



August 30, 2013

Susie Frank, Executive Director  
People Empowering People  
3281 Solano Avenue  
Napa, California 94558

CHAIRPERSON  
John Ryan

EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Jane Adcock

- Advocacy
- Evaluation
- Inclusion

Dear Ms. Frank:

Congratulations! The California Mental Health Planning Council (Council) is very pleased to announce that the People Empowering People program has been recognized as the first program to merit the Joe Mortz Memorial Spotlight on Excellence commendation. Joe Mortz was a Planning Council member who consistently and patiently ensured the consumer voice and perspective was heard and honored in all things under the Council's consideration and review. He felt that a Spotlight on Excellence was the surest way to demonstrate that community-based programs worked and that the best should be replicated. He passed away in 2012 and we are very proud to recognize People Empowering People in his memory.

People Empowering People (PEP) is a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funded program that embodies the spirit and intent of the MHSA and characteristics that the Council has identified as successful and essential practices in community-based services for consumers. Introducing the concepts of personal preference and choice through PEP has proven to be the catalyst for empowerment that fuels personal growth and wellness. The PEP has demonstrated excellence in all four areas requested on the nomination form that reflect guiding principles of MHSA in the following ways:

- **Consumer and Family Member Involvement and Participation**
  - The program is 100% staffed and managed by direct, recovering consumers. All activities, offerings, and program operation rules are voted on by program participants and nothing is implemented without consensus.
- **Community Collaboration (Connecting participants to the community)**
  - Participant members conduct outreach to Board and Care homes and at health fairs and community events; participate in the Napa Court Volunteer Programs; and contribute to the County Mental Health Division's Quality Improvement and Mental Health Stakeholder Advisory committees. Members also created a speaker's bureau in order to offer up their individual experiences to support others in the early stages of recovery in public or private venues or events.
- **Cultural Competency**
  - PEP has bilingual volunteers in-house and has formed a Latino Outreach Group to conduct outreach into the Latino community. The PEP also offers classes and programs in Spanish (the only threshold language in the community) in order to support Spanish speaking consumers more fully and plans are in the works to develop a second center that is located more centrally in a Latino neighborhood.

- **Recovery and Wellness Focus**

- Certified instructors present courses on the Wellness and Recovery Action Plan to ensure participants' wishes are respected in respect to clinical care and a Dual Recovery Anonymous course. Additionally, a 16-week course based on a Wellness and Recovery Curriculum is offered, as are courses in employment readiness, life skills, nutrition planning, men's and women's support groups, and other topics suggested by participants felt to promote recovery and wellness.

The program is funded primarily through the MHSA and the cost per person, per year is \$890, which demonstrates a good value for the benefits it brings to the participants and to the community at large. It provides meaning and purpose to the participants, and participants' involvement in the community helps replace stigma with respect.

As the Executive Director, your enthusiasm, dedication, and pride in the mission of the program are unmistakable. The simple act of empowering each individual to find their voice in order to affect a change in their environment and their life is powerful, especially for those who have felt their control and choices went missing at some point in their life. It embodies what Joe Mortz envisioned when he advocated to leaders for more community-based programs and what he imparted to those he helped during his life.

He would have been so proud to see People Empowering People receive this award! Thank you for demonstrating that great programs can be affordable, and that recovery and hope don't have to be complicated.

Please accept our warmest congratulations on your achievement.

Sincerely,



John Ryan, Chair  
California Mental Health Planning Council

- C: The Honorable Mike Thompson, US Congress, 5th District  
Darrell Steinberg, California State Senate President Pro Tempore  
Noreen Evans, California State Senate  
Marika Yamada, California State Assembly  
Jim Beall, Chair, Senate Select Committee on Mental Health & Mental Health Caucus  
Brad Wagenknecht, Chair, Napa County Board of Supervisors  
Jaye Vanderhurst, Director, Napa County Behavioral Health  
John Pearson, Chair, Napa County Mental Health Board  
Felix Bedolla, Napa County Behavioral Health  
Diane Van Maren, Consultant to the Senate President Pro Tempore  
Diana Traub, Principal Consultant, Senate Mental Health Caucus  
Pat Ryan, Executive Director, CMHDA  
Richard Van Horn, Chair, MHSOAC  
Jessica Cruz, Executive Director, NAMI California