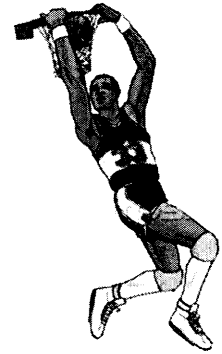




# Spotlight



## A Call to Action!

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### Our Mission

*To provide quality residential options and comprehensive support for persons with developmental disabilities and to provide assistance and advocacy to help them become independent citizens involved in the community*

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Annual Meeting

On January 29, 2009, a public forum was held in Wayne for families and other interested people to gain knowledge of and share thoughts relevant to the 12.5% cut imposed by Community Living Services (CLS) from October 2008 forward. More than 400 people attended the forum. CLS is one of three Managers of Comprehensive Provider Networks (MCPN's), under the auspices of the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (D-WCCMHA). CLS provides case management and financial support to nearly 3,000 men and women with developmental disabilities.

Residential and vocational service providers contracting with CLS, such as Community Opportunity Center (COC), continue to receive funding reductions of at least 10% to 12.5%. **The full year end effect on Community Opportunity Center will amount to \$84,000 less.** These monthly funding reductions are negatively affecting the scope and quality of supports and services that providers can maintain. It is important to note that providers contracting with CLS also received a 13% budget cut several years ago, thus sustaining funding reductions of approximately 25% in recent years. We are not aware of such massive funding reductions elsewhere in Michigan.

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### Come Dine with Us

Thomas's Restaurant on Plymouth Rd. between Wayne Rd. and Farmington Rd. in Livonia has partnered with COC for a fundraiser that extends over five days. This means that you can dine at Thomas's for breakfast, lunch or dinner without being limited to a specific day and time. And by the way, don't feel restricted to only one meal...take the opportunity to avoid cooking while helping COC! Thomas's is an affordable restaurant that offers a wide selection of great food. The fund raiser begins at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009, and extends until 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009. A full page of coupons is enclosed with this newsletter. Present the coupon to the server, who will attach it to the receipt. Twenty percent of the proceeds from food and beverages ordered by those using a COC coupon will come back to COC. We've include a large number of coupons for you to pass on to family, friends, and neighbors.



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CLS and its funding source D-WCCMHA disagree on the necessary level of funding for CLS for the current fiscal year. Although the fiscal issues are complicated, the bottom line is that a resolution must be achieved immediately to avoid further harm to people choosing to receive services from CLS.

We have urged our families and members of our Board of Directors to contact their County Commissioner, State Senator and State Representative to alert them to the ongoing CLS budget crisis with the intent that they would contact Michael Head, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), and Veda Sharp, Acting Executive Director of D-WCCMHA, to press for a resolution of the CLS budget crisis. If you wish to assist in this process, please call our office (734/422-1020) for the necessary contact information.

While these cuts are only relevant to those homes affiliated with CLS, we are also facing huge reductions through our homes with Wayne Center due to Synergy not funding "Leaves of Absence" (also known as LOAs). In this case Synergy is the MCPN who provides funding to the Wayne Center homes, and like CLS, they contract directly with D-WCCMHA. In recent years we have received partial payment for LOAs, which refers to time that a person associated with COC is not in her/his respective (COC supported) home by midnight. We've just learned that these funds will not be forthcoming for last year or this year. **Last year COC lost \$104,815 from LOAs.**

We must undertake more fund-raising activities to offset these losses. While decades of fundraising is making it possible for us to weather this excruciatingly difficult year, unless dramatic changes occur, our savings and investments will dwindle quickly. We remain optimistic and also grateful to our families and friends for their generosity, which allows us to persevere and enrich the lives of the men and women affiliated with COC.

## Our Friends from Resurrection Catholic Church

More than a year ago we became acquainted with the Murray and Mans families and, more recently, the Baechler family. The families were familiar with our corporation through their church (Resurrection Catholic Church in Canton), as they have long included the names of some of the men and women associated with COC on their annual "Giving Tree." These parents, who place an enormous emphasis on helping others, felt it important that their children learn early in life and through direct involvement the value and moral obligation of reaching out to family, friends, and those in need.

The ten children (Justin, Claire, Quinn, Nick, Megan, Olivia, Matthew, Madeline, Brocton and Lou), who were initially shy, now greet and eagerly participate in each of the many activities that have been organized by their parents (Doug and Terri Mans, Mike and Terri Murray, and Tim and Julie Baechler) with the help of Lisa Lindner of COC. The families have sponsored two Christmas parties and have been extremely generous and kind in their giving. They have also hosted a Valentine and Halloween party, a summer picnic, pizza party, purchased tickets for people to attend Whaler's games, and make sure people are never forgotten on their birthdays. Furthermore, they have made a point to visit each of the homes where the men and women live.

We are extremely grateful for their genuine interest in twelve people associated with COC, the friendships that have been nurtured, and the happiness they continue to bring.



Our Church Friends