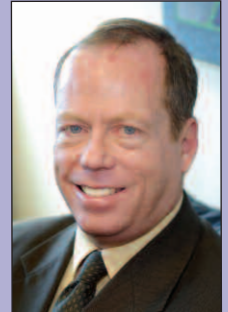


**2008: REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY**
THE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF
DENVER

Enriching Lives and Minds

DEAR FRIENDS OF MHCD,

The Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) provides exceptional mental health care for the people of the City and County of Denver. Every day we offer **hope for recovery** for persons with mental illness –



Dr. Carl Clark

driven by the unwavering belief that **people can and do recover from mental illness**. Our success speaks for itself. Every day people walk out our doors into a new life: a life filled with promise and hope for the future where there once was none. **Seventy-percent of the people treated at the Mental Health Center of Denver recover.**

People who fight hard for those with mental illness are in the minority except at MHCD. For the past 20 years we have been fighting hard because we believe in recovery for persons with mental illness and in keeping our community healthy – it is paying off. We have developed a comprehensive system of care that is keeping people off the streets and out of emergency rooms and jails and preventing kids from developing serious emotional disturbances. We are reaching out to them, engaging them, treating them and getting them back to their families, to school and to work.

In this report you'll read about the work we do and the difference we make in people's lives every day. In 2008, MHCD served 11,500 people with core clinical services and we assisted an additional 24,000 individuals on their journey to recovery.

We are grateful to you – our donors and supporters, volunteers and community partners – for your support of our life-changing work. If I could imagine a perfect MHCD, we would never have to turn anyone away. I know that with your help we can get there.

With heartfelt appreciation for these 20 years,

Carl Clark MD

Dr. Carl Clark, Chief Executive Officer



DONATIONS SPREAD HOLIDAY JOY

When Darren Cruwys and his 30-member Broadband Installation Team from Qwest Communication's Thornton facility transform themselves into "Team Blitzen," holiday magic happens. For the past six years, this group of high-tech elves has donated 90 to 100 gifts to MHCD's Gifts of Joy annual holiday campaign. Gifts of Joy provides presents to youth served by MHCD, many of whom are indigent and would otherwise not receive a single holiday gift.

This year, Team Blitzen upped the ante and issued a penny challenge to co-workers which raised \$400 in cash to donate along with their gifts. What inspires Team Blitzen's ongoing support year after year? Envisioning the children's delight when they open the gifts, according to Cruwys. "We have been very blessed in this industry and we are fortunate enough to be able to give to those who have very little," he said.

In 2008, close to 2,000 MHCD consumers received presents through Gifts of Joy. For the first time, adult consumers were included as recipients. They received gift cards, which many consumers unselfishly used to purchase gifts for others. Stories of generosity, such as the consumer who used his gift card to buy a present for another consumer who has no family, abounded throughout MHCD. Thanks to donors like Team Blitzen, the holiday magic continues to spread and multiply.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

"It is times like these that really make my job all the more worthwhile," says Jennifer Peterson, MA, therapist in MHCD's deaf counseling program.

After a Deaf consumer tried and failed on his own to solve an ongoing error with his bank that cost him over \$1,500 plus bank fees, therapist Jennifer Peterson and her consumer went to the bank together. Once there, the problem was quickly solved. Her consumer was refunded all the money plus the fees.

It is estimated that only 2% of deaf individuals receive appropriate mental health treatment. Obstacles include language barriers due to lack of trained interpreters and too few clinical staff who are knowledgeable of deaf culture.

MHCD's highly trained clinical staff and interpreters have been providing counseling services to the deaf community since 1986. Last year we served 75 consumers.

Sign up to receive our e-mail newsletter at www.mbcd.org. MHCD saved 238 trees by using SHRED IT.

COMMITTED TO RESULTS

■ MHCD'S work with **Street to Home**,* part of Denver's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, helped 45 homeless adults with untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse move into safe housing and enter appropriate treatment.

■ **GROW**, Growth and Recovery Opportunities for Women,** numbers speak for themselves. All 41 women homeless at intake, now have a permanent place to live and 67% are abstaining from substance use; many have jobs or are attending school.

■ The jail diversion program targeting repeat offenders with untreated mental illness, **Court to Community***** shows striking results:

- 70% reduction in re-arrests
- 80% reduction in days spent in jail
- \$104,790 savings to taxpayers in 18 months

Of 70 consumers served - 47 are with MHCD and 23 are with Colorado Coalition for the Homeless.

■ **At 2Succeed in Education and Employment** – MHCD's continuing education and supported employment program:

- Over 70 consumers are attending college or working on their applications for school or financial aid.
- The current catalog offers over 50 classes and educational programs.
- Forty-two consumers found work and 23 have worked three months or longer.

ONGOING DEDICATION TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

• We reach out to the community by partnering with Urban Peak, The Spot, Gilliam Youth Detention Center, Jefferson County, Denver Department of Human Services Family to Family sites, Denver Juvenile Probation, the Mayor's Office and the Metro Denver Gang Youth Coalition.

• The HIKE (Health Intervention Knowledge Education) Project; partners with Urban Peak and the Council to address the mental health needs of at-risk young people ages 16-24 year olds.

• The Voz y Corazón suicide prevention project has grown to 13 sites with girls and boys from diverse backgrounds participating in training, art and mentoring activities.

• We collaborate with 16 Denver Public Schools resulting in access to mental health care for 900 students and their families.

* Colorado Health Foundation granted \$1 million to Denver's Road Home to help implement the strategies of the 10-year plan and meet the health care needs of Denver's homeless population. www.ColoradoHealth.org.

**Partially funded by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration.

***Court to Community is partially funded through grants from the Colorado Health Foundation and Denver's Crime Prevention and Control Commission.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Our national reputation as one of the best supported employment programs in the country is why we were chosen to participate in a Social Security Administration Mental Health Study with the goal of helping people with mental illness on disability return to work and leave benefits. Forty-five MHCD consumers are participating in the study.

TWENTY YEARS IN THE MAKING: A KEY COMMUNITY PARTNER THE NATIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

As we reflect on the work we have done over the past year and over the past two decades, we are driven by our dedication to the essential role we play in the Denver community. Each year, the results we experience and measure show us that our programs and services are vital to the strength and well-being of the people we serve and our community as a whole.

Year after year, it is truly an honor to have the opportunity to serve Denver in a way that means so much to so many. As Colorado's largest community mental health organization, we are a place where thousands come for compassionate, accessible care. We are a resource for the many in need of substance abuse treatment, housing, education, employment services and much more. We are recognized as the national center of excellence for

those seeking the understanding of proven, recovery-focused treatment.

With one in five families affected by mental illness in Colorado, MHCD is committed to growing our programs and expanding our reach. Your support allows us to continue as the national center of excellence breaking down barriers for those with mental illness as we build a community of hope and promise for all.

How essential is the work of MHCD to our community?

- In 2008, we served 11,500 adults, families and children.
- We provide services in 37 locations throughout Denver, including 16 public schools.
- We have 500 highly qualified professionals on staff, including psychiatrists, nurses, therapists, case managers, social workers, and residential counselors.
- We have 95 professional affiliations and contracts with national and community organizations.

Enriching Lives and Minds

PAYING IT FORWARD



All it took was one hour over breakfast to send Jeannine Snyder and her daughter Carlie on a spending spree that made a big difference for many MHCD consumers in need.

Jeannine was one of 275 guests who attended MHCD's annual Gifts of

Hope fundraising breakfast this past October, where she was inspired by the messages delivered by MHCD CEO Dr. Clark and consumer Nichol (read her story on the back page).

When Carlie, a college student at Denver's Regis University,

ended her semester with an excess in her campus spending account, she and Jeannine went shopping at the college store. Three-hundred dollars later, they delivered cases of water, sports drinks and snack foods to MHCD's Wishing Well Resource Center. The Resource Center offers consumers a place to secure furniture, clothing, food and household items free of charge.

For Carlie, who is studying to work with people with disabilities, the experience was especially meaningful. "The Mental Health Center of Denver specializes in things that I really care about and that I am venturing into for my future profession," she said.

For Jeannine, a one-hour breakfast made her a committed MHCD supporter. "Attending Gifts of Hope made the issues of mental illness more real to me and really brought it home," she said. "I am honored to support an organization that sees the possibilities and helps people reach them."

EL CENTRO BRIGHTENS COMMUNITY WITH HOPE

Where there once was a drab, concrete wall blemished with graffiti, there is now a colorful mural symbolizing hope, recovery, and resiliency. MHCD's El Centro de las Familias, located in southwest Denver, now welcomes the community with vibrant images and new signage that help identify the center as a place for people to come for help with mental health needs.

El Centro is a multi-cultural outpatient clinic that specializes in providing services to Spanish speaking and bilingual children, adolescents, and adults. Individual, group, and family services are focused on recovery and integrating understanding, respect and the strengths of the Latino/Hispanic culture into the treatment process.

The new mural, which was painted by art students mentored by



nationally acclaimed artist Carlos Fresquez, depicts families streaming through a door surrounded by images like the rising sun to symbolize the hopeful beginning of a new day. The mural has made the clinic more visible to the community while helping beautify the area, according to MHCD/El Centro Program Manager Russ Urrutia. It has also significantly reduced costly graffiti tagging incidents.

The addition of the mural was part of El Centro's overall building improvements for the year, which coincided with an increase in services to benefit the community. In 2008, El Centro significantly increased the number of consumers served and added:

- Parenting classes in English and Spanish.
- Monthly sessions to help adult consumers connect with MHCD's 2Succeed employment and education services.
- Play therapy services.
- An intern training program, expanded the

center's capacity to serve children and families, and increased El Centro's contribution in training much-needed bilingual mental health professionals.

A LIFE TRANSFORMED: NICHOL'S STORY



Nichol

It is obvious at first glance that Nichol—artist, singer, and author—has talent, ambition, and personality to spare. What is not plain to see is the struggle Nichol has endured to reach recovery.

“Recovery means to me, hope...it’s reclaiming your soul,” said Nichol, who views her recovery as an ongoing, transforming experience. “It’s not what it looks like in the movies—recovery is a process.”

Nichol’s life has not played out like a picture-perfect Hollywood scene. She battled addiction and mental illness most of her life. After graduating from college, Nichol experienced a psychiatric breakdown and was hospitalized. After her release from the hospital, Nichol was referred to MHCD. “I knew I needed a lot of help,” she explained. “My spirit was gone.” Here, Nichol found the understanding and comprehensive services she needed. “At MHCD, it was all in one clinic—it was this working unit where everyone knew what was going on,” she said. Nichol refers to her involvement with MHCD as “a miracle

in my life.” Through treatment, therapy, and participation in MHCD’s 2Succeed vocational rehabilitation services, Nichol is now living an extremely full life. She sings on stage at local venues, does speaking engagements for MHCD and is writing a book about her experiences and recovery. Nichol is also employed by MHCD as a residential counselor at a transitional living facility.

Nichol has learned a lot about recovery in her 30 years. “Without support, there is no recovery,” she said. “MHCD can help you get your life back if it’s crushed, as mine was by illness.” (See a video of Nichol’s story in her own words at www.mhcd.org.)

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*What is MHCD doing to make
Denver a stronger community?
Read all about it inside!*

TOGETHER
GREEN

MHCD’s 2008 Annual Report to the Community has been streamlined in support of MHCD’s *Together Green* initiative and to conserve resources and support sustainability. Visit www.mhcd.org for expanded information on how MHCD serves our community!



Visit www.mhcd.org or
call 303-504-6500.



Learn about the many ways to
volunteer or donate.
Come and meet us at a monthly Enriching
Lives and Minds Open House!

You can help MHCD
strengthen our
community!



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