



news from the
alexandria
community services board

Department of Mental Health,
Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse

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Mental Health: Get Connected

The Alexandria CSB hosted events for National Mental Health Month in effort to raise awareness about the importance of mental wellness. This year's theme, *Get Connected*, emphasized social connectedness, an important part of mental health. People are encouraged to **get connected to: family and friends** to feel close and supported, **their community** to feel a sense of belonging and **professional help** when having trouble coping.

Mayor William D. Euille highlighted the month with a mayoral proclamation and hundreds of people turned out for two community events held by the CSB.



Dr. Kay Redfield-Jamison

One event featured **Dr. Kay Redfield-Jamison**, clinical psychologist and a Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Over 350 guests flooded the auditorium leaving standing room only in the lobby. Dr. Jamison spoke about *Personal and Professional Perspectives on Depression*. She is one of the foremost authorities on manic-depressive illness and has experienced it first hand.

Dr. Jamison related the terror she first felt at divulging her illness. With the support of friends, family and colleagues, as well as being fortunate enough to afford treatment and "tired of hiding," Jamison went public to help others. She described the exhilaration of mania and the subsequent crashes of depression that brought a suicide attempt and left her in a coma while she was a professor at UCLA. Dr. Jamison captured the audience with humorous, yet painful stories about the throws of mania including "trips to Saturn without a spaceship" and other "voyages of the mind, body and soul." The depressions that followed these highs left her "numb in all the senses and unable to experience any joy." Jamison shared a deeply human and comical essay entitled *The Gracious Acceptance of Lithium in My Life*.

Similar to the experiences of many, Dr. Jamison was reluctant to take medication regularly, then struggled for years to find the correct medication and dosage. She now "lives virtually symptomless" and emphasizes that with patience and courage, "treatment works." Jamison works to fight the stigma of mental illness and encourages people to consider talking about their illness: "One is what one is."

Dr. Jamison is the author of several books including *An Unquiet Mind* and *Touched with Fire: Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*. She also wrote the textbook on manic depression that is used at Johns Hopkins school of medicine. Jamison was chosen by *Time* magazine as a "Hero of Medicine." She has been the recipient of numerous awards including the MacArthur Award, a fellowship given for extraordinary creative and intellectual talent, originality, dedication and promise for future advances. Dr. Jamison waived her speaking fee for this event.

A second event featured psychiatrist **Dr. Millie Osborne, M.D.**, who presented on *Suicidal Youth: What Every Parent and Health Professional Should Know*, the title of her book. Dr. Osborne's talk, like her book, encouraged guests to identify and address dimensions in children's development. According to Osborne, "Existing approaches to preventing youth suicide have had little impact on reducing the number of suicides and attempts." Dr. Osborne's book features Electra, a well-loved, intelligent teenager. Yet, as is not uncommon, she becomes so depressed she contemplates suicide for years until she takes action. Electra's diary teaches us about the changes that are needed to develop effective suicide prevention strategies.



See the back cover for resources related to this story.

Discussion groups during the Dr. Osborne event covered topics related to depression. Here, a young man presents his group's thoughts.

CSB Stars Recognized at Employee Performance Event

Each year the CSB recognizes individual employees and teams of employees whose quality of work and dedication have been extraordinary during the previous year. Nominations for different categories are submitted by CSB staff and reviewed for selection by a committee that includes Board members and CSB consumers. Honorees receive a plaque and a monetary award. The CSB salutes these award recipients and our many other outstanding employees.

Individuals

Sandra Cañas,
Cultural Competency Award
Audrey Jones, Esprit Award
Asta Lynch,
Continual Improvement Award
Tony Muccio, Phill Bradbury Award
Margaretrose Odigwe, Access Award
Sam Priego, Stewardship Award
Mary Ellen Ruff, Collaboration Award

Access Award

Medication Clinic Staff

Delores Brooks
Alice Cadow
Henrietta Edelin
Lucinda Mosley
Karla Zelaya

Continual Improvement Award

Quality Assurance Team

Diana Sabados
Melissa Unruh
Justin Wise



Tony Muccio, Substance Abuse Therapist and Liz Wixson, Director of Acute and Emergency Care Services.

Phill Bradbury Award Peacock GH Staff

Peter Etube
Tammblerae Felton
Mary Martin
Shavonne Stevens
Dawn Swistak
Robert Walker
Joyce Woulard

Stewardship & Accountability Award - PIE Staff

Robin Crawley
Patty Eitemiller
Pam Little
Deatrice Williams

Collaboration Award Change Agent Team

Judi Booker
Judy Carter
Jennifer Cohen Cordero
Allyson Coleman
Linda Darrell
Lynn Fritts
Sharon Graham
Melissa Johnson
Gouss Joseph
Berline Juleau
Connie Juntunen
Jennifer Kane
Asta Lynch
Beverly Randall
Jodie Roberts
Bill Rooney
Diana Sabados
Susan Tatum
John Thomas
Ben Toma
Melissa Unruh
Wendy Vaughan
Justin Wise
Jonathan Zeitlin



Cultural Competence Committee: Front- Will Thompson, Elaine Edge, Sorin Cetina. Back- Mike Gilmore (Chair), Juan Palma, Juliette Milushev, Aberra Sumamo



Mary Ellen Ruff, Drug Court Coordinator.

Lifetime Achievements Award

Venus Gatling -Spruill
Tony Muccio
Diane Vallance

Cultural Competence Award -Clubhouse Staff

Carlin Brodie
Selene Butler
William Hibler
Pam Hottenstein
Craig Pearson
Kristine Sinclair
Aberra Sumamo
Ndidi Uzowihe
Wendy Vaughn
Loretta White

Esprit Award- Cultural Competence Committee

Sorin Cetina
Elaine Edge
Omayra Hunt
Juliete Milushev
Juan Palma
Aberra Sumamo
Will Thompson

Cultural Competence Committee

The CSB's Cultural Competence and Diversity Committee (shown on the previous page) works to implement strategies to heighten staff's level of cultural competence and responsiveness in serving Alexandrians from diverse backgrounds. The group promotes greater participation in dialogue about matters of race and the exchange of ideas that will lead to unity, fellowship and healing.

During Black History Month the Committee sponsored a film about the history of black entertainers, followed by a discussion, and featured black history quizzes with prizes. The Committee has also sponsored events for Hispanic Heritage and a variety of holidays.

The Cultural Competence Committee is currently analyzing the results of a survey done to determine areas where staff feel additional training or other activities are needed. They will base their planning for the next year on these survey results.

The group recently received the CSB's Espirit Award, also called The Morale Award, for creating a healthy emotional climate at the CSB, enhancing morale, improving attitudes and making changes for the better in the workplace.

Spring for Alexandria

A team of Alexandria CSB employees joined the City of Alexandria for the first-ever community-wide day of service, *Spring for Alexandria*. Hundreds of volunteers provided services at dozens of sites throughout the City. The CSB team worked at a group home where they stained a fence, weeded, seeded, mulched, trimmed hedges and planted shrubs and flowers.



Front: Allyson Coleman, Robin Crawley, Juan Palma, Yorvska Salazar, Julie Frye, Jennifer Cohen Cordero. Back: Molly Schnure, Bill Rooney, Mike Gilmore, Doug Rizzo, Carol Layer, Tony Briggs, Jennifer McFarlane.

Vocational Services

Alexandria Vocational Services (AVS) provides meaningful work to persons with intellectual disabilities based upon their individual needs and preferences. Participants are offered to participate in one of several programs.



The Sheltered Workshop

provides supervised employment for persons requiring ongoing moderate support. Workers operate in groups of 10 or more completing projects such as labeling, envelope stuffing and film recycling.

Direct Support Professional Frank Tolson and Vickie Jackson, member of an AVS work team. The team has a long-term contract to clean the Fire Department on Second Street, where they have become part of the family.

Competitive Supportive Employment for Groups and Individuals-

The program for *groups* of people provides employment for persons in need of long-term on-the-job training and support. Groups work in the community as subcontractors, or the group is hired by a business. Jobs performed include janitorial services, groundskeeping and recycling services.

The program for *individuals* provides job placement for persons in need of on-the-job support. Individuals work in the community alongside a job coach who supports them until they are comfortable working independently. Jobs include cashier, receptionist and cook among others.



David works at a local Safeway.

For more information about AVS, please contact Godwin Okafor at 703-519-5926.



Alexandria Community
Services Board
720 North Saint Asaph Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Adult Support Groups

The Alexandria CSB's Acute Care Services offers over 20 different adult support groups for help with mental health and substance use problems. Persons who are interested in participating in a group and who are currently receiving services at the Alexandria CSB may speak to their service coordinator about referral to a group. Persons not currently receiving services at the Alexandria CSB can call Intake at 703-838-6400 and request an assessment appointment to see which services would be most helpful.

Groups include anger management, women's empowerment, trauma recovery, Spanish language groups, dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), dual diagnosis groups and a variety of drug, alcohol and relapse prevention support groups for people in all stages of recovery. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa to see a list of groups and descriptions.

To make comments, suggestions of story ideas or contributions, call Jennifer Cohen Cordero at 703.838.4455, x161.

Resources Related to Manic Depression and Suicide

(cont. from front page)

Alexandria Community Services Board

www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa
703-838-6400 24 Hours

CrisisLink Hotline

www.crisislink.org
1-800-273-TALK

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

www.dbsalliance.org

Mental Health America

www.nmha.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

www.naminova.org
703-525-0686

www.suicidology.org

www.survivorsofsuicide.com