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Community Intervention Programs

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS *for Violence Prevention Project*

Summer 2007 Public Service Project in Milwaukee sponsored by minority/woman small business

MILWAUKEE, Wis., JUNE 1, 2007 -- In response to ongoing concerns about community violence, a new project will promote mental health awareness and violence prevention information to reach youth and adults over the entire summer. The project will kick 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 website educational resources available to the general public.

Mental Health Matters *for Violence Prevention* will involve diverse public service messages and resource materials from June through August 2007, sponsored by Community Intervention Programs, Inc. (CIP)/LeFlore Communications, LLC. The project’s focus is on increasing awareness of behavioral/mental health and resources for individuals and families seeking help to cope with problems and other life challenges in productive ways. Contact information for referrals to counseling services in Milwaukee County will be provided, in addition to educational materials on mental health and violence prevention. **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. It also includes a summer essay contest with prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25.**

The project’s 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 Fannie LeFlore, MS, LPC, CADCD, who founded Community Intervention Programs in 1995. *In 2005, CIP became the non-profit component of LeFlore Communications*, a small business that provides human service workshops to schools and community organizations and corporate communications/special projects consulting for businesses. LeFlore Communications’ local clients include Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee Health Services, Inc. and the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, a coalition. LeFlore recently had articles on mental health and/or violence prevention (the latter co-authored by Dr. Michael Bell) published in The Wisconsin Psychiatrist. *Fannie LeFlore is a former newspaper reporter and psychotherapist, and maintains professional licenses as a mental health and substance abuse counselor in Wisconsin.*

LeFlore said 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.

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