



Hey, From GOBHI Land.

I have been fighting with my computer, “Well” it won. It went to blue screen, and “said” FATAL ERROR.

I was so mad. I had been working on the newsletter, and all most had it done. I really put my heart and soul in this one, and now it is gone. TURKEY BUTTS!!!! OH, my Mouth gets away from me. What was I thinking?

I'll tell you what I was thinking. I wonder what would happen if a case manager went and popped in on a group home or a foster home. Just to say Hi, what would they find? The reason I bring this up is for those who have been in these places. Know what I am talking about? I was in the state hospital at 9 years old. I was in 7 different foster homes and then 5 different group homes between 8 and 13 years old. I know a lot of people on both sides. The mounds of paper work and the amount of kids or adults that they manage is too much for most people. Someone falls through the cracks, and is forgotten about. That is where the problems lie. They need more training for these case managers, and more people to do the work. OK, now that my one brain cell has woken up. We have people out of work, and people that need to be put to work. What is wrong with getting some people to do the paper work? And then the case manager can focus on the person. And get the proper programs for each of the peers. I am hearing a lot about the AMHI program which is, for people who are in the state hospital. They are given a chance to get out and be in some sort of support housing. It also gets them to be a part of a community, and give them the support that they will need to be successful with the move. I have asked the question, how are you going to do this? Are there going to be supports put in place to encourage them to want to move on? Most want to move on and others need a little push.

Now this is where peer support can come in. The peers can work together on a way to get to these people in the state hospital. We encourage them that recovery is possible. It can be a scary thing to move on, and live on your own. I know I had to do it. I turned 18 and knew I had to move on. I had to learn a lot on my own and at times it was hard and very scary. I'm sure most people feel the same way. It is a 50 to 50 chance you get the right home that will work with you. The real sad part is most will fall

through the cracks, and are forgotten about. This is something that should not to happen, kids and adults that are forgotten. People who have a lot to offer are just put on the back burner and thought of as worthless. I am sorry I said it that way but, that is how it is for some of us. We're not smart enough or we don't look the best, or talk the best. It is the best that move on to the next best thing. At times I wonder why some can make it and others don't. The case managers try to make a difference in our lives. But that is hard for them if we keep fighting them. We learn how to do that by what we were told and how we are treated. I had some who believed in me and there were some who didn't even care. It is hit and miss like I said. We just don't measure up to someone's idea of what we should be like. Some forget that we struggle with our own problems. Like others in the home making fun of us, or the staff are not trained right. Some staff have their favorites and they get all the help, or they get the good stuff. Some who have an idea of what they want for themselves are going against the program, and are put down and told they are trouble and need to grow up. So if I am to grow up then I need the right programs out there to help. No matter how I look or how smart I am, like I said, I know both sides. I was in the system as a kid and an older adult, and then my son is also in the system. Some of what happened to him is just terrible. I am trying hard to help him to help himself, not to let the system beat him, stand up and be the better person. I tell him don't let them win by breaking you. Stand up speak your mind and be heard. It is just as hard for him as it was for me. I pray that with what happened to me I can help him through this stuff. I hope to keep him from being forgotten. Some like my friend had to really work had to get to where they are. She has written a little about the walk she took. I hope you well enjoy this story. But first, I want to open this letter to others to put their story in or to put in their art work or poems. I feel good about writing all of this because that way people have a way of being heard and it is a good way to share your heart's desire. I won't JUDGE you, and if any one does then you have hit a sore spot. It needs to be brought up. So let's do something we have not been able to do. Let's rock the boat and get some things out in the open. The open is where healing is and being able to say, this is happening. It is about time that the peers have a say. So please e-mail me with you story, poems, or art work (whatever it is you want). My e-mail is [paintedlyofafrica@yahoo.com](mailto:paintedlyofafrica@yahoo.com) or you can send it snail mail to 364 S. 18<sup>th</sup> St. #5; St Helens, OR 97051. So send it in any way you can. No matter what it is or how someone might feel. It may be that someone out there has gone through it and need to see how others made it through. There is life after mental illness, and it is called mental health. See you never know whose life you will touch and isn't that what we want to do? Our hope is that we make a difference for those that came after us. It would be good to stop the falling through the cracks. So please write to me.

I would like very much for you to now read about my friend. She really is a wonderful person. ENJOY.

You know, it's truly amazing what you can make yourself believe. I never really gave it much thought when I was younger – the power we can harness with our minds. It comes in many forms. For instance, while I was attending college, I often told myself “I can do anything because the goal is worth it”; and I did. I worked two jobs and attended school – both full-time and still kept my grades up (graduated at the top of my field). I never studied, all the while telling myself, “I never forget anything I hear”. I would take notes in class, sure, but I didn't even bother to buy textbooks, let alone study; yet I graduated with a GPA of 3.98.



Unwittingly, whenever I told myself I could accomplish whatever I wanted (over and over again), it seemed to work out that way. Conversely, as my mental health deteriorated, whenever I told myself frightening “predictions” or so-called “truths”, they turned out as well. By the time I was 28, I had convinced myself no one would ever hire me again, that I was a detriment to humanity itself and didn't

deserve to live and, not only that, but had a ruinous impact on everyone around me. As a result, I don't even remember most of the next ten years. The one overriding thought / feeling throughout this time period was fear and consuming terror.

Then, as a result of years of therapy, becoming involved in the Peer program here (in Columbia county) and friends who love and support me, it finally occurred to me to start telling myself a different story. Some fears were particularly difficult to replace, but one fear at a time, I began. I repeated to myself – again and again – such things as “I am NOT destined for hell” to gradually replace the fearful thoughts that had haunted me for so long and so, one by one, I told myself that I either couldn't be hurt, the thing didn't exist, or whatever was appropriate to the situation. In time, my world began to look different and, although I won't go so far as to say I am completely free of all fear, I am no longer paralyzed by it. I can, however, say that today I no longer black out because I am too terrified to face the “real world”, I am working part-time, am an advocate for my peers and am working with the Peer program myself in an effort to show others that there is indeed a way out of the darkness.

Maybe my next step is to tell myself I am a math whiz....

Now that was a very nice story. She has been a friend for a long time. We both have come a long way. I bet that at one time someone stood up for you, and in the back of your brain you can find hidden memory's Maybe you have had someone make that extra step for you.

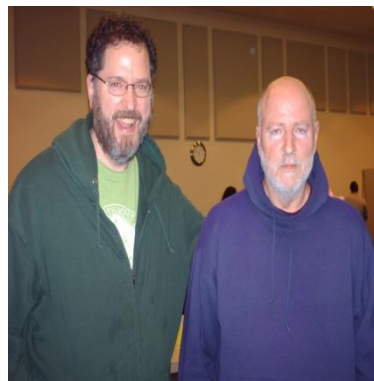
Well I want to keep going with the newsletter. In February of 2010, there was a training in Intentional Peer Support An Alternative Approach. It was written by Shery Mead. We talked a lot and then we role played. IPS is a whole new way of communicating, if you get it, it is good, but for some it is difficult. I would say that if you are asked to join the training go for it. I had a problem at first with world view, I just could not think outside the box. My biggest problem is that I'm a mother hen who has to have all her little chicks in the basket so that none get hurt. I'm a fixer and I have been my whole life. But IPS sounds good and it works so well. Angel Moore out did herself. Every time I take the training I learn new things, and the better I get at IPS, and communication.



I met some nice people



The wonderful teachers Angel, Beth, Becki





The gang that was at the training.

Like I said the training was very nice. Meeting the people that I met was great. We even had a meeting with Kevin Campbell. He is a good man that works at GOBHI. He wanted us to talk about our experience with children services. Some had a good experience, and some of us had really bad experiences. One thing that was talked about was the paper work. Some people are so out of it at the time of losing their kids that the paper work does not make sense to some. The case managers are not very helpful at that time. They want the paper work signed, but some people really don't know what they are signing. Kevin did a great job of listening to the ladies. It makes me happy that someone cared enough to listen.

Well what do you think? What do you want to say about your experience? Was it good or bad or maybe a little of both? It doesn't matter, we need to speak up so that way they know how to change it and make it better.

You can e-mail me at [paintedladyofafrica@yahoo.com](mailto:paintedladyofafrica@yahoo.com). I well like it very much to hear from you. You will be heard, my goal to get people to let others know that they are not alone. Well you all have a wonderful life until we meet again. I put this picture on the back. It is from one of my trips to Africa. I thought that maybe you would enjoy it.

SO LONG, Norma

Get your head  
out of the  
clouds, and  
into yourself

