



Julie Ann Avin, Executive Director

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

2010 has been a year wrought with changes and challenges for MIRCI. The Board of Directors, staff and many supporters of MIRCI have risen to the challenge, and adjusted to the changes. Rather than use this newsletter to talk about these changes and challenges, I felt it would be much more meaningful to let some of those we serve tell their stories. After all, those we serve and their individual stories of recovery are what keep us focused and directed to meet the many challenges of operating a non-profit behavioral health agency in these economic times.

This edition of the MIRCI newsletter is dedicated to those who work daily to attain and maintain their recovery from the effects of their illness- our clients. I hope you find these recovery journeys as inspiring as those of us who work at MIRCI do.

TONY REVISITED

If a recovering, previously homeless person can have rock star status, then that would be Tony Nguyen. Perhaps it is because the 51 year old Vietnamese refugee wandered around the streets of Columbia during his 20 plus years of homelessness and became a familiar sight to so many people. When MIRCI helped Tony get off the street and into treatment several years ago, he became a celebrity, in part, because of an article published in the State Newspaper. A lot of people continue to inquire about Tony, so we thought it is time for an update.

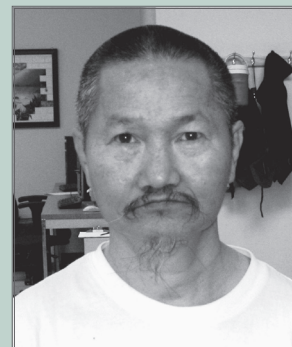
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In late 2007, Tony moved into MIRCI housing. For the first few years, Tony lived in a MIRCI men's residence, but this past April moved into his one bedroom apartment where he resides on his own. He's extremely thrifty with his Social Security income and saved enough money to purchase new furniture for his apartment and has a new wardrobe as well. Tony is very proud of his new place and takes much pride in keeping his home clean and tidy. He loves to watch television and that's one of his favorite activities at home.

Tony visits the Recovery Center most days so MIRCI staff have the pleasure of seeing him regularly. His quiet, pleasant demeanor is missed on those rare days when he is not around. One of Tony's favorite pleasures is going to the "all you can eat" buffet with his friends from the Center and for a small guy he can really put away some food. Recently, his MIRCI psychiatrist treated Tony and a MIRCI employee to a meal at a local Vietnamese restaurant where Tony had the pleasure of conversing in his native tongue and sampling cuisine from long ago.

Tony continues to surprise folks with his talents. Just last week Tony stepped up to the Center's pool table and continued to play throughout the day, soundly defeating some of the regulars at table. He is a man of few words, but his frequent smiles and laughter let everyone know that he is enjoying his new life.

MIRCI
Mental Illness
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TONY

RICKY ANDERSON

Ricky began with MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center in approximately 2005. At the time he began in the program he was homeless, using heavy amounts of crack cocaine, alcohol, and was psychiatrically unstable. He began receiving psychiatric and substance abuse services, along with housing from MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center.

In late December 2008, he tested positive for alcohol during a random alcohol screen while he was residing in one of MIRCI's Men's Residences. This became a major turning point in Ricky's recovery. Following eviction from MIRCI's housing he began to reside in a local Oxford Home. Although the transition was not easy for Ricky, he was placed in an environment that maintained a zero tolerance for alcohol and drug abuse and provided a high level of accountability. Ricky promptly became involved in Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings and continued to participate in substance dependence groups through MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center and as a result he quit using alcohol and crack cocaine. After approximately 6 months in the Oxford home environment, he was designated as the house chore coordinator and the house representative. Throughout the next 6 months, he became more involved with the 12-step community and required fewer outpatient treatment services through MIRCI to address addictions related issues.

Today, Ricky continues to maintain residence in the same Oxford House he moved into almost 2 years ago. He facilitates a spiritually based recovery meeting several times a week at MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center and recently began to serve on the SC Homeless Coalition Board of Directors. He has become volunteer peer support specialist at MIRCI's HRC and is closing in on his 2-year anniversary for sobriety. He was recently a recipient of MIRCI's 2010 Volunteer of the Year Award. He is psychiatrically stable, receives minimal services, and continues to reside in the community independently.

ANGEL

*** Name has been changed***

Angel grew up in Detroit and came to South Carolina for college. One year after graduating from college she became a widow and she began to display symptoms of mental illness. Following the onset of psychiatric illness she served 4 months in prison and was committed to Bryan Psychiatric Hospital where she began to receive treatment. Following her discharge she became homeless when hurricane Hugo destroyed her home. She was introduced to crack cocaine during her second marriage, in 1991, and used for approximately 12 years. She admits to having a drinking problem from her early childhood until becoming involved with MIRCI's recovery program.

Angel came to MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center approximately 2 years ago in 2008. At that time she was using alcohol occasionally and was not being treated for mental illness as a result of the rapid deinstitutionalization of the psychiatric hospitals. She was psychiatrically unstable, abusing alcohol, and was homeless. Today, she has been clean from crack cocaine for

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6 years and with the exception of a couple of minor relapses, alcohol for 2 years. She is active in the 12-step community and frequently volunteers to speak during MIRCI tours and fundraising activities. She continues to participate in group therapy to address substance dependence issues and has secured a NA sponsor. She states that at this time in her recovery she attempts to "give back" and is hopeful that one day she can sponsor another individual. She is psychiatrically stable and has been living independently for the past 2 years in her own individual apartment. Angel attributes her success to the ability to secure housing through MIRCI's program. Angel states "I suffered from child abuse which caused me to isolate myself. MIRCI staff, doctors, and nurses have helped me to give back to society through volunteering because I found a new way of life."

JOHN B.

As told in his own words

I was in the hospital and I got a visit from two people from MIRCI asking if I would like to be placed in a group home. I said that I would be interested in that, and was told it would be somewhat of a wait because the homes were still being built. In the meantime, they started picking me up in the mornings from the hospital to take me to the Friendship Center to check out the program. When I first came to the Friendship Center, I didn't know anyone and mostly kept to myself.

After some waiting, the day finally came that I was able to move into the group home. It was brand new, and the nicest group home I had ever seen. It was the first time I had a room to myself. At first, I felt paranoid because I didn't know anyone. After spending time in the group homes and at the Friendship Center, I started to make friends. People would ask me to join in on activities, and I really enjoyed playing cards.

MIRCI helped me to manage my money, so I was able to take care of my personal needs. We took trips into the community, such as the library, the movies, and going out to eat. This helped me to become less paranoid in the community, as I got used to being around a lot of people. We would go to the Friendship Center three days out of the week, where I got more involved in groups and activities. These groups taught me a lot about skills to help me manage my symptoms and live on my own.

I was doing well at the group homes. I started to take on more duties, such as helping with the shopping and cleaning around the house. I asked the clinical director if I could get an apartment through the Assisted Housing Program. I was put on the list to wait for an available apartment. While I waited for an apartment to become available, I continued to stay at the group home and be at the Friendship Center.

The day finally came when I was able to move into the apartment, where I still am currently. I have been able to live more independently and make my own decisions day to day. I am doing well now, and even though there are still challenges, I have the confidence that I can live independently. MIRCI has been a Godsend to me, and I am grateful for every opportunity they have given me to help me grow.

50TH ANNIVERSARY AND ANNUAL MEETING

On June 17, MIRCI held its 50th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors at 701 Whaley Street, which included a keynote address by Richland County Councilman Greg Pearce; recognition of outstanding board leadership; volunteer and employee awards and the presentation of the 2010-2011 Board officers and members.

The officers for the 2010-2011 board year are:

David Wells, Creative Financial Management, President
Tom Lawhead, The Hunter Group, Vice-President
Zealy Bradshaw, Carolina First, Treasurer
Gerry Herron, USC School of Medicine Dept. of Neuropsychiatry, Secretary
Mary Winter Teaster, CB Richard Ellis Columbia Office, Immediate Past President

Board members for the 2010-2011 board year are:

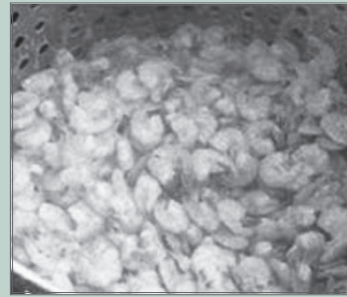
Dr. Lorraine Fowler, Adjunct Faculty Midlands Technical College
Tim Langfitt, Thrivent Financial
Marcy Coster-Schulz, Palmetto Health
Dave Wallace, Colonial Life
James Scott, Boardroom Health Solutions
Wallace Cunningham
DyAnne Wilson
Joyce Britt, Emeritus
Andy Giugliano, Emeritus
Jeff Hamm, DMH Liaison

New Board members for the 2010-2011 board year are:

Angela Monts, Longs Drugs
Elizabeth Powers, Hospital Association
Ashley White, Nelson Mullins, Riley & Scarborough

Mary Winter Teaster received recognition for her tenure as President of the Board. The following Board members received recognition for dedicated service: Zealy Bradshaw 9 years, Lorraine Fowler 6 years, and Dave Wallace, Tom Lawhead and Gerry Herron 3 years. The following employees received recognition for dedicated service: Loren Robinson 15 years, Liz Green and Janelle Goodman 5 years. Ricky Anderson received the Donald-Harding Service Award for significant contributions to the mission of MIRCI. Lawrence Haynes received the Bobby Monts Outstanding Employee Award. Amanda Moore received the Frank Clark Scholarship Award.

JOIN MIRCI AS WE CELEBRATE THE 26TH ANNUAL SHRIMP BOIL!!



SHRIMP FOR THE SHRIMP BOIL

Please join us on October 21st from 5pm to 7pm at 3809 Rosewood Drive for MIRCI's 26th Annual Shrimp Boil. Our volunteer chefs will cook up a delicious combination of shrimp, sausage, corn on the cob, potatoes and onions seasoned with a spicy shrimp seasoning. Dine in and listen to live music, enjoy the atmosphere and see who wins door prizes or if you are in a hurry, swing through our convenient drive thru and take the dinners home! Ticket price is \$15.00 and may be purchased in advance by calling 786-1844 or at the door that evening. All purchases are tax deductible.

The annual "Shrimp Boil" event raises money for MIRCI's housing and homeless programs. Through these programs, MIRCI secures housing and provides services to homeless persons with mental illness or dual diagnosis (mental illness and substance abuse). MIRCI's goal is to provide these individuals and families with the stability and supportive services needed to assist them in making the transition from homelessness to permanent, safe housing. Some highlights of MIRCI's Homeless Recovery Center:

- In 2009 the Homeless Recovery Center served 264 individuals. The Outreach Coordinator contacted 247 homeless individuals currently on the street.
- The rate of emergency department visits by individuals served at the Homeless Recovery Center dropped 23%.
- The rate of inpatient hospitalization by individuals served at Homeless Recovery Center dropped by 54% in the year following enrollment.

Please remember to mark your calendars for October 21st and help us make a difference in an individuals or family's life.

MIRCI
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Gaining New Ground

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Ms. Evelyn Phillips In honor of Ms. Arlene Andrews
Mr. James Jackson Jr. In honor of Ms. Linda Jamison
Ms. Marcy Coster-Schulz In honor of Ms. Jesse and Ms. Isabel Klowpus
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2010 Donors...
Thank you so much for your gift and your participation in our mission! Without your help, MIRCI would not be able to support our clients.