



The X-Files

"Working together to enrich our community one life at a time."

Volume 3, July 2008



Robert Johnson,
Executive Director

Stay The Course

The difficulty with visions is there is no guarantee they will happen. That makes it difficult if you've become dependent on the vision for your emotional and mental well being. We have a vision at R-Ten that sees a better life in a better community for everyone who comes in our doors. While the emphasis of the vision has been on our consumers, as it rightly must be, it also embraces our staff, our board members and our partners. Today, I want to speak to the staff about vision. It has been a mere eight months since the board voted to allow the reorganization and strategic framework that includes our new vision, mission, values and action committees. Although a lot of important changes have happened in those intervening months, they have been largely conceptual. Like visions, it's hard to find anything concrete in concepts. Yet, good concepts usually precede all good material accomplishments. Building a house without a conceptual blueprint will likely result in several "OOPS!" statements as the "finished" product starts to lean to the left or right and the neighbors start to complain. When done correctly, it's still a time consuming process with lots of cussing and discussing while the foundation and walls go up. The finished product if en"visioned" properly gets a nod from the neighbors and

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Pine Ridge House Opens

After years of waiting, Region Ten dedicated Pine Ridge House with a ribbon-cutting ceremony June 30.

Louisa Mayor James S. Artz joined Region Ten directors and Pine Ridge residents as they cut the blue ribbon officially opening the home at 112 Pine Ridge Drive.

The first of its kind in Louisa, Pine Ridge is a home for men and women disabled by mental illness who are able to live independently as long as they have support.

Staff at Pine Ridge will help residents with grocery shopping, menu, leisure and recreation planning, budgeting, improving interpersonal skills and manage-

ment of mental and physical illnesses.

Each resident will have a plan tailored to their own needs. Pine Ridge was built with the help of HUD grants. Several area churches donated money and items to help furnish the home.

Former Region Ten Executive Director Jim Peterson came out to celebrate the completion of the home that began on his watch.

After the ribbon-cutting, guests and residents toured the home and snacked on cookies and punch.

Local media covered the event.



Above: Louisa Counseling Center Director Michelle Hottinger (far right) gets help cutting the Pine Ridge House ribbon.



Right: Senior Director of Rural Services, Marcia Becker, chats with former Region Ten Executive Director Jim Peterson.

Consumers Dine with Director

More than 50 people receiving services from Region Ten got to know each other and Executive Director Robert Johnson a bit better June 18.

Consumer Advisory Council members Myra Anderson and Paul Patrick helped plan the brunch meant to familiarize consumers with the head of the agency and he with them.

Consumers gathered in the newly opened conference center for bagels, muffins, fruit and yogurt and to hear about Johnson's plans for Region Ten.

After asking those present to introduce themselves, Johnson talked about the agency's vision and mission statements. He also told the group that increasingly their needs, plans and desires would be the catalyst for change as they meet with their service providers and set goals.

This is all part of Region Ten's efforts to become a person-centered agency.

Several consumers made suggestions, including planning a trip to Washington DC for

consumers to talk to legislators, hiring more peer-support workers and getting new computers for Meadowcreek Day Support Center.

Johnson listened to the suggestions and said he would consider each one.

Anderson asked CAC members from each service area to stand so consumers could see who they could go to with questions.

With the brunch's success, everyone agreed it should become a regular event.



Above: Robert Johnson gets to know consumers as they enjoy a brunch together in the new conference room.

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engenders a sense of pride in the owner. I mention this because we are nearing the beginning of the implementation or building phase of our strategic framework. I'm aware that for many staff, despite the important changes in many areas of the agency, such as the adoption of by-laws by the CAC, the start of the PCDA (There is an article about it in this month's Newsletter), the new campus for Child and Family Services and our new conference center on Old Lynchburg Road, the environment is not yet different enough to register as real change. When, you must be thinking or saying, will it really get better?

I would offer that for many of us, it will begin to make sense after the Comp and Class study results are in. That exercise will be the beginning of a shift in how R-Ten staff are rewarded for the work they do. It will also be our first "real" attempt at developing career ladders for all positions. It will be easier to see what's going on as we adopt across the board standardization for workload, titles, and start tackling pay for performance objectives. Much of this work will happen in the Workforce Development action committee as it has completed the survey and gotten critical feedback from you on what we need to focus on to become the employer of choice. The proposals to do the study are coming in as I write this article and we plan to be finished with the process in a few months. It will not be the flop of the previous study, which thankfully was not under my watch, primarily because the committee did a lot of prep work before we went out to bid. So, I ask that you stay the course as we begin this and many other "construction" projects. This year will yield real change that you can grasp and be proud of.

Partnership for a Consumer-Driven Agency

By Ken Moore

I'd like to introduce you to the *Partnership for a Consumer-Driven Agency*. This is a group of Region Ten staff and consumers that meets every other week with the sole purpose of openly and honestly discussing core issues and concepts central to our agency's vision: "A better life, a better community."

Grassroots movements effect federal, state and local change in the provision of human services that then

often become directives, mandates and statutes, which require us to adapt.

Too often we simply change policies and procedures, memorizing the new requirements without actually conceptualizing the meaning and implications into our understanding and awareness.

It is my most sincere hope that Region Ten Directors and Program Managers will allot a portion of time at team meetings for similar open and honest discussions. On July 9, 2008 the PCDA dis-



Above: Region Ten's Consumer Advocate Ken Moore.

cussed two questions: Why is Recovery important? and Why is Person-Centered important?

Region Ten Gets Input

Region Ten held a series of Focus Groups facilitated by our consultants Charlie Harris and Stefano Siciliano, to get feedback from different groups about Region Ten.

Previous focus groups were held in September 2006 to learn how employees, consumers, and stakeholders felt about the agency. Information gathered from these sessions has been used

extensively to help guide change.

Participation in the focus groups was voluntary and all comments held in the strictest confidence. The consultants will prepare a report for the Board and the Leadership Team summarizing what they learned from those who attended.

The purpose of the report is to help Region Ten gauge the

effectiveness of change initiatives, be responsive to family concerns as well as to look for help in setting the organization's future direction.

The last focus group was held July 15 for families of consumers. Thanks to all who attended these groups and provided valuable feedback for future planning. Together we will enrich our community one life at a time.

Please Join Us!

You are cordially invited to honor former Executive Director Jim Peterson's years of devoted service to Region Ten on July 25, 2008 at 11 AM. as we officially rename the building at 800 Preston Avenue in his honor.

Light refreshments to follow the dedication ceremony.

Please let us know if you'll be attending

Please contact Jeff Sobel with any questions or to respond to this invitation:

434.970.2185 or jeffs@regionten.org.

"Working Together to Enrich Our Community One Life at a Time"



Top X List

Top Ten things it takes to play on a Region Ten sports team.

10. Good humor
9. Desire to get to know other Region Ten employees
8. Desire for exercise
7. Willingness to play nice with others
6. Desire to relieve stress
5. Ability to communicate
4. Willingness to learn
3. Ability to show up
2. About a two-hour a week commitment.

And the number one thing it takes to play on a Region Ten sports team.....

1. Ability to breathe on your own.
- Notice skill isn't one of the requirements. If you want to play a fall sport, contact Jessica Spears (434) 970-1453



Left: Kate Junker takes off for first as Jeff Carr gets ready to bat.



Left: Good eye Carl.

Right: Carl Hicks drives one into center field



Right: Callie Tolbert takes a good cut at the ball. Callie took over catcher duties after Courtney's injury.



Employee Softball Team ends Season With One Win

Several employees — and friends and relatives of employees — took to Charlottesville sandlots to enjoy the warm weather and hit a few balls (very few.)

The team ended the season with a 1 and 16 record and one broken ankle. Jessica Spears' sister, Courtney, sacrificed her body for the team covering home and was bowled over by the runner in the fifth game of the season. Even though she needed surgery, Courtney doesn't think she suffered a career-ending injury.

Right: The team as it appeared after the last game. From left: Jeff Sobel, Kate Junker, Scott Shaw, Rob Stewart, Carole Terry, Callie Tolbert, Rachel Shaw, Ruthann Robinson. Behind them stand Jeff Carr and Carl Hicks.



Staff Changes/ Anniversaries

New Hires:

Kimberly Cashwell, ESS
 Lauren Kois, psychosocial specialist
 Cheryl Crush, MHSS Nelson
 Catherine Herring, Louisa clinician
 Derrick Mulder, behavioral specialist
 CJ Arban FitzHenry, SA
 Ilyssa McCleese, ESS
 Steven Stewart, relief facilitator
 Michelle Williams, relief facilitator
 James Hart, MHSS Step Up

Elsie Mae Coleman, MHSS, Louisa

Transfers:

Tim Campbell, WRC
 Rochelle Smith, Office Manager
 Al McGibney, Maintenance Manager
 Michael McCarthy, ESS
 Fia Midboe, MHSS, IST
 Laura Giles, Outpatient clinician
 Charles Fawcett, Outpatient/Access clinician

Anniversaries:

Cheryl Cottrel, 5y
 Vivian Vest, 5y

People in our Neighborhood

Several businesses partner with Region Ten to help our consumers in recovery become viable employees. These companies work with Region Ten to train, teach and help our consumers find jobs.

The following companies and the company representatives were honored at a banquet July 18 for all they do to help Region Ten realize its vision of a better life; a better community.

WalMart, Debbie Robinson
Tucker Griffith & Barnes, Theresa Harris
TJ Maxx, Cheryl Ragland
Express Car Wash, Brian Harris
Food Lion, Kathy Smith
Hilton Garden Inn, Erik Pfister
Colonades, Lamar Hester
Old Navy, Darlene Morris
Roses, Gary Coles
Crutchfield, Lauren Bibb
ChicFilet, Travis Cranford

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

Six Simple Strategies for Relieving Stress

By Ruth L. Ewers, MS

You know the drill: Your desk is covered with charts that need updating, your cell phone hasn't stopped ringing all day and three of your emails are marked urgent. Toward the end of the day, one of your clients walks in the door homeless and in crisis. You begin to feel tension in your neck, then your shoulders. You develop a throbbing headache, an eye twitch, or an upset stomach.

Medical studies suggest 50 to 80% of illness may be stress related, and in the human services field stress goes with the territory. As human service workers, we are confronted by an array of people with serious problems. We constantly deal with human suffering, which can lead to emotional exhaustion. While not everyone responds to stress in the same way, from time to time we can find ourselves suffering from the symptoms. That being said, what can we do about it when it hits? Here are six simple techniques shown to work:

Move. Get up and take a brisk walk. Dance around your office. Go to the gym. This improves blood flow and oxygenation to the brain, providing a clearer head that helps you face the pile of work or crisis at hand. Exercise is a natural mood enhancer, and can alleviate depression, anxiety and agitation.

Laugh. Humor can defuse anger and lift your spirits. It can also provide insight and help you through a crisis situation. The physical act of

laughing relaxes those tight muscles and helps to create a sense of well-being. It releases endorphins and reduces the production of stress hormones. It also lowers blood pressure, which in turn decreases the strain on your heart.

Write. Journaling is a useful technique in reducing stress. It can help you clarify underlying feelings in a safe and private way. It can even provide another perspective on the situation. Close your door, put your phone on hold for 10 or 15 minutes, and just write. Don't worry about grammar or proper English; the goal is to find relief by getting your thoughts and frustrations out and onto paper.

Breathe. Studies show that during periods of anxiety and stress, we sometimes hold our breath or breathe in a shallow manner. Try taking a few minutes and breathe in slow, steady breaths, keeping inflow and outflow even. This will lessen tension and anxiety.

Talk: Discussing a difficult case or situation with a coworker can help articulate the cause of the stress and provide a fresh perspective. Studies show that venting feelings provides professional social support and helps form good relations and cooperation among colleagues.

Be grateful. Medical studies show pessimism is linked with depression, and hostility to heart disease. Optimism, on the other hand, is shown to create greater resilience in people faced with difficult situations. Recent medical research into the brain revealed plasticity -- the brain's

ability to form new connections. We can change our patterns of thinking to increase a sense of well-being. By appreciating what we have and all the things we are grateful for instead of what we lack, we can change our perceptions. Try it: you may be surprised at how this simple exercise can change your day.

Of course, we can't eliminate all stress; but we can learn to respond to it in healthier and even productive ways. So go ahead: find a coworker, take a brisk walk outside and share a story or a joke.

If your stress is persistent and none of these exercises help, the Employee Assistance Program is available to all employees. Dr. Jane Lewis, Director of Training, states that her team is available to design instructional programs on stress for any team and they hope to expand this part of their offerings in the future

In our next issue: Helping caregivers deal with stress

Ruth L. Ewers, MS, is an Access case manager. She's also a published writer. Her work has appeared in both national and regional publications, including the Christian Science Monitor, Modern Bride, Highlights and Cricket for Children, and The Virginian Pilot.



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