



“One person can have a profound effect on another. And two people... well, two people can work miracles. They can change a whole town. They can change the whole world.”

Diane Frovlov & Andrew Schneider

Autumn 2007

Volume 2 Number 2

IMPORTANT DATES

- January 12, 2008 – Consumer Development Training Session at UAB Hospital in Birmingham.
- January 28 through February 1, 2008 – Certified Peer Specialist Training at Shocco Springs.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Director’s Message	2
Membership Application	2
Certified Peer Specialist Training	3
Supportive Housing	3
Senate Bill 1710	3
Member Spotlight	3
The Alternatives 2007 Conference	4

New Executive Director Hired

On August 28, 2007, the Executive Director selection committee interviewed four candidates for the position of Executive Director. Then, this committee made a recommendation to the full Board of Directors. The result of this process was that an offer was made to Ronald Hunt. Mr. Hunt accepted, and began work on October 2, 2007.

Mr. Hunt comes to us from his position as peer support specialist at Searcy Hospital. He was also a subcontractor for Slack Consulting working on the Respect and Sensitivity training curriculum that the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation is currently providing to all of its employees. He was the former Treasurer of WINGS, also.

“I am excited with this opportunity to serve Alabama’s consumers,” says Ronald. “I hope we will work together with a unified vision of how to affect positive change for everyone.”

New Officers Elected at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors

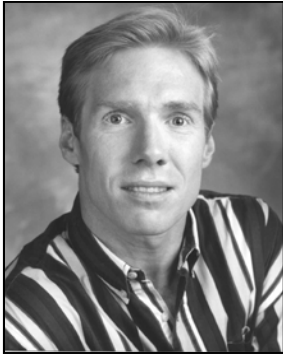
The WINGS Board of Directors held its Annual Meeting on September 29, 2007. Because our organization’s by-laws allow officers to serve a maximum number of terms, two officers were not eligible for reelection to their respective offices. Roy Willingham and Nancy Jester could not serve additional terms as President and Vice President. In addition, Ronald Hunt resigned as Treasurer to become the executive director. Therefore, the nomination committee submitted a list of nominees that were eligible to hold each office.

Nancy Jester of Cullman was elected President. Steve Puckett of Birmingham was elected Vice President. Roy Willingham of Emelle was elected Treasurer, and Adele Morgan of Dothan was elected Secretary.

We are excited about this change of leadership at WINGS. We are very grateful for the hard work and effort of our previous officers. Their hard work and diligence kept the organization operational during the interim period when there was no executive director.

From the Director

Ronald Hunt



My name is Ronald Hunt, and I am the new executive director of CONTACT: Wings Across Alabama. Many of you may already know me, as I was previously on the Board of Directors of WINGS for

almost two years. I have enjoyed working with this organization, and I am excited by the new challenges I face.

However, I am frustrated at the level of stigma that still surrounds mental illness. I imagine you often feel the same. Other people often diminish or downplay our beliefs that we can lead fulfilling and satisfying lives. Our friends, family members, and co-workers often tell us how much they believe in us, but secretly doubt our goals and dreams. They do not deliberately rain on our parade; they just buy into that belief that there is only so much love, satisfaction, and wealth to go around. Consequently, they believe that their satisfaction is dependent upon holding others at arms length forcing them to accept what is left.

This type of thinking is counterproductive to our movement, and the only way to combat stigma is to unify with other consumers who can love and support each of us in ways that reinforce a

positive self-image.

That is where WINGS can help. WINGS simply must become an effective advocacy organization that has the strength to shape public policy. In order to do this, we need a strong statewide consumer organization. Please become an active member of WINGS, and renew your membership today. Write a letter to an elected official supporting increased funding for mental health services. Volunteer a few hours in the WINGS office in Montgomery. Work with the Board member from your area on a project. Submit a letter for the newsletter, website, or your local newspaper. Ask your friends to join WINGS. Make a difference. It takes all of us working together to change the system, and every action counts.

Check Out Our Website:
www.wingsalabama.org

Membership Application

Mail completed application to:

CONTACT: *Wings Across Alabama*
 P.O. Box 211286 Montgomery, Al 36121

Phone: 1-888-WINGSAL

Phone: 334-395-7616 Fax: 334-395-7618

E-mail: cfcwings@bellsouth.net

Become a Member of WINGS

We need your help to grow. You are an important part of our team. WINGS success depends upon combining the strength of consumers and other supporters throughout Alabama. Together, we are more effective, efficient, and powerful. We need everyone's participation to achieve our mission. We invite you to become part of an organization that appreciates what you have to offer. Consumers on disability can join for \$2.00. Those not on disability can join for \$10.00, and non-consumers cost \$20.00.

Membership Form—Check One	Dues	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer on Disability	\$2.00	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Not on Disability	\$10.00	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Consumer	\$20.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	\$50.00	Phone Number _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	\$	Signature _____
Total \$ _____		

It's Almost Time to Pay Your 2008 Annual Dues. Those Who Join Or Renew by April 2008 will Be Entered into a Drawing for a Door Prize.

Peer Specialist Training Opportunities

The Office of Consumer Relations is coordinating Alabama's efforts at establishing a Certified Peer Specialist program. When the program is completely functional, community mental health centers will hire certified peer specialists to provide peer-to-peer services in the treatment of mental illness. One group of thirty consumers received training September 17 – 21, 2007 and completed certification testing by October 23, 2007. Another training session is scheduled for January 28 – February 1, 2008. Certification does not guarantee a job, but it is a necessary prerequisite for employment. If you are interested in this program, contact 1-800-832-0952.

A peer specialist is a consumer who shares his or her life experience with recovery. The peer specialist acts as a positive role model reinforcing hope that a better life is possible. The magic of peer-to-peer services is that both parties benefit. Any meaningful dialogue challenges both the peer specialist and the consumer to view things from a new perspective. Thus, a successful peer specialist mentors the consumers he or she counsels and empowers them to accept greater responsibility. Over time, successful peer-to-peer programs create new peer specialists.

A New Option: Supportive Housing

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has set aside funds for supportive housing. This option is designed to spread consumers throughout the community in independent living units. Each consumer would have his or her own apartment that a community mental health center leases. However, there would be a case manager for every twelve consumers. Those who qualify for this program will pay a percent of their income for rent and utilities.

This is an excellent opportunity for those individuals who are ready for more independent living arrangements. Participants must be able to cook and clean for themselves, as well as self-monitor their symptoms. The consumer must also be willing to allow Department of Mental Health certification personnel access to their apartment. This is necessary because funding is provided from the State of Alabama, who is responsible for certifying that the housing is safe and well maintained. Case management will be available, but this program requires a high level of self-care.

We are planning a Consumer Development Training Session for January 12, 2008. Everyone is invited. However, write an essay (See p. 4) to be considered for more specialized training.

Member Spotlight

Sister Lucindia Claghorn



Sister Lucindia Claghorn is a lay nun with the Secular Franciscan Order. She is the President of the Mobile Consumer Council of CONTACT: Wings Across

Alabama and the Southeastern liaison for Schizophrenics Anonymous. She has also volunteered for three decades each with the Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross and Mental Health America – Southwest Alabama.

Twice in the past year, Sister Lucindia has been acknowledged for her work serving those with mental illness. The Eli Lilly Foundation awarded her the Reintegration Award for Mentorship, and Mental Health America (MHA) honored her with their highest honor given to a consumer, the Clifford Beers award. This award is named in honor of the founder of MHA, who in 1909 founded what was then called the National Committee on Mental Hygiene. We are fortunate to have such a talented and seasoned consumer advocate as a member of our organization.

Senate Bill 1710

Please contact your Senators today to pass Senate Bill 1710, the FY2008 Labor-HHS Education Appropriation Bill, and the proposed \$43.4 million increase for mental health illness research at the National Institutes of Mental Health. This would boost the NIMH budget to \$1.436 billion. President Bush has threatened to veto this legislation. Please contact your Senators to support this legislation that would increase funding for education and research for mental health.

Sen. Richard Shelby: (202) 224-5744

Fax: (202) 224-3416

Sen. Jeff Sessions: (202) 224-4124

Fax: (202) 224-3149

Plan on Attending the
Consumer Development
Training Session Jan. 12,
2008 at UAB Hospital in
Birmingham.

1-888-WINGSAL or 334-395-7616
Fax: 334-395-7618

Montgomery, Al 36121-0286

P.O. Box 211286



MISSION STATEMENT :

CONTACT: WINGS ACROSS ALABAMA IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOR CONSUMERS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES WITH A DEDICATION TO MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF CONSUMERS THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, TRAINING, SERVICES, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS THROUGH BUILDING A STRONG NETWORK OF CONSUMERS ACROSS ALABAMA WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT INCLUSION, PEER SUPPORT, TRUE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION, SELF-EMPOWERMENT, AND QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE KEY INGREDIENTS TO RECOVERY.

Alternatives 2007 was a Big Success

The annual Alternatives Consumer Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri October 10-14, 2007.

Speakers included Terry Cline, Ph.D., administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service



Pat Deegan, Ph.D. spoke at Alternatives 2007.

Rehabilitation Sciences at Boston University.

However, the most inspiring moments came from consumers sharing their stories of recovery. Alternatives 2007 provided over 58 workshops that

were predominately lead by consumers. Topics included recovery, consumer operated services, advocacy, and skills building to address common problems.

were predominately lead by consumers. Topics included recovery, consumer operated services, advocacy, and skills building to address common problems.

WINGS plans to offer Consumer Development Training in 2008. In order to be selected, please write an essay explaining:

- Why you would like to become an advocate?
- How would you like to be serving others in 2012?
- What services you would change and why?