

Aurora news

The Move is On!

Improved Facilities Secured for Programs in Dauphin and Cumberland Counties

Leases have been signed for Aurora's new Harrisburg and Mechanicsburg program locations, and moves are planned for this summer. Eagerly anticipated by members and staff, these moves cannot come soon enough for an agency in the midst of a major growth spurt. And with these new facilities comes the ability to serve more members, as well as the opportunity for expanded programming.

The new building on Division Street in Harrisburg is 6000 square feet, nearly triple the space of the old drop-in center (2200 sq ft). Aurora will be able to serve up to 90 members daily at this new program location, as opposed to the 30-40 served at the current location. The new facility at 104 West Main Street in Mechanicsburg will accommodate 50, up from 24 at the current center.

Several exciting new programs will be added to the current array of services Aurora provides. In Harrisburg, staff will be moving toward work with smaller groups. Renewed emphasis will be placed on identifying what services members are most interested in, and making sure these needs are addressed. Already, there are plans to provide more targeted activities for young men in the program, including offsite sports activities and computer time, all of which improve skills while providing social opportunities and entertainment. For Aurora's more senior members, it is clear that they enjoy participating in agency activities, but are sometimes hampered by limited mobility. Staff will be developing specialized activities for seniors that will keep these members involved, but at their own comfort level.

The Harrisburg program also will be starting a support group for members who are caregivers for young children (typically a family member such as a niece, nephew, or grandchild). These caregivers tend to be older females. The support group will provide an outlet for participants to discuss successes they have had and struggles they are facing with childrearing, and to let caregivers know they do not have to face the challenges of parenting alone.

Additionally, there will be new parenting classes designed specifically for dads. Several of the Harrisburg drop-in center members are young fathers. This training program will

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Top photo: the new Harrisburg facility; bottom photo: the new Mechanicsburg facility.

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Check out our new website!
www.auroraservices.org

From the Desk of our Board President

This month I am thrilled to announce that Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services has been named a Finalist in the Central Penn Business Journal's



2006 Nonprofit Innovation Awards, in the category of Nonprofit Leadership Excellence, for the work of our Executive Director, Laura Starke. Laura came to Aurora in November 2002, and in just over three years, Aurora has enjoyed tremendous growth. Examples of this growth include the following:

- Corporate and individual giving, as well as Aurora's operational budget, have tripled;
- Aurora's Harrisburg drop-in center has increased the number of consumers that it serves from an average of 14 daily to 30 daily;
- Aurora's Mechanicsburg drop-in center has increased the number of consumers that it serves from an average of 5 daily to 24 daily;
- The Dromgold Center opened in 2003, in conjunction with the Northwestern Human Services' Stevens Center, to meet the needs of Perry County residents with mental illness;
- Aurora has joined Shelter-Plus-Care, a six-agency collaboration to assist individuals in the move from homelessness to housing; and
- Aurora has implemented the Hispanic Life Skills program to meet the needs of our Spanish-speaking consumers.

These are just a few of the positive changes that have taken place under Laura's management. The Board of Directors recognizes that these achievements are largely attributable to Laura's excellent leadership, and we are thrilled that Central Pennsylvania's business community has taken notice of this as well. ●

The Move is On!

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be targeted at men who are parents, whether custodial or not, who are interested in improving their parenting skills.

In Mechanicsburg, the new facility will allow for continued movement in the direction of a recovery self-management model of service. Recovery workshops will continue, and grow, as new members are welcomed to the center. Peer to peer services will be enhanced, as part of Aurora's continuing aim to promote consumer-driven programming. To further support this goal, the agency will continue to hire mental health consumers as service providers. And as highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter, the new Mechanicsburg location will be host to Café Aurora, adding to the list of creative social and vocational opportunities available for members.

As always, Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services remains committed to providing members with the tools needed to live self-directed lives. We are delighted that we now will be able to reach even larger numbers with these supportive and empowering services. ●

Café Culture: It's What's Brewing at the New Mechanicsburg Drop-In Center

We are a society that tends to order our lattes to go, but isn't it nice when there actually is time to slow down and sit a while at the local coffee shop? Maybe it's the smell of the coffee, or the chance to catch up on some reading, or the opportunity to visit with a friend in a cozy environment. Whatever it is that makes "café culture" so appealing, it seems to center on people coming together to enjoy coffee, company, and conversation.

Aurora is always on the lookout for innovative ways to bring people together, particularly through programs and activities that emphasize socialization and support. Vocational training is another of the important life skills addressed by this organization. Taking full advantage of the storefront layout at the front of the new Mechanicsburg drop-in center, Aurora Social Rehabilitation

Services is proud to announce plans for the new Café Aurora!

Café Aurora will operate on Friday evenings and will be open to agency members as well as other "friends of the agency." The café will be set up like a typical coffee house, with comfy seating; a stage for poetry readings, music, and other events; and member artwork on the walls, which will be rotated on a regular basis. A selection of coffees, teas, and baked goods will be available. Guests will be encouraged to leave a donation, rather than paying a set price for items. The service counter will be staffed by Aurora members, thereby availing the agency a new opportunity to provide valuable, hands-on vocational skills training.

With the growth Aurora is experiencing, it is critical that the organization continue to expand the social outlets



for members. Once the Mechanicsburg center opens its doors this summer, Café Aurora will provide a new place for members to go on Friday nights to socialize, share their poetry and artwork, and soak in some of that great café culture. ●

Executive Director's Report

Most people are now aware that the Harrisburg State Hospital closed at the end of January. The full impact of this on Aurora and other providers is still being realized, but rest assured we are prepared. We have created new and innovative programs to better serve members' needs, and have recently hired an additional staff person to help with the increase in our daily attendance figures. And I remain grateful for the work of our talented, caring and professional staff who provide quality programs every day. To date, members who came to us from the State Hospital have made a smooth and successful transition to our program and are

already integrating well into the Aurora community.

The increase in demand for our services predates the Harrisburg State Hospital closure. Since 2004 we have experienced a steady and dramatic increase in the number of referred individuals. For more than a decade, our Harrisburg drop-in center served an average of 14 adults daily. We now serve 30-40 people each day. For the first time we have a waiting list, which tops 20 individuals. Attendance at our Cumberland County program is unprecedented as well. Aurora is bursting at the seams.

This is a good problem to have. It's an affirmation of the high quality of services we provide. It does however

challenge us to ensure that we provide those services to all who need them.

To address overcrowding at our Harrisburg drop-in center, we are preparing to a move to a larger facility that can accommodate up to 90 individuals. We hope to be open for business at the new location on July 10.

Our move to a new facility in Mechanicsburg also should be completed this summer and we anticipate beginning operations from that site by summer's end.

We take these steps now to ensure that all those from Harrisburg State Hospital, and the community at large, have access to the programs and services they need and deserve. ●



social rehabilitation services

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MISSION STATEMENT

Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services, a nonprofit organization, has been providing social rehabilitation services for adults with mental illness and mental retardation since 1962.

While our programs and services have expanded and adapted to the changing needs of our members over the years, we remain true to our mission: to serve adults with mental illness and mental retardation in Cumberland, Dauphin and Perry Counties. The agency's social rehabilitation programs provide opportunities for personal growth and satisfaction through life skills training and social activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The official registration and financial information for the agency may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State.

You make the difference!

Community support enables us to continue to directly and positively impact the lives of those we serve. Your contributions allow us to provide services that are critical to the wellbeing of our members. Please give an amount that is significant and meaningful to you. Checks should be made payable to Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services. Or call the Harrisburg drop-in center at 232-6675 to discuss donations of goods and services. Whatever you give will be appreciated and will make a difference.

In addition to financial support, our current needs for goods and services includes:

- Board of Directors Members
- Fund Development Committee Members
- Repair and maintenance workers
- Field trip chaperones
- Tickets to local sporting events or recreational facilities
- Movie theater gift certificates

You also can support Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services through your gifts to the United Way. Just designate nonaffiliated agency #10530 to be the recipient of your United Way support. ●