

SHAREHOLDERS CELEBRATION by Jan Graham

Get ready to party! Pathway to Hope is hosting a **Shareholders Celebration** to mark 10 years of service in the community. Save the date--**Friday, April 24 from 5:30-7:30**--to reconnect with your PTH family at Center of Grace. Come eat dinner, visit the office, share some memories, and honor all the people who have dedicated their time and resources to transform lives of those affected by mental illness. Board members will present our goals for the coming year and ask you to help shape our future. Seating is limited to 175 people so get your reservation in early by visiting our website www.pathwaytohope.org. We encourage you to view and sign our guestbook, so go to our website and click on the "News and Events" page. Cost is \$10.00 per person and RSVP is due by April 15. Hope to see you there!



HOPE FOR THE SPRING

I love the following article entitled, "LETTING GO," for it reminds us all that we do not have to fix everyone and every situation and always have the answers to all of life's questions. We just need to "be," and take time for ourselves so that we can breathe in the air of life and breathe out the message of hope. When we do this and follow the principles listed below, we allow ourselves and our loved ones to live in freedom with dignity and respect. So I challenge each of you to practice "Letting Go!"

"LETTING GO"

"LETTING GO" does not mean to stop caring – it means not to take responsibility for someone else.

"LETTING GO" is not to cut myself off from others – it is realizing I can't control others.

"LETTING GO" is not to enable others – it is to allow them to learn from natural consequences.

"LETTING GO" is to admit to my own powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

"LETTING GO" is not to try to change or blame others, but to make the most of myself.

"LETTING GO" is not to care, but to care about.

"LETTING GO" is not to fix, but to be supportive.

"LETTING GO" is not to be in the middle arranging, but to be on the sidelines cheering.

"LETTING GO" is not to be protecting, it is to permit another to face reality.

"LETTING GO" is not to deny, but to accept.

"LETTING GO" is not to nag, scold or argue – it is to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

"LETTING GO" is not to adjust everything to my desires – but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.

"LETTING GO" is not to criticize and regulate others, but to grow and live for the future.

"LETTING GO" is to fear less, and love more.

SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULES

Call Gloria for more information - 913.782.5040

Family Support Groups

(for family members with a mentally ill loved one)

College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe:

- Every Thursday, 7:00pm
Room S115

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church

- Every Tuesday, 7:00pm

Survivor Support Groups

(for individuals with a mental illness)

College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe:

- Every Thursday, 7:00pm
Room S121

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church

- Every Tuesday, 7:00pm

PTH BOARD

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A DEBT OF GRATITUDE

The PTH office has been experiencing problems with our computers and it had become very serious, knocking us off-line for a few days at a time. Finally, we decided to go beyond our volunteer help and get the professional help that we needed. Ann found a company called **Net-Connectivity** that came in and did a first-rate job on all of our computers and got us up and running and we have had no problems since. They also gave us a discount, knowing that we were a nonprofit and the work that we do. Thank you to the guys there and we can heartily recommend them (913-649-9009).

IN MEMORY OF

Shirley Chang-Divadeenam, wife of Dr. Krishna Divadeenam, lost her battle with post-partum depression on Feb. 28th. Shirley leaves two little girls (4 yrs & 2 mos.) and was also a doctor of internal medicine. Dr. K. Divadeenam is a staff psychiatrist for Johnson County Mental Health, working at the Olathe office and at Community Support Services (CSS). In lieu of flowers, the family requested that donations be made to PTH. We are most honored and grateful for their trust in us. Our sincerest sympathy goes out to the Divadeenam family and we hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

COME TO THE CONCERT by Ann Palmer

Sing Out Loud!

Saturday, May 30, 2009, 7:30 to 8:20pm at Black Creek Coffeehouse

(www.blackcreekcoffeehouse.com)

Performance by Karla Bauer-Tate (www.KarlaBauer.com)

Come around 6:30pm to socialize

No Cover Charge! However, a donation basket will be passed with all proceeds going to Pathway To Hope.

NEW SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP

Deedra Dowd has volunteered to start a Survivor Group to coincide with the Family Group that meets at 7:00pm on Tuesday evenings at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church in Overland Park. It started on March 10th, and will always be available, so if you or anyone you know lives on that side of town, be sure and tell them about the group. Deedra is one of our seasoned facilitators and has a good grip on her own mental illness.

BLAKE HOUSE by Larry Zimmerman

Blake House residents hosted a Survivor Group potluck the end of February and did a great job, as everyone had a good time. A couple of the residents attended the "Quick Meals for Busy People" class that was sponsored by the KS State Extension Service. They learn nutritional info as they are learning how to make a delicious meal. The floor in the half-bathroom on the main floor will be replaced in the next few weeks, as it is in serious need. The middle of April, the residents, along with the Survivor Group, will be doing annual yard clean-up so the outside of Blake House will reflect the beauty of the inside. Also, Larry Zimmerman is now the Executive Director of Blake House, with Shelia Holliday working part-time during the week to add another dimension to the residents' program.

WHIM-B

Our WHIM-B course started on March 24th, at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church in Overland Park. Gloria Bowersox is teaching this course and it runs for six weeks.

SURVIVOR CORNER by Lynelle Vondergeest

The survivor group is a blessing to me and those who attend. It is a place for sharing and finding understanding for our illnesses, which is hard to find. The group is growing and has between twenty to thirty people attending each week. Last week we had three new survivors attend. I appreciate all of the fellow survivors. Everyone adds something unique to the group.

The survivors had a potluck at the Blake House the end of February. Meat was provided by Blake House and over 20 survivors attended. This was a wonderful time to socialize and get to know each other better. The next 2 events for survivors are on April 18th. From 9AM-12PM, we will be helping Blake House clean up their yard. That afternoon at 4PM, we will be having a barbeque at Blake House. Even if you can't come in the morning, you are still welcome to attend the barbeque.

The Survivor Council has been meeting on a monthly basis. We have developed brochures specific to the Survivor Group. These brochures have been given to area hospitals, mental health centers, and private physicians and therapists. We thank our web master, Cathie Messick, for her spectacular work on the brochure. (Check out the Survivor Brochure on our PTH website, www.pathwaytohope.org.)

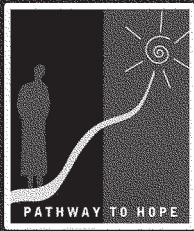
Many survivors are fortunate to have Dr. Divadeenam as a psychiatrist. The suicide death of his wife concerned many survivors. Marty Noonan from CSS came and spoke with the group. This allowed survivors to share their feelings and opened the doorway to a candid discussion about suicide and suicide prevention. Please keep Dr. Divadeenam in your thoughts and prayers.

MY STORY OF HOPE by Andrea Cahalan

I was diagnosed with ADD in 1994 and Bipolar Disorder in 1997 and Post-partum Depression in 2002, after the birth of our son, Brendan. I was told to go off of my psychiatric medications during my pregnancy so as not to cause birth defects, but I was fortunate that my natural hormones helped to control my depression. It was after his birth that my OB/GYN diagnosed me with Post-Partum Depression, but I didn't want to believe her; after all, being diagnosed with previous mental health conditions just meant more problems on the way, right? Wrong! I accepted it and educated myself and realized that I would make it through, no matter what.

I decided to breast feed Brendan for four months, which meant I still was off of my medications, in addition to being on a strict diet of no spicy food or milk. To make matters worse, Brendan had colic, so both my husband and I would take turns taking care of him during the night, with each of us losing a lot of sleep. I felt so guilty towards myself and my son for eating the spicy foods (or wrong foods) before he was born, and I would tell myself how bad I was to do so. This made my confidence and depression worse.

At that time, I saw my psychiatrist and told him that I could not breast feed anymore because I needed my meds! He, as well as everyone else knew that I was overwhelmed by all that was happening in my life, so he chose to start me back on the meds, much to my relief. It took months and years while Brendan was very small to still get enough sleep and the right dose of meds, but I made it. If it wasn't for my older sister telling me about Pathway To Hope and Mother to Mother (Catholic Charities, Carla Golden 913-782-4077), I don't know where I would be today.



Pathway to Hope, Inc.
520 S. Harrison, Suite 206
Olathe, KS 66061

913.397.8552
www.pathwaytohope.org

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

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On the white board in our outer office is written a saying by Cicero, "While there's life, there's hope." Of course, I love the word, for it is part of our name and for a very good reason. Jackie said that possibilities is a word that comes to mind when she hears the word, hope. Anticipation and expectation are two words that I think of when I hear the word, hope.

Spring brings a sense of renewal and hope, as we shed the heaviness of winter and change over to the lighter, brighter things of spring. There's even more daylight. This is like a parable of those of us with a loved one or those of us living with mental illness. Before we find the right diagnoses, medications, support, education, and resources, we are living in darkness – maybe even denial. But once we know truth and are embracing our illness (or our loved one's illness), we come into the light and are empowered and we hold our heads high and walk with our shoulders back. Mental illness does not define us!

I'm very excited about our Shareholder's Celebration (read more about it inside) on April 24th. What's really cool is that you can get on our website and click on "News & Events" and leave us a message/memory on our Shareholder's page. Without each of you, PTH would not be where we are, so please, join us for this time of hopeful celebration.

Sharon Lawrenz