



August 2021

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MAKING WAVES

Message from ACBH Director Karyn L. Tribble, PsyD, LCSW

May 18, 2021: REMEMBERING MR. JAY MAHLER

It is with sincere regret that I take this moment to share the news of the passing of Mr. Jay Mahler. Sadly, our community lost a champion this past weekend. Mr. Mahler was raised in Hayward, California and lived his life supporting local Bay Area consumer and peer led initiatives. He fully shared his lived experience and the fact that he spent over a decade in mental health treatment and subsequently dedicated his life to being a true activist and pioneer in the consumer, survivor, and peer movement since 1972. Stories of Recovery: Jay Maher (<https://youtu.be/sw2ZTwhJYsl>)

For those who do not know, Mr. Mahler was the first Consumer Relations Manager in Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (ACBH) from 2006 until 2012, and founded the Pool of Consumer Champions (POCC) in 2006. He was appointed by the then Governor to the California Council on Mental Health from 1979 to 1985, and has been a member of the California State Mental Health Planning Council since 1990, where he served as Co-Chair. Mr. Mahler served on many local boards including the Alameda County Mental Health Advisory Board, the Fairmont Hospital Advisory Board, and the Eden District Mental Health Committee.

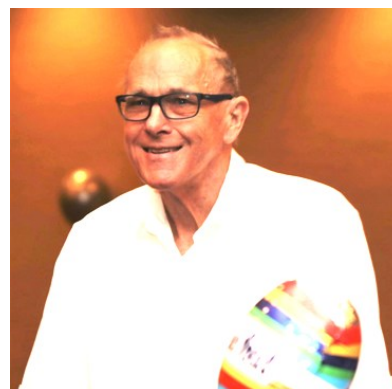
After his retirement from ACBH, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors approved a new building to be named after Mr. Mahler. Our very own POCC championed the call to name a new building after Mr. Mahler for his tireless commitment to the community. In 2015, the Jay Mahler Recovery Center in San Leandro, California opened and offered what Jay envisioned to be a benefit for people experiencing mental health crisis: a homelike, voluntary setting that promoted peer to peer support and mental health wellness services.

Mr. Mahler touched the lives of many people; and has helped many through his advocacy and we all have benefited from his faithful commitment to wellness, resiliency and recovery. For those who knew him, we are keeping Jay's committed wife, Susan; his family and friends in our thoughts during this difficult time. His message to keep hope alive and keep working to help transform our system to a wellness, resiliency and recovery focused system will continue to inspire us well into the future. For those who did not have the opportunity to personally meet him, his legacy lives on through our shared work and through the very building that was commissioned in his name.

On behalf of the Office of Consumer Empowerment and our Executive Team, we thank you all for taking the time to receive this update and commemorate a very important partner to our community ...

Thank you,

Karyn L. Tribble, PsyD, LCSW
ACBH Director



Jay Mahler, POCC Founder

POCC Gets a New Name

On November 20th, 2020, the Pool of Consumer Champions' Steering Committee voted to change its name to *Peers Organizing Community Change*. The acronym will remain "POCC."

A recognition that "consumer" is an outdated word sparked a decision by POCC leadership to update our name. The word "consumer" to identify a person with lived experience has largely been eliminated from use, not only statewide but throughout the country.

We know that change is always hard. The POCC Review subcommittee (a sub-committee of the Steering Committee) began the difficult conversation to change the name. Over a seven-month period of brainstorming ideas (including not changing the name), making recommendations, and taking those recommendations back and forth to the Steering Committee, the magic happened and the right name came along. The POCC felt that "Peers" was a more accurate description of people with lived experience, and is a term widely used today.

The POCC still has the same mission, vision and values. It is still a program dedicated to transforming the mental health system to a recovery model, providing input to the County behavioral health system, and providing training, outreach and engagement to the many individuals who are currently POCC members, as well as those who have not yet joined.

Mary Hogden
POCC Manager



Jaleah Winn Transitions to ACBHCS Guidance Clinic



Eight years ago, Jaleah Winn joined the ACBHCS Consumer Relations Team, and began staffing the POCC Membership Committee, Events Trainings & Support Committee, and later the Consumer Employment Advisory Taskforce. In June, Jaleah transitioned to the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Hall Guidance Clinic. She is grateful to have been hired to support Transition Age Youth and their families. "I will miss the Consumer Empowerment Department and the Pool of Consumer Champions. My connections and interactions with the staff and program participants will not be forgotten. I am thankful to have been able to contribute to the department and the organization," she said.

Jaleah continues as a POCC member, and reminds us of the quote, "We are made to reach for the stars. It is not enough to wish upon them. We must attain the dreams that appear far beyond our reach and as distant as the farthest star." In parting she affirmed, "I believe the Consumer Empowerment team and POCC will continue to transform the system and promote wellness, recovery and more." Her absence is felt by staff and the POCC. May she attain her dreams!

SB 803 Peer Support Specialist Certification Act of 2020



Khatera Aslami Tamplen, Manager
ACBH Office of Consumer Empowerment



Tanya McCullom, Program Specialist
ACBH Office of Family Empowerment

On behalf of the Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH) Offices of Consumer Empowerment and Family Empowerment we want to thank all the POCC members, peer support advocates, parent peer support advocates and community who are and have been engaging in the Peer and Parent Peer Support Specialist Certification Stakeholder meetings focused on implementing Senate Bill 803 authored by Senator Beall and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 25, 2020.

SB 803 required the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) by July 1, 2022 to establish statewide requirements for counties to use in developing certification programs for the certification of peer support specialists. This would authorize a county or an agency that represents a county to develop a peer support specialist certification program and certification fee schedule.

The ACBH Offices of Consumer Empowerment and Family Empowerment have been hosting the Alameda County Peer and Parent Peer Support Specialist Certification Stakeholder meetings, ensuring the POCC, peers, parents, caregivers, family members, providers and community have a voice in the areas that are important to them as pertains to peer support certification in Alameda County.

In these meetings, we have discussed the values of the peer specialist workforce and peer support field, the similarities and uniqueness's amongst peer and parent support specialists as well as amongst the specialty areas such as parent peer supporters, crisis peer supporters, transitional age youth peer supporters and much more. We also have been sharing updates and getting input from our community about DHCS' process, listening sessions, and draft information notices. Some of our successes have included engaging over 60 advocates and community members in our meetings, and securing commitment from our ACBH Director, Dr. Karyn Tribble, that Alameda County will opt-in to offer the benefit of peer support services within the mental health and substance use Medi-Cal systems, and participate as a county in certifying peer support and parent peer support specialists. We have also engaged in providing feedback to DHCS on the tasks to implement SB 803 through their listening sessions and letters written to DHCS with recommendations for changes in the implementation language to be more inclusive of parent peers working in the children's system of care.

The Peer and Parent Peer Support Specialist Certification Stakeholder meetings are still happening, and we invite you to join us. We meet virtually on the first Thursday of the month and will continue until DHCS has completed its implementation of SB 803. We know there is a lot of work to complete, and again thank all who have joined us on this journey. You are making a difference! We look forward to more discussions as a group, learning from each other and working towards building a system where all individuals in Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services have access to the benefits of peer and parent peer support services.

Our next virtual meeting is on August 5th from 2:00-3:30 pm. Please see the zoom information below for access.

Sincerely,
Khatera Aslami Tamplen and Tanya McCullom

<https://zoom.us/j/91357353388?pwd=d3VQYU9GSnZKNkUwOWN3UkVhMG5SUT09>

Meeting ID: 913 5735 3388 Passcode: 411477 Phone: 1-669-900-6833

POCC SAGA Committee lets its Light Shine at its Annual Celebration

Once again, it was time to come together and celebrate! On April 30, 2021, the POCC Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) Committee hosted its annual celebration to look back on where the committee has been and all that it has become. Due to the pandemic, there could not be a usual, in-person event, however, even through Zoom, the love, joy, fun, and appreciation could still be felt.

The celebration was hosted, as always, by the chair and founder of the SAGA Committee, Kozi Arrington, who presided over the festivities with charm, poise, grace, and humor while navigating the program with the challenges of Zoom. Opening remarks were by Dr. Karen Tribble, followed by a performance from Corinita and Josh, the dynamic musical duo of Illexotic, which had everyone singing along. This was just a taste of the talent that would be on display throughout the event. There was a stirring vocal performance by Steve Hayes, as well as an awesome poem written and recited by LaMar Mitchell. One of the many special guests, Kivi Neimi, shared a powerful music video from her band, Kittenhead, which entertained and inspired.

Peppered throughout the event were words of congratulations, encouragement, gratitude, love, and support for the SAGA Committee, the LGBTQ+ community at-large, and those in attendance, current SAGA members or otherwise. The appreciation was certainly felt as it flowed. The event concluded with a fun and informative game of LGBTQ+ Jeopardy. Participants learned about terminology and milestones within the recent history of the LGBTQ+ movement. The event closed with a beautiful poem written and recited by the founder of the SAGA Committee, Kozi Arrington, leaving us with a sense of peace and a reminder to enjoy all of the world around us.

Judging from the kudos and smiles on the attendees' faces, a good time was had by all. As a member of the SAGA Committee, I would like to extend thanks and gratitude to the chair, Kozi Arrington, all of the committee members, and those who helped to bring the event to fruition. It was a labor of love, and not easy to do with all of the challenges that Zoom may bring. However, throughout it all, the event was a joy and a complete success. **By Steve H.**



Let Your Light Shine!

Virginia Hall Remembered

Our beloved peer, Virginia Hall, passed away on 1-20-2021 of a heart condition. Virginia, may you rest in peace. We will not forget you. Thank you for your contributions as a friend and colleague. Virginia worked tirelessly on many issues including housing and human rights. I will always see her as a fearless warrior fighting for social justice and being a voice for those that didn't have her strength. Virginia was the Community Expert for the Public Policy & Education committee and she was a true advocate. Virginia was a member of the POCC Steering Committee and Executive Committee. She also was the Chairperson of the POCC Veterans Committee. Virginia has been in the POCC as long as I have, since 2008. She was connected to many of her POCC peers and community, and we offer our condolences to all of her friends and family.

Mary Hogden



Family, friends and peers gathered for a tree planting ceremony to honor the heavenly birthday of Virginia Hall on June 20, 2021, at Dover Street Park in Oakland, hosted by Causa Justa, Alma Blackwell, and Max Cadiji.

"We are blessed to be on the planet."

~ Virginia Hall

POCC AAEC partners for the 2021 ACBH Black History Month program

POCC African American Empowerment Committee (AAEC) is fulfilling the committee mission by engaging in Black History programs for ACBH. This is one annual event in which the committee partners with other agencies to celebrate Black heritage, accomplishments and leadership. AAEC staff, Paulette Franklin and Gordon Reed, were part of the planning of the program this year.

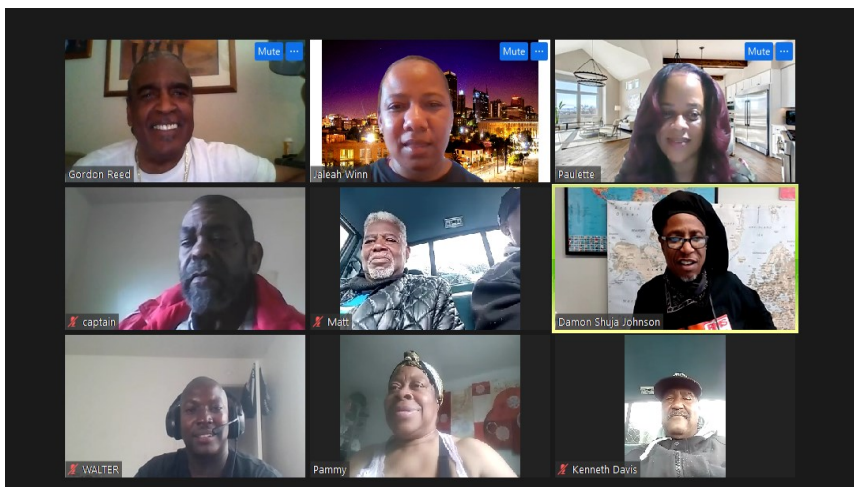
AAEC represented POCC and the Office of Consumer Empowerment in a Webinar presentation to over 500 individuals from various counties, programs and communities on February 26, 2021. Committee members described the leadership of peers in Alameda County in response to the pandemic, violence and current political issues. Paulette Franklin, Nguyen Weeks and I gave a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of AAEC. The presentation is a debut of a report that will be released later to highlight the steps AAEC and POCC has taken to deal with issues related to behavioral health.

AAEC and POCC have hosted three peer town hall meetings. Two of the meetings provided peers an opportunity to share insights and plans for system transformation. The third town hall was a voting campaign to inform and promote personal responsibility in the upcoming elections. Voting was an Action Plan item raised by peers in the initial town hall, and there are other topics that the committee is currently pursuing for system transformation.

The Black History Month Webinar was a transformative event. In addition to AAEC's presentation, it featured local leaders and community members. Elected official Greg Hodge set the tone with African drumming and pouring libations honoring ancestors. A photo montage of African American historic events and leaders was displayed accompanied by the National Negro Anthem. ACBH Ethnic Services Manager, Javarre Wilson, conveyed hopefulness in sharing a statement to eliminate the stigma of mental health services. The webinar opened with prayer by Jacqueline Thompson, Pastor to Allen Temple Church of Oakland. Ms. Barbara White, of City of Berkeley and the African American Steering Committee announced the development of an African American resource center in Berkeley.

Dr. Karyn Tribble spoke about the emotions involved in the Black History program and encouraged everyone to work toward liberty, wellness and recovery. Spoken-word artist Nyabingha Zianni shared her gift through the reciting of three poems. Each of her poetic expressions were tributes to Black history, resilience and hope. Raffles were held, and the prizes were Amazon gift cards for educational gifts. Energizing movement was facilitated by Karma Smart.

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, author and professor, was the keynote speaker for the event. His delivery cultivated critical thought about the COVID-19 impact among People of Color, access to healthcare, healthcare service delivery, and the connection of behavioral health and spirituality. Dr. Dyson addressed the urgency to eliminate community violence by supporting Leaders of Color. He promoted reconciliation as a part of the process for change. Dr. Dyson said after quoting Reinhold Niebuhr, author of the Serenity Prayer, "Hope is a shallow virtue. Hope grapples with darkness and rises up. Engage in Black History Month." **Jaleah Winn**



**POCC African American
Empowerment Committee**



Asian American POCC Town Hall

The POCC Asian American Committee collaborated with Alameda County Behavioral Health's Office of Consumer Empowerment, Office of Ethnic Services, Office of Family Empowerment, Crisis Services Division, Quality Management, TAY, Adult and Older Adult Systems of Care, Crisis Support Services of Alameda County, and the Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities, in a virtual town hall on April 20th this year, to address concerns of Asian American communities and supporters.

Dr. Tribble, ACBH Director, welcomed and addressed the participants with a personal message responding to events that brought us together. POCC Asian American Committee member Joshua Occasion led us through guided imagery created by committee member Taylor Wong, to center us.

ACBH's Michael Castilla, MPA, moderated an open mic., Voices of the Community, as POCC members and others of many ethnicities shared their experiences with visible emotion. A committee member of Asian and African American heritage educated us on the history of standing together that transcends any attempts to polarize our communities..

The convening of Asian American ACBH staff and allies in planning the Town Hall and other opportunities to voice our needs was, some felt, long overdue and well-received. Khatera Aslami, Manager of the Office of Consumer Empowerment, gave a recap of what we heard from those who had spoken. Joshua Ocasio and Corinita Reyes of Ilexotic performed "Tides," their song about change, resilience, and overcoming hard times.

The gathering left us all closer, grateful, feeling heard and supported.

Adrianne DeSantis





HHREC's We Move for Health Food Give-Away

Left to right:

Tim Robinson; Gordon Reed;

Talia Bennett,

Executive Director of HHREC;

Damon Shuja Johnson

We Move for Health—Food Give-Away

On May 12th, Health & Human Resource Education Center (“HHREC”) gave out free vegetables and fruit baskets with \$10.00 gift cards and more, at its center at 1905 San Pablo Avenue in Oakland. And on May 14th, HHREC held an event called “We Move for Health,” with a Fitness Fusion Class and food demo. The cooking class incorporated the veggies from the baskets.

“The veggie give-away brought healthy food to create a healthy environment. This is something that we need in our community. When we provide healthy foods in areas where we don’t have that, when people are in poverty and faced with COVID-19 and need help, an agency like HHREC stepping up and providing some nourishment for the community and its members makes all the difference. It is something dearly needed, and I was very thankful to partake of it and share a wonderful, blessed meal. I would like to thank them for what they did for me and my family. HHREC had healthy food for our community for wellness.”

Damon Shuja Johnson

Also in May, HHREC’s virtual “We Move for Health” event offered hip hop classes, African dance, Tai Chi, youth scavenger hunts, and more.



HEALTH & HUMAN RESOURCE
EDUCATION CENTER

Health Equity Conference

On June 10th and 11th, CIBHS (California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions) brought us the 2021 Health Equity Summit. Highlights were a memorial tribute to Janet King (of the Native American Health Center), including a slide show of her life presented by her daughter, and a keynote address by Stacey Abrams, voting rights activist who served in the Georgia House of Representatives for 10 years. Stacey was comfortably down-to-earth in speaking with us, even relating that she unapologetically enjoys watching a lot of tv. Although the event was virtual, there was music and dance, which has always been an enjoyable part of the former Cultural Competence Summit. Fiesta Mexicana, a Folclórico Colibrí performance, livened up our lunch hour!

There was something for everyone in the way of workshops, from African American Healing Modalities to a joint workshop by Berkeley psychologist Matthew Mock and Raquel Morris, LCSW, of Monterey County Behavioral Health, on narratives of Native Americans and Asian Americans. Professional development, support for youth and the LGBT community, and healing of collective, intergenerational and historical trauma were other conference topics. Jei Africa, PsyD, MSCP, CATC-V, Director of Behavioral Health & Recovery Services in Marin County, redefined what it means to be Asian American in the 21st century.

From Alameda County, Javarre Wilson, our Ethnic Services Manager, Dr. Karyn Tribble, Director of Behavioral Health Care Services, Colleen Chawla, Health Care Services Agency Director, and Board of Supervisor representative Keith Carson all spoke. From the reclaiming of ancestral FilipinX roots to suicide in multicultural communities, no stone was left unturned.

Adrienne DeSantis



Why yoga for Black men & boys?

Yoga is a proven form of self-love. Yoga offers Black men & boys a holistic, therapeutic form of healing from intergenerational and systemic marginalization. Yoga brings inner healing, centeredness, and self-awareness. It is a conduit for changing one's life from pain, despair, and self-hatred, to love of self and others, stress reduction, and happiness!

Black Men Speak, Create the Space, and Barbershop Yoga work together to bring mental wellness, stress reduction, and body-strengthening exercises to underserved communities of color. Through yoga, processes such as breath-work, meditation, group discussion, community building, and brotherhood, these organizations are changing the lives of many who have been outcast by society. **Damon Shuja Johnson**

On June 3rd, Black Men Speak began participating in the yoga (with Rondy, the instructor) which it hopes will continue in the park until the seasons change, and then find a place indoors to continue it.

