

the Bert Nash Community

VOL. 3, ISSUE 1

N E W S L E T T E R

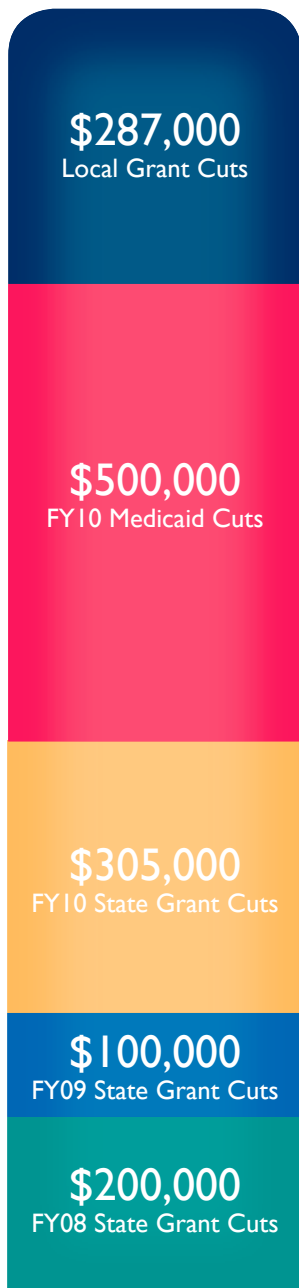
January 2010

200 MAINE STREET | LAWRENCE, KS 66044 | (785) 843-9192 | www.bertnash.org

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

State and Local Grant Cuts Double

(A Letter from our CEO)



Dear Friends,

I suppose the only way to start this letter is to admit that I was wrong (it does happen). Last summer the Governor said that mental health had been cut more than our share and 68 legislators had called him to say the same thing. As I mentioned in my letter in the July 2009 issue of this newsletter, I really thought that would give us some protection.

Not that we thought it would be easy. We still prepared for challenging times – and it's a darn good thing we did. State budget cuts announced by Governor Parkinson the last week of November will reduce 2010 revenue at Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center by \$785,000. The severity of budget cuts will mean that the level of service we can provide to the community will be deeply affected. Additionally, we have to cut staff, reduce salaries and reduce benefits to existing staff.

The new budget cuts represent a total of 1.4 million dollars in reduced state and local funding for Bert Nash since 2007. I thought the budget cuts we made in 2008 and 2009 were as extreme as we could go. Coupled with increased benefit costs, we now have an additional \$900,000 hole in next year's budget.

To say this is a challenging time for us would be an understatement. But as I've told the staff at Bert Nash, we may get knocked down but we will get back up again. 2010 marks our 60th anniversary and we're committed to working hard to provide as much as our reduced resources will allow for the next 60 years.

Since this news has reached the press and the public, we've received dozens of reactions that have solidified our commitment to our mission of advancing the mental health of the Douglas County community through comprehensive behavioral health services responsive to evolving needs and changing environments.

A few of the messages I've received:

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- *Bert Nash has changed my life and without your services, I would have been literally lost.*
- *If we continue to brush off mental illness, our problems will only get worse.*
- *Our citizens need more of what Bert Nash can do, not less!*

We're working on the local, state and national levels in an effort to expand our resources as a safety net. While it will take some time to pull off, we're working hard and we're committed to forging ahead. We hope you will join us. Please visit our website for more information about our programs and services and how you can help.

Thank You,

David E. Johnson, CEO

Bert Nash is faced with 1.4 million dollars in reduced state and local funding, since 2007.

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Bert Nash

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bertnash.org

OUT & ABOUT



The staff at the Center was recognized by the Shelter, Inc. as an "Unsung Hero" during the Festival of Trees auction on November 30, 2009. Janice Storey, Child and Family Services Director, and David Johnson, CEO, accepted the award on behalf of the Center. Pictured with David and Janice is Judy Culley, Executive Director of Shelter, Inc. "We greatly appreciate the work of Bert Nash. We are thrilled to be able to work with them to help families keep custody of their children through respite care. We have benefitted greatly from this collaborative relationship, and we feel very fortunate to be in a community where mental health and child welfare regularly work hand in hand to meet the needs of the children and families we serve," Culley said.



Carice Riemann, Child and Family Therapist, won the "Walktober" Challenge completing 89.5 miles. Center staff were encouraged to walk during the month of October. Over 40 Bert Nash participants logged 900 miles during the challenge.



"With all of the holiday parties and activities, we thought our donors and friends would appreciate the opportunity to enjoy time with their families, instead of having to attend another function. In this time of severe state cutbacks to our funding, the 'unevent' is designed to raise awareness of the increasing need for contributions," stated Cindy Hart, Development Director of Bert Nash. The invitation contained a card for individuals to enclose their ticket price as a donation to Bert Nash. Individuals could also donate online at bertnash.org. Prior to publication, the Unevent had already raised over \$13,000 for the Center. Thank you to everyone for "attending"!



The Center's community crisis response team, a part of the state-wide Kansas All Hazards Behavioral Health Team (KAHBH), provides mental health support for emergencies such as a fire or for events such as the HINI Flu clinics. Our team of mental health professionals from Douglas County works closely with our first responders, Douglas County Emergency Management and the Red Cross to provide support when needed 24 hours/7 days per week. Since October, the team has responded to three crisis events and two HINI clinics. Team members are designated by wearing special blue vests, as seen on KAHBH team member and Bert Nash COO Pat Roach Smith.

Bert Nash Member SPOTLIGHT

In each newsletter, we like to shine the spotlight on a member of our remarkable staff

Father's calling influences Little's path

Matthew Little did not expect to be working in the mental health field when he was in college six years ago at Wichita State. "My focus at the time was Exercise Science, but through some twists of fate, I ended up in mental health services, and I am glad I did," the 26-year-old stated. As a Case Manager at Bert Nash, Matthew leads a psychosocial group for school-age children and provides training to the Bert Nash staff on crisis intervention.

Before he joined Bert Nash, Matthew worked for COM-CARE, the community mental health provider in Sedgwick County. "I started as an office specialist when I was still in college. Within a year, I was promoted to a Case Manager position and that is how I got my start in mental health services." Matthew believes, however, that the seed was planted earlier in life.

As a result of his father's job as a United Methodist minister, Matthew grew up all over the state of Kansas. Now, both he and his brother, a student at KU, live in Lawrence. His parents live in Cimarron where his father is pastor at the United Methodist Church and his mother is the City Clerk. "I know my father has had a huge influence on my desire to help individuals. We have talked about how similar our work is – he provides guidance to individuals who come to him at church and I provide help to individuals with problems here at Bert Nash."

In his role as Case Manager, Matthew leads an after-school psychosocial group for children age six to eleven. The children are Bert Nash clients that are being treated for behavior problems or emotional disturbances. The children meet twice a week to develop better skills in following rules and interacting with others in school, at home and on the playground. "A big part of my job is working with the children to identify triggers and teach coping skills," Matthew stated. "It is rewarding to see kids learn in the group setting and then to hear from parents and teachers that those skills they learned have carried over to the rest of their life."

Matthew has been at Bert Nash since 2008. In his first year, he was part of the Community Support Services team, providing case management services to adults. In that role he worked with individuals diagnosed with a chronic mental illness and helped them learn to live independently in the community.

Along with his responsibilities with the children's group, Matthew teaches a non-violent crisis intervention class to Bert Nash employees. He has been certified for the training by the Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc. The training helps employees cope with individuals who are in crisis, and teaches them how to intervene to address behavior issues that may escalate. "The course provides valuable tools for staff to use in addressing problems that may occur," Matthew explained. According to the Crisis Prevention Institute, crisis intervention is a small segment of time in which staff members must intervene with another person to address behavior that may escalate into disruptive or even violent incidents. The goal of staff is to intervene in a way that provides for the care, welfare, safety and security of all who are involved.

"In the training, I give our employees tools on how to de-escalate individuals before they get to a potentially dangerous situation. We learn about different behavior levels, including anxiety, defensive behavior, acting out and tension reduction, and we learn how to verbally intervene." Matthew is also the director of our crisis response team, a specialized team of individuals who are trained in physical crisis intervention and advanced verbal intervention.

Working at Bert Nash is a big part of Matthew's life. His wife, Emily, is a Supported Employment Specialist and has worked at Bert Nash since November 2008. "My desire to help others is based on my upbringing. Both my mom and dad are amazing parents that I've watched give as much as they can to their community. That is why I want to give back."



Matthew Little
CASE MANAGER



The first-ever Mental Health Wellness Week, a grassroots public education campaign focused on promoting mental health wellness across the country, took place this past November. Each day, one wellness tip was shared through our Facebook page and online at bertnash.org in an effort to promote mental health wellness. Visit the events page on our website and click on the link to read the wellness tips.

IF SOMEONE IS HAVING A HEART ATTACK, YOU KNOW TO CALL 911.

What would you do?

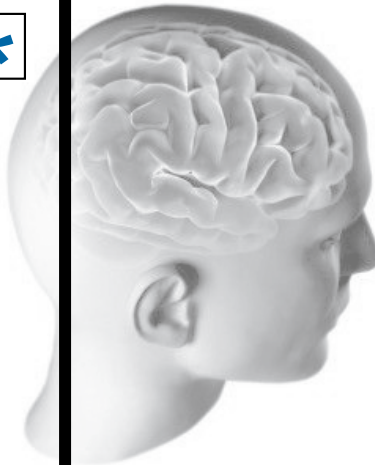
IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SITUATION

stigma *

REDUCE IT : REFUSE IT

mental illness is more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease

SOURCE: U.S. Surgeon General's Report



Do you ask the person if they're planning to kill themselves? Should you?

Do you pretend that you are seeing and hearing things, just like they are, to help calm them down?

Learn how to handle this and other mental health crisis situations by enrolling in a 12-hour MHFA certification class for only \$25.

now enrolling for

FEBRUARY

1, 8, 15, 22 (4-7pm)

MARCH

6, 7 (10-5, 1:30-6:30)

APRIL

5, 12, 19, 26 (4-7pm)

All sessions are held at the Bert Nash Center in the second floor Board Room. Classes cost \$25 per person, which covers 12-hour instruction, a manual, and snacks. To sign up for an MHFA class, please email talktobert@bertnash.org.



Nancy Shontz

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING: *Save the Date! March 4-5, 2010*

Bipolar Disorder in Children & Adolescents: Diagnosis & Treatment

featuring

Mary A. Fristad, PhD, ABPP

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY & PSYCHOLOGY, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, DIVISION OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Look for more details and the registration form online at bertnash.org later this month.

Newsletter going electronic in 2010

Direct to your inBox. To subscribe, email talktobert@bertnash.org.



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID