



# According to PLAN

Planned Living Assistance Network of Central Texas

*Serving individuals with mental illness and their families by providing an array of support services to address their immediate needs and to plan for the future.*

Editor: Karla Starkweather Co-editor: Anita Garner [www.planctx.org](http://www.planctx.org)

April 2013

## PLANCTX Update

by Anita Garner, CRC, CCM Treasurer

I am writing this on the official first day of Spring. There are signs of new life with the promise of change in the flowers and tree blossoms throughout Central Texas. This is in spite of the challenge of our ongoing drought! Are you doing your "Spring cleaning" and preparing your gardens? PLANCTX is doing so! We are showing signs of new life with the promise of change and are meeting our ongoing challenge to obtain funds through our fees, grants and fund raising.

I am glad to announce that our newsletter "According to PLAN" is being reinstated with Karla Starkweather agreeing to be our editor again. We have "new life" thanks to our new grant from the Methodist Health Ministry which provides one half the cost of services to 40 new clients. The Robert V. Miller Foundation will again allow PLANCTX to provide the PLAN'd Getaway this year in October. Part of our "Spring cleaning" and preparing includes recent contracts to have a financial audit and organizational review completed in the next few months. We invite you to be a part of our growing programs and also our preparations! Our Board meetings, as always are open, and are now the first Tuesday of every month at 4:30 in the conference room next to the PLANCTX office. We hope that you will consider serving on committees and possibly on our Board. Join us at our fund raiser, A PLAN'd Evening, to be held at Wally Workman Art Gallery on Thursday, April 25, from 6:00-9:00pm. "Cheers for a Cause," will include drinks, appetizers and a silent auction with the opening of the art exhibit, "A Private Revolution" by Fatima Ronquillo.

We close 2012, with having provided a year of significant and important services to our clients and families while meeting our financial challenges due largely to the success of the NASH Event! The 2013, PLANCTX "garden" has a good start from the many years of ongoing efforts of so many and the continuing ability to meet our challenges. Won't you join us in preparing the PLANCTX "garden" with the promise of your support?

## According to Plan is Back!

by Cecile DeWitt, PhD

*According to PLAN* is up and running. Our editor Karla Starkweather is ready to volunteer again her services.

Much has happened since the December, 2010, issue. Three events stand out:

- "PLAN'd Getaway" (see Liz Shelby's article in the December, 2010, issue.) PLAN'd Getaways took place April and November (2010), May and September (2011) and May and October (2012).
- A \$26,000 grant from the Methodist Healthcare Ministry (MHM)
- "The Nash Event" Alicia and John Nash came to Austin from September 13 – 17, 2012, for three full days of activities

A symposium honoring Alicia Nash took place at the AT&T Conference Center. The program, the sponsors, and the donors (cash and in-kind donations) are listed on our website. Fourteen workshops were selected. Because of a bomb scare, the presentations were abbreviated. In its forthcoming issues, *According to PLAN* will reproduce a few articles written by the presenters for the symposium.

To begin with we shall include:

- "Work and/or Benefits" The panel consisted of Cecile DeWitt, Jan DeWitt, and Clyde Farrell.
- "Men Do Care" by the Rev. Peter K. Stimpson

Other articles based on the workshops will appear at various times. The collection of *According to PLAN* issues since its creation by Helen Hardwig and Elizabeth Nash (no relation to John and Alicia) is an interesting record that flushes out the Corporate Notebook.

### *A PLAN'd Evening* *Cheers for a Cause*

Drinks, Appetizers, and Silent Auction  
Thursday, April 25, 6:00-9:00 pm  
Wally Workman Art Gallery  
1202 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tickets \$20 at PLANCTX.org

## Work and/or Benefits *by Cecile DeWitte, PhD.*

People with disabilities can lose their benefits when they earn even a very small income. I know someone who would lose important benefits if she earns more than \$12 a month.

I asked Clyde Farrell, a member of PLANCTX Board of Advisors, if income from a “sheltered” or “subsidized” employment counted as “income.” The answer is complex, in some cases it *does not* count as income, in some cases it *does*.

I bought an advocate manual recommended by Clyde Ferrell titled *Benefits Management For Working People with Disabilities*. It is an excellent manual available from Empire Justice Center (1 West Main Street, Suite 200, Rochester NY 14614, attn: Disability Benefits Unit; (585) 454-4060). It is useful to navigate the current very complex rules and regulations but it does not address the shortcomings of the system.

Losing benefits can be devastating, but renouncing work in order to remain eligible is a major blow on the road to recovery.

Work is more than a source of income. The value of work is the fulfillment of the individual, and his/her link to society.

The value of work should be the guiding principle of

legislation affecting people with disabilities. In spite of the variety of situations, such legislation must not be cumbersome. It must be “user friendly” to people who want to work.

When my daughter received her first paycheck since her illness forced her to quit her job as a technical editor, she burst with pride, “**My first paycheck since 1984.**” But when she lost her Medicare Savings Program (MSP) benefits because she had earned \$227 a month in 2010, she was devastated.

Through a long and stressful process and with some help from her PLANCTX care manager, she has been reinstated in MSP. It pays to explore all avenues before giving up. But she has given up work because she could earn no more than \$12/month without losing some of her benefits and because there is no meaningful employment that pays less than \$12 a month. She has less motivation for volunteering because, for her, it was a step toward gainful employment.

I am going to discuss the issue of gainful employment vs. government benefits with Disability Rights Texas to find out how we can advocate for legislation helping people on the road to recovery who want to go back to work without losing benefits.

## Men Do Care

*The Rev. Peter K. Stimpson, M.Th., M.S.W., L.C.S.W., B.C.D.,  
Executive Director, Trinity Counseling Service, Princeton, New Jersey*

Caregiving has been thought of as something done by women. In the twentieth century, a man’s duty was to work to support the family, and a woman was seen as providing nurturing at home to children and aging parents. “Women’s work” was seen as being sensitive and caring, and something to which they were more naturally drawn.

If a man were to be pulled into caregiving, it was thought that he would function more in the role of a case manager, arranging for home health aides or visiting nurses to come into the home to provide care. Or, perhaps he would be someone who would bring his wife to the doctor’s, run to the pharmacy for medications, or even pick up the duty of grocery shopping. Caregiving by men was seen as done from a safe emotional distance.

But today, many factors have changed and are forcing change in how and by whom caregiving occurs. Role reversals are more common with men caring for children at home, and women taking over a much larger percentage of the work force. Children are moving farther from home in our mobile society, and so are far less available to help their aging parents. And there are simply more aging par-

ents, as the baby boomers (1946-1964) are retiring at the rate of 10,000 a day!

Hence, caring for caregivers requires us to not only realize that there are more male caregivers, but also to focus more upon their needs. Men are often expected to be confident, to do rather than feel, to accomplish goals instead of discuss feelings. Men also have more acquaintances than deep friendships with people in whom they can confide and unload their feelings. Hence, when confronted with grief, anger, or frustration, coping is hard, perhaps relegated to holding it in, toughing it out, and blowing off steam by outside activities.

This workshop will draw attention to the fact that more men do care, can grow in expressing feelings, and suggest ways to help them both in terms of the emotional support of family and the use of counseling to increase their coping skills. The model developed at Trinity Counseling Service in Princeton will be explained, and numerous examples given.

A copy of the powerpoint and the 21-page handout is available for download at [www.planctx.org/NashEvent](http://www.planctx.org/NashEvent).

## The Nash Event *by The Nash Team—Cecille DeWitt, Liz Shelby and Leo De La Garza*

It all began in September 2010 when Cecile DeWitt discussed fundraising plans for PLANCTX with John and Alicia Nash. The first steps involved setting up a “Caregivers Fund in honor of Alicia Nash” and making plans for the Nashes to come to Austin. The Nashes were here from September 13 to 17, 2012, with three full days of activities.

The Nash Event was made possible by the donations of so many, including:

### **\$5,000 and over**

L.D. and Frances Collman  
Jeff and Gail Kodosky  
Wells Fargo Bank

### **\$2,500—\$4,999**

Patricia and Ed Harris  
Terry and Shannon McDaniel  
The Tocker Foundation  
Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc.

### **\$1,000-\$2,499**

Imme and Freeman Dyson  
Donald and Susan Evans  
St. David’s Foundation

### **\$500-\$999**

Phillip Burgieres  
Capital Area Psychological Association  
Ron and Cheryl Howard

### **\$50-\$499**

Carolyn M. Bates, Joan E. Berger, Chris B. and Amanda B. Brownson, Mary Alice Conroy, Gareth W. and Jane G. Cook, H.D. Falkenberg, John De La Garza, Leo De La Garza, Bernard and Pamela Greene, Mr. and Mrs. Sanford L. Gottesman, Lawrence A. Hauser, MD, Stormy M. Hull, Martita A Lopez , Robert J. McLaughlin, M. and D.D. McMahon, Dr. Robert and Miriam Minkoff, Phyllis Jack Moore, Mary Ellen Nudd and David A. Kerwin, Michael W. Perrin, James A. and Linda G. Prentice, Frank A. Pugliese, Julian L. Rivera and Melanie L. Gantt, Regina J. Rogers, W. Truett Smith.

First and foremost, thank you to the Nashes for their friendship and their contributions to the Nash Event.

Every aspect of the Nash Event was made possible by in-kind donation. There were 30 in-kind contributions listed in the program (and listed below) of the symposium held on September 14 at the AT&T Conference Center. Also, **Martha and Richard Coons** invited the donors to dinner at their home and **Jen Padron** arranged for the screening of *A Beautiful Mind* at the Alamo Drafthouse Theatre.

Thank you to all who made contributions of any kind to make the Nash Event a success!

## The Nash Event In-Kind Contributions

Alamo Draft House • Americus Diamond • Austin Area Home Health • Austin Case Management Association • Austin Convention and Visitor’s Bureau • Austin Digital Printing • Austin Film Festival • Austin Travis County Integral Care • Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center • Campus Club • Capital Area Psychologists Association • Carey Limousine • Cloverleaf Studios • Martha and Richard Coons • Custom Bookbinders • John De La Garza • Cecile DeWitt • Brandon DiNunno • Dobie Garage • Dianne Grammer, art donated by Jerry Grammer • Hogg Foundation for Mental Health • Luke Lindemann, pianist • Barbara Morgan • National Association of Social Workers, TX • Sarah Jones Nelson • Matthew Sanford • MariAnne Sexton, artist • Peter Stimpson • Eric Tate, videographer • John Wood, webmaster

## The Nash Event Symposium Presenters

Dr. Denise DeLaGarza, LPC, Center for Disability Studies

Bill Gilstrap, Director of Recovery & Peer Specialist Services, Bluebonnet Trails, Amy Pierce & Sarah Martinez

Professors Dr. Russell Poldrack, Dr. Marie Monfils, Dr. Michael Telch, & Dr. Chris Beevers - UT Austin Department of Psychology

Dr. Debbie Webb, Executive Director of PLAN of Central Texas, and Sharon Miller of the Robert V. & Benjamin G. Miller Fund

Judith Sokolow, MSW, LCSW, Austin Interfaith Inclusion Network & Suzanne Potts, MSW, MPH, One Star Foundation

Dr. Vijay Ganju, Secretary General of the World Federation for Mental Health

Cecile DeWitt, Jan DeWitt, & Clyde Farrell, attorney

Dr. Matthew Stanford, professor of psychology, neuroscience, and biomedical studies at Baylor University

Stephani Wolfe, UT Services for Students with Disabilities & Laura York, Dir. of Consumer Support Services, Texas Dept of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

Jan DeWitt, Tamara Moyse, Rosie Ortiz, Daniel Rossi, Sid Wattinger, Liz Shelby

Rev. Peter Stimpson, Executive Director, Trinity Counseling Services, Princeton, New Jersey

## Mental Health Matters, Just as Physical Health Does *by Anne Shelby Clark, MA, PLAN Board Member*

To have a broken bone or a dysfunctional organ in your body means a visit to the doctor is in order. Something is not working properly and may even interfere with your daily activities. To not get it treated would be foolish and wasteful for a timely recovery, and likely worsening the pain and/or ability to function well. So it is with that other part of the body—the brain, the most powerful organ in the body. This computer-like part sometimes also needs adjustment. It can get sick or temporarily broken and, without proper medical care and continued support, become very dysfunctional.

Good mental health care is cost effective. Early detection and intervention with proper medication and support can reduce the effects of mental illness, both for the individual and for society. Assistance through care management and peer support are needed to promote integration into the community as functional, productive and valued citizens. It even promotes recovery.

People with mental illness are more often victims of crime than perpetrators. Yet, the largest mental health

facilities in Texas are our jails. The average amount spent on mental health care in the US is \$129. In Texas, the average is \$39. The lack of affordable and available care and the stigma that prevents both recognizing and acknowledging its need continues to marginalize a segment of our society. These people can be very creative, bright, skilled in technology, funny, fun to be with, curious, caring individuals who just want to be the most they can be and join in the world in which they live as full participants. Mental illness doesn't have to mean the end of the world to them, but without access to good mental health care and support, it can be.

Mental health matters to us all. Some degree of mental illness affects one out of every four people. PLANCTX specializes in providing valuable support through care management, family counseling, peer support, therapy as needed, and outings for adults with mental illness and their families. *Because mental health matters.*

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*According to Plan* is available in PDF format on the PLANCTX.org website. Additional paper copies are available on request.