

# THE CSB OF MIDDLE GEORGIA'S PERSPECTIVE



With a New Year comes the opportunity of having a *tabula rasa*. No, *tabula rasa* is not the latest vehicle make to hit the market! *Tabula rasa* is Latin, meaning “blank slate.” This is the time of year when people are most likely to make resolutions for “turning over a new leaf”—to get rid of bad habits and/or make healthy changes to their lifestyle. While obviously people can choose at any time to start over with a blank slate, I would encourage you to take advantage of the cultural popularity of doing so as a new year begins. Go ahead and jump on the band wagon, if you will!

What kinds of changes would you like to see in your life? Are any of them health-related? Statistics from the American Heart Association in 2013 alarmingly revealed that 23.9 million children and teenagers and 154.7 million adults are overweight or obese. The CDC estimates that currently 19% of all adults smoke cigarettes. Unsurprisingly, 3 of the 10 ten resolutions for 2014 are related to the above statistics. #1 was “lose weight, #5 was “stay fit and healthy,” and #7 was “quit smoking” (University of Scranton, Journal of Clinical Psychology, 1-1-14). The administration of the CSB encourages you to seek to make healthy changes to your life. Later in this newsletter you can read about an initiative we’ve chosen to participate in as an agency.

A recent Harris interactive poll found that the #6 New Year’s resolution was “managing stress better. An unofficial organizational climate survey conducted at the CSB in October 2013 seems to echo that desire. Administration is reviewing the results of this survey (and will soon be reviewing results of

a formal climate survey conducted in December) in an attempt to find ways to improve areas that employees perceive as weak within the agency. One of the areas identified as needing improvement is availability of resources to deal with work-related stress. As a healthcare organization committed to helping people with mental health issues, the CSB naturally supports having a workforce equipped to deal with life’s unavoidable stressors. We will continue to consider this need and seek to address it in various ways, one of which will be resources disseminated via this newsletter.

Lastly, common New Year’s resolutions revolve around living meaningful lives. #4 on the JCP survey referenced earlier was “enjoy life to the fullest” while #8 was “help others in their dreams.” You have probably experienced what Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, noted: “It is the very pursuit of happiness that thwarts happiness.” Likewise, research has instead often supported St. Francis of Assisi’s observation that “it is in giving that we receive.” As you face 2014, you are encouraged to give of yourself to others—your family, friends, co-workers, and consumers. Instead of focusing on self as we all are so tempted to do, focus on helping others. Give it all you’ve got as suggested by the apostle Paul: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart...”



“We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.”

Jesse Owens, Olympic athlete

## From the Director's Chair

By Denise Forbes, CEO



We have had four sessions of “Chatting with the Chief” so far, and I look forward to gearing up again in January 2014 for our quarterly meetings. These sessions have been a great opportunity for me to meet with some of our direct line and support staff who might not normally get a chance to discuss issues with upper management. Many of our sessions have been emotional, but worth every minute that I have spent in your company. Thank you for your suggestions. I hope that you will see that we are utilizing as many of these suggestions as is possible to do so.

Our agency has a long list of accomplishments that we have completed over these last twenty-one months, with many projects under construction. Some highlights listed below are part of our strategic goals for our agency, which occurs throughout the year as needed changes are identified and as planning takes place.

- Vehicle fleet upgraded for the safety of our clients and staff member, and staying relatively budget neutral.
- Approval as a National Health Service Corp provider for Dublin and Eastman, which allows our licensed staff to make application for school loan assistance. We hope this will incentivize our current staff and also serve as a recruitment perk for others.
- Contract with Therap DD Electronic Medical Record and Netsmart EHR for BH/AD --- both of these projects are underway. The decision to move in this direction was dictated by a standard in the Affordable Care Act that agencies would require a “certified” system in order to bill for Medicaid/Medicare services.

- EHR incentive payments received in November 2013 --- first phase--- \$149,000. Cynthia Reid deserves praise for her tenacity and perseverance in staying behind this tedious and challenging project. It is also a fine example of how our agency researched another stream of revenue and turned it into an accomplishment.
- 11/13 APS Audit 98% score

I encourage each of you to continue to voice your opinions, communicate with each other and with your managers, and participate in events of which our agency is involved. A more informed staff makes for a better trained and responsive workforce, and I encourage each of you to strive for the best for your program, your agency, and yourself. Every staff member here is an important part of the CSB of Middle Georgia team, and the work we do **could not** go on without your support. Thank you for your dedication to the individuals and families we serve. I look forward to continuing to grow and learn with you as we make this the best agency of its kind in Georgia!



## CSB Connection

The ballots were cast, and the vote is in! Congratulations to [Ella Dixon](#), who was selected by her co-workers as the 2013 CSB Employee of the Year!

The following are just some of the comments made by the person nominating Ella: She is very dedicated to the people she serves. She displays great passion and love for her job. She gives her all to the care of the facility and the individuals. She is a team player and willingly assists her co-workers. She speaks positively about her job and encourages others. She is dependable and very seldom misses any days from work. She shows great devotion to getting the job done while also keeping the consumers her primary focus. She goes way above and beyond her duties to insure that those she serves get the best services she can provide. If this means working after hours to provide a needed service, she does so without complaint.

Recently, she went into a roach- and rat-infested apartment to help clean it up for a consumer who, without her assistance, would have been evicted. Even though a cleaning service was hired, they would not touch his personal belongings. She did it on her own time. She washed his clothes, went through unimaginable filth as she sorted through his possessions, washed dishes, and helped organize his home, all the while knowing her efforts would go unappreciated by this individual. In other cases, she has cooked for consumers who love certain foods but are not capable of cooking them. She has gone the extra mile for years doing special things for people and never expecting anything in return. She believes with all of her heart that the individuals served come first. This is not just a job but also her way of life. None of these efforts are listed on her job description; they just come from a caring heart. It is always about the consumer.



The Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs provide incentive payments to eligible professionals and hospitals as they adopt, implement, upgrade or demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHR technology. Eligible professionals can receive up to \$44,000 through the Medicare EHR Incentive Program and up to \$63,750 through the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program. The registration can be a long and frustrating process; but thanks to Wanda Ellison (from Ogeechee Behavioral Health) who personally took time out to come and show us the process, it eased some of the burden. Our CSB's credentialing delegate, **Cynthia Reid**, applied for the Incentive Payment for 9 (nine) providers and received \$21,250.00 in payment for each provider giving us a total of \$191,250.00 received in incentive monies. In a day when we count every nickel and dime, this is great news for the CSB! Thanks for your efforts, Cynthia!

## Employee of the Month

The CSB Morale Committee is already hard at work recognizing great employees for 2014! **Mat Rainey** was nominated Employee of the Month for January 2014. Congratulations, Mat!



We're excited to share some good news with you! Let's hear it for **Susan Garin**, who just recently officially became a Licensed Professional Counselor, and for **Krista Kelly**, who became certified as a Certified Addiction Counselor! Way to go, ladies!



## Way to Go!

As part of Governor Nathan Deal's continuing efforts toward Justice Reinvestment, the Georgia Dept. of Corrections was allocated funds to implement a pilot program called DRC-Lite to provide substance abuse recovery initiatives for probationers in rural areas of Georgia. The CSB, the only one in the state at this time to form an official partnership with the DOC, began the DRC-Lite program in Dublin in September. Staff are housed on-site and assist in providing enhanced supervision and programming for offenders who would not otherwise have access to these tools for recovery. The program is an alternative to incarceration that Judges can use in an effort to correct an offender's behavior. Betsy Thomas, DRC-Lite Program Coordinator, reviewed the work done there so far a few weeks ago and spoke in glowing terms of the staff who serve that program, **Anthony Marion** and (until recently) **Rose Pearson** have done an outstanding job!

# CSB Chatter

## CARF is Coming!

It's time for our 3-year reaccreditation survey visit from CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities)! Surveyors will be visiting our agency from January 29<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to give them a warm Emerald City welcome!

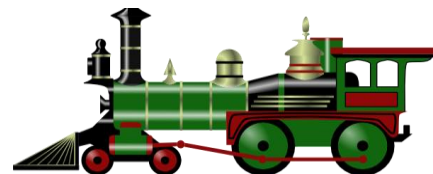


The Laurens County I/DD individuals' activity for December was "Socks for Seniors." They collected enough socks and Christmas cards to distribute to the Southland, Shamrock & Dublinair skilled nursing facilities in Laurens County. Thanks to all who made this event successful!



Several participants in the Developmental Disabilities program worked overtime as Santa's elves during the Christmas season! When they weren't busy collecting and delivering socks and Christmas cards, they were involved in the Patsy Hill Thomas Mass Memorial Choir and entertaining at the CSB Administrative and Medical Staff's Christmas luncheon! Their matching red shirts, provided by Healthcare Staffing, made things not only begin to *look* a lot like Christmas but *feel* a lot like Christmas! Thanks so much for brightening our holidays!

It looks like music is equally enjoyed by the staff from the DD program, who look like they had a good time at their Christmas party, too!



The **Emerald City Express** has brought two new employees to the CSB: Sharon Jones and Don Crowson. Welcome!



The CSB's theme is "Operation Excellence: Doing ordinary things extraordinarily well." How do we know we are doing this? Here are some ways:

- We had a successful financial audit on 8/20/13.
- We had an overall score of 98% on our November 2013 APS audit.
- Our C&A program was awarded the Garrett Lee Smith grant and the Systems of Care grant.
- We applied for and achieved acceptance to be an NHSC loan repayment agency to help recruit and retain qualified clinical staff.
- Our Crisis Stabilization Unit detoxed and/or stabilized approximately 1200 consumers over the past 12 months.
- We are the anchor program for the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Dublin-Laurens and the *first and only* CSB in the State of Georgia to be the anchor program.
- We have successfully initiated a pilot program jointly with the Department of Corrections to staff a DRC-Lite program in Laurens County and were the *first* CSB to do so.



Check your workspace to make sure you are in compliance with OAP 100-6E and have a bomb threat checklist under your phone!



Even though most of us have been out of school for quite some time now, we still suffer from "test anxiety!" Yes, CARF surveyors will soon be here and MAY ask you some questions! Just consider the upcoming survey an opportunity for you to take a little mini "refresher" on some topics you need to know, anyway!

1. Where is the fire alarm in your building?
2. Where is the first aid kit in your building?
3. What should you do if you receive a bomb threat?
4. What is a real-life example of a performance improvement project completed within the CSB?
5. In what ways do we educate our consumers and their family members about consumers' care?
6. What does PDCA stand for in relation to performance improvement?
7. What is the P.A.S.S. method of using a fire extinguisher?
8. What is the most effective way to prevent infections?
9. What does RACE stand for in relation to fire safety?
10. Do your consumers know their casemanager, treatment goals, how the program(s) help them reach their goals, how/when to take their medication, and what to do if they experience side effects?



A recent study by Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Society and Health found that people with less education are living shorter, sicker lives than ever before. It's never too late to further your education. If you need some inspiration, consider Steven Spielberg, big budget filmmaker. He got his degree at the age of 56, 35 years after beginning it!

# CSB of Middle GA Wellness Events and News

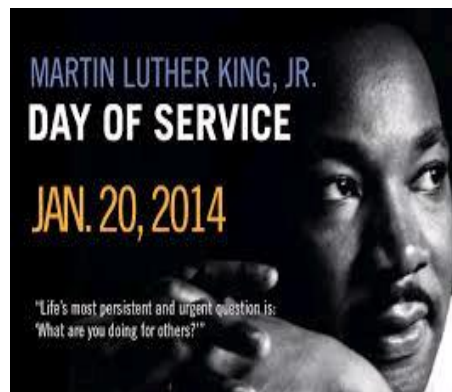
The CSB sponsored a Door Decorating Contest in December. The entries were diverse and creative, but there could be only one winner! The top prize went to Step One Recovery Center! The consumers made the snowflakes and on some of them they



wrote their hopes for recovery and on others they have what makes them unique (like snowflakes are unique.) During a group we had on parenting - creating fun for the family - they learned and made the clay that was used to make some of the ornaments on the border garland. Enjoy your pizza party, SORC!



Second place went to Building #3, and third went to Building 4! Great job, everybody!



All staff and consumers are encouraged to find ways to serve our community. Please email your stories to Dina McDonald to be considered for next month's newsletter.

There has been discussion among administration, personnel, and Risk Management program staff about the need to encourage employees to be proactive about pursuing a healthy lifestyle—exercising, seeing your physician on a regular basis, etc. For those needing a little extra motivation and/or accountability for establishing some healthy routines, you are encouraged to join a new health initiative started at the CSB!



The President's Challenge is an American program introduced by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports that aims to encourage all Americans to "make being active part of their everyday lives" and to be physically fit. It offers the *Active Lifestyle* program for starters and *Presidential Champions* for more active people.

You must first create an individual account at [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org). You can choose your own "challenge" and nutritional goal and log your physical activity. You have the option to join a group via a search by group name or #. If you want to join the CSB group, we are listed as **CSB of Middle GA** and our group # is **945007**. Group members can compare points earned, earn group points for our group, etc. Research has found that those receiving online support like this lose 3 times more weight than those going it alone! We hope that you will consider joining our group!



Breaking news! Our CSB is an official NHSC loan repayment agency, and the application cycle for individuals has just opened; applications are being accepted through March. Licensed clinicians (M.D., LPC, LCSW, etc.)—except for nurses—who have outstanding student loans can apply for possible partial repayment of those loans! Go to [www.nhsc.hrsa.gov](http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov) for more information.



Mat Rainey, Certified Peer Specialist, Community Support Team

When I first came into the mental health system, it was the result of being pulled between two separate worlds. Imagine if you will, of ropes entangled around each of your arms. Each rope has a different meaning, but regardless of which way you're pulled, the winning party is never good. The ropes, of course are metaphors, but this 'tug of war' between two evils-mania and depression-is very very real.

To put things in chronological perspective, I would deem it fair to say that the depression was always somewhat present, at least off and on since the age of five when I had lost my mother because of a blood clot that reached her heart.

It wasn't until my high school years before I encountered the onset of my mania. I was voted most studious during my middle school years, and received plaques at the end of my sixth, seventh, and eighth grade for most distinguished writing portfolio. With that said you could probably imagine how confused I had been my sophomore year when my grades started to steadily decline.

I can think of no exact words that could adequately express what depression is like, nor could you find these words in any medical journal, text book, or peer reviewed article. These are merely attempts to express the inexpressible, and even the attempts are next to blasphemous. I can, however, tell you the struggle and anguish inflicted on me as a result of this dastardly illness. I could tell you how something as simple as brushing my teeth became a laborious task. I could tell you how the excruciating pain coursing through my kidneys was, on numerous occasions, the only reason I got out of bed in the morning.

And then there's the polar opposite; ceaseless hours of ceaseless thoughts, tossing to and fro from one side of the bed to the other, constantly flipping the pillow because it became too warm on one side. After a while I would look at the ceiling and think of how it looked a lot like cake icing, to thinking about

what excuse could I use for not having my home-work completed, or rather what excuse have I not already used for not having my homework completed, because I didn't want to use the excuse of 'I have manic states that keep me up all night and as a result I don't understand anything you're teaching me.'

During this time I started reflecting heavily on past events-my mother's death, my grandmother's decline from Alzheimer disease, a period of molestation during my childhood, and to add salt to the wound I had recently lost my grandfather. The accumulation of these things motivated me to try and take my own life. Thankfully, I didn't succeed.

Needless to say I was institutionalized and this was, if anything, torture. As a result of my hospitalization I found myself without a place to go home to, and though it wouldn't seem like the thing to say, if I could live it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing, for this moment forward was sparked a turn of events that would change my life forever, or at least until this very day.

During the concluding days of Spring 2008, I came as a walk-in through intake at the Community Service Board of Middle Georgia. Here I was able to express my concerns of not having anywhere to go. Sharing this information with the staff here seemed like the thing to do, but I didn't expect I would actually have a place to lay my head that night, but thanks to a program (Shelter Plus Care) offered through the Service Board, I did.

Shelter Plus Care not only allowed me a roof over my head, but granted me the opportunity to get on my feet. During the day I would come out to the Day Service program where I met staff who truly cared about the wellbeing of the individuals they served; staff whose ultimate goal was to 'provide quality behavioral healthcare' and consider me as person who has the means to better himself, something I never had the opportunity to witness in the institutional setting.

I remember being asked what it was that I wanted for myself (to obtain my GED, and get a job) and of how my treatment plan was developed around my very

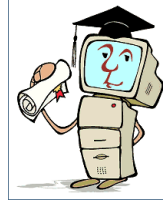
own words, and how that treatment was geared towards me, and not some textbook umbrella definition of a person with a mental illness. I think what amazed me even more was the peer involvement - that somehow, somebody, somewhere, came up with the great idea that by sharing your lived experiences, one could provide motivation and instill hope, and most importantly I wanted the opportunity to do just that.

After obtaining my GED, I had learned that a peer specialist had recently resigned-This was my golden ticket. I spoke with the Day Service director, explained to her that I had just received my diploma and expressed my interest in working as a Peer Specialist and to one day become certified. To my amazement her response was 'You can start tomorrow.' It was Spring of 2009, nearly 8 months of working as a Peer Specialist, when my supervisor suggested that I sign up for the next Certified Peer Specialist training. In August I attended the training, and by September I had passed the exam and was hired by the Community Service Board as a Certified Peer Specialist.

A little more than five years have passed since I began working at the Community Service Board. I can honestly say that some of my greatest and most memorable moments happened right here at this agency. I now work full time with our Community Support Team, a truly rewarding job with even more rewarding outcomes. My coworkers have become more than coworkers... They're my family; and the Peers I partner with are a constant reminder of just how great of a job I have. I would be lying if I said that I no longer experience mania, or depression. In truth, I still encounter sleepless nights now and then, as well as some periods of sadness. The difference now is that I have something to look forward to when I wake up in the morning. Because of this agency my life has meaning. I'm not saying that for want of wasted breath. It's the God's honest truth.



Did you know that the CSB of Middle Georgia has 136 consumers in Supported Employment positions?



# Sandi Sez...

by Sandi Harrison, UM

Many of you may or may not know that the CSB of Middle Georgia is transitioning to a new EMR (Electronic Medical Record) system. Due to regulations of the Affordable Care Act, the agency is required to have a certified EMR. Currently MEDUSA is not a certified EMR and would be too costly to attempt to get it certified. CSBMG partnered with Albany CSB and South Georgia CSB to purchase a certified EMR called "My Avitar" from Netsmart. Project planning started in June 2013, where all three CSB's met in Cordele, Georgia to become acquainted with My Avitar and to develop committees to aid in developing the new EMR system. September 2013 was our project kickoff where the committees and Netsmart developers started building the EMR. This entailed having the clinical and medical committees to develop progress notes, assessments, etc. as well as the practice management committees to develop the scheduling and billing processes. November 2013, all three CSB's met once again in Cordele, Georgia to begin the solutions review stage of the EMR process. During this stage, all forms, notes, assessments, scheduling and billing issues are being resolved and tweaked. In February 2014 we are scheduled for the final review and validation of the EMR system where all three agencies will be testing the system and will be trained on how the EMR system will work. We are planning to "go live" with the new EMR system by September 2014.



Staff driving agency vehicles need to ensure that vehicles have the required fire extinguisher, road side kit, first aid kit, & the blue bag with

participants' information in them. Make sure your vehicles are in compliance. Contact Roger Mathis & Marsha Williams immediately to report any areas of concern or vehicle needs.

