



UMASS Transitions IRTP Fall 2009 Newsletter

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UMASS Transitions IRTP
305 Belmont Street
Worcester, MA 01604

Youth Voices

I'm the Girl

By Tiff. G.

I'm the girl
With the broken smile.
A shattered heart
That's been bleeding awhile.

Look deep enough
You'll see the pieces.
The blood stained pattern
It has in its creases.

You won't notice
With one quick look
Dig a little deeper
You'll feel shook.

The trauma's so intense
You wouldn't believe.
that the girl that lived it
Is only seventeen.

People who search
They look to see.
Say they'd be dead
If they were me.

Six feet under
With a sheet covered face.
Sleeping forever
Lost without a trace.

But I'm so done
With the easy way.
I'll deal with my dilemmas
Come what may!

By Tiffany age 17.5

I have enjoyed attending the GED program at You INC in Worcester. It gives me alone time out in the community and is a great experience for me in preparing myself for entering the community on my own after discharge. The biggest challenge for me had been doing the classes and the work. It takes a lot of time and effort but if you are truly motivated then the effort is worth it. The biggest reward is definitely taking the test and finding out that you passed because then you know that all your hard work paid off and you feel great about passing. My advice to others is work hard and push yourself to reach your goal. It is hard at first, but don't give up because the time and effort definitely pays off and once you obtain your GED you feel so great about yourself!



A Word from Peer Mentor Lori G.

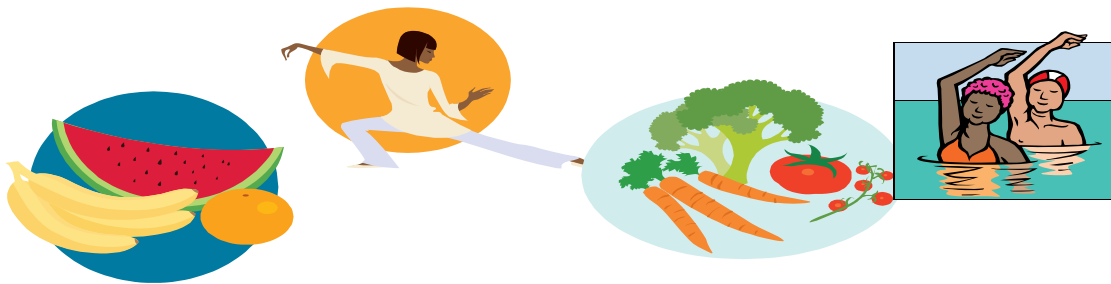
We have been working on a safety tool that would be useful for the clients and staff. We needed to develop a way for the tool to be easily accessible and also changed when needed. It is not yet fully developed but we are working on a card that lists coping skills and warning signs that clients could carry with them that is quickly available. I am working with one of the clinicians on this project.

“I love when we were on a hike with Bogie and she went in the stream and shook off and got Amy wet”~ DJ

“ I like taking care of Bogie, it is fun and it makes me feel happy”~ T.E.



Bogie



Health and Wellness by Katie Hickey, LICSW

We continue to support one another in meeting our health commitments. Health commitments have become a part of Transition’s culture. Since the summer, residents, staff and school personnel have identified health and personal growth commitments. Community meetings provide the forum for rich discussions, review and revision of our commitments. Members of the community encourage one another, share struggles and solicit suggestions to promote successes, as well as share their successes. Recently at our Open House we invited our guests to embrace the spirit and make a commitment.

Older Adolescents at Transitions

We have started admissions of older adolescents at UMASS Transitions IRTP. We continue to build our older adolescent component focused on educational, vocational, and life skills development. We are building relationships with community programs who serve this youth population to identify available resources and collaborate on new endeavors.

**Welcome to Jessica Murphy, MA
Assistant Program Director**

Let us all welcome Jessica Murphy, MA new Assistant Program Director for UMass Transitions.

She has a wealth of experiences working with youth and their families in the residential world and in other community human service agencies including UMASS Communities of Care and DCF.

Fall Happenings

The fall season started with the UMASS Walk for Cancer on Sept 13th where together with many others we walked to support the cure for Cancer.

We had a great turnout for our Fall Open House on 10/8/09.

Students presented school projects along with sharing their poetry in our poetry slam. Residents raised money selling *handcrafted doggie biscuits* and *woven bracelets*. Funds from dog biscuit sales were donated to the NEADS program which is where our very own therapy dog Bogie was trained.

Mental Health Awareness Week~~

On October 8th Transitions participated in the Mental Health Awareness week at Worcester State Hospital. Youth submitted artwork for sale and to be displayed in hospital wide art show. All of our Youth sold their Artwork!!!

U Mass Transitions School Bake Sale October 30~~

Youth and teachers spent a week baking and preparing for our annual School Bake Sale. Imagine how much had to be baked and sold to make \$140.00!!! WAY TO GO!

HALLOWEEN

Halloween at Transitions was a great success. Activities with staff and residents, it was a joy to see such cooperation and fun. Everyone had a good evening filled with activities and lots of fun snacks., like Donuts on a String, Chubby Bunny(all those marshmallows!)and don't forget the Peanuts in Flour, Guess the Guts, and Witches 'Brew. Then later in the evening we had a special masquerade dinner and a pajama party to watch "The Nightmare Before Christmas". It was a great night~~~~!

Sunday's Poetry Slam at Jumpin' Juice & Java in Worcester

In August youth at Transitions began to attend this open poetry venue. Many have read their poetry each week and have been received warmly by participants. The Poetry Slam is held at a local coffee house each Sunday evening and we hope that our youth will continue to be brave enough to step up to the microphone and share.

~~Halloween Fun~~



Do you want my auto-graph???



I think I found some peanuts"

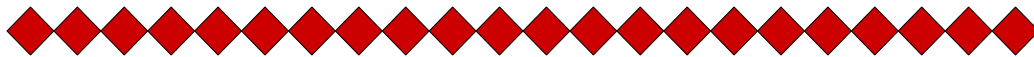


Donuts on a String??

UMass Transitions is committed to an environment free of restraint and seclusion. Discussions with our youth about cultivating a community where respect for one another and healing without violence is our utmost shared value are open and ongoing.

The Sanctuary Model

For the past couple of years we have been shopping and testing out new lenses to help our vision. We actually found some in Yonkers, New York at the Sanctuary Institute. No its not Versace, Louis Vitton, or Guess. Its called the Sanctuary Model, an organizational trauma informed approach, designed by Dr. Sandra Bloom. We recognize that this approach shares many values that our program has had all along but it gives us "a new set of frames" (framework), common language, and practical tools that can be used throughout the organization in working with trauma and chronic stress. We believe that implementing this model into our organization is a magnificent undertaking and that this will be a slow but very rewarding process for our youth and staff. Members of the treatment team spent a week at the Andrus Children's Center to learn more about the Sanctuary model and explore opportunities to integrate into our programs.



The FISH Philosophy

The philosophy from the world-famous Pikes Place Fish Market in Seattle Washington has now made it's way to Transitions IRTP. If you watched the video, then you saw the many high-spirited, humorous sales people whose presence and attitudes transformed a struggling fish market into an exciting circus-like atmosphere customers and spectators love to attend.

Transitions continues to transform its culture by encouraging staff to 'choose their attitudes', 'play', 'be there', and 'make their day'. We're not throwing fish across the halls but we are all trying to make work a wonderful place to be by recognizing the great things each person brings to the workplace.



Happy Holidays to All!

