



transforming lives

DIDI HIRSCH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Annual Report 2006-2007

a year of transforming lives

Dear Friends,

We all know how difficult it is to distill 365 days of a family's life in short holiday letters. When it comes to describing the accomplishments of the Didi Hirsch family in an Annual Report, it's virtually impossible. Therefore, this year we are featuring our newest program, much the way families do when a child is born.

In the pages that follow, you will learn how Michelle, Herman and Emily have been transformed by working together in our new Full Service Partnership (FSP) program—intensive services for transitional age youth (16–24 year olds), adults and older adults.

As in any successful family—with hope and occasional leaps of faith—clients, staff, and volunteers learn from and inspire each other.

Twenty years of homelessness! Journeys like Emily's demonstrate our incredible resilience and capacity for change. But no one with mental illness should have to suffer for so long. Fifty percent of mental disorders emerge by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 24. As with other illnesses, the sooner they are treated the better, and there now are many effective treatments.

That is why in 1970 Didi Hirsch became a federally designated community mental health center, offering a full continuum of care. Today, our FSP program anchors one end of that continuum, but our education, outreach and early intervention services are the building blocks for a better future. We dream of the day when no one endures years of school and work failure, hospitalizations and homelessness before receiving care. We dream of the day when neither stigma nor lack of insurance prevents individuals from seeking care—a day when FSP programs rarely are needed.

UNTIL THEN, PEOPLE LIKE EMILY REMIND US TO NEVER GIVE UP ON OURSELVES OR OUR LOVED ONES. CHANGE IS POSSIBLE AT ANY AGE.



ANDREW E. RUBIN
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



KITA S. CURRY, PH.D.
PRESIDENT/CEO

A transforming grant paves the way for our Full Service Partnership program.

Thanks to California voters who passed Proposition 63 (the Mental Health Services Act), we are now able to offer integrated, comprehensive services to adults, older adults (60+), and transitional age youth (16-24) with serious mental illnesses and a history of frequent hospitalizations, incarceration, or homelessness.

Our Full Service Partnership (FSP) program offers much more intensive services than those of a traditional outpatient program. It provides wraparound support wherever and whenever needed by a multidisciplinary team comprising psychiatrists and other medical practitioners, care coordinators, therapists, housing specialists, and peer advocates. Staff members, like Herman, work with clients in community settings such as work, home, hospitals, and the courts, helping them significantly reduce their symptoms and live full and healthy lives. Clinicians have small caseloads and see clients daily, if needed, with services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The main goal of the program is to reach out to and engage individuals who have been reluctant to receive sustained services in the past. One of the program's first successes is Emily, who was homeless for more than two decades and receiving mental health care infrequently before coming to Didi Hirsch.

To ensure that we reach those most in need, we seek them out in parks, at the beach, on the streets and under freeways, and at a variety of service providers and institutions, and make obtaining care simple by offering Drop-in Centers, which are open to anyone. At our Drop-in Centers, individuals can receive a mental health assessment, help with access to services, group counseling, prepared lunches and more. In collaboration with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) - Urban Los Angeles, we also have peer advocates on site, aiding clients with issues large and small, from filling out forms to giving peer-to-peer feedback on a range of concerns. These peer advocates serve as mentors, having themselves successfully managed their mental illnesses. Michelle, who began working at Didi Hirsch as a NAMI peer advocate, is a stellar example of the positive change that arises from having the understanding and support of peers.

WHETHER OBTAINING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT, TRANSITIONING FROM HOMELESSNESS INTO STABLE HOUSING, CONNECTING WITH A COMMUNITY OF PEERS, OR DISCOVERING OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, OUR FSP CLIENTS RECEIVE THE KIND OF COMPASSIONATE CARE THEY NEED TO RECOVER, HEAL, AND LIVE FULL, HEALTHY LIVES.



“Helping others who suffer from mental illnesses believe in themselves is at the heart of my own recovery and transformation.”

MICHELLE - Resource Specialist for Didi Hirsch's Full Service Partnership Drop-in Centers

Burdened by the stigma of mental illness, it took Michelle more than a decade to realize that she had suffered in silence for too long. When she finally opened up about her bipolar disorder, it was though a tremendous weight had been lifted from her shoulders. Since then, her journey to recovery has been fueled by helping others understand that being mentally ill doesn't preclude one from having a full and productive life. First as a NAMI Peer Advocate in our Full Service Partnership program, and now as a full-time employee helping to establish our new Drop-In Center at Inglewood Center, Michelle inspires other clients at the beginning of their journey to realize their strength within.



“Each day, I feel blessed that I can help someone struggling with hardship. Being there for them as they go through their crisis is more than just help in the immediate – it tells that person that someone cares.”

HERMAN - Program Director for Didi Hirsch's Full Service Partnership Drop-in Centers

Growing up in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, Herman saw the devastation of homelessness first hand, often passing the infamous Skid Row as he walked home from school. This experience, coupled with his empathetic nature, led him to a career in helping others – in particular, adults with chronic mental illnesses. Now, as the Program Director for our Drop-in Centers, Herman lends his guidance, expertise, and moral support to motivate clients to make strides toward recovery, giving them the security they need to take risks in unfamiliar waters.



“Everyone at Didi Hirsch treats me with sincere dignity and respect. Being a part of the FSP program has given me renewed hope in the goodness of others”

EMILY - Client in Didi Hirsch's Full Service Partnership Program

Emily is more than just a homeless woman. She is a dancer, having finished a Master's program in Ballet and Drama. She is a battered woman who endured three husbands that beat her almost to death. She is a trained legal secretary with more than a decade of work experience. She is a progressive thinker and activist, helping to integrate her college dormitory during the early 1960's and currently developing an organization to help battered, homeless women find permanent housing. More than all of this, Emily is a survivor, braving mental illness and ensuing homelessness for more than two decades. Since arriving at Didi Hirsch, she has begun a regular regimen of therapy and is well on her way to recovery. She is also in the process of obtaining Section 8 housing, thanks to the support and guidance of our dedicated FSP staff.

Locations

HEADQUARTERS

4760 South Sepulveda Boulevard
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 390-6612

CULVER-PALMS CENTER

11133 Washington Boulevard
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 895-2300

EXCELSIOR HOUSE

1007 Myrtle Avenue
Inglewood, CA 90301
(310) 412-4191

INGLEWOOD CENTER

111 North La Brea Avenue
5th and 7th Floors
Inglewood, CA 90301
(310) 846-2100 5th Floor
(310) 677-7808 7th Floor

JUMP STREET

1233 South La Cienega Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(310) 855-0031

MAR VISTA CENTER

2420 Venice Boulevard
Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90066
(310) 751-1200

METRO CENTER

672 South La Fayette Park Place
Suite 6
Los Angeles, CA 90057
(213) 381-3626

S. MARK TAPER

FOUNDATION CENTER
1328 West Manchester Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90044
(323) 778-9593

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In Memory of JUDY PHILLIPS

For nearly 45 years, Judy Phillips counseled countless clients suffering from serious mental illnesses, was a supportive, encouraging friend and confidante to so many Didi Hirsch staff, and for more than three decades, guided interns in their first experiences as mental health professionals. She passed away in August 2006.

Judy began her career at Didi Hirsch in 1962 and progressed with the agency as it underwent many changes. During her many years at Didi Hirsch, Judy's dedication to helping others saved lives. According to her clients, her guidance was the "beginning of [their] growth." A committed and compassionate social worker to her core, she strongly believed in the importance of helping the mentally ill and supported Didi Hirsch's future services by leaving a bequest in her will.

Judy – we will miss your kindness and laughter. Your legacy will live on in our lives and in our work.

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