Recovery Works! Meet Gita
(Featured Peer Success Story)

Before my nervous breakdown I was a computer programmer. Before that, I was a manic overachiever; at one point I was teaching from 8 to 10, working from 10 to 6 and going to graduate school from 6 to 10, to say nothing of completing assignments over the weekend. I thought everyone stayed up several nights in a row to get things done. My first case manager said that with my history she was amazed that no one had already diagnosed me with bipolar disorder.

So I crashed, hard, and was determined SMI after a month in a locked ward. So I was living in Flagstaff—moved from New York to Arizona during one of several manic episodes—and had developed serious depression (what goes up, must invariably come down.) I went to the local clinic and asked about possible group therapy. I was told that while the clinic itself did not offer groups, there might be one available at a nearby recovery center. And there was. One day the management of the recovery center came to visit and I asked them why they didn’t provide this all over the state and they agreed that was on their agenda.

Upon returning to Cottonwood (bipolar people move a lot, and it was way too cold in Flagstaff), I started attending the recovery center there. First I came to groups then I began to facilitate a bipolar group. Next I found myself volunteering, and taking Peer Support training. When a position for a part-time recovery specialist arose at the local mental health facility where I was receiving services, I applied and started on a personal journey to recovery.

Now I train potential Peer Support Specialists at a Community Service Agency in Phoenix (still moving around!). I am still SMI, I am still disabled, and still can only work a few hours a week, but at least it’s something. Something about recovery!

Don’t Get Dropped!

Community groups have organized a grassroots campaign entitled “Don’t Get Dropped” to assist all childless adult members of the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) who may be impacted by the freeze. AHCCCS staff will provide information to representatives of this campaign on a regular basis or as requested. Grassroots initiatives operated by organizations whose mission is to assist vulnerable populations in local communities are best positioned to provide assistance. AHCCCS has targeted specific populations and created special processes to assist more vulnerable populations maintain their eligibility. To find out more, please visit the website at www.dontgetdroppedaz.org.
Arizona Peer and Family Coalition Update

Don Vandenbrul and Bill Schwartz from the Coalition recently attended the ASU Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy's 12th Annual Summer Institute, a four-day conference for professionals, academics, and providers of behavioral health services. The conference also offered many opportunities for attendees to ask how the peer and family voice is being integrated into the decision making process about funding, integrated health care, the medical home and other topics. Attendees asked hard questions that represented the peer and family perspective when it was perceived as missing from the dialogue. Many times these questions resulted in other persons with an interest in the peer and family perspective to add their own questions and concerns to the discussion. It was a very effective way to learn about the role peers and family members have in the behavioral health system.

The Coalition congratulates members who worked on every aspect of the “Raise Your Voice” forums, a groundbreaking project. Phil Sawyer, Chaz Longwell, and Diane Anderson were also members of the System Transformation Subcommittee in addition to their work collecting data, collating data, running analysis on the data and much more. Dr. Laura Nelson told the attendees at the Summer Institute that the report was a crucial piece of the State’s response to the Court in the latest round of settlement negotiations. The Coalition usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month in Phoenix. The next meeting is on August 8th. There will be a video connection available for that meeting. The meetings are free and there is no membership requirement. Persons from outside Phoenix can attend by phone if service is available. For more information about the Arizona Peer and Family Coalition and the location of the next meeting, contact Don VandenBrul by e-mail at info@azpfc.org or by telephone at (480) 213-6257. Look for the Coalition on the web at www.azpfc.org or on Facebook by searching for Arizona Peer and Family Coalition.

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Do you ever worry about bad breath?

If you ever worry about bad breath, you’re not alone. Nearly 40,000,000 Americans commonly suffer from bad breath…and it can be the beginning of potentially severe dental disease. For many persons living with mental illness, dental health may be a low priority when other treatment and health issues must also be addressed.

Throughout this quarter, the DBHS Quarterly Health Initiative is promoting the topic “Dental Health”. Dental health is important because it contributes to general health and wellness, self-esteem and quality of life. Learn about the importance of dental care, what is proper dental care, and more.

Educational handouts for members and providers are now available online! Providers are encouraged to place these informational handouts in areas visible to their members and to encourage questions and conversations with members about this important topic.

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Protect yourself from extreme summer heat...here is how.

Arizona’s summers can get extremely hot, particularly during August. Heat related illnesses are common throughout the summer and can lead to hospitalization and even death. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the heat is through proper planning:

1. Keep water with you and drink plenty of water often to help your body stay cool (even if you don’t feel thirsty).
2. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. If you have to be outdoors, rest often in a shaded area.
3. Remain in air-conditioned areas. If air-conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, away from sunshine.
4. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine (or illicit drugs) which worsen the effects of heat on your body.
5. Never leave an infant, child or pet unattended in parked vehicles.
6. Eat small meals often.
7. If your heart begins to pound, or if you become light-headed, confused, weak or faint, STOP all activity and get assistance immediately!

More information is available at the Department of Health Services website.
News from the ADHS/DBHS Office of Individual and Family Affairs

**Raise Your Voice Focus Groups: what peer and family members told us**

Recovery is a very personal journey that consists of fulfilling an array of personal goals that lead to better quality of life. It is a multifaceted process, because it entails fulfilling goals in many aspects of individual's life, such as improving physical and mental health, gaining or restoring relationships, or furthering one's education. Although recovery is a personal journey, peers and family members agreed that respect, choice and support are three important things they all should have throughout the journey.

Peers and family members voiced their interest in having a recovery oriented behavioral health system; such a system would offer three distinct elements: individualized care, supportive services and integrated health.

The *Raise Your Voice report* and project has served to highlight the pivotal role that peers and family members have in the planning, organizing, leading and monitoring of Arizona’s public funded behavioral health system. Learn more about this [project](#) online or contact the ADHS/DBHS Office of Individual and Family Affairs at 1-877- 464 – 1015.

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**Peer-Run Organizations Profiles: Recovery Empowerment Network**

Recovery Empowerment Network (REN) is offering a “Summer of Learning,” featuring advanced peer support topics every Friday through August. The first topic, "Intentional Peer Support", was conducted in June and July, followed by "The Effects of Trauma" on July 22nd and August 5th. "Grief and Loss" will take place on August 12, and "Resiliency" will be offered August 19th and 26th. These trainings are open to all, and registration is available by telephone, at 602-248-0368.

REN is expanding its pain and stress reduction programs. Each weekday, T’ai Chi, Qigong, and mindfulness meditation is offered to Title 19 individuals at one of the five Direct Care Clinics: San Tan, Osborn, Highland, Metro and Comunidad. As classes grow, REN will offer additional classes each week. Qigong will be offered to students in the peer support class as well. These classes have helped participants begin physical activity, gain strength and flexibility, and develop confidence in their abilities.

Through funding from its SAMHSA statewide consumer network grant, REN is offering two-day forums hosted by peer-run programs around the state. These forums are focused on building skills and knowledge to effect local system transformation. REN has hosted forums in Phoenix, Tucson, Safford and Kingman, with more forums to come in the rural areas. These federally funded forums will culminate in the Statewide Consumer Network Annual Meeting on November 14th in Phoenix, and details about meeting participation will be available in August.

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**The Arizona Stigma Reduction Committee**

The Arizona Stigma Reduction Committee (ASRC) is made up of peers, family and community members and behavioral health staff. ASRC members conduct Arizona Dialogues and educational presentations around the state to promote inclusion of all people in the communities where they live, work, volunteer, socialize and go to school. After all, with mental health and substance use challenges being so common, the people who are affected by them could very well be our own friends, neighbors, family members, teachers, health providers, supervisors, co-workers, or students. In other words, it is very likely that we all know someone who has or had these challenges.

When you think about the people you know and love, would you want them to be discriminated against simply because they have a mental illness or substance use disorder? Of course not! The ASRC invites you to stand with them for inclusion and non-discrimination of persons with mental illness or substance use disorders. A great place to start is by joining in meetings or scheduling and attending an Arizona Dialogue or presentation. To learn more contact Cynthia Henry, ASRC Coordinator, visit the website or simply learn ways in which you can fight stigma.
Community Bridges on a roll with SYNAR Inspections

Tobacco use is the leading cause of death and disease in the United States, with 443,000 deaths annually attributed to smoking (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). Each year, tobacco use results in more deaths than AIDS, unintentional injuries, suicide, homicide, and alcohol and drug abuse combined (Heron et al., 2009). In general, tobacco use begins as a pediatric issue. In fact 80 percent of adult smokers who are nicotine dependent report that they started smoking before the age of 18 (Office of Applied Studies, 2009). In July 1992, Congress enacted the Alcohol, Drug abuse and Mental Health Administration Reorganization Act (P.L. 102-321), which included the SYNAR Amendment aimed at decreasing youth access to tobacco. This amendment requires States to enact and enforce laws prohibiting the sale or distribution of tobacco products to individuals under 18 years old. To determine compliance with the legislation, the amendment requires each state to conduct annual, random, unannounced inspections of retail tobacco outlets and to report the finding to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Currently there are several youth aged 15 -17 participating in the tobacco inspections through various organizations throughout the State. Community Bridges is one of these organizations and takes this role very serious!

Jensen, one of the youth working on the project says “I enjoy performing SYNAR Tobacco Investigations for Community Bridges because I know I’m helping neighborhoods be safer for kids.”

Community Bridges Prevention Partnership has provided federally mandated tobacco inspections under the auspices of the SYNAR program yearly since 2004. If the Prevention Partnership were a bank, a $6 investment in the work being done would yield $600 in one year. Today the strength of that investment rests heavily on changing environments and not just individuals. A combination of social marketing, social media and compliance checks are impacting large numbers of youth and families helping prevent youth access to legal substances. Compliance checks in Arizona come in the form of SYNAR Tobacco inspections every summer.

There have been over 5000 inspections in Maricopa, Mohave, and Yavapai counties on behalf of the Arizona Department of Health Services Division of Behavioral Health since 2004.

In addition to SYNAR, Community Bridges is now involved with Food and Drug Administration inspections through ADHS as well. The goal of both projects is to ensure minors cannot easily access tobacco through retail outlets.

Meet the New “Lifewell Behavioral Wellness”

Effective July 1, 2011, Triple R Behavioral Health and New Arizona Family, Inc. (NAFI) have merged to become one: Lifewell Behavioral Wellness. This merger is an exciting opportunity for behavioral health recipients and the general community.

By integrating and leveraging the strengths and expertise of the two organizations, Lifewell will be uniquely positioned to address the dynamic changes in the behavioral health services marketplace and provide a broader and more integrated continuum of services.

The creation of Lifewell unites two highly compatible and stable organizations with established track records of high-level performance in behavioral health service delivery. As long-time partners, both agencies hold similar values and philosophies regarding client service. As Lifewell moves forward, there will continue to be a fundamental commitment to preserve and enhance the core principles of client-driven, evidence-based, quality care. Lifewell’s Board of Directors has selected Tom McKelvey to be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the newly formed organization. Wayne Hochstrasser will serve as Special Projects Manager, supporting the transition for six months before his retirement.
Meet the Tucson ACERS!

How would you like to meet a great group of youth in Tucson? They are the ACERS Youth Council which started in January of 2005 and have grown from 9 to over 20 members! ACERS stands for Awareness, Change, Education, Recognition, Support. Members of this group have all been receiving services in the behavioral health system. The group’s mission is to reduce stigma associated with mental illness by educating the community about challenges and strengths of those with mental illness.

Here are the voices from several ACERS members:

Jeremy, 20, says “6 years ago I felt as if I were a lost cause. Today I am a student at Pima Community College and am a confident member of society. Never before did I feel I would function and manage myself with the efficiency that I do now, nor feel that I would be able to seek services to help me when I cannot.”

Na-il, 18 adds “Before I came to youth council, I had severe attitude issues, stole things, and was afraid of expressing who I was and who I truly wanted to be. Now, I have grown into someone confident in himself to the point where I can travel out of the country for long periods of time without fear.”

And Megan, 20 shares “I’m diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, ADHD and OCD. Since I’ve joined the youth council I’ve moved out on my own, I got a job at a pet clinic; I attend college and am 23 credits away from my associate degree. When I first joined the youth council I was very shy and had a lot of trouble talking in front of a group of people. I am now very outgoing and enjoy participating in group discussions.”

Kilby, 16 states: “I started back in 2008. I was a confused. The cop’s were called all the time on me. I guess you could call me a delinquent but now I participate in committees and I am even the chair of the ACERS. I am proud to say I haven’t had the cops called for a year and a half.”

Some of the ACERS have participated in the development of the Youth Protocol and participated on various committees in Pima County. ACERS also provides feedback to Community Partnership of Southern Arizona on issues concerning the youth in Tucson, things that are working and things that need improvement.

The future for this group looks pretty busy. ACERS will be participating in an Arizona Dialogue on Bullying and Stigma, and some want to be trained to be part of a panel for the suicide prevention and education program held in high schools-OPTIONS. They are also being asked by Individual and Family Affairs at CPSA to help develop training by youth for youth on transition and how to be an active participant on their child and family team. If you would like more information about the group, call Phyllis Grant or Marci Rojas at (520)882-0142.

New SOCPR report published last month

ADHS/DBHS has collaborated with the University of South Florida to produce the FY2010 Statewide System of Care Practice Review (SOCPR) summary report. This report has been a year in the making, and has involved collaboration between the DBHS Children’s System of Care and researchers from USF.

The report includes both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis, as well as recommendations and next steps for statewide practice improvement for Child and Family Team Practice.
New Healthcare Integration Website

The Arizona Department of Health Services recently launched a new website to keep you and the community informed about several important initiatives around the integration of behavioral and physical health care. The goal of these initiatives is to provide physical and behavioral healthcare services that improve the overall health, wellness and quality of life for members through an efficient, financially sustainable healthcare service delivery system. One of these initiatives includes an Interagency Steering Committee comprised of ADHS/DBHS and AHCCCS leadership to explore the feasibility of contracting with one (1) or more at-risk managed care organizations (MCOs) to serve as Specialty RBHA with SMI Health Homes in Maricopa County beginning October 1, 2013.

What is Behavioral Health Care & Physical Health Care Integration and why should you care? Integration of Behavioral Health Care and Physical Health Care refers to the intentional, ongoing, and committed coordination between all healthcare providers working with the individual.

We all need to take care of both our physical health needs and our behavioral health needs. Both physical health and behavioral health benefit from prevention efforts, screening tests, routine check-ups, and treatment. Many people have both physical and behavioral health illnesses. In Arizona, as well as nationally, there has been a focus on improving quality and efficiency of healthcare services by properly addressing all physical and mental health needs. This new website offers valuable information about health integration and provides opportunity for you to get involved.

ONFERENCE NEWS

Trauma Informed Care – a popular topic at this year’s Summer Institute

At the recently concluded 12th Annual Summer Institute, Kathy Bashor, Manager of OIFA, Nitika Singh, PhD, Lead Clinical Advisor, Teresita Oaks, Special Projects Coordinator with ADHS/DBHS, Chaz Longwell from NAMI, and Diane Anderson, Intern at DBHS/OIFA, gave a presentation on “Trauma Informed Care and Use of Community Based Participatory Research.” This interactive presentation offered an opportunity to learn about trauma informed care, which is an approach to engage people with histories of trauma by recognizing the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledging the role trauma has played in their lives. Although exact prevalence estimates vary, there is consensus in the field that most consumers of mental health services are trauma survivors and that their trauma experiences help shape their responses to outreach and services. <continued on Page 8>

Groundbreaking: the SOAR State Local Coordinators Conference

July held the first groundbreaking conference by SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery). There were representatives from 44 states, including Hawaii and Alaska. Thirty-seven states reported 6,300 applications accepted in 2010. This conference provided comprehensive strategies for forming partnerships as well as examples and sample agreements to help collaboration with important partners such as hospitals, jails and physicians. Additionally, the conference offered opportunity to discuss best practices around collecting and using outcomes processes, examining cost savings from hospitals, and identifying solutions to barriers within specific states. The SOAR initiative is designed to serve adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and who have mental illness, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders and/or other serious health conditions.

The SOAR technical assistance initiative provides strategic planning and training to increase access for individuals who are homeless, or who are returning to the community from institutions (jails, prisons, hospitals or foster care) to Social Security disability benefits. These benefits can increase access to housing, treatment and other supports. Helping people with disabilities who are homeless to gain access to the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) benefit programs is a financial investment in people, in programs, and in communities. For individuals, the immediate gains of SSI and SSDI are clear: a steady income and health coverage. In addition, having SSI and/or SSDI brings homeless adults a step closer to accessing stable housing, treatment, and support services. Using SSA’s work incentive programs, individuals can return to or begin employment, which may be an integral part of their recovery from serious mental illness. For community providers, SSI/SSDI eligibility for individual clients, and Medicaid eligibility that results from SSI eligibility in most States, help agencies expand their capacity to serve people with the most complex needs. State and local governments may recoup money spent on general assistance to applicants, and health care providers may receive Medicaid reimbursement for services they provide.
State Chatter...

Who is the person at DBHS you would think is least likely to enjoy alternative/techno music?

Bob Sorce, Assistant Deputy Director of DBHS, says techno is his favorite chill-out music!

What happens when you mix fun, exercise, good food and add a touch of friendly competition?  The Tournament of Champions Kickball Challenge, of course! Peer and provider organizations get together a couple of times a year for this Tournament, which has included bowling and softball. Visions of Hope took First Place in this year’s Tournament, ChEEERS placed 2nd and Jewish Family & Children’s Services came in 3rd – congratulations everyone!

A high five to Cenpatico for holding its first ever Family Support Partner Symposium for family support partners working in their GSA’s. Kudos to Diane Taylor, Family Support Coordinator, for organizing this professional development and networking event and to MIKID for their collaborative involvement.

What’s a haboob? A gigantic miles wide dust storm that hit the Valley a couple of weeks ago -- looked like the one in the movie, The Mummy! Be on the alert for symptoms of Valley Fever caused by fungus and spores in the Arizona dust which can cause serious lung problems. To learn more, visit the ADHS valley fever website at www.valleyfeverarizona.org.

Arizona has a former HGTV star turned mental health advocate in our midst: Barbara Green. Barbara works ceaselessly on behalf of the behavioral health community and is Arizona’s first Mental Health First Aid Trainer. Barbara is also co-chair of the Arizona Stigma Reduction Committee.

Youth Creating Change is a great group of youth that meet regularly at the Family Involvement Center in Phoenix. They recognize the importance of having the necessary supplies to start the school year with and sponsored a back-to-school supply drive. Youth Creating Change has spent several months collecting school supplies and is donating it to local schools. Way to go!

Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA) staff donated approximately 6,100 bottles of water during CPSA’s annual water drive in July for distribution to people who are homeless. The water was donated to La Frontera Center’s Readily Accessible People Program (RAPP) Team for distribution during RAPP’s daily outreach to homeless men, women and children.

Have something for the State Chatter box? —send us news this month in your organization, provider, peer and/or family member lives that you would like to share with everyone in the state. For consideration, email your submission to OIFA@azdhs.gov no later than 8/19/2011.
Coming Up...

Art of Recovery Expo
Saturday, September 24, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
At the Phoenix Convention Center. This event is free and open to the public.

In celebration of national recovery month, this Expo offers a positive atmosphere to help raise awareness about recovery from all types of addictions. Workshops throughout the day including Keynote Speaker Grammy Award Winner Paul Williams.

San Carlos Apache Meth Summit 2011
Thursday, August 11, 2011
At the Apache Gold Casino Convention Center in Globe, AZ. Free to attend. No pre-registration and onsite registration will open at 9:00 am.

Event hosted by the San Carlos Apache S.T.E.P.P. Coalition (including all district coalitions), in collaboration with the San Carlos Wellness Center, San Carlos Police Department, Arizona Statewide Meth Initiative and HIDTA National Meth & Pharmaceutical Initiative. For more information or to register a health information booth, please contact SCPD Meth Coordinator Tara Kitcheyan at 475-2224 or Louie Lorenzo at 475-3450.

ADHS/DBHS now has an online Statewide Events Calendar!
Find out information about behavioral health related events including support groups, conferences, workshops, webinars, focus groups, peer/family/youth trainings, town halls, health/wellness fairs, job fairs, professional development opportunities and related community events. The calendar can be found at the DBHS website and then click on “Calendar of Events”. Follow instructions there to submit an event. Note: This is the same as the AZ Happenings calendar.

Mental Health: Everyone Has It!

The presentation also discussed the method of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and how it could be adopted to engage and partner with members, family members and stakeholders to design and implement strategies to enhance the behavioral health system.

There was also a discussion of DBHS’ trauma informed care initiative and the use of statewide dialogues for conducting needs assessment and creating awareness. If you would like to be put on the distribution list for the weekly e-communication focused on providing information about happenings in the field of Trauma Informed Care (TIC), please contact Nitika Singh at singhn@azdhs.gov.

About ADHS/DBHS:
The Division of Behavioral Health Services is a Division within the Arizona Department of Health Services. DBHS manages Arizona’s publicly-funded, statewide behavioral health system. Learn more at www.azdhs.gov/bhs/.

Vision:
All Arizona residents touched by the public behavioral health system are easily able to access high quality prevention, support, rehabilitation and treatment services that have resiliency and recovery principles at their core, which assist them in achieving their unique goals for a desired quality of life in their homes and communities.

SUBSCRIBE TO RECOVERY WORKS today!
To submit articles for the next issue of Recovery WORKS, please email your article by August 19, 2011 to OIFA@azdhs.gov. Looking for positive stories that inspire, encourage, showcase, or highlight achievements in recovery. 200 words maximum, 2 photos maximum (must provide ADHS/DBHS publishing rights).