Alternatives 2010 Annual Conference:
“Promoting Wellness through Social Justice”

Hyatt-Regency Hotel, Anaheim, California
Thursday, September 29 to Sunday, October 3, 2010.

Puerto Rico Presentation:
Community and Social Inclusion Track

“Developing a Peer Support, Leadership and Education Program in Puerto Rico’s Public System of Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services.”

Thursday, September 30, 2010; 1:30pm to 3:00pm

Presenters:
Ángel L. Cortés-Cruz, B.A., C.P.S.—Assmca--Puerto Rico
David Gonzalez, Senior Consultant, Recovery xChange, N.Y.-L.A.
Violeta Figueroa-Robleto, B.A., C.P.S.—Assmca--Puerto Rico

Session Description:
This presentation highlighted the first training of Certified Peer Specialists (CPS’s) ever done in Puerto Rico’s public mental health system. It explored the successes and challenges of CPS’s in Puerto Rico and the Peer Program at ASSMCA (Administration of Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services of Puerto Rico). It also brainstormed ideas and recommendations to improve the lives of CPS’s, recipients of services in general in Puerto Rico. Stakeholders attending the Alternatives 2010 Conference participated on an open discussion on ways to assist CPS’s, the peer community and the Peer Program of ASSMCA in Puerto Rico.

The presentation featured a photo slideshow, created by David Gonzalez, Senior Consultant & Trainer of the Recovery x-Change, of pictures taken of the participants during the CPS training held during the week of October, 13 to 17, 2008, at the ASSMCA facilities of the Centro de Servicios Integrados de Recuperación de Trujillo Alto (CSIRTA) –Center of Integrated Recovery Services of Trujillo Alto.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 IN REF:
CPS’S, PEER PROGRAM & PEER INITIATIVES IN PUERTO RICO’S PUBLIC SYSTEM OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ANTI-ADDICTION SERVICES

Submitted by Eric O. Jackson, B.A., C.P.S., Director (acting) Peer Program ASSMCA-Puerto Rico

1. It is recommended that for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 the Puerto Rico Administration of Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services (ASSMCA):

   ■ Assigns a specific official at the central office to focus on the Peer Program and the newly certified CPS’s with the specific objective of:
- Research the current existence and any possible future projection of opportunities in reference to grants and possible allocation of funds (local-Puerto Rico or external--United States or other) to target:
  - Technical assistance support, and,
  - Financial assistance support for:
    - Development of programs and peer initiatives.
    - System transformation in Ref: Peer Recovery and Empowerment.
    - Services to people with mental diversities and disabilities.
    - Services to people in recovery from addictions.
- Assess ideas and viable possibilities, and provide consultation and assistance services to peer groups in matters of self-initiatives and self-enterprises that could be developed as alternative enterprises to those dependent on allocations of direct funds.

- Provides basic financial support to the Program-Peer Office and to a CPS personnel that can implement peer and community initiatives for the benefit of the recovery of the clients served by ASSMCA.

- Assess the existence and analyze the existing data in mental health systems of the United States and other countries which support the affirmation and the evidence that investing on the development of peer programs and initiatives decreases, on the short and long terms, the needed investment and the costs of provision of services for the mental health agency of the state or the country making such peer-oriented investments:
  - Such data and analyses must be utilized in agency efforts to seek and justify funds allocations and other tangible supports for the success of peer initiatives as part of the clinical and social goals of the agency, and for the success of austerity measures and fiscal efficiency of ASSMCA as a public agency.

- Include the participation of CPS's and representation of community and peer interests in central and regional meetings of stakeholders.

2- It is summarized that in Fiscal Year 2010-2011 the Office/Peer Program of CSIRTA:

- Intends to obtain the assignment of basic financial support for the Office/Peer Program.

- Intends to obtain the assignment of CPS personnel with appropriate monetary compensation:

- With assigned and duly financially supported CPS personnel, the Office/Peer Program of CSIRTA will:
  - Establish participative coordinated networks of the needs, activities, visions, perspectives and interests of the original group of Certified Peer Specialists (CPS’s) trained and certified by DBSA-ASSMCA in October, 2008.
Establish official compromises from the central office and regional centers of ASSMCA for tangible supports to the needs, activities, visions, perspectives and interests of this original group of CPS’s.

Establish official compromises from the central office and regional centers of ASSMCA for tangible supports to the needs, activities, visions, perspectives and interests of the community of peers at the service centers of ASSMCA.

Produce a variety of initiatives directed to provide support to the social and clinical objectives of ASSMCA, emphasizing the vision and the objectives of independent living and life in the community established and developed by the CPS’s and by the participating peers. Such initiatives would be, but not be limited to:

- Workshops.
- Trainings.
- Conferences.
- Support groups.
- Education groups.
- Cultural and education activities.
- Socialization activities.
- Assisting in the conceptualization and coordination of Conferences with local and foreign leaders in reference to peer issues, recovery issues, independent life, empowerment, others.
- Establish working collaborations with organizations, agencies and peer leaders in Puerto Rico and other countries.

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