

ths

recover, restore, renew

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

Kutt N' Up Dance Crew performs at the Juneteenth celebration held on June 17 at the Youth & Family - Seattle branch.



celebrating achievements

Return service requested

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NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Norman O. Johnson



Recovering lives and restoring futures. Five words we use in much of the messaging about THS and its programs. Five words which represent both the short and long term goals we hope to achieve in the work we do with individuals and families receiving our services.

40 years of experience has shown us that the road to recovery is not always a smooth, linear process – there are bumps in the road and detours along the way. Our job in both individual counseling and group sessions is to provide support and encouragement to those we serve no matter where they are in the process.

We are in the business of giving second chances. One of the most effective ways we do this is with our Drug Court programming. You can read about this program in the article on page 4 of this newsletter.

Caring for the individuals who come to us for chemical dependency and mental health treatment is a comprehensive commitment – we work with all members of an individual's family, we make sure basic needs are met, we help with employment and job readiness and provide resources to find stable housing.

One of the innovative ways we provide mental health treatment is through our Peer Support Counselor. Please read more about the work Marisa does for us in the profile on page three.

In the coming months the care we provide will become even more integrated as we begin to offer primary care into at least three of our branches. I look forward to sharing these plans in the upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Until then, have a great summer!

SAVE THE DATE: 2013 Alvirita Little Award Luncheon

Mark your calendars for the 2013 Alvirita Little Award Luncheon.

The luncheon will take place on Thursday, October 3, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Seattle. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., with the program beginning promptly at noon.

Joyce Taylor, morning anchorperson at KING 5 TV, will return as the event emcee.

Invitations will be sent out later this summer. If you would like to be a table captain, or if you would like to R.S.V.P. for the event, please contact Ken Schlegel at 206-323-0930, extension 201 or kenneths@ths-wa.org.

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We want your feedback!

Please write to info@ths-wa.org with any questions, comments or suggestions.

STAFF PROFILE

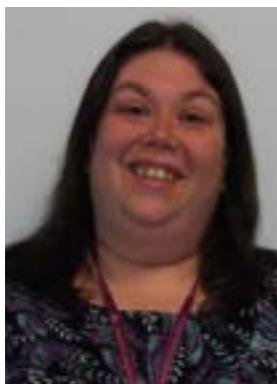
Marissa Brooks - Peer Support Specialist

Marissa has been in the mental health community since she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 13. She says, "I grew up in mental health. It was very difficult. The stigma was palpable. I felt like I had a scarlet letter and that I would never be normal. Now I know that's not true. This diagnosis wasn't a life sentence; it was the beginning of a journey. I began to understand the value of mental health recovery and taking personal responsibility for my life and my mental health."

Unhappy with her job as a recruiter, Marissa participated in the vocational services program at a mental health agency near her home. She learned about peer counseling and embraced it as her career path. Peer counselors draw upon their experiences with mental health recovery to provide peer support to those in mental health treatment. They are especially well-equipped to provide support, encouragement, and resources to those enrolled in mental health treatment because they've been in a similar situation and understand what it feels like to have mental illness and to work towards recovery.

Marissa attended training through the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and became a certified peer counselor. On September 21, 2011 she started working at THS and she remembers it as "the best day of my life." She runs vocational groups for clients in our opiate treatment program and provides peer support for mental health participants.

"I find my job really rewarding. I get just as much out of working with clients as I hope they get out of working with me. I want people to see that my mental illness doesn't define me. I am multi-faceted. My mental illness is one part of me, but it's not the only part. I have a three year old son, I like horror movies and I want to travel. I am more than my mental illness."



THE MADRONA PREVENTION CONVENTION



THS counselors sponsor a group of students at Madrona K-8 School in Seattle called the Panthers In Charge, which is a drug and alcohol prevention group for middle school students. Each year the group creates a service project focused on prevention. This year, the students organized and hosted a conference called the Madrona Prevention Convention. All of the middle school students attended the conference, which consisted of 6 different prevention workshops with topics including peer pressure, bullying, safe sex, and the impact of drug and alcohol use. Presenters were professionals from the community or high school students from Garfield High School who are involved in the prevention club at their school.

Panthers In Charge is part of a larger THS program called Making a Difference at Madrona. As part of this program, THS stations two full-time counselors on-site at Madrona K-8. The goal of this program is to improve student and family connection to and positive participation in the school. The program reduces the barriers impacting kids' readiness to learn by addressing their social and emotional needs and improving access to resources for any student/family who wishes to participate in the project. Our counselors act as a resource for the school, students and families and provide a broad range of services including crisis intervention, assessment, individual and group counseling, community support, and resource connection.

Madrona teachers are grateful for the expertise and resources that THS provides. One staff member says, "As a teacher, I appreciate the immediate access my students have to the THS counselors when I see something isn't going right for them that day." Our counselor intervention helps get kids dealing with emotional problems or family issues back in the classroom and back to learning.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

THS & Drug Court

THS is proud to partner with King County Superior Court and King County Juvenile Court to offer treatment services to youth and young adults who are enrolled in King County Drug Diversion Court and King County Juvenile Court services. Our services are intended to help break the cycle of criminality and substance abuse and get young people's lives back on track. For nearly 10 years, we have worked with the courts to provide intensive drug, alcohol and mental health treatment, case management, life skills training, employment services, pro-social activities, and community reintegration to young people.

Drug Court is unique in that it depends upon a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where the judge and a team of people including prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers and community social service providers like THS work together toward the common goal of breaking the cycle of drug abuse and criminal behavior. Eligible defendants can opt to receive drug treatment instead of going to trial, and if they graduate from the program, all charges are dismissed and their record is expunged. Most participants have an enormous incentive to get clean because if they fail out of the program they are sentenced on their original charges.

THS serves transition-age young adults ages 18-26 enrolled in Drug Court through our Chance to Change Program (CTC), and youth under the age of 18 are served through our Juvenile Drug Court Program. These programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of young people and work to divert them away from prison into positive, productive adulthood through a rigorous program that can take up to two years to complete. Participants get help for their issues and have strict limits placed on their behavior. Participants are randomly drug-tested, meet with their THS counselors for individual and group counseling a minimum of 1-2 times per week, complete community service, and appear in front of the judge as often as once per week.

The services that THS provides through Drug Court are successful because they address the multitude of issues that can contribute to recidivism including addiction, mental illness, behavioral problems, and homelessness. A report by the Washington State Institute for Public



Policy found that statewide, drug courts saved Washington taxpayers \$7,651 per participant over that participant's lifetime. That is over \$13.5 million saved in King County alone.

Judge Wesley Saint Clair, a judge with the King County Drug Court, says "THS has a commitment to our community that is surpassed only by the effort they make to improve the quality of service to our families. They instill in those around them a sense of purpose to achieve only the best for their clients and the community." He goes on to say, "I have been delighted to have a very committed and innovative organization that has shown a decades-long commitment to our community that only makes the outcomes that much better."

THS PREFERRED FUTURE

THS will be the preferred provider to meet the growing need for accessible, culturally relevant, and affordable chemical dependency and behavioral health services, while remaining flexible and adaptable in meeting emerging community needs.



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Editors: Rehana Lanewala and Ken Schlegel