

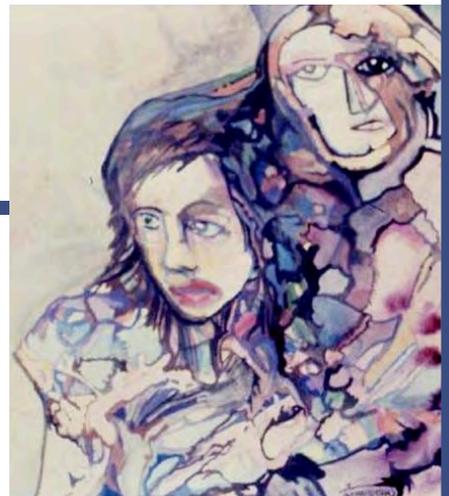
# MHSOAC *Expressions*



*The true measure of a civilization can be seen not in its great scientific achievements, its large bridges and freeway systems, its supermarkets and fast food chains, its IT advances, or its great movie epics. The true measure of a civilization is seen in the way it treats its people who are poor, sick, elderly, handicapped, or otherwise in need.*

*- Stuart Rawlings, Placer County Social Worker*

**Volume 3**  
August 2012

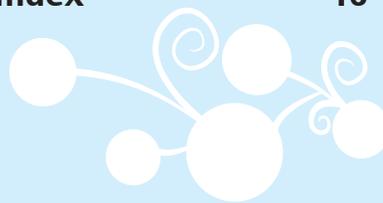


A Collection of Artwork and Writing from California's Mental Health Community

# Welcome to the August 2012 Edition of MHSOAC Expressions!

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*MHSOAC Expressions* is a special edition of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) newsletter, featuring artwork and writings from California's mental health community at large. A special thank you goes out to all of the talented clients, parents, caregivers, family members and stakeholders of the mental health community who submitted their artwork, poetry and short stories. We have received hundreds of submissions from artists and writers from varying counties throughout California, and are pleased to present a handful of these in this newsletter. It has been a wonderful experience and very inspiring to hear your stories and share in your creative expressions.

Wellness, Recovery and Resiliency are key themes of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA or Prop 63), which serves thousands of people with mental illnesses in California. These themes are evident in the lives of so many in the mental health community, and throughout this newsletter you will see a full range of emotions and motivational illustrations of these themes as experienced by many of our artists and writers.

The newsletter has been divided into three sections: *Expressions*, *Art*, and *Recovery*. *Expressions* presents several inspirational poems paired with a few similarly expressive art works. In *Art*, you will see a display of some of the many outstanding art works we have received. And, in *Recovery*, individuals share their personal stories of triumph over mental illness.

I'd like to thank the MHSOAC Communications Team for their excellent work on this special edition. We hope you enjoy it.

Thank you,

Sherri Gauger, Executive Director  
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

## Artists Featured on the Cover



**Untitled**  
Mike Dietz  
Placer County



**Natural Love**  
Kenneth James  
Los Angeles County



**Champion**  
Designed by  
Juanita Olmos  
Tulare County



**Road to Nowhere**  
Andrea Price  
San Bernardino County



**Port of LA**  
Lynn Keune  
Sacramento County



**Friends at Beach**  
Lynn Keune  
Sacramento County



**My Dream Job**  
Leann Simpson  
Alameda County



**Together**  
James Christiansen  
Stanislaus County



**Tears Of...**  
*Sandra Velasco*  
*Santa Clara County*

## I Cry

Sometimes when I'm alone  
I cry  
The tears I cry are bitter and warm  
They flow with life but take no form  
I cry because my heart is torn  
I find it difficult to carry on  
If I had an ear to confide in  
I would cry among my treasured friend  
But who do you know that stops that long  
To help another carry on  
The world moves fast and it would rather pass by  
Than to stop and see what makes one cry  
And sometimes  
I cry  
And no one cares about why

*Bradley Vancel*  
*Sacramento County*

## The Two Sides of Me

I'm as honest  
as the night is long  
Responsible  
to a fault  
Loving as a  
nightingales song  
A caring  
and supportive adult.  
I blame you  
for what I cannot see  
I'm shy  
beneath a darkened sky  
Withdrawn inside  
my tortoise shell  
As introverted  
as blackened rye  
Reluctantly, I confide  
I know me well.

*Barbie Anne Gaulin*  
*Sonoma County*



**Night Sky (Jerry Yarnell's Starry Night)**  
*Karen Snyder, High Risk Health and Senior Access Team*  
*Stanislaus County*

## Untitled

My dear friend  
You'll be okay  
Not everyday  
Will be like today  
Things will be fine  
You know that they will  
Focus on positive  
Meditate and be still  
You're finally able  
To truly be free  
Do what you want  
Whatever that may be  
You've been through so much  
I know that you have  
You've come so far  
Now let's look back and laugh  
So many trials  
Some that you failed  
But you learned so much  
In the end you prevailed!  
Just stay open minded  
Keep your eyes open wide  
And show the world  
What it means to be alive!

*Brenna Feller  
San Diego County*



**Love Upheaval**  
*Martin Ortega  
Imperial County*

## Disorder

There is no order to this my life  
It is so chaotic in my mind  
On the inside looking out  
I am sane by all accounts  
On the outside looking in  
This where true chaos begins  
Self deluded I see me  
Righteously  
My intentions virtuous worthy.  
Essentially I covet secretly  
It that touches me so deeply  
sweetly purely unknowingly.  
Professing outwardly to be  
In control  
I am seeing me.  
Trust  
Come and go with me  
I help you not just for you  
But me  
Deluded is my mind  
Crazy  
Valued secretly are the moments  
In the company  
See  
How bizarre my mind creeps  
To disorder within order  
Is it live or Memorex  
On cloud nine, ten  
I rise  
The it's grey silver lining  
Visualized.  
The latest  
Episode in the chaos of my mind.  
Is actually a moment of reality  
Defined

My fate for this time for a while.  
Deluded delusions yet  
Reality Real  
It all coming down  
How I feel  
Inside the chaos  
Mental madness  
Surreal  
*Tracy Inez  
Los Angeles County*



**Untitled**  
*Mike Dietz  
Placer County*

*Art... is an attempt to bring  
order out of chaos.*

*- Stephen Sondheim*



**Shadow**  
Katrina Eden  
Santa Clara County

## About "Shadow"

The shadow side of self and culture. We hold both, the shadow and the light. Inspired by \*Paschimottanasana, this work depicts the transformational aspects of self-inquiry based systems of recovery and wellness.

An expression of the shadow side of self and culture, this painting holds the understanding that we, as individuals and as a community, hold both the shadow and the light. By facing the hidden aspects of ourselves, we cultivate self-acceptance and wisdom. The process of healing ourselves from the inside out encourages acceptance of others; in turn uplifting our local and global communities.\*\*

\*Paschimottanasana is a hatha yoga posture best described as a seated forward fold.

\*\*Abridged



**Boatman Sunset**  
Val Esprit  
Sacramento County

*A good painting to me has always been like a friend. It keeps me company, comforts and inspires.*

*- Hedy Lamarr*

## Look At Me Now

Look at me now it's not where I came from its where I made it  
Look at me now never thought I would of made it this far with my  
Background and my past the hurt and deceive this life has cause me  
The pain I never thought I could get over but  
Look at me now learn how to take the pain in and turn it into power  
Learn from my mistakes grew in strength  
Look at me now I'm going to graduate  
Life just getting started  
Look at me now I'm on a great start

Sabrina Harrell  
San Joaquin County



**Hope and Love**  
*Sarah Favorite*  
*Los Angeles County*

## Desolation

The trees are black, the forest gray.  
With ashy casts and foggy rays.  
Can't the sunlight come through the air  
And give some hope to the spirit there?  
Then may we see the beauty that exists,  
can sigh a moment and enjoy this long-awaited bliss.  
Oh death what do you have me do –  
when everyday you force myself to talk to you?  
I'm tired oh life and death combined.  
Tell me what is really mine.  
Do I have the sunlight coming through the fog?  
Or will darkness always prevail,  
Casting shadows on my grave and longing for my fall?  
Let me yield to the sweetness and the joy  
of a forest shiny green and gold,  
With amber sounds coming through the leaves  
yearning for my touch.  
Hear me life, extend your hand  
and guide me through  
until we find that tender patch of precious blue.

*Carmen Lee*  
*San Mateo County*

## Letters Home

Another drop of sweat  
Lingers on my chin  
For a few heartbeats.

Baptizing the paper.  
Just below the stain  
Of the one  
From the tip of my nose.

Distorting my writing.  
Making it look  
As if  
I had been crying.

While I work hard,  
After three days  
In the bush,  
To say something interesting.

I work hard  
In this night.  
To tell my mother  
Lies.

About myself  
And my heart,  
And how little  
I died out there.

*Donald Loomis*  
*Riverside County*



**Tsunami in Japan**  
*Dennis Riley*  
*San Diego County*



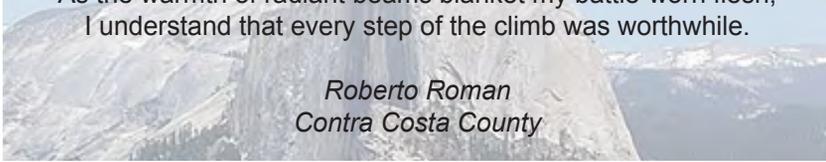
**African Sunset**  
*Jeff Syvertsen\**  
*Stanislaus County*  
*\* Legally blind*



## Summit

The air atop Half Dome is its gentlest in the morning.  
The kiss of sunrise caresses the valley below.  
Streams like capillaries traverse redwoods that lean towards heaven  
With outstretched hands.  
The quiet that comes with morning is always with me.  
My gaze fixes upon a tender sky shedding shadows of the past  
Extending its reach like oceans pierced by starbursts.  
As the warmth of radiant beams blanket my battle-worn flesh,  
I understand that every step of the climb was worthwhile.

*Roberto Roman  
Contra Costa County*



By Val Esprit '08

**Happy Forest**  
*Val Esprit  
Sacramento County*

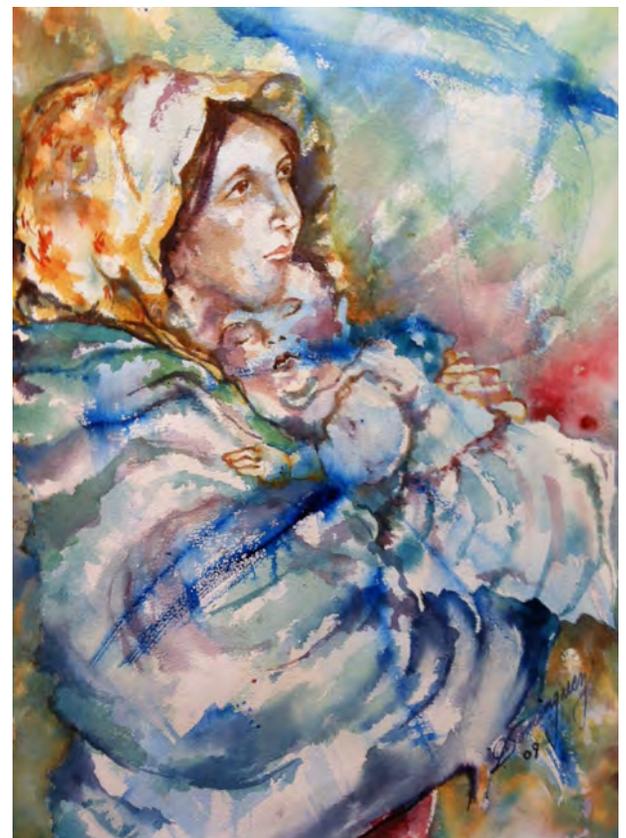
## Hold On

I am afraid to let go, but I am tired  
God says hold on  
I cannot breathe, feel like the walls are closing  
God says hold on  
I am running and I am tired, but I cont' to run  
God says slow down  
I do not listen and then I fall  
I try to stand but I cannot  
I am bleeding  
God says crawl  
I crawl  
God says walk  
I walk  
God says I will heal your wounds,  
But I will not remove the scars  
I ask why  
He said I want you to remember  
No matter what you go through I am here for  
you  
Believe in me and all things are possible.

*Renee Norman  
San Joaquin County*



**Fishing Day**  
*Juan Alvarez  
Napa County*



**Mother and Child**  
*Victor Dominguez  
Los Angeles County*

## Independence

Strength, Joy  
Peace, Love  
Holding on  
Letting go

Becoming Authentic  
No matter what  
No matter where  
No matter when

I have the choice  
Within myself  
To make the move  
To open my mouth  
To speak my truth

Independence is becoming close  
Becoming vulnerable  
Becoming honest  
Becoming real

Opening my eyes  
To the clarity of my life  
As I reframe  
My old ways  
And embrace the new

For only I know  
What it is like  
To hold on to fear  
Keeping me from love

A fear  
That I might not  
Be worthy of freedom

Freedom  
That lives inside each of us  
Freedom to see life  
As only we can  
With love, joy and purpose

That is true independence

Mary Pat Nally  
Ventura County



**Eagles Over Canyon**

Ron Reiswig  
Napa County

*“Every artist dips his brush  
in his own soul, and paints  
his own nature into his  
pictures.”*

*- Henry Ward Beecher*

## Natural Love

kenneth james  
Los Angeles County

### About “Natural Love”

This is about who we are naturally, and how nature is therapeutic, it is a place that we were naturally given to, but as city dwellers have been removed. It brings a peace that the city does not know! This is also about fantasy, about wishing to be there in the nature, and escaping all the craziness of the city, and also the craziness of being victimized.





**Compassion**  
James Christiansen  
Stanislaus County

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”

- Aristotle



**Split Time**  
Guy Kerr  
Nevada County

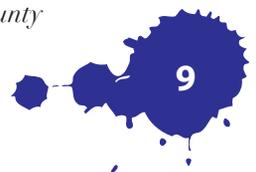
## Broken Spirit

I am broken in spirit  
I'm losing control  
The absence of peace  
Has taken over my soul  
The pain I feel  
Along with shame  
It makes me so tired  
It drives me insane  
The dread and anger  
Delusion and guilt  
I have become accustomed to  
This misery I feel  
Demoralization and failure  
Are part of me now  
I suffer from an incurable disease  
That is chronic and foul  
Hopeless and sick  
Rebellious and forced

Has cut me off from those I love most  
Arrested and jailed  
Suicide on my mind  
No more excuses  
I look but can't find  
Self centered, self seeking  
Is that who I am  
Will I choose to live  
Or choose to be damned  
Defensive and Proud  
The fear invades my being  
Consumed in this nightmare  
It invades all my dreams  
Destruction dissipated  
Condemned and enslaved  
This is my reality  
To this day  
The question I must ask

What am I willing to do  
To end this spiral war I go through  
Will I be honest with self  
And live what I've learned  
Make use of this time  
Absent from drugs I learned  
Will I make this time in treatment in vain  
Or be grateful for life and heal from the pain  
Will I learn to live my life on life's terms  
Or will I continue to allow my dreams to be burned  
No, today I take a stand  
To change everything  
And for that change I know I must be willing to be free.

*Gina Enriquez*  
San Diego County





**Somewhere I Belong**  
*Patricia Aveni*  
 San Francisco County

## Healing Trauma

- I.  
 withdraw into numbness  
 spinning, spinning going faster  
 meditate, finding answers  
 smashed  
 burglarized, burying the pain in work  
 prayer  
 inspiration
- II.  
 yoga & prayer  
 unfolding the fear & pain: breathing  
 response  
 climbing on the way up  
 broken: must make myself better  
 study & practice faith  
 inspired
- III.  
 now fully in-the-now  
 centered, relaxed yet alert  
 world's problems  
 looking for the light  
 faithful, whatever arises, I'll be okay  
 healing with hope  
 wellness

**Bipolar**

I'm recovering now,  
 It's been by the sweat of my brow.  
 Doctor's, nurses, hospitals, pills,  
 Up and down the mountain and hills,  
 Of my delusional mind.  
 In a world that was so unkind.  
 There were days when it was good,  
 And some days I wouldn't have even if I could.  
 But all in all I can't complain,  
 I can see through the fear and pain,  
 You have to be brave to face your mind  
 Especially in a world so unkind.  
 It's been 40 years since my mind went away  
 I look forward to tomorrow and today.  
 I've put the past behind me and I see,  
 That the person in the mirror is a different me.

*Suzanné*  
 Stanislaus County

## Survivor

Who me, yes me,  
 Previously surrounded by unfavorable  
 conditions,  
 Entrenched in muck,  
 Existing in the grim,  
 Living in the dirtiest of waters,  
 Hiding in the dark,  
 Alive but not living.  
 A person who experienced trauma...  
 Boundaries violated, abused, raped, and  
 neglected.  
 Everyday -n- every night, reliving the  
 horrors that filled my world...  
 But like a lotus, magnificence unfolded.  
 A spiritual being who is perfect, whole, &  
 complete,

I AM A SURVIVOR - not a victim!  
 Life as a caterpillar ends.  
 Metamorphosis and change has occurred  
 The journey begins.  
 I am living life boldly & courageously.  
 Insight, perspective, and transformation.  
 Self propelled like a butterfly,  
 I rise!  
 Rejoicing for all that I am, give, and bring.  
 My existence, my being, my living  
 Manifesting radiance and radiance  
 manifesting.

I AM A SURVIVOR!  
 I Am, I Am!

*Yaffa Alter*  
 Alameda County

*"I found I could say things  
 with color and shapes that  
 I couldn't say any other way  
 - things I had no words for."*

- Georgia O'Keeffe



**About "My Dream Job"**

As a consumer and advocate working in the non-profit sector, creating art has become vital to my recovery and maintaining wellness, it tells a story...

**My Dream Job**

Leann Simpson  
Alameda County



**Painting Out Loud**

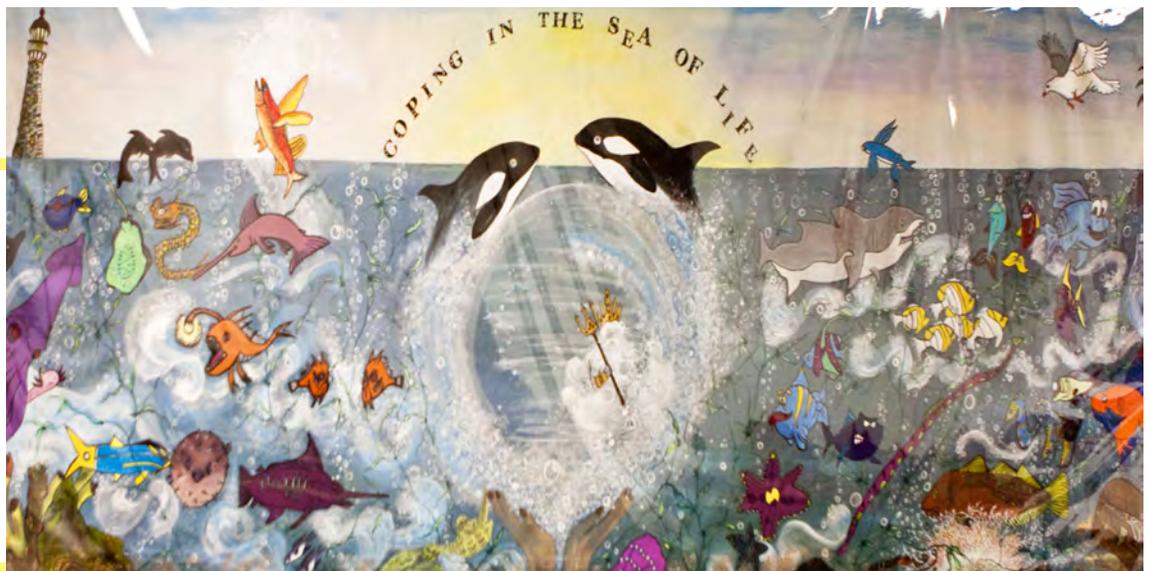
Counseling Staff of Petaluma People Services Center  
Sonoma County

*Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.*

- Thomas Merton

**About "Coping in the Sea of Life"**

The mural "Coping in the Sea of Life" symbolically portrays the challenges, battle, triumphs, and joy that play out as we strive to face up to the storms of life and work toward recovery and wellness.



**Coping in the Sea of Life**

Case Manager, Dianne Washington and Clients  
of Pacific Clinic's Children's Intensive Community Services (CICS)  
Los Angeles County



**The Gathering of Friends**  
Robert J.  
Placer County



**Squirrels**  
Jo Ann Myers, Stepney  
Santa Barbara County



**Swan with  
Seashells in a  
Goose Egg**  
Kristina Kaufman  
Butte County

*“A picture is worth a thousand words.”*

*- Napoleon Bonaparte*



**Holding Your  
Thoughts**  
Mark Grenz  
Nevada County



**Volcanoes of Feelings**  
Ayleen (12),  
Jacqueline (9) and Mercedes (5) Peguero  
Orange County

## My Journey of Recovery

In the past, I never liked  
The word recovery  
I felt like I was broken  
In some way  
Others could not see

It was my projection  
I held tightly in my hand  
I had a fear of letting go  
Afraid others  
Might not understand

Understand my heart  
Understand my pain  
Understand just who I am  
So the real me  
Would still remain

To admit I have a challenge  
To admit that I need help  
To admit that I need to lean on others  
That I cannot do this all by myself

Today  
My thoughts are different  
I have begun to understand  
That recovery is discovery  
Of parts of myself  
I have buried in the sand  
Parts that I have revealed  
Cry for my attention  
They have been waiting  
In the shadows  
Healing from experiences  
They are too scared to mention  
I might not have been able  
To handle it at the time  
I am surrounded in support today  
The opportunity is mine

To take off the veil  
To let down my guard  
The wall that I built  
Was oh so very hard

I was tired of pretending  
No longer wanting to hide  
Tired of feeling all alone  
Hoping the tears  
Would eventually subside  
I was enveloped  
With love and acceptance  
Validated for my gifts  
I started to see  
The love in myself

And it really gave me a lift  
In the process of becoming  
I am uncovering my truth  
I am a divine, loving and creative soul

For that, I need no proof

When we come together  
We mold ourselves like clay  
Strength in numbers  
We support and celebrate  
Let us have a wonderful day

Sincerely,

*Mary Pat Nally  
Ventura County*

## My Recovery: Total Transformation!!

Reflecting back on my past nine months of treatment of all kinds, not the least of which includes extensive group therapy along with intervention by a doctor, I can best sum up my recovery as being a total transformation for myself. Being here at "Las Encinas Hospital" here in Pasadena with its cross section of ethnically diverse people from all over the greater L.A. area, its been an eye opening experience. These people come from all walks of life of which most well educated. Regardless, the common thread that brings these folks together, is for their growth and recovery. This experience made me aware that life in spite of its ups and downs, life can be at times a lot of fun!!

It made me aware that recovery and wellness for the most part means, is always knowing how to take care of myself. In addition to that, living a very productive and prosperous life can include, always working hard, helping others in need and having a great sense of humor!! At times, letting out a little "LAUGHTER!!" can help others in say having a wonderful day!! Therefore self help courses, namely therapy here at Las Encinas Hospital has been truly intrigal part of my recovery and wellness. Also going to the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles has also been crucial

for my wellness and recovery as well. Getting together with folks of the Japanese community along with getting in touch with the lord has made me really appreciate how this Betsuin has been a unique sense of community all to itself. I'm really thankful for that this is another way of taking really good care of myself each and every week.

However, the one single most important element that has defined my life in terms of recovery is: my skills of being able to do research of articles and doing writings of all kinds of stories related to recovery. This has really helped me immensely in my recovery. Along with that listening to a lot of interesting vintage music on web site, youtube along with internet radio, has been really theraputic for me. In all, the process of recovery and wellness has truly been beneficial for me the fact that I do have a lot of life's experience and lived experiences. These things has really made me very opinionated and moreover insightful in my conversations of sharing my stories of recovery and wellness with others. In feel I have really helped others in their growth, healing in their road to recovery. In terms of a summation, knowing myself and knowing what my weaknesses and limitations and my desire in getting the help I need has really help me immensely. With that I encourage others to do the same, as they work towards their road to recovery and wellness!!

Thank you,

*Steve Wakimoto  
Los Angeles County*

*Writing is an extreme privilege  
but it's also a gift. It's a  
gift to yourself and it's a gift  
of giving a story to someone.*

*- Amy Tan*

## My Stop Message

If more under the power and insanity of addiction could stop long enough to focus on the beginning of a fresh new day without the plague of a bottle of wine, a balloon, spoon and its outfit, a hit and its accompanying glass pipe or anything that must be ingested to relieve the pressure and pain felt by addiction.

If such could stop long enough to watch the sun rise and endure its soothing warmth and tremendous energy instead of what has become a pest in the sky burning and getting in the way of another beautiful day that can never be seen.

Stop and try to remember what your teeth were like before this monster called addiction took over the direction of your hygiene. Remember what your bathroom was like around this same time and if you showered or bathed on a regular basis.

Stop long enough to hear an ole jam mastered by one of America's greatest of strings being played on a distant radio. Remember those days and how life was indeed Breezin'.

Stop and reflect on the last night's peaceful and most comfortable slumber. As well reflect on that significant other you cherish to this day and how the two of you awoke to that beautiful dawn. And in such waking, after experiencing a night never to forget, the two of you put a seal on your love aided even more by the dawn and its rising sun.

Recall, if you will, the times on a regular basis when breakfast, lunch and dinner were hot and tasty meals. Remember if such was the reason for all those diets. Remember the service you were treated with at the local supermarket due to the checks that were always honored because not one of them ever bounced. Recall, if you can, how your identification to verify checks had been replaced by your wide smile.

Compare your domestic quality today to yesterday. I mean; when was the last time you were paid a compliment for your domestication - a bright and cheerful home?

Stop and try to calculate the last most consistent lot of paid: rent, electric, gas, phone, cable, internet, McCall, playboy, jet, ebony and newspaper bills - not to forget house notes for those of you. And by consistent refer to that lot of paid bills years old now. And while you're calculating find those receipts for that television set and attachments for video, that stereo system with its 1000 plus collection of your favorite music, that gold watch with the diamond midnight mount, other jewelry shared out of love and the late model car.

Maybe after just some of this reflecting one may begin to do more wanting, desiring and yearning other than those times in life we can get backed up against a wall. As long as that need does not arise, those of us who keep saying "hey; maybe I need to", may have a shot at recalling to light that missing sun and all its fresh glory.

You may even find that a rainy day has a certain freshness to it for its intended purposes.

Like the rain after some polluted problem in a downtown or ghetto alley you may think of that monster you are polluted by as the very same. And a good hard rain can be thought of as those tears and flow of snot all pouring without the thought of a man crying or a woman giving in to the same both in surrender.

And like the rain there is something clean and fresh throughout that is seen and felt as strength, courage, relief and especially humbleness. On the first sun shiny day after the cleansing rain can be felt the very same intensity after one's own shower - Oh Yes; it's alright to cry!

At least for me it was and still is today. As well there are those I walk with in this fresh new world who feel the very same. There are those witnessed on a regular basis who feel the beginning of this fresh new world free of the chains of insanity.

And if pride should stand in the way of so much pain suffered by addiction then it is only my suggestion that maybe you wait for one of Seattle's many rainy days, Chicago, Atlanta or New York's many buckets of rain and walk in it.

No one except our Higher Power will notice you in the midst of a wet crowded downtown or even a lonely ghetto street CLEANING HOUSE!!!

*BeBop  
Los Angeles County*

## The Client on the Couch

I was led down the long corridor of a small mobile home by a frail older woman who seemed to emanate pain from her stooped body with every tender step. With excessive effort, she turned her body so she could fall back into the sofa that already retained an impression of her body exactly how she had maneuvered herself. "This has just been the year of living on my couch" she reported with a sigh. She went on to describe a lifetime a trauma and pain, both physical and psychological, that had seemed to "just overwhelm" her as she had aged. According to the client, her present experience was so harsh, that she wondered daily if it might not be better for her and those around her if she were dead.

As a clinician in the Connections Program, funded through MHSA, I was able to go to her home and meet with her every week. I have no doubt that without this flexibility and creativity in providing service, the client would not have been able to receive the services that she needed to remind her that hers was a life worth living.

Every week, I went to her home and was led down the same narrow hallway and listened to her seemingly infinite stories of pain and anguish. Every week we discussed the continued value of her life for herself and others. And every week we worked to confront the depression that had skewed her perspective so severely that her life had seemed to become almost unbearable.

I am not sure when or how it started, but thinking back, I remember that the client began to sit on her couch instead of reclining through our sessions. A short time later, I noted that the client had started to greet me at her front door dressed instead of her customary pajamas. Then, she started to share art work and jewelry that she had started creating and discussing the positive interactions with her family that she was having on a regular basis.

In my recollection it feels most accurate to say that I was watching her come alive before my eyes. I wish I could share the feeling I have in thinking about this client with others who do this type of work. Words fail to express how appreciative I am to the client for letting me be a part of her success and the creative program that allowed it to happen at all.

I haven't seen the client in several months. I have heard that she has a boyfriend now. She met him at the church that she had resumed attending during the time we meet. She also has joined a peer support group, established by our program to promote client achievements like hers, as a valuable and well liked member. Most exciting to me, though, is that I recently heard that she has gotten rid of the couch that she spent that year on. She has replaced it with a table so she continue to work on her art and jewelry and create a life she knows is worth living.

*Christopher Sims, LCSW  
Butte County*

## My Success Story

Hi, my name is Arturo Flores, and I am a recipient of mental health services in Santa Clara County. Particularly, those at Evans Lane Wellness and Recovery Center. I am currently employed by the Learning

Partnership Intern Program, being trained to provide peer support services. Both Evans Lane and the Learning Partnership Intern program are funded through Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

The services at these various programs have helped me in various ways. The Evans Lane program has helped me with stable housing on site; staff who were always ready to answer questions or help with activities or support. They helped with emotional support or in obtaining the services which I had difficulty obtaining myself. They would help with transportation to places when needed; they would give sound advice. We would attend group therapy. We all would have to maintain our apartments to demonstrate that we have the capability to take care of ourselves; also we would have to do our own laundry. We also would have to take care of the ground, as well as do volunteer hours at Evans Lane, to help defer the rent and cost of our program.

Due to the help that I received there at Evans Lane, I was capable of landing a job with Santa Clara County Learning Partnership's consumer intern program. I am being trained to work with other mental health clients who could use the support of someone who has been there in their spot as a mental health recipient; who was having a difficult time maneuvering through the system; being on medication, compliant, housing issues, access to community program, navigating through the social security benefits, and all sorts of other issues. Through the availability of these MHSA funded programs, I have found great self sufficiency and I believe will find even greater forms of self sufficiency. I look forward to advancing in the venture to greater independence. If you are struggling and are a mental

health recipient, these programs can help you make and sustain a healthy and productive life where otherwise you would find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable and productive life. For people who are struggling with their mental health issues and get to a place in their recovery process where they can accept help, these programs which assist in daily living, give reassurance and hope for the future and provide opportunities to be productive members in our society through training and employment opportunities are essential to gaining a productive life. I thank my god that such assistance is available to help or teach me how to do the things that I do not know so that I can not only help myself, but help others not to be held back by such obstacles. I am grateful and willing to be led as well as lead.

Sincerely,

*Arturo Flores  
Santa Clara County*

## Submit Art and Writing!

The MHSOAC is always accepting art and writing submissions from California's mental health community to be considered for display in our publications and on our website.

We accept all submissions, and especially welcome those with themes of: wellness, recovery, and personal experiences or triumphs as related to mental health.

To obtain a submission form and submit work, please contact the MHSOAC.

**Email: [mhsoac@mhsoac.ca.gov](mailto:mhsoac@mhsoac.ca.gov)**

**Phone: 916.445.8692**

**Fax: 916.445.4927**

Attention: Art Coordinator

Subject: Art & Writing Submission

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“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

- Pablo Picasso

# MHSOAC

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The MHSOAC has received consent to display all art and writing submissions in MHSOAC publications and on the MHSOAC website. All outside parties wishing to use artwork and writing must contact the MHSOAC for permission.



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE