

# CENTER NOTES

Moving Lives Forward

Spring 2007

Vol. 24, No. 2



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## Support Mental Health In Your Community And Support The Center

Donating to a non-profit organization is an excellent way to help lower your taxes and in doing so support the important work of the Center. There are a variety of ways to donate to the Center, here are a few:

**Planned Giving:** Planned giving is a great way to leave a legacy of hope for others. Include the San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc. in your will, living trust, or other estate plan. If you would like more information about establishing your own Legacy of Hope, please call Marci Kass, Director of Development at 818-901-4830, ext. 3103.

**Albertson's Community Partners Program:** Use your Albertson's Preferred Savings Card and have up to four percent of your total purchases at all Albertson's and Sav-On/CVS stores directed to the Center at no cost to you. To enroll in the Community Partners Program, simply go to our web site at [www.centerdonations.org](http://www.centerdonations.org) to download a Community Partners application. If you do not yet have a Preferred Savings Card from Albertson's, the next time you checkout at one of the stores, simply ask for an application and they will process it in seconds. ■

## WIN A 2008 MAZDA MIATA CONVERTIBLE SPORTS CAR

Drawing will be held at the "Moving Lives Forward" Gala on Sunday, Sept. 16, 2007. All proceeds from this raffle will benefit the San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc.

Only 750 Tickets Will Be Sold!  
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 or \$20,000 in cash!

To purchase raffle tickets, simply log on to [www.centerevents.org](http://www.centerevents.org)



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### Notes from the Executive Director



Ian Hunter, Ph.D.

I am pleased to announce that the Center has been awarded two new Mental Health Services Act contracts. The first is for a Client-Run Center, and second is a program to provide Field Capable Clinical Services for Older Adults.

#### Client Run Center

The Client-Run Center offers consumers an additional step toward fully independent living in their communities. It is designed to offer options to consumers who no longer need the intensive services offered through the Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs or traditional adult outpatient services and who are ready to take increasing responsibility for their own wellness and recovery. The Client Run Center has a strong emphasis on consumer governance. Consumer managers are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Center; and, consumers design and staff all of the services/programs offered within the Client Run Center. Professional staff provide general oversight only and serve primarily in consultative roles vis-à-vis management. Of course, professional staff are always available

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## Save The Date: "Moving Lives Forward" Gala Coming in September

Circle September 16 on your calendar. The Second Annual "Moving Lives Forward" Awards Gala will be held Sunday evening, September 16 at the Sheraton Universal and will feature inspiring honorees, a silent auction and an exciting raffle.

The gala celebrates those in the community who have shown an extraordinary commitment to mental health issues and moved lives forward.



This year's special guest host and honoree will be Cynthia Fox from KLOS radio station. At this year's gala, the Center will hold the highly anticipated raffle for a 2008 Mazda Miata

convertible sports car! Raffle tickets are only \$100 each and there will be a maximum of 750 tickets sold. Tickets are already on sale! You can download a raffle ticket form from our web site [www.centerevents.org](http://www.centerevents.org). ■

## Decadence Event Is A Sweet Hit

*An afternoon of wine, exotic cars and chocolate gives attendees a taste of the sweet life.*

Wine and chocolate were flowing as attendees at the "Decadence" wine and chocolate event, held Sunday, May 20, strolled among an amazing collection of exotic and classic collectible automobiles.

Several fine wine companies were on hand to pour their finest for the patrons. A bewildering assortment of fruits and other goodies were available for dipping into the decadent chocolate fountain.



The event was held in "The Collection" at Galpin Motors in North Hills. "The Collection" houses a beautiful assortment of fine automobiles — the personal collection of Galpin Owner Bert Boeckmann. The showroom is not open to the general public and is viewed

by appointment only. The Boeckmann's were gracious enough to allow the Center to hold the event in such a beautiful and exclusive location

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**Executive Director's Notes cont.**

in the event of an urgent or crisis situation requiring their involvement.

Client-Run Centers promote both recovery and sustained wellness through an emphasis on pro-active behavior, preventative strategies, and self-responsibility. They incorporate the following program components: (1) self-help groups; (2) peer support services; (3) integrated substance abuse and mental health services/supports; (4) social and recreational activities; (5) healthy living services/health management activities; (6) medication support services; and (7) linkages to mental health services, vocational/employment services, housing services, and primary care health care services.

**Field Capable Clinical Services**

Field Capable Clinical Services (FCCS) for older adults, aged sixty (60+) years, are specialized clinical services delivered by professional and paraprofessional staff specifically trained to work in multi-disciplinary treatment teams. "Field Capable" refers to community locations that are accessible for older adults and services that are effective to ensure the achievement of positive outcomes. Locations might include consumer homes, senior/public housing complexes, senior centers, shelters or homeless service agencies, and primary care physicians' offices. One requirement for the proposed program is that, at a minimum, 60 percent of the services be provided in field-based or community settings. The rationale for this requirement is obvious — many older adults who are mentally-ill are homebound or are otherwise unable or unwilling to travel to the clinician's office for treatment. In addition, older adults will frequently experience a mental health crisis situation in the community which will require field-based interventions.

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## Center Unveils New Transitional Housing

### Sylvan Place Grand Opening

The Center recently opened the Sylvan Place Co-op, a master leased transitional living facility. It is funded through the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs and self-paying consumers. Sylvan Place, a former hotel, has been completely renovated and now offers 38 fully furnished rooms, with 58 beds. It provides long-term, transitional housing (18-24 months) to men



and women who are Transitional Aged Youth, Adult and Older Adult FSP consumers.

The complex offers a clean, comfortable, safe and secure residence. Handicap accessible rooms are available. All residents receive basic necessities including bed linens, towels, laundry facilities, central air and heating, free utilities and basic cable. The complex has two community rooms, large, modern restrooms, a full kitchen and outdoor patios. Daily buffet breakfasts and lunch snacks are also included.



The housing is available for eligible Center consumers who qualify to live in a communal independent living environment. All residents cooperate with other consumers in sharing and utilizing the facilities. They also receive mental health services through their existing service provider. The Center's Cornerstone program and Homeless Continuum of Services oversees the

operation and maintenance of the building. There is a residential manager and on-site maintenance staff.

While living at Sylvan Place, residents pay 30 percent of their income towards rent and work to save money toward permanent housing. Some consumers also pay for their rooms through their own sources and enjoy the privacy and ease of living in an affordable and supportive community.

The building is centrally located near the Van Nuys Administrative District and within walking distance to Center mental health programs. Local bus lines, municipal buildings, libraries, food markets, and numerous stores and shopping centers make the residence an ideal location for transportation, safety, and convenience.

Consumers who have moved into the building report that they finally have a "place to call home." They take incredible pride and ownership in their rooms. For example, residents have decorated rooms with curtains, computer desks, pictures and other personal effects, bedspreads and linens. They have truly made warm homes reflective of their individual lives and personalities. The Sylvan Place Co-op is a model for how private and non-profit interests can effectively come together to serve the needs of this special needs population. ■

supports high risk youth and their families. It transitions children out of institutionalized care and into a stable home environment. Turning Point will allow the boy to continue receiving mental health services from the therapist, while also receiving intensive case management services and family support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The therapist's ability to go out to the family home and recognize that the family's needs were greater than what one program could provide may very well serve to keep this child out of a psychiatric hospital or residential placement. Her compassion and clinical skills will hopefully help both the boy and his family to heal and to develop the skills they need to enjoy their lives together.

**Project Safe**

Project Safe is a program that, in partnership with The Help Group, provides services to help prevent pregnant and parenting teens and families from maltreating their high risk children ages 0-5 years. The program works with a 21 year old mother of two year old twin boys — very active two year old boys. When she was first referred to Project SAFE, she and her boys were renting a room in a two bedroom apartment. She did not know the last name of the woman who she was renting the room from, and knew nothing about the man who was also paying rent and sleeping on the floor of the living room. As a result, she and her sons spent much of their time in their small bedroom. She hated living like this, but she did not have a choice. Even though she worked full-time, she could not afford to move out.



The mother had limited parenting skills and had been referred to Project SAFE after the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) investigated suspected child abuse charges. She felt she had more pressing matters, however, to deal with than how to parent. In fact, when she and her In-Home Outreach Counselor developed service plan goals, she did not identify parenting skills as an area where she needed help.

This is not unusual for Project SAFE families. Meeting the basic necessities of living is such an overwhelming task that parenting, attachment, and enjoying one's children are often overlooked. Knowing this, the counselor worked with the mother to meet her most immediate needs. She helped the mother to establish a budget so that she could save for a place of her own. She linked the mother to a program where she could

do her laundry for free, access food/clothing pantries, and find free child care. With the money the mother was able to save, she and the boys were able to move into their own apartment. In addition, the mother's work with the counselor can now focus on the mother's relationship with her sons and on developing stronger parenting skills. She and the boys now spend time playing together, going to the park and enjoying each others' company. Although the mother still has work ahead of her, she recently smiled while watching her boys play during a recent session and stated, "They're happy now." ■

## Support The Center: Donate Useful Items

Supporting the Center can be so much more than just donating funds. Consider donating some of these useful items as well.

**Children**

Diapers, Baby supplies, Action figures, Books, Boomboxes/mini stereos, Toy cars, Discman portable CD players, Dolls, Movie gift certificates, Music gift certificates, Sports balls (basketball, football), Stuffed animals, Toddler toys, Watches

**Adolescents**

Boomboxes/mini stereo, Bulletin boards, Clothing store gift certificates, Costume jewelry, Journals/diaries, Make-up sets, Manicure and pedicure sets, Music gift certificates, Phone cards, Radio alarm clocks, Sports equipment (basketballs, etc.), Stuffed animals, Wrist watches

**School Supplies**

Art supplies, Backpacks (no red), Basketballs, Binders, Calculators, Color construction paper, Pencils and pens, Loose leaf paper, Markers & highlighters, Notebooks, Pocket dictionaries, Pocket thesauruses

**Adults**

Personal grooming kits, Cell Phones — new and used, Clothing (shirts, tube socks), Clothing store gift certificates, Slippers, Art supplies, Alarm clocks, Books, Radios/mini stereos, Phone cards, Gift cards

If you wish to donate a gift card that we may use to purchase gifts, please indicate your purchase preference.

Please send all donations to:  
**Development Department**  
**SFVCMHC, Inc.**  
**6931 Van Nuys Blvd., 3rd Floor**  
**Van Nuys, CA 91405**

**Executive Director's Notes cont.**

The specific types of field-based clinical services that will be offered through this program include: (1) outreach and engagement; (2) bio-psychosocial assessment; (3) individual and family therapy; (4) medication support; (5) crisis intervention; (6) specialized assessment and treatment interventions for co-occurring disorders (mental illness and substance abuse); (7) peer counseling, family education, and support; (8) linkage and case-management support, including medical, dental, vision, and other health care needs; and (9) consultation with gero-psychiatrists, geriatricians, gero-pharmacists, and neuro-psychologists. In addition, the program will utilize the services of several "Service Extenders" — consumers in recovery or family members of consumers who receive specialized training. These Service Extenders will provide a variety of supportive activities for consumers and their families and home visits to decrease social isolation; translate consumer cultural and attitudinal patterns for the clinical team and assist consumers in the development of community living skills and the utilization of community resources.

In reality, the Center has been providing field-based services for older adults in its Homebound program for more than 25 years and has developed a high level of expertise in this area. In combination with the existing Homebound program and the Center's new Full Service Partnership program, the Field Capable Services Program will be a major step toward completion of the Center's continuum of services for mentally ill older adults.

These two new services — the Client Run Center and FCCS — enable the Center to more effectively fill gaps in services so that Center consumers can seamlessly transition from one program to another and get the services they need to continue on their path to recovery. ■

**Moving Lives Forward**  
*Center Programs At Work*

**North Valley Youth and Family Center**

North Valley Youth and Family Center (NVYFC) is an outpatient treatment program. This historically means (both here at the Center and at mental health clinics in general) that consumers come to an office for a 50-minute therapy session once a week. Through survey data both from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and internally, we have become aware that this treatment modality does not work for all consumers. As such, the Center and specifically NVYFC approach our work a little differently. We recognize the benefits of "clinics without walls." In fact, among traditional outpatient centers, there is now a nationwide trend to increase in-home services. The Center has been at the forefront of this. We are truly meeting our consumers where they are, in their homes.



The benefit of providing services in this way has proven to offset the anxiety that clinicians who have never done in-home work may feel about going into consumers' homes. As an example, one therapist has been working with an 11 year-old boy for approximately 1 1/2 years. Recently, the therapist received a call from the boy's mother who was frantic. While during school that day, her son had written a poem expressing feelings about killing parents and pets, exposed himself to another student, and told a teacher that he had "dissected a dead puppy." Understandably, the mother was upset. She spoke of her fears for her son and her family, as well as her own anger about his behavior. She questioned if she

could maintain her son in her home or if she should start looking to have him placed in a residential facility. After assessing that the mother was too upset to drive into the office for an emergency session, the therapist drove out to the family's home.

The therapist met individually with the boy, his younger sister, his mother and then conducted a family session. During the family session, she observed as the boy sat quietly and appropriately participated while he was sitting next to the therapist. When she and the mother switched places (putting the mother and son on the same couch), the therapist

watched as the son's entire demeanor changed. He climbed over the back of the couch, kicked at his mother, and lost his ability to focus on the session. Seeing this dynamic allowed the therapist to explore the nature of the mother/son relationship and began to help the mother to process her own

sadness and feelings of her son's rejection. This knowledge allowed the therapist to work with the family to develop a safety plan that the mother could and would implement. This plan succeeded in preventing both the boy and his mother from continuing to escalate.

Although the boy continues to reside with his parents, the therapist recognized the need for more intensive services for the boy and his family and began to discuss this with the family. Given the numerous losses the boy has experienced in his short life and his strong attachment to the therapist, the family chose to seek additional services through the Turning Point (Wraparound) Program. Turning Point is a Center program that



**Consumers and Community Members Honored At Annual Consumer Advisory Council Luncheon**

The Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) held its annual awards luncheon on May 16 at the Sportsman's Lodge. The annual event celebrates the accomplishments of the Consumer Advisory Council over the past year. It also honors consumers and community partners who have helped embrace the recovery model and positively impacted our programs and its consumers.



*Ron Klein, Ph.D., District Chief for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health*

The theme this year was "Voices of Recovery." Leading this musical theme, the Center's Clubhouse band — Voices of Victory — performed at the luncheon and played their signature song — "Miracles." Consumer voices were also heard when the finalists from the CAC's consumer poetry contest read their poems. The winner was presented with \$50.



*Voices of Victory - the band comprised of Victory Clubhouse clients performs at the CAC Luncheon.*

Consumers then presented awards and honors to peers who have demonstrated exceptional growth and who have worked to enhance the lives of others with mental illness. In addition, awards were presented to members of the business

and mental health community who share the Center's commitment to help improve the lives of the consumers. Awardees included: Ron Klein, Ph.D., District Chief, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health; Melaine Hedgemon, Planned Parenthood; Armen Tatevossian, Market Pharmacy; and April Adams and Jose Gutierrez, Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles.

The CAC is dedicated to enhancing the recovery focus of the Center's programs advocating on behalf of mental health consumers. The council is comprised of consumer representatives from each adult program and meets monthly to address or review concerns and activities. In addition, they address program issues related to meeting consumer needs, improving care and enhancing facilities. The CAC continues to be instrumental in moving the San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc. into the forefront in many aspects of recovery and care. ■

**"Pathway Toward Recovery"**  
*First Place Poem from the Consumer Advisory Council Luncheon*



Laughing carefree  
Smiling to people  
Telling a good story  
Donating my time  
Doing volunteer work  
Writing new jokes  
Brought me hope.

Teaching my experiences  
Reaching out to the elderly  
Visiting a patient  
Doing volunteer work  
Made me responsible.

Having a nice conversation  
Receiving a free gift  
Fixing a delicious meal  
Traveling enthusiastically  
Looking for treasures  
Believing in me  
Gave me power.

Serving customers  
Offering one emotional support  
Forgiving a person  
Bringing a smile  
To a person's face  
Cheering up a crowd  
Solving problems  
Is developing many roles  
In me.

## Center Staff and Consumers Honored



Adrienne Sheff, Dir. of Adult Services (left); William Lemley, Award recipient (right)

Each year, the Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission honors outstanding members of the mental health community at a luncheon. This year, the Center is proud to announce that its own staff and consumers were recipients of awards and recognition. In addition, the Center received perhaps the most meaningful recognition when another program outside the Center was honored. Why would this be such an honor? Well, the staff honored at that program received their education and training at our Center.

Congratulations to William Lemley for being awarded Outstanding Consumer of the Year! William is a valuable leader who promotes recovery principles and encourages consumers to work toward greater autonomy and independence. He has been working at the Victory Clubhouse as a Mental Health Advocate for the past two years. He began his journey at the Center as a consumer of the Center's Cornerstone Homeless Drop-in Center. After obtaining housing and stability, William decided he wanted to give back and help others so he enrolled in the Victory Clubhouse Peer Advocate Training Program. Subsequently, he was hired as a Mental Health Advocate. William is an expert in the area of benefits, Medicare, housing and Section 8 vouchers. He is a passionate and articulate speaker who has made many presentations, including the recent California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH) Partnership

*continued on next page*

## Decadence Event Is A Sweet Success

*...continued from page 1*

— and what a location! Polished black granite floors and dramatic lighting helped to set off the beautiful works of automotive art. Among the outstanding cars of the "The Collection" were a Von Dutch customized 1953 Jaguar XK-140; a rare 1929 Rolls Royce Shooting Break; a 1937 Packard in pristine condition; Elvis' Lincoln Continental; several exotic Ford GTs; Grandpa Munster's "Dragula" racing car, featured in the hit TV show "The Munsters;" one-of-a-kind Shelby

Mustangs and a stable of Aston Martins.

Actor Adrian Zmed was the afternoon's special guest host. Zmed's acting career spans television, feature films and stand-up comedy. Zmed's early film role was in "Grease 2" and his memorable performance as Tom Hanks' best friend in "Bachelor Party." Perhaps Zmed's most famous role was as officer Vince Romano, opposite William Shatner in the hit TV series "T.J. Hooker." Most recently, Zmed headlined at the Tropicana in Atlantic City.

The wine was sumptuous; the cars were dazzling, but the food

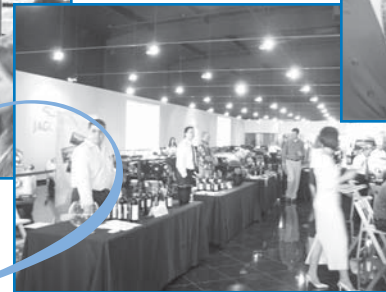
was amazing. Local bakeries and chocolatiers donated decadent chocolate delights. In addition to the donated goodies, Galpin Motors' own restaurant, The Horseless Carriage put the finishing touches on the delights. They provided a large chocolate fountain with an assortment of items to dip and delicious hot hors d'oeuvres.

Among the afternoon's festivities were a raffle, in which a HDTV, iPod and other high-tech gadgets were given away. One item that received a great deal of attention was the Mazda Miata on display

to kick off the Center's raffle for the upcoming "Moving Lives Forward" gala. The winner of the Mazda Miata will be chosen at the gala on September 16. To purchase raffle tickets for the Miata, go to [www.centerevents.org](http://www.centerevents.org) to download a raffle entry form.

The event was a resounding success. That success was due, in no small part, to the many donors and sponsors. On behalf of the Center, we would like to thank all of those who helped to make this event possible!

For more pictures and complete details of the event, go to [www.centerevents.org](http://www.centerevents.org). ■



# Decadence 2007

### Special Thanks to:

**Albertson's • The Boeckmann Family • Phil Englander • Giovanni Euceda • Jesus Mendez • Charlie Rubin • Joe Van De Veere • Rita Wilde • Adrien Zmed**

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Dr. Ian Hunter, Exec. Director of SFVCMHC, Inc.

conference. He is greatly valued by the staff and consumers with whom he works.

Congratulations Dr. Hunter for being a Personal Legacy Nominee and receiving a commendation! The commendation was for his dedicated service for more than 25 years to the affairs of the community and for the civic pride demonstrated by numerous contributions for the benefit of all of the citizens of Los Angeles County.

In addition, the Center is proud to acknowledge Caring Neighbors, a program of Lutheran Social Services for receiving the Outstanding Program Award and Roberta Burkenheim, a case manager with the program. Caring Neighbors provides support services to low income older adults, the physically disabled, or people diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness. When Roberta accepted the award, she acknowledged the Center's own Victory Clubhouse Peer Counselor Training Program for providing the training for their Peer Counselors. At the Victory Clubhouse, Peer Counselors go through a rigorous training to learn how to offer "light" counseling services to clients. The path they travel rivals the training required of some professional clinicians. Peer counselors provide a supportive relationship and a confidential atmosphere for clients to talk about concerns. This is proof positive that the work of the Center extends far beyond the boundaries of its own walls to not only help those in need in our community, but also empower those we serve to continue the work elsewhere. ■