

On the Path



FALL 2006

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urban pathways
For homeless New Yorkers, the way home.

New Directions: Wellness Self Management and the Expansion of ESTEEM

There was a time when people diagnosed with mental illnesses were viewed as hopeless, with few prospects for the future. Families, doctors, and mentally ill individuals themselves viewed the afflicted as fragile and unable to function independently. Rather than focusing on recovery as a goal, the traditional medical model emphasized medication as the way to diminish symptoms, shorten hospital stays, and achieve greater stability, with the patient just a passive recipient of treatment and services. Fortunately, times have changed—and current research, new medications, and the advent of a mental health consumer movement offer a more promising future for people with mental illnesses.

Urban Pathways is leading the way in adopting Wellness Self Management (WSM) as an alternative to the more traditional medical model. In this therapeutic approach, patients are active participants in the recovery process. An evidence-based model, WSM deals with the whole person, not just the disease, and focuses on the potential for growth.

To ensure that the WSM model of recovery is successful for as many clients as possible, Urban Pathways plans to offer all clients support services, including entry into the ESTEEM vocational counseling program. Currently, the NYC Department of Hygiene & Mental Health (DHMH), the primary funder for our ESTEEM program only allows clients with Axis I diagnoses (clinical disorders) to enter into the program. This means that 50% of our clients are not currently eligible for the program, even though it is clear that the program works. Last year, 89% completed six months of either Tier I or II training and of those, 53% moved on to the next Tier. Sixty-five percent of those who were enrolled in Tiers III and IV were employed by the end of the year.

Now, by working through the WSM model, and making ESTEEM available to everyone we serve, we can provide the best opportunity for clients. In this way, they can become stable, manage their own lives, and succeed in more independent living situations—and, in some cases, enter part-time, full-time or competitive employment and move onto permanent housing.

In this scenario, not only will our clients benefit, but so also will homeless adults living on the streets, as spaces at our transitional residence and drop-in centers become available.

The ESTEEM program consists of four stages, or Tiers, that provide increasing responsibility and independence for clients. These Tiers allow participants and counselors to focus on issues of self-esteem and self-efficacy, including adult daily living abilities such as scheduling and time and

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ESTEEM: An Innovative Program

ESTEEM is a marriage of current vocational counseling theory and evidence-based practice of the supportive employment paradigm. The more traditional “on the job training” structure combined with weekly therapeutic sessions affords clients the opportunity to excel as they work on issues of personal growth and development. Unique components of the program include:

- Unlike most traditional TEPs (Transitional Employment Programs), ESTEEM staff work one-on-one on individual goals and vocational planning and find opportunities that fit clients' profiles
- The program supports Urban Pathways' “continuum of care” model by incorporating aspects of: IPRT (intensive psychiatric rehabilitative treatment), vocational counseling, supportive employment and competitive employment
- ESTEEM staff explore clients' personal barriers to employment such as family background, substance abuse history, fears of success/failure, and understanding behavioral patterns
- The incorporation of intensive counseling/crisis management when relevant

Mizuho Corporate Bank, Ltd. & Urban Pathways Spruce Up the Open Door Drop-In Center

On Saturday, September 9th, 50 employees from Mizuho Corporate Bank, Ltd. participated in Urban Pathways' Corporate Volunteer Day. Mizuho chose Urban Pathways as its New York partner for the bank's first US-wide day of community service. For four hours, the Mizuho volunteers, alongside Urban Pathways senior managers and staff members from The Open Door, painted the interior of the center to give it a fresh look.

Improving the environment within the Open Door will further its goal to provide clients - homeless men and women, the majority with mental illness - with hope and dignity, empowering them to better the circumstances of their lives.

This project was Mizuho's second volunteer effort with Urban Pathways. Last summer, employees donated 26 cases of hygiene products for The Open Door and its sister program, The Antonio G. Olivieri Center for Homeless Women. Each year, Urban Pathways spends over \$100,000 on such products. Freeing up even a portion of this expense allows program directors to increase critical services such as medical attention and housing placement and expedite our clients' move to permanent housing.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity for Mizuho Corporate Bank and its employees to continue to partner with Urban Pathways, and to show our appreciation for the effort that The Open Door puts into providing critically needed services every day of the year." said Mitsuhiro Nagahama, Managing Executive Officer of Mizuho Corporate Bank in New York.

Opened in 1988, The Open Door Drop-In Center offers the City's homeless access to meals, clothing, showers and rehabilitation and recovery programs as well as on-site medical, mental health and substance abuse assessments. In addition, utilizing a strong case management approach, the centers provide individual counseling, entitlement assistance, banking facilities, vocational training, money management and instruction in other independent living skills, all of which help clients successfully transition to housing.

For more information on The Open Door or how your organization can partner with Urban Pathways on a volunteer project, please email Karen Trella at ktrella@urbanpathways.org



ESTEEM *continued from page 1*

money management, as well as recognition and enhanced understanding of personal barriers. The ESTEEM program offers insight and support that often expedite the psychosocial development of the individual because the focus is brought back to the present, concrete, practical world accessed through work—whether stipended, part-time or full time, supportive or competitive employment. With each Tier individuals' proficiencies are reinforced and supported to optimize growth. Through practice of newly learned skill sets, and repetition of formerly learned ones, clients are best able to enhance their development. Components include “on-the-job” training placements in the areas of food services, maintenance, and clerical and messenger work; individual and group vocational counseling; job placement services; and referrals to community-based training and literacy/GED programs.

Implementation of the Esteem Expansion

To help the growing number of clients we expect to serve, ESTEEM must make the following adjustments:

- Increase the program director's job from 60% to full time
- Hire a second job developer to provide one-on-one job counseling, assistance with resume building and other job-related issues
- Hire a part-time associate to form new internship opportunities for Tier III participants
- Double the size of the existing ESTEEM computer lab

2007 Program Goals

- Double the number of ESTEEM program participants to at least 200 annually
- Increase the number of ESTEEM program participants who move into part- or full-time work from 16 to at least 40 annually
- Create partnerships with at least 10 new employers for ESTEEM Tier III program participants
- Create individual employment/vocational plans for at least 40 clients
- Create a 10-week computer training series for clients
- Create additional Tier I and II training positions

Patricia Herring: An Inspiration

Before Patricia Herring's grandmother died, she said, “Stay true to your personality.” Anyone who has met Patricia, a former client of Urban Pathways' Antonio G. Olivieri Center for Homeless Women, knows she has followed her grandmother's advice. So it came as no surprise when Patricia was honored with the New York City Department of Homeless Services' 2006 Barbara Kleinman Award, which recognizes positive attitude and a strong value system in the face of adversity.

Born in Harlem in 1953, Patricia had a turbulent childhood marked by physical abuse and stints in foster care. By her late teens, she had attempted suicide and begun a 30-year cycle of repeated incarceration, substance abuse and depression. Despite the life-long hardship, in 2001 Patricia landed a great job in food service at the Ellis Island Museum. For three years she enjoyed meeting tourists from around the world and serving a diverse clientele. Then in 2004, Patricia was laid off. She could not keep up with her expenses and eventually ended up on the street. After two weeks, she met an outreach worker who referred her to The Olivieri Center where her depression and psychosis were finally diagnosed. She was given appropriate medication and help applying for benefits, and was referred to a partner organization for substance abuse counseling. After six months Patricia moved into The Traveler's Hotel, Urban Pathways' transitional housing facility; four months after that, she was successfully referred to a supportive housing residence in the Bronx.

In a remarkably short time, Patricia achieved self-sufficiency and was able to live independently. Unfortunately, in January 2006, feeling disoriented and coughing up blood, she was rushed to the hospital. Doctors diagnosed lung cancer and ordered emergency surgery. When Patricia fell into a coma, friends and family, many from Urban Pathways, were constant fixtures at her bedside, anticipating the worst. Yet, with her trademark upbeat spirit, Patricia made an astonishing recovery, beating the odds and leading doctors to call her “the miracle baby.” With physical therapy successfully completed, she will soon begin additional treatment. A diabetic who smoked cigarettes for 30 years, she admits, “I've endured.”

This month, with over a year of sobriety, Patricia will graduate from her substance abuse program. She attributes much of her success to The Olivieri Center, where she learned to face her past and look forward to the future. “It has been hard to leave it all behind, to get past the guilt and the shame.”

Patricia hopes to inspire other women with similar histories. She regularly visits The Olivieri Center noting that “their door is always open and that's a wonderful thing.” Staff members are always glad to see her and clients enjoy spending time in her company. Patricia reminds them of where she has been and then, through her example, of where they can go. “Sometimes people just need a little push.”



Olivieri Center 25th Anniversary

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Antonio G. Olivieri Center for Homeless Women, one of the nation's earliest comprehensive 24-hour drop-in centers, which has pioneered a new model of reaching out to and serving homeless adults.

“So many times over the years, I have seen a new client come in from the street, in distress, nothing in her hands but a small brown bag or a hospital wrist band. Within a month, or even days, she will be looking well-groomed and carrying a large bag of clothing, will have become a part of the group and will be making steady strides toward something better. These are the experiences that make this work so fulfilling for me and make me proud to be a part of the Olivieri Center.”

- Beverly Johnson, staff member since 1981

Since opening, The Center has been a safe haven, a place where escaping life on the streets and receiving vital services is as easy as walking through a door. It started by providing basic survival needs for homeless women – food, clothing, showers and a respite from the street. Over the years, comprehensive social services, assistance in the areas of mental and physical health, recovery from substance abuse and addiction, and housing placement were added. While The Center remains, 25 years later, a “low demand/high reward” program, where any woman walking through that door may immediately begin receiving a rich array of social services, all aimed toward achieving stability



and housing, it is also far more than simply a service program – it is an ever-evolving community of women who not only rely on the support and professional assistance of skilled staff, but who draw on each other's strength to survive and to overcome homelessness.

In its first year of operation, The Olivieri Center was open seven days per week, eight hours a day. It was staffed with five full-time employees. With few other resources, women came in droves, reaching a high of 220 clients on Easter Sunday of 1981. With such demand The Center's operations were quickly reevaluated and The Center increased both hours of operation and staffing, with the goal of maintaining an active caseload of 65 to 75 women. By 1984, operating 12 hours each day, The Center saw an average of 70 women, served 204 meals per day.

Today, The Olivieri Center operates around the clock, providing clients with a number of basic necessities – food, clothing, showers, safe haven from the streets and a variety of social services. Staff provides rapid engagement and assessment of new clients to identify urgent needs and begin the process of movement toward shelter and housing immediately. More than 80% of the women who seek refuge at The Center are coping with severe and persistent mental illness; many face physical illness and disability, substance abuse and addiction, unemployment or lack of employment skills, and domestic violence. Staff prepares clients for transitional and permanent housing through a program of comprehensive case management, individual and group counseling, assistance with entitlements, money management education, therapeutic recreation activities, medication management and health education, readiness skills workshops, vocational training, on-site medical and psychiatric services, and housing placement services. In 2005, The Center provided services to 1,050 individual women, served 37,082 meals, and placed 75 clients in transitional or permanent housing. We are so proud of its remarkable history and its continued success.



Mary McCartney, Urban Pathways Board member presents awards of recognition to Marilyn Murphy (right) on behalf of her late husband, John Murphy, and (top right photo) Alessandro Olivieri on behalf of his father, Antonio Olivieri. Both men were crucial to the center's development and success.

Urban Pathways' Young Professionals Board Provides Financial and Programmatic Support in 2006-2007

Urban Pathways' Young Professionals Board (YPB) has developed a 12-month plan to support the organization's priorities. Activities will include:

- Executing a holiday gift program to provide gift bags for 600 UP clients and raise \$3,000 to support client projects at Cluster House (see below).
- Holding a spring benefit with a \$8,000 income goal.
- Organizing and running the silent auction at the Spring 2007 Annual Gala with a \$20,000 income goal.
- In collaboration with Cluster House staff, organizing nutritional and educational activities and classes to support the wellness self management program recently implemented at that site.

The YPB launched in 2003 as a collective of young people engaging with their community for its betterment. The Board supports Urban Pathways by providing invaluable fundraising, marketing and other technical assistance, as well as through various special events and volunteer activities, while promoting and advocating on behalf of the agency.

The Urban Pathways' Board of Directors elected Sonya Covington of Forest City Ratner Companies as its fourth Board President. Ms. Covington, a member of the Board since 2001, succeeds Gary Belsky of ESPN. Mr. Belsky, a Board member since 1996 and President for the past six years, assumed the title of President Emeritus along with Gerald Blume, Esq. of The Rockefeller Group, the Board's second President.

In other news, the Board welcomes two new members, Frank Wolf and Adam Heft, Esq. Mr. Wolf, formerly the Dean of Columbia University's School of Continuing Education has recently joined the Thomas J. Watson Foundation as Director of The Jeanette K. Watson Fellowship Program. Mr. Heft, currently Vice President and Assistant General Counsel for Goldman, Sachs & Co.'s Employment Law Group, got to know Urban Pathways earlier this year when he provided invaluable pro bono legal services.

Newly-elected Board President Sonya Covington with Presidents Emeritus Gary Belsky and Gerry Blume at the 2006 Spring Gala.



Keith Berger and Alex Orban, Young Professionals Board Co-Presidents

Young Professionals Board Members

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DROP-IN CENTERS

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