

# AWARE

Advocating Wellness And Recovery Everywhere



AWARE Editor, Gregg Pieples

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## After Graduation, Then What?

*The success of WMR groups at each of the pilot sites continues to be seen both in the outcome data and in the numbers of participants (now over 600). But mostly, the success can be seen with the desire of participants to continue building the relationships made in the groups. What many individuals are now grappling with is what to do next?*

*Although there are many ways to accomplish this goal, the CCOE has been supporting the idea of Alumni Groups. The idea of Alumni Groups developed from suggestions of WMR participants at several of the state-wide gatherings such as User's Groups & Monthly Coordinator's Conference Calls. Alumni Groups are for any individual involved in Wellness Management & Recovery. They allow WMR participants to continue to work on their wellness, but do it in a way that fits their individual needs. The agenda is theirs alone. The manner in which that agenda is accomplished is up to the participants.*

*The following article is the story of one such Alumni Group and how they chose to develop a group to fit their needs.*

*By: Wendy Frieder, WMR Facilitator, Lake County*

The idea of some type of alumni group in Lake County began with a kick-off planning meeting of interested WMR graduates and Coordinators from BRIDGES and Neighboring on June 3rd. Specific responsibilities such as facilitators, phone calls, flyers, refreshments, securing locations and speakers were chosen by the interested graduates.

Peer planning meetings were then held on June 21 and August 2nd. Brainstorming sessions led to the decision to meet twice monthly. The first Tuesday of each month would be informational and WMR curriculum-based meetings alternating with one month hosting a guest speaker and the next being peer led. The second meeting each month (held the third Saturday), would be geared toward fun and friendship building activities.

*...Continued on page 4*

## What is Mental Illness Awareness Week?

In 1990, the U.S. Congress established the first week of October as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" (MIAW) in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. "Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day" (BDAD) is held each year on the Thursday of MIAW.

MIAW and BDAD are NAMI's premiere public awareness and public education campaigns.

MIAW has become a tradition in NAMI. It presents an opportunity for all three levels of NAMI--national, state, and local--to work together in communities across the country to achieve the NAMI mission through outreach, education, and advocacy.

### Building Community, Taking Action

Real recovery from mental illness requires community action, understanding, and teamwork. Recovery is possible because of

improved science, better community supports, and reduced stigma. But significant barriers still exist. Services are at risk, insurance can be insufficient, and stigma, though less today than when MIAW was founded, is still prevalent.

**Contact National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) or by calling the Information Helpline @ 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)**

## WMR Sites

Bridgeway, Incorporated  
2202 Prame Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44109

BRIDGES  
2709 N. Ridge Rd.  
P.O. Box 2031  
Painesville, OH 44077

Center of Vocational Alternatives  
(COVA)  
3770 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43214

Choices  
320 E South St  
Akron, Ohio 44311

Day-Mont Behavioral Health Care,  
Inc.  
1520 Germantown Street  
Dayton, OH 45408

Gathering Hope House  
1173 North Ridge Road E  
Lorain, OH 44055

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral  
Health Services  
1322 E. McMillan Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45206

The Main Place, Inc.  
117 W. High St.  
Mt Vernon, OH 43055

Maumee Valley Guidance Center  
211 Biede Ave.  
Defiance, OH 43512

Neighboring  
5930 Heisley Road,  
Mentor, OH 44060

The Nord Center  
6140 South Broadway  
Lorain OH 44053

Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare  
930 S. Detroit Ave.  
Toledo, OH 43614

# Choosing Brilliant Health

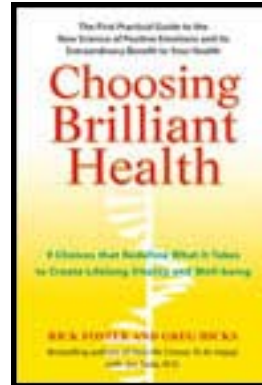
## A Book Review by David Granger

*Choosing Brilliant Health* by Rick Foster and Greg Hicks with Jen Seda M.D. authors of *How We Choose to Be Happy*. "The First Practical Guide to the New Science of Positive Emotions, and Its Extraordinary Benefit to Your Health" - Published by the Penguin Group 2008, the book has a total of 268 pages an extensive index, and a chapter by chapter extensive selection of research citations.

*Choosing Brilliant Health* is the result of work the authors started 13 years ago, when they began their study of happiness. Thousands of interviews and workshops later, the authors put together this book, which identifies nine important choices we can make that literally improve and enhance our health and well-being. This book identifies nine choices that create health enhancing positive emotions, rather than stress related negative emotions. The book details each of the nine choices with examples from case studies that show how these health enhancing choices can be applied in everyday life.

The first nine chapters of the book deal with each of the nine choices. There are three chapters that deal how these choices of apply when coping with illness, how they have played out in the lives of persons living more than a hundred years, and how these same choices can enhance the quality of life during terminal illness. Finally, there is a nine question questionnaire to help the reader identify their brilliant health quotient.

As the title suggests, this book is about choices, choices that



move us from merely suffering from the effects of our body's reactions, to being an active participant in the biochemical processes that accompany daily living. "The most important lesson in *Choosing Brilliant Health* is that you can learn to create positive emotions." Positive emotions such as hope, joy, trust, faith, love, and forgiveness create healthful internal biochemical states in the same way that negative emotions like anger, sadness, fear, and hate can create destructive biochemical reaction in our bodies. As a person who has been dealing with a major mental illness for over 30 years, I was intrigued by the notion that biochemistry is not just something that happens to us, that we can make choices that impact our biochemistry beyond just the choice to take medication. The entire approach of the book also constantly reminded me of my WMR (Wellness Management and Recovery) work, and the enhanced feeling of well being I had just because I was doing my WMR work.

The first choice healthy choice is *intention*. This choice is about consciously articulating who you are how you would like to react moment to moment and how you would to behave each day. The authors identified three families of intention, core intentions, which are those intentions that speak to your fundamental values and principles. What type of person you would like to be. Moment to moment intentions, which are advanced self-directions in terms of how you would like to react to stressful situations and daily intentions, which can become a daily morning practice for identifying the behaviors you would like to demonstrate each day.

The second healthy choice is *accountability*. Being accountable involves identifying, honestly, your part in any difficult situation you're confronting and overcoming the feeling that you are solely the victim of circumstances or the actions of others. Taking a proactive stance about what you can do to courageously confront and change the situation. "The ultimate power is in your hands. The past is done, so what can you do from this point on? Notice how you feel now: energize, empowered, capable?" Accountability is about being determined, disciplined and non-defensive.

The next choice is called *identification*, recognizing and remembering the things we've done to create pleasure in our lives.



A Wellness Management & Recovery Publication

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Phone: 614-225-0980 | Fax: 614-360-0399 | Email: [gpieples@wmrohio.org](mailto:gpieples@wmrohio.org)

## WMR Sites

The Phoenix Place  
4 Cecelia Dr  
Amelia, Ohio 45102

Southeast, Inc.  
16 W. Long St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

Summit Behavioral Healthcare  
1101 Summit Rd  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A  
WELLNESS MANAGEMENT AND  
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION  
SITE?

Applications available at  
our website at  
[wmrohio.org](http://wmrohio.org)

Or you can contact us at  
16 W Long St, Suite 340  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Office: 614-225-0980  
Fax: 614-360-0399

Studies have shown that many of the health benefits of doing something relaxing and re-creating can be achieved just by remembering those relaxing and re-creating activities. Part of this helpful practice is to remember and tell stories about pleasant things in our past and not dwelling on unpleasant, stressful situations. When remembering relaxing and re-creating pleasures, is important to push our imagination and try to imagine in the most vivid detail possible, those situations, that give us pleasure and which bring passion to our lives.

The fourth helpful choice is called *centrality*. This is has to do with prioritizing and making sure that we do some of the things that we've identified as giving us pleasure and that lends passion and meaning to our lives. This is the choice to do what we have to do to make sure that we incorporate some of those activities in our lives and end that we find the time and space to do them.

The fifth choice, *recasting*, is much like the reframing of cognitive behavioral psychology. When confronted with trauma or illness we are asked to change our reactions to those situations by going through the three step process of recasting. First allow yourself to feel your real emotions around the issue. Second, think about what it means to you to have this problem. And finally identify what opportunity your understandings of your new situations suggest. Again, what actions can you take to change the situation?

The sixth choice is called *options*; this has to do with being open to possibility. Certainly we are to have goals and to plan for the accomplishment of those goals. But we cannot afford to be inflexible when dealing with the future. This choice is about being open to positive outcomes that we may not aware of. The authors tell a story of

visiting an orphanage in Vietnam and asking the superintendent, could she identify which of the children would later thrive, and which would not. Without hesitating she answered. The children that would thrive are those that see possibilities. Options is about looking for and being open to possibilities.

Our seventh healthful choice is *appreciation*. This is about regularly taking the time to value and appreciate your life, your body and others. It is also about taking time to express your appreciation to others. The authors suggest, "To enjoy deep self appreciation. Get out a pad of paper and write down all the qualities you most love about yourself (and what you want others to value in you as well)." Consciously appreciating yourself and others can again bring about positive change in your internal biochemical environment by just choosing to do it.

The eighth choice is *giving*. We all know the positive feelings that we can derive from giving to others. In making the choice to give, we increase opportunities for those positive feelings and the positive effects of the hormones and neurotransmitters that are released in response to giving. Giving can allow us to feel effective and powerful. It is also important to participate in the creation of a giving and helpful environment by allowing others to give to us.

The final brilliant healthy choice is *truth*. Have you ever considered that a lie detector works by measuring the body's involuntarily stress responses when you are not being truthful? Besides, moving needles on a lie detector machine, these responses can negatively affect your body health and well-being. The practice of truth is about telling the truth to others and yourself about your weaknesses as well as your strengths. When the authors talk about truth, they mean either factual truth, that can

be confirmed or evaluations you make that you honestly believe yourself. "If you believe your own statements and intent to mislead no one, particularly yourself, you are speaking your personal truth. The practice of telling the truth, leads to the brilliant sensations of clarity, independence and well-being.

In summary, I'd like to offer the nine questions that make up the authors' BRILLIANT HEALTH QUOTIENT SURVEY.

For each of the questions rate yourself from 1 to 10 with 1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree.

1. I chose my thoughts and feelings and behaviors before each event of the day.
2. I don't think of myself as a victim or blame others.
3. I envision my passions frequently.
4. I frequently do the things I love to do.
5. I convert trauma and illness into learning and new opportunities.
6. I look for many possibilities as I go through life.
7. I frequently appreciate my life, my body, and I express appreciation to others.
8. I give to others and allow them to give to me.
9. I tell the truth to myself and others.

Whether it's the giving, truthfulness and appreciation that is part of being in a WMR group, or the intention and options that's inherent in working your wellness wheel, or the accountability that comes from learning to self directing your own care, so much of what's covered in Choosing Brilliant Health seems to fit with the work of Wellness Management and Recovery. So for those interested in another, perhaps more academic perspective on how this WMR stuff works, I think you'll find Choosing Brilliant Health a good read.

# After Graduation, Then What?

Continued from page 1

Flyers are peer produced and mailed



monthly by BRIDGES and Neighboring to all peer graduates. A week before each meeting, peer callers contact one another as a reminder of the upcoming meeting. That way, transportation can be set up, if needed.

Upon registering for the first time, each peer receives a membership card. This helps to form an immediate bond and contributes to a more “club-like” atmosphere; thus the name Alumni Club.

One of our most helpful ideas has been to have a suggestion box where index cards are passed out at each meeting and peers are asked for thoughts, topics and ideas. These ideas then become the format for the individual meetings.

Meetings held to date:

August 5th – Guest Speaker: Stephanie Rich. Topic: Personal Medicine

August 20th – Topic: Games People Play. Played “The Therapy Game” by Pressman

Sept 2nd – Peer Facilitators: Wendy F, Pamela W. Topic: Goals – Where are you now? (Use of the Wellness Wheel) plus \$1 Sale Fundraiser

Sept 20th – Topic: Bingo

Oct 7th – Guest Speaker: Rosanne Radgowski M.Ed. Topic: Communicating with your provider – Empowering yourself to empower them

Oct 18th – Topic: Join your friends in surfing the web – Basic Computer Skills. Peer Led: Linda C, Pamela W

Being newly formed, our WMR Alumni Club is continually working to improve and expand. For helpful thoughts and ideas, please e-mail Wendy Freider at [teachwendy@oh.rr.com](mailto:teachwendy@oh.rr.com)

Top picture: Ice Breaker at Lake County Alumni Club

Bottom: Alumni Club Meeting



## RED CROSS HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS AND ADULTS

With witches, goblins, and super-heroes descending on neighborhoods across America, the American Red Cross offers parents some safety tips to help prepare their children for a safe and enjoyable trick-or-treat holiday.

Halloween should be filled with surprise and enjoyment, and following some common sense practices can keep events safer and more fun.

- Walk, slither, and sneak on sidewalks, not in the street.
- Look both ways before crossing the street to check for cars, trucks, and low-flying brooms.
- Cross the street only at corners.
- Don't hide or cross the street between parked cars.
- Wear light-colored or reflective-type clothing so you are more visible. (And remember to put reflective tape on bikes, skateboards, and brooms, too!)
- Plan your route and share it with your family. If possible, have an adult go with you.
- Carry a flashlight to light your way.
- Keep away from open fires and candles. (Costumes can be extremely flammable.)
- Visit homes that have the porch light on.
- Accept your treats at the door and never go into a stranger's house.
- Use face paint rather than masks or things that will cover your eyes.
- Be cautious of animals and strangers.
- Have a grown-up inspect your treats before eating. And don't eat candy if the package is already opened. Small, hard pieces of candy are a choking hazard for young children.



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# Facilitator's Spotlight with Robert Moon, Lorain County

I met with Robert on a beautiful fall day at the Gathering Hope House in Lorain County. I enjoyed getting to know Robert as this was my first opportunity to sit down and talk with him. Robert shared that he has lived in Lorain County his entire life and that he comes from a large family. On his mother's side, he has three sisters and one brother. On his father's side, he has two brothers and two sisters. He said he was raised by his mother, a single parent. Robert shared that his older sister took on most of the caretaking in the home while his mother worked outside the home. He indicated that things were tough, but that they loved each other. His family continues to be a great support to him in his recovery.



Robert said that what he appreciated the most about WMR was what he learned about himself. Prior to WMR, he would judge himself based on his past experiences and behaviors. He has now learned that he is a good person and that he is a

good leader. When I asked Robert to describe the characteristics that make him a good leader he replied that he is tenacious, a people person, and always trying to help others. He also recognizes the importance of his role as a peer and that he shares his story in hope that others will learn from his experience. He said that with other persons in recovery, he knows what they are going through and he can give them good support and good feedback.

Robert also shared that being involved in WMR has helped to improve his relationships with persons who provide him services. The sessions on communication in the WMR curriculum are Robert's favorite to facilitate. He said that many times when people get into a doctor's office, they feel small. However, learning how to communicate with your doctor lets you tell the doctor what you want him or her to know. This allows you to get much more accomplished, according to Robert. WMR also helped Robert with his relationships with his family. He says he has great support and talks with his mother and brother every day.

Robert is not the only person who has changed as a result of participating in WMR. He said he has seen changes at The Nord Center also. Reportedly, consumers are asking to get into WMR groups and want to get more involved in their treatment and in the organization. He also indicated that the WMR facilitators' team has been meeting every other week which has allowed everyone to get to know each other. He said during the meetings, everyone gets to be themselves and is working toward the same goal – recovery and wellness at Nord.

Robert indicated that his Wellness Wheel has changed in the last few months and that he is trying to increase his employment and his social supports. His current goals are seeking employment, exercising, increasing the number of leisure activities, and playing sports. He also said that in the future he would like to start a family. What keeps Robert well? He said he has 5 nephews and 6 nieces and he is a role model for them. He also said that he is actively working his recovery and runs a Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) meeting once a week. This has helped him meet a lot of sober friends. He shared that he has been clean and sober for 2 years and 4 months. Additionally, Robert indicated that he stays strong mentally by being busy and talking with others.

Finally, I asked Robert what words of wisdom he had for others who might read this article. He said to first give WMR a shot. It might work and it might not, but you don't know if you don't try. He then added to be yourself in the group. Others will learn about you and you will learn a lot about you, but you will also learn about others. You can form relationships and build supports. Finally, he said that bad days happen and when he is having a bad day, he is reminded of a phrase, "let go and let God". He said he has realized that there are some things that he cannot do anything about and that during these times it is best to put his trust in God.

Robert is a peer facilitator with the Nord Center in Lorain County. Thank-you Robert for your ongoing commitment, dedication, and enthusiasm for WMR. We wouldn't be the same without you!

Submitted by: Kelly Wesp, Program Coordinator

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## Spotlighting Those Who Make a Difference for Mental Health

### *Nominations now being accepted for the 2009 Voice Awards*

Join with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to recognize entertainment industry and mental health consumers who give voice to people with mental health problems. The Voice Awards honor writers and producers who incorporate dignified, respectful, and accurate portrayals of people with mental illnesses into film and television productions. The awards also recognize consumer leaders who inspire us with their contributions toward promoting the social inclusion and recovery of people with mental health problems.

If you know of a film or TV show that was released after October 1, 2007, and depicts people with

mental health problems in a dignified, respectful, and accurate way, please nominate it for a 2009 Voice Award.

Similarly, if you know of mental health consumers who have led efforts to promote social inclusion, demonstrated that recovery is real and possible, and made a positive impact on their workplaces, communities, and/or schools, please nominate them for a 2009 Consumer Leadership Voice Award. Additional consideration will be given to nominees who have made a positive impact within special populations such as culturally diverse groups, young adults ages 18 to 24, and those who have worked to prevent suicide.

Nominations are open to anyone, are free, and there is no limit to the number an individual can submit.

Entertainment industry nominations will remain open until March 15, 2009.

Mental health consumer nominations will remain open until May 15, 2009.

The Voice Awards will be presented at a gala ceremony in Los Angeles on October 14, 2009. More details about the awards ceremony to follow!

*The Voice Awards are part of the Campaign for Mental Health Recovery, a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, and the Ad Council. The Campaign is working to reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by young adults and others with mental illnesses. Visit [www.whatadifference.org](http://www.whatadifference.org) to learn more.*

## “Mental Illness”

Mental Illness can make you sick.  
Taking your medicine will usually do  
the trick.  
Going to your doctor can help some  
too.  
Keeping active everyday helps the  
mind, this is true.  
Prayer is also worth a try,  
Sometimes a little meditation can get  
you by.

By: Cynthia Yurik

## Everyone Is Changing

Everyone is changing  
and I am just the same  
my horizon keeps fading  
and I got myself to blame

So let it all down on my  
shoulders  
and we will see about my  
past  
it's times when I'm feeling  
older  
and come to grips with my-

## self at last

From the hallows of fortune  
to the desolation of the street  
I'll never stop seeking my  
own  
true inner nature  
the unique person lying be-  
hind my eyes  
that I know myself to be

By Chris Frenzer

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

STEPHANIE RICH

A few weeks ago, while at Choices, a gentleman reintroduced himself to me. (He had heard me speak at the ARN Conference in Canton.) Of course I didn't remember, I can't remember what I ate for breakfast! He asked me a simple question: "Are you free?" I had to stop for a second. For some odd reason I didn't hold this man hostage with 'The world according to Steph'. I didn't talk about the state of the economy or my experience with living in a Nanny State. My response: "I feel free in myself." Apparently this was the correct answer because he smiled and stated, "I can tell."

This has been the highest compliment that anyone has ever given me. Naturally, I've awfulized it since. Thinking to myself...if people only knew.

Today, I rode my bike for the very first time since Phil's accident. (It will be one year on the 12th). Some of you know that my bike was left outside to rust all winter. A few weeks ago I made the commitment to dig it out of the weeds that had swallowed it. In the process, I planted a beautiful garden. But, then the bike, a bit cleaner, stood upright among pretty flowers and herbs. So, I put some air in the tires and away we went.

Pedaling brought back the exchange I had at Choices. I felt free with the wind blowing, the sun beating down, and the great music I downloaded on my iPod. But, I got disappointed after I realized that this would end eventually. I would have to go to the bathroom or something. Still, I continued riding up and down hills thinking, remembering, feeling.

My partner is a paraplegic. (He gets to be labeled too). I've come extremely close to losing him (more than once) this year. To be honest, he has come extremely close to losing me as well. What a journey it has been and continues to be. Zan chose to walk (swim, skip, fly... however the hell she feels like moving) on a different path. I know that our spirits are still connected, as they have always been. I think that there is a point in everyone's life when we finally meet ourselves. Whether we choose to hug ourselves or run away screaming is up to us. I chose to hug myself, today. Guess what, self hugged back. In that hug I felt strength and fortitude. Compassion and empathy. Gracious intelligence and wisdom. She is a peaceful warrior without boundaries. She is free.

I am free. Maybe the gentleman from Choices was able to meet myself before me. Maybe I was too busy running and screaming. Bike rides are spiritual when I'm able to acknowledge my many blessings. Then it came to me, those blessings ARE my freedom. Sometimes I have to dig deep to grab the weeds at their roots and spray an entire can of WD-40 to get the gears unlocked from the rust. All that work and I turn into a muddy, greasy, frazzled mess on the outside. On the inside, I created more space for flowers and gratitude. I'm not disappointed. This freedom is everlasting because it lives in my soul. Now, that we have been formerly introduced, I'm sure that I could even take her to the bathroom with me. (If need be.)



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The WMR Family continues to welcome new members across the state. Now over 600 individuals have participated in WMR Groups at our 17 implementation sites, including Nord Center (above) and Northcoast (right).

Facilitators continue to be groomed at the WMR Facilitator Workshops. Most recently completed at Southeast and at the Chalmers P. Wylie VA Outpatient Clinic (top middle and top right).



**A Mind In Transition**

From a passive state of mental havoc turned into a slow agonizing hell to illusionary vivid colors of evil faces damming me from within side out

From a whole world of a blitz screen of bereavement in a zenith point driving directly at my third eye to a desperate experience of being forsaken to Satan with suicide as the only way to survive

From a psyche exploded into infinite jagged fragmented pieces and impelled into a kaleidoscope of a hellish void to a stagnated radiation of mental nerve incapacitating me my perception of human existence destroyed

From a point of loss of freedom locked away to forever be in an asylum to a vegetable world of insanity imprisoned to a spaced out delirium

From an agony vermin aggression ripping through me as if I was inhuman and lost from the grace of God that I had once had known to a puppet on a string of psychodrama bottled up in a fighting mad war for self-control

From being broken and torn from reacting to every hallucination destroying and eating away at my soul to the desolation of the concrete heat of the streets with strange ominous images on a bending hell fire roll

From the off the counter waves of webs enmeshing me into a panic till exhausted and paralyzed to the very slow crawl of finally breaking through a distorted placid mirage of lucid illusions tormenting me in my eyes

From the red paranoid stream of my mental voice rampaging out of my head to the silent nature of peace and

tranquility from not thinking uncontrollably out loud instead

From being cast out a non-belonging man thrust-ed into a world of madness with no return to a survivor of every type of confusion and delusion conceivable branded into my psyche there forever burned

From the mayhem of a deranged kayos of my thoughts racing at the speed of light to the hard fought for mental clarity of my conscious in a new understanding of my world in my sight

From all of the traumas that spun violently down under me to my present state of recovery and remission to the calmer shores from my journey in discovering the power of love and new sacred secrets of my soul like a coveted passage for a mind in transition

By Chris Frenzer

# Marilyn's Makeover by Pam Buford, COVA

It has been a long road back for Marilyn Sandusky, who has been battling depression and other ailments for several years, since leaving behind her teaching profession. The intolerance of unemployment and depression led her to COVA, the Center Of Vocational Alternatives, a non-profit agency that assists person's with mental illness obtain meaningful work in the community.

I interviewed Marilyn, at the office where she is currently filling in a full-time temporary office position as an Office Manager, for the Director of Housing Programs, Community Housing Network, but she's looking forward to returning to her regular job at Birggsdale Apartments. She was overflowing with pride as she talked about her tenants, a Community Housing Network Residential Program, where she has many roles. Marilyn, who is a former teacher and recent graduate of COVA's Careers For the Future Computer Training Program, was hired on after an Internship through CTF at Briggsdale apts. Her Supervisors were so impressed with her people, computer and office skills that they offered her a Full-time position after graduation. Marilyn loves her job, assisting her Supervisor with traditional office assistant tasks, (i.e. developing Power Point presentations, etc.) but also fulfilling a Peer Role to the many residents at Briggsdale Apts. where she assists residents with resumes and encouraging them to study for the GED. Marilyn is even

organizing a Peer to Peer book club for residents, coming up this Fall.

Marilyn attributes her employment success and reintegration back into the work force to COVA and CTF, but she attributes her new sense of Self and Wellness to the Wellness Management and Recovery program at COVA.

Marilyn reports feeling stronger physically, her walking has improved and her overall sense of wellness has changed. She is much more organized and at peace with herself, managing her medications, and reclaiming areas in her life that were previously neglected (i.e. She keeps her medications on a spreadsheet so she knows when to re-order meds sooner before letting them run out). She credits WMR with helping her to become more sensitized about weight loss and now that she can participate in a medically supervised weight loss program, Marilyn has a goal of losing at least 150 lbs. She has already lost 40.6 lbs. and reports that her energy level has skyrocketed and her walking has significantly improved. She has made changes, modifying her diet and cooking habits to accommodate her weight loss program and her dog "Phydeax" is eating better snacks as well! She is organizing and cleaning her house, and she doesn't "bitch and yell" like she used too. She is more in control of her emotions which she attributes to COVA's Recovery and "WRAP" training, and WMR, all of which have

helped her to push through the tough times.

Marilyn acknowledges that she still has occasional lapses of Depression but she is much more able to manage and cope with things.

It is exciting to see and hear about all of the transformations that Marilyn is making, but I was curious about her plan for maintaining her momentum, and this is her recipe for staying the course:

- I set and maintain goals
- I go to church regularly
- I may attend women's groups
- I've gotten better at saying "No"
- When I feel myself getting stressed, I use my "WRAP" plan
- I've learned what sets me off which are usually financial issues, job stability and problems with my car, and that, used to bring on eating binges and stress; leading to depression
- I don't worry as much, I have a couple of friends I talk to, I talk to my pastor
- I deal with things as they come up ( i.e. pay bills on time)

After my interview with Marilyn, I could only think of a few things to say, "Go Marilyn", and "Keep doing what you're doing, you're going to make it!"

## Stay Tuned !

The upcoming January Newsletter will be featuring personal stories of how Wellness Management & Recovery Groups have supported individual's relationships.

If you are interested in contributing to this article, please contact

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Above: Bud receives his certificate at the Facilitator's Workshop at VA Medical Center in Columbus.

## From the Editor

WE WANT YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS !

Stories  
Pictures  
Poetry  
A Fun Exercise  
A Healthy Tip  
WMR Events in Your Area

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Thanks  
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