

the Bert Nash Community

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N E W S L E T T E R

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For almost 60 years, the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center has advanced mental wellness through comprehensive behavioral health services that respond to the evolving needs and changing environments of the Douglas County community.

Lawrence School Board Considers Local Option Budget

Lawrence's School Board of Governors has supported the use of local option budget (LOB) taxation as a means to continue and improve some school programs, including the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center's WRAP program (see page 2 for more information) for at-risk students. The Center's Board of Governors has supported the continuation of the program from Bert Nash coffers until long-term funding can be established at the community level. Look for the issue to appear on April ballots. The Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center asks you to vote for the LOB increase.



"What a child doesn't receive, he can seldom later give."

- P.D. JAMES

Center Hosts Annual Shontz Education Series



Nancy Shontz
EDUCATIONAL SERIES

In November 2000, Dr. Franklin Shontz generously donated the family home in honor of his wife Nancy's mental health work. It was called Nancy's House, and it expressed the spirit of Nancy's love for Lawrence as her home by providing family-style housing—a home—to individuals recovering from mental illness. In early 2005, significant

changes in clients' housing needs required reconsidering the best means by which to honor Nancy's memory. Dr. Shontz and members of the Center's executive team determined that education for the Center's staff and other professionals, as well as for the larger community, were pressing concerns and that supporting such activities was an appropriate way to continue to redirect the funds generated from the sale of Nancy's House.

Because Dr. Shontz believed strongly that the Nancy Shontz Educational Series should be started immediately, he made an additional generous donation to the fund in order to launch the series in 2005.

The purpose of the Nancy Shontz Educational Series is to promote educational excellence in the area of community mental health for our staff, colleagues and community at large with the goals of

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UPCOMING EVENTS

BNC Annual Meeting
April 29th

Business Awards
May 9th

Nash Dash
May 31st

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Supporting the Center

The Bert Nash Center’s Endowment Trust Fund supports crucial programs fully financed by public funds and client fees. A volunteer citizen Board of Trustees oversees the fund.

Every week, our staff works with hundreds of Douglas County individuals and families. Our endowment gives the Bert Nash Center staff the resources they need to serve our community.

For more information or to find out how you can contribute, please contact the Community Development Director at (785) 843-9192.

*“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.”*

- WINSTON CHURCHILL



Nancy Shontz Educational Series (Continued from page 1)

developing competence and emphasizing ongoing evidence-based training. The educational series honors and memorializes Nancy Shontz, whose commitment to community and education were vital to Lawrence, and, Frank Shontz whose vision for community mental health sustains our educational commitment.

This year, the educational series brought Jorge L. Pena, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist with the Family Therapy Institute of Miami. Dr. Pena gave a lecture on Brief

Strategic Family Therapy on Thursday, March 6th to 150 Center staff and community mental health professionals. On Friday, March 7th, Dr. Pena met in depth with Center staff to cover more applicable measures. His teaching experience includes universities and colleges in both the USA and abroad, including eight years as a faculty member at Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, in Salamanca, Spain. He has held clinical positions with both public and private agencies and currently conducts evaluations for juvenile courts in Florida.



Dr. Frank Shontz and Dr. Jorge Pena

In Focus: WRAP (Working to Recognize Alternative Possibilities)

WRAP has provided children with the tools needed to become successful adults since 1997. WRAP is a Bert Nash Center service, in cooperation with USD 497. It is designed to improve child development and learning, increase connectivity to a broader community, and provide resiliency, wellness and mental health support within one of children’s primary natural environments: their school.

WRAP is offered free of charge so that all students and their families can benefit from support.



WRAP helps the entire family and not just the student... WRAP is one of the most valuable and effective programs available”

- parent

“I realized how easy it was to talk to them”

- student

Whenever I talk to the WRAP workers, I thank them for being here.”

- teacher

The WRAP program has an overwhelmingly significant and positive impact on the climate in the school.”

- principal

Internet Addiction?

Have family and friends developed an obsession with the internet, spending hours at a time in front of a monitor? Maybe. Maybe not. According to an article in the Harvard Mental Health Newsletter, many behaviors are channeled through the internet – gambling, gaming, researching, talk and sex to name a few. The presence of other mental health disorders among potential internet addicts is the rule, not the exception. Its availability anywhere at any time in unlimited quantity compounds its influence. On the other hand, people who chat online may be making social connections or finding personal support that would otherwise



The average internet user spends approximately 14 hours online, per week. (JupiterResearch 2006).

be unavailable to them. What looks like wasting time may be learning and mastering skills. Some can be avoiding a high-risk behavior by substituting one that carries less risk. A comprehensive evaluation followed by treatment for underlying mental disorders may be indicated. “Addictive Behavior can be treated effectively with a combination of talk therapy and self help groups. Generally, individuals are looking to fill some lack in their life and appropriate treatment can help to identify and address those issues,” according to Marciana Vequist, Ph.D., Bert Nash Center Therapist.

Think Happy, Be Healthy

In a study published by the American Journal of Epidemiology, those who reported upbeat moods had lower levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that contributes to high blood pressure, abdominal obesity and decreased immune function. In the same study, women with chipper outlooks tested for lower blood levels of two proteins that indicate widespread inflammation. The results of both tests factored for age, weight, smoking and income. “Good physical health contributes to good mental health.” says Tom Bates, LCP Bert Nash Center, AOP Team Leader

Coping with Sibling Diagnosis

“I really didn’t know what was going on. All I know is my Mom and Dad were gone all the time and it was really hard,” said Paige. Often siblings get lost in the serious medical diagnosis of a sister or brother and their needs go unnoticed, says an article in Oncology News.

Teaching siblings to deal with anxiety and keeping them informed helps the child understand what their sibling and parents are going through. Without coping programs for siblings, Bert Nash experts say kids can become angry or withdrawn.

Middle-Aged Suicide on Rise

Suicide rates for middle aged Americans are at their highest in over two decades, rising 20 percent between 1999 and 2004, a new government report said. The report said roughly 32,000 suicides occur each year. There were 20 suicides in Douglas County in 2006. Female rates are highest in middle age, with rates for men peaking after retirement. “Other research is showing that happiness actually increases later in life if general physical health is maintained. So, there is also some good news about getting older”, said Eunice Ruttinger, LSCSW Bert Nash Center Director of Adult Services



Charlie Kuszmaul

WRAP Program Coordinator | 16 Years of Service

What is your favorite memory working at the Center?

Getting the original grant that started the WRAP program. It was the first grant writing I had been involved with and it seemed like quite a shot in the dark at the time. It provided for 2.5 positions and allowed me to work full time at Lawrence High School. It also provided for a full-time position at Free State High and a part-time at the Alternative High School.

What is most important to you about your work?

Knowing that what I am doing is having a significant positive impact on this community as a whole. What we are doing in the WRAP program will have lasting effects on the specific children we work with, but also will ripple out through our whole community for years to come.

Bert Nash Employee SPOTLIGHT

What else should we know about you? I live in the country in a barn converted into our home. I have very deep blue collar type roots and so I spend much of my time making, fixing and creating all manner of devices and objects. My favorite project to build right now is wooden boats. I do all types of outdoor activities such as sea kayaking, backpacking, canoeing, hiking and biking. I also plan to hike the Grand Canyon for a second time this Spring.

Youth Psychosis Up to 80% Predictable

A study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health says that a combination of risk factors can accurately predict psychotic illnesses 6% to 80% of the time before symptoms become full blown. The study listed the following factors;

- deteriorating social functioning,
- family history of psychosis combined with a recent decline in ability to function,
- increase in unusual thoughts,
- increase in suspicion and paranoia,
- past or current drug use.



“...such a critical window of opportunity for getting them the help they need”

- DR. ROBERT HEINSSEN

The research was conducted with youth having a mean age of 16. In this study, a total of 35 percent of participants with at least one risk factor developed a psychotic illness within the 30-month study timeframe. However, when researchers broke the data down further, they found that the youth who had two or three additional risk factors developed psychosis at a rate of 68 to 80 percent, depending on which risk factors were combined. A separate group of 134 healthy people with no known risk factors for psychosis served as a control group, for comparison. None of them developed a psychotic illness. Researchers also found that the youth who progressed to a psychotic disorder tended to do so relatively quickly. Twenty-two percent developed psychosis within the first year of follow-up, an additional 11 percent by the end of the second year, and 3 percent more by two-and-a-half years (adding up to the total percentage of people — 35 percent — who developed psychosis in this study).

“The message here is that once we identify people as being high risk, we have a very good chance of knowing whether or not they’re likely to develop a serious mental disorder like schizophrenia and that it will happen fairly quickly. That’s such a critical window of opportunity for getting them the help they need,” said Dr. Robert Heinssen of the NIMH.

Upcoming Events

04/29/08 Bert Nash Annual Meeting



Annual Meeting at the Eldridge Hotel: The Bert Nash Center will hold its Annual Meeting at the Eldridge Hotel on April 29th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Annual Reports will be available as well as a hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden will give the keynote address on Mental Health Reform in Kansas and accept the 2007 Pioneer Award, given to those who typify the progressive, caring spirit which led to the founding of the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center.

Former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden.

05/09/08 Business Award Luncheon

4th Annual Recognition Luncheon: The fourth annual Supported Employment Services Employment Recognition Luncheon will be held on Friday, May 9th from 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Bert Nash Center. Bert Nash staff will join with the community partner employers and employees to celebrate the successes of the SES program and to name the 2007 Outstanding Employer & Employee of the Year. Past nominees include The Home Depot, Maceli's, and Pizza Hut.



Michelle Mathias, winner of the 2006 SES Employee of the Year. (Pizza Hut)

05/31/08 8K Nash Dash & Fun Run



7th Annual Nash Dash: The seventh annual Nash Dash will take place May 31st on the Kansas River levee in North Lawrence. Avid runners, adults and children are invited to compete in the certified 8K Dash course and 1 mile fun run. The Nash Dash is a fundraiser for Working to Recognize Alternative Possibilities (WRAP), which places mental health professionals from the Bert Nash Center in schools in Baldwin City, Lawrence and Marion Springs Elementary school. Visit bertnash.org/nashdash to register.

2007 First and second place winners in the 9-12 year-old category pose with Big Jay.