



# 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

[www.planctx.org](http://www.planctx.org)

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## President's Message: Looking Back on 2008 *by Marcia Toprac, Board President*

This past year was a great one for PLAN, both financially and programmatically. We are very thankful that PLAN was spared the consequences of the financial crisis that affected so many individuals, businesses, and non-profits in 2008. We saw our total income increase 77% from \$76,313 in 2007 to \$138,038 (including about \$17,000 in endowment donations) in 2008. Our endowment and quasi-endowment funds grew from \$20,867 to \$38,169 (an 83% increase). Our Founders Luncheon and Fundraiser, honoring Cecile DeWitt, Bob Englert, and Yvonne Hansen, was our best fundraising event ever in terms of net proceeds (over \$27,000). Even though expenses grew substantially with the addition of our wonderful new Executive Director, we ended the year with a net balance of \$37,943 and a reassuring cushion of cash in the bank. Though we certainly face another financially challenging year here in Austin, I feel assured that PLAN will continue growing and will make it through 2009 "in the black."

As you will note in the 2008 Income chart, like most non-profits, we are dependent on several sources for income. This year, the largest source of income was our program-related earned revenues (service fees, membership dues, etc.), followed by our special fundraising events. Grants from foundations and corporations and donations from individuals and businesses (including endowment contributions) also added significantly to our coffers.

As expected, more than three quarters of our total expenditures went towards staff salaries and related costs and contract services (including our CPSs - certified peer specialists). Another large expense category that you'll note in the 2008 Expenses chart is Travel and Meetings (primarily mileage reimbursements), which increased when we raised our

reimbursement rate as gas prices skyrocketed midyear. Our insurance expenses also increased this year because we added both liability insurance (for care managers and CPSs) and workers' compensation insurance.

We have not completely "closed the books" on 2008, but

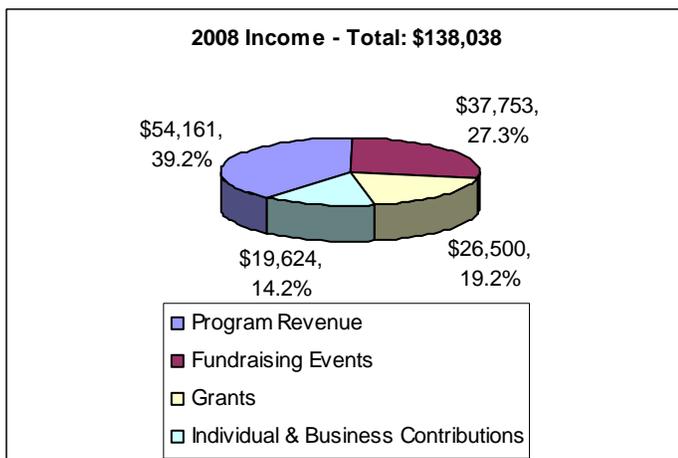


we do not expect our official financial reports to differ significantly from what has been reported here. If you would like copies of our official 2008 financial reports, please call or write the PLAN office.

On the program side, the highlight of this year was, undoubtedly, the hiring of Dr. Debbie Webb as our part-time Executive Director. In her first half year at the helm, Debbie focused her extensive clinical and programmatic experience on enhancing the "professionalism" of our services. She placed her efforts on refining our program policies and procedures and bringing our services in line with them, and on providing one-to-one and group supervision and in-service training for our care managers and CPSs.

She also placed high priority on quickly responding to inquiries about our services and established regular office hours so that our current and potential clients, staff, board and others, can hear a live voice or see a real person when they call or visit the office. Debbie's been working hard on improving our website, making it more accessible and helpful to both current and new members and clients. While "professionalizing" services took precedence over seeking new members and clients this year, we still experienced an increase in inquiries about our services and provided services to about 48% more people in 2008 than in 2007 (67, up from 45).

Exciting new services and an outreach campaign are already underway for 2009. Look out for news flashes about service offerings and events on our website, and be sure to catch Debbie's column in our next newsletter. ☆



## PLAN Members Receive Awards from NAMI Austin

by Jan DeWitt, Board Member, Certified Peer Specialist

On November 24, 2008, two PLAN members were given awards by NAMI Austin (National Alliance on Mental Illness)! Willie Williams received the Professional Award and Jan DeWitt won the Harold Scogin Sunshine Award. The Professional Award is given to a professional who promotes the principles of NAMI. Past awardees have included Carl Schock, superintendent of Austin State Hospital (ASH). The Harold Scogin Sunshine Award is named after June Scogin's (PLAN/NAMI member) late husband. Harold was one of the early presidents of NAMI Austin and served two separate terms. He and June joined the Austin chapter of NAMI in the mid 1980s. It was their son's, Robert, idea to start an award in his father's name. The Sunshine Award is given to a consumer (client) who has demonstrated significant progress in their recovery, especially, by helping other consumers. Past awardees have included Diana Kern, PLAN/NAMI board member and

founder of Expect Recovery! Inc. Jan has been working hard on her recovery by volunteering at ASH, Self-Help Advocacy Center (SHAC) and Austin Travis County MHMR. She also does some paid work for PLAN as a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS). Besides taking the CPS training, Jan has taken several other classes/training in peer support and advocacy. Both Willie and Jan are board members of PLAN as well. Big congrats to both of them!

PLAN also received an award for our participation in the 2008 NAMIWalk (October 4). On December 7, awards were given to the top 10 fundraising organizations. PLAN was among them! Thanks to Care Manager, Patrick Guy, for being our team leader! Thanks to Board Member/Grant Writer, Liz Shelby, for raising so much money, again! Thanks to Executive Director, Debbie Webb, for all her work! ☆

**PLAN wishes to express much appreciation to Liz Nash for serving as the *According to PLAN* newsletter editor for the last several years!**

Pictured right: Gerry McKimney and the B-Cats Band perform at the Founders Day Luncheon and Fund-raiser.



## Two Simple Fundraising Opportunities for PLAN Supporters

by Liz Shelby, Board Member

What if PLAN earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. I recently checked and we had \$5.97 on 523 searches. You use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! Simply go to [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) and enter "Planned Living Assistance Network of Central Texas" as the charity you

want to support.

You can also contribute to PLAN by choosing to do your online shopping at [www.GoodShop.com](http://www.GoodShop.com) which will generate a donation of up to 37 percent of each purchase to "Planned Living Assistance Network of Central Texas" (or any other favorite charity you select). More than 900 top retailers and travel sites including Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, eBay, Expedia, Gap, Target and Macy's have joined forces with GoodShop to donate part of every purchase to the charity or your choice or school, at no additional cost to you. Please spread the word to your family and friends. ☆

Here's what you do:

1. Go to [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com)
2. Download the tool bar to Internet Explorer (website has instructions for Firefox and Safari):
3. Download the toolbar - When the download window appears, select "Open" to launch the toolbar installer.
4. Then simply follow the installer instructions.



## A Collaboration Between Public and Private Resources

by Cecile DeWitt, Chair, Resource Development Committee and Board Vice President

Cecile DeWitt, Marcia Toprac and Liz Shelby of the Resource Development Committee, and Debbie Webb, Executive Director, met with Kenneth Placke, Director of Behavioral Health, and Louise Lynch, Director of Network Development and Management at Austin Travis County Mental Health Retardation Center (ATCMHMR) on December 30, 2008. We explored the possibility of collaboration between PLAN and ATCMHMR. ATCMHMR is transitioning more than 400 clients to community services and linking them to primary health providers/clinics in the community due to their stable recovery and successful completion of their treatment goals. As part of the transition process, ATCMHMR will assist these clients in developing Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP). The Center leadership anticipates that engagement in

WRAP planning and peer support activities will decrease the likelihood that the transitioning clients will need to reenter ATCMHMR's more intensive services.

We discussed ways that PLAN's Certified Peer Specialists and professional Care Managers can assist the transitioned clients achieve their WRAP recovery goals and maintain stability. The ATCMHMR and PLAN representatives agreed that a public/private non-profit collaboration such as this could help ensure long term stability and continuing growth and recovery for the transitioning clients who may require additional supports, and could be beneficial for both organizations. With ATCMHMR's support, PLAN will seek grants to fund this initiative. ★

### PLAN Membership Report

by Becky Lilljedahl, Chair, Membership Committee

Have you ever wondered exactly what you get for your annual membership in PLAN of Central Texas, Inc.?

Here's what 22 cents a day buys you:

- Consumer Socials once a month, usually held on the third Saturdays of each month.
- Membership Socials throughout the year for consumers and family members.
- Our newsletter.
- Free professional initial assessment and planning time with purchased services such as care management.
- Quick access to PLAN staff and priority if/when your family needs to add or increase services.

In 2009, that will mean 17 opportunities to mix with other consumers and families for "get acquainted" games, making friends, and connecting! It also allows you to access customized, family centered care management services for adults who have mental illness, educational support groups for consumers and family members, peer assistance and other services only offered by PLAN in the Austin area.

#### Tentative Dates of 2009 Membership Socials and meetings:

- Saturday, February 28, 2009: First Presbyterian Church, 8100 Mesa (near intersection of Spicewood Springs and Mesa in Northwest Hills), time TBA (likely to be 12 - 2pm). Light refreshments provided.
- Second Tuesdays for Tea and Chinese Food from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm...ice breaker games, film, meet new members...all for the price of your meal! China Palace on Airport Blvd, between N. Lamar and Highland Mall. Dates: Tuesday, May 12, Tuesday, June 9, Tuesday, July 14
- Annual Membership Meeting with Pot-Luck (Thanksgiving Celebration). Lunch: Saturday, November 7, 2009

Check the PLAN website and future newsletters for updates.

#### So...when and how do I pay my 22 cents a day for this great service?

**When:** You can join PLAN and pay your first year dues any time. Dues are renewable once a year in the month you initially joined. In order to attend socials and membership meetings or to receive PLAN care management services, membership must be current.

**How:** Make your check for \$80 payable to PLAN of Central Texas.

**Mail to:** PLAN of Central Texas at PO Box 4755, Austin TX 78765-4755,

**OR** pay on our website: [www.planctx.org](http://www.planctx.org) using MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express via PayPal.

Thanks for helping keep PLAN in business to continuing specializing in serving families facing mental illnesses! ★



Founders Luncheon Honoree Yvonne Hansen with Debbie Webb



Founders Luncheon Honoree Bob Engert with Becky Lilljedahl



Founders Luncheon Honoree Cecile DeWitt with Liz Shelby

## Peer Socials: Networking and Fun

by Jan DeWitt, Board Member, Certified Peer Specialist

We held our Christmas party peer social on December 20, 2008. We had a great turnout and I think we all had fun! There were eight peers besides Stephanie (Care Manager/Peer Social Facilitator) and her family, Annette (newest PLAN Care Manager), Anita, Rita and Betty (PLAN Board Members), Debbie (Executive Director) and a few parents. Good food, good drink (non-alcoholic) and good fellowship made for a great time! It was really nice how many people (I'm not even sure who all) brought so much good food. There was almost too much, but it didn't go to waste. Peers took some home and the rest was taken to an ATCMHMR halfway house, thanks to Debbie! Anita deserves a lot of credit for leading us all in caroling, along with Sven. I even sang one song in French by myself! All in all, it was a good time. The peers appreciate the generous Christmas gifts the board gave them.

Peer socials are held once a month, usually, the third Saturday from noon to 2 p.m. Usually the peers (consumers/clients) attend without their family members though exceptions are occasionally made. It is a time for the peers to get together

and have fun! Although it is not a support group, we are pretty supportive of each other. Stephanie is our fearless facilitator and she does a great job! She doesn't act like a therapist. She just treats us as equals which is what we all expect.

We meet at different places each month, depending on the activity. We've been bowling a number of times over the years, as well as going to museums and parks, and occasionally movies or live theater. The activity depends not only on the season and weather, but also on the funds available from PLAN. Grants are occasionally available for the specific purpose of peer socials. Sometimes, PLAN even has money for eating at a reasonable restaurant. Strangely, we seem to get the biggest turnouts when the activity involves food!?!

If you are a peer and you want to be on our call list for the Peer Socials, please let us know: Call Stephanie Dowbusz at (512) 535-3502 or email her at [frankensteph@gmail.com](mailto:frankensteph@gmail.com).

You can also check out the PLAN website: [www.planctx.org](http://www.planctx.org) and click on Peer Socials for information about the upcoming events. ★

**PLAN Board of Directors** Marcia Toprac, PhD, President • Cecile DeWitt, PhD, Vice President • Anita Garner, CRC, CCM, Co-Secretary • Yvonne Hansen, EdD, Co-Secretary, Rita Hornak, Treasurer • Phil Cates • Jan DeWitt, BA, CPS • Adrienne Kennedy-Puthoff, MA • Diana Kern • Gary Knight, CFP • Becky Lilljedahl, BS • Liz Shelby, MEd • Deborah Stote, PhD • Betty Wattinger • Willie Williams, MS, LCDC, CAS • Bob Englert, JD, Emeritus

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