

NETWORK NEWS GOES ONLINE

The Ohio Mental Health Network for School Success (OMHNSS) will be distributing *Network News* online for 2008. In an effort to share the work of the Network more widely, readers will be able to access the newsletter online and via email and have the ability to print and share the information with friends and colleagues.

To find current and past issues of Network News go to:

www.units.muohio.edu/csbmhp/network/network_pubs.html

This issue highlights the **School Support Service Summit** that was held in Cleveland, Ohio last fall. Stakeholders from around the state gathered to participate in a Community of Practice. Eighty-seven diverse stakeholders attended the meeting representing Ohio school administrators, school social workers, counselors, psychologists, community-based mental health providers, pupil personnel professionals, teachers, occupational therapists, academicians, parents, and legislative representatives. The purpose of the Community of Practice was to organize cross stakeholder groups

to start conversations about important components of education and school performance.

This issue also includes some of the upcoming children's mental health trainings throughout the state and a new section featuring youth perspectives on mental health issues.

If you have story ideas or would like to receive future issues of *Network News*, please let us know by sending an e-mail to Amy Wilms, Co-editor (wilmsab@muohio.edu).

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YOUTH PERSPECTIVE PAGE



"Me"

There is a young lady seen in the hall
Her reputation in school casts a pall
Her words are blunt, she speaks her mind
Many students think her the fighting kind

She learned at a young age the world is rough
Sometimes the only answer is to be tough
Smiling and playing the game is not enough
She has little patience with high school stuff

For she has those who need her you see
She is someone who is not about "me"
You can find the real girl if you bother
She is home taking care of her father

Her eyes are passionate like a rose
She has a beautiful gem that sticks out of her
nose

Her smile has a way of lighting up a room
Hopefully she finds herself a fantastic groom

Written by Miranda SanMiguel who is 18 and is a senior at Northwood High School.



Matt's Thoughts On...

School



I have been through a lot with my schooling. Teachers often just don't understand these illnesses. They haven't learned about these things in school. They think that you are choosing to just be bad. I didn't want to be a bad kid. It was my reactions to things. I didn't have enough energy to handle things and I would react badly. People acted

as if I had a choice about this. I didn't choose this. Who would choose this? I am just trying to deal with what I have given to the best of my ability. I missed nearly 60 days of school a year. It was all I could do just to stay alive. My depression gets worse in the winter when there is less sunlight. I would start to get depressed in September or so, and by my birthday in October I was often in the hospital, having ECT, or at home. My school days would start as full days in the fall. As I would get more depressed we would shorten my school day. Usually by around Christmas my day was less than half a day. I would often go on home instruction for part of the year. One year I was on home instruction from January until June. One year I was so sick in the fall I couldn't do any school at all for nearly 3 months. All I could do was sit and stare and watch movies. I barely ate or talked. My mom and doctor talked about what we could do the next fall because they said they could never let me get that sick again. The next fall I started Electro-shock treatments, ECT.

As you can imagine, when you are this sick it is hard to focus on math. I didn't barely have enough energy to keep myself alive, let alone learn. I was in a partial hospitalization program through a local mental health agency for about 1½ years. I have been in a day treatment school, self-contained classes, home instruction, no instruction..but now I am so well I am back in public school for a special education English class and then on a work-study job the rest of my day. I will graduate with my class and am on the honor roll.

The teachers want to help. They just don't seem to know how. We need education to every single teacher about these illnesses and how to help us. This is critical. The things they do with us in the classroom stress us out and make our illnesses worse. They don't mean to do it. They just don't know how to help us.

Matt is 18 years old and a senior in high school. Matt was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder at age 8 and has been through a lot in his young life. He has been blessed to have transformed his life into great success. It is his life goal to use his experiences to help other children who are experiencing the types of things he has struggled with. Matt feels he has been placed on this earth to use his experience to help others and he is devoting his life to purpose. Matt serves on The State of Ohio Transformation Working Group, a cabinet level group who will work to evaluate and improve the state's approach to mental health care.