



# Phoenix Rising

RBHA  
Voices United in  
Recovery (VUR)

Volume 5 Issue 1

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**RBHA** | RICHMOND  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
AUTHORITY



## Kindness

**Kindness is the language  
which the deaf can hear and  
the blind can see.**

**- Mark Twain**

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Kindness p.1

Art by Liz-Ann p.2

Editorials p.3

Poetry by Angela p.4

Songs by Anthony p.5

Poetry by Eric p.6

Art by Luanne p.7

Art by Angeline p.8

Art by Ann p.9

Intuitive Art by Carla pp.10-11

Rapid Access p.12

Engagement Specialist p.13

Region 4 conference p.14

Art by Zeldina and Liz-Ann  
p.15

Spotlight: Christina p.16

Art by Sherry p.17

Art by Marisa p.18

Computer lab p.19

Art by Luanne p.20

Art by Liz-Ann p.21

Poetry by Melody p.22

Art by Marisa p.23

In memoriam: RH pp.24-25

Art by Liz-Ann p.26

Kindness p.27

Phoenix by Charlie p. 28



ART by Liz-Ann Tropp



## EDITORIAL PAGE

Kindness is tending to the soul and heart of someone, showing respect and dignity. All too often in the world, there exist prejudice, meanness and bullying. Kindness may not be popular in the moment, but it lasts. As the late poet Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel".

At RBHA, case managers post meaningful quotes outside their offices. One quote has stuck with me for some time: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle". Everyone. No exceptions. Even the mean ones. Show some kindness today.



Beth Wiltshire, editor



The theme of this edition of the Phoenix Rising is kindness. Kindness has to do with being nice to everyone. Some things a person can do include listening to someone when they need to talk and giving to help the homeless and the hungry.

You can also pay it forward when someone is nice to you. You can give a person money when they come up short buying groceries. Simply telling a tired cashier they're doing a good job can work wonders.

It talks about "entertaining angels unaware" in the Bible. When you do a kindness, do so with an eye toward helping an angel. You'll be surprised how good you feel. Kindness takes very little, but it can mean the world to someone you're helping.



Cheryl Cummins,  
co-editor



Forgiveness is a hard pill to take.  
Sometimes you just can't.  
It makes you madder at them  
And it makes you feel hate and  
That's not good for you.  
Let it go!

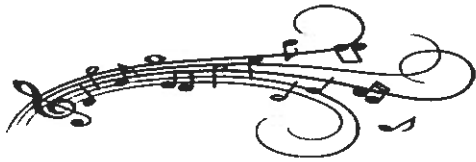
A place I can call home:  
Don't ever call this place my  
home.  
You say wherever you lay your  
hat  
Is home.  
Well, I don't feel at home here.  
I don't want to live with anyone  
any more.



I lost a best friend today  
And my world is upside down  
In my heart.  
I feel like I lost a sister.  
She had cancer, and how  
Would you bet that would happen?  
She's gone now  
And a part of me is gone.  
The world has lost a wonderful sister.



**POETRY by Angela Jones**



### **YOU ARE UNDERSTOOD**

You work so hard to be understood.

Some may find it odd.

You always look very good.

You walk to the melody

Of the song in your heart.

No one can play your part.

You see each day as a brand new start.

To hear your voice is music to my ear.

How I desire to have you near.

Bass, tenor, alto or soprano

I will sing about you on

My guitar and piano.

You are understood.

### **BRIGHTEN THE WORLD**

The way you move

Is like a surfer shooting a curl.

Beautiful, I guess:

That's why we call you girl.

CHORUS:

Girl, you brighten the world.

Without you it just wouldn't twirl.

Now you can brawl

And the way you play ball!

I will always look forward

To your call.

To see you on the balance beam

Is a very memorable scene:

A gymnast at her very best, it seems.

You are always full of surprises

Another reason the sun

Also rises.

North, South, East, West,

You never cease to give

Your very best.

**SONGS by Anthony Harrison**



To Stephanie

Poem by Eric Gordon

Stunning and beautiful,  
Not a flower but a tree,  
More breathtaking than those,  
And only I can see,  
My heart beats your name right down to the core,  
Filling me with such joy  
And so much more!  
Your eyes so amazing,  
I just can't look away,  
They're gorgeous and shining throughout all the day.  
Here in my arms  
Is where you belong.  
Our two hearts beating to the same song!

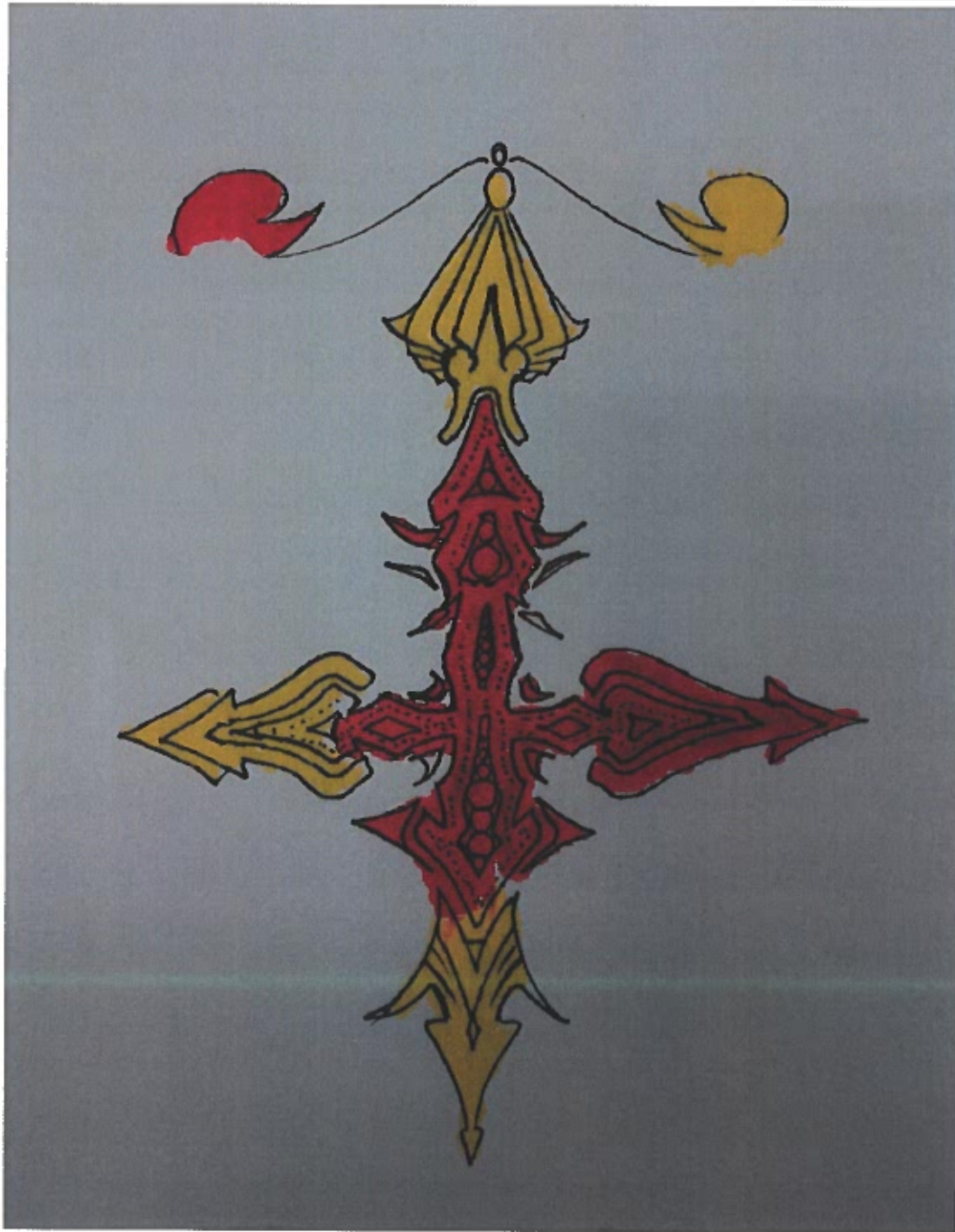




## ART by guest artist Luanne Holsinger



Luanne Holsinger  
Blackwoods



**ART by Angeline McDougald**  
**RBHA Art for Recovery class 2018**





**ART by Ann Mitchell**  
**RBHA Art for Recovery class (coloring)**





## My Journey through Intuitive Art

By Carla E. Heath

As soon as I saw the book in the library, I knew it was for me. I read the book and made a quick dash to the craft store for supplies. I got started on my big, blank canvas right way, adding paint and designs randomly. I added a message to "let go." I am someone who plans a great deal and starts with a careful vision when I paint, so this was a tough process for me. Dealing with the unknown is not something I usually enjoy.

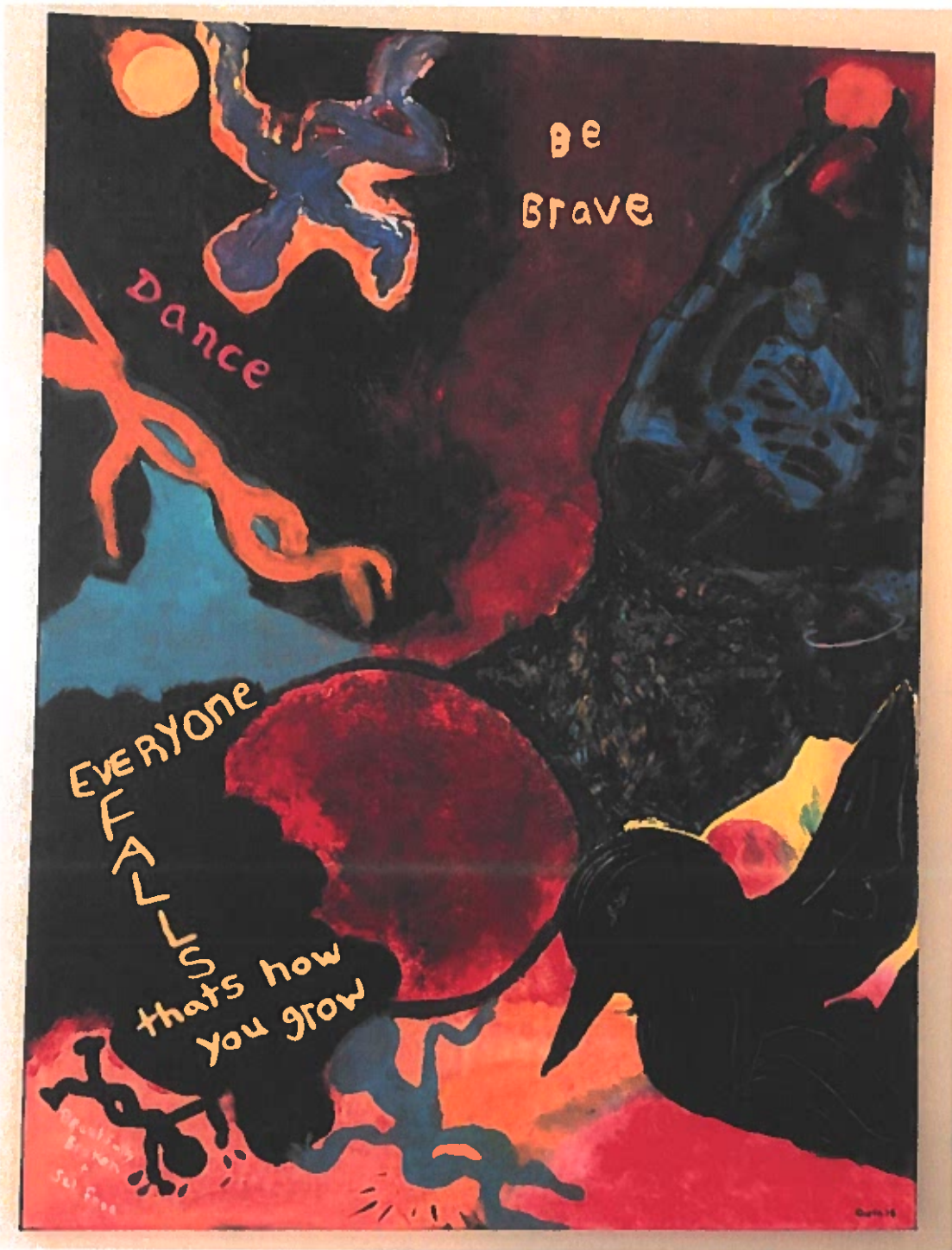
I used the tips from the book, *Brave Intuitive Painting - let go. be bold. unfold.* by Flora Bowley. I wrote in my journal. I turned on some music. I meditated to tap into my intuition and I turned the music up louder. I added more paint joyously, using various tools I had gathered, and I even painted with my fingers. I spiraled out and looked at what I created, remembering there are no mistakes.

When I felt stuck, I would break out my journal and write about how I was feeling. It gave me a great deal of insight into what was going on in my head, and I put that into the painting. Every time I was stuck, another piece of the painting was born. It was healing for my soul. I would just let the process flow, spiral out and look at what I had added to the canvas, spiral in and add more detail.

It is like looking at clouds and seeing what you see; only you are looking at paint and seeing what flowed out of you. It was a constant process of quieting the perfectionist that had a grip on my psyche and letting go.

Art has been a healing tool for me and has enhanced my wellness. I am continuing to learn to tap into my own intuitiveness through art. That is my journey. What is yours? To submit your healing journey contact Beth Wiltshire, the editor of the Phoenix Rising.







## RAPID ACCESS AT RBHA

Kristen Scott, LCSW, CATP is Program Supervisor II of Intake and Assessment Services-Rapid Access and Outpatient Psychotherapy. The editor asked her questions about the beginnings and the implementation of Rapid Access at RBHA. Here are some of her answers.

### 1. What is Rapid Access?

The RBHA successfully has implemented Same Day Access: "Rapid Access". Individuals receive a screening and full assessment when they arrive at the agency seeking services. We will increase the number of clinical staff to 9 clinicians this summer and this will help to meet the demand of individuals arriving on any given day for services. The transition to Rapid Access has allowed all individuals seeking services, regardless of disability area, expedited access to needed services.

### 2. How did it start and develop?

System Transformation Excellence and Performance (STEP-VA) is a uniform set of required services for individuals with behavioral health disorders in Virginia. Same day access is one of the first steps in STEP-VA. All 40 CSBs/BHAs across Virginia are implementing Same Day Access and are in various stages of start-up. RBHA was required to implement SDA on 7/1/2018. The Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, however, successfully implemented Rapid Access within the Mental Health Division in October 2015. We started small, with offering Rapid access in the mornings and with a limited capacity. On February 6, 2017, RBHA expanded Rapid Access to include core agency services and moved toward meeting the same day access requirements. STEP-VA also includes increased access to Outpatient Psychotherapy Services. On July 1, 2018, the Mental Health division implemented Outpatient therapy.

### 3. Hopes for the future

I think Rapid Access has significantly increased access for individuals seeking services. I see us continuing to grow over the next few years with an expansion of hours to increase access. I would like to see Rapid Access be able to offer increased access to basic health care screenings. I would also like to have peer support services increase to provide additional resources and support to individuals as they connect to their ongoing treatment providers.





## RAPID ACCESS, continued

### 4. What is the role of the Engagement Specialist?

The Engagement Specialist position is designed to be the first face to face point of contact for an individual who arrives to request services. Engagement Specialists do not provide clinical services, but they are able to answer basic service questions and serve a crucial role by assisting with educating individuals about the initial steps in the Rapid Access process and services provided at RBHA.

## SPOTLIGHT ON ENGAGEMENT SPECIALISTS !

### *Michael Braswell*

*I started working for RBHA in 2009. I was promoted to Engagement Specialist because my supervisor thought I would be a good fit for the job. I thought I could share my life experiences with others. I enjoy being an Engagement Specialist because it gives me fulfillment to give clients hope for a new life or renewed optimism. Interacting becomes easier for the clients when they talk with someone who has lived experience.*



### *Eric Gordon*

*I started working for RBHA on September 17, 2018, as a Support Associate. After a few months, I moved up to Engagement Specialist, a job where I can help clients get services. I like the position, because I like to help people and share my experience. I show them that they can get through things by taking one step at a time. There is nothing like the feeling when I see clients come downstairs and I ask them if everything went ok and they say yes. This makes my day better, because I know I was part of the reason toward their steps to recovery.*



### *Beth Wiltshire (former Engagement Specialist)*

I was one of the original Engagement Specialists, promoted in 2014 and beginning work in the lobby in January 2015. Over the years, my duties increased and changed, but I never lost sight of the fact that I was doing a crucial, important job. I tried to treat everyone who came through the door with dignity and respect. I have resumed work as a Support Associate, but have learned some lasting lessons from my work as an Engagement Specialist. I am better for it.





# SAVE THE DATE

July 22, 2019

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Region 4's 5th Annual Collaborations Recovery Conference

## *Healing Step by Step*

A conference for peer specialists, clinicians, and individuals receiving services

Featuring Keynote Speaker: Dr. Peter Coleman

Dr. Peter Coleman, The Coleman Institute's National Medical Director, has dedicated his career to treating addiction patients. Beyond his medical experience, he understands first-hand the struggle to get clean and stay clean due to his own personal struggle with addiction.



*"I have been very blessed with the opportunity to get and stay in recovery for more than 30 years — and equally blessed to be a part of so many other peoples' recoveries."*

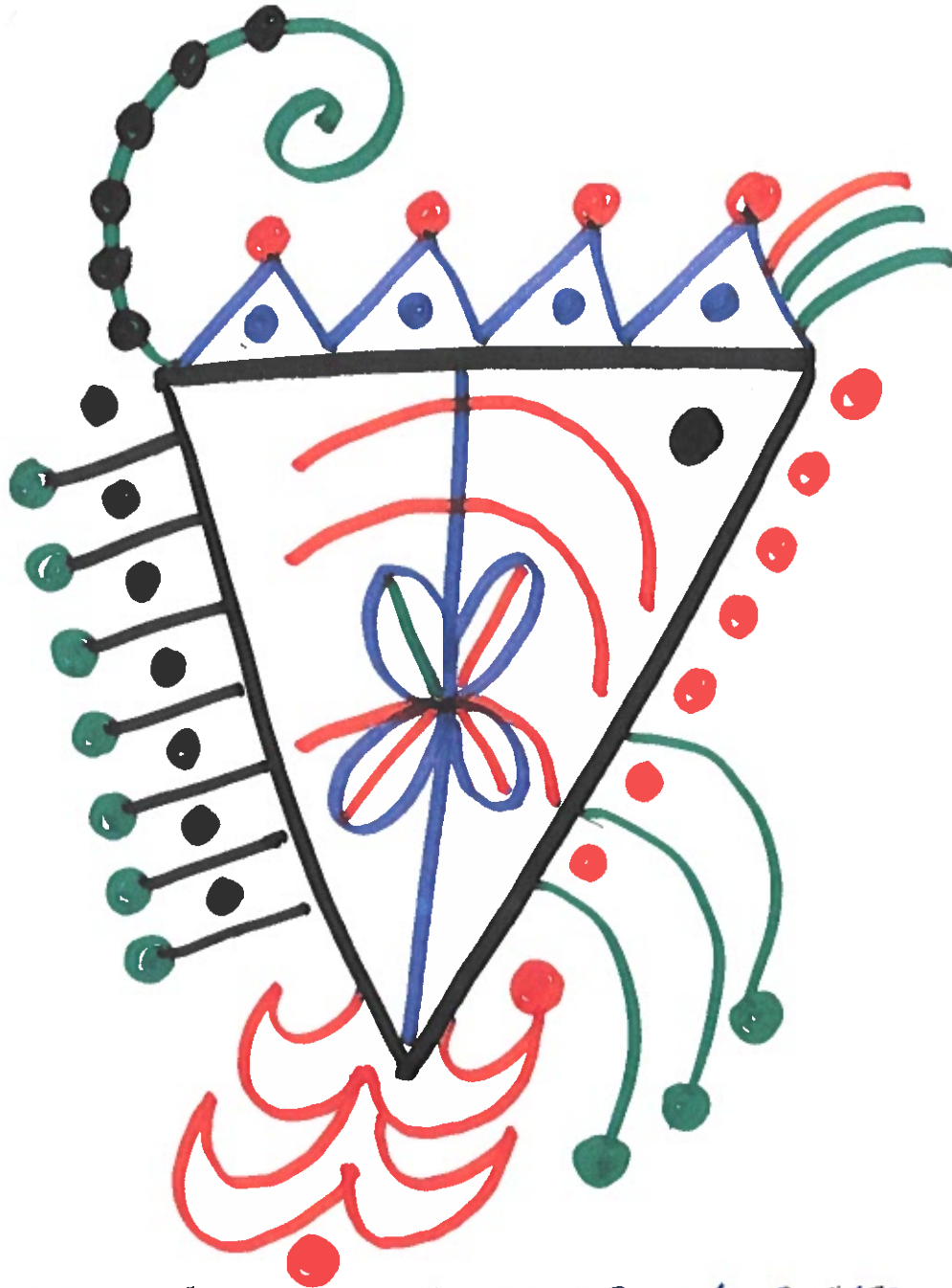
Join us for a terrific conference including breakfast, lunch, a variety of workshops, and a chance to win a door prize.

Location:

Doubletree by Hilton  
1021 Koger Center Boulevard  
Richmond, VA 23235



Registration will begin in May. There is no cost to attend.



ZELDINA THOMPSON AND  
LIZ-ANN-TROPP

**SPOTLIGHT:****CSU PEER RECOVERY SPECIALIST, CHRISTINA BURNETTE****CHILDHOOD**

I was born here in Virginia, and I have lived in Chesterfield all my life, aside from living in Brazil on and off for a year. I have always lived close to family and had a strong bond with my mother, father and grandmother, having been the only child. When I was young, I took dance (tap, ballet, jazz, baton) from age 3-13 and roller skated from 13-14. Having always loved animals, I used to catch feral kittens at my grandmother's house. I always had a passion for people and their life stories.

**ONSET OF ILLNESS AND RECOVERY**

I remember always having mood instability, but it got worse after several traumas occurred in my life without treatment. I was diagnosed after attending a peer run center to learn socialization and gain support. I met other peers with mental illness. Through education, I was able to talk to my doctor about symptoms such as mood instability, irritability and racing thoughts. Before my diagnosis, I had pursued a career as a legal assistant. The loss of my son and my father, however, two years apart spun me into a depression that I could not overcome for several years. After multiple years of letting life pass me by in a deep depression, I began to seek out answers to get better, which I later discovered was called recovery. Becoming a peer specialist was never the goal of recovery. I had just decided that I wanted to recover for my son and be an example for him to grow up happy, healthy and able to cope.

**WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH**

I started facilitating groups at Friends 4 Recovery, attended my first VOCAL conference and learned what networking was, attended CELT and Mental Health America of Virginia (MHAV), did NAMI In Our Own Voice and Peer to Peer. Through NAMI, I facilitated groups and told my story to peers in inpatient settings. Over the next several years, I went on to continue my trainings and became a certified WRAP facilitator and Recovery Coach. I assisted wellness support groups with Rise Phoenix Rise. This is where I acquired my 500 hours for certification. I pursued part-time employment of 30 hours a week which convinced me I could maintain full-time employment. I applied for the position of CPRS (Certified Peer Recovery Specialist) in the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) where I had previously been a patient. I have now been working in the CSU for almost a year.

**HOBBIES AND INTERESTS**

I enjoy spending time with old friends and encouraging new relationships, watching movies, having family outings with my mom, my grandmother, my son and my fiancé. I would like to pursue dance classes again and take swimming lessons with my son. I also like to try out new recipes. I continue to work on myself through socialization and therapy.

**HOPES FOR THE FUTURE**

My hope is to continue my employment here for a long time, start my own peer run center, take my son to Disney and fulfill his dream of visiting Australia. I want to continue to raise him in a healthy way so he is able to cope. After 3 years in a relationship with my fiancé, I look forward to planning our wedding and raising my son together with him.





ART by Sherry B

In honor of Christina Burnette



Christina - A Predestination Made By God!

Christ, the root word of your name.

How, honesty, open, wisdom, not a game.

Reminds our talk, brought up some of the same.

Isn't it great that the program offers nothing like.

Surely this reprise; God used you.

To help me, Oh - definitely - see some things thru.

It wasn't an accident that we in this season,

Not climate, or time for any other reason.

A destination made by God!

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)



To: Christina  
From: Sherry B  
John 15th



**ART by Marisa Richards**





## COMPUTER LAB

Hi everyone,

I'm Dominic Williams, a computer lab educator here at RBHA. I would like to talk about our computer lab and how it is used. We assist clients with CMS surveys, job readiness, keyboarding techniques, checking emails, assistance with Medicaid enrollment, and much more. I helped clients with filling out Medicaid applications which is passed on to social services. Many individuals were looking for a job as well. Our CMS surveys determine if clients can receive assistance with food, utilities and housing. The information is passed on to case management. I show clients how to type and improve their keyboarding skills. Our computer lab is a resource center that I encourage clients to use.

I would like to mention one of our staff members who was determined to make progress while she was in college. She used our computer lab often. Her name is Olivia Claytor, and she is now a Support Associate at RBHA. She is successful because she has continuously come in for services and utilized our resources. Soon Olivia will be a Peer Recovery Specialist at RBHA, and she is already thriving in her role as Support Associate.

I would like to thank Beth Wiltshire and Laura Minnick for inspiring me to write this article, and all the RBHA staff, who continue to play an integral part in our success in the computer lab.



Above: Dominic Williams

Below: Olivia Claytor





*The Beach House!*

**ART by guest artist Luanne Holsinger**



**ART by Liz-Ann Tropp**



### I LOVE TO PRAY

I love to pray to the Lord  
Because he is my Jesus.

I love Him very much.

He blesses me.

Keep on blessing me, Lord.

I love you very much.



### GROWING WITH GOD

I want to grow  
To be a better person  
Through God.  
I know He loves me,  
When sometimes I  
Don't love myself.  
So I read the Bible,  
And try to grow  
With God.

**POETRY by Melody Howey**



*ART by Marisa Richards*



**IN MEMORIAM****R.H.****A long-term member of the Marshall Center**

R.H.

*R. was a searcher. I think he was looking for the truth in life. He was a lovely, ferociously funny, and memorable human being. His gift to all who met him was his honesty. Although he faced numerous challenges in life, he never let any obstacle deter him from living each day with an admirably unique flare and an impeccable sense of style. We are fortunate that his light will continue to shine in our memories, and his fantastically creative works of art which were created across the years as a valued member of the Marshall Center. Thank you, R.*

—by Kameron Lee

If you ever met R.H., you'd never forget him! He loved life ferociously. His incredible resilience was awe-inspiring. In spite of his struggles, he cared about others deeply. R. gave back to his community with his sense of humor, his astonishing dance moves, his impeccable fashion sense, and his spectacular ability to create beauty with his art. He taught me how valuable the little things in life are. R. made ordinary life extraordinary, and for that, he will never be forgotten.

—by Sarah James

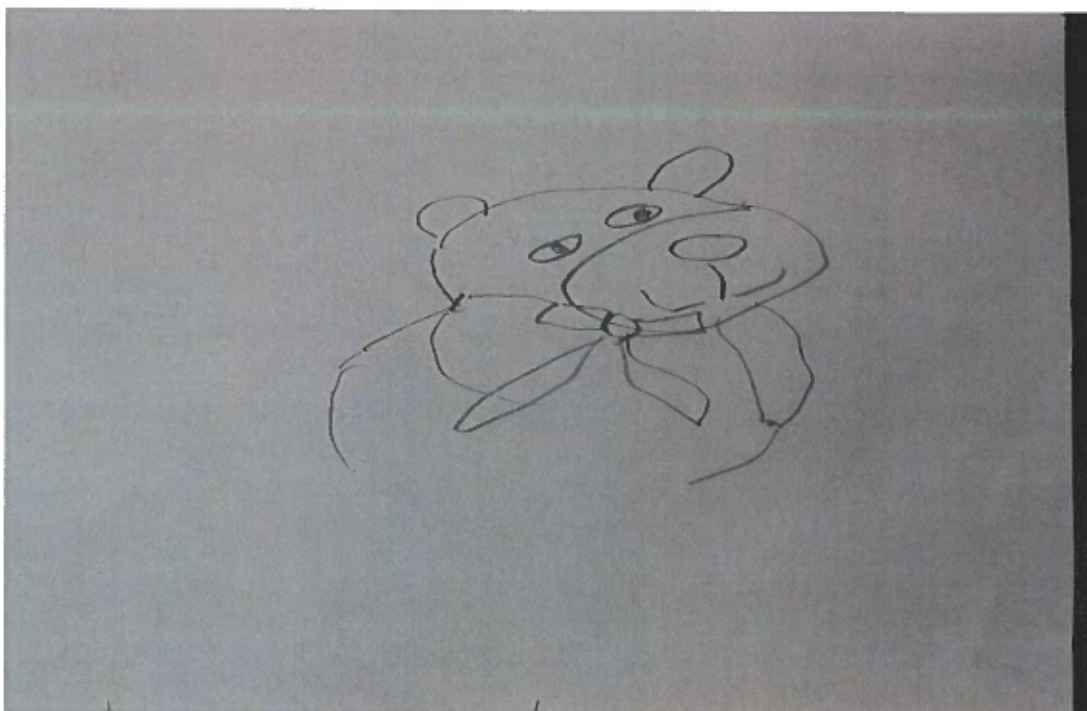
**R.H. by Erin DeLizzio**

**R. was a beloved and colorful client, full of love for those he knew loved him in return. He had many talents and interests and was especially talented in the arts. His love for life showed in his drawing, dancing and singing. He brightened up a room with his classy sense of style. R.'s favorite outings with his team were for pancakes! He was a special person and will always be remembered with a warm smile on his face, in his best outfit. We thank him for touching our lives. We were the lucky ones for knowing him.**





**ART by R.H.**

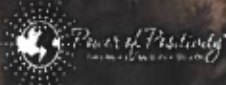




ART by Liz-Ann Tropp



In a world  
where you can  
be anything:  
Be kind.





**Art by Charlie Thedieck**

**To submit articles, poetry, or art to the Phoenix Rising,  
please contact Beth Wiltshire at**

**wiltshireb@rbha.org or**

**RBHA**

**107 South 5th Street**

**Richmond, Virginia 23219**

**All submissions are welcomed, but subject to editing.**

**We want to hear from you!**

**This newsletter is produced by Voices United in Recovery.**