

Concept Paper:

Project Title: EAST Community Network

Need:

The Community Network is needed to increase the support networks for young people with psychosis.

Goal:

The goal of the Community Network is to create a unified network of support for young people with psychosis. The Community Network will look to create opportunities for the individuals in EAST to explore their goals, talents, and interests. It is our hope that this program will encourage young people with psychosis to be more connected socially, find and maintain good jobs, and become active citizens in their communities.

Project Narrative:

The Community Network will be designed to fit the needs of the individuals and families EAST serves. As part of the needs assessment five focus groups were held. The purpose of these focus groups was to gain a better understanding of what the individuals in EAST goals were, identify people who they felt would help guide them to the place they wanted to be, and access how they personally would like to be involved with the Community Network. Another part of the needs assessment consisted of conducting interviews with EAST staff. Some of the results of both the interviews and focus groups found were:

- Many of the people in EAST goals were work related (examples include: building up resume, starting their own business, finishing school).
- There was a strong theme from people in EAST of wanting to give back. Many people wanted to share their experiences with people who were in the early stages of EAST.
- Almost everyone agreed that the Community Network should be used to educate the community on psychosis, which potentially could help counteract negative stigmas.
- Another common theme was the need for opportunities for social interaction.
- Many people liked the idea of using mentoring as a part of the Community Network's services.
- Other ideas proposed were connecting people to jobs and volunteer opportunities (both episodic group volunteer opportunities and individual opportunities), connecting people to affordable housing, connecting with faith-based communities.

On February 18, 2006 a planning retreat was held for the Community Network. The main goal of the planning retreat was to identify which opportunities (ideas gathered from needs assessment) the network would take on. Participants in this retreat were individuals and families involved in EAST. This group discussed both activities that

could be done in the short-term (within the next few months) and long term (3-5 years) programming goals. The Short-Term activities were planned with the goal in mind to build up a core group of members. The short-term activities that were chosen to jump-start the Community Network are:

- *Hold a potluck on April 22, 2006 from 4-7pm at the Willson House in Salem.* The goal of the potluck is to have a fun gathering that will build community within the Community Network (as well as EAST in general), increase the overall visibility and awareness, and build up a core group of members.
- *Organize a team to participate in the Northwest NAMI walk on May 21, 2006.* This will be another opportunity to gather as community and will promote mental health awareness to the community.
- *Have an event that will mark the fifth year anniversary of EAST.* This event will help get the word out about EAST and celebrate the successes/accomplishments of people in EAST.

Participants of the retreat also discussed what the Community Network's long-term priorities should be. The long-term (3-5 years) priorities that were set include:

- *Attaining resources to make EAST self sustaining*
 - A key part of this includes arranging for people who have been in EAST program to share their success stories to potential funders, policy makers, and key players in the community
- *Develop a structured mentoring program:*
 - Independent living
 - Daily Routines – skills to navigate life successfully
 - Fill out forms, balance checkbook, college, 1st apartment
 - Items related to transitioning out of EAST
 - Workshops - money management, etc.
- *Ongoing education about EAST*
 - To both the community at large and people in EAST (past, future, and present)

The Community Network will look beyond what members want to gain from the network, but how members are willing to contribute. Each member will bring to the Community Network a unique set of attributes, skills, and connections. For example: an EAST graduate will have personally been through the ups and downs of recovery. They can share their experiences through speaking engagements and mentoring. A parent of a person in EAST will also bring many attributes to the Community Network. A parent is likely to have community connections to their workplace, church, or civic clubs. These connections will help expand the Community Network. In addition, a parent may have a special hobby and be willing to lead a group that also shares passion for that hobby. All our members will bring skills and strengths to the Community Network. EAST wants to utilize our members' strengths and talents to make the Community Network more enriched. By encouraging member to contribute to the Community Network it is our goal that it will model community involvement as a way of life.

Community Network will access both the ways members are looking for support and the how people are willing to contribute to the network. This will be done through a set of

questions on the membership interest survey and if needed a follow up survey. All the information will be inputted into the database. A key part of the early development stages of the Community Network is the development of the database. The database will store:

- Members' contact information
- The types of services the member is interested in receiving
- Ways the member is willing to contribute to the Community Network
- The member's hobbies, interests, professional expertise, and connections to community groups or organizations

The database will be first used to identify people who are interested in taking a leadership role in the Community Network. The portion of the database where hobbies and interests are listed will be used to figure the types of activities members would be interested. As well as giving EAST an in depth look at the members talents and connects to determine how they can be best integrated into the Community Network.

Community Network Development Timeline:

5 Focus groups held for individuals and families in EAST to help define the vision of the Community Network:

- October 2005-February 2006

Recruit Members to join the Community Network

- Ongoing
- Goal: By August 2006, at least 50 members will have joined

Recruit people to join the leadership team:

- Ongoing

Strategic Planning Retreat:

- February 18, 2006
- Follow up meeting March 14, 2006

Leadership Group Meetings

- March 2006- August 2006
- Meetings occur once a month

Community Network Events

- Potluck: April 22, 2006
- NAMI Walk: May 21, 2006

Strategic Plan written:

- Draft: May 2006
- Finalized: July 2006