

What's Working Well



...In the Employment of People with Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges, Parents and Family Members to Transform California's Public Behavioral Health Workforce

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<http://workingwelltogether.org/dnn/> Volume 1, Issue 1 Summer, 2011

Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center

What's Working Well Quarterly Newsletter is written and produced by Karin Lettau, MS, CRC of the California Network of Mental Health Clients for Working Well Together and was funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in partnership with the California Department of Mental Health.

Working Well Together (WWT) is a collaborative project comprised of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families, and the California Institute of Mental Health. Funded by the MHSA and the Department of Mental Health, the WWT Training and Technical Assistance Center supports the vision of the MHSA Act to transform systems to be client and family-driven. As such, WWT supports the sustained development of client, family member and parent/caregiver employment within every level of the public mental health workforce.



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Riverside County Paving the Way



Each issue of the WWT newsletter will highlight an exemplary county model employing consumers, family members and parent partners (C/FM/PP) in public behavioral health as peer specialists.

With honor we present the County of Riverside, a progressive county leading the way in recovery/discovery practices.

Start with the number of C/FM/PP working in the county—over 270 altogether, almost 100 of these are employed by Riverside County itself. All are unionized and almost all full time. Interns and volunteers are not even included in this count.

The county C/FM/PP employee breakdown is about 60% consumers, 30% parent partners and

10% family partners, however the family advocate program is currently working on expanding their services so that number is sure to grow.

Remarkable are some Riverside County hiring practices to capture people with 'lived experience' of mental health challenges and family members. Every person applying for a position as a County consumer, family or parent support specialist **is guaranteed an interview** with a panel composed of the County HR Director and the Directors of the three stakeholder groups (see below) within 30 days of applying. Once a month the panel spends a day or two interviewing applicants, giving weight to varied 'lived experi-

ence', similar to points given for being bilingual, while advising candidates how to become more qualified.

There are four Riverside County peer specialist levels: MH Peer Specialist Trainee, MH Peer Specialist, Senior MH Peer Specialists and the administrative level MH Peer Policy & Planning Specialist which the three women from each stakeholder group pictured below proudly hold. Positions pay from \$12.77-\$29/hour.

Most consumer peer specialists graduated from the 75 hour Recovery Innovations Inc.'s Peer Employment Training provided by contractor (continued on next page)

Riverside County's 3 Musketeers Spread Progress



from left: Claudia Espinoza—Family Advocate Manager, Alison Emery—Director of Consumer Affairs, Lorie Lacey-Payne—Parent Support Manager

Though their official HR titles are MH Peer Planning and Policy Specialists, Alison Emery, a.k.a. Consumer Affairs Director, calls them the 'Three Musketeers' as united they boldly implement more and more services rooted in recovery/discovery practices in the adult and children's systems throughout Riverside County. Attributing the County's success to MH Director, Jerry Wengerd, they say he has bestowed upon them the expectation, empowerment and authority to make changes needed to manifest the intent of the Mental Health Services Act.

Riverside County Innovative Programs Continued

(continued from previous page) Jefferson Transitional Programs (JTP) (<http://itpfriends.org/>), who also have three peer-run centers, an art program and gallery, two homeless drop-in centers, occupational therapy and supportive housing. JTP has been honored with numerous awards for the transformative impact their programs have on so many lives.

Soon to have its grand opening is a really exciting peer-run County Recovery Learning Center that will help people with 'lived experience' to achieve goals of their Wellness Recovery Action Plan—WRAP, with the support of recovery coaches. This will serve as an alternative to traditional services. I am sure all

are welcome to the Grand Opening on September 28, 2011. I can't wait!

Also coming as an alternative learning project is the Family Room Program, which will integrate peer specialists and family advocates support for family members as they learn and embrace recovery/resiliency/discovery practices for their loved ones. NAMI will be supportive of this program.

For more information on Riverside County services please visit: <http://rcdmh.org/>

We have not even nicked the surface of innovative practices in this county. It would take 10 pages, not two. Nice progress. We salute you, Riverside County!

What Does WWT Offer?

- Website: <http://workingwelltogether.org/dnn/>
- E-Learning~1 now, 2 coming
- Curricula~ all downloadable
- County/CBO Technical Assistance
- Networking Support Calls
- Regional Training
- Webinars~ Four Each Year
- Toolkit~ recruiting, hiring, retention
- Support, Model Programs Report
- Peer Certification Standards for Consumers, Family and Parents
- Survey Analysis..& more

Introducing WWT Technical Assistance Coordinators (TACs)

Donna Matthews, MSW, CiMH, Superior Region

—deep-seeded commitment to social justice, twenty years in mental health and social services, advocacy, community organizing, direct services, program management and public policy.



Deborah Van Dunk, UACF Greater Bay Area Region

—devoted her entire career working with children with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges, and excelled in educating, supporting and training other family members how to receive the appropriate mental health services for their children.



All WWT TACs Together Collaborate with Los Angeles Region

John Aguirre, NAMI Central Region

—twenty years of program management addressing prevention, stigma reduction, intervention, and treatment of violence, mental health, and substance abuse. John values family strengthening modalities, advocacy, education, and integration of private and public services while emphasizing collaboration of community stakeholders.



Karin Lettau, MS, CRC, CNMHC, Southern Region

—enduring passion to system transformation, to resolve injustice for disenfranchised groups, after twenty years in sales, marketing, and management, rediscovery of her meaning and purpose in life came as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, empowering others to find their mission as well.

