



10 Key attitudinal shifts in order to *Live Life to the Fullest*.



What is Mental Illness Costing Your Business?

Helping Denver's Homeless Rediscover Their Dreams



At last count on August 28, 2006, Colorado's homeless topped 16,000 individuals - adults, families and children.

While the Colorado Division of Housing is working to expand resources for those in need, Ron Markovich, a counselor for Aurora Mental Health Center is taking a very unusual approach, and succeeding.

Markovich teaches creativity. Not the kind that produces beautiful art, profound poetry, or persuasive advertising, but the kind that builds lives. Through his job for Aurora Mental Health Center, Markovich has the chance to work with some of the most down and out homeless men and women in the Denver area. With the help of Case Manager Everett Grove and Deputy Director Michael Kucera they implemented a coaching program for Colorado's homeless.



Rebuilding Hope

All the men and woman were brought under one roof for shelter. Most have lost all hope and suffer from substance abuse, depression, and chronic mental illness. Clinical caregivers focus on their mental health conditions, while Markovich provides them with strategies for changing their attitudes. He provides them with life coaching strategies focusing on what they want to happen in their life even if they

have problems. Markovich's team discovered that every day the residents were either enriching or diminishing their lives and the lives of others through their thoughts, beliefs and actions.

"Either they make things better or they make things worse in their lives," Markovich said. "As a group they learned to support each other and they learned from each other's successes how to stay sober, get along with people and actually develop a more loving way of being every day. What got created was a community that most of the time supports each other's growth."

"I saw my own life change when I learned to change my attitudes and thought process, so I decided to experiment with this group of homeless individuals," recalls Markovich who has been working with this population for three years. "It works. And the most amazing part of it is that it really boils down to one fundamental question that changes lives."

The Million Dollar Question?

Helping Denver's Homeless Continued on page 2



The Million Dollar Question?

What do you WANT to create vs. what ARE you creating for your life?

Through what he refers to as "life coaching", Markovich has helped many of these men and woman understand the impact of negative thoughts or beliefs, anger, or poor self concept on their ability to live a better life and pursue their dreams.

"The main focus of the program is on developing a willing, accepting, caring way of being every day to create a life that has meaning to us and the people we come in contact with. We all make an impact on our society whether it is positive or negative. What kind of impact we want to make in our lives and the lives of others depends on our own attitudes, thoughts, and actions."

Since conducting their initial experiment in March of 2004, Markovich and Grove have treated nearly 50 homeless adults with a diagnosed mental illness through this coaching approach to create positive energy and rebuild lives. Of these adults, 70 percent are successfully living independent lives founded on sobriety, positive thinking, and dedication.

"I am in a much better place than I was before I was involved in the life coaching program," says former homeless client David Tilford. "Now, I have a much more positive outlook on life, have goals to look forward to, and the ability to control my life."

Tilford spent two years in the life coaching program and is now living independently. He credits the positive

changes in his life to the counseling he received from Markovich and Grove. He continues his involvement with the program through continued counseling, and by participating in group activities such as the Wellness program and group fishing trips to Chatfield Reservoir.

Increasing Happiness For Everyone

Markovich's success with the homeless population has allowed him to adapt his concepts into what he calls "Happiness Class," a group wellness program for the general population. The class teaches people positive ways of being, thinking and acting that can lead to increased happiness and better health.

A happier person is more likely to be more productive, efficient and healthier, according to a CNN report.

Through the Aurora Mental Health Center's Happiness Class, Markovich covers:

- ▲ What it means to take 100% responsibility for your life
- ▲ How to apply the law of attraction to your own life
- ▲ Discover the power of living life fully in the NOW
- ▲ How to create happiness in your world each and every day

By helping individuals adapt these principles into their daily actions, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts, Markovich has helped many people, from homeless to prosperous, rediscover their dreams and redefine meaning and happiness in their lives.

Call 303.617.2331 for more information or to sign up for the Happiness Class.

Jeannie Ritter Encourages Open Discussions about Mental Health At Annual Benefit Luncheon

Living life to the fullest doesn't just happen, it takes planning, commitment, and skill.

This was the message presented by Colorado's First Lady Jeannie Ritter, and Marianne Neifert, M.D., better known as Dr. Mom, at the Aurora Mental Health Center's Annual Benefit Luncheon held on June 5. Serving as Master of Ceremonies for the third annual fundraiser, which focused on *Living Life to the Fullest*, was Molly Hughes, news anchor for CBS4.



Colorado's First Lady, Jeannie Ritter and Randy Stith, Ph.D.

Learning to laugh and establish priorities are not only keys to positive living, but fundamental to mental health.

according to Randy Stith, Ph.D., Executive Director for Aurora Mental Health Center.

"To help people recognize the importance of learning to be positive and happy," says Stith "we focused this year's event on Living Life to the Fullest through proactive changes in attitude and lifestyle management. We truly appreciate Jeannie Ritter and Dr. Mom's wonderful efforts to help us deliver this important message."

Jeannie Ritter reiterated her commitment to further mental health awareness and solutions while serving as Colorado's First Lady, and asked the 200 plus attendees to start talking as openly about mental health as they do other aspects of their life. Ritter emphasized that mental health is treatable, and that treatment provides a promise of quality of life and hope for everyone involved.

Improving the quality of your journey by changing your perspectives and embracing humor was the message delivered by Dr. Mom, a nationally renowned speaker on health and quality of life issues. A frequent guest on *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *CNN*, and other programs, Dr. Mom shared her life changing experiences of completing medical school while raising five children, and trying to be everything to everybody.

Marianne Neifert, M.D.
aka Dr. Mom



10 Key attitudinal shifts in order to Live Life to the Fullest:

- 1.** Reject the ideal of "perfectionism" and accept the challenge to be "consistently adequate." Dr. Mom stressed that when we say yes to something someone asks us to do, we say "no" to other priorities that often are more important like time with family, self-care, and so on.
- 2.** Focus on self-esteem: Rather than focus on trying to be significant to others, we need to focus on accepting our self and our capabilities.
- 3.** Downscale and simplify: We need to heal the frenzy of busyness which drains our emotional energy and stops us from enjoying life's simple pleasures.
- 4.** Cultivate Humor: Laughter defuses tension, relaxes muscles, restores positive perspectives, aids healing and immune systems, shrinks problems, among other positive outcomes.

To receive the complete list of inspiring messages from Dr. Mom, download a copy at www.aumhc.org/whatsNew.htm.

Furthering Our Goal To Help People Live Life To The Fullest

One of the core goals of Aurora Mental Health Center is to help people Live Life to the Fullest. As you may know, we do this through many preventive and life coaching programs as well as providing excellent clinical care. To our counselors, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and administrative staff, Live Life to the Fullest has many important meanings and drives much of what we do. Our vision is to help people enjoy a higher quality of life such as:

- ▲ Being able to concentrate on the moment instead of obsessing over the past or fearing the future
- ▲ Overcoming personal and professional challenges without relying on obsessive compulsive behaviors or other "distractions"
- ▲ Managing life's stresses such as moving, changing jobs, family issues, and financial problems instead of letting stress control your thoughts and actions
- ▲ Improving family relationships by being able to better manage emotions, anger, and reactions to frustrating situations
- ▲ Being able to relax without recurring anxiety, fear, uncertainty, panic

If you'd like more information on our programs that help people live more full, rewarding lives, contact us at 303.617.2300.



You are invited to Aurora Mental Health Center's 32nd Annual Celebration Living Life to the Fullest Celebration & Art Contest

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

The Summit Conference & Event Center
411 Sable Blvd., Aurora, CO 80011 (near 6th Ave. & Sable Blvd.)

Schedule of Events:

5:00 p.m. - Reception, Hors d'oeuvres, Viewing of Art
5:45 p.m. - Program begins: Guest speaker Erin Kuechler, Art Therapist
Art Contest Recognition and Awards
Employee Awards and Board Election



Art just isn't fun to look at, it's therapeutic.

Art therapy has become an effective and important method of communication, assessment, and treatment with children, teens, and adults. Children's art expressions reflect developmental, emotional, and cognitive growth.

At this year's annual celebration, Aurora Mental Health Center is pleased to host an Art Contest open to all art students in Aurora Public Schools, Cherry Creek Schools, and Aurora Mental Health Center.

We've asked students to submit their best piece to our Art Contest based on the theme:

Living Life to the Fullest - What makes you happy and love life? This theme captures our goal to give individuals the support and care they need to cope with a mental illness so they can live full and productive lives. We will recognize all participating students for their excellent artwork by displaying all pieces at this event and honor the winners.

In addition to the Art Contest, Erin Kuechler, a School Based and Family Art Therapist for Aurora Mental Health Center, will talk about the ways in which art therapy and creating art in general can promote self-esteem and self-efficacy in school age children.

Please join us at our FREE Annual Celebration & Art Contest on Wednesday, October 24, 2007. It's open to the public at no charge, but RSVP is required. So bring your family, friends, and coworkers along.

Please RSVP by Friday, October 19, 2007.

Call 303.617.2300 or e-mail annualcelebration@aumhc.org

Untreated Mental Illness Costs American Businesses Nearly \$45 Billion Dollars Each Year. What is it costing your business?



You might know first hand what payroll, insurance and supplies cost your company every month, but do you know the high price that mental health disorders could be costing your company?

Depression, the most

common form of mental illness among adults, is alone responsible for more than \$43.7 billion in absenteeism from work and 200 million lost work days each year. And the costs for treating depression are as much as those for treating AIDS or heart disease.

A company of 100 employees is likely spending anywhere from \$28,000 to \$41,000 each year on absenteeism due to depression among its workforce. And increased direct medical costs can add another \$7,700 to \$15,000 to your expenses.

These costs don't take into account the many hours drained from mentally healthy employees forced to deal with another's issues during working hours. And, the above costs are for depression only...not factoring in the costs of untreated anxiety, bi-polar disorders, schizophrenia and other mental illnesses suffered by Americans.

In total, mental health disorders cost the US more than \$100 billion per year, and businesses bear much of the costs. To calculate the direct costs for your business, you can use the Cost Calculator prepared by the National Mental Health Association available via the following website link: www.depressioncalculator.org

Sample Summary for your company

Personalize these figures by visiting www.depressioncalculator.org and follow the steps.

Your firm's characteristics:

Number of employees	Number affected by depression	Industry category	Region
1,000	66	General	National

Estimated number of firm's employees affected by depression by age:

Gender	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Female	10	13	8	6	1	38
Male	7	8	8	4	1	28
Total	17	21	16	10	2	66

Estimated impact on workforce:

	Minimum	Maximum
Average workdays missed per year per affected employee	22	32
Estimated additional direct medical costs per affected employee	\$1,000	\$2,000
Total work days missed per year for all affected employees	1,449	2,107
Estimated replacement costs for depression-related absenteeism (based on average daily wage)	\$237,101	\$344,875
Estimated incremental medical costs for employees affected by depression	\$65,845	\$131,690

Percent of employees diagnosed and treated	Percent reduction in absenteeism	Average cost of therapy per year, per employee
50%	51%	\$2,000

Potential benefit from treatment of diagnosed employees:

	Minimum	Maximum
Reduced absenteeism (days)	501	729
Net benefit from treatment of diagnosed employees	\$6,167	\$43,457

The good news is treatment works:

- ▲ The National Institute of Mental Health found that more than 80% of those who receive treatment for clinical depression show improvement.
- ▲ University of Michigan Depression Center conducted a survey which showed that respondents claiming that depression interferes with work or causes

them to miss work, said their effectiveness at work and their ability to meet their work responsibilities improved after they received treatment.

- ▲ A study conducted by the American Journal of Psychiatry noted that anti-depressant treatment reduces overall healthcare costs by more than 70%.



Thank you to our corporate and individual contributors for your support during the second quarter!

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 Adolphson & Peterson Construction
 Arapahoe County Commissioners
 Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health Network
 Aurora Chamber of Commerce
 Aurora Economic Development Council
 Aurora Housing Authority
 Aurora Public Schools
 Aurora Sentinel
 Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
 Brunzwick Zone Heather Ridge
 C-Groove Putters
 Charity Checks
 Cherry Creek Schools
 City of Englewood
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 Colorado Rapids Soccer Club
 Comedy Works
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Mission Statement

Aurora Mental Health Center is committed to creating healthy and secure communities by providing the least restrictive service that ensures quality, appropriate, and efficient care.

Officers

Larry Davila, President
 June Smigel, Vice President
 Sue Spiller, Secretary
 Ruth Ryan, Treasure

Appointed Representatives

Barbara Shannon-Banister, City of Aurora
 Pat Noonan, Arapahoe County
 Judy Edberg, Aurora Public Schools
 Paul Zimmerman, Cherry Creek Schools

Board of Directors Representing the Community

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If you would prefer to start receiving a color PDF of our newsletter instead, please email Cindy at cindybohl@aumhc.org.

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Among the ways the Center thanks donors is by publicizing your name in our newsletter and on our website. If you would prefer that your name not appear in our newsletter, please check the box.

You will be receiving a tax deduction letter acknowledging your generous support. If your employer has a donation matching program please enclose any necessary forms.

Please cut out and mail this form along with your check or payment information to the address above.

Thank you for your support!

Please accept my donation to your Endowment Fund of \$ _____

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You have a chance to step-up the pace for helping change the life of a neglected child, displaced adult, emotionally troubled adolescent, professional with depression, or the victim of a tragedy.

The fact that one in four Coloradans has a mental disorder in any given year is an eye-opener. This goes to show that everyone is connected to someone with a mental illness – maybe a friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor, or possibly you. For only a limited time, we are fortunate that the Lutheran Medical Center Community Foundation will match all donations 50%. So, your \$100 check quickly becomes \$150 and increases the impact our programs and services have on our community, and possibly your future.

We need your help in order to reach our goal before time runs out!

By sending your gift today, you will not only help provide innovative programs to your community, but will also help those who cannot pay to receive the proper treatment they deserve. A donation to our endowment is truly a "gift that keeps on giving" in that Aurora Mental Health Center has agreed to never reduce the principal in the endowment, but to draw only from investment earnings.

Aurora Mental Health Center is a nonprofit corporation so all donations are tax deductible.

Remember those who are affected by these widespread disorders and help them rediscover their dreams, their independence, their self-reliance, their lives.

Send a gift that gives forever.

Three easy ways to pledge your support:

Call 303.617.2361
 Visit www.aumhc.org/help.htm
 Mail in the donation slip below to Aurora Mental Health Center
 c/o Tawney Bass • 11059 E. Bethany Drive • Suite 200
 Aurora, CO 80014-2637



Pledge to our limited-time Endowment Fund