

Staying in Touch

June 2009

Message from the Director

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Dear DMH Employee,

I want to call your attention two very important events taking place next week—the 8th Annual Mental Health Conference on Monday, June 22 and the 2009 Dixon Child-Youth Review and Practice Development Workshop on Wednesday, June 24.

Sponsored by the State Mental Health Planning Council, the conference brings

together the mental health community to discuss strategies to address critical issues. This year's conference will focus on housing and job opportunities—among the biggest challenges that we hear from consumers. I intend to focus my remarks at the conference on the results of the recent children/youth community service reviews that reaffirmed the absolutely critical need for good team formation and team functioning. We anticipate that about 250 people will attend, and as usual, **Juanita Reeves** has done an outstanding job providing organizational support for the conference. You still have time to register by contacting her at Juanita.reeves@dc.gov.

As a follow up to the children/youth CSRs held in March, the DMH Training Institute is holding the 2009 Dixon Child-Youth Review and Practice Development Workshop. You can register on line at www.dmh.dc.gov. I would like to acknowledge the new Community Services Review unit in the Office of Programs and Policies which for the first time assisted with the logistics for the reviews. **Anne Sturtz**, Deputy Director of Strategic Planning, has done a wonderful job coordinating the reviews and we very much appreciate her work. Bringing the community services review in house will help us better integrate recommendations for improvements with our ongoing work.

I welcome your comments or suggestions on any subject regarding DMH at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

Saint Elizabeths Hosts 2nd Annual Walking Tour

Under sunny skies, the 2nd annual walking tour of Saint Elizabeths on May 30 attracted nearly 100 participants eager to learn more about the history and future plans of one of the most beautiful landmarks in the District. Participants came from various walks of life—including a graduate student from a local university, avid history buffs, retirees, and a former Hospital employee from the 1980s.

Because of its size, the tour was divided into two groups to facilitate interaction with **Dr. Jogues Prandoni** and **Dr. Surya Kanhouwa**—Saint Elizabeths historians who led the tour. As always, the history of the Hospital stirred the people who were there.

One person asked if the Hospital could make the presentation at her Senior Citizens Home. Several others were so excited about the tour that they asked about volunteering at the Hospital!

After the tour, many participants viewed the carefully preserved exhibits in the Blackburn Laboratory and listened to a longer presentation on the history of the Hospital.



courtesy of Dr. Jogues Prandoni

Saint Elizabeths Walking tour participants listen closely to recitations of the Hospital's history.

Organized by the DC Cultural Tourism with support from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development, the tour is part of the walking tour of historical sites in the District.

News from Human Resources

Employee Recognition: An article by **Julie Goldstein-Grumet**, Project SUICIDE director, and her former evaluator **Melanie Brown** titled "School-based suicide prevention with African American youth in an urban setting", recently was published in *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. Vol 40(2), Apr 2009, 111-117. An abstract is reprinted below:

Abstract: Youth in urban settings are at significant risk for suicide and other mental health issues, but little is known about the utility or outcomes of suicide prevention programs with this population. This article reviews the outcomes of a grant-funded initiative to provide suicide screening to urban, African American youth. Columbia TeenScreen was implemented at 13 middle and high schools in Washington, DC, to 229 Black or African American students. Forty-five percent of students screened positively for previous suicide attempt or ideation, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and/or other emotional problems.

Twenty percent of all youth screened endorsed current or previous suicidal ideation or attempts. Over 90% of youth endorsed at least some problem with depression or irritability. Early detection of risk factors through universal screening can lead to earlier treatment, thwarting a suicidal crisis. Implications for conducting screening in an urban setting and how psychologists can engage in screening are explored. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved)

OSHA Safety Training: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is offering Level I training on safety in the workplace on topics including Fire Protection, Electrical Hazards, Ergonomics, and Trips, Slips and Falls. The first class is June 26 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

To register for this no cost training, please contact **Tia Rucker** on (202) 727-4034 or tia.rucker@dc.gov or **Mary Campbell** on (202) 673-7690 or mary.campbell@dc.gov for more information.

Employee Spotlight: Sylvia MacKey

If you enjoy watching CSI: Miami, you can thank **Sylvia Mackey** in part. She served as lead tester on the search engine of the CODIS DNA database featured on the show that leads to capturing the bad guys.

While this might be her most high profile assignment, her current responsibilities are critical to DMH's bottom line—she is responsible for making sure that the eCura information system operates properly to ensure accurate enrollment, billing and revenue generation for the Mental Health Rehabilitation Services Program. As Director of Applications in the Information Technology division, she directs the daily operation, enhancement and application of eCura in support of executive decision making and MHRS program activities. Sylvia also is responsible for directing activities to ensure the operation, enhancement and maintenance of the Anasazi practice management system used by the DC CSA.

Prior to joining DMH in 2001, **Sylvia** worked for more than 20 years as an information technology consultant with a variety of Beltway consulting firms that support numerous federal government agencies.

Sylvia was born in Jackson, Mississippi, and at three years of age she moved with her family to Los Angeles. She graduated from Crenshaw High



Sylvia Mackey

School and obtained a BS degree in Health Science from California State University at Northridge.

Sylvia enjoys family life with her husband and two children, reading, traveling, politics and genealogy. She is an avid Tiger Woods fan!

Mayor Fenty Recognizes National Consumer Memorial Campaign Kick Off at Saint Elizabeths



Director Baron presents Mayor's Proclamation to David L. Shern, MHA President and CEO

Mental Health America, other national advocacy organizations and local consumer action groups held a dedication ceremony for a national consumer memorial to honor hundreds of thousands of patients buried at state psychiatric facilities across the country—many in unmarked and neglected graves. Saint Elizabeths Hospital was selected as the site of the memorial in recognition of its historic leadership in moral treatment, and DMH staff is actively supporting the project. To honor the occasion, Mayor Fenty proclaimed June 10 National Consumer Memorial Day in the District.

The Gardens at Saint Elizabeths—A National Memorial of Recovered Dignity will be woven into the Hospital cemetery where more than 4,500 patients are buried including about 1,800 veterans dating back to the Civil War. The memorial will include metal markers surrounded by gardens and a pool of water from all 50 states and the District of Columbia that list the number of patients buried and at which institutions.

A granite marker bearing the quote "I must fight in the open" from Mental Health America founder Clifford W. Beers was unveiled as a permanent part of the memorial. Construction on the memorial will begin in 2010.

DMH Steps on the International Stage with Mrs. Sara Netanyahu *children/youth services focus of the meeting*



2nd from l) Barbara Parks, Marie Morilus-Black, Mrs. Sara Netanyahu, Steve Baron, Barbara Bazron, Dr. Oron Gan, Anne Weiss along with other District and Embassy officials.

Director Baron and several DMH staff met recently with Mrs. Sara Netanyahu, wife of the Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was in the US for a meeting with President Obama. Mrs. Netanyahu, a trained child therapist with the municipal government, initiated the meeting. Following an open exchange about common issues regarding serving children, DMH presented her with two books on evidence based practices in children mental health services.

The meeting was organized by the Mayor’s chief of protocol in the Office of the Secretary of the District of Columbia.

Upcoming Events

To include your upcoming event, please contact phyllis.jones@dc.gov

8th Annual Mental Health Conference **June 22**
contact Juanita.Reaves@dc.gov

2009 Dixon Child-Youth Review & Practice Development Workshop **June 24**
Register: DMH Training Institute

Saint Elizabeths Residency Training Program Graduation **June 29**



Deputy Director of Accountability Anne Weiss shares reminiscences with Mrs. Netanyahu from her years of living and working in Israel.



Deputy Director of Programs and Policies Barbara Bazron gave an overview of child and youth services to Mrs. Netanyahu who is a trained child therapist.



Director of School Based Mental Health Program Barbara Parks talked about successful mental health practices in the public schools.