



LeFlore Communications, LLC

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Community Intervention Programs

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS *for Violence Prevention Project*

News Release: June 18, 2007

Support for Project Growing among Professionals, Community/Organizational Leaders and Local Citizens

Support is growing and momentum building in the Milwaukee area for the new **Mental Health Matters for Violence Prevention** project being sponsored from June through August 2007 by Community Intervention Programs, Inc. (CIP)/LeFlore Communications, LLC. Key staff from the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division and Mount Mary College have circulated mass emails about the project. Various community and organizational leaders have submitted comments and quotes, and local and national professionals have provided articles, for posting on the project website. All have come together to express concerns about ongoing community violence, and the need for interventions, information and other resources to promote mental health awareness and violence prevention solutions to reach and empower youth and adults. **Please see “Mental Health Matters” and “Quotes and Comments” relevant to the project on the www.leflorecommunications.com website.**

Consider what a few professionals, community and organizational leaders said (their quotes are featured on the project website above):

Jenni Sevenich, Chief Executive Officer, Westside Healthcare Association, Inc., Milwaukee:

“People often talk about needing to take care of the whole self – body, mind and soul. We are encouraged to eat healthy, exercise, and get regular checkups for the body. It is acceptable to attend church, synagogue, or mosque, or just pray or meditate by oneself to take care of the soul. So why is there still a stigma attached to the practices that help us take care of our minds? People seem very concerned about the level of violence in our community and say we need to do something. We can make an effort to take guns off the street, but unless we address the issues that make someone angry enough, depressed enough, or apathetic enough to want to shoot another in the first place, we are spinning our wheels.”

Stephanie Harrison, Executive Director, Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, Madison:

"For far too long, mental health has been relegated to the back seat of the overall health care delivery system, which only perpetuates the stigma that patients feel when they experience difficulties in life and want to seek out help. More and more, research demonstrates that mental health has a profound impact on a person's overall health, and the health care industry is beginning to take notice. Community Health Centers have long recognized the importance and the value of providing integrated and holistic care to the community. For them, comprehensive primary care includes prevention programs, wellness programs, chronic disease management programs, oral health care, and mental health services. The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association is

pleased that Community Intervention Programs, Inc./LeFlore Communications, LLC is raising awareness of this vital link in our health care delivery chain."

Among other supporters or contributors of information to the project website to date are (in alphabetical order):

Stephen P. Adams, President of Community Development Management Partnerships in Milwaukee;

Michael Bell, M.D., Psychiatrist and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the Medical College of Wisconsin;

Yvonne Lumsden-Dill, Executive Director of Women's Leadership Institute, Mt. Mary College;

Polly E. Drew, M.Ed, LCSW, LMFT, Individual, Couple and Family Psychotherapist and regular chat host for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's online edition;

Kimberly Goins, MA,LPC, Psychotherapist and Project Director at a local community health center;

Johnnie M. Johnson, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Youth Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee;

Dwayne Lee, a Community Columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel;

Chris Morano, PhD, Psychologist, Director of Milwaukee County Mobile Urban Treatment Team;

Beth Powell, Director, Public Policy and Professional Issues, American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) in Alexandria, VA.

Project Focus

The Mental Health Matters for Violence Prevention project kicked off on June 6 with a large display poster – featuring a “jungle” background theme -- in The Shops of Grand Avenue mall in downtown Milwaukee, accompanied by articles in community-based newspapers and a dedicated website with resource information available to the general public. The public is being linked to telephone contact information (through 211 or 1-866-211-3380, offered by the local Impact organization that runs the help line) for referrals to behavioral health and counseling services in Milwaukee County. Articles and educational materials from diverse professionals and organizations can be accessed through the project website. **The project also includes a summer essay contest with prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25.** The theme for essays is: **"How I am Demonstrating the Change I Want to See in the World."** Youth and adults are eligible to enter, and the deadline is August 10.

The project takes a unique approach to addressing mental health issues from a “common cold” perspective, showing that mental health/illness exists on a continuum. The project’s focus is on increasing awareness of behavioral/mental health and violence-prevention resources for individuals and families seeking help to cope with problems and other life challenges in productive ways, according to Fannie LeFlore, MS,LPC,CADC-D, President of LeFlore Communications, a woman/minority-owned small business based in Milwaukee, and Founder of Community Intervention Programs, the non-profit component of LeFlore Communications.

In addition, a need exists to shift perceptions, and reduce barriers to seeking help, in a nation where nearly half of all Americans have a psychiatric disorder at some time in their lives -- usually depression, problem drinking or some kind of phobia (Archives of General Psychiatry), and where one in every five Americans experiences mental health issues or mental illness in any given year (U.S. Surgeon General's Report). National statistics show that conditions such as major depression and anxiety disorders can be as disabling for some people as chronic physical illness, LeFlore said.

The project's ultimate goal is to engage individuals, families and communities to be part of the solution by de-stigmatizing mental health based on the reality that people will experience problems *and may need help or other support at some point in their lives*, according to LeFlore.

Background on LeFlore Communications, LLC

Fannie LeFlore is a former newspaper reporter and psychotherapist, and maintains professional licenses as a mental health and substance abuse counselor in Wisconsin. LeFlore recently had articles on mental health and/or violence prevention (the latter co-authored by Dr. Michael Bell) published in The Wisconsin Psychiatrist. LeFlore is a professional member of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA).

LeFlore Communications, established in 2005, provides writing/editing and corporate communications services, and consulting to facilitate trainings and special projects for schools, community organizations and businesses of all sizes. Among LeFlore Communications' local client companies are: Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee Health Services, Inc. and the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, a coalition of major hospitals/ health systems, community health centers and others.

Community Intervention Programs Inc., the non-profit organization affiliated with LeFlore Communications, has been registered in Wisconsin since 1995.

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