



Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists...

Igniting Recovery

Volume 8 Issue 1

Special points of interest:

- Peer run organization- Cornucopia Art and Wellness Center
- Successful transition from jails and prisons for people with mental health and substance use disorder
- National Peer Specialist Certification from Mental Health America

The Story of Cornucopia...by Emily Akins

The sound of comforting music and the wonderful smell of freshly brewed coffee fills the air. Some members are talking and making connections with one another; while other members are working diligently on their latest artistic creations. One member is working on a clay sculpture of historic Aztec leaders. Another member is showing other members her much thought out painting of a woman in peaceful solitude near the ocean’s edge. Hand-made greeting cards and leather work creations are showcased on the entryway tables. There is a game of scrabble going on in the background with locally “famous experts” in the field. The phone rings. It’s another professional in the area wanting to speak to the Executive Director about establishing Peer Support services for one of his anticipating clients. What is this place? It is Cornucopia, Inc.; where all are welcome with warmth, empathy and met with non-judgmental attitudes. It is a place where people can just be who they truly are, themselves. As members take part in the program, they soon learn that the trials and tribulations of life are only challenges to overcome with the loving support and guidance of its members, volunteers and staff.

On the isthmus of Madison, Cornucopia is a peer-run, non-profit organization and always has been since 1996. Cornucopia was established after Donna Murdoch met Mary Moran at Borders Book Store in Madison. They had a dream to establish a consumer-run center for people with psychiatric challenges. It was that evening that Cornucopia was born and their dream became a reality. Years later, Cornucopia still stands as an art and wellness center for those who identify as having mental health issues and their allies. It’s mission of celebrating creativity and diversity through mutual support and promoting growth and dignity of members has slowly changed life for those in the community. In fact,

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Cornucopia...continued



because of the program, participants have experienced less isolation, hospitalizations and incarcerations. Karen Herro, Cornucopia's Executive Director, was referred to Cornucopia by Meriter Hospital back in the year 2000. At that time, she says she was not doing well. However, over time with the loving support of Cornucopia, she got her footing back and she gradually she took leadership roles in the organization. She became in charge of the wellness program and then took on administrative duties which later led towards her role as the Executive Director. Christa, long-time member, has been coming to the organization since 2008. She says that Cornucopia has been an excellent resource for her to express her emotions through art and has been an important part of her mental wellness. Dawn, a newer member, started coming to Cornucopia in 2016. Since then, she has found Cornucopia to be the best support group in Madison with non-judgmental surroundings. "I wouldn't change it for the world", she says. "Just about everyone has befriended me. It's beautiful, no matter what I am doing here." There are also similar stories of the many others who have taken part in the organization.

"Certified Peer Specialists work in a wide variety of areas in mental health and/or substance use disorder recovery"

In addition to membership, Cornucopia has branched out in recent years to include services within Dane County's Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program. Through the program, individuals with mental health issues in the community are paired with one or more of Cornucopia's CCS staff. As these individuals access services, they work on their own recovery goals with a Certified Peer Support Specialist or an Individual Skills Development and Enhancement professional. Over time, CCS participants learn coping skills, enhance social skills and become more independent members of the Madison community. Those who participate in the CCS program say that it's been very helpful and positive.

Cornucopia is a small organization, yet is doing big things in the Madison community. Whether people come here for art, wellness activities or Peer Support, they stay here for the genuine, caring connections they make with one another. It is a unique place of its own and will always work towards eradicating the stigma of mental illness one membership at a time.



For further information contact: Cornucopia, 2 S. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-249-7477

Recommended Reading...



Guidelines for Successful Transition of People with Mental Health or Substance Use Disorders from Jail and Prison Implementation Guide

From the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

The purpose of Guidelines for Successful Transition of People with Mental and Substance Use Disorders from Jail and Prison: Implementation Guide is to provide behavioral health, correctional,

and community stakeholders with examples of the implementation of successful strategies for transitioning people with mental or substance use disorders from institutional correctional settings into the community.

Audience: Program Planners, Administrators, & Project Managers, Law Enforcement, Legal Community, Prevention Professionals, Professional Care Providers

Population Group: People on Probation or Parole, People with Mental Health Problems as Population Group, Inmates, People in the Criminal Justice System, People in the Juvenile Justice System, People with Alcohol Use or Abuse Problems as Population Group, People with Substance Use or Abuse Problems as Population Group

You can access this guide to download at the following link:

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Guidelines-for-Successful-Transition-of-People-with-Mental-or-Substance-Use-Disorders-from-Jail-and-Prison-Implementation-Guide/SMA16-4998>



“Certified Peer Specialists are an integral part of a persons recovery team.”

National Mental Health Consumers’ Self-Help Clearinghouse

The National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse, the nation's first peer-run national technical assistance center, has played a major role in the development of the mental health consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) movement. The movement strives for dignity, respect, and opportunity for those diagnosed with mental health conditions, often called peers. Individuals who receive or have received mental health services continue to reject the label of "those who cannot help themselves." Instead, they -- and we -- proclaim, "Nothing about us without us."

You can sign up for the “Key Updates” to receive information on events, webinars and trainings. 1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1100, Philadelphia, PA 19107 Phone: (800) 553-4539 or (215) 751-18 10 Fax: (215) 636-6312 E-mail: info@mhsselfhelp.org

<http://www.mhsselfhelp.org/>





3810 Milwaukee St
Madison, WI 53714

Phone: 608-242-8484

FAX: 608-242-0383

alicep@accesstoind.org

Visit:

www.wicps.org

The newsletter is also available in other formats. If you would like to submit an article for consideration or recommended reading we would be happy to review it

2017 Peer Specialist Certification Exams

Certification Exam dates for 2017 have been posted. Training dates are expected to be posted in the near future. Please check the www.wicps.org website for updates on training and exam dates. For further information alicep@accesstoind.org

Thank you to the ILC's and UW-Milwaukee for their partnership in making the exam process a success!

MHA National Peer Specialist Certification..

The MHA National Certified Peer Specialist (MHA NCPS) certification recognizes peers with the lived experience, training, and job experience to work alongside healthcare teams. The certification is designed to exceed the standards used in public behavioral health around the country. A major purpose of the certification is to meet the needs of private health insurers and private practitioners. Expansion of peer support into the private sector will open up new career paths and opportunities, which have been previously unexplored, for thousands of peer supporters.

This certification has been peer initiated and conceived. We have worked with a stellar group of subject matter experts most of whom are accomplished leaders in the peer community. Within the community there has been much concern that professionalizing peer support will take away from its true nature. True to the spirit of peer support, the credential does not mean a peer is a clinician. It emphasizes and expects that all duties reflect the principles, guidelines, and core values of peer support.

It is not designed to replace current trainings but to build upon and enhance current programs. This means adding additional competencies to ensure peers are able to meet the demands of a changing workforce and increasing opportunities.

For detailed information visit: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mha-national-certified-peer-specialist-certification-get-certified>

Resources...

Wisconsin Bureau of Prevention, Treatment and Recovery

Phone: 608-266-2717

Web: http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh_bcmh/index.htm

Grassroots Empowerment Project

Phone: (800)770-0588

Web: www.grassrootspower.org

NAMI Wisconsin

Phone: 608 268-6000 or (800) 236-2988

Web: www.namiwisconsin.org

Wisconsin United for Mental Health

Web: www.wimentalhealth.org Phone: 866-948-6483