



The National Empowerment Center announces Alternatives 2005, the national mental health conference organized by and for mental health consumers and survivors, at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, Arizona October 26-30, 2005

In 1985, On Our Own of Baltimore, Maryland hosted the first Alternatives Conference, which was funded by Community Support Programs (CSP). The National Empowerment Center's Executive Director Daniel Fisher recalls, "During the twenty years of Alternatives Conferences, our movement has inspired the nation to see that recovery is possible for all individuals. This history of consumer leadership played a role in recovery becoming the goal of the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. Alternatives 2005 is an opportunity for consumer/survivors to continue to lead this transformation to a caring system based on trust, hope, and a belief in the potential of each person to lead a full life."

"Like the mythological phoenix bird that rises from its own ashes in new power, many of us find new ways of being, functioning and making a difference," according to NEC Director, Judene Shelley. "We rise from extreme emotional distress and use our experiences of personal recovery to transform our systems of care into caring systems."

Each Alternatives Conference offers in-depth training and technical assistance on consumer-delivered services and self-help recovery methods. The Alternatives 2005 Advisory Board, which includes consumer/survivor leaders from across the nation, is seeking proposals for workshops on the following subjects: Individual Approaches to Healing and Recovery, Reaching Across Cultures, Creating a Recovery Culture in Mental Health Systems, and Community Integration. Consumers and survivors, including those from diverse backgrounds, are invited to present workshops because our knowledge and experience is vital to transforming our lives and our mental health care.

The Hyatt Regency Phoenix is located in the Copper Square district of downtown Phoenix, Arizona. Special hotel rates are available for the conference. Phoenix boasts 325 days of sunshine per year with 70° to 80° temperatures in October. From historic buildings and cultural museums to sports arenas, restaurants and pubs, the area around the hotel has streets with palm trees and flowers blooming year round. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX) is served by 23 airlines providing nonstop service from Phoenix to 89 cities in the United States and 17 cities in Canada, Latin America and Europe.

Additional information on Alternatives 2005 including the Call for Papers and Hotel Registration Information is available at: www.power2u.org. Scholarships funds will be provided by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the NAMI STAR Center and awarded through AFYA, Inc. For general conference information, contact: Horizon Meetings, 800-776-1286.

Alternatives 2005 is funded by:



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