Why We Do The Things We Do

Many things at Region Ten may be new, but the changes are built on the past, said executive director Robert Johnson. The 2006 focus groups held by consultant Charlie Harris showed the agency needed to address problems in leadership, morale, advocacy, fiscal responsibility, respect, collaboration, career ladders, employee rewards, communications, information systems and consumer empowerment, Johnson said.

After the July 2007 retreat in which the 56 participants came up with core values of accountability, empowerment, community, respect, person-

(See “Changes” on page 2)


Region Ten Likes Books

Blue Ridge House and the Meadowcreek Center recently were awash in all things books. Members of Blue Ridge House held a book reception Jan. 16 celebrating their self-published book “Meet Me at the Mountain Top.” Several contributors read excerpts from their stories of recovery.

The stories had a powerful effect on the audience of more than 40 who attended the reception. C’ville Reporter Scott Weaver covered the event and wrote an article for the C’Ville Weekly.

Two of the “Mountaintop” writers, Myra Anderson and Debra Knighton, have been chosen as two of seven Virginians featured in the Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership “Firewalker” project. That yet-to-be-published book will highlight the sometimes spiritual aspects of recovery.

Anderson is the head of Region Ten’s Consumer Advisory Council and a peer support specialist at Blue Ridge House. Knighton is a psychosocial specialist at Blue Ridge House. Joni Raskin is the third Region Ten employee to be chosen for the “Firewalker” project. Raskin is a consumer provider at the Wellness Recovery Center.

As a part of the Virginia Festival of the Book, Authors Paul DuBois and Jennifer Swender talked to Meadowcreek members about how to make their own books.

The pair have written several books, including “NASCAR ABC’s.” Their March 26 visit to Meadowcreek was their second.

On March 28, Miss Happy Foot, also known as Arlene A. Carter, came to Blue Ridge House as part of the Virginia Festival of the Book.

In her animated style, Carter recited the poem she wrote about her father entitled “Tucked in Real, Real Tight.”

Carter had dolls at the ready to help her tell stories.

Blue Ridge House members crowded into the group room to enjoy Carter’s presentation.

(Continued on page 2)
Changes at Region Ten

(Continued from page 1)

centeredness and excellence, Johnson, who was hired by the Region Ten board in April 2007, changed the agency’s leadership structure.

He organized seven Centers of Excellence and put seven tried and true Region Ten employees in charge of each: Quality Improvement and Standards, Jane Lewis; Adult Development, Martha Maltais; Child and Family, Neta Davis; Rehabilitative, Reed Banks; Assessment, Case Management and Emergency, Lynn Shoen; Rural Services, Marcia Becker; and Adult Outpatient, Linda Hamilton.

Along with the above-mentioned directors, Johnson chose Medical Director Dr. David Moody, Consumer Advocate Ken Moore, and Deputy Executive Director Caruso Brown to round out his leadership team.

Johnson hopes the new structure will foster “effective, efficient and progressive change.”

“That change is first and foremost a change for a better quality of life for our consumers. Secondly, it is a change for our agency toward increasing excellence in performance.”

While the leadership team’s focus is on internal change, what Johnson refers to as the triad, focuses on the external. The triad consists of Karen Rifkin, research, evaluation and grants; Jeff Sobel, development and fundraising; and Ruthann Robinson, public relations.

Robinson handles all matters of communication -- within the agency and telling the Region Ten story to the public. She also acts as the legislative liaison, keeping the leadership team apprised of legislative issues that will affect Region Ten.

Sobel and Rifkin’s focus will be on generating funds “to help break the restricting yoke of Medicaid funding,” Johnson said.

“We want the freedom of funding supports that allow as much collaboration time as needed with peers and partners to help consumers make effective recovery and habilitative gains.”

Busy Busy Busy

Honoring Helpers

Celebrating Intellectual Disabilities Awareness and Inclusion Month, Region Ten’s Meadowcreek Center honored two groups of volunteers: Madison House and Best Buddies.

At the March 21 ceremony, Executive Director Robert Johnson thanked the volunteers.

“We need strong partners like you,” Johnson said to the honorees. “It’s too steep a mountain to climb alone.”

Meadowcreek member Caroline Gore thanked her Best Buddy for being “The best buddy in the world.”

“I like what you done for me,” Gore said.

Madison House is a student volunteer organization at the University of Virginia that promotes lifelong volunteerism.

Best Buddies is a national organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of those with Intellectual Disabilities with one-on-one friendships, said Martha Maltais, senior director of Adult Development Services at Region Ten.

Honoring Cynthia Harrison

On Jan 11, Region Ten said goodbye to long-time employee, Cynthia Harrison by celebrating her retirement at Blue Ridge House. Harrison worked for Region Ten for 30 years, most recently as co-founder and director of the Virginia Human Services Training Center.

The Rural Services team in Louisa performed “For She’s a Jolly Good Fellow” on their kazoo, thanking Harrison for the years she spent as their director. Buzz Balett, director of Emergency Services, remembered being interviewed by Harrison when he applied for a job at Region Ten 21 years ago.

Balett drew the biggest laugh of the afternoon when he said Harrison advised him that he “shouldn’t work at Region Ten.”

Harrison told the crowd she looked forward to spending more time on her artwork. Several of Harrison’s pieces decorate Region Ten buildings.

Breaking Ground

Everyone huddled under tents against the pouring rain at the official groundbreaking ceremony for the Nelson Counseling Center Feb. 6. Seven years in the making, the new center will be a three-story, $19 million building.
**Top X List**

The Top Ten Reasons Why we Like Having Robert Johnson as our Executive Director

10. Robert is easier to spell than Caruso
9. He survived the DC government.
8. He never has to take off work to get a haircut.
7. We can count on him in a crisis (remember the fire drill at the Town Hall meeting?)
6. He sees The Wizard of Oz as an allegory for recovery.
5. He's been seen in more than one Region Ten location.
4. No more spending money on ads for an executive director.
3. No need for mirrors — Employees can check their look in his shiny head.
2. Dressing up no longer means wearing a tie.
And the number one reason we love having Robert as our Executive Director:
1. He panders to our need to feel important by calling us “Your Majesties.”

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### Employee Hire-Date Anniversaries

**January**
- Allan Kanter, 30y
- Jacqueline Webber, 10y
- Shannon Wright, 10y
- Connie Fitzwater, 10y
- Savannah Ray, 5y

**February**
- Reed Banks, 30y
- Molly McCoy, 10y
- David Meyer, 10y

**March**
- Tim Gillispie, 5y
- Victoria Morrison, 5y
- Barry Blumenthal, 5y

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### Staff Changes

- **Deborah Kushner**
  - MH Support Svcs (IST)
- **Martha McCoy**
  - Outpatient Clinician
- **Jennifer Hughes**
  - Hospital Liaison
- **Liz Nordquist**
  - Training scheduler, coordinator
- **Beth Moore**
  - Case Mgr.
- **James Clark**
  - Program Mgr., SA diversion and Recovery support
- **Lisa Roberson**
  - Program Mgr., Residential Services

- **Rose Etosh**
  - Office Operations Mgr.
- **Gail Anstine**
  - Case Mgr., Crozet
- **Sheri Gauthier**
  - Program Mgr., Compliance Services
- **Donna Dean**
  - Access Clinician, WRC
- **Roxanne Jones**
  - Recovery Support Clinician
- **Carl Hicks**
  - Recovery Support Clinician
- **Ursala Hill**
  - Case Mgr., Project Link

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**Legislative News**

The 2008 Legislative session saw many changes for mental health providers:
- $42 million to expand community based mental health services
- An additional 600 ID waiver slots
- A 3.6 percent rate increase for ID waiver congregate care
- New criteria for temporary detention, emergency custody and mandatory treatment orders
- Possibility of employment for mental health consumers with past convictions of certain “barrier” crimes.

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**Want to Help?**

Has Region Ten helped you or a loved one and you want to help us help others? Either clip this donation form and mail to:

Jeff Sobel, development coordinator
502 Old Lynchburg Road, Charlottesville, Va. 22903
Or e-mail him at jeffs@regionten.org

- $25
- $50
- $100
- Other

Contact me about other giving options
Name
Phone #
E-mail
Stay Tuned:

The next Town Hall meeting will be held sometime soon. Although the date has not been set, we are looking at some time in the middle of May. We’ve taken to heart your suggestions, especially about it being too long, and hope this shorter version will do the trick. Be watching for an all-staff e-mail announcing the date and how to sign up.

Employee recognition will now be done at a separate function, most likely a luncheon. It’s still in the planning stages. Human Resources Director Amy Downey will let us know when that will take place.

Say “Hello” to New Employees

Kelly Kramer, PACT
Laura Giles, Access clinician
Zara Lyn Wampler, Direct Care
Christine Jones, Day Support
Jeffrey Sobel, Development
Justin Pretlow, ESS
Joan Mbindo, Residential
Alvin Morris, MHSS, Carlton
Leanne Evers, MHSS Nelson
Nesta Elcan, ESS
LuKondi “Jack” Luutumba, Residential
Peter Fitch, ITS Help Desk
Brenda Woodward, MCC
Kristin Gillen, MHSS, PACSS
Donalee Rooks, BRJ DC
Rachael Beasley, Student Assistance

People in our Neighborhood

By Ruthann Robinson

This regular feature of the Region Ten newsletter is where we acknowledge those in our community that help us serve our consumers. We know we can’t do it alone.

In May, we will be planting flowers at many of our Region Ten sites.

Lori Hall, a gardener on staff with the City of Charlottesville, graciously provided a list of flowers that are relatively drought-tolerant and maintenance free.

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Hall not only listed the flowers, but she grouped them in suggested combinations for eye-pleasing displays.

Peter L. Warren, a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent, took time to meet with me to offer tips on gardening in Virginia’s hot, often dry summer weather.

Steve Murray, of Panorama Pay Dirt, said he’d give Region Ten a pick-up truck load of compost for free.

Thanks to Murray, our annual beds will have great soil in which to put down roots.

We’d also like to thank Mary Alice Blackwell, who writes the “Helping Hands” column for the Daily Progress. Says RT staffer, Ruth Ewers: “She (Blackwell) has run countless columns for our folks, enabling us to help them get much needed services and items.”

So Region Ten officially thanks Hall, Warren, Murray and Blackwell for helping us do our job.