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Listening EAR

Striving for Excellence – Accreditation Achieved!

This fall, we at Listening Ear were thrilled to learn that we had successfully achieved our 6th Accreditation since 1998. This designation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) demonstrates our organization's ongoing commitment to excellence. With accreditation, Listening Ear joins 2,200 other public and private organizations worldwide that have undergone intensive internal and external audits to deliver the very best services for its consumers.

To realize reaccreditation, for more than a year, Listening Ear staff reviewed each policy and procedure to make sure that all methods met internationally accepted high performance standards for ensuring the wellbeing and success of children and adults served. All programs offered by Listening Ear were examined for accessibility, cultural competence, ethical behavior, safe practices and consumer protections such as privacy rights, among others. Last spring, a compilation of Listening Ear's revised policies and practices was submitted to COA for review. A team of COA professional reviewers came to Mount Pleasant in the summer to meet with staff and review additional materials. Amanda Hart, Executive Director of Listening Ear said, "I was particularly pleased that the COA final report included numerous positive comments saying that Listening Ear has "high standards of ethical and transparent practice," and that "Performance and Quality Improvement data collection and reporting process is exceptional," and "well respected by stakeholders." Official documents arrived in August showing the agency is accredited for the next four years!



On July 31st, Listening Ear Crisis Center staff, board members and COA reviewers gathered to celebrate the completion of the on-site external survey. Pictured left to right are: Viviane Ngwa and Jeanette Oliver from Council on Accreditation, Al Kaufmann, Listening Ear Board of Directors, Amanda Hart, Executive Director at Listening Ear, Patrick McFarland, Council on Accreditation, and Kristin Sheridan, Board of Directors.

Agency Updates

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

Welcome

- Thomas (Alex) Byers - Mental Health Technician/2-1-1 Call Specialist
- Emilio Campos, Human Resources
- Amber Carman, B.S., Transitional Living Program Case Manager
- Shelby Flores, B.S., Youth Services Activity Specialist
- Patricia "Tricia" Fuller, Associate Degree in Health Care Management and B.S. in Long Term Care, Program Director for Residential Services North - North Birch Home
- Danielle Germaine - M.A. Mental Health Technician/2-1-1 Call Specialist
- Jenna Gilginas, CMU Social Work intern in Foster Care
- Nicholas (Nick) Goike - B.S. Mental Health Technician/2-1-1 Call Specialist
- Ariana Kisell, CMU Social Work intern in Youth Services
- Abby Long, Assistant Program Director for Residential Services Central - Adams Street Home
- Mary Richards, B.S., Foster Care Worker
- Megan Taylor, Assistant Crisis Center Director

Congratulations:

- Susanne "Sam" Booth, Program Director for Residential Services North homes was recently recognized as the Antrim-Kalkaska Kiwanis member of the year for her role in heading the Kiwanis Aktion Club that is run by persons with developmental disabilities.
- William Brewer, promoted to Program Director for Residential Services Central – Oakleaf Home
- Mallary Soloc, promoted to Assistant Program Director for Residential Services Central - Weidman Home
- Jennifer Vietti, promoted to Assistant Program Director for Residential Services Central - Oakleaf Home
- Kathleen Tarrant, Director of the Crisis Center at Listening Ear, was recently awarded the inaugural Michigan AIRS Life Time Achievement Award by the Michigan Alliance of Information and Referral Systems – a statewide alliance of agencies, community organizations, and individuals committed to providing quality information and referral services. Kathy, one of three crisis center founders in 1969, always goes beyond the call of duty. For example, during the 2017 flood, she came back from a vacation to help set up a call center for community members affected by the flood crisis.

Board of Directors

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Executive Director: Amanda Hart

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

INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

As the holidays approach, we take stock in what really matters. We celebrate with our families and communities wishing health and good will to all. We look back at the past year and set goals for the next. Listening Ear is like a big family made up of consumers, staff, volunteers and board members. We care about each person's hopes and goals for the future. We strive to make sure each person feels supported and can meet their dreams.

The accreditation process, as described on the cover, included revisiting our mission and values. As a result, we adopted a new purpose statement which now reads "We are in the vocation of supporting and improving human life around the clock." As a team, we work to address organizational-wide challenges and make needed improvements to meet agency goals. We assessed business and service delivery practices and evaluated our strength and capacity for meeting the needs of the communities served. Achieving reaccreditation is one way of demonstrating our credibility to produce positive outcomes.

Each year we honor a few of our members with the "Lori Shively Power of Kindness Award." It is named for a past board member who often went beyond the call of duty. On page 2, meet three "Shining Stars" selected for 2018. Each reflects Lori's spirit by showing kindness, unrelenting service, unending love and a "can do" attitude.

On page 3, note that one of the "Shining Stars" chosen, Sara Sroufe, using her excellent clinical skills, was able to help young Tess "Find a Rainbow" after suffering horrific sexual abuse. Also on page 3, the pictograph summarizes ways in which thousands benefit from Listening Ear services.

None of this would be possible without the financial assistance generously given by you and our community funders. We are forever grateful. Next year we will be celebrating our 50th year of serving the community which began with 24 hour crisis services! I hope you will use the enclosed envelope to help Listening Ear continue into the future ensuring services are "Always There."

Sincerely,

Amanda Hart, LLMSW
Executive Director

Shining Stars

At the annual agency banquet, staff, board members and consumers gathered to recognize some "Shining Stars" among them. The "Lori Shively Power of Kindness Award" is given in memory of a past board member who conveyed kindness, unrelenting service, unending love and a "can do" attitude. These characteristics, and the staff honored, mirror Listening Ear's values. "Shining Stars" awardees are shown below with Executive Director Amanda Hart



Jamie Weber, always welcoming and friendly, began as a volunteer, serves on the Weekend Recreation planning team and is a treasured employee at the front desk office. Jamie has been part of the Listening Ear family for eleven years.

Avis Titsworth, Peer Support staff for Residential Services - North, has built meaningful relationships with consumers for seven years. A strong advocate, she has spoken about consumer and Direct Care Worker experiences to the Board of Directors, the Developmental Disabilities Council, and State Legislators.



Sara Sroufe, M.S.W. Therapist in the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program has supported and encouraged consumers of Listening Ear since 2003. Sara's interactions with others are always carried out with a positive attitude, compassion, and the utmost ethic of care.

Find a Rainbow

Tess was only ten years old when she was sexually abused by her mother's former boyfriend. As most often happens, the man responsible was not a stranger. Sexual abuse can cause both trauma and shame in young victims that affect them throughout their lives resulting in depression, anxiety and other problems. Fortunately, Tess was able to tell someone that she needed protection.

Tess and her mother enrolled in Listening Ear's Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program and began working with therapist Sara Sroufe. Sara has a Master's Degree in Social Work and was among the first to complete the Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Therapist Certification Program in the State of Michigan. At first Tess was quite reluctant to take part in the program. As trust was built, Tess began to express her desire to feel safe. During counseling, Tess's mother also revealed her own history of victimization. Mother and daughter met their goals for learning skills to prevent future risks and for healing from victimization. At closure, Tess wrote a letter to other kids who have had similar experiences but don't want to deal with it, "You may not feel happy with what happened because it frightens you, but once you get it out you can face your fears. Don't be afraid of a memory. It cannot harm you. See through the scary thunder, find a rainbow."

Building a Community that is "Always There"



WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THESE SUPPORTERS!

(Gifts made since the last newsletter) . . .

LISTENING EAR CRISIS CENTER FUND

- Kathy Tarrant

CONSUMERS NEEDS AND DREAMS FUND

- Jane Kipp

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT FUND

- Pamela Burke

GENERAL DONORS & GRANTMAKERS – THANK YOU TO:

- American Mitsuba Corp
- Anonymous, quilts for the Foster Care and Transitional Living Program youth
- The Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundations toward monthly recreational activities for youth and adults
- Diane, Wayne & Wendy Fetters for the needs of the Weatherhead home in honor of Tammy Fetters
- In memory of Brenda Goodrich from her nieces Kim, Andi and Jodi Goodrich
- Isabella Bank toward Homeless Youth services
- Smooth Surfaces, Ltd toward Crisis Center Operations in honor of Nick Olson
- WE Martin Foundation toward Homeless Youth services

WEEKEND RECREATION DONORS:

- Central Michigan Sports – use of trike for event
- Louis DeRocco Jr. Giving Fund toward community engagement
- Salisbury Trucking – for donating pig for event



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