



Minding Your Health

Stepping Stones Clubhouse: Happy To Be Smoke Free

Chester County
Commissioners:
Terence Farrell
Kathi Cozzone
Ryan Costello

If you or
someone you
know is in a
mental health
crisis call

Valley Creek
Crisis
Intervention

610-280-3270
Or
877-918-2100

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Jenn Kirsch tells it like it is. So when the director of Stepping Stones Clubhouse was asked why the Coatesville psychiatric rehabilitation program will soon be smoke-free, she didn't mince words.

"I started working at the Clubhouse in 2006, and by 2009 I'd gone to 10 funerals for Clubhouse members," Kirsch said. "Most were heavy smokers and most died before the age of 55."

The trend illustrated an unfortunate statistic: People with mental illness, on average, live 25 years less than the general population. One reason is that people with mental illness often smoke cigarettes as a way of self-medicating with nicotine. Many tend to be overweight as well. Weight gain can be the result of the mental illness itself, or a side effect of certain prescription medications.

Kirsch, who was a smoker herself until she quit in 2008, said things began to look up when Stepping Stones connected with Mike Barnard, a Community Health Educator at ChesPenn

Health Services in Coatesville.

With Barnard's help, Stepping Stones, a program of Human Services, Inc., has been promoting healthier lifestyles since 2007. The efforts include encouraging members to try various forms of exercise, having members join a local walking club, and holding nutrition and smoking cessation classes.

Last month the Clubhouse began the first phase of their plan to be completely smoke-free by Nov. 17, which will mean no smoking on Clubhouse grounds. The date is also the American Cancer Society's 36th Annual Great American Smokeout, which encourages smokers to quit the habit.

Michael, a 53-year-old Clubhouse member who said he has taken part of the "smoking ritual" for more than 20 years, has almost quit completely. He's no longer smoking at home, so most of his smoking time was at the



Stepping Stones Clubhouse smoking cessation group with facilitator Mike Barnard (left side, front row)

Clubhouse.

"You have more time in the day when you don't smoke," he said.

Dave, age 48, is another member who started smoking when he was just 15. He noted that Mike Barnard has suggested many alternative activities.

"I used to chain-smoke," Dave said. "Now I'll try to take a walk and get some fresh air instead."

Barnard, who acknowledged his smoking cessation class was a

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New Information on Shyness & Social Phobia

Both ordinary shyness and the psychiatric disorder called "social phobia" can cause trembling hands, pounding hearts and flushed cheeks. But according to a survey of more than 10,000 teens aged 13-17, the two are not the same.

A just-released report from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) utilized data from the survey, which was conducted face-to-face and was nationally representative. It assessed social phobia according to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV). To assess shyness, teens were asked to rate how shy they felt around peers that they did not know well.

While about half of youth identified themselves as shy, only 12 percent of shy youth also met criteria for social phobia. Among youth who did not identify themselves as shy, about 5 percent still met criteria for social phobia, suggesting that social phobia and shyness are not necessarily directly related. In addition, those with social phobia also had a risk of developing other psychiatric disorders and having higher levels of impairment at work or school, as well as with family and peers. However, they were no more likely to be receiving professional treatment or prescribed psychiatric medication than their shy counterparts. More information is at: www.nimh.nih.gov.

Administrator’s Diary:

Congratulations to everyone who participated in local observances for Mental Illness Awareness Week 2011. Several successful activities and events took place the first week of October, from informational displays, to the annual Recovery Stars Luncheon, which had more than 250 people in attendance and recognized more than a dozen award winners. A special thanks goes out to Debbie Thompson and Chester County NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) for their contributions, including the purchase of informational posters placed in all Chester County libraries and a large banner.

Congratulations are also in order for Stepping Stones Clubhouse for going smoke-free on November 17. Clubhouse members are embracing healthier lifestyles, including nutrition and exercise. They should be commended.

Finally, this month’s spotlight is on a former colleague and friend — Glenn Koons. A strong leader and advocate, Glenn may be missed, but he will also be remembered through a scholarship fund in his name. The honor is much-deserved.

— Gary Entrekin, Administrator, Chester County MH/IDD

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“tough sell” at first, received a grant from the Health Promotion Council of Southeast PA in 2008. The course treats smoking like any addiction because it impacts the brain in the same way. It analyzes the smoking routine, builds cognitive and behavioral skills and provides additional aids to quit.

“We approach things in a positive way,” Barnard said. “We talk a lot about motivation to quit, and explore reasons why people are smoking. Is it boredom, is it stress?”

Strategies for quitting can be designed around a person’s reasons for smoking, Barnard explained.

Dean, a staff member who is in the cessation class, said he thinks about his motivation to quit all the time. “I have a 13 year-old son,” he said.

Randy, 66, who has been smoking for more than 40 years, and Greg, just 52 and has already undergone triple-bypass surgery, both say they are motivated to quit.

So, on Nov. 17, Stepping Stones will complete the final phase of their goal and there will be no smoking on Clubhouse grounds. But chances are, few members will have time to think about their next cigarette on that day.

“We are going to celebrate and we’re going to stay busy. We’re planning to hold a dance marathon that day,” Kirsch said.

13th Annual International Survivors of Suicide Day

Survivors of suicide need specialized support, and on Saturday, November 19, survivors around the globe will gather at hundreds of simultaneous healing conferences to connect with others who have experienced loss through suicide.

Sponsored by the American Foundation For Suicide Prevention (AFSP), this Survivors’ of Suicide Day address the questions that so many newly bereaved survivors face: Why did this happen? How do I cope? Where can I find support? Experts on suicide share information on what we currently know about suicide and grief

Conferences are being held in Philadelphia and other PA cities and will be broadcast by AFSP online in English with Spanish and French subtitles available from 1:00-2:30 pm EST.

For more information about his international event, visit the AFSP website at www.afsp.org. For information about the Philadelphia event, contact:

Pat Gainey at
pgainey@afsp.org, 215-746-7256

19th Annual Forensic Rights And Treatment Conference

Nov. 29 pre-conference session
Conference: Nov. 30—Dec. 1, 2011

**Holiday Inn
Harrisburg/Hershey**

For more information & registration:

www.drexelmed.edu

Free, on-going Suicide Prevention Trainings available from the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force

QPR—Question, Persuade, Refer
(Three words that may save a life)

Appropriate for school staff, first responders, businesses, churches, community groups and other interested stakeholders. Contact Tracy Behringer or Gina Buckman, co-chairs, for more information about bringing this training to your site.

610-344-6265

Spotlight: Glenn Koons Scholarship

Glenn Koons was a well-known and admired mental health advocate who lived in Chester County for many years. When the 53-year-old died in August, the local mental health community, as well as others across the region, felt a tremendous loss. Now, Koons will be remembered with an annual scholarship in his name.

A dedicated and caring person, Koons was a Certified Peer Specialist who worked with others struggling with their mental health. He also worked to educate the general public and increase understanding of mental illnesses.

Koons moved to the Reading area about five years ago, but while he lived in Chester County, he was an active member of the Chester County chapter of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force. After his move, he stayed in touch with local friends and organizations, often returning to assist with various events and trainings.

In addition to his position as a certified Peer Specialist at Wernersville State Hospital, Koons served on a number of committees and boards across the state. At the time of his passing, he was serving a three-year term on the Mental Health Association of Pennsylvania Board of Directors, for which he was immediate past president.

Koons was also a gifted musician who loved to sing and play guitar, keyboard and saxophone. His passion

for music allowed him to reach out to local youth who participated in Liv Live Concerts, musical events sponsored by the Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force.

To honor his memory, two organizations, the PA Mental Health Association and the PA Mental Health Consumers' Association, have committed to the creation of an annual scholarship to be awarded to a promising candidate for Certified Peer Specialist training.

The scholarship will be awarded to a person who demonstrates the ability to engage people, to share life experiences in recovery, to provide leadership, and to teach others these skills.

The two organizations are currently accepting donations to this scholarship fund. For more information about the scholarship, or to donate, contact either Lynn Keltz, Executive Director of the PA Mental Health Consumers Association at lynn@pmhca.org or Sue Walter, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association in PA at swalter@mhapa.org. Additional information is also at www.pmhca.org.



Glenn Koons

Holcomb Behavioral Health Introduces Free Gambling Prevention & Education Programs

Youth Educational Programs:

- **The Amazing Chateau** (4th—7th grades) teaches the difference between games of chance and skill as well as concepts related to gambling
- **Hooked City** (8th—10th grade) same as above for higher age group
- **Wanna Bet** (3rd—8th grades) teaches facts, myths and consequences of gambling

Speaking Engagements:

tailored educational presentations for target populations such as high risk youth, college students, older adults, athletes, and others

In-Service Trainings for Professionals:

customized trainings provide overview of problem gambling, screening and treatment resources available for professionals in all fields

**For more info or to schedule, contact:
Gambling Prevention Specialist Kaila Smeach
610-363-1488 or ksmeach@holcombhhs.org**

New Parent Support Group for Parents of Children in Out-Of-Home Placements

A new support group, designed for parents with a child or children either currently in out-of-home placement (or being considered for out-of-home placement) is being offered by Child & Family Focus. Inc. These sessions will provide an opportunity to meet other parents who have had children in out-of-home placements and understand the issues. Parents will also have the chance to share comments, suggestions and provide feedback.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 29 from 6:30 pm until 8 pm. A light dinner will be provided and registration is required. Find out more by contacting Heather Pierson, at the phone number or email address below.

610 925 4683, ext 21

hpierson@childandfamilyfocus.org

Have you checked out Chester County's Refer Web?

Find resources on a wide range of services—from employment and financial services, to shelter and legal assistance. Check it out at www.referweb.net/chesco.

- ◆ Every Thurs. — The Depression and Bipolar Alliance - 6:30- 7:30 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 610-429-1702.
- ◆ Every Tues. & Thurs. — Double Trouble for those recovering from addiction and mental health problems - 3:30- 5 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 610-429-1702.
- ◆ Every Tues.— Recovery Works a schizophrenia support group - 6:30 – 7:30 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 610-429-1702.
- ◆ Every Tues. — Celebrate Recovery for a faith-based support - 6pm-8:15pm at Hopewell UMC, 852 Hopewell Rd., Downingtown. For more info call 610-269-1545.
- ◆ 2nd Mon. — Adult MH Meeting - 5:30 - 7:30 pm at the Peer Support Center 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 610-344-6265.
- ◆ 2nd Tues. — Chester County Children's Committee 9:30 – 11 am at Government Services Bldg., 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester. For more info call 610-344-6265.
- ◆ 1st Wed. — NAMI West Chester Family Support Group - 7-9 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 484-947-5643.
- ◆ 1st Wed. — CSP (Community Support Program) Meeting - Noon to 2 pm, the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info call 484-239-0687.
- ◆ 1st Wed.— ADHD Support Group for parents and caregivers of children with ADHD - West Goshen Municipal Bldg., West Chester. For more info go to www.chestercountychadd.org.
- ◆ 2nd Wed. — Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force - 3:30 – 5pm at COAD, 930 E. Lancaster Ave., Exton. For more info call 610-344-6265. **NOTE: November meeting is changed to Wed., Nov. 16.**
- ◆ 2nd Wed.— Survivors of Suicide (S.O.S.) - 7:30 pm in the Willistown Room of the Paoli Memorial Hospital in Paoli. For more info call 215-545-2242.
- ◆ 3rd Wed. — Participatory Dialogue Committee Noon to 2pm at Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. For more info contact Jamie Messersmith at messersmithj@ccbh.com.
- ◆ 4th Wed.—NAMI Paoli Family Support Group - 7-9pm at the Daylesford Abby, 220 S. Valley Rd., Paoli. For more info call 484-947-5643.
- ◆ 1st Thurs. — NAMI Kennett Square Family Support Group - 7:30-9 pm at Friends Meeting House, Rt. 82, Kennett Square. For more info call 484-947-5643.
- ◆ 2nd Thurs. — NAMI Phoenixville Family Support Group - 7-8:30 pm at Penn Psychiatric Center, 601 Gay St., Suite 6, Phoenixville. For more info call 484-947-5643.
- ◆ 2nd Thurs. — NAMI Grief & Loss Family Support Group - 7:30 - 9:30 pm in Downingtown. For location and more info call 610-269-3476.
- ◆ 3rd Thurs.— NAMI PA Chester County General Meeting 7pm at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Malvern. For more info call 484-947-5643.
- ◆ 4th Thurs. — MH/IDD Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting - 6pm at the Government Services Bldg., 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester, Room 149. For more info call 610-344-6265. Next meeting is Nov 17. No Dec meeting.
- ◆ 4th Friday — Creative Expressions Coffee House—7-9pm at The HOOD, 530 E. Union St., West Chester. For more info, call 610-429-1702.

To keep this calendar up-to-date, we need your feedback! If you know of changes to the above information, please let us know. Email: tbehinger@chesco.org or call 610-344-6265.