## The Georgia Legislative Session and You

The 152nd General Assembly convened under the state capitol or as it’s commonly called, the Gold Dome, on January 14, 2013 for the first day of the Georgia Legislative Session. What is the General Assembly and how does it impact the lives of those who live with behavioral health concerns? The General Assembly is made up of two chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 236 elected officials who make up the two houses of Georgia’s General Assembly. There are 56 are senators and 180 representatives. The term of office for senators and representatives is two years. The Georgia Assembly or “The Legislature” after many processes and reviews proposes and forwards bills to the Governor to be codified as law in the Code of Georgia Annotated. The Governor may sign the bill or he may veto the bill; he also may do nothing and the bill will become law. If the Governor vetoes the bill two thirds of each chamber of the Legislature can override the veto and the bill will become law. Any new or amended bill signed by the Governor during this legislative session will become state law effective July 1, 2013 unless another date is specified. Mental Health Day at the Capitol gives opportunity for consumers of mental health services, family members of consumers, advocates, and mental health professionals to meet and speak directly with legislative members and their aides—the lawmakers—about laws and policies that affect the services we receive; and to some degree, the manner in which we are viewed and treated by all citizens of Georgia. This year, Mental Health Day at the Capitol was held on February 19th. The host of this year’s MH Day at the Capitol was the Behavioral Health Services Coalition. Eve Byrd of the Fuqua Center For Late Life Depression and Chair of the BHSC, thanked and welcomed everyone for attending. James Guffey, Director of the Peer Support, Wellness and Respite Center of Bartow County was the Chairperson for the Mental Health Day at the Capitol. Recovery and Respect were the key words for the day and all the speakers shared the triumph of recovery and respect over mental illness. From the Governor to the consumers who spoke, the message delivered was: “With proper support people with mental illness can and do recover.”

The 2013 Legislative Session is scheduled to run for 40 days and expected to end sometime in March. For a list of Senators and Representatives in your area and a downloadable consumer’s advocacy handbook, please use this link:

[http://hq-org2.democracyinaction.org/o/6118/getLocal.jsp](http://hq-org2.democracyinaction.org/o/6118/getLocal.jsp) by Georgians for a Healthy Future

### Upcoming Events

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<tr>
<td>Georgia Peer Support Institute</td>
<td>April 22 - 24, 2013</td>
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<td>St. Simon’s Island, GA</td>
<td>November 12 - 14, 2013</td>
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<td>WHAM Training for CPSs</td>
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<td>GMHCN Board Meetings</td>
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<td>Conference Call</td>
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<td>St. Simon’s Island, GA</td>
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<td>CPS Trainings</td>
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<td>Macon, GA</td>
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<td>Decatur, GA</td>
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<td>USPRA Annual Conference</td>
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<td>Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network</td>
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THE ART OF RECOVERY

By David Hawkins

Part of recovery is not to dwell on the past. The art of recovery is to focus on the future. With correct supports you can manage these symptoms to the best of your ability. Sometimes you will struggle, but you can make it. You must rely on yourself to say you have enough of the past and you are not going to let it harm you anymore. What is ahead of you is more positive and it will help you live a better life. What will make you feel good about yourself is knowing that people will be proud of you. You must think positive and it will always be positive.

LOOKING FOR PIPELINE SUBMISSIONS

Hello everyone. The Pipeline is seeking people in recovery to submit material to the Pipeline for use in its quarterly newsletter publication. The purpose of the Pipeline is to keep peers up to date with the very latest in recovery and wellness. The Pipeline also keeps peers apprised of upcoming events sponsored by the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN). The Pipeline is dedicated to supporting peers in moving forward with their recovery and wellness journeys. Please submit material via email to GMHPAC@gmhcn.org or by mail to the Pipeline, GMHCN, 246 Sycamore Street, Ste. 260, Decatur, GA 30030. Please do not submit material longer than one 8 1/2 X 11 page long. Please send submissions of articles, poetry, art or some other creative material that has benefited your recovery and you feel will support others too. Please make sure that along with your submission you send your contact information including mailing address, email, and daytime phone number. Submitted material cannot be returned and by submitting such material you are giving permission for its use in the Pipeline. If your submission is not used immediately, it is still possible it may be used in a future Pipeline.

In Memoriam

Donna Silva, CPS – December, 2012

You helped people and you will be missed.
“The highest form of charity is to help sustain a person before they become impoverished by offering a substantial gift in a dignified manner….by helping them find employment….so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others.”—Ancient Jewish Scholar

**GMHCN Job Announcements**

**Now Hiring!**

**DBHDD Consumer Satisfaction Survey Starts March 15, 2013**

Are you a friendly, honest and dependable person who is interested in earning some money this spring? GMHCN is looking for individuals who have direct lived experience with mental health and/or addictive disease services to serve as surveyors and team leaders in every area in the State.

If you are able to read and understand our annual survey questions, willing to disclose that you have received mental health or addictive disease services, able to follow directions and work as part of a team, and are comfortable approaching and relating to other consumers then you may be one of the people we seek.

The positions pay $60 for surveyors and $70 for team leaders for a full day (6 hours including travel time), plus $.50 per mile for drivers doing transportation (or reimbursement for public transportation).

Call our office at 404-687-9487 or 1-800-297-6146 for applications and information.

**Peer Mentor Positions Available**

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network is seeking self-identified consumers of behavioral health services to fill part-time positions in the state of Georgia as Peer Mentors. This is an excellent opportunity to assist consumers who are transitioning from DBHDD Regional Hospitals to living self-directed lives of hope and purpose in communities of their choice. Currently, we have three positions available in the following locations: Milledgeville, Columbus and Atlanta. Potential candidates will need to work flexible schedules, have reliable forms of personal transportation, work independently, and pass criminal background checks. The Peer Mentor position is part-time (20 hours/week) and pays $10.61/hour. Preference will be given to Certified Peer Specialists. If interested, please submit letters of interest and resumes to Gena Brock at GMHCN, 246 Sycamore Street, Suite 260, Decatur, GA 30030, or email to peermentoring@gmhcn.org, or fax to 404-687-0772. For further information please contact Gena Brock, CPS, Peer Mentoring Project Coordinator at 1-800-297-6146 or 404-723-6018.

**A Recovery Story**

I was diagnosed with diabetes at 12 1/2 years-old. I felt like my whole life was taken away, and I was depressed because I was diagnosed with diabetes. With diabetes I had to learn how to give myself insulin shots in order to live. A year later to the day, my father passed away with a massive heart attack—he was only 36 years-old. I have had many ups and downs in my life. I also deal with major depression. I have tried to commit suicide several times in my life. But I thank God that I’m here today. I stop and think if I would have succeeded, I would have hurt my family, friends, and myself deeply; and I wouldn’t get to see my nieces and nephews grow up. I lost my mother five years ago with a massive heart attack and she was 68 years-old. I realized God’s not done with me yet, and one day I will see my parents in heaven. You just have to remember you can do anything you want in life. If you just believe, put your faith and trust in Jesus. Seven months ago, I was really depressed and had to go to Greenleaf for my depression and suicidal thoughts. After I got out, I started an outpatient program with other peers. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I have been in recovery for seven months. I haven’t had a negative thought in seven months; it has been all positive thoughts. I am no longer a depressed, isolated person. I am happy, outgoing, and I feel fantastic! I am still in recovery, taking it one day at a time.

Submitted by Debbie Messimore
Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a two day training offered by the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN). It is a twelve hour course presented over a two day period. MHFA equips attendees with the knowledge to help persons with mental health needs connect to support and care. Those who take the course learn a 5-step action plan that encompasses the skills, resources, and knowledge to assist a person in crisis connect with appropriate peer, social, self-help, and professional supports.

The MHFA trainings presented by the GMHCN are unique because they are recovery based and presented by Certified Peer Specialists who are people in recovery from behavioral health diagnoses. The consumer delivered MHFA training has been embraced by the people we have trained and they report that having a person in recovery present the training is a huge benefit because of the lived experience our trainers bring to this work.

If you would like to host a MHFA training or learn more, please feel free to contact Lori Wade at 404-687-9487 or email her at lori@gmhcn.org

Coquina Cookies by Ms. Kimberly Barksdale

What you will need:
- 3 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of ground almonds
- 1 cup of mini chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees
2. In a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer, whip egg whites, cider vinegar, and salt until foamy. Add sugar a tablespoon at time until stiff peaks form. With a spoon or spatula, fold in the almonds and chips. Using a teaspoon, drop cookies onto an ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch.
4. When cool, cookies can be frosted with melted chocolate and pistachio nuts
5. Enjoy!

Note: Mixture may also be formed into shells before baking and used for fresh fruit or ice cream.