

Human Writes

STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Issue 9-10

Winter-Spring 2008

Welcome

Welcome to the combined winter-spring edition of Human Writes, a quarterly newsletter from the State Human Rights Committee (SHRC). The purpose of this newsletter is to share ideas, problems, solutions and other items of mutual interest among the Local Human Rights Committees and the SHRC. Please submit your thoughts and ideas to:

DMHMRSAS
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Richmond, VA 23218
SHRC.newsletter@co.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

SHRC Recruitment

Effective June 30th, 2008, there will be two vacancies on the State Human Rights Committee. Applications are attached. The membership subcommittee will select finalists who meet the current membership requirements. The types of vacancies can be for consumers, family members, healthcare providers, and professionals. At this time, we are particularly interested in consumer and family members. The balance of the committee includes diversity of age, background, race, gender, skills, experience, and area of the state represented. At this time we are especially interested in applicants from Northern Virginia and the Southwest (Roanoke south.) The SHRC hopes to have selected applicants attend the April 18th meeting at Western State Hospital. This will allow the applicants to meet the SHRC members and be interviewed by the subcommittee. After selection, the chosen applications will be submitted to the State Human Rights Board at their early May meeting. The Board's approval is necessary for the new members to join the SHRC as full voting members on July 1st. Thank you for your prompt responses. We are looking forward to meeting you.

FYI

**Implementation of the revised regulations
(Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights Of Individuals Receiving Services
from Providers Licensed, Funded or Operated by DMHRMSAS).**

Providers were to be operating in accordance with the new regulations by December 2007. Also, the regulations require that providers have certain policies. An example of such a requirement is from section 12 VAC 35-115-50 D.3 ... "Providers shall develop, carry out, -and regularly monitor policies and procedures that assure the protection of each individual's rights." To ensure that providers have updated policies in accordance with the regulations all providers were required to submit their revised policies and procedures to the OHR(Regional Advocate) by March 1, 2008. As of March 20 approximately 75% of providers have submitted their policies as required. The Department is following up with the remainder of providers to promote their compliance.

Web based reporting system

The Department is developing a web based system for the reporting of several required elements including allegations of abuse/neglect and human rights complaints. The first phase of the new system will be field tested in June 2008 and is planned to be rolled out statewide in the fall 2008. The goal of the new system is to increase the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of data.

Training

We hope to hold a Seminar in the spring of 2009. In the meantime each region will conduct regional training events for local committees in the fall of 2008

Reminder

Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The LHRCs and the SHRC are considered "public bodies" as defined in the Code of Virginia, section 2.2 - 3701. As such, the committees must adhere to the FOIA requirements for meetings and records. The following reminders about FOIA requirements should appear in the LHRC by-laws, as well.

Meetings:

- * include work sessions
- * can be in -person or by telephone or video
- * require three members or a quorum, if less than three

FOIA meeting requirements:

- * are open to the public unless subject to a specific provision for a closed meeting
- * 'public' includes the media
- * votes may not be secret or written ballot
- * votes may not be taken via telephone or other electronic means without specific statutory authority

- * notice of the date, time and location of the meeting must be posted at least 3 days prior to the meeting (exceptions for special or emergency meetings)
- * at least one copy of the agenda packet must be available for public inspection
- * minutes must include the date, time and location of the meeting, members present and absent, a summary of discussion, and a record of all votes taken

NOTE: draft minutes must be posted on the internet within 10 -days of the meeting and final approved minutes within 3 days of approval

Hail and Farewell

The first few months of 2008 have seen the retirement of 3 advocates who have a combined 80 years of advocacy. Sonia Smith, Human Rights Advocate at Catawba Hospital and the Roanoke Valley retired in January after 23 years. An interesting highlight about Sonia is that she grew up on the grounds of Catawba Hospital where her mother was the Director of Nursing for 27 years. Frances Rose, Human Rights Advocate at Central Virginia Training Center retired in late February after 30 years. Anne Stiles, Human Rights Advocate at Piedmont Geriatric Hospital and Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation is retiring in April after 27 years. The Office of Human Rights will miss all three of these dedicated, caring and skilled advocates.

Ms. Adrien Monti has accepted the position as advocate for Catawba Hospital and the Roanoke Valley. Ms. Monti begins on April 22. We are in the process of recruiting for the CVTC and Piedmont/VCBR positions.

Meet the Advocate

*Each edition of Human Writes will profile one of the Advocates.
This edition introduces Michael Curseen, Advocate of Region 3.*

Michael Curseen was born in Brooklyn, New York and is the younger of two sons born to the late Albert F. and Helen F. (Clarke) Curseen. He received his Bachelor's Degree in psychology in May 1974 from Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania and has been married to his wife, Roslyn, for 33 years. He is the proud father of Dr. Kimberly Angelia, Christian Michael and Cory Albert.

Michael began his employment with the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1978 With the Department of Corrections before coming to work at Southside Virginia Training Center where he was a Team Leader in the behavioral unit. Michael later worked as an Assistant Program Manager in the Habilitation Center of SVTC before accepting the position as Human Rights Program Supervisor in June of 1991 at Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia. His years of service with the Commonwealth total 28+ years. As a Human Rights Advocate, Michael's caseload includes forensic and civilly admitted patients at CSH as well as a community caseload which covers the Henrico Area Community Services Board and its 25 affiliated mental health providers. Michael also is responsible for monitoring the human rights activities of 28 providers who are affiliated with the Richmond

Tri-Cities Local Human Rights Committee. Michael enjoys providing technical assistance to the providers he works with and enjoys helping providers and peers problem solve.

Michael attends New Life Worship Center in Petersburg, Virginia and has served as an ordained elder since 2007. Michael LOVES ITALIAN FOOD!!!!

Meet the LHRC Honoree

Each edition will introduce an outstanding LHRC member.

This issue spotlights Ann Pascoe, Chairman of the NOVA Regional LHRC.

Ann Pascoe was appointed to the NOVA Regional LHRC in May of 2003. She became interested in joining while she was working at Loudoun County CSB the Department of Mental Health Center as a Discharge Planner. She attended a Human Rights training conducted by Advocate Mary Towle where she discussed the Human Rights Regulation changes. Ann had known and trusted Mary's name for years as they had worked in other MHMRSAS programs in Northern Virginia, She thought that the best way to understand the new regulations was to join an LHRC.

When Ann joined the NOVA Regional LHRC, there were five members (including her). By the end of her second year she became Chair. Under Ms. Pascoe's leadership, the Committee started to grow and develop. Ann ventured past her role as the chair and started to look at new and innovative ways for committee members to communicate with other LHRC members in the area.

From this came the idea of getting all of the Chairs of the various Northern Virginia LHRCs together to meet, collaborate and discuss and the NOVA Regional Partnership Group was formed. This undertaking has been no small task but thanks to Ms. Pascoe, it has been a huge success. In 2006 they developed a regional recruitment brochure and they are currently working on a "Welcome Packet" for new committee members.

Ann moved to VA from Buffalo NY to pursue her Masters of Social Work at VCU. She attended the satellite campus in Northern Virginia and graduated in 1998. Since then she has worked for various providers in Northern VA and recently become a full time SAHM (stay at home mom). Ms. Pascoe will be leaving the NOVA LHRC at the end of her 2nd term in June but has promised us that she will take on another committee in the early fall.

Advocating for a Sister Volunteer Organization

Do you want to make changes to the mental health delivery system in the community? Do you want to influence where funding goes for mental health services in the community? Or, get more involved in advocacy for people with mental health needs?

If so, consider joining Virginia's Mental Health Planning Council. The Council is seeking new members persons who are committed to ensuring that Virginia's mental health services are the best they can be.

The Mental Health Planning Council (MHPC) is a federally mandated body required by Public Law 192- 321, which requires that states develop and implement comprehensive mental health plans for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. The state plan implementation must be monitored and progress reported annually. This review is done by a broad-based, statewide Mental Health Planning Council. Virginia's Mental Health Planning Council represents consumer, family, and advocacy interests.

Membership on the MHPC is governed by federal guidelines and the Bylaws of the MHPC. Recruitment is an ongoing process. Although the MHPC may not have a vacancy in a particular category at a particular time, the Membership Committee will maintain a list of persons who have indicated interest by completing the application. The MHPC is committed to diversity and seeks to ensure that membership is representative of the Commonwealth. Minorities and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Currently, the MHPC has multiple vacancies for persons with serious mental illness and for family members of children and youth with serious emotional disturbance.

We invite potential members to submit their application (found at <http://www.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/MHPC/documents/MHPC-Membership-Application.pdf>) and to attend a meeting as our guest to see if it feels like a good match. The membership committee reviews all the applications and makes recommendations to the full council regarding appointment. Recommendations are focused on seeing that the MHPC maintains diversity and an appropriate ratio of consumers/family members to state employees and mental health providers.

The MHPC meets for 4 regular meetings a year, usually in Richmond; there is also an annual retreat in October. The proposed meeting dates for 2008 are: April 16, June 18, and December 3. The meetings are generally scheduled from 10:00 - 3:00. Although service on the MHPC is volunteer, travel costs are reimbursed. Much of the work is done in committee; each member is asked to participate on either the adult services or child and adolescent services committee. The committees generally meet between the regularly scheduled MHPC meetings, either in person or via telephone.

You can find further information on the MHPC website <http://www.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/MHPC/Overview.htm> and can view the state's Mental Health Block Grant application at <http://www.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/OMH-BlockGrant.htm>.

State Human Rights Committee Application for Membership

Today's Date:

Name:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Telephone #:

Current (or most recent) Employer:

Employer's Address:

Dates of Employment: From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Occupation/ profession (if retired, list previous occupation):

Educational Background:

Please check categories in which you are eligible or willing to serve:

Professional Family Member Consumer Healthcare Provider

Have you ever been employed by, or a member of the board of directors or a volunteer of a program licensed, operated or funded by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services?

Yes____ No____

If so, name of program (or programs):

Capacity in which you served:

Dates of service:

From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Have you been a member of a local human rights committee?

Yes____ No____

If so, which LHRC did you serve on?

Capacity in which you served:

Dates of service:

From ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

If so, please describe your experience on the local human rights committee.

Please describe your education, training or experience in the area of Mental Health, Mental Retardation or Substance Abuse services, if any.

What is your interest in serving on a State Human Rights Committee?

As a member of the State Human Rights Committee, what do you think will be your biggest challenge and will you be able to attend meetings regularly? Please note that the SHRC holds meetings 8 times per year and all meetings are on Friday. Also, the SHRC meets in locations throughout the state that results in members frequently staying overnight on the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Please use the space below to provide any additional information you think is relevant to your application.

Applicant's Signature:

Thank you for your interest in serving on the State Human Rights Committee