

Aurora news

Café Aurora is Percolating

The response has been fabulous! Our new Mechanicsburg drop-in center is now host to Café Aurora, a traditional-style coffee house open to members and friends of the agency on Friday evenings from 5:00 to 9:00 PM. The storefront has turned out just as lovely as we had hoped and we are pleased with all the positive feedback we have received from members, staff, and friends.

Café Aurora is a warm and inviting space offering food, beverages, and live entertainment in a typical café environment. Members' artwork adorns the walls and will be rotated on a regular basis. Adding to the list of creative social and vocational opportunities available for our members, the Café provides a place to gather at a time of day when other agencies and resources are typically unavailable. Gourmet coffee, teas, and delicious baked goods are available every week at the service counter is staffed by Aurora members. Guests are encouraged to leave a donation for items, rather than having a set price for goods.

Each week, live entertainment takes the stage at the Café as guests settle in to the comfy couches and chairs. We already have enjoyed the talents of a four-piece jazz ensemble, and harpist, and even each other at our recent Karaoke Night. The Café also hosted a Halloween party in October. We are looking into hosting an open mike night in the coming weeks, for poetry readings and other offerings.

With the growth Aurora has been experiencing lately, it is critical that our organization continue to expand the social outlets available to our members. 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 our organization. We are very proud of this new venture, which takes full advantage of the storefront layout at the front of our new Mechanicsburg drop-in center.

We hope you can join us on an upcoming Friday evening at Café Aurora located at 104 West Main Street in Mechanicsburg. Please call Lisa Radcliff or Laura Starke for 717-232-6675 more information. ●

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Debbie Murphy, Director of Drop-in Center Services
Owen Hannah, Program Coordinator, IMHR
Kelly Thompson-Chacon, Program Coordinator, Hispanic Life Skills
Rebecca Sakala, Program Coordinator, Dauphin Drop-in Services
Violet Swager, Program Coordinator, Dromgold Center
Louise West, ESL Coordinator, Social Rehab Staff
Sundra Boughter, IMHR Specialist
Kim Weirich, Administrative Assistant

RECOVERY is a set of principles for dealing with mental illness and for providing services for mental health consumers. Recovery focuses on goals rather than obstacles, and on personal empowerment. The National Mental Health Association is a leading advocate of recovery-based services and calls on public mental health systems and policy makers, and by extension, service providers, to:

- Incorporate the principles of recovery-based care into the mission and day-to-day activities of local, state, and federal mental health departments and agencies.
- Invest in evidence-based and emerging practices that are community-based and consumer or family driven.
- Ensure that consumers have meaningful involvement in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of mental health services systems.

Aurora Social Rehabilitation Services joins NMHA in their commitment to this model of providing services. Aurora has always been consumer-driven, with diverse programs designed to meet the needs of individual agency members. By offering a series of Recovery workshops this fall at both our Harrisburg and Mechanicsburg drop-in Centers, we hope to strengthen our commitment to a strengths-based model for service delivery. ●

From the Desk of our Board President ...

Standards for Excellence

Aurora's Board is proud to have made the commitment to participate in the Standards for Excellence program offered by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO). This intensive, approximately eighteen month-long process is designed to help nonprofits ensure that they are meeting a high standard of internal organization, program competence, and fidelity to mission.

Over the course of four months, the Standards workshops that key board members and executive staff will be required to attend will focus on Program and Mission, Conflicts of Interest, Legal Issues, Finances and Accountability, Policies and Procedures, Public Policy and Fund Raising. Aurora will then be aided in modifying existing procedures and policies or creating new ones to meet the standards developed nationally for successful, well managed agencies.

When Aurora completes the intensive Standards for Excellence program, we will hold a new certification that affirms our policies are up to date, relevant, and legally appropriate, and that our program and administrative practices meet the high standards set by PANO. ●

Check out our new website!

www.auroraservices.org

We've Moved!

It was a hectic few months, but we are thrilled to report that we are all settled in to our new Harrisburg and Mechanicsburg program locations. The moves to both new buildings have been a huge success and actually went even smoother than anticipated. Staff and members have adapted very quickly to the new spaces, and everyone is feeling happy to be able to spread out a bit.

At 6000 square feet, Aurora's new building at 401 Division Street in Harrisburg provides nearly triple the space of the old drop-in center. We are able to serve up to 90 members daily at this new program location, as opposed to the 30-40 served at our previous center. And our new facility at 104 West Main Street in Mechanicsburg can now accommodate 40, up from 24 at the previous location.

We are delighted that we are now able to reach even larger numbers of individuals with the supportive and empowering services we provide. Please take the time to come and tour our new space. Contact Lisa Radcliff or Laura Starke at 717-232-6675 if you would like to schedule a visit. ●



Highlight On Dauphin County Small Group Activities ...

New Groups Begun this Fall

Aurora is pleased to offer a number of new small groups in Dauphin County designed specifically to meet the needs of the individuals we serve. Group activities take place at our drop-in center or in the community, under the direction of an Aurora staff person and/or group member(s).

Recovery Workshops

These workshops are ongoing and are run in collaboration with the Mental Health Association. Future topics will include developing Advances Directives, creating support networks, understanding triggers, peer-support, and more.

Newsletter and Writing Club

An in-house members' newsletter is currently being produced by participants. This group is run by members and meets weekly.

Men's Group

This group is currently focusing on male health issues. The group meets monthly and is co-facilitated by staff and members. Activities include guest speakers and field trips.

Women's Group

This group meets bi-weekly for group support, field trips, and guest lectures. It is co-facilitated by Aurora staff and members.

Senior's Group

Also co-facilitated by staff and members, this group hosts guest speakers, and provides recreational activities and group support for Aurora members over the age of 55.

Caregivers' Support Group

This staff-facilitated group is focused on providing support for those who have responsibility for the care of family members. ●



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. ●