

Study of Veteran's Needs Spurs New Services and Statewide Conference

Many local families are anxiously awaiting the return of their loved ones as more Maine soldiers prepare to return home after their tour of duty in Iraq. For the families being reunited, this is a truly jubilant time. Unfortunately, as the excitement of this long-awaited homecoming wanes, the effects of combat stress and trauma can disrupt the lives of these brave veterans and their families.

Realizing that the effects of traumatic stress may not materialize immediately upon veterans' return home, Community Counseling Center, in partnership with the Maine National Guard, conducted a study of the mental health status and needs of Iraq War veterans. The results of the study, released last March, were sobering. Iraq War veterans are likely to experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression or substance abuse. And, many of these soldiers are reluctant to seek the services they need to overcome combat stress due to a lingering stigma associated with seeking mental health services. We also learned that families struggle to find appropriate services for children of veterans.

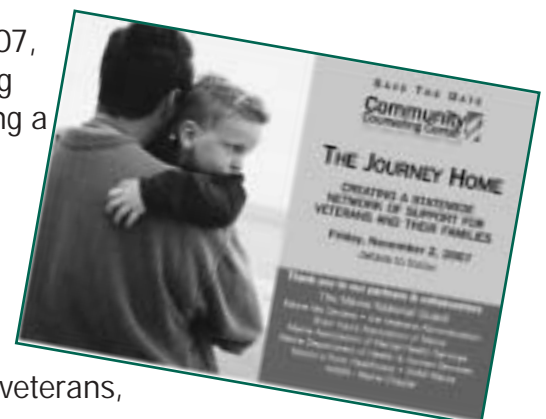


Veterans conference planning committee members. Pictured are (l-r) Carol Carothers of NAMI Maine, Marcia Cooper of the Brain Injury Association of Maine, Christine Robinson of DHHS, Gary Wolcott of DHHS, Chaplain Andy Gibson of the Maine National Guard, Catherine Stakeman of the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Amy Marcotte of the Sanford Vet Center, and Laura Gottfried, CCC's Vice President of Programs. Not pictured are representatives from the Veterans Administration and Martins Point.

As a result of this study, Community Counseling Center has added a suite of services that address the specific needs of returning veterans and their families. Many of these services are provided by therapists who are veterans themselves, and who are extensively trained in the most effective trauma treatments currently available.

Community Counseling Center is also partnering with the Maine National Guard and several other collaborating agencies to present a statewide conference for treatment providers. This conference, to be held November 2, 2007, will train counselors throughout Maine in best practices for treating veterans and their families, and will be the first step toward building a statewide network of support for veterans and their families.

If you would like to learn more about Community Counseling Center's specialized services for veterans or the upcoming conference, please call 207-874-1030 or email info@commcc.org. If you would like to read a summary of Community Counseling Center's study on the mental health status and needs of Iraq War veterans, please visit www.commcc.org.





Perspective

Leslie Clark Brancato
President & CEO

Beginnings

Summer is a time for new beginnings at Community Counseling Center. We turn the calendar to a new fiscal year, equipped with goals and budgets to keep our services accessible and helpful to those who need them. It feels fitting that our "new year" is at the time when everything outside is new, too. We've weathered our spring storms and are reveling in the blossoms and green leaves that make Maine so lovely in the summer.

As we look ahead, we've also been reflecting on our organization's beginnings. You may know that Community Counseling Center is the result of the merger of five parent agencies: *Child and Family Services, Unmarried Parents' Services and Adoption Program, Traveler's Aid Society, Portland Fraternity and South Portland Family Service Association* in 1971. What you may not know is that these agencies and their predecessors date back to as early as 1874.

I recently reviewed annual reports going back to our earliest days, and it struck me that while the services have changed over the years, our core mission has remained the same. True to our roots, we continue to provide direct services that reflect the needs of the day, whole promoting a safe and healthy community for all.

- In the 1870's in keeping with the social philosophy of the time, we served our community by delivering food and fuel , and seeking to eliminate the roots of poverty.
- By the 1920's, professional social workers assumed the responsibility of direct counseling services to clients. This change reflected national developments in the field of social work.
- Today, Community Counseling Center helps people of all ages and from all walks of life develop coping skills, obtain wellness and find recovery with all of modern day life's challenges and difficulties.

Community Counseling Center remains on the forefront of our community's needs. Our recently published study on the needs of soldiers returning from war has inspired community organizations throughout Maine to collaborate together and build a statewide network of support for veterans and their families. We have expanded the geographic reach of the Trauma Intervention Program, which provides emotional first aid to victims and witnesses of trauma during the worst hours of their lives. And, we are growing our model counseling and case management services to serve refugees and immigrants in their own languages, making the work of recovery from past trauma, and adjustment to a new culture much more accessible and helpful.

We are as vital, innovative and responsive now as we were over 130 years ago. And, as we face new challenges and obstacles, I know CCC's focus will endure and remain the same: on our community. After all, that's what we do.

Did you know...

More than 274 individuals and families have been served by CCC's Family Intervention, Response & Support Team (FIRST) in the past year. FIRST helps families that have experienced abuse or neglect, or are considered at risk for abuse. By breaking the cycle of abuse, FIRST is helping generations to come.

The mission of Community Counseling Center is to develop and provide quality, outcome-based services that enhance the emotional strength and well-being of Maine residents throughout their lives.

communityconnections
the newsletter of
Community Counseling
Center

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Nicole Holt, Editor
Any comments or suggestions?
Call 207.874.1030, ext. 336
or email nholt@commcc.org

9th Annual Walk With The Ones You Love Dedicated in Memory of Founder

In 1998, Christian Chenard and Elliott Cherry did something revolutionary. They held hands as they walked around Portland's Back Cove. This deed, innocuous for heterosexual couples, was ground-breaking for Portland's LGBT community. When vacationing in Provincetown, they were able to be a couple that openly cared about each other, but in this community - where they lived, worked and paid taxes - they did not feel that same freedom. They felt harassed, disrespected and even unsafe when walking hand-in-hand.

But Chris and Elliott took that leap of courage and walked around Back Cove hand-in-hand once a week in what they called "a same-gender power walk." In taking that risk, they found some hostile looks and comments, but they also found something that they weren't expecting - the smiles, waves, and "thumbs up" from passers-by.

June 10th marked the 9th annual *Walk With The Ones You Love*, an event that promotes safety and acceptance in public for all families, regardless of sexual or gender orientation. This year, the Walk was officially dedicated and renamed in honor of Christian Chenard, who recently passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Approximately 250 supporters joined CCC staff and SpeakOut volunteers at Deering Oaks to participate in the event.

Thank you to all the volunteers and attendees who made this event such a success. The 9th Annual *Christian Chenard Walk With The Ones You Love* was sponsored by Lee Auto Mall, Pelletier, Chase & Associates, Hewins Travel, Lee International, Coffee by Design, The Law Offices of Joseph Bornstein, Moose Ridge Associates and Jonathan Lee.



Patti Brassard, CCC Board Member, Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO, Maine Attorney General, Steven Rowe & MSOP program coordinator, Jen Hodsdon



The 9th annual *Walk With The Ones You Love*

Volunteers Make a Difference



CCC's CMY Mentor Program held its mentor appreciation picnic Thursday, June 28th at Fort Williams in Cape Elizabeth. Eleven mentor matches participated in field games, including three-legged races and a pie eating contest. Pictured are Raquel and her mentee, Tiffany.

The CMY Mentor Program serves young people ages 6-17 who

live in Cumberland County and who participate, or have a sibling who participates in, the case management programs of Community Counseling Center and Day One. This program gives youth the opportunity to develop a caring, positive relationship with an adult mentor.

To learn more about the CMY Mentor Program and how you can make a difference as a mentor, call Gretchen Earle at 207.856.6100, ext. 557 or email mentor@commcc.org.



Rachel Korenkiewicz and Christopher Cote of Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield plant a garden for our Elderworks clients during the United Way Day of Caring.

Elderworks is a day treatment program for older adults with long-term mental health needs. The goal of the program is to empower, enable and enrich

participants' lives in a nurturing and supportive environment. Elderworks clients participate in a curriculum of healing arts, including art therapy programs, Tai Chi, and groups such as "Grow Your Own Self Garden" that teach and reinforce coping skills.

9th Annual Express Yourself Art Auction Draws Capacity Crowd

On April 27th, almost 200 community and business leaders, mental health professionals and advocates, artists and art collectors gathered at the Portland Club to participate in the 10th Annual Express Yourself Art Auction to benefit Community Counseling Center.

Express Yourself has become one of greater Portland's premiere fundraising events of the year. Funds raised at the auction directly support Community Counseling Center's programs and services.

The live auction featured art from such noted artists as Rachael Eastman, Douglas Burnor and John Bisignagno. Katherine Bradford of New York donated the signature piece of the event, "Arms 8 Women." Local merchants donated more than 50 items to the silent auction.

Special thanks to all the volunteers, artists, merchants, and corporate sponsors who helped make this event a success. Express Yourself 2007 was presented by CB Richard Ellis/ The Boulos Company and sponsored by The Olympia Companies, H.M. Payson & Co., Unum, Clearpoint, Macdonald Page and Co., Wright Express, Verrill Dana LLP, Jensen, Baird, Gardner & Henry, The Law Offices of Joe Bornstein & Coffee by Design.



Auction planning committee members Didi Washburn, Richard Bilodeau & Muffie Fernald



Attendees David & Bunny Polansky with Lisa Toner, Board Chair

2nd Annual Heroes With Heart Raises Funds, Awareness for TIP



Rick Urban, South Portland Fire Dept., Leslie Clark Brancato, President & CEO, Shannon Moss, Cathy Steele of the Junior League of Portland, Maine, Lisa Toner, Board Chair and South Portland Fire Chief Kevin Guimond

On February 16th, over 135 individuals gathered to raise awareness and funds for the Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) of Portland, Maine at the 2nd Annual Heroes with Heart Dinner and Dance.

Shannon Moss hosted the event, which recognized TIP volunteers and first responders from area police and fire departments and Maine Medical Center. Community Counseling Center also recognized the Junior League of Portland, Maine Inc. with the first ever "Heart of Gold Award" for their important role in co-founding and promoting TIP in our community.

Special thanks to event attendees, supporters and sponsors including TD Banknorth, Spectrum Medical Group, RBC Dain Rauscher, Preti Flaherty, AAA Energy Services Co., Central Maine Power, Coldwell Banker, Maine Cardiology Associates, Pape Chevrolet, Verrill Dana, LLP, Wendy's and Wright Express.

TIP is a group of specially trained citizen volunteers who provide emotional and practical support to victims of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy. For information about the next TIP training academy, please call Avery Jenkins at 207.874.1030 or email tip@commcc.org.



TIP volunteer Susan Scanlon with her husband, Patrick

Community Counseling Center Launches Recognition Fund

Community Counseling Center is pleased to offer a new way to honor special achievements and occasions and to remember loved ones.

By making a gift to Community Counseling Center's Recognition Fund, the person being recognized or the family of the person being remembered will receive a note card, featuring artwork from past Express Yourself Art Auctions, letting them know who sent the gift and the difference it will make in the lives of individuals and families in our community. Also, recognition gifts will be listed in an upcoming issue of Community Connections.



If you would like to make a gift to CCC's Recognition Fund, please note your honoree's name and address and your special message on the enclosed envelope and mail it to Community Counseling Center. If you have questions or would like more information about Community Counseling Center's Recognition Fund, please call 207.874.1030.

Community Counseling Center's Recognition Fund

In Memory of Christian Chenard
Elizabeth Allen
Joseph Blinick
Lisa Bulthuis
Sandra Caron
David Cohan
Ann Marie Lemire
Mark Mickeriz
Preble Street Resource Center
Mark Swann
Stephen & Catherine Tarpy
L.S. Yetter

In Honor of Lynn Shattuck
JoAnn Daigle
Lillian Libby
Susan & Patrick Scanlon

In Honor of Avery Jenkins' New Position
Lynn Weisz

In Honor of Leslie Clark Brancato
Karin Anderson

In Honor of Gracia Holt's Retirement
Chris & Nicole Holt

In Memory of Esther Margaret Lane
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In Memory of Lynn Moran
Bonnie Moran

In Memory of Marjorie Wolf
Eleanor & Carl Packer

In Memory of Elsie Freda
Richard Loiacono

In Memory of Joe Black
Eleanor & Carl Packer

On the Cutting Edge of Treating Trauma

CCC is committed to helping our clients overcome traumatic events and build coping skills and resilience. An example of our expertise in this area is our clinical team trained in the use of Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR), an innovative treatment technique that helps victims and witnesses of traumatic events overcome the anxiety that can be so debilitating after a tragedy.

"Think of an old record with a scratch," explained Scott Hutcherson, clinical supervisor of Outpatient Counseling Services. "Much like that song that keeps looping back to itself, the memory of a trauma can get 'stuck,' making it difficult to fully process the event." Survivors of life-threatening events often experience symptoms when the event is not resolved in the mind. Those symptoms subside when the event is finally resolved. EMDR is clinically proven to break the memory "loop" by activating both sides of the brain while thinking of the event using techniques that involve the body, like following a moving point with the eyes. EMDR

Meet our EMDR-trained clinicians. Front row: Deirdre Hogan, Sarah Kelsik, Kimberly Austin & Andrew Berglund. Back row: Scott Hutcherson, Mandy Lasselle, Kelly O'Rourke, Lynn Bentz-Fontaine & Glenn Selwood.

is incredibly effective in treating victims of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including veterans, survivors of automobile accidents, and victims of crime.



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Save the Date

September 27th: Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) Fall Training Academy
For citizens interested in becoming TIP volunteers. FMI call Avery Jenkins at 207.874.1030, ext. 509

October 11th: National Depression Screening Day Free, confidential depression screenings. FMI call 207.874.1030.

October 25th: Community Counseling Center's Annual Meeting CCC's annual meeting featuring General Libby from the Maine National Guard. This year's meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn By the Bay. FMI or to RSVP call 207.874.1030.