

THE HAPPENING

COMMUNITY
Living SERVICES
OAKLAND COUNTY DIVISION
CITIZENS' ADVISORY
COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

January/February 2015

ERIN OLDAUGH - WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR TOTE



Erin Oldaugh is an enthusiastic and energetic young lady that is living and enjoying her life to the fullest. From volunteering, to participating in bible studies and bowling, to having her own business, Erin is one very busy young lady and being busy is exactly what she likes.

Erin was born 11 weeks early and then she experienced a stroke at 3 days old. The stroke led to Hydrocephalus, which means she had water on her brain and she needed a shunt implanted to drain the water. By the time Erin was 2 years old, she had undergone 7 shunt surgeries. Throughout her childhood she also had numerous surgeries on her legs, for a total of 29 surgeries in her young life. Today Erin is doing well. She hasn't had any recent surgeries and despite her fragile childhood years, Erin hasn't let her health challenges slow her down.

Erin is driven to succeed and earn income as a productive adult in our society. Her sparkling personality and outgoing communication skills come in handy when she needs to promote her microenterprise, cleverly named "*Whatever Floats Your Totes.*" Erin, with the



assistance of her support assistant, makes gorgeous tote bags. Erin's support assistant helps her guide material through the sewing machine while Erin works the foot pedal with her hand. They also work together to coordinate fabrics, styles, and color combinations. Erin really enjoys working with her various sewing equipment, irons, threads, and beads to make her unique tote design. Erin has also created a recent partnership with a friend she knew from school, Nick Frye. Nick has an incredible talent for sketching birds, so Erin now uses his detailed hand



sketches on her totes. Erin says one of her favorite parts of owning her own business is her ability to talk with her customers when taking orders and making personal deliveries. Her Independent Supports Coordinator, Sarah Dolza, indicates, "Erin has never met a person she doesn't like."



When Erin isn't busy making and promoting her totes, she gives back to her community. She volunteers her time at the Forgotten Harvest in Holly, she also DJs and calls bingo for folks with disabilities at the Hart Center in Davisburg through the Kaleidoscope Foundation. Erin is an active member of the CLS/OC's Citizens' Advisory Committee. She likes to keep busy by having fun in her community, including bowling every other weekend, taking music lessons, making jewelry, participating in the Special Olympics, fishing, playing video games, and hanging out with her family and friends. Erin also finds great joy in attending her bible study group and loves sharing bible verses if someone needs a little pick me up.



Erin currently lives with her very supportive parents, however Erin would like to someday move out on her own and become even more independent. Erin is working on increasing her skills toward independence by hiring support assistants through a Self-Determination arrangement.

Erin loves to give people hope and let them know that whatever challenges they may face in their life, they are not standing alone in this world. Thank you Erin for sharing your inspirational story, we look forward to following the continued success of your *Whatever Floats Your Tote* business!

If any of our readers are interested in Erin's totes, you can contact her at 810-618-2927 or Connie Fiss at 248-931-8598.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Be the Brightness You Want the World to Be"

- Lisa Williams

ABLE ACT SIGNED BY PRESIDENT



On December 19, 2014, President Obama signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience, or ABLE Act. The bill will allow families who have a child with a disability to save for their long-term care through “529-style” savings accounts. The ABLE Act passed the Senate on December 16, 2014, with a final vote of 76-16, and it passed the House the previous week with a final vote of 404-17. This legislation has been called “...the broadest legislation to help [people with disabilities] in nearly a quarter-century.”

The ABLE Act aims to change the tax code to allow for tax advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities for certain expenses, like education, housing, and transportation. Similar to existing “Section 529” college savings plans, ABLE accounts would let individuals and families save for disability-related expenses to supplement, but not replace, benefits provided through Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, the beneficiary’s employment, and other sources.

An eligible individual is someone who becomes disabled before the age of 26 and (1) receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or SSI; or (2) files a disability certification under rules that the IRS will write. The ABLE account will only affect Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits if the ABLE account exceeds \$100,000. SSI benefits would be suspended but not terminated. In other words, the beneficiary of the account would not receive a check but would retain eligibility for the SSI program. The ABLE account will not impact your Medicaid eligibility. ABLE regulations may differ in each state. Although federal law applies uniformly to all states, individual states may regulate ABLE accounts differently. Under current law, states provide different tax benefits for college savings accounts, which are similar to ABLE accounts.

The Arc has released two fact sheets about ABLE accounts – a summary and a more in-depth look at the law to educate the disability community about how this law will work. These are the first of several materials on ABLE accounts that will be provided by the Arc. For the summary and in-depth look at the law, please visit <http://www.thearc.org/document.doc?id=5009>

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



On February 6, 2015, Gov. Rick Snyder signed an executive order announcing the merging of the state’s human services and community health departments. Lt.

Gov. Brian Calley announced the order merging the departments during a speech in Grand Rapids.

The merger plan was initially announced during the governor’s State of the State address in January, saying it would create a “river of opportunity” by making government more focused on people instead of programs.

The executive order also would establish a Michigan Children's Services Agency within the new Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The Autism Council and State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board also would fall under the new department. The Office of Services to the Aging will also be restructured as the Aging and Adult Services Agency.

Nick Lyon, the Director of DCH and interim director DHS will be the director of the new Health and Human Services Department.

The new departments are to be working as one 60 days from the filing date of the executive order which was February 9, 2015. For more information about the executive order visit the following link.

<http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-347072-,00.html>

THE PURPOSE OF ADVOCACY

By Renee Uitto

OCCMHA started an Advocacy Workgroup last fall. Participating in this group has helped me think about what advocacy really means and what steps need to be taken to be successful. One of the important things I have realized is that you should advocate for groups of people, not just for yourself.



Renee Uitto, CLS/OC
Citizens' Advisory
Committee Chairperson

Advocacy is supporting a cause or proposal and finding the best way to improve a situation. Currently, people are contacting their state legislators in the hopes to restore community mental health dollars for people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, and substance use disorders.

Advocacy is also protecting the rights of people or to change unfair or abusive treatment to fair, equal, and humane treatment. Advocacy can be focused on improving services, gaining eligibility for services, and enhancing service quality to better meet the needs of an individual. The main message behind the advocacy effort is "A valuable system for valuable people."

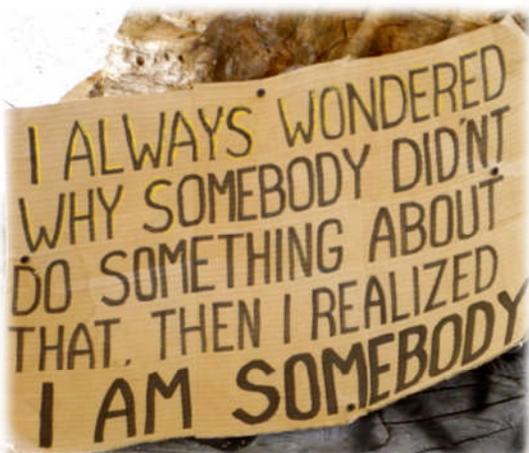
Here are some hints to advocate more effectively:

- **Know the facts:** It is important to have all the facts on both sides of any issue. This will be helpful when having conversations with government officials and the general public.
- **Use the facts:** The position you take should be grounded in facts. Create a one-page fact sheet to help you remember your message and get your points across.
- **Engage the Public:** Use social media, letters, e-mails, and phone calls to connect as many people as you can to join your cause. Numbers speak loud to elected officials!
- **Say thank you:** Everyone's time is valuable. Keep your meetings or conversations short and always say thank you at the end for everyone who helped you achieve your victory!

OCCMHA ADVOCACY MANUAL

Advocacy materials are now available on Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority's (OCCMHA) website, including links to advocacy resources, Oakland County budget information, and the Advocacy Manual.

Visit the OCCMHA website at www.occmha.org, select Advocacy Resources from the menu.



Community Mental Health: A Valuable System for Valued People.



Be an advocate for adequate funding of Michigan's Public Mental Health System.
Visit the Advocacy Center Online at:
www.occmha.org

BUDGET UPDATE

The primary funding source for Community Living Services-Oakland County Division is the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority's (OCCMHA). OCCMHA's Medicaid funding was reduced by \$14 million for Fiscal Year 2014, which continued into Fiscal Year 2015. This reduction was combined with an \$8 million General Fund (GF) decrease resulting from the impacts of Healthy Michigan, and a \$7 million increase in service demand. This all means that OCCMHA is faced with a \$29 million budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2015.

As noted in prior newsletters, CLS/OC had to implement a budget reduction plan totaling \$875,900 for this fiscal year. We began our reduction plan by seeking stakeholder input, reducing our internal workforce and administrative costs, and then implementing provider rate reductions focused on increased transparency, consistency, fairness and outcomes for those we serve.

There is much uncertainty about what the future holds for mental health funding state-wide. We remain highly involved in the Oakland County advocacy efforts related to mental health funding - with the key message being "A valuable system for valuable people". The goal of our county's advocacy effort is to promote collaboration between MDCH and the Pre-paid In-patient Health Plans (PIHPs) to develop budget strategies that ensure adequate Medicaid funding is available to Michigan's entire public mental health system.

As always, if anyone has input or ideas related to any potential areas of efficiency within CLS/OC or our network of providers, please send an email to clsoaklandnewsletter@gmail.com. We welcome input from any and all of our stakeholders.

Please continue to check the OCCMHA website for budget updates, www.occmha.org.

FERNDALE HOUSING COMMISSION OPENED SECTION 8 WAIT LIST



Section 8

The Ferndale Housing Commission opened a waiting list for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to a maximum of 5,000 individuals on Monday, January 26, 2015.

The Public Housing Program

waiting list for the 2-bedroom public housing apartments and 4-bedroom single family homes was also open at the same time. Interested applicants must apply online. The link to apply online can be located on the Ferndale Housing Commission's website at www.ferndalehousing.com

Eligible applicants cannot exceed the U.S Department of HUD's income limits for the Detroit Metro Area and must meet the suitability requirements for the individual programs. Applications will be selected for placement on the Section 8 Waiting List by utilizing a lottery system of a random drawing of 1,000 names. Applications will be placed on the waiting list in the

order they were selected. The waiting lists of the Public Housing Program will remain open until further notice. Applicants can check their status on the waiting lists after submitting an application on the Ferndale Housing Commission's website at www.ferndalehousing.com

For more information, or if a reasonable accommodation is needed for a person with a disability, please call 248-547-9500.

SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANDING FIELD OFFICE HOURS NATIONWIDE

 Social Security announced as a result of Congress' approval of the fiscal year 2015 budget, the agency will expand its hours nationwide and offices will be open to the public for an additional hour on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, effective

March 16, 2015. A field office that is usually open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. will remain open until 4:00 p.m. Offices will continue to close to the public at noon every Wednesday so employees have time to complete current work and reduce backlogs.

Many Social Security matters don't require a visit to a field office. You can apply for retirement, disability and Medicare benefits online at www.socialsecurity.gov or call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY: 1-800-325-0778) Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to talk with a representative.

KEEPING MY WELLNESS PLEDGE! By David DeWitt Taylor

Hello, Everyone, if you have been reading the newsletter you may remember that my family and friends sat me down in May and talked with me about my health and their concerns related to some of the decisions I had been making. After hearing what they had to say and seeing their concern for me, I decided to make a pledge to change my lifestyle to be healthier.

It has been a while since I have given an update. First, I would like to say "Happy New Year." My plan is for 2015 to be another year of healthy weight loss for everyone in need, including myself. My total weight loss is almost 40 pounds so far and I am very grateful for the support of my team. Your team can do the same for you and can help you celebrate fun things that come along in your life.

I am very proud of what I have accomplished and hope you can be too!



David's Secrets to Weight Loss:

- Watch your sugar and carbohydrates intake
- Watch your fat and salt intake
- Eat fiber and protein rich foods
- Drink lots of water, some diet soda is ok, but not too much
- Enjoy tons of fruit and veggies
- Exercise and increase your daily activity.
- Talk to your doctor about your goals



David makes himself salad kits for quick and easy access. One bag is lettuce and the other is chicken.

The OCCMHA Advocacy Workgroup invites you to a Parent Group Networking Continental Breakfast

Wednesday, February 25th

9 -11 am

At the Resource & Crisis Center

1200 N. Telegraph Road

Building 32E

Pontiac, MI 48341



What to Expect:

- Meet the OCCMHA Executive Director & CEO, Willie Brooks
- Meet people from parent groups in Oakland County
- Learn about different family support organizations
- Find out how you can join families statewide in advocating for the public mental health system

Who should Attend:

- Parent Advisory Committee Members
- Consumer Advisory Council Members
- Parents or family members of people receiving public mental health services

A light breakfast will be provided. Please RSVP by Wednesday, February 18th
To register, email register_me@occmha.org.

CHAMPIONS

for **ACHIEVEMENT CELEBRATION**



Applauding Ability, Advancement, and Advocacy

Join local business owners as they sell their goods and services in honor of **March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.**

It will be a showcase of entrepreneurial spirit including: talent, refreshments, and a photo booth. **March 13, 2015 1-3 p.m.**

**Troy Community Center
3179 Livernois, Troy, MI 48083**

When you arrive at the Community Center, look for the "Banquet Entrance."



Event Sponsors:



"Moving Forward" Peer Support Specialist/Peer Mentor Training

Training is now available for persons who are interested in learning more about the peer support specialist/peer mentor role. The "Moving Forward" Peer Support Specialist/Peer Mentor Training is a 17 hour educational program for individuals who are receiving services and want to support others in achieving their personal goals. It's open to people with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Training topics include Role of a Peer Support Specialist, Using Your Story as a Tool, Listening and Communication, Gentle Teaching and others. The training is one day a week for five weeks. You must attend all five training days. The training will be held at MORC, 1270 Doris Road in Auburn Hills.

Upcoming Sessions:

Spring Sessions: March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6. 9am-12:30pm

Fall Session: September 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12. 9am-12:30pm.

This training opportunity is sponsored by Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority. To register for the training go to www.occmha.org or contact Beth Jacobs at 248-858-1795

SPEECHCRAFT CLASS



Sign up for this great eight week class and increase your confidence speaking in front of a group or in public. Learn in a small group setting how to effectively "tell your story" and "wow" the audience with your speeches while having fun! The classes take place every Tuesday 1:30-3:30 pm at the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority office at 2111 Executive Hills Blvd. in Auburn Hills.

Upcoming Sessions:

➤ **March 24, 2015 – May 12, 2015.**

This class is open to persons receiving services, family members, CMH Staff, and provider staff. To register for a class please go to www.occmha.org or contact Beth Jacobs at 248-858-1795.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY SYSTEM SATISFACTION SURVEY



OCCMHA contracts with Michigan Consumer Evaluation Team (MCET) to conduct various surveys on their behalf. MCET will again be doing the annual Community System Satisfaction Survey. For the past several years OCCMHA has asked MCET to conduct face to face surveys for persons with developmental disabilities. This means MCET will be calling individuals to set an appointment to meet with them either in the community or at their home to conduct the survey. OCCMHA supplies MCET with a random sample of names from their database.



OCCMHA IS LOOKING FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority is recruiting for open positions on their Recipient Rights Advisory Committee. They are looking for persons who receive services and parents of minor or adult children with developmental disabilities. They meet the first Thursday of each month at 5:30-7:00 pm. Members are paid a \$25 stipend and mileage for each meeting attended. For an application and questions, please contact the OCCMHA Recipient Rights Office at 248-858-1202 or toll free at 877 RIGHTS- U (877- 744-4878).

They are also looking for someone who receives services to participant on the Consumer Strategic Planning Workgroup. They meet the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the OCCMHA Office in Auburn Hills. Workgroup members are paid a stipend and mileage for attending. If you are interested contact Vicki Suder at 248-858-1235.



EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Southfield Human Services Department in conjunction with the Southfield Parks & Recreation Department has become a distribution site for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

WHEN: Wednesday, March 11, 2015

WHERE: Southfield Human Services,
26080 Berg Road, Southfield
(Inside the Burgh Church)

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

Income eligible Oakland County residents can pick up a box of nonperishable food. Please contact Rhonda Terry at (248) 796-4542 to be added to the list.

SAVE THE DATE - WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES RALLY 2015



Clear May 6, 2015 on your calendar to attend this year's Walk a Mile in My Shoes Rally in Lansing.

THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Outdoorama will take place February 26th - March 1st at 46100 Grand River Ave. in Novi. Whether you like hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking, camping, or bird watching this is a show you would like to catch. Many attractions to check out including Big Buck Night and Entertaining Dog Acts. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$4 for children. For more information go to <http://showspan.com/OUT/home/venue-and-directions/>

The Royal Oak Nature Society presents "Owl Hoot" at Cummington Park on Friday, February 27th, 2015 beginning at 7:30 pm. Park and meet at Leafdale & Torquay. Walk with the group to the park and attempt to lure in or have screech & great horned owls answer tape recordings of their calls. There is no pre-registration or cost for Royal Oak Nature Society public speaker programs & nature walks. For more information on the Royal Oak Nature Society & their programs, call 248-246-3380 or check out www.romi.gov/nature.

Holistic Health and Wellness Expo is being held Saturday, March 7th at Royal Oak High School (1500 Lexington Blvd) from 10:00 - 3:00. The expo features health and wellness exhibits, a number of short seminars and/or speakers, and introductory exercise demonstrations that all promote a healthy lifestyle. Donation is \$2.00 at the door for adults/free for students. Everyone is welcomed!

THE NEXT CAC MEETING

Monday, April 27, 2015

2:00-4:00pm

at the CLS/OC office

642 E. Nine Mile

in Ferndale

Everyone is Welcome!



HAPPY NEW YEAR
2015



COMMUNITY
Living SERVICES

**Oakland County
Division**

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