

Fund Supportive Housing & Community Services!



KEEP THE PROMISE

December 2009

Legislative Update 2009, by Cheri Bragg, Coordinator

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"In the know..."

Next KTP Monthly Meetings:

01/20/10 and 02/17/10
10am-12 pm
at CVH
Page Hall in Room 217

Sign up to receive KTP email alerts:

keepthepromise@namict.org
or call 1-800-215-3021 or
860-882-0236

Check out our new

WEBSITE and BLOG at
www.ctkeepthepromise.org

IMPORTANT CORRECTION: The last quarterly KTP newsletter incorrectly printed the number for **CHOICES**. It should have read: **1-800-994-9422**. You can contact Choices for questions regarding state health insurance programs and Medicare Part D.

KTP advocates have already begun testifying in regards to the Governor's latest cuts and proposed rescissions to the previously passed budget. She said that rescissions are necessary because revenues have fallen short of projections. Unfortunately, many of the rescissions will deeply and disproportionately affect people with mental illnesses.



(Photo by Cheri Bragg)

Cuts include: reducing housing services and supports, reducing young adult services, and reducing grants for mental health services and jail diversion funds. The Governor is also proposing that the state: remove the protection for people who are stable on psychiatric medications, impose co-payments for people on Medicaid, cut housing and homelessness funds, and freeze intakes into SAGA (State Administered General Assistance). Over 20 Coalition members testified on Wednesday, December 9th effectively sharing impactful stories about what these cuts and proposed cuts would mean to their mental health and that of their family members and friends. Other Coalition members submitted written testimony, provided rides to testifiers, or visibly supported testifiers by wearing a KTP ribbon at the hearing. With well over 300 people signing up to testify, KTP succeeded in getting their message across.

But it's far from over. Many Coalition members made calls to their legislators and the Governor from their local communities. More calls are needed to ensure that they know that these cuts will affect many CT citizens and that they will only result in increased costs in emergency care and unnecessary hospitalizations.

If you have not spoken to your legislators about these cuts, please call them today and tell them to 1) preserve critical programs and services 2) that we want real solutions, not costly cuts and 3) what these cuts would mean to you and/or your family members and friends. **It can't be stressed enough: Your personal stories have the most impact on legislators! Please call today!**

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★ KTP gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Melville Charitable Trust. ★
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ATTENTION! MEDICATION ACCESS CHANGES



Starting January 1, 2010, state policy changes impacting prescription drug access will be implemented and will affect people on **MEDICAID, (INCLUDING HUSKY A), SAGA, CONNPAGE AND THOSE ON MEDICARE PART D.**

If you or someone you know or work with has trouble getting medication prescribed by their doctor resulting in disruption and/or other adverse consequences, please contact Keep the Promise Coalition or NAMI-CT at 1-800-215-3021 to report it.

It is critical that we document any harm resulting from these restrictive policies. Problems at the pharmacy may include: 1) The program won't pay for the drug and the person does not have the money to cover the cost, 2) The pharmacy tells them their doctor has to ask for prior authorization, 3) The person does not have the money for the co-pay (only applies to people on both Medicare and Medicaid)

Please join us in our effort to document medication disruptions and humanize the harm and cost of creating barriers to needed treatment.

Thank you for sharing your story!



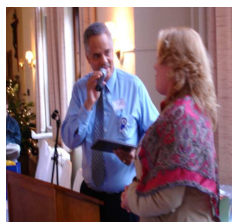
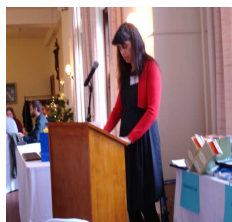
KTP Awards Ceremony & 10 Year Anniversary

Keept the Promise Coalition celebrated its annual Awards Ceremony and 10 Year Anniversary on November 5th at Saint Thomas Seminary, in Bloomfield, with over 180 people in attendance thanks, in part, to the many sponsors who generously supported our cause.

Heartfelt thanks go out to The Mental Health Association of Connecticut, Inc., the Reaching Home Campaign and the Partnership for Strong Communities, Natchaug Hospital, Connecticut Legal Rights Project, and Sheila B. Amdur for their contributions.

We would also like to thank Janet Auster, Maureen Kelly and the Keep the Promise Players—Bob Davidson, Howard Beatman, Sam Bliven, Dylan Croft, Judith Essex and Melody Smith, for providing us with awesome entertainment again this year.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to all who helped to make this years celebration a wonderful event!



WINTER HOLIDAY AND NOTE CARD CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

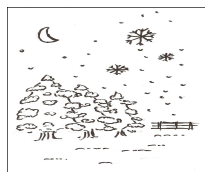
Many thanks to this year's winners for their outstanding entries! Winning cards from, Paul Acker, Liz Gerhard, Beth Stannard, and John Sembrakis will be available to clubhouses/social clubs to send to their State Representative and State Senator. This is an excellent opportunity to wish them a happy holiday, as well as remind them that mental health issues are imperative to remember this 2010 session. Call Cheri or Maura for cards.



Paul Acker



Liz Gerhard



John Sembrakis



Beth Stannard



Liz Gerhard



CT's YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT CONSORTIUM FOR MENTAL HEALTH

By Amy O'Connor

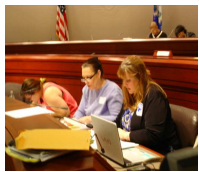


CT's Youth and Young Adult Consortium for Mental Health held its first two statewide meetings this fall for up to 30 youth and young adults aged 16 – 32. The goal of the meeting was to create a youth and young adult driven and led coalition to promote their age-specific needs and recommendations to advise policymakers, state agencies, and other providers; and to build a statewide peer support network while providing opportunities for leadership development and education on individual rights and advocacy. All participants proved themselves to be creative, driven, and wise beyond their years! With assistance from facilitator Cliff Davis of the Human Service Collaborative and KTP co-chairs, Jan Van Tassel and Alicia Woodsby, the group established their purpose and priorities for future Consortium activity. They agreed that their immediate priority would be to launch an anti-stigma campaign targeting schools, providers, and the broader community. They also decided to reach out to other youth and young adults to provide on another with support by holding future statewide meetings, using media networking tools, and reaching out to clients of DMHAS' Young Adult Services programs, high schools and college students, and other support groups around the state. The group wants to advocate for age-appropriate and individualized services, opportunities to be active participants in their treatment and service planning, preventive healthcare measures and development of youth and young adult-informed quality standards. The Consortium aims to empower the youth and young adult voice to achieve these goals by providing education and leadership opportunities for one another. Opportunities to hold future statewide Consortium meetings are being explored by the group's Leadership Committee, which is comprised solely of youth and young adults dedicated to moving the Consortium forward. Watch out for future Consortium meeting announcements and updates! Contact Amy O'Connor at NAMI-CT for more information at policyassistant@namict.org.

Annual Fall Legislative Advocacy Trainings a Big Success!

Thanks to co-facilitators Doreen Del Bianco, Legislative Program Manager for DMHAS and Jan VanTassel, Esq, Executive Director of CT Legal Rights Project, Keep the Promise Coalition recently finished up two fun and successful Legislative Advocacy trainings.

The Essentials of Legislative Advocacy held in October had a record 91 registrants. Representatives Betsy Ritter and William Aman took time out of their schedules to speak to the class. Students learned about the importance of registering to vote, writing letters to their representative and state senator as well as letters to their newspaper editors. Everyone who wished, had an opportunity to write and practice giving testimony. Students took a tour of the Capitol and Legislative Office Building to become more comfortable with the areas. Senator Jonathan Harris also spoke before handing out completions certificates at the end of the day.



The Legislative Leadership class held in early December graduated 25 students with Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan handing out certificates and posing for pictures with each person. Representatives Jan Giegler, Peter Tercyak and David McClusky gave advice on the best way to approach them and get their attention at the LOB. Susan Keane, from the Appropriations Committee, talked about her experiences from a staff perspective after a competitive game of Legislative Jeopardy was played in the morning.

Congratulations to all graduates! We look forward to seeing you at the LOB in 2010!

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Keep the Promise
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KTP Monthly Meeting:

01/20/10, 02/17/10
10am-12pm
CVH, Page Hall, Room 217

Call or Email to RSVP
—lunch included—

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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The Keep the Promise Coalition is dedicated to advocating for the “Blue Ribbon Solutions” needed to maintain and expand critical mental health services for adults and children. We hope you will join us in building the bridge to support, respect and recovery. Together we can create change!

Coordinator’s Corner by Cheri Bragg

This year’s legislative “short session” may seem anything but short as the state enters the second year of its 2-year budget planning process. Officially starting on February 3, 2010 and ending on May 5, 2010, there will be no time for rest as hearings and committee deadlines come fast and furious. With the Governor’s most recently proposed rescissions to last year’s budget already on the table, advocates have already risen to the challenge of testifying and making mental health concerns known by sharing their important stories. If you plan to testify at the budget hearings, please start crafting testimony now. KTP can assist as needed.

If you would like to hold a legislative breakfast in your local community, please target January as an optimum time to hold one (before the official start to the legislative session). You might also think about holding an evening event (spaghetti dinner? Showcase art? Coffee & dessert?) or simply inviting your legislators to have coffee one-on-one or with a small group of advocates in your community. This is an effective way to educate and/or discuss mental health issues of personal interest with your legislators without coming to the Capitol. KTP can provide you with blue ribbons (unifying our message), talking points, and fact sheets to guide your discussion. **There is a saying: “Tell me, I’ll forget; Show me, I’ll remember; Engage me, I’ll understand.” We must use our personal experiences to help legislators understand the importance of mental health services & supports!**

