

# ACCORDING TO PLAN



## The Time to PLAN is NOW

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### Your Choice:

- Use case managers who can serve your loved one's needs for the long term, or use those that are convenient for the moment
- Have follow-on care givers who understand and know your family member, or depend on the kindness of strangers
- Assure that your loved one will have continued access to government benefits, including Medicaid, or hope for the best

Many of you have been friends and supporters of PLAN since its inception. Yet, many of our most loyal friends have not become clients of PLAN. Neither have many NAMI members.

I understand this. Every day in my work, I encounter very serious resistance to long-term planning for the care of a mentally ill family member. There are many, strong reasons for this.

Perhaps the biggest one is no one wants to think about their own demise, yet alone their own disability, or even a possible relocation. Family care-givers may not have wished for that role, but they have risen to the challenge with relish, and have done a fantastic job at it. In addition to resisting the thought that, one day, they may not be around to care for their loved one; they also resist the notion that anyone else could do their job.

Yet, the choice is not between them and someone else. It is, eventually, between someone else and no one at all. Or, perhaps, between someone who understands the needs, history, and wishes of their loved one, and someone completely ignorant of the situation.

Not planning for the future is easy. All it takes is not spending the time and the little bit of money it takes. Of course, the consequences of not planning are far from easy, and often include relapses, homelessness, indifferent strangers filling in as "care-givers," and serious risks to continued qualifications for government benefits, including disability payments and Medicaid.

What do you need to do? Talk to PLAN. It may be time to begin to think about a Care Plan and setting up of a Special Needs Trust. It may also be time to let PLAN into the picture, such

as with our case management, respite, and advisory services.

PLAN can do a lot for you and your family. We have care coordinators/case managers who can supplement the care families lovingly provide today, and help replace it tomorrow. Come, join our social events, meet with our Principal Care Coordinator, browse through our web site ([www.planctx.org](http://www.planctx.org)).

You will turn to planning on your own time. But, if you get involved with PLAN, and avail yourself of our compassionate and professional services, that time probably will be sooner. That will mean greater assurance of long-term quality care for your family member, for as long as he/she needs it, and peace of mind for yourself.

Given these comments and your own reflection on the subject, we're confident you will soon take advantage of our services.

## What is PLAN?

PLAN is a non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the long-term planning and services needs of families caring for special-needs adult children. *PLAN supplements the caregiving of families today – and replaces it tomorrow.* This means we:

- ☼ encourage long-term planning for special-needs families;
- ☼ assist with the planning process;
- ☼ fill-in for primary care-givers when they are no longer able to fulfill that role;
- ☼ host enriching social events to break down the isolation of people with serious disabilities.

## From Becky Lilljedahl, PLAN's New President



Dear PLAN members, supporters, and friends:

January, 2004: a new calendar year, a new start, a bright future! As your new PLAN Board President I want to first

thank my two predecessors, Cecile DeWitte and Bob Englert, for the foundation they have laid. Their insight, wisdom and many hours of work have given birth to PLAN of Central Texas. I am thankful and relieved to know they both remain fully active in PLAN!

In this, my first newsletter contribution since assuming this office, I want to ask something of you, tell you my vision of PLAN, and share some things about myself.

People talk about their plans all the time. Vacation plans, wedding plans, diet and exercise plans, retirement plans. Unfortunately, many plans fall in the category of "a-round-tuit" plans, as in "someday I'll-get-around-to-it." NOW is the day to PLAN ahead both financially and socially for our loved ones who suffer chemical brain imbalances (a.k.a., mental illnesses).

*I challenge every care-taker reading this newsletter to set aside 30 minutes per day for the next 30 days to review and record your plans for the care of your family-member in the event of your own severe disability or death. WHO would do the things you now do to ensure that family member's best care?*

To assist with this procedure, call the PLAN office and order a life-time care-outline/form for a reasonable cost of \$25. Allow 10-14 days for delivery, and set a goal of completion of the forms by March 1. As an incentive to spur one another on, I'm proposing that everyone who completes the form and sends in a "completion of form" slip to the PLAN office by March 1 be treated to a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to Randall's!

While PLAN's presidency is not an office I either craved or sought, it is, however, one I am very much determined to succeed in.

*"I see that same invisible design all about me. Sometimes it is a matter of faith that even in the sorrows and tragedies of our lives there is a plan, a design, a reason...."*

I believe in PLAN, and know, from the bottom of my heart, that PLAN is needed, and that it fills a void in the care of persons with mental illness and other long-term disabilities. I am confident that we can meet the needs that families have for long-term planning, for answers to pressing social service and benefit questions, for case management and respite service, and, replacing the care provided by parents or siblings when they can no longer fulfill that role.

I know we can succeed because:

- We have the talent needed to do so – with our dedicated, volunteer

Board of Directors, with our fabulous volunteers, with our extremely talented and professional Care Coordinator, and with our jack-off-many-trades Executive Director;

- We have laid the proper groundwork in prior months (and years) refining our organizations, our communications, our marketing, and how we provide Care. This effort has been lengthy, but enables us to offer services with compassion, reflection, and experience;

- We are following the path laid down by over two dozen other PLAN organizations in other parts of the country;

PLAN is vitally needed --- to ensure the continuity of care, and to give family care-givers a well-needed break from their tireless care-giving efforts.

And about me? I have a strong hunch that what really is relevant is not my degree, my teaching experience or honors, my work in advertising, or my experience as the mother and sister of a special needs family member. What is most relevant is what motivates me every day. To explain that, look up with me, after the sun goes down.

Starry, starry night! Step outside and look up! The heavens declare the glory of God! I grew up in Amarillo. In the Texas panhandle, the sky cannot be escaped or ignored...the expanding cosmos explodes in the brilliant night sky. By day, clouds are giants at play above the scrubby plains beneath. The panhandle sun infuses the mornings and evenings with spectacular displays of golds,

**Becky's letter is continued on p.3**

## President's Message (continued from page 3)

reds, pinks, and oranges. My fondest memories of childhood are of family



campouts in nearby Palo Duro Canyon where I slept outside on a little cot and pondered the heavens.

Even at that early age I was struck with an inner awareness that the stars were not just capriciously flung into their orbits—that in the beauty of their majesty there was an unseen Hand and plan at work. Now I am in my late fifties, and I see that same invisible design all about me. Sometimes it is a matter of faith that even in the sorrows and tragedies of our lives there is a plan, a design, a reason...and that we echo this incredible mandate to create, to plan, when we utilize all our talents and gifts to work together for good!

*Becky*



## SPONSOR THIS NEWSLETTER



PLAN is proud of the new look of its newsletter – with more articles, more photos, a sharper appearance (OK, OK, we're getting there!), and even a reprint from *The Economist*. We think the new look and content will be more helpful to our readers, just as our Web site is more helpful to those caring for people with long-term disabilities.

We're looking for a newsletter sponsor. That is, we're looking for someone who will donate \$800 to cover the cost of the newsletter. We would be honored to acknowledge the sponsoring gift in the sponsored issue, if the donor wishes. For information, call the PLAN office at 512.851.0901, or e-mail us at [sponsor@planctx.org](mailto:sponsor@planctx.org).

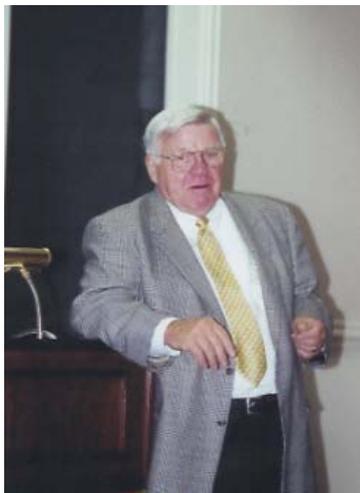
Is it time for your contribution to PLAN?

Help is help area families in need — .

Send in your contribution today!

Need information on planning?

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



Snapshots from PLAN's Annual Meeting, October 29<sup>th</sup> clockwise from top left: 1) Bob Ploger (founder of PLAN of North Texas), Betty Ploger, Sandi Worley; 2) King Davis talking about future of Hogg Foundation; 3) new PLAN Vice President Yvonne Hansen; 4) new board member Lisa Belli; 5) listening to Dr. Davis' presentation; 6) Treasurer Anita Garner with Barbara André.; 7) President-Elect Becky Lilljedahl; center) Bob Englert, presiding.



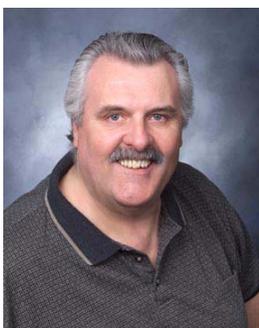
**Know anyone who would benefit from PLAN or this newsletter?**

**Pass it along to them—or give us their address and we will be happy to send them one!**

## PLAN is on the Radio !

In a major step towards our goal of educating the public about the importance of long-term planning for families caring for seriously disabled adult children, PLAN has taken to the air-waves. A series of 60-second commercials is now running on KVET (98.1 FM) and KIXL (970 AM).

PLAN's ad urges families to think about the long-term needs of their loved ones and to plan accordingly. It offers PLAN's help, both in the planning process and in fulfilling the family's planning goals.



Tom Allen, KVET-FM

PLAN was very fortunate when KVET on-the-air personality Tom Allen volunteered to be the voice behind the ad on that station. KIXL also generously volunteered a radio professional to record their ad.

Rob Teir, PLAN's Executive Director, says that the ads "are a great way to inform the Austin community that PLAN is here and ready to serve." "There are thousands of families caring for a person with

a serious mental illness who need to think about planning. If we succeed in prompting them to do this, we will have performed an enormous community service."

Becky Lilljedahl, incoming PLAN President, added: "The ads reflect PLAN's leapfrog advancement during the past twelve months, from a good idea to an organization ready and able to provide quality service to the families that need us."

If you have not heard the ad, you can e-mail Rob and he can send you a digital version of it. Rob's e-mail is [robt@planctx.org](mailto:robt@planctx.org).

## Planning: Necessary, not Sufficient

By Bob Englert

Let's say you have a Supplemental Needs Trust to supplement government benefits. Also, let's say you have a Care Plan.

You probably feel that, with these documents in place, your loved one will be well taken care of when you are no longer in place as a care-giver.

Do not, I say, *do not become complacent* to the point where you feel that these two documents are all that is necessary in order to care for your disabled loved one. You wouldn't buy a suit without trying it on and having it tailored to fit you. You certainly would not buy an automobile without a test drive. So, too – if you want PLAN to work for you and your loved one, you must take a PLAN "test drive," to see what, if anything, needs to be fine tuned. This will help ensure that your loved one's needs and expectations will be met for the long term.

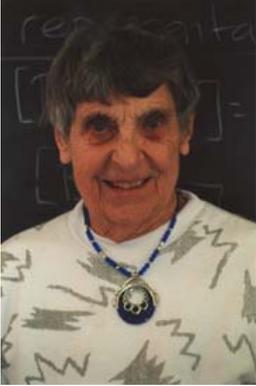
We have a professional Care Coordinator, Elton Woolsey, who furnished case management and navigational care services. Elton is available to work with PLAN clients. The charge is \$45 per hour – well below most similar professional care from someone with that level of experience. I strongly urge you to test drive PLAN. Find both the kind and extent of services you want for your family member, to ensure the best continuum of care for the people you love.



More pictures from PLAN's Annual Meeting: from L to R: Genevieve Hearon, Board member Jan DeWitt, King Davis

From the Desk of Cecile DeWitt

## CARING FOR AN ORCHARD ABOUT TO BEAR FRUIT



PLAN has reached a stage analogous to that of an orchard almost ready to bear fruit for the first time. This is the time when the orchard needs the most careful tending. Similarly, for

the ideas and effort behind PLAN to bear fruit and benefit the community, we need to strengthen our respective contributions so that PLAN becomes financially stable by 2005. This implies:

\* Increasing the number of families whom we serve

\* Raising money until enough service fees make PLAN a viable business.

My current contributions include helping Rob Teir draft a proposal to the Seawell-Elam Foundation. The Foundation gave PLAN a grant of \$10,000 in 2001 – PLAN's very first grant. Robert Elam Roth, President of the Foundation, visited Rob and me at the PLAN

*"We need to strengthen our respective contributions so that PLAN becomes financially stable by 2005.?"*

office last Spring, and we had an opportunity for discussing PLAN's goals with him.

The Foundation's calendar calls for an inquiry letter to be submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup>, and, if selected, a full proposal in January. We have used the imagery of the critical need of an orchard before its first fruit-bearing season in our second approach to Seawell-Elam. We have planted the trees, they look good; we are still within a critical period, but we can already see encouraging early signs of our 'first crop.'



### Factoid:

**More U.S. servicemen who served in Vietnam died from suicide than from combat (65,000 vs. 58,000)**

### PLAN WISH LIST

The PLAN office would be very grateful if the following were donated:

- ☐ QuickBooks software
- ☐ USB chords
- ☐ Carrying case for notebook computer
- ☐ Desktop photocopier
- ☐ Digital projector
- ☐ Small office table

## Case Manager, Care Coordinator — Available to Help Now

PLAN is not just about providing services when primary family care-givers are no longer in the picture. We can help now. We can supplement family care, and assist with such issues as social security, ATCMHMR services, respite care, etc ( a complete list of services is on our web site).

Our Care Coordinator is currently available MOST WEEKDAY EVENINGS, 6-8 p.m., and on Saturdays. For an appointment, call the PLAN office, 512.851.0901. Appointments and the professional time of the PLAN Care Coordinator are on a fee-for-service basis.



# Locked Up

## Prisons have replaced hospitals as the main home for the mentally ill

*(reprinted with permission from The Economist. The article originally appeared in the Economist print edition on November 13, 2003 © 2003 The Economist)*

IN AN Illinois prison, one inmate hears voices of dead people. To relax, he cuts his legs and arms, and has been trying to eat his own flesh. In Indiana, another prisoner believes there is a radio in his nerves and often picks at his ear to find the receiver. These two are not alone. The American Psychiatric Association has estimated that as many as one in five of those behind bars has a serious mental illness.

Some 300,000 people in American prisons suffer from mental disorders ranging from major depression and post-traumatic stress to schizophrenia—three to four times more than the number in mental-health hospitals. In a recent report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) argued that the penal system is “not only serving as a warehouse for the mentally ill but is also acting as an incubator for worse illness and psychiatric breakdowns.”

Fifty years ago, says HRW, more than half a million Americans lived in public psychiatric hospitals. Today, proper hospitals house fewer than 80,000 people. This is largely a sign of progress. The development of new drugs has made it possible for the mentally ill to be treated outside hospital. And there is far better legal protection to prevent people from being locked up against their will.

Nevertheless, things have not gone to plan. When many of the country's mental-health hospitals were shut down in the 1960s, the idea was that patients would be looked after by local health systems. Instead, the men-

tally ill often have little access to treatment, and many have ended up on the streets. According to the National Resource Centre on Homelessness and Mental Illness, up to one in four homeless people has a serious mental illness.

Once on the streets, and with only meager health care, it is often only a matter of time before a mentally ill person commits a crime and is sent to jail. For instance, the number of mentally ill in Santa Clara County's jails jumped by 300% in the four years after a nearby Californian state hospital closed down. Another study showed that the arrest rate of mentally ill people rose five-fold in the first eight years after the rules tightened about whom was allowed into mental hospitals.

Tougher sentencing policies are also pushing mentally ill people towards prison. America's prison population has more than quadrupled over the past 20 years, largely because of the war on drugs. The minor misdemeanors for which mentally ill people get arrested increasingly draw prison sentences: three-quarters of the new arrivals in state prisons are there for non-violent offences. And the famous “not guilty by reason of insanity” plea is increasingly rarely used. Shocked by the fact that John Hinckley used this defense to escape punishment for shooting Ronald Reagan in 1981, many states restricted a defendant's right to plead insanity. Utah, Montana and Idaho abolished it.

There is a perverse economic logic in the mentally ill ending up in prison, rather than hospitals. American prisons, after all, have been far more suc-

**“Once on the streets, and with only meager health care, it is often only a matter of time before a mentally ill person commits a crime and is sent to jail. “**

cessful than mental-health systems at protecting their budgets from cost-cutting politicians. It is also cheaper to house the mentally ill behind bars than in a state hospital. On the other hand, the prisons are not designed to treat the mentally ill. They are bad at rehabilitating “normal” prisoners, and they usually make mentally ill people iller still.

The problem has got bad enough for some politicians to reconsider the current tough policy, and try to divert non-violent mentally ill offenders away from prisons. There are now 90 special mental-health courts in more than 20 states; these can sentence minor offenders to treatment programs rather than prison. A bill is being considered in Congress that would provide money for such courts, as well as more cash for treatment and housing. It will cost money; but Congressman Ted Strickland, a Democrat from Ohio who has sponsored the bill, says that the alternative is accepting “incarceration and homelessness as part of life for the most vulnerable population among us”.



## CHRISTMAS COOKIE BAKING CLASS

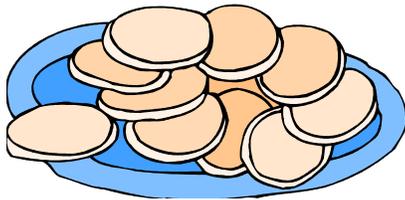
*From the desk of Sandy Englert*

*Ed: Ms. Englert provided this article to PLAN in December; her warm holiday greetings were retained.*

Alecia Regan taught us several methods to make Christmas cookies.

First of all, she gave us the best sugar cookie homemade from scratch recipe. Alecia had sample cookies displayed on a tray. The homemade from scratch best sugar cookie was my favorite.

Alecia used peanut butter refrigerated cookies to make peanut butter blossoms, which she rolled in red sugar baked at 350° for ten minutes, then added Hershey's® kisses while the cookies were warm.



Alecia also cut out holly leaves from Refrigerated Dough Sugar Cookies. She baked these at 350° for ten minutes as well.

The aroma of the house smelled like warm peanut butter cookies and sugar cookies. We ate warm cookies.

We also had mint Oreo® cookies dipped in Ghirardelli® melted chocolate. Anita brought chocolate Hershey's® Santas for everyone. We had a nice visit. Elton is now with us for our monthly consumer social group. Sid and I were at my home.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you.

## The 47 Year Itch

Lately, I've been obsessing on the number 47.

What does 47 mean? Answer: it is the number of years between age 18, when children become adults, and age 65, when adults become seniors.

For persons suffering with long-term disabilities, this 47 year span is crucial to their wellbeing.

Society loves, and tends to care for, children. Some institutions only serve children (such as children's hospitals and children's museums). The public school system, similarly, gives special attention to children with disabilities. The Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon prompts individuals and corporations to donate millions of dollars to support "Jerry's kids."

Now, fast forward to age 65. Seniors can access all manner of services, many financed by the Medicare Program. For-profit, non-profit, and public and private institutions all offer a grand array of services and programs, often at a discount, for seniors. I get mail from senior centers, and invitations to senior dances, senior meals, senior games and entertainment.

There is a story about a senior couple who checked into a hospital. On weekends, they enjoyed three meals a day plus snacks, a private room, and took all of this in at a bargain rate – as the hospital stay was covered by Medicare. Much easier on the check-book than a stay at a hotel!

The story is not true – but it does serve to illustrate the services that are available to seniors.

# 47

are available after age 18 and before age 65. This 47 year span of time is, therefore, when the disabled population will suffer the effects of fewer agencies and less funding, from both public and private sources.

PLAN of Central Texas bridges this gap, or, at least, it can do so with the help of your time and treasure. The mission of PLAN is to serve the disabled with social and educational programs, as well as respite and follow-on care. We have professional staff available to engage your loved one – now. In addition, we can offer you assistance in preparing a Care Plan, to have in place when you can no longer serve. I have taken advantage of these services. I hope you will too.

With my best wishes for the New Year,

*Bob*

Bob Englert  
PLAN President Emeritus

# PLAN'S BULK MAIL ADVENTURE

I did it. I successfully got a Bulk Mail permit for a PLAN, and its first bulk mailing on its way.

Oddly, I have a sense of accomplishment that rivals completing the standard PLAN presentation, getting an op-ed in the Washington Post, or graduating at the top of my class in law school. Leaving the post office, I was tempted to break out champagne.

While getting a bulk mailing for an operating, local non-profit organization out should not be that challenging – it is. The rules and procedures are complicated and cumbersome (the mailers guide is over 100 pages). As one example, there are over 40 bulk mail postal rates, depending on which zip code the piece is going to, and how many pieces, and what size, are going to each three digit zip code region.

Putting aside the theory that these rules and procedures are just an example of a government monopoly gone amuck, they do seem purposely designed to weed out the unwary, the unorganized, or the undiligent.

Even getting started is not easy. It took multiple trips to post office branches in Austin before I was able to learn which post office accepts bulk mail permit applications. One does, in northeast Austin. Perhaps the most telling answer to my question was one postal clerk who said, "yes, there is a post office that accepts these applications, and it's somewhere outside of downtown. I'm not sure where it is." I was comforted to learn from this that I would not have to search all of the 57,268,900 square miles of the Earth's land-mass – downtown Austin could be eliminated.

Someone eventually knew an area, but not an address. I then searched the Web for post offices in the area, and made an educated guess. Arriving at the service desk, I was told I was in the right complex, but the wrong room and the wrong building. Applications are not taken by postal clerks that sell stamps and accept packages.

Once at the bulk mail office, I learn that the desk that takes bulk mailings does not take bulk mailing permit applications — same building, different room.

Once in the apparently correct place, I was able to apply for a bulk mail permit and a non-profit rate permit. The former, not the latter, was downloadable from the Postal Service's Internet site.

I also learned that bulk mailings may be done by pre-cancelled stamps (without additional permit fees), or using pre-printed permits (for an additional \$150 permit fee). For now, we chose the former method.

Shortly thereafter, we had our first opportunity for a bulk mailing – with our October newsletter. I learned that, if we folded the newspaper, it would, just barely, qualify as a "letter." If we did not, it could be bulk mailed as a "flat," at greater expense. We needed 200 pieces to qualify under the regulations – we had 214. We needed 150 pieces to the same three digit zip code prefix to qualify for a further discount for those pieces. We had 151 to prefix 787. Lucky day, I suppose.



And, we needed pre-cancelled stamps. Not surprisingly, they could not be purchased at just any post office. Back to the post office that accepted the permits—but, this time, to the regular service desk there.

These stamps came in a block of 3,000 – only. Furthermore, only cash and checks could be taken for them. Although the postal service accepts major credit cards, it does not do so when the stamps have over 20% white background, and when Jupiter's moons cover more than 20% of Sagittarius. Whatever, I go to the car to retrieve my checkbook.

*Cont. on next page*

# RANDALL'S GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

## PLAN's Number: 9302

The next time you are at Randall's, pick up a Remarkable Card application (if you don't already have the card). The applications are at the Courtesy Booth, and can be activated while you stand there.

If you name PLAN as the program you would like to support (they know us by our number, 9302), Randall's will donate to us a percentage of your

shopping total — at no cost to you! Also, Randall's provides all kinds of discounts, giveaways, and other benefits to holders of the Remarkable Card. If you already have a card, please add PLAN's number to your record at the store.

Help yourself, help PLAN, help the community. There are few better ways to shop.




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## Bulk Mail, cont.

Back at the post office bulk mail center, I faced perhaps my most formidable challenge in this whole ordeal: *the place has no public restroom*. This is so despite that the fact that even experienced, routine bulk mailers rarely enter the place for less than two hours.

Trying to ignore this, I learned further how the pieces are to be bundled, I stamped them, had them weighed, and had them carefully inspected and checked by two (!) inspectors. I am reasonably confident that firearms and counterfeit currency addressed directly to Osama ben Laden would have received less attention than our humble newsletter. While I am confident that the newsletter neither exceeded the maximum size nor compromised national security, I learn, to my horror, that we lacked the needed *approved* strap around the pieces going outside of the three Austin-area three-digit zip codes.

Happily, a photocopied list is available of places where this item can be purchased. For now, though, a kind postal employee took mercy on me, and gave me an approved strap, while instructing me where I could purchase more.

The mailing then passed inspection, and I was able to get into the next line to pay. You see, the fellow in charge of weighing and inspection verifies my mailing

form, but is not authorized to accept payments. By now, I assume, correctly, that cash or checks are the accepted forms of payment.

Does this save PLAN money? Yes. This newsletter would have cost 60 cents per piece. The bulk mail rate depended (as you now know) on where it was going to — but the entire mailing cost less than \$50, rather than the \$128.40 it would have cost if it went first-class mail.

While the process does take staff time, I suspect there is a learning curve, and it should take less time each bulk mailing attempt. Besides, there is a value in learning and practicing patience, and marveling anew at the advantage that socialist structures have. The U.S. Post Office, after all, does not have to worry about its customers going to a competitor — competition is a federal criminal offense. I think I now have a better idea why.

In any case, we probably should get used to all of this. We now have about 2,800 more bulk mail stamps to use.



## PLAN and VOLUNTEERS

PLAN exists on a shoe-string budget. We accomplish all that we do through old-fashioned hard work, and because of the help of our dedicated volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering for PLAN, we need your help.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- ☀ Organizing and leading consumer-appropriate social events
- ☀ Office assistance, such as copy editing, larger mailings
- ☀ Technical assistance: such as on hardware and software issues
- ☀ Legal assistance: guidance on IRS non-profit regulations, privacy, Medicaid
- ☀ Fund-Raising: organizing events, telephone solicitations
- ☀ Marketing: helping PLAN secure speaking/presentation opportunities, or finding good distribution points for PLAN's brochure

No specific time commitment is needed, and no assistance is too small to be helpful or appreciated. To volunteer, e-mail PLAN at [robt@planctx.org](mailto:robt@planctx.org) or call us at 512.851.0901.

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### **Some Celebrities that have Publicly Acknowledged their Mental Illness**

Judy Collins	Boris Yeltsin
Sting	George Stephanopoulos
John Cleese	Donny Osmond
Margot Kidder	Sheryl Crow
Rod Steiger	Aretha Franklin
Kathy Cronkite	Axl Rose
John Nash	Quincy Jones
Roseanne Barr	Robin Williams
Earl Campbell	Joan Rivers
Barbara Bush	

### **Some Historical Figures who lived with Mental Illness**

Ernest Hemmingway	Howard Hughes
Vincent VanGogh	James Farmer
Edward Munch	Winston Churchill
Claudet Colbert	Michelangelo
King George III	Ludwig von Beethoven
John Lennon	Karen Carpenter

## PLAN's Very Big Thank You

PLAN is tremendously grateful for the volunteer assistance we receive. These volunteers make PLAN's work better and more expansive than it otherwise could be.

### RECENT PLAN VOLUNTEERS:

Barbara Andre: assistance with special events

Lisa Belli: Paralegal; assists PLAN with in-kind donations that are sold.

Shirley Buvens: Advocate and voice of PLAN in the Wimberley area

Joyce Carter: All-around volunteer, writer, and cooking instructor

Kevin Coy: Information about privacy regulations and policies

Betty Crawford: Secretarial and administrative assistance

Elizabeth Crouchet: web site assistance

Glen Fryer: computer and digitizing assistance

Kurt Lewchuck: software/hardware guidance

Barbara Meyer: dance instructor and facilitator

Alecia Regan: cooking instruction

Paula Schmitz: general legal and tax law assistance

Johnny Smith: mailings and computer memory assistance

Marco Uribe: guidance on psychiatric issues

Rebel Quillan: legal assistance

Karen Winget: host and organizer of PLAN socials



## PLAN & Housing

Dear Friend of PLAN:

Of all the requests for services and information that come to our office, the one issue that comes up the most is housing for special-needs adult children. Housing is a special challenge for two reasons.

First, there is a shortage of affordable housing in the Austin area suitable for people living with a mental illness. I

Continued on page 14

## Faith and Healing

*This essay was submitted to PLAN by a consumer who wished to remain anonymous. It contains controversial ideas on a highly sensitive subject. It is printed here because it is a passionate expression of hope by a consumer, and because, as our writer says, the thoughts are worth our contemplation.*

—Ed.

Benjamin Franklin, early in his career, set pen to paper to set forth his thoughts on God and his relationship with God. I am no Ben Franklin, but I wanted to do the same, because I think it may be worth the time of other consumers, to think about these things.

You see, I believe faith is helping me in my recovery from mental illness. I believe that God wants what is best for me, wants me to achieve what I want to achieve, and wants me to put my illness behind me.

And, you see, it may not matter whether any of that is true. I know that I can never know for sure, and believing it helps me.

What kind of God do I believe in?

Well, I should confess that I don't believe in the revealed God of the western Bible. The idea of humans being created as humans, of God caring about dietary restrictions, that God came to earth once and performed a few stunts, or that God sought to destroy nearly all of humanity now and then, does not move me.

What moves me is a God of love, who set creation and evolution in motion, who installs in us a sense of justice and what is right, and who wants us, above all, to love Him, ourselves, and our fellow humans.

At the same time, I watch with skepticism when millionaire movie stars thank God for their success, as if the divine creator of all of the universe cared more about the sales of their last movie than all of the illness, pain, and suffering of countless others. Given the history of the last century alone, I concluded that God is just, God is good, and that God does not interfere with our day-to-day lives here on Earth.

That does not make God irrelevant. We probably need His urging to be moral and be good. And, we can be thankful that He provided us with our sense of beauty, justice, and right.

Although I don't think God plays an active role with us humans, I do think that a relationship with God is still possible. I pray regularly. I pray for things I can achieve, rather than for miracles or for unlikely actions (if God wanted me to win the lottery, He hasn't shown it yet). I pray for contentment, I pray for serenity, I pray for a solid and realistic sense of self-worth. I pray for the end of my demons, which include self-doubt and a feeling that things are hopeless. These, I think, are the kinds of things God and I can work on together, with both of us wanting to succeed.

God is worth serving, and yet He asks so little of us. Be good to our fellow man; treat them as we would like to be treated. Be honest in our dealings, be honest about who we are. The world will continue to be filled with nasty things – mental illness, cancer, AIDS, terrorism, prejudice and intolerance, poverty, and plain old unhappiness. With God in our thoughts and therefore at our side, we can get through it.

If nothing else, it seems far easier than trying to go it alone.



**“God wants us to, above all, to love Him, ourselves, and our fellow humans.”**

# PLAN & Housing (continued)

Indeed, of the few units currently provided for this population, many, those operated by ATCMHMR, are in the process of being sold.

Second, providing housing for a consumer is a tricky endeavor – because the rental value of their residence may disqualify the person from Social Security Disability, and therefore Medicaid.

Of course, PLAN would like to address this issue by simply providing housing for our clients. This will not realistically happen in the foreseeable future. There is no magic endowment or contribution on the horizon that will enable us to construct or purchase such housing.

This does not mean that PLAN does not have a role to play, or that we cannot help. We can.



PLAN can convene a group of family members interested in the housing challenge. This group could then:

Address whether purchased condominiums is a better approach than the provision of rental housing, because of the Social Security qualification requirements;

Examine the feasibility of purchases of such units in tandem, both to reduce

the purchase price and to provide the security of family member/clients living in close proximity;

Study the current market and prepare suggestions for interested families; Address the possibility of grant proposals to expand the stock of affordable special needs housing in the Austin area.

Examine the feasibility of providing pass-through grants to purchasers to enable them to qualify for mortgages, benefiting from PLAN's non-profit status.



The group will prepare recommendations to PLAN's Board of Directors for an effective, realistic course of action.

The group, then, will have a real and lasting impact on the lives of families in Austin living with a mental illness, and therefore presents a wonderful opportunity for your volunteer time and input. I am eager to participate in such a group and contribute to it.

If you are also interested, please call the PLAN office at 512.851.0901, or e-mail Rob Teir, our Executive Director, at [robt@planctx.org](mailto:robt@planctx.org), and let us know.

Sincerely,

*Bob*

Bob Englert  
PLAN President Emeritus

Information about foreclosure properties in the Greater Austin area is at:  
[www.livinginaustin.com/gold\\_distress.asp](http://www.livinginaustin.com/gold_distress.asp)



NAMIWalks for the Mind of America is a nationwide fund-raising and mental health awareness program that will be held in 40 communities throughout the country. There is going to be a walk in Austin, on May 15th, 2004, as part of this worthwhile effort. PLAN is supporting the walk, and hopes you will join the PLAN contingent.



## FROM PHYSICS TO FUNCTIONAL MRI TO MENTAL HEALTH

by Cecile DeWitt

In the October issue of *According to PLAN*, I mentioned in “the next step” an opportunity for PLAN based on the very promising work of Denis LeBihan, M.D., PhD, and of David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., PhD. I pursued the openings mentioned in my newsletter submission and made several contacts, which are summarized below.

### Where We Are

Scientists are making major advances in Functional MRI, especially in the United States and Europe. With the latest technology and software, practitioners can examine the manifestations of the processing of the human brain, as well as the appearance of the brain.

The University of Texas at Austin has been awarded a grant by the U.S. Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) to purchase a 3-Tesla level Functional MRI machine. This machine has not yet been purchased. A principal operator has been tentatively named, who would join the UT community in the Fall of 2004.

There are dozens of Functional MRI machines currently in the U.S., operating at 1.5T and a few number operating at 3T. Three systems are operating at 7T, one at 8T, and two systems are operating at 9.4T have recently been installed.

Denis LeBihan, one of the leading French researchers on Functional MRI, has stated he wants to work at levels of up to 11 Tesla, if he can do so safely with human subjects.

The strength of the magnetic field is the single most important factor in determining the diagnostic capacity of these machines.

### UT's Next Steps



Set up a research team (Alex Huk of Washington University in St. Louis has received an offer to be the principal operator of the new Functional MRI machine)



Finalize the purchase of the machine



Establish a research plan, including research in addition to the planned work that led to the ODCP grant

### Why Functional MRI is of Interest to the Mental Health Community

These machines monitor the processes of the brain, not just its appearance. This enables us to see the brain in operation and measure its dysfunctions, rather than only viewing it as it is at a particular time.

### Gathering the Key Players

Some of the prominent people we have spoken to and we intend to invite:

**Denis LeBihan** has agreed to take part in a UT project organized by PLAN. He cautioned me on the long way from Functional MRI to its therapeutic applications, but (I quote from his latest e-mail to me) “*il reste qu'il faire quelque chose et votre initiative est tres pertinente.*” He is looking forward to meeting David Servan-Schreiber.

**David Servan-Schreiber**, author of *Guerir* (to be published in English in the first half of 2004), has invited to lunch at his home LeBihan and me to discuss the project. Target date is

March 22, based on dates when the three of us are in the same country.

Getting together LeBihan and Servan-Schreiber is an incredible opportunity. I shall report on it in the April-May issue of *According to PLAN*.



### Proposed Events

- Meeting of principals to discuss best uses of UT machine and potential impact on the treatment of mental illness of Functional MRI
- Presentation for UT faculty and students, the public, and PLAN-invited audience
- Public lecture
- Book signing by Dr. Servan-Schreiber

### Timing/Location

Next Fall, 2004, at the University of Texas at Austin.

### *Cecile*

P.S. Quoting from the first instalment (“The Next Step”), “The cost to PLAN: a few stamps, a few phone calls, some promotional drafting time.” “The benefit to PLAN: a valuable opportunity to establish PLAN as a source of information and inspiration to the mental health and care-giving communities in Texas.

And, as before, *le suite au prochaun numero.*

**PLAN of Central Texas**

Phone: 512.851.0901  
Fax: 512.851.0904  
E-Mail info@planctx.org

**Caring Assistance for Families**

**We're on the  
Web!**

**www.planctx.org**

Join PLAN Today. Please clip the form below,  
complete it, and mail it to:

PLAN of Central Texas  
1339 Lamar Square Drive  
Austin, Texas 78704-2205



**Yes!** I want to help PLAN provide for the long-term needs of those living with mental illness.

- I want to join PLAN, and enclose my membership annual dues of \$50.
- I want to join PLAN, and enclose my lifetime membership dues of \$1000
- I want to contribute to PLAN, and enclose my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- I want PLAN to contact me to discuss planning or other needs for a family member with a mental illness.
- I want my gift to be in honor of another person or organization. Please contact me for the details.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_