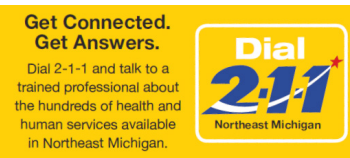


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The mission of Listening Ear is to provide citizens of Michigan with human services and affordable housing that satisfy, support, and promote the dignity and well-being of those in need.

March 2014
 Volume XVII, Issue 1

Listening EAR

Building Lasting Friendships...

Dancing is just plain fun but when you can dance with over 90 friends with smiling faces, it is magical!

The annual Valentines party, including dancing and refreshments, was organized by the agency's Weekend Recreation program and held at CMU's Wesley Center. The program offers monthly recreation events for mental health consumers who are looking to make new friends and become more engaged with their community. The Weekend Recreation program was formed ten years ago after listening to our consumers who said they wanted to have some fun and meet new people, especially on weekends.

Edie Bowerman, the coordinator of the program, states, "we realized years ago that many people would just stay home on the weekends because they lacked money to do fun things."

Because of financial and in-kind support coming from numerous donors, community organizations, CMU's Therapeutic Recreation Department, the Wesley Center and local businesses the program is free to the consumers.

As Edie states, "I am amazed at all the lasting friendships that have formed between volunteers, consumers and business people. We all have fun!" Edie, along with a planning team of consumers, coordinates monthly events like the Valentines party and other special events like Harley Days. Harley Days draws over 100 people and numerous motor cyclists who volunteer their time, motorcycle and sidecar to give anyone interested a ride they will remember for years. As one consumer stated, "I never thought in my life I would get to ride a motorcycle, but I did!"



Walter enjoys dancing with volunteer Michelle Young

Listening Ear is pleased to welcome new personnel and congratulate those who have made advancements —

- Welcome to:
- Megan Dodd, B.S. who joined the Child Foster Care program as a Foster Care Worker.
 - David Johns, P.A. who joined the Board of Directors. David Johns is a Physicians Assistant with McLaren Central Michigan.

- Congratulations to:
- Karen Elkins, R.N., Director of Residential Services North, who attended seminars entitled Assessment of Pain in Special Populations and A Nurse's Guide to Wound Management.
 - The Child Foster Care team for a perfect licensing review during the recent Michigan Department of Human Services Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing inspection audit.

If you wish to have your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, please write: **Executive Director, Listening Ear**
 P.O. Box 800
 Mt Pleasant, MI 48804-0800

or, email dschuster@listeningear.com.
 If you want more information about us, please visit our website at www.listeningear.com or see www.guidestar.org.

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INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

Improving services to people being supported by Listening Ear is a continuous task by our 400 caring employees. Last year we had several quality initiatives but a major focus was offering 'Gentle Teaching' training to every employee and Board member. This training was made possible by a grant from the Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundations. Gentle Teaching is an approach that helps people feel safe, engaged and valued. The staff at Listening Ear has embraced the principles where empathy, caring, a non-judgmental approach, community engagement and a safe environment are essential. The front page Building Relationships and the page 3 Service in Aktion articles show two ways we support consumers to be more engaged and valued in their community.

Creating a Culture of Gentleness is important because of its healing impact on the children and adults served who have often been traumatized by abuse or neglect and hindered by life events. Yet there is great resiliency and hope in each person who comes for services seeking an improved quality of life. We are pleased to say that because of the work by our caring and committed staff the overall **customer satisfaction rate was 97%, with 3,734 consumer dreams realized.** The dreams realized are often simple things like finding a job, owning their own business, making friends in the community, attending church or living in a safe, affordable and loving home.

We know there is more work to do to support each consumer in realizing their dreams. We will need your support, a strong partnership with each consumer and a continuous desire to ensure every community member is valued.

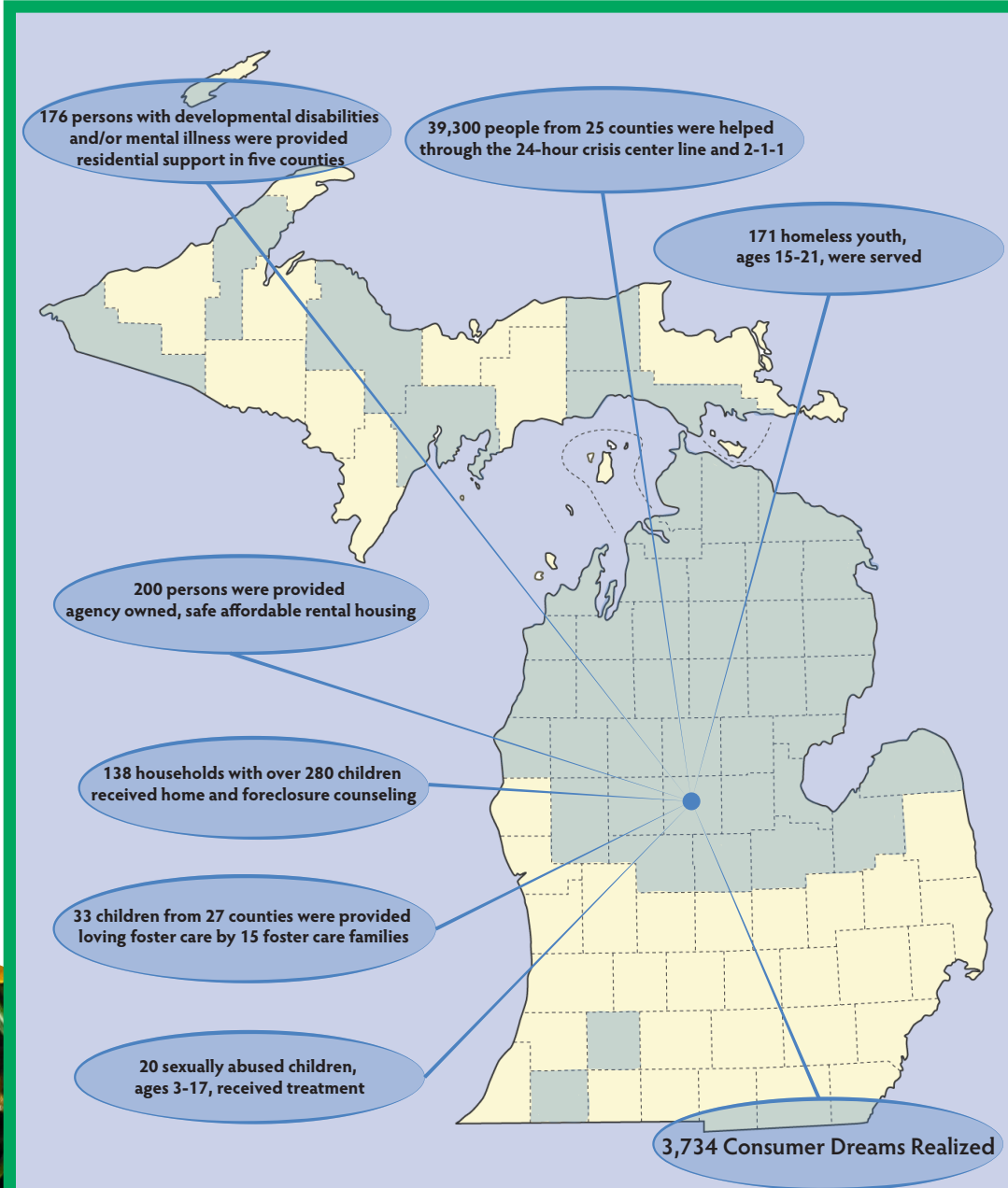
Together we are building a community that is "Always There."

Sincerely,

Donald Schuster, LMSW
Executive Director

ANNUAL REPORT

LAST YEAR 40,000 CHILDREN AND ADULTS FROM 46 MICHIGAN COUNTIES WERE SERVED



Audited Expenses 2012 - 2013		Client Satisfaction 2012-2013	
Personnel	\$ 7,662,240	Residential Consumers	92%
Operations	\$ 3,519,449	Child Sexual Abuse	100%
Depreciation	\$ 168,961	Homeless Youth	97%
Administration	\$ 736,045	Foster Youth	100%
Total Expenses	\$ 12,086,695	Foreclosure Families	99%

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS...

- 27 Consumers have their own Micro Enterprise Business, earning money every month to become a contributor to their community.
- Over 100 people were able to stay in their own home because of our Foreclosure Counseling, helping people feel safe and secure.
- A centrally located emergency center was created to deal with natural disasters that might impact our consumers. This helps consumers feel safe and secure.
- Over 22 fun weekend recreation events were offered to mental health consumers helping consumers feel engaged.
- Dozens of foster care children were offered fun events like visiting Michigan Adventure, helping children feel valued and engaged.
- 20 homeless youth became employed, adding to financial stability and safety.

SERVICE IN AKTION...



Aktion Club Member Ray with Aktion Club Coordinator Sam.

Developing new relationships and giving back to the community are part of the Antrim Kalkaska Aktion Club. The service learning club, sponsored by the Kalkaska Kiwanis Club, offers a way for over a dozen adults with disabilities to help others by fundraising for animal shelters, adopting families in need to provide gifts for their children over the holidays and stocking the shelves with food at the local food pantry. According to one club member Ray, "It just feels good to help others."

The Aktion Club has done so well that last year they won the Michigan Distinguished Club Service Award with Kiwanis. The Aktion Club is one more way for Listening Ear to build a Culture of Gentleness through community engagement.

We are thankful for these supporters!

(Gifts made since the last newsletter)...

LISTENING EAR CRISIS CENTER FUND

- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Greg & Cecilia Bator
- Pat Hartman in honor of Sheri Hartman
- Phyllis Heinze
- Elizabeth Kowalczyk, Mt Pleasant Comm. Counseling
- Michael Libbee & Kristin Sheridan in honor of Carolyn VanCleave & Marsha Phillips
- Robert Long
- Martha & John Mater in honor of Michael Libbee & Kristin Sheridan
- Dianne Morey
- Michele Punke
- Ross & Shelly Rapaport
- Earl & Georgann Schuster in honor of Donald Schuster
- Carolyn VanCleave in honor of Kristin Sheridan and Mike Libbee

CONSUMER NEEDS & DREAMS FUND

- Danny & Barbara Heller-Burstein
- Richard & Carol Tackett
- Richard Young
- Meredith Welling

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT FUND

- Norma Bailey
- Cheryl Nordin
- Earl & Georgann Schuster in honor of Donald Schuster
- Ronald & Margaret Vredeveld in honor of Lucille

The following who made gifts to honor Valerie Stephens, PhD.:

- Anonymous
- Norma Bailey
- Timothy & Kelly Bechtel
- Roger & Helen Chase
- Eileen Delorenzo
- Koblar or Elizabeth Jackson
- Gail Hansen
- Dr. Grayson Holmbeck
- Aparna Lhila
- David & Kathleen Ling
- Nancy Long
- David & Elizabeth Macleod
- Laura A. McBride
- Frederic & Carol Messick
- John & Mary Nichol
- Kathleen Newland
- Cheryl Nordin
- Michael & Wendy Papa
- Seema Singh
- M. Elaine Smiley
- Peter M. Starr
- Blaine & Sharon Stevenson
- Sally VanCise

PHIL A. LANGLOIS ENDOWMENT FUND FOR LISTENING EAR

- Anonymous
- Joseph & Barbara Barberi
- Douglas & Karen Batchelder
- Joseph Bohrer & Patricia Brand
- Jeanette E Langlois
- Doris Jean Powell
- Don Schuster in honor of Tom Sullivan
- Nancy Wanek in honor of Donald Schuster
- WE Martin Foundation

GENERAL DONORS & GRANTMAKERS - Thank you to:

- Paul & Carolyn Buiten toward the Crisis Center operations
- Mountain Town Society of Kapnismologists for brightening the holidays of homeless youth
- Cathy Schafter for donating craft items
- Mt Pleasant Community of Christ toward the Crisis Center operations
- First Credit Union members for donating Weekend Recreation supplies

The following who made gifts for the Weekend Recreation Program:

- Suzanne Duyck
- Glenn Everhart
- Melodie Farnsworth
- John Hargarther
- Janet Kanyuck
- Kimberly Kripa
- Charles Lech
- Lori Loftus
- Harold McIntyre
- Edward Nickowski
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