Housing Options Made Easy, Inc.

THE ADVOCATE

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Parenting 2

Time 3

The Pendulum 3

Yesteryear 3

Resources 4

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NOTES FROM JOE'S DESK

Being in the helping field for almost 25 years has taught me many vital lessons. Some good and some not so good. I have been fortunate enough to have witnessed "the good the bad and the ugly." One of the most important lessons I have learned is that anyone regardless of their current situation or circumstance can get better. I have seen many miracles happen to people despite the system's best and worst efforts to help (including mine). No one can be 100% certain in predicting whether or not someone will recover.

Sure there are patterns, history, and certain predicators. But within my experiences, I have also seen numerous individuals who had no hope, family giving up on them, financially ruined, with medical/legal problems, addictions, limited education, ready to end it all, get and stay well.

When and how did this happen? Simple! They met someone who really cared.

This person took the time to listen and offer options. To point out choices that would help them. All options and barriers were put aside. A relationship developed that helped individuals overcome obstacles they never thought they could. Hope was revived and healing began!

The other lesson is that no one gets better by themselves. Relationships are the key to recovery and healing. Whether family member, friend counselor, sponsor the fact is: We all need someone to love us, encourage us and believe in us. In 2009, don't let trust issues and past experiences keep you from beginning a relationship that will make a difference in your life or the life of some one else. May each day be filled with love hope, peace and someone to share it with.

JOE WOODWARD

Executive Director

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

In December we had our Annual Christmas Party. It was very well attended and everyone had a wonderful time. It was great to talk to you and I thank you for your warm reception. I would like to congratulate Denis Bouchard for receiving this year's Executive Director's Award. Congratulations also to Tom Becker, Shawn Cunningham and Tammy Reinhard of Suburban Adult Services, Inc. for receiving the President's Award for outstanding service to our agency.

As we move into the New Year we have seen many changes leading up to this year. 2009 brings a new administration to the White House along with a challenged economy. Because of the recent downturn rumors have abounded. I would like to put these fears to rest. As of this date, Housing Options has only seen a very minor cutback in one of our programs and no jobs have been lost due to cutbacks. Considering what has happened to a number of agencies, we have been very fortunate.

Healthy Parenting Partnerships

As we all know being a parent can be difficult. I would like to talk about the importance of positive parenting partnerships. We as adults are the role models of what behavior is acceptable in relationships, how to handle stress and of course how to communicate with others.

Differences of opinion in any partnership are common. When disagreements do rise it is helpful to find a quiet private place to discuss those differences. Stress and other issues can make any situation feel overwhelming. Sometimes we may feel the urge to ignore the other person or yell because listening to each other during a stressful time can be challenging, respect is the key.

Respect and teamwork are vital to building any partnership. Deciding family expectations will assist in providing consistency to the child's life. Your child will understand what behavior is expected and will foster the ability to make choices and accept responsibility. Below are some tips in working together in this very important partnership.

Submitted by,
Laura Bentley
Training Coordinator

TIPS ON HEALTHY PARENTING

Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at Change!

Making a difference!

NON-THREATENING CARING BEHAVIOR
Talking and acting so that the other person feels safe and comfortable expressing themselves and doing things. Sharing affection and appreciation for each other. Take time out for yourself or sign up for anger management classes if you feel out of control.

RESPECT
Listening to the other non-judgmentally, being emotionally affirming and understanding, valuing opinions of the other, using tactfulness when discussing tender or tough issues.

TRUST AND SUPPORT
Support the other's goals in life, respect the others right to their own feelings, friends activities and opinions.

HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABIILITY
Accepting responsibility for yourself, acknowledging past use of hurtful behavior and changing that behavior, admitting being wrong, communicating openly and honestly.

NEGOTIATON AND FAIRNESS
Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict, accepting change, being willing to compromise.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Making money decisions together, making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work, masking appropriate shared/family decisions together, consult one another about everything that affects both parties. Both parents need a break and personal time.

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING
Sharing parental responsibility, and becoming a positive role model for children/

TIME

Each day we all face a peculiar problem.

Those who believe that life in the "old days" are sometimes blind to the reality of the present; those who live only in the present frequently have little regard for either the past or the future; and those who live only for some deferred reward often strain themselves with too much denial. Thinking of the past, present and future is a useful conceptual technique, but ultimately they must be appropriately balanced and joined.

We must understand how the past affects us, we should keep the present full of rich and satisfying experiences, and we should devote some energy each day to building for the future.

Just as a river can be said to have parts that cannot be divided, so too should we consider the whole of our time, when we decide how to spend our time.

Submitted by
Anita L. Rusiecki

From the Book:
365 TAO Meditations By Deng Ming-Dao

(continued)

I congratulate all those involved in Housing Options, both peers and consumers. Make no mistake, the lack of cutbacks is due to diligent work by all those involved in our agency.

In reality 2008 brought an expansion of services to Housing Options Made Easy. We are now servicing Niagara County and are also providing services to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center (a program currently in startup). In fact I just signed a new contract with Erie County this week and there was no reduction in services.

As long as we keep on tract and provide the excellent services and the personal connections associated with Housing Options we will continue to prosper.

Sincerely.
Mike Coffman, President

Yesteryear

As part of me from
yesteryear
stepped forward,
with no regard
for today...
I needed to
search deep
within
before I was
able to say...
I left that life
to yesterday...
I cannot allow it
to seep into
today.
For yesterdays
sorrows
if allowed to
Will ruin another
tomorrow.

by
Julie Ethridge
Consumer

THE PENDULUM SWINGS

After graduating from an area community college, I began to experience symptoms of Schizophrenia. Thus began a 16 year journey through our mental health system.

I then began to self medicate immersing myself in alcohol and controlled substances. It began a round of inpatient, outpatient treatments. Because of my volatile temper my relationships with family and friends deteriorated. Schizophrenia had its hold on me.

Eventually I ended up at BPC for intensive treatment and it was two years later that the Doctors introduced me to Clolaril. It was only then that the pendulum began to swing in the other direction. It has been 15 years, since I used alcohol and was discharged from BPC. I was married last October and am currently working as a Peer Advocate.

Joe D'Agostino, Peer Adv

Each journey begins with one small step!

HOUSING OPTIONS MADE EASY, INC.

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Gowanda, NY 14070

(716) 532-5508
FAX (716) 532—5618

We're on the Web...
housingoptions.org

Address

RESOURCES:

Warm Line

People talking

to People!

1-877-426-4373

DTR

Wednesdays

75 Jamestown Street

6:00 pm—7:00 pm

Holistic Alternatives

to Wellness

Wednesdays

1:00 pm—2:30 pm

1547 Hertel Avenue

Buffalo NY

Our Mission

To achieve social equality for individuals with a mental illness by providing supported housing and other services so that individuals can live with dignity and have choices in the community.

Tribute Gifts

What better way to remember a friend, loved one or family member on special occasions than with a monetary gift to Housing Options Made Easy, Inc. Your gift today can help us to continue providing the excellent programs and services to individuals in need as we have been for twenty years.
We need your ongoing support!

For more information and a form, please visit our website.

HAPPY VA;ENTINES