



Educate, Advocate, Lead

October 2018

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Newsletter contact:

**Consumer Empowerment Dept.
2000 Embarcadero, Ste. 400
Box 83, Attention: Adrienne
Oakland, CA 94606**

**Phone: (510) 639-1341
Fax: (510) 383-2756**

**Please visit us at
www.POCC.org**

MAKING WAVES

2018 POCC Latino Empowerment Event !!!



**Aaron Ortiz, Executive Director of La Familia, and
Irma Hernandez, staff of POCC Committee of Latinos**

On September 13th, we celebrated the fourth annual Latino Empowerment Event. Special thanks to ACBHCS Consumer Empowerment Manager, Khatera Aslami-Tamplen, POCC Manager, Mary Hogden, Mental Health Specialist, Jaleah Winn, and ACBHCS Ethnic Services Manager, Javarre Wilson, for all the support given to the POCC Latino Committee. Thanks also to our keynote speaker from La Familia, Executive Director, Aaron Ortiz, and to ACBHCS Medical Director, Dr. Aaron Chapman, to PEERS Associate Director, Dr. Lynn Rivas, and from Casa del Sol, Peer Specialist Enrique Lopez. All of them focused on Latino mental health, standing for us with messages of empowerment, with support, and with information services. They brought hope and somewhere to lean on. I am grateful too for the rest of the speakers, who shared recovery life histories. There were folklorica dance presentations, singers, and Zumba instructor, Paola Acosta, all of whom enriched the event. The Latino Committee felt very proud to bring together a proper program, since all the members are on the recovery journey and have been learning to work as a team with standards learned from the POCC, giving our best. We were proud to wear our ethnic clothing. We got positive comments from the community at the end of the event, and that's empowerment!

"Nothing about us without us."

Elisa Ramirez

Please see www.POCC.org for
more photos from this event.

Gordon Reed

Alameda County Mental Health Board's "2018 Consumer Advocate of the Year"

It is my honor to introduce and talk about Gordon J. Reed, who has been nominated and will receive this year's prestigious 2018 Mental Health Board Award. I have worked closely with Gordon on several projects involving people with mental health or substance use challenges. Gordon has an infectious smile and a contagious laugh that welcomes everyone who identifies with mental health challenges and those that don't admit they have mental health or substance use issues. Gordon is the first to start the conversation by providing comforting, enlightening, and non-judgmental words that empower an individual and give hope that things get better. He spreads the philosophy that "this too shall pass."

Gordon is currently the Chair of the Pool of Consumer Champions Steering Committee, that has oversight responsibilities for this 1500 member program embedded within Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services with the POCC motto "Educate, Advocate and Lead." Gordon was elected to this position by his peers, who see him as a leader in his community. I have seen Gordon reach out to individuals if he does not see them in the rooms where we meet. He does this because he cares about the welfare of those around him. Gordon meets people where they are, and everyone appreciates the depth of his concern and knows that his caring is authentic.

One way that Gordon stays in wellness is by giving back to others, twofold. It makes him feel better, and he is helping others at the same time. Gordon takes pride in connecting with his biological family, his POCC family, his church family, "Black Men Speak," the African American Empowerment Committee, Alameda County "Justice Involved" Mental Health, and the entire community. **Mary Hogden**



Gordon Reed and POCC Manager, Mary Hogden

Veto and Re-dedication

Governor Brown has vetoed the peer certification bill, SB 906, but the fight for peer certification in California will continue. Here is the Governor's veto message, which in my opinion, is not knowledgeable of the purpose or content of the bill:

SEP 29 2018

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 906 without my signature.

This bill requires the Department of Health Care Services to establish a certificate program for peer support specialists in Medi-Cal.

Currently, peer support specialists are used as providers in Medi-Cal without a state certificate. This bill imposes a costly new program which will permit some of these individuals to continue providing services but shut others out. I urge the stakeholders and the department to improve upon the existing framework while allowing all peer support specialists to continue to work.

Sincerely, [Governor Jerry Brown]

There are so many benefits of state certification for peer specialists. Peer certification:

- ◆ Defines the service of peer support.
- ◆ Provides a standardized scope of practice, values and ethics, and competencies
- ◆ Assures that practitioners receive standardized training and demonstrate competency.
- ◆ Provides quality control for the peer specialist practice.
- ◆ Allows for portability of Certification to other counties in the State.
- ◆ Grows the behavioral health workforce in the State. The behavioral health system has a critical workforce shortage; peer providers are ready and willing to work.
- ◆ Can be utilized as a basis for the ability to bill Medi-Cal for peer services.

Forty-eight states have adopted peer certification or are in the process of doing so. Numerous research studies support the efficacy and cost effectiveness of peer specialist services. Peer services over traditional services alone lead to less inpatient services, decreased symptoms, increased coping skills and life satisfaction, reduced overall ongoing need for mental health services, and decreased substance use.

The consumer and larger mental health stakeholder community will continue to pursue California state certification and, by all accounts, will have a better chance with a new Governor. Persistence is the key to success, and is essential to advocacy. Persistence and Hope. We will have peer certification in California!

By Sally Zinman, Executive Director, California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations ("CAMHPRO")





**Khiana Gilmore, granddaughter of
POCC member Virginia Hall**



Participants at the Day of Healing



POCC TAY, Trauma Transformed, Youth in Mind, and Alameda College host a Day of Healing

"I never thought I would be a part of that generation," said POCC Elders Committee member, Sonia Artiles, of 'Youth in Mind,' "but they are so cute and so open-minded." Sonia and Edgardo Artiles attended the September 22nd Day of Healing, held at Alameda College, and enjoyed dancing there. Sonia had a large butterfly painted on half her face. Attendees earned wellness points for having their face painted with their wellness animal, plant, or symbol. Youth in Mind artists also built a live mural, "Our Health Are Civil Rights" for everyone.

Participants were invited to engage with martial artists about the culture, practice, and skills of Afro-Brazilian martial arts, and to work with Bay Area based body-to-mind healers. A San Mateo based group brought healing in rhythm with drumming. There was traditional folkloric dancing, and restorative yoga for all bodies and levels. There were tastings of herbal teas and elixirs, and yummy food from Tacos El Precioso.

Several community leaders held space for a men's circle that included a conversation-based way of connecting, healing, and learning about what it's like to be incarcerated and rehabilitated. People learned about emotional freedom techniques ("EFT") for healing trauma, and about energy psychology from a Reiki practitioner and life coach. There was advanced level WRAP (Wellness, Recovery Action Plan) facilitation.

The positive effects of de-stressing activities were demonstrated with blood pressure readings before and after the activities. Parent-child connection was the goal of learning to affirm and uplift while reaching children through braiding. Other highlights were a photo booth and exploring culture through hip hop. Youth performances, stories of resilience, and keynote and plenary speakers inspired and encouraged community healing.

People expressed themselves at an open mic, and Commonwealth gift baskets were given out as wellness prizes.

This fantastic day was a highlight of the year, and is sure to be repeated by popular demand! **Adrienne DeSantis**

Annual POCC Barbeque

Our annual summer event stayed cool this year, thanks to an overcast start to the day. Early arrivers cleaned the benches and tables, affixed tablecloths, and began setting up snacks and spa water infused with fruit. Music was playing and the opening began at 11:00. Each POCC committee led an activity, including a walk through the park, personal expression collages, wellness bingo, Spanish bingo, yoga, a domino tournament, a POCC version of “Simon Says,” line dancing, group exercise, meditation, and card games.

We were glad to be joined by consumers from Gladman, Villa Fairmont, the Jay Mahler Recovery Center, and St. Mary’s! For the fourth consecutive year, Texas Roadhouse brought a grill and cooked chicken, pulled pork, vegetable kabobs, beans, rolls, and Caesar Salad. For their continual contribution of time and effort to the POCC barbeque, which we so appreciate, they will be honored with a plaque of appreciation later this year.

Adrianne DeSantis



Line dancing



POCC member Larry Vaughan



Members connect as Marilyn Sagna leads a life/art process.



Texas Roadhouse employees at 2018 POCC Barbeque

Berkeley Mental Health Program Makes Bay Area Journeys and Treks for Wellness and Recovery

By Carol Patterson and Jaleah Winn

Berkeley Mental Health Wellness and Recovery Program's consumers plan and participate on trips throughout the Bay Area. Participants explore trails, museums and local historic landmarks. Fun is encouraged on the journeys and peer support cultivated among the program participants. Carol Patterson, formerly the Berkeley Mental Health Consumer Liaison said, "[We] get to learn things about each other by talking with each other [on trips]." Moreover, the participants experience the local area with peers in a meaningful way.

So far the program has visit San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Berkeley Marina, various exhibits at University of California at Berkeley (UCB), and the UCB Campanile/Sather Clock Tower. There is usually no cost to participate but occasionally an admission fee may be required for specific sites.

Each month there is a calendar available to select from its list of program choices. The program welcomes consumers to participate. All that is required is an RSVP and in return, wellness and recovery.

For more about the program contact Crystal Lachman at (510) 981-7650 or clachman@cityofberkeley.info.



Berkeley Mental Health Wellness Recovery program field trip participants at University of California, Berkeley redwood grove. Pictured from left to right: Charles Goodwillie, Carol Patterson, Rachel Marzoline and George Walker.

Thank you, Carol Patterson

For the past 35 years, Carol has worked tirelessly at the local, state and national levels to improve the lives of persons with mental health issues. In August this year, she announced that she was transitioning from Berkeley Mental Health to new opportunities. On September 12th, there was a celebration of her work, at the Berkeley Mental Health Clinic. People who had worked with her at various places over the past 35 years came to honor her and thank her for all she has accomplished. It was amazing to hear the testimonies of what she has done.

Carol's work in the consumer movement started in 1984 in San Francisco, where she played a significant role in organizing the Consumer Speaks Conference. After the conference, she founded and staffed a consumer organization called "Spirit Menders."

In 1986, Carol earned her Master's degree in Social Work at San Francisco State.

From 1985 to 2002, she worked for the Independent Living Resource Center in San Francisco. During that period, she developed a peer counseling training. Carol was recognized as the most knowledgeable person in the state on peer counseling. During her time at ILRC, she was a plaintiff in the Riese vs. St. Mary's lawsuit, which gave involuntary patients in California the right to refuse medication. Also during that time, she served on the Board of Directors of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, which was the first statewide consumer organization in the country.

On the national level, from 1997 to 2002, she served as the West Coast coordinator of the National Empowerment Center, one of three consumer-run clearinghouses in the country. From 2002 to 2004, she was the Executive Director of Mental Health Consumer Concerns, a consumer-run organization based mainly in Contra Costa County, but having Patients' Rights contracts in Napa and Solano Counties as well.

In 2005, Carol began her job as the Consumer Liaison for the City of Berkeley, first via the PEERS agency, and beginning in 2007, as a City employee.

Besides all her job responsibilities helping consumers in Berkeley, she has been active with the Pool of Consumer Champions ("POCC"). She was one of the founders of the POCC, and was instrumental in starting the POCC Healing Trauma Committee in 2007, and supported trauma training for Alameda County. In 2009, she started the Berkley POCC Committee.

Carol has been a champion in promoting the supports that are most important for persons who use mental health services, including the recovery vision, trauma services, spirituality, Patients' Rights, housing, employment, and education. The question as yet unanswered, is "What will Carol apply herself to next?" For all that you've done for us in the past 35 years, thank you, Carol!

Jay Mahler & Adrienne DeSantis



Appreciation of the Alternatives Conference

I thank the Pool of Consumers Champions for the scholarship received, and having attended the Alternatives Conference in Washington, D.C. Speakers' messages were empowering. Some of the speakers were Doctors in Mental Health. Their knowledge, and the experiences of life and recovery, were very touching. There were also video documentary stories of recovery from people with psychosis and schizophrenia, having to accept their illness and seek the support needed for their recovery, including spirituality. I had the pleasure to know that D.C. is a clean town with several museums full of ancient history. I felt very excited and delighted, and desire to repeat this beautiful experience.

Kind regards,

Marina Sánchez

Agradezco a Pool of Consumer Champions por la beca recibida y haber asistido a la conferencia de Alternativas en Washington DC

Los mensajes de los Oradores fueron transmitidos en existencia, ellos son Doctores en Salud Mental y sus experiencias de vida y recuperación fueron de empoderamiento personal, mostraron video-documentales de historia de recuperación de personas con psicosis y esquizofrenia teniendo que aceptar su enfermedad, buscaron la ayuda necesaria para su recuperación incluyendo la espiritualidad en su recuperación. Tuve el gusto de conocer una ciudad limpia y varios museos llenos de historia ancestral, me siento muy emocionada y encantada con el deseo de repetir esta bella experiencia vivida.

Atentamente

Marina Sánchez



Washington D.C. office of Senator Kamala Harris



Washington D.C. office of Representative Barbara Lee

Representative Barbara Lee serves the 13th Congressional District:

Alameda
Albany
Berkeley
Emeryville
Oakland
Piedmont
San Leandro

Oakland office
1301 Clay Street, Ste. 1000-N
Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: (510) 763-0370
Fax: (510) 763-6538
M–F: 9 am – 5 pm

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OTHER SHARING GROWING COOPERATING BUILDING HEALING

