



Heard It through The Grapevine

FEBRUARY 2010

The Vision of The
Grapevine Center,
Inc.

Published By Consumers

**Blending good
people with better
choice for the best
recovery.**

Upcoming Events

Feb. 4th, 2010 Community Meeting 2 PM

Feb. 12th, 2010 Western CSP 9 AM

Feb. 14th, 2010 Valentines Day Party
1PM—4 PM

Feb. 15th, 2010 Community Meeting 2
PM

Feb. 22nd, 2010 GV Board Meeting 5: 30
PM

Feb. 25d, 2010 Rachael Freund 1PM —
3PM

This article has been excerpted with permission from an article published in People First, Vol. 18, No. 1, Fall 2009 ("Compeer Friendships Make Connections and Promote Recovery," by Melissa DiPento). People First is published by the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Compeer friendships make connections and promote recovery.

Compeer began in 1973 in Rochester, N.Y. with just 12 volunteers. Today it has nearly 5000 volunteers, (some of whom may have mental illnesses themselves) serving some 6500 adults and children, in nearly 100 locations in the United States, Canada, and Australia. The program was founded by Bernice Skirlboll who was inspired by her experience a decade earlier when she barely survived an auto accident. It was during this period of extended convalescence that she realized the importance of having friendships while recovering. Cont'd on p-2-

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SAFELINK WIRELESS LIFELINE (CELL PHONES)

Do you have a cell phone? If not, please read the article that follows and it will tell you how you can get your own cell phone. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Lifeline telephone service to low-income families and individuals that would other-

wise find it difficult to pay for telephone service; Safelink Wireless Lifeline Support Service can provide a free cell phone and 50 minutes airtime each month for income eligible customers provided by TracFone Wireless. To qualify for Lifeline Support, families or individuals have to be either enrolled in a state social service program (like food stamps) or

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The Compeer Program cont'd from page -1-

The compeer mission is to provide healing and recovery from mental illnesses through friendships. The way the program works is that a volunteer is assigned to a consumer as a friend and a kind of mentor, at least in the initial phases of the relationship. However, the relationship between the two new friends is often casual: for example, trips to movies, baseball games, a walk in the park, a weekly phone call or e-mail.

The relationships offer emotional rewards. One consumer who lives in Northeast Philadelphia, has maintained friendships with matches he had years ago. Additionally, Compeer helped ignite his passion for writing. When he first got involved, in 1992, he was asked to contribute to the Compeer Philadelphia Newsletter. He then began writing movie criticism for the CC of Philadelphia newspaper; later, he wrote for a Temple University publication. This consumer remarks that ; "Compeer has changed my life, a lot of things I am doing now, you can trace back to Compeer.

Across the state, more programs are forming and many more counties are considering establishing Compeer programs.

In rural Butler county, near the Pennsylvania-Ohio border, the Compeer program has 56 volunteers, with a few volunteers matched to more than one friend, providing support to more than 60 people transitioning toward mental health recovery, said Elaine Callihan, the Butler County Compeer program coordinator. The volunteers range from retired college professors to bankers, hospital workers, sales associates and college students.

The Butler County program was established in 1983; Compeer in nearby Beaver County started in 2006, Callihan said. No two Compeer programs are alike, but they all share the same fundamental ideas, she added. "We believe friendship is a very powerful medicine."

Volunteers must apply to become a compeer friend and must have their references checked. Most Compeer programs require a police background check as well. Volunteers are asked to spend four hours a month for one year with their matched friend. Callihan said her program does not hold volunteers to that requirement, adding that most volunteers go above and beyond what they are required to do.

Volunteers and their friends have many opportunities to get together in a larger setting. For example, Butler County Compeer holds a spring event, a summer picnic, a fall event and a Christmas Tea, giving those in the program a chance to meet with their friends and make new ones.

Michelle and Jayne

A number of factors go into matching two friends. All Compeer matches are between people of the same gender. Pairs are usually matched by their location, their willingness to travel and their interests. Most volunteers are willing to travel to see their friends, and most people are not concerned about age differences. "Most people just want a buddy"; says Ruby Hill, Compeer Philadelphia's program liaison; and "friendship comes in all ages", she tells volunteers.

One successful inter-generational match is between Michelle Fetzer, 24, and Jayne Campbell, 55. Fetzer, a graduate student who is working toward a master's in community counseling, signed up with Butler County Compeer in June 2008. A month later she was matched with Mrs. Campbell.

Fetzer said her relationship with Mrs. Campbell has taken on a mother-daughter component: She often asks Jayne for advice. She said this has helped build up Jayne's self esteem. "I don't have anyone playing that role in my life and I'm so glad to know Jayne," Fetzer said. At first she was worried about the age gap and wondered how well she would get along with Jayne; but she said it didn't take long before the two got close. "It's such a great relationship I have with her," Fetzer said. "I'm doing things I'd never do in my life." For example, the two recently spent a day together at a local shooting range.

Mrs. Campbell, a six-year, third-stage breast cancer survivor, said the relationship between her and Ms. Fetzer has been positive. "We gab on the telephone. I like taking walks and looking at the flowers, and I like having someone to talk to," Campbell said. "I call her on a regular basis. She supports me and I support her back. I'm always telling her to study hard."

Fetzer, who hopes to work in the mental health field, appreciates Compeer as a way to truly connect with someone who has a mental illness. "You never really get to know someone as an equal [in a counselor-client relationship]. I wanted to see past the diagnosis," she said.

Fetzer is busy with graduate school and has struggled to find time to spend with her friend, but she said that Campbell is very understanding about her schedule. Despite the competing demands on her time, Fetzer sometimes spends entire days with her friend, usually in Jayne's home town of a few thousand people. Jayne is very involved in the community, and the two often spend time outdoors in the neighborhood, walking or going to church. The two also exchange cards frequently.

Fetzer said she hopes to continue the friendship for years to come. "It is a very caring and reciprocal relationship," she said. "Jayne is very warm. The cards she sends me give me such a great feeling that I post them in my office; I smile every time I read them. The hat she knitted me I wear religiously during the winter. The shawl she made for me adorns the recliner at my house. Jayne truly and positively impacts my life."

Personal Stories

The personal stories that follow pertain to the individuals' experiences at the last P.M.H.C.A. conference in June of 2009; e.g., what they learned or what they got out of it, what they thought of the lectures and workshops, how they liked the accommodations, and whether or not they enjoyed the entertainments provided at the conference.

Joe Olcus: Joe's experiences at the conference were all good. He was able to meet new people, renew former friendships, and at the same time, enjoy exposure to new and edifying information about mental illnesses. He liked the accommodations and was pleased with the courteous hotel staff. Joe was also very pleased with the food that was served.

Amy Stickle: Amy enjoyed her conference experience, and particularly benefited from the workshop on healthy eating. She enjoyed the entertainments offered, specifically, the Karaoke and the DJ and dance. She enjoyed shopping at the mall that was handy to the conference, and was pleased with the opportunity to network with individuals from all over the state. Amy said the hotel was nice and clean and well kept, except for the fact that she got stuck in a crowded elevator for half an hour.

Jayne Campbell: Jayne enjoyed the conference, overall, but was not at all pleased with the food. Jayne also felt that the rooms in which the workshops were held were too small, too crowded and too cold. Jayne felt that the content of the lectures and workshops were too repetitive of previous years. She liked the hotel, particularly, the cleanliness and order, but had mixed feelings about the entertainment.

Michelle Gould: Michelle had fun at the conference, and felt that the variety of topics were interesting and informative. She also had fun renewing old friendships and meeting new people. She liked the hotel and was impressed with the cleanliness, and order. Further, she was pleased with the courtesy and helpfulness of the hotel's staff. Finally, Michelle felt that

the food and accommodations were excellent.

Betty Paffrath: The aspect of the conference that stood out to Betty was it's degree of excellent organization. "After all, said Betty, there were some six hundred people at the conference". Betty's favorite aspect of the conference was the opportunity to talk with people from different county systems and different programs to compare notes, opinions, and attitudes. One thing that Betty learned was that medications sometime work differently in individuals as they get older. Thus, a medication that worked well in a person when she was twenty, may not work at all at sixty; or, it may have some unwanted effects that were not present before. Betty felt that the lectures and workshops were also well organized, informative and interesting. She felt the food and accommodations were excellent.

Bette Peoples: Bette was asked to act as a monitor of several of the workshops. From her role as a monitor, Bette recalled that the workshops were well organized. Bette also served as treasurer of the organization and was required to make a report. She recalled that an art show was held during the conference and that one of Grapevine's own, Elouise W., displayed some of her work. Bette also recalled that the accommodations and food were good. Bette said that some people from the conference went on to Harrisburg to attend a rally regarding the absence of a budget in Pennsylvania. Finally, Bette recalled, with sadness, that one consumer died on the last day of the conference.

CONT'D ON PAGE -4-

Consumer Rights

- To be treated with dignity & respect
- To have your medical records kept private
- To take part in decisions about your care
- To have your treatment & risks explained to you
- To help set up your treatment plan
- To ask for a change in your treatment plan
- To choose your provider from a list of Health Choices providers
- To see your medical records & discuss them with your provider
- To ask for a copy of the Medical Necessity Criteria
- To ask about the qualifications of your



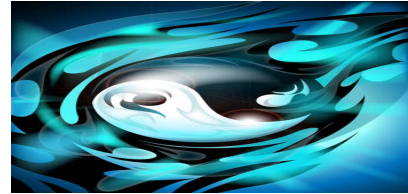
POETRY CORNER

Sound
By
Susan

Analog lover—
Blaring, then soft
Cacophony—and
Decibels later, my
Ears
feel
good.
Here

I am again—
jovial, vibrating.
Kafka-esque, I become what I
listen to.
Music leaves me with
nuances of its creator, from
Om to
poetry to absolute
quiet
rearing its head,
softly, silently, ensuring my

trust.
Understanding me.
Validating me.
Waking me to my own
xcess—my
Yin, my yang, my



Untitled
By
Susan

Affirming my
Beauty, I am
Conscious of the
Devine
Ever present—
Flowing forth my
Good,
Healing me with
Infinite grace.
Just another

Kinetic moment
Leaving
Me
No longer fearful but
Omni
Potent. Its
residual is
Staying power
To live, to work, to love. To
Understand
Vivid in my cells.
Why question its
Xcellent propensities
You have it, too, this
Zest for life.



Twelve years in passing
(o' sister my sister)

By
Benjamin J. Vincent

This passing of a summer shower
This Sun rising and falling
This blink of His eye
Twelve years in passing...

It seems like yesterday when
Death took flight
And the sweet smell of Eden
Called this child of God
Home to rainbows, sunflowers
And laughter

Twelve years in passing...
Through the fingertips of
Angels who whisper songs
To silence the hungry beast,
And carry her tears of lost love
To heaven...
A young woman now
She still believes
With a gentle heart
That has survived these pains of
Twelve years in passing...

O' sister, my sister,
Look how the roses bloom
See how the tears still come
And go...
Hell has lost a citizen, and

We have gained an angel...

Twelve years in passing
O' see how your wings have
grown.
O' sister, my sister
Your twelve years of wisdom
Have taught you to fly
O' sister

My sweet sister...
Show me your rainbows
As I too learn to fly,
With your twelve years in passing
I find hope.

How to stay well (Or get better, if you're not so well to begin with)

By
Susan

1. Do things that bring you a sense of fulfillment, joy and purpose, that validate your worth. See your life as your own creation, and strive to make it a positive one.

2. Pay close and loving attention to yourself, tuning into your needs on all levels.

Take care of yourself, nourishing, supporting, and encouraging yourself.

3. Release all negative emotions-resentment, envy, fear, sadness, anger. Express your feelings appropriately; don't hold on to them.

Forgive yourself.

4. Hold positive images and goals in your mind, pictures of what you truly want in your life. When fearful images arise, re-focus on images that evoke feelings of peace and joy.

5. Love yourself, and love everyone else. Make loving the purpose and primary expression in your life.

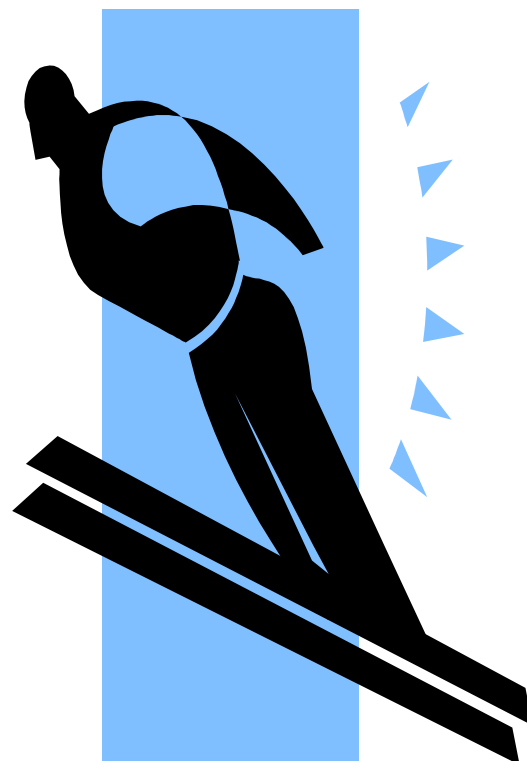
6. Create fun, loving, honest relationships, allowing for the expression and fulfillment of needs for intimacy and security. Try to heal any wounds in past relationships, as with old lovers, and mother and father.

7. Make a positive contribution to your community, through some kind of work or service that you value and enjoy.

8. Accept yourself and everything in your life as an opportunity for growth and learning. Be grateful.

PERSONAL STORIES CONTINUED

John Baron: John said that most of the workshops were interesting and informative, although a bit overcrowded. John also said that some of the workshops were repetitive of previous years. John recalled that the food and accommodations were good, although he was sick for the first two days and really wasn't able to partake of much of the food or the entertainment. John suggested that a workshop on conspiratorial issues might prove quite informative to all.



SEASONAL DEPRESSION (SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER)—SAD (SUMMER DEPRESSION)

If you read the installment in last month's issue of the News Letter, you learned that there are two types of Seasonal Depression: There is the type that you can get in the winter (the most common type), and the type that can effect you in the spring and summer months. It is the latter type that we will discuss in this month's issue.

Ah, the joys of summer. The withering heat. School vacations, when your kids give you minute-to-minute updates on their boredom levels. Isn't summer supposed to be fun and relaxing? If you've got summer depression, it isn't.

For some people, summer depression has a biological cause, says Ian A. Cook, MD, the director of the Depression Research Program at UCLA. For others, the particular stresses of summer can pile up and make them feel miserable.

What makes depression in summer especially hard is that you feel like you're supposed to be having fun. Everyone else seems so happy splashing in the water and sweating in their lawn chairs. So why can't you? And more importantly, what can you do to make this summer easier? Here's what you need to know about summer depression.

Understanding Summer Depression:

Why do some people feel more depressed in summer? Here's a rundown of reasons.

Summertime SAD. You read about seasonal affective disorder (SAD) in last month's issue of the News Letter. SAD affects about 4% to 6% of the U.S. population. SAD typically causes depression as the days get shorter and colder. But about 10% of people with SAD get it in the reverse—the onset of summer triggers their depression symptoms. Cook notes that some studies have found that in countries near the equator—like India—summer SAD is more common than winter SAD. Why seasonal changes cause depression? Experts aren't sure, but the longer days, and increasing heat and humidity may play a role. Specific symptoms of summer depression often include **loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, weight loss and anxiety.**

Some possible contributory factors of summer depression:

Disrupted schedules in summer. If you've had depression before, you probably know that having a reliable is often key to staving off symptoms. But during the summer, routine goes out the window—and that disruption can be stressful, Cook says. If you have children in grade school, you're suddenly faced with the prospect of keeping them

occupied all day, every day. If your kids are in college, you may suddenly find them—and all their boxes of stuff—back in the house after a nine month absence. Vacations can disrupt your work, sleep, and eating habits—all of which can contribute to summer depression.

Body image issues. As the temperature climbs and the layers of clothing fall away, a lot of people feel terribly self-conscious about their bodies, says Cook. Feeling embarrassed in shorts or a bathing suit can make life awkward, not to mention hot. Since so many gatherings revolve around beaches and pools, some people start avoiding social situations out of embarrassment.

Financial worries. Summers can be expensive. There's the vacation, of course. And if you're a working parent, you may have to fork over a lot of money for summer camps or baby sitters to keep your kids occupied while you're on the job. The expenses can add to a feeling of summer depression.

"This summer, we have worries about the economic crisis layered on top of everything else", says Cook "People are feeling more financially strapped. There're wondering, 'If I go on vacation, will the job still be there when I get back?'"

The heat: Lots of people relish the sweltering heat. They love baking on a beach all day. But for people who don't, the summer heat can be truly oppressive. You may start spending every weekend hiding out in your air-conditioned bedroom, watching pay-per-view until your eyes ache. You may begin to skip your usual before dinner walks because of the humidity. You may rely on unhealthy takeout because it's just too stifling to cook. Any of these things can contribute to summer depression.

Tips for coping with summer depression

What can help you feel better? What can you do to make this summer different? Here are some tips on taking control of summer depression.

Get help. It's simple. If you think you're getting depressed, no matter what time of year, get help. Talk to a therapist, like a psychologist or social worker. Or see your doctor or a psychiatrist who can prescribe medicines. Never take the signs of depression lightly. Don't wait them out, assuming they'll resolve. Sometimes, what started as summer depression can turn into a longer-lasting bout of major depression, Cook tells WebMD.

And even if your depression will resolve in September, that's no reason to ignore it in June. We're talking about three months of potentially avoidable misery. "A temporary depression can still be pretty awful. While the symptoms lift in a few months, the CONT'D on page - 8-

**GRAPEVINE
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**We're on the Web;
grapevinecenter.org**

Dear Betty



Betty will answer questions submitted to her through her mailbox. You may submit any type of question.

Question: What is the PMHCA conference and how do I get to go?

Reply: PMHCA stands for Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumer Association. It is a world wide support group for individuals with mental health issues. The main purposes are to educate one another and the public in general and to provide support to one another.

Question: How do we go about making a wish list of things we feel would enhance our experiences at GV Center, like a Wii game?

Reply: You should bring this up at the next Community Meeting on February 4th so everyone can get involved and make suggestions.

Mary Lou's Corner

Chunky Blue Cheese Dressing

In a blender container combine

1/4 c. Plain yogurt

1/4 c. Cream-style cottage cheese

1/4 c. Mayonnaise or salad dressing

1/4 c. Crumbled blue cheese

Cover and blend until nearly smooth.

Transfer dressing to a storage container.

Stir in:

1/2 c. Crumbled blue cheese

Cover and chill.

Makes 1 1/2 cups



SEASONAL DEPRESSION (SAD) (SUMMER DEPRESSION) CONTINUED

Impact on your family and job can be permanent.

Plan Ahead. Cook says there is one advantage to a summer depression: you know when it's coming. June is right there on the calendar. So if you're feeling OK in the spring, think about the specific aspects of your life that become difficult during the summer. What will help prevent summer depression? What's the best way to take time off from work? Would signing up the kids for summer programs or camp help relieve your stress? You'll feel a lot more in control heading into the summer if you have plans in place.

Sleep. Vacations, summer barbecues, the short nights—they can all encourage you to stay up later than usual. But not getting enough sleep is a common trigger for depression. So make a concerted effort to get to bed on time.

Keep up with your exercise. Many studies have found that regular physical activity can help keep depression at bay. So even if it's getting too hot for your normal activities, find other ways to stay active and head off summer depression. Start earlier in the morning or later in the evening, when it's not so hot. Consider fitness for the cool basement. If an annual membership to a gym is too expensive, consider joining one for a couple of months just to get through the summer.

Don't overdo dieting and fitness. Don't kick off the summer with a frenzy of dieting and exercise in order to fit into last year's bathing suit. It's bound to make you unhappy and anxious. Instead, exercise sensibly and eat moderately. If you try an insanely restrictive diet, you probably won't be able to keep it up. And that "failure" will just leave you more demoralized and worsen your summer depression.

Protect yourself. Don't let obligations drag you down. Maybe you always host the enormous family barbecue on Memorial Day or the July 4th picnic. But if you're feeling overwhelmed, give it a pass this year. Ask another relative to host. Don't risk pushing yourself into summer depression just to live up to a tradition.

Think about why. If you struggle with summer depression year after year, ask yourself if there's a reason. Do you associate summer with a difficult time in the past—the death of a loved one or the break-up of a relationship? Have you had previous bouts of depression during the summer? Without even realizing it, you may have started to associate the summer

With sadness—an association that gets stronger every summer that you spend depressed. If you do have some unhappy connection with the summer, sorting it out could help break the cycle.

Talk to your doctor about changing your medication. If you're on medication for depression, and you find that summer—year after year—makes your depression worse, talk to your doctor about changing your dosage. Maybe he or she could up your dose in the late spring and taper it back down in the fall. It could really help head off summer depression problems, Cook says.

Plan your vacation carefully. Before you book your plane tickets or load up your car's roof rack for your annual summer vacation, ask yourself this: Is this what you really want? Or is it an obligation you're fulfilling to a relative or friend? Will it make you happy? Or will it stretch your finances, stress you out, and make you fall behind at work? Consider alternatives. Instead of taking a whole week off at once, might it be better to take off several long weekends spread out through the long summer? Would taking time off but staying at home—a "staycation"—be more relaxing? Don't get locked into a vacation that won't feel like a vacation.

Don't beat yourself up. One thing that's hard about summer depression is that you feel so out of step. Everyone else seems to be having such a swell time. You aren't. You keep asking yourself; "What's wrong with me?"

Try not to think that way. "So much of our misery grows out of the gap between where we are and where we think we ought to be", says Cook. So stop worrying about how you feel relative to other people. Stop assuming that you're supposed to be happy just because the calendar says it's June. Instead, concentrate on what's triggering your summer depression and how you can overcome it.

"Treatments do work", says Cook. "Psychotherapy or medication can blunt the effects of a seasonal depression. Summers really don't have to be so bad".

Excerpted from WebMD from an article by R. Morgan Griffin (Tips For Depression).