workshops. Prizes will include tickets for Universal Studios and DisneyWorld, Orlando Magic signed items, gift cards, and other fun items. There will be a drawing for a weekend away for one lucky Mom and a Mothers Day Brunch Sunday morning. Fun events include pizza party at the pool, a bowling tournament, and a movie and popcorn night.

For more information, to download flyers, and to register, visit www.floridapeernetwork.org/scc.

In This Issue

2011 Florida Peer Conference	1	Wellness Corner	5
A Message from the Executive Director . . .	2	Threads That Connect: One Person's Approach on How to Deal with Mental Illness	6
Lucia's Story	3	Reno Williams	7
Florida Among States With Highest Risk For Homelessness	4	Florida Peer Network Information and Mission Statement	8
Peer Specialist Trainings	4		



A Message from the Executive Director

By Rose Delaney - rose@floridapeernetwork.org

I find it hard to believe that we are almost

at the end of March. The new year really seems to be flying by. So many things have been happening since last December. The main things we have been working on are the Youth and Adult Conferences, which will be held in May in Altamonte Springs. We are so excited about these events and are hoping those of you that will be attending will feel the same way, especially about the workshops that will be done.

I had the opportunity to visit Clay Behavioral in Orange Park. I visited their Respite, Drop-in-Center and Peer Recovery Center. I want to say I was very impressed with what I saw was happening at all the places. The Respite had a very home-like feeling and not a clinical setting. I feel those that are fortunate enough to stay there would feel like they are home. The best was talking with my peers and the staff were all truly inviting. Kudos to Clay Behavioral.

I have been going to the committee meetings and testifying along with others in regards to the strong possibility of devastating cuts to Mental Health and Substance Abuse. These cuts are truly discriminatory to MH/SA. I am calling upon all of you to please contact your local Senators and let them hear your voices loud and clear that we will fight this discrimination and let them know we will not stop fighting until this discrimination ends.

Hear my words now and remember: always be proud of yourself. I know that this is something easy to say and sometimes hard for us to believe but believe it. We are strong, and it is because of some of the challenges we face. We will really be strong if we all band together in the fight for our rights. I want you to all know I am personally proud of all of us and what we have already achieved. Here is the link to find out who your local Senators are: <http://flsenate.gov/Senators>
Hope to see many of you at the Conference in May!

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“If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.”

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

Lucia's Story

I met Lucia when I worked at a hundred bed hospital treating individuals with mental health and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Lucia was one of the nurses who worked the 3-11 shift on one of the open units.

Lucia was a breath of fresh air she was everything you could ask for in a nurse and a co-worker. She was always smiling and respectful to everyone. Both staff and residents loved her. She was an extremely hardworking and dedicated nurse who always gave 110 percent to the people in her care.

Lucia's entire life changed dramatically when she received a call from her family doctor. He called to tell her that she had a brain aneurysm and needed surgery immediately. There were no surgeons in Pensacola who could perform the delicate surgery and she was referred to University of Alabama Hospital in

Birmingham, Alabama. Her sister from Massachusetts came down to accompany her to the hospital for the surgery in October of 2005. After a successful surgery she was to return home to Pensacola to recuperate. When Lucia and her sister got back to their hotel there was an urgent message that their mother had a heart attack and they had to return immediately. Luckily they made it home in time to say their good byes to their mother before she passed away.

Lucia could not return to her nursing career and had difficulty dealing with the grief of her mother's passing. Every day she sunk deeper into depression, feeling useless and inadequate. It seemed that nothing was going right with her life and then two months after her surgery she developed a spinal fluid leak and had to have another surgery. Two weeks after being discharged from the hospital she was

involved in a three-car collision and now suffered from back spasms. The depression deepened and she was sent to a psychologist to determine if she could drive. He diagnosed her with severe depression. She felt even worse now because as a psychiatric nurse she felt that she should have recognized the signs and symptoms of the illness.

She returned to Pensacola and began treatment at the local provider and it was there she learned about the Recovery Peer Specialist certification. Lucia received her certification in 2008 and began working as a Peer Transition Liaison for Access Behavioral Health a division of Lakeview Center Inc. The same organization she worked for as a nurse was now using her unique skills as a peer specialist to help other people on their road to recovery. Lucia continues to work as a Certified Peer Specialist and has found a new purpose to her life.

Florida Among States With Highest Risk For Homelessness

A majority— 31 of 50 states and the District of Columbia— has had increases in their homeless counts. The largest increase was in Louisiana, where the homeless population doubled, according to the recently published report, Homelessness in America. The report investigates the changes in homelessness across the country. Three states—Florida, California and Nevada —“have been disproportionately impacted by the recent housing crisis,” the report said. The three states have multiple risk factors. These are high rates of homelessness and high levels of unemployment, foreclosure, housing cost burden, lack of insurance, and doubling up. Florida, California and Nevada share another distinction: Over 80 percent of households below the federal poverty line in Florida, Nevada, and California spend more than 50 percent of income on rent. The data show that 28 of 50 states had increases in prisoner releases from 2007 to 2008, with Florida’s increasing by 30 percent. In the course of a year, the estimated odds of experiencing homelessness for a released prisoner are 1 in 11.

Nationwide, researchers found the largest percentage of increase was in the number of family households, which increased by over four percent or 3,000 households. “While most people experiencing homelessness are sheltered, nearly 4 in 10 were living on the street, in a car, or in another place not intended for human habitation,” said the research report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Homelessness Research Institute. “These findings project a disquieting picture of what depressed wages, stagnant unemployment, unrelenting housing cost burden, and the lagging pace of the economic recovery could bring about: increases in homelessness and heightened risk of homelessness for more and more Americans.” The report suggested various strategies states could adopt for reducing homelessness. To download a copy of the report, go to <http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/3668>

Peer Specialists Trainings

We are planning three Peer Specialist Trainings between April and June. The April training is being held in Ft. Myers with the class filled. We will be holding one in Pasco County on June 6 - 10, and one in Manatee County on June 20 - 24. Please watch our website, www.floridapeernetwork.org, for locations of the trainings and applications to be filled out.

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

Foil-Pack Chicken Fajita Dinner

- prep time: 10 min
- total time: 45 min
- makes: 4 servings

What You Need

- 1-1/2 cups instant white rice, uncooked
- 1-1/2 cups hot water
- 1 Tbsp. TACO BELL® HOME ORIGINALS® Taco Seasoning Mix
- 4 small boneless skinless chicken breast halves (1 lb.)
- 1 each green and red pepper, cut into strips
- 1/2 cup TACO BELL® HOME ORIGINALS® Thick 'N Chunky Salsa
- 1/2 cup KRAFT Mexican Style Finely Shredded Taco Cheese



Make It

- HEAT oven to 400°F.
- FOLD up all sides of each of 4 large sheets of heavy-duty foil to form 1-inch rim; spray with cooking spray. Combine rice, water and taco seasoning; spoon onto foil. Top with remaining ingredients.
- BRING up foil sides. Double fold top and ends to seal each packet, leaving room for heat circulation inside. Place in 15x10x1-inch pan.
- BAKE 30 to 35 min. or until chicken is done (165°F). Let stand 5 min. Cut slits in foil to release steam before opening packets.

Morning Burrito

- prep time: 5 min
- total time: 17 min
- makes 2 servings

What You Need

- 4 slices OSCAR MAYER Turkey Bacon
- 2 flour tortillas (8 inch)
- 2 Tbsp. KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- 2 egg whites
- 1 Tbsp. canned chopped green chiles
- 1/4 cup TACO BELL® HOME ORIGINALS® Thick 'N Chunky Salsa



Make It

- COOK bacon in small nonstick skillet on medium heat 8 to 10 min. or until lightly browned. Place on tortillas; top with cheese.
- BEAT egg whites and chiles until well blended. Add to hot skillet; cook and stir 2 min. or until set. Spoon onto tortillas.
- FOLD in opposite sides of each tortilla; roll up. Top with salsa.

Simple Southern-Style "Unfried" Chicken

- prep time: 15 min
- total time: 1 hour 30 min
- makes: 6 servings

What You Need

- 1 broiler-fryer chicken (3-1/4 lb.), cut up
- 1/2 cup KRAFT Light Ranch Dressing
- 1 pkt. SHAKE 'N BAKE Extra Crispy Seasoned Coating Mix



Make It

- REMOVE skin from all chicken pieces except wings. Place chicken in large resealable plastic bag. Add dressing. Seal bag; turn to evenly coat chicken with dressing. Refrigerate 30 min. to marinate.
- HEAT oven to 400°F. Place coating mix in pie plate or shallow dish. Dip chicken in coating mix, turning to evenly coat both sides of each piece. Place in single layer on baking sheet. Sprinkle with any remaining coating mix. Discard bag and marinade.
- BAKE 40 to 45 min. or until chicken is done (165°)

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"In the long run the pessimist may be proved right, but the optimist has a better time on the trip."

Threads That Connect

One Person's Approach on How to Deal with Mental Illness

By Clint Rayner, Copyright May 1994

I have the right to be happy. I did not choose to have a mental illness. It was thrust upon me or inherited by me through no fault of my own. I am not a diagnosis but a whole person, created by my genetic makeup, environment and experiences. This illness is not indicative of some moral weakness, spiritual retardation or emotional disenchantment. Although my illness may be comprised of some of these "flaws" in my life, I believe that my total being is worth more and stronger than the sum of these "flaws".

I believe that thoughts go through the brain at a high rate of speed. These thoughts are both positive and negative i.e. beneficial or harmful to me. I believe that I can train my brain to capture those thoughts that can be both beneficial and healthy to my life. This training can be done through prayer, meditation, or simple belief. This training will allow me to "cast a mental net" deep into the seat of my brain to bring into my life those thoughts that will help me live a happier life and leave behind those thoughts that have caused me great harm and suffering in the past.

I believe that people get back what they give out. I can either drink the last of the water in the jug and thus survive or I can use the water in that jug to prime the pump connected to the well of life and bring forth enough water to drink, cleanse myself, refresh myself and finally refill the jug again for the next person to use to prime the pump. This act of faith and hope allows me to go beyond mere survival and represents the beginning of a fulfilled and happier life. In fact, I believe this simple act of leaving the "water" of hope behind for my brothers and sisters will make me stronger and wiser than those who just just survived their mental illness.

I believe that the road to better mental health is paved with the knowledge of education. This education process must first start with myself before I look to others for answers. This is my body I must listen to it. This is my brain I must study it. These are my thoughts I must acknowledge them before I can change and improve them. Finally and most importantly, this is my life only I can live it. I and I alone determine the way I choose to live it. My education process begins and ends here within me and me alone. My family, friends, doctors, nurses, counselors and anyone else who are actively involved in trying to educate me are only tools, which I may or may not choose to use. It is not their job to make my life better, it is my job and I must accept full responsibility.

I believe that hope and understanding go hand in hand and it is with these two hands that will pull me from the depths of mental illness and will give me the courage to face the sunshine. I am not ashamed that I am mentally ill, I am not afraid of what the future brings. I believe that hope is the art of patience and I am willing to wait. It is better to understand just a little bit than to misunderstand a lot. With this fear removed and understanding accepted I now free myself to become once and for all a dreamer. I will not quit.

I owe my life to myself because I have endured it; to my brothers and sisters who went before me because they suffered it; and finally to the children who follow me because my ability to overcome this illness will become my legacy.

Please read a little something about one of our Plenary Speakers for the Youth Conference: Reno Williams

Reno Williams is 12 years old and in the 8th grade. He moved to Southwest Florida with his family from Rochester, New York in 2006. Despite being born legally blind (now visually impaired) he also carries many diagnosis including Asperger's Syndrome.

He became interested in researching autism and Asperger's after realizing that he did some things a little differently than his peers. His mission is to reduce the stigma that others have about people with disabilities and reduce bullying.

For the past two years Reno has been spreading autism awareness through his public speaking in schools and in the community through the use of power point presentations, brochures and bookmarks that he has created. He explains "how to be a good friend to kids with autism"



describing how kids with autism may be a little different than some of their typical developing peers, but also showing how they are very much alike.

Reno's future goals include starting a non-profit organization. Offering a reading club involving children with and without disabilities. Implementing programs such as youth groups and support groups for children who have autism and their families. Reno's ultimate goal is to offer monetary grants to help families in crisis.

Although Reno has dedicated himself to advocate for persons with disabilities and help spread autism awareness he also has many other interests. Reno is an avid reader, he loves to play video games with his friends and he is also a loyal fan of WWE wrestling.

"Weather is a great metaphor for life - sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, and there's nothing much you can do about it but carry an umbrella."

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

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Tallahassee, Florida 32301-3839

Phone: 850-922-0090

E-mail: info@floridapeernetwork.org

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