

Multnomah County/City of Portland Mental Health Liaison

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Board Involvement

Current Board Involvement

State of Oregon Consumer Advisory Council (2004-2010 and currently since 2015)

Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Mental Health and Safety Subcommittee (since 2006)

Past Board Involvement

City of Portland Mayor Tom Potter's Mental Health and Safety Committee

City of Portland Public Police Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee

Irvington Community Association

Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Public Safety and Mental Health Subcommittee

Mental Health America of Oregon

Multnomah County Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) Advisory Board

Multnomah County Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Advisory Committee (AMHSAAC)

Oregon Consumer Survivor Coalition (OCSC)

Oregon Partners in Crisis (ORPiC)

City of Portland Public Police Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee

State of Oregon Mental Health Workforce Committee

State of Oregon Non-Traditional Worker Planning Committee

Unity Center for Behavioral Health Advisory Council

Testimony to Multnomah County Commissioners in Favor of \$3 Million to Unity
Ann Kasper, 2015
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Hi Friends,

I am here supporting the \$3 million funding from the county for the Unity Center. I am supporting the possibility of positive change.

I am a peer (a person with mental health challenges)

Here is a quick resume and why I feel I am qualified to speak on mental health issues.

- 30 years experience
- Not able to get insurance for 15 years
- Received support for treatment from the Multnomah County Indigent fund and treatment from agencies
- Involuntarily hospitalized in every hospital except for one in Portland, six times in the last years at Good Samaritan
- Had my civil rights taken many times
- Committed once and won my appeal

- helped create CATC with Mayor Potter's committee and rewrote the RFP with peer language
- Worked as a peer support specialist for 6 years – 3 years at CATC
- On committee advising police for 11 years – and train the Behavioral Health Unit
- 8 years with LPSCC Mental Health Subcommittee – Jail Diversion (Commissioner Judy Shiprack)
- 6 years of volunteer service – 12 hours a week at Mental Health and Addictions Division
- Advocate for Wellness TV show about mental health (Also, Mental Health Freedom TV Current News Show)
- Masters in Applied Linguistics

The public mental health system does not intentionally hurt people. I have a pain story and my family and friends have suffered along with me due to “the public system” over many years.

I am here to ask for support the total \$3 million funding for the Unity Center from Multnomah County.

I think that the Unity Center will help people not go through as much pain that my family, friends and I have endured in the past and current system.

Thank you Commissioner Bailey for your interest and support for mental health issues and your phone call to me explaining why. We look forward to working with you in the future as peers bringing you our expertise.

The Unity Project is unique in that peers and family members at the table from the ground up for the planning meetings including topics of architecture and management vision. During my 12+ years of involvement with mental health programming in Multnomah County, I haven't seen peers at those beginning stages. It is empowering for me to be at the Unity table with the doctors and nurses who took

care of my in my involuntary inpatient stay at Good Sam. They often tell me how they value my input. We are equals there.

There will be a Unity community advisory council and as a member, I am going to do my best that community is really involved and their input is implemented.

The Unity Center will be a place to help ensure that people with mental health challenges are not "boarded." I was in the emergency room one time for 5 days against my will waiting for a bed in the psychiatric unit.

The center will be based on trauma-informed care. There will be space for community groups to hold support groups.

It is important that this seen not just as a building to put these people with mental illness or mental health challenges.

It is important to have community involvement once it is running.

I would like Multnomah County to encourage Legacy to create a cafeteria that the public would enjoy. One example is Good Sam's cafeteria is affordable attracts people from all over the city. Have you tried their stir-fry?

I would also like Multnomah County to encourage Legacy to build a gym in the building which is not only good for treatment, but can be a place for art. I have talked to some music and dance groups and they said they would perform for patients if there was a gym. Again, bringing community together. Art heals.

They talk about the Alameda model. We are Portland. We can really create a "Portland model."

I encourage Multnomah County (my work family) and the Unity Center to work together with the community to help create a system of healing.

This Unity Center is an opportunity to create something new – to get beyond “the system doesn't work.” It is my personal vision that we work together as equals with compassion for all – including the hospital staff, the Multnomah County staff, the police, jail staff, families, community and of course, my colleagues, the peers.

It is time for healing. And I think the Unity Center is a start.

Remember, Woman

Remember, Woman, you were born
life giver, miracle creator, magic maker.

You were born with the heart of a thousand mothers,
open and fearless and sweet.

You were born with the fire of Queens & conquerors,
warrioress blood you bleed.

You were born with the wisdom of sages & shamans,
no wound can you not heal.

You were born the teller of your own tale,
before none should you kneel.

You were born with an immeasurable soul
reaching out past infinity.

You were born to desire with passion, abandon,
and to name your own destiny.

Remember, Woman, remember
you are more than you can see.

Remember, Woman, remember
you are loved endlessly.

Remember, Woman, your power and grace,
the depth of your deep sea heart.

Never forget you are Woman, divine,
as you have been from the start.

- reeseléyva