

The Advocate

A United Way Agency



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New MHAGH Leaders Take Office

Among other things, annual meetings are for passing the leadership baton, recognizing contributions, and realigning the areas of board members' commitment. MHAGH board president, Judson Robinson, III, presented several awards over the course of the meeting at the Redwood Grill.

Media Awards

Robinson told luncheon attendees that at the recent National Mental Health Association conference in Washington, D.C., 15 journalists from across the United States were honored for excellence in media coverage of mental health issues. Robinson said, "Two of those



Patricia Gras, KUHT-TV producer, shares a light moment at the annual meeting with Judson Robinson after he presented her with a media award from the National Mental Health Assn.

Gras, who produced the series *Mental Illness: Erase the Stigma* that examined the ways in which stigma adversely affects the provision of care for people with mental illness, was granted the National Media Award for Best

Local Television Educational or Public Service Programming.

And the National Media Award for Local Television News Programming went to reporter Dan Lauck for his story, *Crisis Intervention Team* — which was a look at how Houston's mental health crisis intervention team works with local law enforcement.



At right, Immediate past president, Judson Robinson, III, presents Marjorie Johnson her leadership award at the annual meeting.

MHAGH's Newly Elected Officials

- Brad Raffle, president
- Marc Grossberg, vice president
- Richard Winegarden, secretary/treasurer

New Board Members

- Judge Mary Craft
- Marilyn DeMontrond
- Nancy Dinerstein
- Lisa Berry Dockery
- Maureen Hackett
- Pedro Ruiz, M.D.
- Susannah Wong

Also at the annual meeting, Robinson recognized the "extraordinary leadership of several

board members" as they shifted their support from board member to advisory council member or lifetime Friend of MHAGH. These included: Jim Ezrow, John Kelly, Marjorie Johnson, Clive Runnells and George DeMontrond.

Special tribute was paid to Johnson, Kelly and Runnells.

Brad Raffle

Brad Raffle, who succeeds 1999-2000 MHAGH president Judson Robinson, III, is a partner at Baker Botts and has been active in Houston civic affairs for many years.



Brad Raffle is the new MHAGH board president.

"Brad and Susan Raffle have devoted significant amounts of their time and energy to addressing the needs of people with mental illness," said MHAGH executive director, Betsy Schwartz. In addition to serving on the MHAGH Board, the Raffles are certified by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) to teach its family education course.

Over the years, Raffle has also been an active supporter of Houston's schools. He helped establish the Houston Business Coalition for Educational Excellence and served in the late 1980s as board president for Houston Independent School District.



Clive Runnells was one of three board members to be given special recognition at the meeting.

Congress Comes to Houston To Learn First-hand of Youths' Mental Health Needs



The statistics are grim:

- Homicide is the third leading cause of death for children 10-14 years of age in the United States.
- Suicide is ranked the third cause of death for youths 10-24 years old.
- Recent studies indicate 13.7 million American school children suffer from mental health, emotional, or behavioral problems.
- 178,000 kids in the Houston area alone will need mental health care during their school years.

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Houston) and Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minnesota) don't like those odds.

So in June, to better advocate for federal legislation to increase youth-oriented mental health services, they partnered with the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston (MHAGH) and the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County (MHMRA) to convene an 18th Congressional District hearing to access the needs. The hearing was organized with short notice by MHMRA and MHAGH.

Jackson Lee and Wellstone are part of a persevering number of elected officials who, along with many mental health professionals and consumers, believe that better and more mental health services for children could help alleviate or avert the escalation of youth violence. Proponents of increased services say that suicide and involvement in the juvenile criminal justice system are only the symptoms of deeper problems — those of ignoring the problem and of not exerting the needed political muscle to address the issues.

Concerned parents, children and teens with mental illness, mental health professionals and elected officials gathered at the Midtown Family Resources Center to testify for the congressional record. Among those who testified were: MHAGH's Betsy Schwartz, Harris County Juvenile Court Associate Judge Veronica Morgan-Price, Harris County Psychiatric Center director Lois Moore and deputy director of child and adolescent services for the Harris County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority, Regina Hicks.

Schwartz said, "In Texas, we must be particularly concerned that the state budget for children's mental health services has remained virtually flat since 1993, despite growth in both population and need."

The Links Between Depression and Co-occurring Diseases

A growing number of researchers and a raft of recent studies point up a connection between depression and disease — notably cancer, heart disease, stroke, arthritis and diabetes. Why these diseases occur in certain depressed persons is, as yet, unknown. But there are educated theories.

Depression, the most common psychiatric illness, affects 20 percent of America's population over a lifetime. In several studies exploring the relationship between depression and illnesses such as cancer and heart disease, researchers have begun to believe that depression somehow changes the immune system's functioning. However, science has not yet even discovered the reasons for depression though major life changes, a genetic predisposition or a chemical change in the body have all been proposed as triggers.

A number of recent studies indicate such a correlation.

- For instance, in a 1998 National Institute of Aging analysis, researchers found that people who reported symptoms of depression each of the three times they were examined over a six-year period, were almost twice as likely to have a diagnosis of cancer as the non-depressed among them.
- A study conducted as part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, indicated that people who are depressed have a greater risk of developing heart disease and that men who are depressed have a greater risk of dying from heart disease. Paul Friedman, M.D., one of the authors of the study which appeared in the May, 2000, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, said, "This study reminds us that heart disease cannot be treated in isolation, and that maintaining heart health requires us to recognize the interaction between mind and body."
- And, at a recent annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, one of the presenters told attendees, "Not only do disease and disability lead to depressed symptoms, but depressive symptoms seem to be a precursor of the development of future disease. This effect is seen with relatively mild depressive symptoms such as decreased energy and restless sleeping — not just severe clinical depression."

What we need to remember, said Friedman, is that there is little or nothing that occurs in a vacuum. While science has not yet revealed why depression and disease seem to co-occur in many cases, many mental health professionals say that stress reduction, learning to recognize the symptoms of depression, and taking an active role as a partner with a therapist and/or physician to alleviate that depression, can be important steps toward better health.



MHAGH's Betsy Schwartz Is Honored with Women on the Move Award

MHAGH Executive Director, Betsy Schwartz, has been awarded one of Houston's most prestigious awards — Women on the Move — by the Texas Executive Women, *The Houston Chronicle* and KHOU-TV. The awards luncheon is slated for November 8 at the George R. Brown Convention Center and will honor 10 outstanding Houston women. Since 1985, Women on the Move has honored one hundred fifty women from many disciplines and businesses. The common denominator? All have made a difference in their communities. Proceeds from the luncheon go to charities that benefit women and children.

Who Is Today's Marcus Welby, M.D.?

By Betsy Schwartz, Executive Director

At the risk of dating my days of television heroes, a survey recently released by the National MHA made me ponder: Who are the medical heroes or heroines of today's television land? Is it ER's Mark Greene? Or Chicago Hope's Aaron Shutt? Or some up and coming star?

Even in the era of managed care, HMOs and PPOs, it appears that many real-life Americans still believe that their primary care (PCP) doctor should be the one who helps them with all health issues — physical as well as mental. I would like to think that is because physicians and patients alike have come to understand the physiological nature of mental illnesses and emotional problems. (However, I suspect that we are at least a decade away from such understanding.) Rather, I believe we want our PCPs to handle our medical needs because we still need and want to go to nurturing and competent medical caregivers who look at the whole person when making a diagnosis.

MHAGH has forged a new partnership with the Harris County Medical Society aimed at increasing the information available through PCP offices about depression and anxiety.

The results of *America's Mental Health Survey* conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide Inc., a leading survey research firm, in May 2000 found that "almost half of those patients with clinical depression (42 percent) and/or generalized anxiety disorder (47 percent) were first diagnosed by a primary care physician." The survey also revealed

that adults wanted their primary care physicians to play an even larger role in their mental health care:

- Seventy-two percent of diagnosed patients want their primary care physicians to be more proactive in their mental health care, but only 57 percent said this occurred.
- Sixty-one percent of symptomatic but undiagnosed adults want their primary care physicians to be more proactive in their mental health care, but only 31 percent indicated the physicians were.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon MHAGH as one of the community's leading mental health educational organizations to reach out to physicians as well as their patients. We recently submitted a grant to the United Way of Texas Gulf Coast Community Investment Grants to expand our ability to accomplish this. Our goals are: to call on internists, pediatricians, family practice and ob/gyn doctors to distribute literature on a massive basis so that every waiting room is filled with up-to-date brochures on depression and anxiety and to give these doctors the information they need to make an appropriate referral. While this is a daunting task in a city the size of Houston, it is one of great importance.

We are excited about this new initiative. If you would like information, please call me at 713-523-8963.



Pictured left to right in front of counter: Kappa Delta benefactors, Judy Lupo, author Joan Nixon, and Patti Keplinger at Storage USA.

WHO News:

Funding projects, no matter how worthy, can be worrisome. But thanks to the \$5,000 donation from Kappa Delta Foundation, reprinting the *My Baby* books became possible. And as an added bonus, MHAGH's neighbor, Storage USA, provided two storage facilities for housing the *My Baby* and *My Promise* books. Now, neither storage nor distribution of the books is a problem.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS -

MARY CRAFT

Judge Mary Craft, 314th Family District Court, Juvenile Trial Division, hears juvenile delinquency, child abuse and neglect cases, adoptions, child custody and support cases. In 1995 Craft established the first Team Guardian, Ad Litem Project in the nation in conjunction with Child Advocates, Inc. She earned her Doctor of Jurisprudence from University of Houston Law Center in 1976. She was awarded the 1999 Woman of Excellence by the Federation of Houston Professional Women and the 2000 Citizen of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers, Houston Chapter.

MARILYN DEMONTROND

Marilyn DeMontrond, an active community volunteer, has joined the MHAGH board. Her husband, George DeMontrond, former MHAGH board member and chair of the 2012 Houston Olympics Committee, has passed the baton of MHAGH support to his wife.

LISA BERRY-DOCKERY

Reverend Lisa Berry-Dockery is the award-winning host of Person to Person Saturday Mornings, which airs on AM 1430 KCOH. She is also the producer of the weekday Person to Person talk show. An ordained minister, Berry-Dockery is an associate pastor at St. Agnes Baptist Church and serves as Director of Assimilation for the 15,000-member Windsor Village Methodist Church. She is also chairman of The Dockery Group, Inc., a mass communications consulting firm. Among the many organizations to which she belongs are: Interfaith Ministries, the NAACP, HAUL and the Phoenix Mentoring Project. She is an alumnus of Houston Baptist University and Charis Theological Seminary.

NANCY DINERSTEIN

Nancy Dinerstein is a licensed professional counselor in private practice with Greenbriar Psychiatric Associates. Her practice focuses on counseling for individuals and couples.

Additionally she counsels women with issues of infertility. She is a member of numerous organizations including the March of Dimes Guild, the Women's Fund for Health, Education and Research, MHMRA, and the Sisterhood of Beth Israel. In addition to serving on the MHAGH Board, Dinerstein also serves on the Friends of Ronald McDonald House Board, and the Advisory Board of Child Advocates.

MAUREEN HACKETT

In addition to being a new MHAGH board member, Maureen Hackett, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in special education, serves on numerous boards. Among the organizations she serves are the Women's Fund and the Houston Grand Opera. She is president of the ESCAPE Family Resources Center Board of Trustees and chair of the St. Agnes Academy board of directors. She is ball chair for Houston Ballet 2001.

PEDRO RUIZ

Dr. Pedro Ruiz received his medical degree from the University of Paris Medical School. He is a professor in the Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at The University of Texas-Houston Medical School. He serves as vice chair for clinical affairs in the UT-Houston department and as medical director of the Mental Sciences Institute. Ruiz has been honored with numerous awards including the *Exemplary Psychiatrist* award from the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the *Special Presidential Commendation* from the American Psychiatric Association.

SUSANNAH WONG

Susannah Wong is a director of development at the University of Houston. She builds case statements and strategic plans for major gifts/capital campaigns. She serves on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Houston and the Texas Lee Federal Credit Union. She is active in Leadership Houston, and president emeritus of the Asian Pacific American Heritage Association.

Childhood Revealed

Art Expresses Pain, Discovery and Hope

MHAGH will be a participant in the showing of a traveling art exhibit at the Museum of Health and Medical Science. The exhibit, *Childhood Revealed*, is sponsored by the New York University Child Study Center and will be on display September 12 - October 15, 2000.

Intended to increase public awareness of the mental and emotional problems some children have, the exhibit features 102 works of art created by children who are coping with mental health issues.

Each Thursday (during Family Free night in the Museum District), MHAGH will host informal lectures by members of its Media & Training Network on such topics as:

- Early identification of mental illness
- Medications debate
- Grief and loss
- Art therapy

MHAGH will also host informational booths each Saturday during the exhibit.

For more information, contact Terri Urbina at MHAGH, 713-523-8963.



SESSION TO EXPLORE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH ISSUES

Mark your calendars for October 6, the date for the one-day seminar, *Reaching Consensus in Mental Health Research: Consumers and Investigators Weigh the Risks and Benefits*. The event, sponsored by several organizations including MHAGH, Baylor College of Medicine and the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, is slated to be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

“Mental health consumers and their families have benefited from the research of the 1990s,” said Kay York, past president of the Depressive and Manic Depressive Association. “That research raised our hopes for people with neurobiological disorders and for their families.”

The symposium will concentrate on the differences in consumer and investigator perspectives in mental health research, specifically focusing on risk/benefit issues. York says the conference will “help launch a new decade of partnership for consumers and investigators to explore new treatments and find cures for these devastating medical illnesses.”

Topics to be included are: research initiatives, medication trials, consent issues and research for children and adolescents.

The event is open to psychiatrists, general practitioners, family care physicians, internists, emergency room physicians and workers, students, consumers, family members, attorneys and clergy. For more information, call Brenda Schubert, 713-791-1414, ext. 5995 or e-mail: Schubert@bcm.tmc.edu.

TAKE NOTE!!!

The annual MHMRA consumer conference is Wednesday, September 13, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Edwin Hornberger conference center, 2151 W. Holcombe. The keynote speaker at the *Star Consumers Moving Toward Success* conference is Jennifer Rothfleisch, a Houston psychologist who will speak on self-esteem. Lunch is provided. The conference is open to consumers, family, friends and professionals. Call 713-970-7170 for additional information.

Remembrances

Friends and family of Philip and Cheryl Burguires gathered on May 23, 2000 at the *Treasures of Texas* gala to honor Burguires and were rewarded with an evening that paid tribute to faith, family, friendship, and hope. Proceeds continue to climb and the total hovers around \$500,000.

– Photos by Jennifer Binder and Gene and Crissy Beth



Martial, Cheryl, Philip & Emily Burguires



Joan Alexander



Man of

Cheryl & Philip Burguires



Kathy Arnoldy



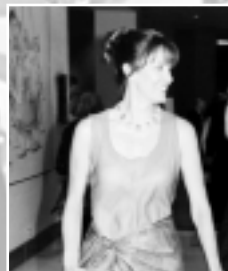
Gerald Coffee & Jeff Love



Jeff Love



Judson Robinson, III & Betsy Schwartz



Katherine Boone &

of the GALA PAST



Beth & Schuyler Tilney



Philip Burguieres & Richard J.V. Johnson



Joan & Stanford Alexander



Maureen & Jim Hackett



Marjorie & Raleigh Johnson



Linda Eller and Todd Zucker



Suzuki Players



Mike & Veronica Curran



Honor



es



& Matt Hennessy

MHAGH Honors HPD Officers and Mental Health Professionals at CIT Appreciation Luncheon

In July 1999, 60 newly trained police personnel who had volunteered to become Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) officers were now better equipped to deal with persons in crisis. How? They had taken 40 hours of experiential training in mental health issues and communication/de-escalation techniques. Ultimately, by the end of the year 2000, one-fourth of the Houston Police force will have been trained in the innovative program in which law enforcement agencies, MHAGH, and other mental health groups have partnered.

The point is to educate police officers about dealing with situations and conditions that might lead to crisis — from psychosis to mental retardation and from substance abuse to traumatic brain disorder. Police officers are the ones most often dispatched to calls involving people in crisis — the vast majority of whom have mental illness. Under the Mental Health Code, law enforcement officers are the only persons with the authority to take a person with mental illness against his will into custody for an emergency evaluation.



Greg Riede, Ph.D., director of psychological services at Houston Police Dept. (HPD) and Verdi Lethermon, Ph.D., have led the HPD training of officers in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) since its inception in early 1999.

To honor the commitment that HPD has made and the mental health professionals and CIT officers responsible for its success, MHAGH hosted the CIT Appreciation Luncheon at the Marriott Medical Center. The following mental health professionals who volunteer their expertise to teach CIT classes were recognized:

- Rose Childs
- Heather Goodman, M.D.
- Terry Rustin, M.D.
- Verdi Lethermon, Ph.D.
- Greg Riede, Ph.D.
- Sandra Miller
- Jose Ramirez, LMSW-ACP
- Donna Olson-Salas, LMSW-ACP
- Kate Sexton, LMSW-ACP
- Consumers Jack Callahan and David Clark

Assistant Police Chief Joseph Breshears and Officer Frank Webb presented the awards and Breshears recognized MHAGH executive director Betsy Schwartz as the visionary behind the program.



Officer Frank Webb, left, and Assistant Police Chief Joseph Breshears, handed out awards at the CIT Appreciation Luncheon hosted by MHAGH.

Psychotropic Drugs and the Older Adult

Healthcare professionals have been concerned about improving the quality of care for nursing home residents for years, said geriatric psychiatrist, Larry Root, M.D., P.A. "More recently, providers have turned their attention to the appropriate use of psychotropic medications to treat older patients with mental disorders, said Root, a participant in the spring seminar, *Use of Psychotropic Medications: Taking the Mystery Out Of Regulations*. MHAGH, The University of Texas-Houston School of Nursing, and the UT-Houston Center on Aging were event co-sponsors.

Service providers from nursing homes, personal care homes and assisted living facilities attended the seminar to learn more about the therapeutic, ethical, legal and financial issues regarding psychotropic medications in older adults. Speakers included, Mark Stratton, PharmD, Alison Dee Pimlott-Weiser, R.Ph., Cameron Vann, JD, Root, Joseph Trumble, MD, and Emeola Curvey, MSN. Anke Runge and Esther Steinberg served as event planners.

According to Health Promotions and People With Disabilities' No Easy Answers website (<http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/hhi/hpp/pmedic/actions.html>), the word "psychotropic" originates from two Greek words — *psyche* meaning "the mind," and *tropos* meaning "tending to turn or change." An appropriate definition, then, could be "Mind influencing." Psychotropic medications are designed and intended to treat, manage, or control symptoms of psychiatric disturbances or "illnesses of the mind" and specifically designed and intended to alter:

- Abnormal thoughts (specifically processes such as hallucinations, delusions, distortions, and paranoia);
- Abnormal moods (specifically feelings, states of pleasure or displeasure);
- Behaviors (specifically those dangerous behaviors arising from paranoid or grandiose delusions or previous traumatic events).

VIDEO, EQUIPMENT AND SPEAKERS HELPING TO PROVIDE OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY

MHAGH has the opportunity to make its presence even better known in print, on the airwaves and at civic and business clubs across the Greater Houston area.

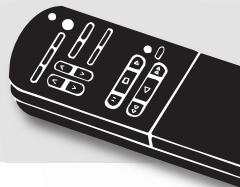
How?

- Thanks to the generosity of Raleigh (“Bill”) and Marjorie Johnson, MHAGH now has a new video, *A Healing Light*, produced by Stone Films, Inc. and narrated by Ron Stone. The film premiered at the May 2000 *Treasures of Texas* gala.
- MHAGH will be creating speaking opportunities with civic and professional organizations to help dispel the myths and stigma of mental illness. These presentations along with the video will encourage people in need to call MHAGH for information and referral.
- With the availability of both video and equipment with which to show it, MHAGH will begin training professional and lay volunteers to speak to organizations in its behalf.
- The Media & Training Network has grown in size and prestige — so much so that if MHAGH receives a news media request such as the one recently from KLDE-FM for an expert in panic disorders, MHAGH can pull from its store of specialists and fill the need rapidly.



Lynn P. Rehm, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Houston. He is a member of the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston's Media and Training Network speakers bureau and is a frequent speaker on behalf of the Mental Health Association.

Rehm, who is a psychologist and who received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, lectures and teaches in the areas of depression, psychopathology, psychotherapy and treatment research as well as anxiety and panic disorders. He recently appeared on radio reporter Marsha Carter's Sunday morning health talk show.



Roseanne Schwartz Conducts Invaluable Research For MHAGH

Roseanne Schwartz spent her summer vacation examining the intricacies of the Medicaid system, finding out what the schools have done to provide mental health services to youth at risk for violence, and researching other mental health policy issues. She came to MHAGH through the Leadership Rice program, which links youth leaders at Rice with mentors in the “real world.”

Schwartz's research assistance has proved invaluable to policy director Leslie Gerber, who says, “Roseanne has provided the background needed to offer MHAGH several possible routes for public policy initiatives.”

MHAGH participation in the Leadership Rice program was made possible by a generous grant from Houston Endowment and by a contribution from Ed Jennings, a mental health supporter and a

Rice graduate. Schwartz is a junior this year, and is studying cognitive science and psychology. She plans to attend law school after graduation.

“The two months I spent researching at MHAGH was a valuable learning tool for me. I took what I had learned about research at Rice and applied that knowledge to researching Medicaid. I'm sure this experience will translate into the rest of my schooling and career.”

Medicaid issues that have been analyzed include:

- How Texas compares to other states in qualifying adults with serious mental illness for SSI;
- What MHMRA of Harris County is doing to help enroll clients;
- What state barriers impact the number of persons with serious mental illness who qualify for Medicaid.

PACESETTER ORGANIZATIONS EDUCATE COMMUNITY ABOUT UNITED WAY AGENCIES



MHAGH is a United Way Pacesetter organization — meaning that it is committed to running an early campaign before the overall United Way campaign begins. As part of its participation in the educational United Way campaign, MHAGH will send staff and board members to community and business organizations through November to speak on behalf of MHAGH and United Way.

The 2000 Pacesetter Campaign kicked off on July 12 at the Campaign Leaders Conference at the Hyatt Regency — Downtown. Fred J. Fowler, group president, Energy Transmission for Duke Energy Corporation is the 2000 Pacesetter Chair. Steven L. Miller, chairman, President and CEO of Shell Oil Company is the 2000 Campaign Chairman. The 81 Pacesetter organizations will complete their campaigns by September 8, 2000 and the results of that



campaign will be announced at the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast Community Campaign Kickoff on September 19.

TIFI FACT SHEET

Texas — like many other states — is faced with a complex funding and service problem. At issue are the children and families whose needs include numerous systems, and a funding structure that is disjointed and inflexible. In an attempt to initiate an organized way in which to share resources, the 76th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1234 which created the Texas Integrated Funding Initiative (TIFI). MHAGH has been chosen as the lead agency for the Harris County TIFI program.

Participants in the first phase of the pilot program recognized the need to build on their current interagency communications. Senate Bill 1234 extended the program by asking that a consortium develop criteria for, and implementation of, the expansion of the TIFI pilot project. The goal in phase II is to develop local mental health care systems in communities for minors who are receiving residential mental health services or who are at risk of residential placement to receive mental health services. Also involved in this phase for other counties are:

- The Rural Initiative Project by STAND Intervention Program of Lamb Co. Juvenile Probation Dept. (Includes Floyd, Briscoe, Dickens, Motley, Hale, Lamb, Parmer, Bailey, Castro and Swisher Counties.)
- Tri-County Integrated Funding Project by Tri-County MHMR Services (Includes Liberty, Montgomery and Walker Counties)
- Wraparound Community Network of Tarrant County. Each of the four entities are allowed a small stipend.

The \$75,000 grant to Harris County will expand the number of sites

piloting this attempt to help child-serving agencies pool their funding and services to: 1) provide wraparound services to families with children at risk for out-of-home placement and to 2) transform the model of serving such children from one which is agency-centered to one which is family-centered.

There is an incredible need for such a program, says MHAGH program director Leslie Gerber, “because there are often duplications of service among different systems serving the same child and because services are often tied to ‘categorical’ funding (meaning that they allow an agency to offer a particular service) which may not be what is needed for this particular family or child. The pooled funding allows for a more flexible provision of services such as respite care.”

As lead organization for Harris County, MHAGH will convene and coordinate meetings, monitor the progress toward goals and objectives, coordinate the evaluation process, and disseminate information to the advisory board, the statewide TIFI consortium, and the general public.

Two major objectives, says Gerber, are to learn how multiple agencies can work together to coordinate care for these high risk children and to transform the service delivery process through the involvement of families. “It isn’t a Band-Aid, but a major shift in philosophy and practice.”

The Harris County program is a trial run for six to 10 families.

Domestic Violence is Subject for October's Self-Help Resource Center's Brown Bag Seminar

We tend to think only of physical battering when we talk about domestic violence. "But there are also emotional and sexual abuse too," says Thecia Jenkins, education advocate at The Bridge: A Refuge for Woman. (The Bridge is a crisis intervention center serving the Southwest Harris County area.) "Women think that just because they've never been given a black eye, they haven't been abused," she says. The Bridge will present, *Facilitating a First Rate Support Group for Victims of Domestic Violence*, at the Self-Help Resource Center's brown bag seminar at MHAGH October 25, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

According to Jenkins and seminar facilitator Susan McLendon:

- One in every three women is affected by domestic violence.
- A woman is battered every 15 seconds.

It generally takes several episodes before a woman will leave the situation. "But before she does, we advise 'safety planning,'" says

Jenkins. Safety planning can include:

- Putting aside a certain amount of money every payday
- Trying to get credit cards in her own name
- Gathering copies of children's certificates and citizenship papers
- Letting neighbors and family know what the situation is
- Contacting the children's school to tell them who can and cannot pick up or visit the kids
- Advising the supervisor at work and notifying building security (Having a photo of the abuser to give to the building security can be important too.)

The Bridge provides assistance to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse, child sexual assault and homelessness. For more information about the brown bag seminar, call MHAGH at 713-523-8963.

Agency Spotlight: Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse

Aids to Victims of Domestic Abuse, founded by the National Council of Jewish Women — Greater Houston Section, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Since 1980, says Michelle Stumpenhuis, an organization spokesperson, the agency has worked to end violence in families by providing advocacy, safety planning, and legal representation for more than 60,000 victims of domestic abuse and intervention services for more than 10,000 domestic violence perpetrators.

The agency began with a volunteer staff working in space provided by Gulf Coast Legal Foundation. It offered legal and personal advocacy to victims of domestic abuse in Harris and surrounding counties. In 1982, the agency contracted with an attorney to begin providing legal representation in family law matters to low-income domestic violence victims. Today, the Legal Advocacy Project provides crisis counseling information about family law and the criminal justice system, safety planning and referral to community resources over the telephone and in person to approximately 3,000 people a year. At any given time, four contract attorneys are representing about 150 victims

of domestic violence in Harris County family law courts, helping them to get protective orders, divorces, child custody and support.

Responding to requests from battered women who wanted the violence — not the relationship — to end and to the legal system, which wanted a place to send batterers for help, Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse began providing battering intervention services through the PIVOT Project in 1984. The program services consist of an evaluation, an orientation, and psycho-educational group work that helps people who are violent, abusive and/or controlling in their intimate relationships to recognize, accept responsibility for, and end their abusive behavior.

The organization realized early that domestic violence is a community problem in need of a community solution. Over the past two decades, the agency has helped strengthen state laws, increase funding for domestic violence programs and change systems to be more responsive to the needs of battered women. Log on to www.avda-tax.org or call 713-224-9911 for more information.

Spotlight on volunteers: Bill Tucker

When Bill Tucker was reading the newspaper several months ago, he saw an MHAGH request for Information and Referral (I&R) Line volunteers in the weekend section. "I had volunteered some time ago for a crisis hotline so I felt comfortable about answering the I&R line. Most of the calls are from those who are seeking information. My job is to listen and to provide sources best suited to the problem."

Tucker, who works four hours a week at MHAGH, retired from education after 32 years, having taught biology in the Spring Branch and Cypress-Fairbanks school districts and anatomy and microbiology at a community college. "I told myself I'd do volunteer work when I could afford the time." And he's made good on his

promise. Currently, he not only volunteers at MHAGH, but also at the Emergency AID coalition (a food pantry).

"Volunteering is a way to do something for others without being (monetarily) compensated for it. The psychological reward you get from doing for others is certainly a plus."

Tucker says he has learned much during his volunteer stint at MHAGH. "I never knew how complex the programs were and just how far-reaching MHAGH was. The number of therapists, houses, clinics and resources is just staggering. I learned another valuable lesson too — one that I hope to pass on. Mental illness is as much a biological illness as diabetes or cancer or heart disease."



**The Mental Health Association
of Greater Houston**

2211 Norfolk, Suite 810 • Houston, Texas 77098

www.mhagh.org

Mission Statement

To promote mental health and to improve the care and treatment of persons suffering with mental illness through education and advocacy by a volunteer/staff partnership.

The Advocate

The Advocate is published quarterly by the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston. Comments, inquiries and contributions are invited.

Send to: **MHAGH**
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