

Contact Us:

Phone
989.362.8636

Fax
989.362.7800

www.avcmh.org

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Sharing Their Success: The Story Board Project

The “Story Board Project” started as a collaboration between the Iosco County Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC) and Customer Services, as a means of acknowledging the success of persons-served, and educating others about the importance of recovery, habilitation, and community integration. Each contributor to the project volunteers to share key, life moments or accomplishments that, for them, represent what it means to lead a healthy and successful life. Their stories and pictures are printed in a poster-size format, framed, and displayed around the agency. To date, five story boards have been published, with many more in progress.

It takes courage to share stories, yet, with the idea that the sharing takes place in a room of peers and supportive staff helps. The shared tears, laughs, and affirmations all make the process a celebration of lives well lived. It is the hope of all participants that by sharing their stories others will feel hopeful and find the courage to move forward on their personal recovery journey.

The “Story Board Project” Committee recently began meeting in Ogemaw County, and it’s their hope that soon there will be many more success stories to share.

Vision Statement:

AuSable Valley Community Mental Health Authority envisions a future where consumers achieve physical and mental health sufficient to empower them to achieve their dreams and desires for greater independence, greater personal responsibility, and full participation in community life.

AVCMHA
1199 W. Harris Avenue
P.O. Box 310
Tawas City, MI 48764

Mission Statement:

AuSable Valley Community Mental Health Authority provides quality prevention, education, and mental health services, in a fiscally responsible manner, in Iosco, Ogemaw, and Oscoda counties, which are aimed at improving the health and welfare of persons served, promote greater independence, and improve the quality of life for people in these counties with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and substance use disorders.

AuSable Valley
Community Mental Health
Authority

June | 2016
Semi - Annual Report

Serving Iosco County, Ogemaw County & Oscoda County



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AuSable Valley Community Mental Health Authority (AVCMHA) continues to provide a full and expanding array of community-based services for persons living with Intellectual/Developmental Disorders, Serious Mental Illness, and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance. Whereas this work is consistent with our mission statement, the changing expectations of State and Federal Government make that task all the more challenging. Fortunately, AVCMHA has capable and dedicated staff doing their best day in and out to support the 2250 persons served.

AVCMHA is no longer expected to meet just mental health needs. The agency is also expected to be a part of an integrated health team, working to promote better population health outcomes. Our staff has been working in all three counties with medical provider groups to better understand local health needs and create innovative solutions. Telehealth is one option available for improving health delivery in rural areas. A citizens group known as CHOICES in Oscoda county, along with many agencies, have worked together to write a grant to create a telehealth clinic. A nurse practitioner from Saginaw Valley State University will provide medical care in Mio, using a sophisticated telemedicine tool. Such innovations mean the future is now, and better health care opportunities are a reality.

The State expanded the age range of those covered by the Autism Program in January of 2016 and is now serving children up to 21 years of age. AVCMHA’s enrollment has gone from 11 children to 32 children, with more being tested for eligibility. This program is producing impressive results and making a meaningful difference in the lives of many children and families. On another positive front, AVCMHA has been added to the regional substance abuse treatment panel. Preparations are progressing and once final technical adjustments are complete, AVCMHA will begin to provide Substance Use Disorder treatment in August.

The presentation of the Governor’s budget came with boilerplate language to move funding for mental health services to private insurance companies. This change would add cost and direct monies intended for treatment to the profit line of the for-profit insurance carriers. I sincerely appreciate the support of elected officials and advocates from across the region that stood up to support keeping public mental health funding public. Too many critical decisions are already being made miles away from the people affected by those decisions, and moving the funding to out-of-state corporations will not make it easier for citizens to get the best level and quality of care possible.

Respectfully,

Joseph Stone, Chairperson
AVCMHA Board of Directors



School's in Session For Stuart

By: Trudi Marsh
Family Program Supervisor

Stuart and his family started services with AuSable Valley in March of 2015. "Things were really bad, like, me and my dad were not getting along, having arguments everyday with him, me and my cousin not getting along, I wasn't going to school because I got angry, and was getting home-based school services instead. I was getting really bad grades. I was not on any of my medicine either. I was also on probation, and still working on it," Stuart said. He began individual and family therapy, as well as psychiatric services, in the Family Program almost immediately. He started attending family therapy sessions regularly and taking his medications as prescribed. Stuart showed significant improvement over the summer of 2015 in his behaviors and mood, so the school felt comfortable with him returning to school half-days, in the fall of 2015.

"I started earning incentives for my grades and good behaviors from my therapist," he said. Stuart's overall goal is to earn the big incentive at school, which is to attend a Loon's baseball game with his classmates.

In January of 2016, Stuart expressed an interest in attending school full-time so Stuart's team, made up of his probation officer, court case manager, AVCMHA therapist, and special education representatives, assisted him and his family in creating a plan to help Stuart adjust to the changes.

"I am now going to school a full day, and passing all of my classes. I have an A in three classes! I like school! "You (AVCMHA) have helped me to

cope with my Dad a little bit more with his problems, to control my anger, and not to argue with kids at school, not to be mean to the teachers at school, and because of this I have been able to go to school again," Stuart said.

Upon Stuart's annual assessment in March of 2016, the changes in positive behavior and his mood were significant. Stuart has worked very hard in therapy, taking things home to try, and coming back with feedback. Congratulations to Stuart for the amazing work you have done!



Since Stuart began services with AVCMHA in 2015, his moods and behavior have improved greatly. He was able to return to school and is working on building relationships with his family.

Pen Pals

By: Laura Marentette
Volunteer Coordinator



Although letter-writing seems to be a thing of the past for most people, during her Person-Centered Planning process, Violet requested an arrangement to correspond with someone the old-fashioned way through letter-writing and "snail mail." She was hoping to make new friends and possibly even learn some new facts.

Volunteer, Sharon Vinson, has a long history of being a pen pal and

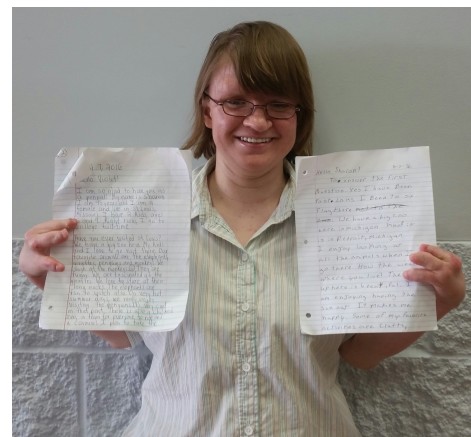
enjoys the friendships she has formed through this fun hobby.

Sharon lives in St. Louis, Missouri and said being a pen pal is an easy hobby to add to her busy life because she can write a letter or a card any time around her schedule. Sharon said, she hopes her letters "puts a smile on someone's face and makes their day go a little better."

Sharon began the exchange with Violet by sending off the first letter. Violet was thrilled to receive a letter specifically addressed to her and purchased a package of loose leaf paper and some envelopes to begin her part of the arrangement. The two pals exchanged information about the differences in weather and some notable places to visit in each of their states.

Violet said it was a small challenge to always be able to spell a word correctly, but she feels that this is a fun way to learn new words and how to spell them. She plans to continue to use Google to check her spelling and possibly even begin to use a computer to type the letters so she can use the spell-check feature.

The pals plan on exchanging at least one letter a month and are fast on their way to forming a long-distance friendship.



Violet proudly displays her letter from her pen pal Sharon from St. Louis, Missouri as well as her follow-up letter she will mail back to her.

"I like how courteous and helpful everyone is. You're treated like a person, not just a patient."

Medicaid Verification Audits

On a quarterly basis, the Northern Michigan Regional Entity (NMRE) conducts a Medicaid service verification audit. The audit is inclusive of service validation as well as coinciding Medicaid dollars for those services. The service validation process for the 1st Quarter of FY' 2016 Medicaid services indicates a verification rate of 100% of total services audited and 100% total dollars audited, well above the 95% threshold. The chart below shows AVCMHA's continued high performance/quality and also compares the agency to the NMRE as a whole.

Medicaid Service Verification % Validated				
	Q2 15	Q3 15	Q4 15	Q1 16
AVCMHA	99.5%	99.8%	No Audit Conducted	100%
NMRE	97.8%	90.4%		96.6%

Medicaid Service Verification Dollars % Validated				
	Q2 15	Q3 15	Q4 15	Q1 16
AVCMHA	99.6%	99.8%	No Audit Conducted	100%
NMRE	96.8%	93.3%		97.2%



Technology Updates from our IT Department



The IT department has expanded rapidly over the last few years, to now include three IT support technicians, a system data analyst, a network administrator, a database administrator, one part-time general clerical, and a Chief Information Officer. With the advancement in technology and the need for electronic security, the IT department has been involved with several projects during the first half of FY'16 to benefit staff and maintain information security. Below is just a highlight of some of their hard work.

Specifically the projects which focused on benefiting staff and increasing efficiency included: Expanding the Network to include new office locations in Oscoda and West Branch; configuring and testing Windows 10 to rollout on all computers by the end of June, 2016; developed new training courses for the computer training schedule related to AVATAR, Outlook, Skype for Business, Windows 10, and IT Orientation; installed a new file server and backup system; managed the conversion to an electronic key card entry and new intruder and fire alarm systems in five office locations to improve safety; and installed new Xerox color copy machines in Tawas and West Branch offices with secure print and scanning capabilities.

There were also several projects completed related to information security, such as: the installation of

SOPHOS encryption on all laptops to protect data; underwent a HIPAA-required security audit demonstrating network security; an AVATAR system upgrade for ICD10/DSM5 codes; implemented several reports required by the State; developed a new IT Policy and Procedure Manual to improve security; and took a step towards Health Information Exchange by implementing the receipt of admissions, discharges, and transfers from hospitals around the state.

The IT staff is kept very busy, often times working afterhours and weekends to update, repair, and maintain systems. The IT department is dedicated to remaining up-to-date on security issues and continues to assist staff with all of their technology-related questions.



System Data Analyst, Coral Smith, trains new staff during an IT Orientation in the AVCMHA computer lab.

"They are very understanding of my memory issues. They try to fit me in with appointments that are best for me."