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MIRCI

3809 Rosewood Drive
Columbia, SC 29205

Phone: 803-786-1844
Fax: 803-754-7783

www.MIRCI.org



From the desk of the Executive Director:



Julie Ann Avin, Executive Director

Oh my.....I came back from vacation on Monday, and had a calendar reminder to write this column for our quarterly newsletter. I also came back to a full inbox on my computer, stacks of correspondence, and several “fires” to be put out! When I tried to start this column earlier, I was at a loss of what you might want to hear from me about the happenings here at MIRCI.

Then I took a moment to read through the other articles Sarah had already arranged for this edition. First, let me say how proud I am of MIRCI, our most excellent staff, the progressive leadership of our Board, and the individuals we are honored to serve. Back in 2012, MIRCI sought and received its first ever CARF Accreditation for three years for its Supportive Living Program.

Over the next three years, we all worked together to prepare every program and service provided by MIRCI to receive accreditation. I cannot adequately describe to you the effort, time and commitment that went into achieving MIRCI’s most recent CARF Accreditation of our Supportive Living, Community Integration and Community Housing programs for the next three years. This accreditation affirms the quality services delivered by everyone on our staff, and most importantly represents an assurance that our patients receive quality behavioral healthcare.

Of course, the article in this edition that touched me most, and I want to be sure your attention is drawn to read, is Mary’s story written by our Homeless Outreach Coordinator May Kirby as chronicled by Mary herself. It’s Mary and all the other special people we are honored to serve who keep me grounded and motivated to guide our mission here at MIRCI. She and the hundreds of other individuals with whom we work, all have their very own unique story, unique journey, if you will.

When I say these life journeys keep me grounded, let me explain. We must always start our supportive relationships here at MIRCI with each individual, meeting them where they are. Listening to them tell us whom they are. Not questioning from what circumstances they’ve come to us. We must see each person as an individual, as a mother, as a daughter, as a husband, as someone’s friend. We must value each individual as we hope to become a part of their journey. Once we engage and form an individual trusting relationship, only then can we join the journey.

It takes trust, but also huge amounts of courage, to share one’s journey to recovery from homelessness and mental illness. Please take just a few minutes to read the story that Mary so courageously has allowed May to share with you. Perhaps it’ll help ground and motivate you to join MIRCI in being a part of other recovery journeys for which we are bound.

Mary Azzolini's Story



Mary Azzolini met with the Outreach Coordinator in the fall of 2013, and stated, "I've moved about fifty-four times, and I've been hospitalized at least twenty to twenty-five times in the last fifteen years."

Mary was raised in Long Island, New York with her three brothers. She began experiencing symptoms of severe mental illness during her college years in San Francisco. Her family attempted to help, but feeling helpless themselves, they often resorted to having Mary involuntarily committed for inpatient treatment on several occasions in her early twenties. This dynamic severely strained family relationships, and Mary separated herself from them in an attempt to regain her own stability. As the years passed, she learned more about her diagnosis and possible triggers for increase in symptoms.

"I finally found the right thing for me, and I'm not moving anymore!"

Statements like the one Mary shared at her intake are not uncommon- many individuals with a severe mental health diagnosis may have a greater risk of entering a similar cycle of hospitalization and homelessness. The individual may have a very difficult time becoming stable without intensive intervention. In Mary's case, she experienced erratic sleep patterns which worsened, causing symptoms to increase. She would be hospitalized, and during her stay would miss paying rent and lose her living arrangements, including her personal belongings. Struggling to regain her life after hospitalization would only exacerbate her symptoms, and potentially create the same situation again and again.

After the meeting and intake, Mary became engaged with the MIRCI program, and was able to move in to an apartment in December, 2013. She now receives her mental health treatment, permanent supportive housing, and representative payee services from MIRCI.

Mary remains in her apartment and has had no hospitalizations in nineteen months! She has recently taken up the guitar again, and has been reconditioning her fingers for playing. She summed up the last forty years of her life quite well as she declared, "I finally found the right thing for me, and I'm not moving anymore!"



MIRCI is pleased to announce the awarding of a prestigious three year Accreditation term by CARF, for our Supported Living, Community Housing and Community Integration Programs. We want to congratulate all staff, as this mark of excellence is due to the hard work, perseverance, and dedication to the higher standards of MIRCI’s commitments to our clients. This shows that our team at MIRCI has not just reached but maintained the level of dedication and commitment that allows MIRCI to be used as the source of positive change in lives of so many otherwise marginalized members of our community.

This Three-Year accreditation decision represents the highest recognition of excellence which CARF awards to any organization it serves and shows MIRCI’s consistent conformity to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process successfully. This organization has demonstrated to a team of surveyors, during an on-site visit, its continuing commitment to the future of our community by offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

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