

# The Recovery Route

## MISSION

**TO IMPROVE  
THE LIVES  
OF PEOPLE  
LIVING WITH  
MOOD  
DISORDERS**

## *The Benefits of Peer Support in the Event of Mental Illness*

By Susan Orr Parker, Nov. 1, 2008

The mentally ill, rather than being ostracized and left to struggle through life alone, benefit greatly from peer support in both individual and group settings.

My own perception of the mentally ill has changed dramatically over the past few decades, exponentially with my knowledge and exposure. When I was diagnosed as Bipolar in my late teens, in the middle of my nursing school years, I felt like it was a death sentence. How could I possibly live anything like a normal productive life? The stigma associated with the diagnosis (not being eligible for health or life insurance, fretting over those questions on job applications about being treated for a mental health disorder) was nothing compared to the internal constant fear that no matter how hard I “tried,” I still might end up in a state facility some day, just like dear old grandma.



I have been quite fortunate in that over the years, I have learned to handle my own mental illness in much the same way that a diabetic learns to manage his illness— and that I have been able to work to instill that concept in others. We do not choose what we are required to deal with, but we can choose how we attempt to deal with it. So instead of feeling that a life lived under the constant shadow of depression was not worth living, I learned to feel that a life lived to anything other than the highest potential, no matter what that may be, is truly the life that is wasted.

One of the most important aspects of living life to the fullest, for me, requires the interactions with my peers; the support and understanding of compassionate individuals who do not say ‘Oh I know, it’s awful to be depressed’ in a patronizing tone, but can express their own true understanding by simply being there, and having ‘been there’ themselves. Peer support, found to be amazingly effective in the treatment of alcoholism and drug abuse, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, can also be effective in the ongoing management of mental illness, depression and of bipolar affective disorder, to name a few.

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## *Peer Support, cont'd*

Groups exist and provide support to not only the individuals suffering from the mental disorder, such as the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), but for families and loved ones as well.

Check out a group in your area today!

Susan Orr Parker is a psychiatric nurse and bipolar. She lives in Virginia with her family and was the stand-out comedian of last years DBSA National convention.

## ***CITY WIDE WATER FIGHT FUNDRAISER***

*The ULTIMATE in childhood games has come back!* This time, it's ADULT-sized water fights!

Join us for the paranoia....the fun...the revenge. Use any water-delivery system you choose– water

balloons, water guns, a vase.....



A three(3)-week contest pitting player against player. When you get your 'dossier' you'll have your first target. Who is your next target?

You'll have to eliminate your first one to find out!

***Last player standing, wins the \$250 Grand Prize!***

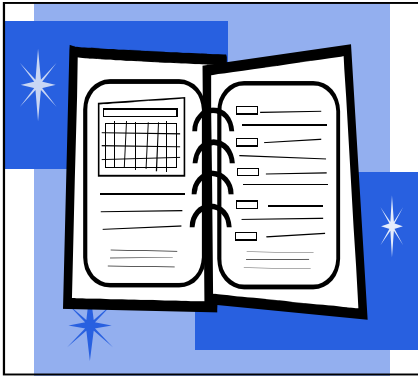
Game starts June 8th. Sign up today. Must be 18. Entry deadline is Noon May 31, 2009

But keep it a secret...your co-worker could be your next target!

\$25 per player to enter. A four (4)-person team is only \$80.<sup>00</sup> Contact Rave @ 405-409-5946

Rave@coxinet.net

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Please mark the following items on your calendar if you wish to attend...and don't forget to call the DBSA-OK office if you must register in advance!

### MAY

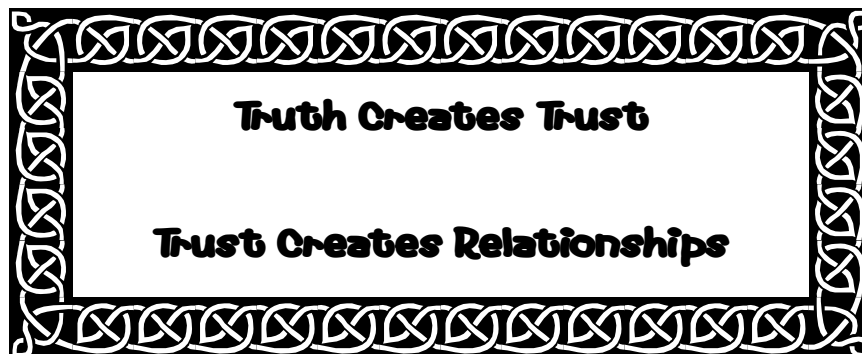
- 4th DBSA-OK Board Meeting 5pm
- 6th—8th 16th Annual Children's Conference, The Art of Creating Resilience  
Embassy Suites, Norman.  
Keynote Speaker, Dave Pelzer, Author of *A Child Called It*
- 16th NAMIWalks for the Mind of America
- 20th Facilitator Summit (plz register)

### JUNE

- 1st DBSA-OK Board Meeting, 5pm
- 17th Facilitator Summit (plz register)

### JULY

- 6th DBSA-OK Board Meeting 5pm
- 15th Facilitator Summit (plz register)



## DEPRESSION & BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE- OKLAHOMA

4501 N. Classen Blvd. Suite 108, Oklahoma City, OK 73118 405-286-9370

Apr 2009

### ADA

Contact: Linda Kauffman  
Phone: 405-401-9279  
Thursday's 6:00 PM  
Rolling Hills Hospital  
1000 Rolling Hills Lane

### ARDMORE

Friends of Hope Chapter  
Contact: David Engle  
Phone: 580-272-3781  
Thursday's 7pm  
Ardmore Public Library

### BETHANY

Contact: Becky Rowell  
Phone: 405-943-0879  
Thursday's 7pm  
Bethany Church Of Christ  
3301 N. Rockwell

### GUTHRIE

Contact: Iva Cook  
Phone: 405-373-0059  
Thursday's 7 PM  
West Guthrie Methodist Church  
Fellowship Hall  
1201 W. Noble

### Lawton Public Library

Contact: John Windham  
Phone: 580-483-4942  
Contact:2 Jack & Priscilla Yoast  
Phone: 580-248-2390  
Monday's 7:00 PM  
Lawton Public Library  
[www.dbsa-swok.org](http://www.dbsa-swok.org)

### OKLAHOMA CITY

Northside 1- All Souls  
George Crooks  
405-413-7778  
Monday's 7pm  
All Souls Episcopal Church  
6400 N. Penn(63rd &N. Penn  
Park and go in back door

Capitol Hill - SouthSide  
Contact: Nancy Vlet  
Phone: 405-570-3672  
Thursday's 6:30 PM  
Capitol Hill Library  
334 SW 26th

Northside 2- Crossings  
Shannon Streeter  
405-942-0172  
Monday's 6PM  
Crossings Community Church  
14600 N. Portland

Daytime Group  
Contact: Tammy Lenox  
Phone: 405-272-4743  
Tuesday's 10am  
DBSA State Office  
4501 N. Classen Suite 108

Closed Groups\*  
Red Rock- Yukon  
North Care- N. Hudson OKC  
Crisis Center- NE 13th OKC  
\* Must be a client

### MIDWEST CITY

Contact Jackie Skaggs  
Phone 405-737-1923  
Tuesdays 6:30pm  
Eastside Church of Christ  
916 S. Douglas

### NORMAN

Contact: Iva Cook  
Phone 405-373-0059  
Thursdays 7:00 PM  
Edsel Ford House  
Griffin Memorial Hosp.

### PONCA CITY

Contact: Katherine Ewing  
Phone: 580-336-0136  
Mondays 7:30-9pm  
at Ponca Hosp, conf. Room B

### STILLWATER

Contact 1: Don Brown  
Phone: 580-336-0136  
Tuesdays 7:30 -9pm  
1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church

### WEATHERFORD

Contact: Anita Crawford  
Phone: 580-302-3397  
Tuesdays 6pm  
Pizza Hut Meeting Room  
309 N. Washington St

### YUKON

Contact: Marcia Newhardt  
Phone: 405-514-1597  
Tuesdays 7:00 PM  
First Christian Church  
601 Maple

**ALL DBSA SUPPORT GROUPS ARE FREE OF CHARGE**

Please Check our website for the most up-to-date information on groups, training sessions, conferences & get-togethers!



[www.Okdbsa.org](http://www.Okdbsa.org)



We've Been There. We Can Help

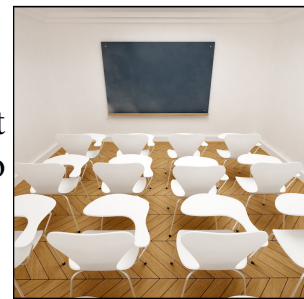
## *From Sandy's Chair*

Several people have said that DBSA in Oklahoma is a best-kept secret. We're hoping to lose our secret status this year and one way we are going to do this is by advertising.

Our ads are already in the *Oklahoma Gazette* and will be out later in April in *The Seasoned Reader*. In addition we update our information for the meeting calendar in *The Daily Oklahoman* and most of the city papers in which we have meetings. In addition, we urge people attending support groups to take copies of the schedule to their doctors offices, their church, their local library, nearby hospitals... anywhere people will be.

We know a couple of things are true: 1-we can never assume that we can tell by the outside what is inside people and 2- that sharing our lives with a few other people we trust to be positive and non-judgmental has great healing power.

We will be presenting facilitator training on Saturday May 30th at the DBSA State Office from 10-2. Lunch will be served. Call to register please 286-9370.



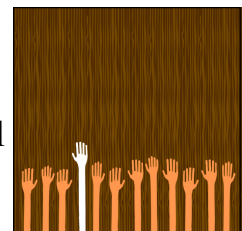
Coming up is the NAMI Walk on May 16 , if you want to walk, register with me (see number above) and George will lead the actual walk. It is at Stars and Stripes Park and registration begins at 9:00am. See you there.



The Day at the Capitol was great! Good turn out and lots of break food left and all the orange juice you could drink. For those who didn't know that it was happening, I am so sorry, the date was set a couple of weeks ago and we were unable to notify everyone.

We are ready to accept scholarship applications for the national DBSA conference. It is in September, begins on the 10<sup>th</sup> and is in Indianapolis, Indiana. Call the office to request an application.

Big thanks to the volunteers who have worked at our table at several conferences this month. Recovery is all about doing!



OKLAHOMA  
DEPRESSION &  
BIPOLAR SUPPORT  
ALLIANCE

4501 N. Classen Blvd  
Suite 108  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Phone: 405-286-9370  
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***WE'VE BEEN THERE,  
WE CAN HELP.***

