

CAPITAL CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF THE CONSUMER LEADERSHIP FORUM (CLF)

November/December 2006

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Office of Consumer and Family Affairs*

Consumer Leadership Forum

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to unite our best efforts as mental health consumers to reshape/reform/reinvent the D.C. mental health system.

We will not expect the meeting to be a place where we resolve our personal issues but will support each other and network as desirable / possible outside the meeting.

While gathered as a group, we will focus on the vision of the type of mental health system we want to create and the process for getting there.

How to Contact Us:

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Interview with Dorothy Adams CLF Advocate Coordinator, Consumer Choice Awards



Can you please tell us little bit about the Consumer Choice Awards and how it came about?

The idea for the project came about through the CLF. It originated with Bobby Holder. He proposed that I get involved, and I ended up taking it on. I wrote the proposal with the help of others, it was then sent on to the Mental Health Planning Council, and it was approved.

What was the proposal writing process like?

There's a lot of research involved in writing a proposal. First I had to go out and research venues for the ceremony, look into the food, look at all the details. You really have to do a whole lot of work. Lots of changes along the way were made. (Con't, p.2)

In this Issue:

Interview with Dorothy Adams.....	1
Consumer Choice Awards.....	2
Community News	
November 3 CLF Meeting Report.....	3
Access Helpline Meeting Report.....	4
WRAP Training Opportunity.....	4
Wired Consumer Project.....	5
Disability Rights Protection Act (DRPA) Report.....	6
CLF Vision Statement.....	9
CLF Taskforces.....	10
Upcoming events.....	11

(Dorothy Adams, con't)

Writing the proposal was challenging and interesting. I learned a lot about how to go about doing things. It takes time and patience – it needs to be redone over and over until you get it just right. And once you send it out, it still takes time – it's definitely not an overnight thing! So you have to be a very patient person.

Why is the Consumer Choice Awards so important?

There's a lot of negativity going on [in the mental health system], and it's important to reward what is positive. There are people who deserve to be recognized. The consumers should be the ones to do it. We want to recognize the individuals who have helped us through our recovery, and to show that we appreciate the things they have done to help us get back on our feet.

Consumer Choice Awards Ceremony

Save the date!

March 3, 5 pm – 9 pm

The McClendon Center

The Consumer Choice Award is based on consumer choices from throughout the city on mental health program/providers and staff. We want consumers to choose people and programs/providers that have helped them on the road to recovery. People can choose both a person and program/provider if they wish. Our overall goal is to get consumers to write a statement about how they have grown in their recovery from the help of that person or provider/program. It must state exactly what they have accomplished and how it has helped them in their everyday life.

Here is a list of things that the CLF can help with:

- Take the nominee forms around to programs/providers
- Make sure the consumers themselves have filled them out
- Help with the writing process if needed
- Explain that the person or program must have made a positive different in their lives in order to be nominated
- Have plenty of pens and pencils available when going to programs/providers
- All nominee forms must be kept confidentially and in a safe place until they are returned to Legal Aid.
- Do not give out any information on who/m they should write about.
- This process may take a couple of months to do.
- Do not leave the nominee forms at the organizations for them to give to consumers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Dorothy Adams at (202) 661-5947 or (202) 652-0605. Thank you for your help.

COMMUNITY NEWS



November 3rd CLF Meeting Report

The CLF had a lively session with a packed agenda. Sarah Lichtman Spector and Taranja Jackson from Legal Aid gave a presentation on the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. There will be upcoming free clinics for people in the community who have questions about this plan or who would like to apply for the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan's low-income subsidy – please see the calendar section on p. 11 for details.

Jeanne Locher presented the CLF outreach team plan. David Goodwin has agreed to be the official outreach team coordinator. Jeanne will discuss with David scheduling our first meeting hopefully in December or if necessary in January. The proposal is for CLF members to go out into the community as a team on a monthly basis, to visit consumers on site at their programs throughout all eight wards of the District of Columbia. We want to go out, introduce ourselves, talk to people, tell them about the CLF, and invite them to join us and to find out what is on their minds. If you are interested in joining the CLF's outreach team, please contact Jeanne or David via the CLF (see contact info on p. 1).

Mary Blake talked about the recovery training workshop she is doing with Debra Young, Director of the Woodley Programs out at DMH. A group of us hoped to attend but it didn't work out because they had so many people who registered for the workshop. Go Mary! We are planning to arrange with Mary a day and a time for her to present her workshop to our group. (TBA)

Frances Priester, Director of the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs at DMH, presented the latest developments at her office, including an exciting opportunity for WRAP training for District consumers (please see details below on pp. 4-5).

Galina Sergen talked to us about plans for our December monthly meeting. Please see details on p. 11.

Leah Harris announced that she is the current editor of the new CLF newsletter, and that she is always looking for submissions and story ideas from folks in the community. In future issues, she is seeking to include people's recovery stories, poems and stories, features and interviews with folks who are making a difference, editorials on issues of importance to the consumer/survivor community, and announcements for upcoming events of interest. Please email or call Leah call at 202-236-7747 or email her at leah_ida@hotmail.com with your ideas. The December/January 2006-2007 issue will be published on December 12, with a submissions deadline of December 11.

Leah Harris also presented a short workshop entitled “The Hero/Heroine’s Journey” on telling our recovery stories for personal healing and for advocacy purposes. We had a long list of announcements on the agenda along with Leah's workshop. Jeanne did not fully anticipate how much time it would take to bring everyone up to date on all the news. Consequently, we ran out of time to do the full workshop Leah had planned for us. We are planning to schedule a special day to do the workshop in full as Leah had planned for us to do with a lunch break in between (please see p. 11 for details). Jeanne has decided going into future time we will put our guest speakers and workshops first on the agenda and do announcements at the end of the meeting. This way if we run out of time people can decide to stay or leave.

Access Helpline Meeting Report

On October 30, members of the Consumer Leadership Forum (CLF) met with Ms. Alexis Haynes, Care Coordinator for the Access Helpline and the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) with the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the standard of customer service on the Access Helpline - with the CLF calling for improvements across the board. This was the first time the CLF had met formally with Ms. Haynes and our team was encouraged by her responses to our concerns.

The CLF recognizes that many case workers and service providers in the current system are overworked and may not have the necessary supports to cope with the many problems that get thrown their way. We understand the frustrations and emotional toll that can sometimes occur. But we are committed to working with our partners in the provider community to help further understanding about consumer concerns and support staff who want to make the changes toward building an excellent system for respectful mental health services. The CLF is very pleased that Ms. Haynes has suggested that regular monthly meetings between her staff and members of the consumer community should take place and that the Consumer Action Network (CAN) will work with the CLF to facilitate that process. If you would like to volunteer to build understanding through this initiative please contact the CLF or CAN directly.

We hope that through this initiative, we will build understanding between staff persons who rarely meet the people they are serving and consumers who can share their stories of recovery. Perhaps in the course of these exchanges, the staff will understand how important it is for consumers to hear a courteous friendly voice when they are in crisis or experiencing problems with a provider. We also hope to gain insight into the concerns and frustrations that the staff might have as they work to serve our community. And, we are optimistic that the customer service standards of the Access Helpline will improve as we work together to build better relationships between the provider and consumer communities.

Galina Sergen

Wrap Training Available to District Consumer/Survivors

The Office of Consumer and Family Affairs has announced a Train-The-Trainers program in Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP). There will be a number of slots open to members of the CLF so that people can train to become facilitators and trainers in this very exciting recovery initiative. You can read more about WRAP at <http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.com/>

From the website of WRAP creator Mary Ellen Copeland:

The **WRAP** system was developed by people who have been dealing with a variety of psychiatric symptoms for many years and who are working hard to feel better and get on with their lives. Mary Ellen Copeland has shared it with people with other illnesses and they too believe that it can be easily adapted for use with other conditions.

WRAP stands for **W**ellness **R**ecovery **A**ction **P**lan™

WRAP is a self-management and recovery system developed by a group of people who had mental health difficulties and who were struggling to incorporate wellness tools and strategies into their lives. WRAP is designed to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist people in achieving their own life goals and dreams.

WRAP is a structured system to monitor uncomfortable and distressing symptoms that can help you reduce, modify or eliminate those symptoms by using planned responses. This includes plans for how you want others to respond when symptoms have made it impossible for you to continue to make decisions, take care of yourself or keep yourself safe.

We are in the process of designing an application process that will be fair and transparent. In the meantime, you can: research the principles of WRAP,

1. start working on your résumé and,
2. locating two people who would be willing to write personal references for you

Please share this with your friends, colleagues and people on our list who do not yet have access to email. **The deadline is December 15.**

If you have any questions please give Galina a call at (202) 661-5947.

Wired Consumer Project

The Consumer Leadership Forum is pleased to announce a new project, *Wired Consumer* which will help consumers in the District of Columbia receive free computers. This project has been made possible by a generous donation from the DC Bar with the assistance of the Legal Aid Society. As this project grows, we hope to also reduce the costs for consumers to receive internet access and connect to the online peer support initiatives around the country. It is our hope, that as consumers become more connected to one another both in the city and around the country, that they will build vital computer skills, share recovery stories and spread messages of hope to their peers.

To request copies of the application form, please contact Galina c/o Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, 666 11th Street NW Ste 800, Washington DC 20001, Fax: (202) 727 2132, Tel: (202) 661 5947 (assistance with filling out the form available by appointment).

Please spread the news to your friends, colleagues and clients. We have only 16 computers to donate in this first round so applicants should send in their forms as soon as possible. Any applicants who don't receive computers during this application period will be put on a waiting list as we work to increase the donations to this project.

Disability Rights Protection Act (DRPA) Report

By Jeanne Locher

On Friday, October 27th at 10:00 am Councilmember Vincent Orange held a public hearing on the Disability Rights Protection Act. The legislation as it is written will create in the Mayor's office an Office of Disability Rights. The primary function of this office will to oversee the implementation of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Program throughout all DC Government agencies. The ADA Compliance program will require by law for all DC Government Agencies to comply to the standards set forth by law in the American Disabilities Act.

Two of our members of the CLF testified Friday, Angela Frank and Fredrica Gonzales. Both did an outstanding job in presenting their testimony. Dorothy Adams, Nathaniel Stanley, Galina Sergen, Phillip Quietie, Carolyn Bridges Ward, and Jeanne Locher all attended to support Angela, Fredrica and the DRPA. Throughout the day we listened to people tell the Councilmember again and again why the Council absolutely must pass this important piece of legislation. Just imagine if you are blind, or deaf, or in a wheelchair, or contending with a mental illness etc...and needing services and needing special accommodations to assist you in getting into the building, in reading instructional or educational material, in filling out an application, in simply understanding how to navigate our complicated bureaucratic system.

Below is a copy of the written testimony I signed onto in the name of the Consumer Leadership Forum.

The Disability Rights Protection Act of 2006 (DRPA) is an important piece of legislation that will give DC the opportunity, resources, and expertise to provide persons with disabilities equal access to all government services, buildings, and employment. If DC hopes to become a city that is inclusive of all of its residents, including those with disabilities, then it must commit to equality in words *and* action. We believe that it is imperative for the DC Council to take quick action to approve and fund the DRPA.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been in effect since 1990, but DC has failed to develop the necessary internal structure to oversee and effectuate its ADA compliance. Because more than 1 in 5 DC residents has a disability, DC's lack of compliance with the ADA has serious repercussions for a significant portion of its population.

If the District had a governmental structure in place to monitor its buildings, services, and programs for compliance, as do most other jurisdictions, it could divert valuable resources spent on defense of discrimination claims to proactively increasing the accessibility and openness of the District to people with disabilities. Even more importantly, people with disabilities would not have to suffer from discriminatory acts before DC took the necessary steps to protect their civil rights.

We believe that the DRPA will prevent violations of people's rights under the ADA and related disability rights laws before they occur, and will help to develop a more open, accessible city for

people with disabilities. Specifically, we believe that 5 key improvements will occur if the DRPA passes:

- 1. People with disabilities will have a stronger voice in their government.** By transferring the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities to the Office of Disability Rights and requiring the Office to actively work with the Committee as an advisory board, persons with disabilities will be able to lend their expertise to formulate policies and procedures that respect the civil rights of persons with disabilities.
- 2. DC residents and city employees with disabilities will get the support they need and deserve.** When individuals in DC have a difficult time accessing DC services or facilities (including DC employment) due to a disability, the Office will provide assistance in overcoming barriers, including disability-rights information, resource referrals, technical assistance for workers and supervisors, and assistance with filing complaints.
- 3. DC agencies will be better equipped to serve people with disabilities.** The Office will reach out to DC agencies to provide training and technical assistance, as well as referrals to crucial resources such as assistive technology and translation services.
- 4. DC will develop and implement strategic plans to address the structural changes and resources that may be necessary to provide equal access to persons with disabilities.** Such plans include a plan to place people with psychiatric or cognitive disabilities in the least restrictive environment to comply with the Supreme Court's ADA-related *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision.
- 5. Each agency's compliance with the ADA will be thoroughly evaluated and compliance efforts will be coordinated across agencies.** The Office will evaluate ADA compliance of DC agencies, recommend improvements and work with the ADA Coordinator at each DC agency to ensure well-coordinated and efficient ADA compliance efforts across DC government.

We urge the Committee on Government Operations to proceed quickly to mark-up and pass this civil rights legislation. We thank you in advance for all of your work to ensure that the DRPA becomes a testament to the District's strong commitment to equality and to the civil rights of all of its residents.

Regarding the markup of the legislation that took place the following week: below is an excerpt from TJ Sutcliffe, who worked with Amber Harding and the Mayor's office to write the legislation for the DRPA.

Disability Rights Protection Act (DRPA)
Update, November 7, 2006

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend yesterday's vote by the Committee on Government Operations! We are pleased to report that the Committee voted in support of the DRPA and will be referring it back to the full DC Council for further consideration. The Committee approved the bill as follows:

YES - Orange, Fenty, Graham, Schwartz;
PRESENT - Mendelson.

The DC Council will need to take 2 votes, at least 13 days apart, to approve the DRPA. The first vote will most likely be next Tuesday, November 14, 2006. Between now and next Tuesday we will be working with staff in the Mayor's office and Councilmember Fenty's and Gray's offices to resolve the bill's fiscal impact and potential amendments. At yesterday's mark up, the Committee did not move any of our proposed amendments. The bill is also still awaiting a fiscal impact.

Stay tuned for a confirmation of the date and time for the first vote on the DRPA. Again, thank you to everyone for your support!!



Update on Nancy Lee Head

From Judith Johnson at Green Door

Nancy Lee, as most of you know, is still at the wonderful Ingleside Presbyterian Home. She will have her leg operated on December 1 in Washington Hospital Center. She will have a pin/rod put in her leg, which we hope will lead to her being able to stand on it. I assume she will be at WHC for a bit and then go to a nursing home that has the level of nursing care she needs for her leg. She will continue on oxygen probably forever since her lungs are damaged. When she moves to WHC, I'll let you know the address and where there she is and then I'll let you know where she goes next after that. She enjoys your cards and calls and visits now and (for those of you out of town), know that she stays positive and upbeat.



Consumer Leadership Forum

Our Vision

1. We seek an end to our isolation and we refuse to have our existence limited;
2. We seek a community that looks after the health and well-being of each individual, that respects the choices we make about our lives and our care;
3. We seek an improved system of crisis care and continuous care, where holistic healing, progress, and recovery are the key components. We need services that are individualized and self-directed as well as community supports such as consumer-driven respite and wellness centers;
4. We seek to engage with one another and to create a grassroots movement where we can support one another and keep our morale high. To forge our own identity as individuals and as a movement, separate and distinct from the provider community, but working in partnership with those who support use;
5. We seek a system that is driven by the needs, choices, and voices of consumers, not large pharmaceutical companies, providers and others in positions of power;
6. We seek a system of natural supports, where we can recognize that it is ok to fail, to make mistakes, to test new ground for ourselves in all that we do and in safety move beyond the system;
7. We seek an end to homelessness among persons with mental illness, and the creation of a network of affordable housing;
8. We seek to support and encourage consumer-run businesses and enterprises and to foster job opportunities;
9. We seek a community that respects the diversity within our movement and protects our traditions through a culture of competency and understanding. We seek to support families, youth and individuals to prevent isolation from one another and to provide training and information so that our community is empowered to cope with the unique challenges we face;
10. We will seek support from communities that are willing to partner with us and respect our choices and goals.

Taskforces under the Consumer Leadership Forum

If you're not on one – you should be –
Great things are happening!

Housing	<u>Regular meeting time:</u> 3:00 – 5:00 pm, 4 th Thursday of each month Legal Aid Conference Room
Crisis-Care	<u>Regular meeting time:</u> 1:00 – 3pm Third Tuesday of each month Legal Aid Conference Room
Peer-Specialist	<u>Regular meeting time:</u> 3:00 – 5:00 pm 2 nd Thursday of each month Legal Aid Conference Room
St. Elizabeths	<u>Regular Meeting:</u> To be determined Legal Aid Conference Room
Consumer Leadership Forum	CLF Monthly meeting – 1 st Friday of each month. 12-3pm at the McClendon Center, 1313 New York Avenue, NW

"Human salvation lies in the hands of the
creatively maladjusted."
-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, December 6 Mental Health Recovery and Stigma Training

With Mary Blake and Panelists

9:00am-12:00 Noon

St. Elizabeths Hospital Chapel-Lower Level; 2700
Martin Luther King Ave., SE, Gate 4. Advanced
registration is required. Please contact
dmh.training@dc.gov or Ms. Shelton 202-671-4084.

Friday, December 22 Telling Our Stories of Struggle, Survival, and Recovery Workshop

10 am – 2 pm, The McClendon Center

In this interactive workshop, we will work together on
constructing our stories for the purpose of healing,
and to share our journeys of experience, strength, and
hope with the world. Please come prepared to write!
We will have a writing workshop in the morning from
10 am – 12 noon, followed by lunch, then an open
session where we share our stories with one another.

Friday, January 12, 2007

Fall Conference Highlights Session

12 pm – 3 pm, The McClendon Center, 1313 New
York Avenue, NW.

Twelve CLF members received grants from the DMH
Office of Consumer and Family Affairs to attend
three conferences this fall: The International Center
for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology (ICSPP),
the National Association for Rights Protection and
Advocacy (NARPA), and Alternatives. These
attendees will speak on a panel designed to reflect on
their experiences and to share information with the
larger community. Lunch will be provided.

Creativity Shout - Out!

The CLF is compiling a chapbook of poems and
artwork created by and for District
consumers/survivors. Once the chapbook is
complete, it is our plan to organize a poetry slam for
rights and recovery, featuring the artists whose work
is published in the chapbook. Please email your
submissions to Leah Harris at
leah_ida@hotmail.com or snail mail them to Leah
c/o Galina at Legal Aid (address on p. 1).

The deadline is March 15, 2007.



NEXT CLF MEETING:

Friday, December 1st, 12 – 3 pm
The McClendon Center
1313 New York Avenue, NW

Steve Baron and Alexis Haynes from DMH will be with
us from 12 – 1 pm.

Then from 1-3 pm we will have a group discussion on the
future of the CLF led by change management / leadership
development consultant Katherine Green.

We will be thinking about such questions as what do we
want the CLF to be? What role do we want the CLF to
play in the Consumer/ Survivor movement in DC? Do
we want to develop the skills to become leaders in the
national consumer / survivor movement?

Your questions/vision/ideas are welcome!

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Part D Free Legal Clinics

11/28/06 – Whitman Walker Clinic (WWC) SE
2301 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE
10am – 2pm

12/2/06 – Legal Aid Society of DC 9am – 12 noon

12/5/06 – WWC NW 1701 14th Street, NW
12 noon – 4pm

12/6/06 – WWC SE 9am – 1pm

12/12/06 WWC SE 12 noon – 4pm

12/14/06 WWC NW 9am – 1pm

For more information, please contact:

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