said she would speak to the school and make sure the staff accommodations she needs to be a successful student. Mam was concerned the new school would not give her the mother is a nurse, she can help Brittany with her school work, "Brittany has been accepted to nursing school and since her with her parents. Mam said she has been diagnosed with depressive disorder and is 19 years old.

"Brittany has had many hospitalizations and that's one of our goals – to decrease hospitalizations," Mam said. "She is doing much better."

When Brittany first left the hospital she thought she wanted to move out on her own, however she has now set some different goals for herself and has decided to stay at home with her parents.

"Brittany has been accepted to nursing school and since her mother is a nurse, she can help Brittany with her school work," Mam said.

As the meeting progressed Brittany confessed she was concerned the new school would not give her the accommodations she needs to be a successful student. Mam said she would speak to the school and make sure the staff

there understood the situation. She has also helped Brittany apply for Social Security Disability/Supplemental Security Income, and will continue to see her through that process. Mam has also kept Brittany’s counselor up-to-date on what’s going on and made sure that everyone involved in Brittany’s treatment is on the same page.

"Superna helps me a lot," Brittany said. I never know where to start and she is very hands-on and helpful. I had a Care Manager when I was in a program through Child and Family Services so I already knew how valuable it was to have a CM."

Brittany continues to go to counseling and is improving. She said she feels her medications are really helping, and she has not been hospitalized since her last acute episode early last summer. For Brittany, Care Management has been a very valuable service. The six-month criteria imposed by Critical Time Intervention makes it challenging for Care Managers like Mam, but with her training and experience she has been able to make a difference in the lives of many consumers facing the challenges of mental illness.

When a person dealing with the challenges of mental illness is linked to Erie County's network of care providers it is sometimes difficult for the individual and his or her family to understand where each of the multiple services fits into their recovery plan. Care Managers like Mam’s charge is to get her clients to their highest level of functioning within six months. This is called Critical Time Intervention (CTI), and is a program sub-contracted to BFNC by Erie County. Part of John reaching his full potential, for example, may include getting him into a driving school at the Department of Motor Vehicles which is geared to people with special needs.

Clearly this question was an issue when Supernam Mam, care management coordinator, went to meet "John" for the first time at the home he shares with his mother. John, who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, had set an appointment with Superna but had suggested they meet on the front porch rather than inside the house. He is fortunate in that he did not become ill until later in his life and had several years of work behind him that enable him to have health insurance and an income to live on. Although he has expressed a wish to live on his own and become involved in some kind of volunteer work, at the time of this writing he was living with his mother. He was also depending on her for transportation as he found it difficult to drive.

When Mam arrived for the meeting. John’s mother answered the door and refused to allow her to talk to him. Mom said they did not require BFNC’s services as John was already seeing a counselor and had all the assistance he needed.

"There are a number of things I could help John with," Mam explained after the encounter with John’s mother. "First, Brylin, which was the hospital he was in when he became acute, was concerned that he was living with his elderly mother – she is 80."

"If he wanted optional housing I would help him find it and became established. I’d also help make sure he got to his medical appointments – he has other health issues besides his mental illness – and I’d connect him with opportunities to work as a volunteer."

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HOPE Center expands services to FAFSA assistance

The BFNC HOPE Center is expanding its services with assistance for students and their families in filling out and filing FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid) forms. Since the HOPE Center also handles tax returns and financial coaching, staff can assist applicants in getting all of the right documentation together to apply for financial aid.

“You have to have your taxes done for the previous year – and if you don’t, we can help get them done through our Free Income Tax Program,” said Brooke Densing, program director. “This can be a challenge, particularly for students who might have to file FAFSA without parental assistance.”

“We will have one-on-one FAFSA application assistance, review FAFSA award letters in detail with each applicant, and provide one-on-one coaching to help ensure students are able to afford all college costs even after they receive their financial aid.”

For the 2013-2014 school year students can submit FAFSA forms from January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. Assistance will be provided at two of our tax site locations: the BFNC Hope Center, as well as the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). Students or families needing assistance with FAFSA can call the Hope Center at 362-0744 to set up an appointment.

FAFSA assistance is not limited to students in their first year of college. It is also available to anyone returning to school, regardless of age. The goal is to assist students beyond the application, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to succeed while in college and after they graduate.

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Our Vision
The Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers plays a major role in ensuring that any person in Western New York who needs help and has no place to turn, or who has had trouble accessing services, or who has slipped through the cracks of the traditional human service system, has a trusted place to go for help in taking the next step toward maximum independence.

Our Mission
BFNC prepares, equips and empowers individuals to address life management issues, and to improve the quality of life in their communities.

Executive Director
Ricardo Herrera

Officers
President - Eugene Partridge
1st Vice President - Verna Morton
2nd Vice President - Charles Symjs, LCSW
Treasurer - Christopher Rumin, CPA
Secretary - Estephine Greene, LCSW

Board of Advisors
Ricardo Herrera, Executive Director

Message from Executive Director

These are exciting times at BFNC as we gear up for the New Year. The Free Tax Preparation Program begins again January 25, 2016. Last year the program helped 7,246 individuals and families receive refunds from the Federal government averaging $1,922, and 6,440 returns averaging $339 each.

If you have not been to the Moot Center recently, come by and see all of the changes. Staff member Mary Gilroy, BFNC’s assistant program coordinator. Moot has undergone a kitchen renovation, floor plan reconfiguration including new offices, new flooring and a complete repainting of the interior. This coming year will also see the start of a program connected to the Moot Center that is totally new to BFNC.

The new Moot Cares program will provide Care Coordinators who will step in when families caring for children are struggling due to illness or injury so that their child gets the medical attention and support he or she needs. The goal is to help seniors continue to live as independently as possible by providing the extra assistance they need. For information call: 716-882-4637.

The Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (CAPP) has been making considerable headway within the schools and at community sites. At the end of the third quarter of 2013, 634 youth had participated in evidence-based programming covering teen pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Another 276 youth participated in youth development programs, including Health and Hygiene, Puberty, Boys to Men and Gowning Great Girls. CAPP has also collaborated with other organizations on a youth conference (Sister to Sister with 167 attendees) and a professional development conference, Can We Talk About Trauma-Informed Care, attended by 220 adults who work with youth. Project director Ellen Trautman says the CAPP educators and curricula are becoming so well-known in the schools that they are now being invited to present in schools they have not previously worked with.

The HOPE Center welcomed an Opportunity Corps Volunteer to its staff. The program also added FAFSA services to its menu of financial literacy offerings. Parents with kids planning on college can now get individualized and qualified assistance in completing all college financial aid paperwork. Small Business incubation services were also provided to two groups of minority females interested in starting their own businesses. Finally, the HOPE Center has begun working closely with our own Care Coordination Services on several integrated projects.

33rd Annual BFNC/Citigroup Thanksgiving Dinner serves more than 1,000 meals

The Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Center’s (BFNC)/Citigroup Thanksgiving Dinner for the community sponsored by Citigroup, was a huge success, serving more than 1,000 full turkey dinners. Held Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the Moot Senior Center, the dinner featured entertainment by Pappy Martin and the Supreme Love Trio, One of a Kind, Dance, and karaoke. Buffalo Xerographix, Inc. donated the turkeys and Emerson School of Hospitality roasted them. Sides were prepared by the Moot Senior Citizens Catering group.

Message from Executive Director

“This was probably one of our most successful Dinners. The interior of the Moot Center has just been renovated and painted so we were able to fit more tables and seat people more comfortably. Plus it looked great,” said Letrice Harwell, administrative assistant and chair of BFNC’s Thanksgiving Dinner committee. “Everyone really enjoyed themselves and the dinner was delicious.”

Attendees won turkeys and other prizes during the raffles. In addition to support from Citigroup and Buffalo Xerographix, Inc., Lasertron and New Rosen Printing made donations. These contributions make it possible for BFNC to keep the price of tickets to the dinner at $1 per person, and no one is turned away. In addition, several meals were taken to homeless individuals.

Dewey House closes

In October one of BFNC’s long-term homes was closed and the consumers living there were integrated into other housing options. These are difficult decisions to make, said Chandra Redfern, director, Residential Services, but well worthwhile when necessary. Here are the behind the scenes details:

Q. When did BFNC decide to close Dewey? Why?
A. Discussions began in October of 2012. Dewey was one of our oldest facilities and it required major upgrades. Furthermore, it was not a property owned by the agency, and therefore it was not cost effective for us to make updates and repairs. Original plans were thought to not re-create the facility, however, based on the requirements for community residences, it did not seem cost effective either. In a housing model that supported group living. In an effort to conform to the state’s Housing Redesign effort, and based on the changing population, it made sense to convert the 12 beds to treatment apartments.

Q. How many consumers were living there? Where were these consumers relocated?
A. At the time of transition there were approximately 10 individuals residing at the residence. Three were relocated to housing options outside of the agency, and the other seven were relocated to group homes or apartments within Residential Services.

Q. What did BFNC do to make this transition go smoothly for the consumers?
A. We held a meeting with the residents to talk about the move. We were very cautious not to do it too quickly as we did not want to create anxiety for anyone. At the meeting, residents were able to ask questions and discuss their housing choices. Additionally, staff members worked individually with residents to discuss housing options and residents were taken on a tour of the available facilities. Every effort was made to place individuals in housing that suited their needs.

Fortunately, Redfern says, the transition went smoothly and the residents who moved out are settled and happy in their new surroundings.

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