

Recovery:

What We Know & What We Still Need to Learn

by Rick Forbess

More people are talking and writing about their recovery from the impact of mental illness than ever before, and more people are listening. Although there is still a lot to learn about the experience of recovery, we've learned quite a bit over the last several years.

- ◆ We know that many more people recover than most providers, family members, and recipients once believed possible. For decades the common wisdom was that a person with a serious mental illness was likely to face a lifetime without any real hope of participating in a meaningful community role. Today we know this isn't true. We've done a better job of listening to and giving credence to the personal stories told by people who are recovered and realize that the recovery experience is not at all uncommon. Based on these inspiring stories and research that backs it up, there is a rising tide of hope and expectation for recovery.
- ◆ We know that there are some common themes to the descriptions people give of their recovery experiences, but that there is no single path to recovery that fits for every person. The key to recovery varies among people; for some people it's the consistent encouragement and support of a single person, for others it's the positive effects of a new medication that does its job without crippling side effects, for others it's the sense of accomplishment associated with simply establishing a daily routine, for others it's the sheer determination to become the person she or he once was

rather than a "mental health client," etc., etc. The old saying "There's more than one way to roll a seven" seems to be true when it comes to the recovery journey.

- ◆ We know that recovery does not come fast or easy for the person. As Pat Deegan, a leader among people who have recovered, has written, "Recovery is the urge, the wrestle and the resurrection." There's a lot of hard work involved for the person who is recovering and there are periods of ups and downs. Just like anything in life that has such a profound pay off, sustained effort over time is required for recovery. The effort needed to recover is great and the end result is even greater.
- ◆ We know that recovery is something the person with a mental illness accomplishes, not something that mental health providers accomplish for the person. Don't be fooled by the program names, articles, and conference titles that include the term "Recovery." The program or counselor doesn't recover anyone, the person recovers. There is no recovery pill or recovery program that recovers people.
- ◆ We know that providers can support and facilitate recovery not only by the types of services offered, but, more importantly, by how services are provided. Treatment, rehabilitation, case management, rights protection, and crises intervention are among the services that can facilitate the recovery process. Each of these services can contribute in unique ways; relief from symptoms,



CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

<i>From the CEO's Desk</i>	2
<i>Actions Demonstrate Need</i>	2
<i>Giving Makes a Difference</i>	3
<i>The Value of Us</i>	4
<i>Recognition Dinner</i>	5
<i>Let Our Voices Be Heard</i>	6
<i>Exceeding the Above and Moving Beyond</i>	6
<i>From My Point of View</i>	6
<i>Janet Sieber Award</i>	7
<i>Meet the Board: Lawrence Powell, Vice Chairperson</i>	7
<i>You Asked... We Listened</i>	8
<i>Mission / Vision Statements</i>	8

Rick Forbess, M.S.S.W., is currently the Associate Director of Training at the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University. He began his career as a provider, supervisor, and manager in community mental health centers in Texas and Maine. He received his Masters of Science Degree in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1978 and joined the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation as a Senior Training Associate in 1985. Since that time he has provided training and technical assistance to a wide range of mental health agencies throughout the United States and Canada in order to implement psychiatric rehabilitation, person-centered service planning, and other services guided by values considered central to facilitating a person's recovery from mental illness. He has developed and assisted with the development of training technologies, manuals, guides, and program curricula and has coauthored published articles and book chapters on psychiatric rehabilitation and case management.



From the CEO's Desk

Although there are many aspects of recovery, one key element is regaining a valued role. For some, that role or meaningful activity might be continuing their education. For others, it can be engaging in socialization in the community. For still others, it might mean the return to the valued role of worker. It is on this last role that I would like to focus.

While those in recovery from mental illness may want to return to work, there remain some large barriers to this occurring. Many times these barriers are external ones. In statistics cited by Cornell University (2005), the percentage of men and women between 18 and 64 in the United States with a disability who worked was only 28% in 2004. This represents a decrease from the early 90's when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was actually passed. In that year the percentage of working men and women with a disability was 39%. While these statistics relate to a wider range of disabilities, one can be sure that those with mental illnesses are represented in these numbers. Based on these statistics, the number of workers with a disability that are employed has actually decreased. The reasons for this are

Sharon Alberts, CEO

complex. One of them, however, does relate to the incentives to return to work. While the worker with a disability does receive some incentives for returning to work, I would argue that those aren't enough. Incentives must continue until the individual is able to achieve self-sufficiency. Workers must not find themselves working but not really earning a living and being without medical benefits. Often the employers that are willing to hire those with disabilities offer no medical coverage, pay lower wages and lay off the worker with a disability first when it is time for a cut in the labor force.

Having read all of the above, one could ask what the provider community could do to assist individuals to return to work. If we are involved in job placement, we need to find employers who provide a decent wage and offer benefits. It is also important to assist those we serve to understand the social security system and how their benefits will be impacted when they return to work. We also need to advocate for additional incentives for those who have disabilities, so that it becomes attractive to return to work and remain employed. Finally, we need to make a real effort to hire those with disabilities ourselves. This is especially important since there is currently a workforce shortage; one that will continue and grow worse as the "baby boomers" retire. While the idea of making reasonable accommodations may be worrisome to some employers, making accommodations is really a simple matter. It requires engaging our employees, listening to them, honestly assessing their performance and providing support as needed. All of this not only makes good business sense, but it is why many of us serve in the capacity we do. We want to see those served be able to return to the valued role that they have chosen, that of worker.

Actions Demonstrate Need

By Craig Dorin, Coordinator of Quality Operations, and Kathy Doloughy, Clinical Associate

One voice can make noise. Many distinct voices raised together become a message. The single message sent so loudly and clearly cannot be ignored. Change often follows once the message is heard. It must. The people raising their voices will not be satisfied until action is taken. This process is not new.

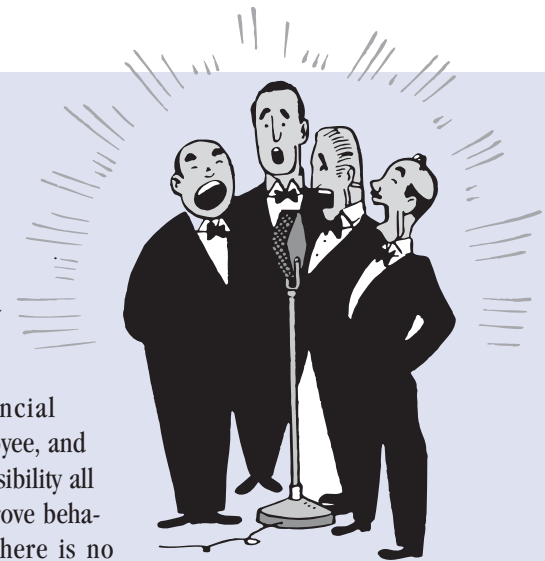
Making noise for change has occurred since the first individual or group realized that a situation was unfair or their rights were being compromised. This approach, so effective in the past, seems presently to have been forgotten or be lacking true support.

Recently the Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery held a Recovery Forum. The purpose of the forum was to share the results of the Principles and Practices of Recovery Signature Drive, discuss the potential impact and explore how individuals can become personally involved.

The forum was intended to be a media event to generate more support for recovery oriented practices and funding for persons with behavioral health issues. The event was supposed to send a message of support. Instead of sending a message of support, it raised a question: "How can support for behavioral health issues gain the public's support if it cannot first gain the active support of the persons directly affected?"

Consider for a moment the importance of your services, your financial needs as an employee, and the shared responsibility all of us have to improve behavioral health. If there is no constant message sent demonstrating support for recovery oriented services and funding, then slowly and quietly, they will disappear. The time for actively advocating for rights and needs is not when they are threatened. It is then too late as often times decisions have been made.

The next time an opportunity to show support occurs think about the impact not only on you but on all of those affected by behavioral health issues. Be motivated to get involved because of the opportunity to send a message and not the food that may be offered. It is time for us to identify what is important, become aware, get active and support ourselves. Once we support and promote ourselves the public will too.



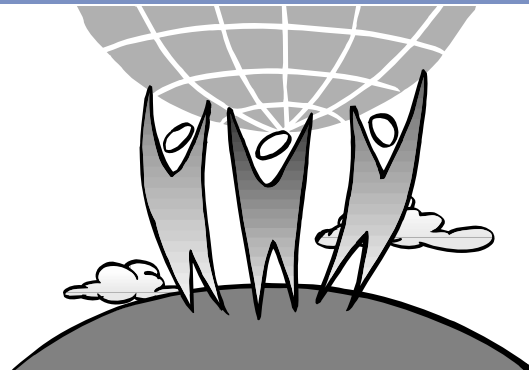
Giving Makes a Difference

Giving Through Partnership: Mary Brenholts, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts: Artist Residency Program

*By Jennifer Mullins,
Community Supports Program Supervisor*

There are many ways in which organizations can give to Transitional Services. The Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Artist Residency Program offers a unique way to lend monetary support to make our Rhythm and Dance class a reality. The Artist Residency Program is a matching funds program awarded to schools and nonprofit social service programs. Made possible through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (supported by the National Endowment for the Arts) Mary Brenholts, Director of School and Community Programs at PCA, shared that their program has been in existence for six years. When asked why PCA chose to sponsor our organization, Mary stated that it was based on similarities in organizational mission and values.

She related that she has personal experience working in social services and has learned first hand that the arts are essential to an individual's recovery process. Through this matching funds grant program, person's served by TSI's Rhythm & Dance class benefit from opportunities to explore their authentic selves in a safe and nurturing environment. Mary believes that this exploration lends itself to personal empowerment and increased self-esteem.



Why I Give

by Lanise Holmes

Being an employee at TSI, I choose to donate during the Annual Campaign because I know firsthand of the compassionate, dedicated and hard workers that are employed at TSI. I also know that some clients have limited finances and that can be a struggle in itself. Knowing this and my own dedication to TSI, I ask myself how could I not give.



More Than One Way to Give

TSI service users benefit from contributions no matter how they come in. Of course, a personal check is always welcome. Donations such as new bedding, towels, cleaning supplies and other household items are also needed. These items can be dropped off at:

Transitional Services, Inc.
806 West Street
Homestead, PA 15120

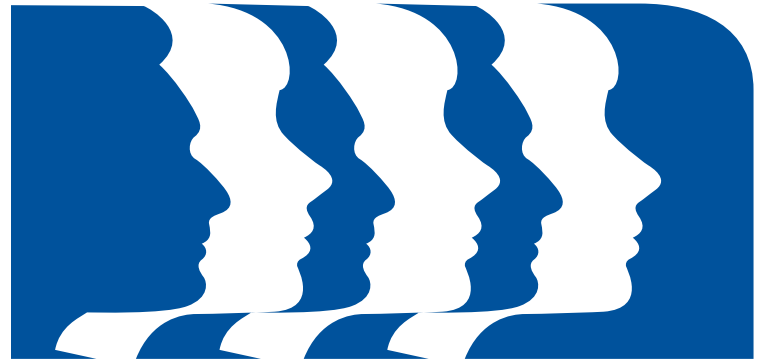
If you prefer to send a personal check, please make check payable to Transitional Services, Inc. and mail to the above address to the attention of Gerry Henry. Contributions to TSI are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. TSI also participates in the United Way Contributor's Choice Program, contributor choice # 172.

*For more information on making a contribution to TSI, please contact
Gerry Henry at 412-461-1322 ext 222 or ghenry@transitionalservices.org.*

THE VALUE OF US Disabilities in the Workplace

By *Johnnie Smithson, Supervisor*

Employing individuals with disabilities has had mixed success at Transitional Services (TSI). However, when an organization grows and challenges itself it takes time for everyone in the organization to get on board. Promoting an organizational culture of inclusiveness where all employees feel important and valued has its own challenges. Valuing and respecting others as well as constantly seeking to promote the rights of others are two of the guiding principles of TSI. These principles become a moral compass for how we handle situations and interact with each other. One of the ways the Cultural Diversity Committee is addressing the issue is this year Emmett Baxendell from Goodwill Industries will facilitate training on Teamwork. Part of the training will address disabilities



in the workplace. According to DiversityInc, 1 in every 5 persons has a disability. That means one of your neighbors; friends, coworkers or children's friends have a disability. Sometimes we are not sure how to act around someone who has a disability. At work we are under the false assumption that the person with a disability can't carry the same work load or that they have less responsibilities and this can cause hard feelings on a team. DiversityInc. also reminds us that when a person with a disability is hired the chief obstacle in the workplace is not the disability but the bias of the coworkers. The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Policy offers six myths about people with disabilities in the workplace.

MYTH

VS

FACT

A physical disability means a mental disability.

Employees with disabilities miss work at a much higher rate than employees without disabilities.

Employees with disabilities often are unable to meet basic performance standards, make them an unemployment risk.

Employees with disabilities always need help in getting acclimated to their work environment that will hinder other employees and negatively effect productivity.

Employees with disabilities will have transportation problems getting to and from work. They'll arrive late—when they arrive at all.

Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate employees with disabilities.

Sometimes people think physical disabilities are linked somehow with intelligence, but they are not.

Studies by DuPont Corp. demonstrate that employees with disabilities typically have no greater absenteeism rates than that of non-disabled employees

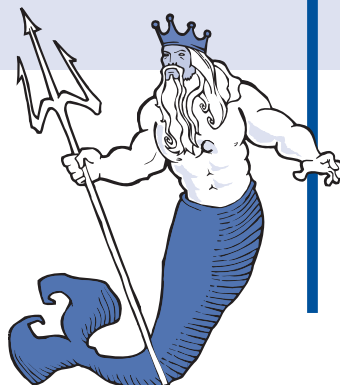
A 1990 DuPont Corp. study, which surveyed the supervisors of 811 employees with disabilities, found 90 percent rated average or better in job performance, compared with 95 percent for employees without disabilities.

Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help as well as receiving it.

People with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation needs just like everyone else.

According to an ongoing study by the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the University of Iowa's Law, Health Policy, and Disability Center (LHPDC), most workers required an accommodation, and the cost for those that do is usually manageable. Forty-two percent said an accommodation resulted in a onetime median cost of \$600.00.

—DiversityInc. Magazine, October 2006





Back row (l-r): **Joyce D. Fisher** (3 Years), **Shawn Glass** (10 years), **Pamela Benson-Williams** (5 years), **John Lavender** (5 years), **Marie Gerg** (3 years), **Alice Muyang Mobit** (3 years); Front row (l-r): **Izetta Caldwell** (3 Years), **Lois Woody** (25 years), **Linda J. Jones** (10 years), **Gretchen Oliverio** (5 years).

Recognition Dinner

For the past 6 years, TSI has been having its Annual Recognition Dinner at Dave & Buster's at the Waterfront. On December 6, 2006, board members, staff and family members met to recognize staff for longevity, Above and Beyond and our most prestigious award, The Janet Sieber Award (see page 7). It has been noted by many in the agency that this year we have seen an increase in the number of longevity awards. Our Above and Beyond awards were awarded to those who went above and beyond the nature of their daily duties throughout the year. The importance we place on this award is that the awardee must have qualities that meet at least one of our Core Values (Integrity, Teamwork, Communication and Customer Service) and exemplify any of the Agency's Guiding Principles or the Mission Statement. The nominations are then voted upon by a staff committee. The winners are then nominated for the end of the year recognition. From this group of winners, the Board then selects those whom they feel exemplify these characteristics. The winners are awarded a gift certificate.

Years of Dedicated Service

- | | |
|---|---|
| 25 Jacqueline Pillows | 20 Norman Tomaszewski |
| 15 Geneva Hall | 10 Robert Bell
Myrla Myers
Yvette Stearns |
| 5 Carrie Charles
Chester Dixon
Deborah Jennings
Beth Liberman
Keisha Meadows
LaRue Staples
Douglas Tkocs | 3 Minnie M. Benjamin
Kimberly Perkins
Charlene Thornhill |



Above and Beyond Award Winners

Bob Dinkelemeyer, Fiscal Department (top left); **Renay Trotter**, Coordinator, MH Services (top right); **Shawn Glass**, CSS II M.R. Supported Living (below); **Keisha Meadows**, Administration (not pictured).



! Congratulations to **Kathy Doloughty**, Clinical Associate, who received her Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) credential in December 2006.

Thank you to the following businesses for their donation to make our Recognition Dinner a success:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Bravo's at the Waterfront</i> | <i>Employment Guide</i> |
| <i>Pittsburgh Penguins</i> | <i>Vase HighmarkCasualty</i> |
| <i>Concentra</i> | <i>Delta T</i> |
| <i>Clinical Edge</i> | <i>PF Changs</i> |
| <i>Highmark BC/BS</i> | <i>Dan's Flower Shop</i> |
| <i>Henderson Brothers</i> | <i>Tina Treece of Pampered Chef</i> |
| <i>Send Me No Flowers</i> | <i>TJ & S</i> |
| <i>Damon's at the Waterfront</i> | <i>Pittsburgh Play House</i> |
| <i>Terry Clark Photography</i> | <i>Walgreens Homestead</i> |
| <i>Eat-n-Park</i> | |

Let Our Voices Be HEARD

By Jennifer Mullins

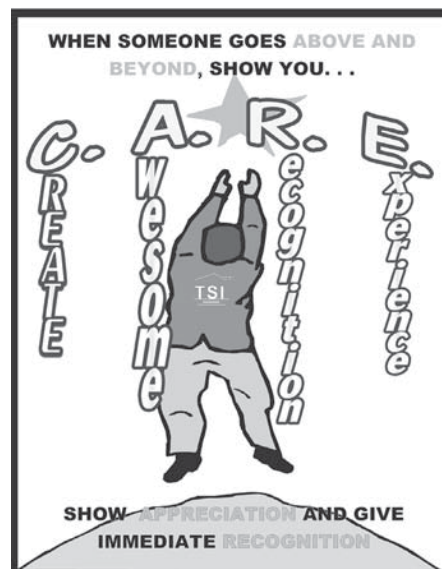
On the evening of October 4, 2006, a group of 17 staff and service users came to TSI's main conference room for a preliminary forum in Self and Community Advocacy. Rachel Freund from the Mental Health Association and the Let Our Voices Be Heard (LOVBH) advocacy project was the guest speaker. Let Our Voices Be Heard is a cross-disability group of mental health service users and advocates who work to make sure that people who use services are at the table when decisions are being made and that democracy is accessible to all (LOVBH newsletter, Feb. 2005, pg. 3). The forum was held as a response to a request from persons served that they have more access to resources for self and systems advocacy. In addition to this outcome, the Community Supports Program sought to gauge the interest level of persons served in participating in a regular Let Our Voices Be Heard group at TSI.

The forum provided the participants an opportunity to test their knowledge of government, stressed the importance of lobbying, as well as provided information about voting and election history. Rachel engaged the group through a lively discussion that proved both educational and recreational. Individuals were introduced to the different types of advocacy: individual, collective, political, and systems. She detailed six good reasons for getting involved in systems advocacy. Voter registration forms were made available to people who wanted to register. The two-hour meeting ran over by thirty minutes because people were so engaged in the group experience.

A week following the forum, a survey was conducted by the Community Supports Program. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. All who had attended the forum reported that they wanted to learn more and would be interested in being a part of a LOVBH group here at TSI. As the survey asked for responses of all persons served throughout TSI, others who were not present reported that they too wanted to be better informed on issues. Out of the 95 responses received, 62 wanted more information on advocacy, and 44 expressed interest in attending a regular group. The plan is to hold regular monthly meetings facilitated by Rachel beginning in January 2007. The goals of this group are to continue the discussions begun at the forum and to teach people ways in which they can become more active in advocating for changes that ultimately affect themselves and their peers. As

the adage goes, knowledge is power—get informed, get educated, participate. The Let Our Voices Be Heard advocacy education groups will begin at Transitional Services on January 10, 2007. Contact Jennifer Mullins, Community Support Supervisor, at 412-464-4370 x225 to get involved or for more information.

Photo: Rachel Freund from Mental Health Association and the Let Our Voices Be Heard advocacy project at the first of several forums sponsored by TSI's Community Supports Program.



Exceeding the **ABOVE** and Moving **BEYOND**

Congratulations to our 4th Quarter Above and Beyond Winners:

- ◆ Dawn Knight – Supervisor
- ◆ Kelly Wilson, CSS II – M.R. Supported Living
- ◆ Keisha Meadows – Administration

If you see a fellow TSI team member exemplifying the TSI Values and Guiding Principles in such a way that you believe they have gone Above and Beyond not only what is expected but beyond their responsibilities as well, tell them about it today. Locate a nomination form and complete it. We have many outstanding staff members; let's make sure their efforts are recognized. If you are in need of more forms, please contact David Treece at 412-461-1322.

FROM MY POINT OF VIEW

By Karen Fitz

“Believe there are no limits but the sky.”

I attended the journey for recovery group. I was pleased to participate in the group and learned a lot about myself and my recovery from the effects of a mental health disability. The members of the group spent a lot of time together, and we learned that we are reclaiming our living, learning, working and social lives. The recovery journey is not over when the group ends. The journey begins in you and continues as you learn how to overcome difficulties, even if it's only one day at a time.

The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree

The most prestigious award given to staff is the Janet Sieber Award. Janet was the Administrative Assistant for TSI from May 3, 1972 to July 21, 1995. As you can imagine, during her tenure, she has worked with various staff, working closely with the CEO, each one coming with their own style and uniqueness which probably differed from the previous CEO. Her adaptability, and professionalism were noted as memorable trait. "If you asked her about a previous record or file, she always knew exactly where to retrieve the information," said Sharon Alberts, CEO, who had worked with Janet for about 3 years before she retired. Dedication, and loyalty along with professionalism and many other qualities are some of the traits that our previous winners display just as Janet. This year's recipient displays many of the same characteristics as Janet, which is very understandable, being that year's winner is her son, Joe Sieber.

Aside from many vivid examples of deeds that merit special recognition to help consumers live happily and safely in their environments, the most impressive thing about Joe is his heart for the people served. His interactions with them demonstrate caring for them as people.



He also demonstrates a keen concern for the finances of the agency and is always looking for cost-effective ways to work with the ever-tightening budgets within the MR sites at which he provides maintenance support. Often times, Joe went the extra mile and did things himself to save money. His knowledge of heating and cooling has helped TSI be able to do some projects in-house, which in turn saved the agency money. Over the years, his knowledge in the technical aspects of his job has increased, and he has used this to help his peers improve their skills as well.

Joe puts the needs of those we serve first. His actions clearly show that every area of the agency can touch the lives we serve in a positive manner.

Meet the Board...

LAWRENCE POWELL, VICE CHAIRPERSON

At the Annual Board Dinner Meeting held on October 25, Larry Powell was elected as the Vice Chairperson. He has been on the board since January 2006. He came to us through another member, Ms. Lola Mason, a coworker at Carnegie Mellon University.

He is the Manager of Equal Opportunity Services, Disability Resources at Carnegie Mellon. In this position, he is responsible for providing staff and students with disabilities needed accommodations. This could include things like books on tape, getting materials enlarged and making sure all building and programs are accessible to staff and students with disabilities.

Mr. Powell graduated from IUP in 1973 with a BS in Special Education and received his Masters in Education from Pitt in 1986. He taught from 1974-1992, during which time in 1984 he took a position with Community College of Allegheny County providing job training and job placement for special needs adults. From there he took another position with CCAC providing accommodations for students with disabilities.

In addition to being on the board at TSI, he was a former board member of the Governor's Committee on The Employment of Persons



Left to right: Robert Johnston, Beverley Rebovich, Sharon Alberts, Lawrence Powell, Glenn Calliban

with Disabilities and Pittsburgh USP. So, Mr. Powell is somewhat familiar with the kinds of services TSI offers and related that he wanted to learn more about us. His vision for TSI is to strive for an inclusive community and promote best practices for the people we serve. He believes that leadership is never about yourself. It should be about fostering relationships and supporting others in a way that assists individuals in meeting their goals and the goals of the organization.

Mr. Powell is an avid football fan and loves fishing. He was married for 28 years and has one daughter and two grandchildren.

Recovery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

increased skills, better access to services, assurances of legal and moral rights, assuring safety. One key to supporting a person's recovery is to provide the right combination of services, in the right amounts, at the right times. At certain points, crises intervention is more important than rehabilitation, and at other points the opposite is true. Whatever the service being provided, values such as hope, respect, person orientation, self-determination, and person involvement must guide the way the service is provided in order to facilitate the person's recovery.

- ◆ We know that recovery involves more than a decrease in symptoms; that gaining a sense of self-respect, hope, and confidence, that connecting or reconnecting with friends and family, that developing a personal identity beyond being a mental

health client or consumer, and that engaging or reengaging in personally meaningful work, education, and/or socialization in the community are also important milestones in a person's recovery.

The bottom line is that we know enough about recovery to be hopeful for the recovery for every person with a mental illness, we know enough to be able to plan and deliver services in a way that supports the person's recovery, and we know that families, friends, and other caring people in the community can facilitate and support recovery. The challenge now is to act on what we know and remain humble enough to realize we need to learn more about the experience of recovery from mental illness.

You Asked...We Listened

Individuals who live in our Community Homes or use the services of our MR Supported Living Program were asked about the things that they wanted TSI to help them learn and do. Their feedback and our response was presented at our Fall 2006 Public Forum.

You Asked...	We Did...
<i>To learn how to buy healthy food</i>	<i>Health Talks Series on buying healthy food Healthy Living Project (HLP) revised the packet on healthy eating</i>
<i>To learn how to be assertive</i>	<i>HLP developed a packet on assertiveness</i>
<i>To learn how to get along with others in the community</i>	<i>HLP developed a packet on community safety</i>
<i>For more activities with other people like walking and dancing</i>	<i>HLP Boo Olympics Event HLP Steeler Tail Gait Event Expressive Movement Group</i>
<i>For more art activities</i>	<i>Offered two new art groups & held the Collective Dreaming Art Show</i>



806 West Street
Homestead, PA 15120-1566
412-461-1322
412-461-1250 fax
www.transitionalservices.org



Transitional Services, Inc. has been accredited by CARF for the following programs:

- *Community Housing: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Adults)*
- *Community Services: Community Living Services*

Mission Statement

Transitional Service, Inc. is an innovative human services organization transitioning people with mental health and mental retardation disabilities into the community. We are committed to fostering an environment that provides quality services for all of our customers. Through creativity, respect and partnership, we continue to assist individuals in need to gain the skills necessary to be as self-sufficient and independent as possible through the provision of residential and rehabilitative services.

Vision Statement

We will be recognized as a regional leader in services provision for people with mental health, mental retardation and other related disabilities. We will provide life-changing opportunities for those we serve to grow individually as people, community participants, and to inspire others in their growth and recovery.