

TABLE TALK

A MESSAGE OF HELP & HOPE



STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Spring 2005
Volume 13, Issue 1

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A Mother's Story*

"Hello? This is the elementary school principal. Richie's in the nurse's office and we'd like you to come get him. He had a seizure, but he's OK now."

"This is Audubon School. We're calling about Richie. He won't come into the building."

"... This is the counselor at Jefferson High school."

"... This is the Columbus Police Department."

"... I'm calling from the State Police post ..."

.....

They were golden, the twins at two - golden hair, golden smiles. They never cried. Always running, laughing. The butterfly worried Richie, "Do he bite?"

Together they rushed to discover the world - always together. There was never a time they weren't. They were "single-egg twins" with a flawed gene.

They lived in their own world. Nothing outside them mattered, not unmatched clothes, separate classrooms, or even separate schools. They brought friends home but played mostly with each other. Looking back I wonder if it was a bit excessive. Maybe their happy childish energy was too intense, too focused. Or maybe not.

.....

Late at night he'd come home from the school library. Pacing up and down my study he'd tell me about his evening.

At first I thought he was joking: "Mom, I shouldn't tell you this. If they find out they'll come after us both. There's a plot against the government. They leave coded notes for each other in library books and they tell which book the next part is in. Tomorrow night I'll find the last part and report it."

But he wasn't kidding, so I played along: "Are you sure?"

Continued on page 2

Mission Statement:

The mission of Association for Children's Mental Health is to promote the development of a system of care for the families of children with emotional, behavioral or mental health disorders through community education and awareness, family support, involvement and advocacy.

A Mother's Story... from page 1

"Oh, yes. All this time you thought I was studying, but I'm actually working for the CIA. They like to use high school kids because no one will suspect us."

My heart sank. He was living in a world where not even his twin could join him. I had seen this before: paranoia and schizophrenia.

Finally he decided he was too close and had to go into hiding.

"Where will you go?"

"I can't tell you, and I won't be able to write, but I'll be watching you. And so will they."

.....

High school must have been a nightmare for Richie. He certainly made it one for the rest of us. His sisters and brothers were embarrassed and outraged at being lumped with him by outsiders, but they sympathized too in a way. Strangely he was a hard worker and had a pathetic need to be liked. He saved his money and as soon as there was enough some foxy kid would talk him out of it. Hurt, he'd start over and do it all again.

I learned who his dealer was. When he came to the house one day I confronted him with my knowledge. He was destroying my son and I promised to kill him if ever I caught him in the act. I don't know how I would have done it but I believe I would have. It may have been harder than watching a child die of an illness or be crippled in an accident. It was coldly intentional, a simple act of making a sale. It was all about money to a dealer.

.....

A year later he was back. He worked in a restaurant and roomed with another high school drop-out who had similar problems. One day his room-mate's mother called to say she had found THE treatment center. It was expensive and I searched without success for funding. When his friend returned "cured" after a few weeks I redoubled my efforts. A few days later Richie found the body.

The death affected him deeply and there was another call: "We have Richie in jail. After he sleeps it off we'll clean him up and ask the judge for a 30-day psychiatric evaluation." Good news! Community mental health had failed us and this might be the answer.

He was jaunty as he walked into court, waving to me cheerfully. He was barefoot and shirtless, pants tied with a rope at the waist... Couldn't they have found him a shirt?

.....

The diagnosis I knew already: paranoid schizophrenia with auditory hallucinations. Hospital conversations were 3-way - Richie, his voices and me. The cause of his illness? A "schizophrenogenic" home environment. In other words, my fault. Today we know better, but for me that was yet another blow. They found him a place in a treatment center on the other side of the state. With high hopes I left him there one day and drove home alone. The next morning he was sleeping in my car.

.....

Later he hitch-hiked westward and settled in California. He worked and lived in a restaurant on the coast, wrote letters home and even sent pictures. Then the letters stopped. For ten years he'd start a new life and write a few letters then disappear for a year, then we'd hear again from a different state. Finally the letters stopped for good. I always scan the faces in TV documentaries about the homeless but I'm not sure I would recognize him any more.

.....

This story is not just about Richie. It's about a family. His parents and siblings shared his troubled life which left lasting marks on us all. As parents we tried our best to get help for him, often shortchanging the other children. They grew up embarrassed and sometimes afraid of him. As they start their own families they wonder which of them may carry that gene and who will pass it to their own children. There is no way to know if or how it will appear again.

His twin is the person Richie might have become: a university professor, devoted husband and father, and a tireless community volunteer. What made the difference in these single-egg twins? Theoretically they were the same person. There is so much we don't know. Will medical science ever find the answers and bring an end to stories like ours? Meanwhile we must provide information and support to the many families like ours who struggle daily with the unanswerable questions and painful and costly realities.

**This article was written for ACMH by a mother who prefers to remain anonymous; the names and locations have been changed to protect her family's privacy.*

MDE/OSEEIS Seeks Input on Revised Forms

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services recently revised a number of documents: public review and written comment will be accepted by the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services through **5:00 P.M. on June 15, 2005**.

The revised documents include: Proposed Revised IEP Manual and Forms, Proposed Revised IFSP/IEP Manual and Forms, Proposed State Board of Education Policy on Placement in Private Schools

for Students with Disabilities, Proposed Revised Procedural Safeguards Available to Parents of Students with Disabilities, and Proposed Michigan Continuous Improvement Monitoring System (CIMS)

Comments may be submitted to OSE-EIS via the following methods:

Email - SPED-publiccomment@michigan.gov

Facsimile - (517) 373-7504

Surface mail - Policy and Compliance Program, OSE-EIS, Michigan Department of Education, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.

To download the documents, visit the MDE Web site at: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235_6785_6786---,00.html

From the Executive Director, Amy Winans

Recently, while stopped at a red light, I noticed a bumper sticker which read *Support Health Care for All Children*. My first reaction, I like it! My second thought - why only one car bearing this message? The work of ACMH will not be finished until ALL families have access to health care systems which meet their children's needs. It is the business of ACMH to make clear that health care systems cannot address the health needs of all children and adolescents without including quality, family-driven mental health services for those with serious mental health disorders.

Critical decisions which will impact children's health care are being made now. We cannot accept the 'inevitability' of decisions designed to cut costs which hurt children. ACMH urges all families and members to lend their support to bills now before the state Senate for mental health insurance parity. ACMH also urges improved not reduced funding for Medicaid funded services for children and families.

Mental health insurance bills (senate Bills 229 and 230) are now being considered by our state senators. These laws would prevent greater restriction and financial burden on coverage for brain disorders than that which exists for other medical care. Children with serious mental disorders are the ones most negatively affected by current discriminatory practice. Studies have consistently shown that short-term cost of mental health insurance equality (for parity) to employers and insurers is relatively small.

Clearly, proposed cuts, at both state and federal level, in Medicaid funding will hurt children and their families who rely on public mental health services. Reductions will likely occur in the number of children eligible and in services covered by public programs, including Medicaid. Wraparound services which help children avoid school failure or involvement with the juvenile justice system are in jeopardy. Chris Koyanagi, policy director for the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law sums it up well, "Forcing billions in spending cuts -- with no indication of how they will be accomplished -- harms low-income individuals with mental illness and does nothing to address the healthcare crisis that is forcing so many people to turn to Medicaid or deal with the causes of escalating health care costs."

The stories of individual children and their families are desperately needed. Please contact your elected officials and share your story. For additional information on these and other important topics, check this issue of *Table Talk*, contact our office, or visit the ACMH website.

Partners for Parity

ACMH serves on the Steering Committee of Partners for Parity. **The next several weeks represent a productive time for all families and their friends and supporters to make known to State Senators your support of mental health insurance parity bills in Michigan (Senate Bills 229 and 230).**

Whether it's a letter, e-mail, or phone call, please help stimulate supportive messages to Senators. **Personal stories about problems caused by the lack of parity from family members are especially powerful.** For those wishing to make contact without such stories, you can pick and choose (using your own words) from the key points below:

The lack of parity in Michigan is a blatant form of discrimination against individuals and families experiencing brain disorders. Experience across the country (Michigan is one of only 11-12 states without parity law) shows that parity has virtually no direct cost implications for employers, while having the potential to save them and society considerable money.

Research has shown that children with serious mental disorders are the age group most negatively affected by lack of parity. At a time of major budgeting difficulty for state government in Michigan, parity can and will relieve some of the pressure under which the publicly funded mental health system operates.

For more information about parity, go to the link to Michigan Partners for Parity - <http://www.mha-mi.org/MPP/>

Links to Senate Bills 229 & 230.....

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/mileg.asp?page=getObject&objName=2005-SB-0229>

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/mileg.asp?page=getObject&objName=2005-SB-0230>

Links to the Michigan Senate & Executive....

<http://www.senate.state.mi.us/>

<http://www.migov.state.mi.us/>

ACMH would like to recognize Mark Reinstein, Coordinator, Michigan Partners for Parity, for his leadership. Thanks Mark and all the partners.

Michigan Mothers Ask Gov. Granholm to Protect Children's Health this Mother's Day

Mother's Day Cards to Gov. Ask for Major Reductions in Mercury Pollution

Last year, ACMH joined as a co-sponsor of the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan's new Healthy Children Project (HCP). The Healthy Children Project's purpose is to bridge the gap between our knowledge of environmental factors that impact developing fetuses, the newborn or children, and the actions we are taking to minimize or eliminate those factors.

On May 5, 2005, representatives from the Learning Disabilities Association of MI, the Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH), the Michigan Council for Maternal & Child Health, and PIRGIM joined to deliver Mother's Day cards to the Governor from Michigan mothers urging her to reduce toxic mercury pollution.

The cards ask Gov. Granholm: "This Mother's Day, please give all Michigan mothers the best possible gift: Protect our children from toxic mercury pollution by requiring our state's power plants to reduce mercury by 90% by 2010."

Children are affected by mercury in the form of nervous and digestive system problems, kidney damage, mental and developmental disabilities. Children are at risk by playing with broken thermometers, eating too much contaminated fish and accidental exposure. In babies born and unborn: Mercury can pass from mother to child through the placenta and breast milk. In newborns, it causes mental retardation, brain damage, lack of coordination, blindness, seizures, and the inability to speak.

Power plants are the single largest source of U.S. mercury emissions, contributing 41 percent of U.S. mercury emissions. Michigan's power plants emitted 2,714 lbs. of mercury in 2002, and our state has the second worst mercury hotspot in the country. The principal way that people are exposed to mercury is by eating fish. Unfortunately, mercury is so prevalent in Michigan's waterways that the state health department has issued fish consumption advisories for every inland lake in the state.

For more information visit: www.healthychildrenproject.org

ACMH News

Southwest Detroit

In January, Calvin Dishmon was named interim director of the ACMH-SWD Family Center. Congratulations, Calvin! Our SWD staff has been working closely with Southwest Solutions on a new DHS Family-to-Family project. The purpose of the project is to improve outcomes for children and families who are involved with Protective Services and Foster Care. On March 24, ACMH sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt for families. Bookmarks, resource guides, support group flyers and other valuable information were distributed. Nearly 70 parents and 265 children were in attendance.



ACMH community partners, from top left, Cheryl Jackson, Bobby Wade, Tina Ellis, and Regina Kurtz, talked with parents about

foster care at a recent ACMH-SWD parent support group. Other topics have included special education, accessing mental health services, and Mercy Education Project.

Northern Michigan

Susan Campbell, our dedicated staff person of 14 years recently decided to reduce her hours because of the needs of her growing family. She will now serve as a Resource Specialist. She will be responding to requests from community service providers that are seeking information relating to children with emotional disorders and their families. Jane Shank, our newest staff person in N. Michigan has increased her hours and is now the family advocate serving Northern Michigan. She is a parent who has a master's degree in social work. Working with families, agencies, organizations and community members to support and assist families will be among Jane's primary responsibilities. Educational programs for families and the community will be on Jane's agenda for the coming year.

West Michigan

Shareen McBride Wicklund, along with parent Samantha Cory, recently made a presentation for the West Michigan Child and Family Leadership Council Fiscal Committee. Samantha talked about how her family benefited from ACMH services. Shareen described our family services and our system for tracking data. Shareen writes "not only was I able to show them the great things that ACMH is doing, but also how we are keeping track of our data. They were very impressed with our new way of doing the data and liked that they would be able to see how we are impacting the communities". **Special thanks to Sam and Shareen.**

Continued on page 5

For “May is Mental Health Month,” Shareen collaborated with her local Community Mental Health. Together, they distributed post cards with green ribbons attached. The cards had facts about children’s mental health on one side and information about ACMH on the other. They were handed out at the local CMH’s and at three different lunches for our state representatives. **State Representative Geoff Hansen attended one of the luncheons and asked for 150 cards with ribbons to take back to his colleagues in the House.**

Oakland County

Oakland Family Advocate, Paulette Duggins, has hosted several parent trainings for families. Coming events include a presentation by Malisa Pearson on Evidence Based Practice on May 26th from 6:30 – 8:30 P.M. The workshop is free and will be held at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, 1100 Lone Pine Road, NW corner of Telegraph Rd. and Lone Pine. Please RSVP Duggins@comcast.net or 248-646-0819.

Resources: Publications, Toolkits, etc...

Secondhand smoke: A study linking kids’ lower test scores to secondhand smoke appeared in Environmental Health Perspectives. The researcher measured exposure to secondhand smoke by testing for cotinine, a by-product of nicotine in the blood. Learning gaps were significant for the 4400 children studied--even after they considered other factors, such as race, income and parents’ educational levels, that might have influenced test scores.

The full article can be found on the Web <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2004/7210/abstract.html>

Resource Center for parents of children and adolescents with depression: Recently a coalition of medical and family/patient advocacy organizations launched ParentsMedGuide.org. A focal point of the Website is a fact sheet with practical advice for parents called “The Use of Medication in Treating Childhood and Adolescent Depression: Information for Patients and Families”. The workgroup is sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The Parent Guide can be found on the Web www.parentsmedguide.org/parentsmedguide.htm

Service Gaps for persons with Traumatic Brain Injury: The Michigan Department of Community Health (DCH) has developed a report addressing the public service gaps for persons with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in our state. The Full Report and the Executive Summary can be found at Web site at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235_6785---,00.html.

Curriculum on Children’s Mental Health designed for students between the ages of nine and eighteen: A website called “Breaking the Silence” offers a series of lesson plans for upper elementary

Paulette also represented ACMH on the OCCMHA planning committee for the April *Ready..Set..Go! Recognizing Family Strengths; Building a Better Future* family conference. Paulette, Chandra Jones, Marega DeLizio, Lynn Tamor, Calvin Dishmon, and Amy Winans represented ACMH at this important event.

Clinton, Eaton, & Ingham Counties

During Children’s Mental Health Week, Tiffiany Leischner and Malisa Pearson distributed awareness buttons and literature to participants at an annual Head Start Conference in Lansing and to staff at many local community agencies.

Malisa continues her work as a parent spokesperson on the Statewide Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Steering Committee and the Parent Management Training (PMT) work team and research subcommittee. She recently give a presentation on EBP at the Foster and Adoptive Care Conference.

through high school classroom instruction. The curriculum covers the following topics:

- Major Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Panic Disorder

The fully scripted lessons are written so that no prior knowledge of the subject is required, and they include suggested activities, a board game, and a poster. They can be used either as a single lesson or as a series of lessons that take place over several days. The website for “Breaking the Silence” follows: <http://www.btslessonplans.org/index.htm>

HRSA Awards \$160,000 in New Grants to Support State

Trauma Systems: The MI Department of Consumer and Industry Services (Lansing) recently received a \$40,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help strengthen their trauma system infrastructure. HRSA’s Trauma-Emergency Medical Services Systems Program administers the grants, which are designed to help ensure that key infrastructure elements are in place. Learn more at: <http://newsroom.hrsa.gov/releases/2004/trauma-systems-dec7-2004.htm>

CDC: Almost Half of Americans Use at Least One Prescription

Drug: Almost half of all people are taking at least one prescription medicine and one in six are taking three or more medications, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ annual check-up on Americans’ health. Other findings include:

1) adult use of antidepressants almost tripled between 1988-1994 and 1999-2000; 2) ten percent of women 18 and older and 4 percent

of men now take antidepressants; 3) three times as many white adults as black or Mexican adults took antidepressants; and 4) **boys were prescribed drugs to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder twice as often as girls, but antidepressants were prescribed to boys and girls at the same rates.** Read press release at: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r041202.htm>. The full report can be accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hs.htm>.

SAMHSA: Tutorials on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

The first of four free online tutorials on substance abuse and child welfare is now available on the website for SAMHSA's National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare. This tutorial, *Understanding Child Welfare and the Dependency Court: a Guide for Substance Abuse Treatment Professionals*, is an interactive series of five modules designed to provide comprehensive information on child welfare to professionals who treat substance abuse clients who have children. <http://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/tutorials/index.asp>

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ISSUES: Free Brochure on Tutoring from the Department of Education, "Extra Help for Student Success." Available in English and Spanish, the brochure answers the following questions: *What are Supplemental Educational Services? Who Can Get These Services? How Will I Know If My Child Is Eligible? How Do I Find a Good Supplemental Educational Services Program for My Child? What Happens After I've Chosen a Provider of Supplemental Educational Services? Where Can I Get More Information?* For a free brochure: Call the Education Department's Publications Center toll-free at 1-877-433-7827); order online www.edpubs.org; or write to: ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Also available online at: <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/suppservices/services.pdf>

Navigating Medicare and Medicaid, 2005: A Resource Guide for People with Disabilities and their Families, and the Advocates: is a new online, consumer guide published by the Kaiser Family Foundation. The guide is intended to be understandable to people who are completely unfamiliar with Medicare and Medicaid. Copies (#7240) are available on their website: www.kff.org

Recent research points to an association between early marijuana use and a heightened risk of developing schizophrenia or other psychological disorders: among persons aged 18 or older, those who first used marijuana before age 12 were twice as likely to have serious mental illness in the past year as those who first used marijuana at age 18 or older. For a complete copy of this National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) report, visit: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>

Linking Foster Children to Community Support - New Michigan Supreme Court Program Chief Justice Maura Corrigan recently announced a new initiative to assist older foster children who may age out of the foster care system without family assistance or support. The initiative, the Children's Community Support Network, is intended to help link volunteers and mentors with opportunities to help foster children. Michigan has more than 19,000 children and young people in foster care, the majority of whom will not be adopted or returned to their biological families. To learn more about the Children's Community Support Network contact Randy Wilger at 517-373-5322 or WilgerR@courts.mi.gov.

Online Information about Key Low-Income Benefit Programs

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, located in Washington, D.C., provides web-links to information about key low-income benefit programs. There are links to policy manuals, descriptive information, and applications for state food stamp, TANF, child care, Medicaid, and SCHIP Programs. The links to Michigan programs include:

Policy Manuals/Materials

Food Stamp, TANF, Child Care, Medicaid/SCHIP

<http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/pem/pem.pdf>

Descriptive Program and Eligibility Information

Food Stamp, TANF, Child Care, Medicaid/SCHIP

<http://www.michigan.gov/fia/0,1607,7-124-5453---.00.html>

Applications for Assistance

Food Stamp, TANF, Child Care, Medicaid

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/FIA-GenApp-FIA1171_66260_7.pdf

Medicaid (for children)/SCHIP

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MICChildApplication_11847_7.pdf

Online Application for Medicaid (children only)/SCHIP

<https://eform.state.mi.us/michild/intro1.htm>

Multi-Program

<http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/eAdvisor-Mars/>

Information for other states is available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/1-14-04tanf.htm>

Practice Prevention Columns available in English and Spanish

from the Institute for Children's Environmental Health. These include: overview of children's environmental health, mercury, pesticides, and television. All of these are available at: www.iceh.org/LDDIpublications.html.

Michigan Adventure:

The lead article in our winter edition of *Table Talk* was written by mother and ACMH Board Member Kristen Hawkins. It was about Kristen's visit to Michigan Adventure with her three children – the lack of appropriate accommodation and unfriendly attitude of staff. In response, we heard from Janet Meyers, Director of Park Operations. She sent letters to Kristen and ACMH and later followed up with a phone call. She expressed concern over Kristen's experiences and told us that the goal of Michigan Adventure is to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for every guest. She went on to explain that Kristen's experiences prompted them to examine both their policies and training for new employees. Kristen's article made a difference! And we applaud Michigan Adventure for taking swift corrective action.

Nov. 3, 2005 Conference: Toxic Threats to Child Development in Michigan

ACMH joins as a co-sponsor of the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Environmental Health Committee's one day conference, Toxic Threats to Child Development in Michigan. The conference will be held November 3, 2005 at the Rackham auditorium on the University of Michigan Campus. The program goals are to assist those individuals who have concerns for children to recognize environmental hazards for children, methods to minimize such exposures, approaches to ameliorate the impact of such hazards for both otherwise healthy children as well as for children with disabilities, and approaches to acquaint the public, policy leaders and legislators. More details will soon be posted on the ACMH website.

CADRE Resource Now Available in CD Format:

Educating Our Children Together: A Sourcebook for Effective Family-School-Community Partnerships. This sourcebook was designed to identify and describe promising practices in family-community-school involvement occurring in pre-K-12 school environments across the country. The resource includes guiding principles for family-school-community involvement, tips for getting started, a self-assessment tool to determine current practices, strategies, and program descriptions.

To review the Sourcebook, click here:

http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/EducatingOurChildren_01.cfm (or copy and paste in your browser)

To receive a copy in CD format, contact the CADRE office at 541-686-5060 or cadre@directionservice.org

Parent Support Groups - Local Contacts

Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Counties	Tiffany Leischner	517.381.5125
Grand Traverse & Northern MI	Jane Shank	231-943-0368
Kalkaska County (Fife Lake)	Carole Slaterline	231-879-3134
	Maria Gowen	231-369-3999
	Pam Gephardt	231-369-3399
Mid-Michigan Counties	Cindy Miller	989.772.7713
Oakland County	Nancy Scott	248.547.2215
	Paula Eifler	248.683.3065
SW Detroit		313.895.2860
ACMH Support Group	Kim Hunt & Vanessa Isom	
Special Education Group	Calvin Dishmon & Gladys Rodriguez	
Juvenile Justice Group	Rocio Rodriguez	
Youth Group (age 13-22)	Pam Cornell	

TABLE TALK

A MESSAGE OF HELP & HOPE



STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

SAVE THE DATES...

The ACMH Annual Conference
Healthy Families: Healthy Children
Support Children's Mental Health
Location: Lansing's downtown Radisson
September 28 and 29, 2005

2465 Woodlake Circle, Suite 140 • Okemos, MI 48864
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