



Program Spotlight: Transitional Housing Program



THP staff Maria, Jose, Shani, and Willie (front) with residents Victor and Juan (back)

On June 4th, 2011, residents of the HAS Transitional Housing Program (THP) arrived in Logan Square to march in the 16th annual ALSO Walk for Peace. Despite record-breaking heat and humidity, they lingered after the march to join in the community celebration and help spread the word about tolerance and nonviolence. Outreach and social activism are central to the program at THP, the only long-term, Spanish-language residential treatment program in Chicago available to participants regardless of financial resources.

“When THP residents are given the opportunity to overcome their challenges and utilize their strengths and talents, they become natural leaders in the community,” says THP manager Shani Harshbarger. “They are then equipped to the fight for the lives of others and help reduce the incident of relapse and chronic homelessness.”

The challenges faced by THP residents are serious. In addition to homelessness and addiction, between 50-75 percent of residents are living with HIV. Many have received little formal education and have limited employment histories. They are often faced with language barriers and the lack of a support network. Nevertheless, nearly 100 percent of THP residents successfully complete their stay and enter outpatient treatment. In conjunction with what peer support specialist Jose Tovar describes as “the only full-service recovery management program in Chicago,” THP works actively with participants to address long-term barriers to recovery. **See THP, pg. 3**

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—Shani Harshbarger, THP Manager

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JUNE 27TH
NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY
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“I truly see the program’s value in the number of individuals who come in because of what they have heard in the streets and from other community providers.”

—Shani Harshbarger, Manager, THP

Manager’s Note—Transitional Housing



Shani Harshbarger

Dear Friends of HAS,

As Manager of the Transitional Housing Program (THP), I feel that we have created a uniquely effective recovery environment for homeless, Spanish-speaking men.

At THP, we are committed to evidence-based practices: we offer a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) relapse prevention group and are implementing the *Thinking for a Change* CBT curriculum. The power of the house as a whole, however, is its community involvement. Our participants value reaching out to other homeless individuals and providing access to our services while they work on their own recovery. Their involvement gives everyone a sense of ownership and pride in recovery from a community perspective.

My experience with this program and the desperate needs of the people we serve has changed my personal insight and views. Data reports for THP show successful outcomes, but I truly see the program’s value in the number of individuals who come in because of what they have heard in the streets and from other community providers. We work closely with them because we believe we need to help each other as a community to best assist participants and their families.

Thank you to the THP team and to everyone else who makes the work we do possible. You are the leaders and the change agents for these participants, and your work, time, and effort is the light that shines on our program.

Sincerely,

Shani Harshbarger—Manager, Transitional Housing Program

Congratulations & Accomplishments

Congratulations to HAS CEO **Marco Jacome**, new **Faces and Voices of Recovery** board member. Marco also presented a lecture on treating Hispanic populations at the **Addiction Technology Transfer Center’s** recent national conference.

Welcome new HAS Board Members **Andrea Barton** and **George Terzakis**.

Congratulations to HAS PPD therapists **Cristina Nieto** and **Jessica Carlos**, on becoming **Licensed Clinical Social Workers**, and **Cecelia Quinn**, on her **adjunct teaching appointment and dissertation research** at Loyola University.

HAS has a **new website**. Visit us at <http://www.hascares.org>. You can also find us on **Facebook** and follow us on **Twitter**.

HAS Unveils “A Celebration of Family Life”

On June 24, 2011, HAS unveiled “A Celebration of Family Life,” a series of life-size mosaic sculptures representing the Latino family. The sculptures were created by HAS Youth Prevention participants under the direction of Urban Gateways instructor Nicole Beck.

Beck worked with the youth for over a year on the sculptures. “They saw the work from start to finish,” she says, “so they can really take ownership and feel pride in what they did. They learned work ethic and developed collaboration skills. For years to come, they’ll be able to look at their work and say ‘I did that.’” Youth participant Edwin C., 16, agrees: “it’s a fun program. It doesn’t just focus on the alcohol and stuff out in the neighborhood. It’s about the art.”

“A Celebration of Family” was unveiled at a ceremony featuring speakers including



Nicole Beck with youth artists at the unveiling

Father Bruce Willems of the Peace and Education Coalition. Representatives for 12th Ward Alderman George Cardenas and Commissioner of Public Health Bechara Choucair were also present and proclaimed June 24 as “Healthcare Alternative Systems Day” in the city of Chicago. The sculptures, one of the first works of public art in the Back of the Yards, will remain on display at HAS’s youth treatment headquarters on Western Avenue.

Participant Profile: Maria K.



Maria K, exploring her creative side

“I have a beautiful job,” says Maria K. Employed at the HAS Transitional Housing Program since February, Maria locates apartments, speaks with employers, and evaluates educational programs. Her work at THP draws on years of experience in the medical and customer service fields: “I find people what they need to stay safe and keep sober,” she explains. Maria’s work also benefits from her firsthand knowledge of the challenges of recovery. Now sober for three years, she had her first drink at the age of nine and first smoked marijuana at thirteen. At sixteen, she was introduced to cocaine. “After that, it was *on*,” she likes to say. “I went to a party when I was sixteen, and I didn’t come back until I was fifty-five.”

Maria’s forty-year struggle with substance abuse, however, was often far from a good time. As an addict, Maria sold drugs. Her relationships with her children suffered. She was often unable to pay her bills—“sometimes the lights went out,” she remembers. “My kids were used to that.” The factor that truly defined Maria’s years of drug and alcohol abuse, though, was fear. “I had a lot of bad, violent relationships,” she states. “I was afraid. I used to drive around with a grenade—a live grenade—in my car.” It was in fact a particularly frightening incident of violence that finally propelled Maria into treatment: she came to Chicago after her longtime partner, also a drug user, made a serious attempt on her life. Terrified, she waited until he fell asleep and then collected her hat, her shoes, and the man’s wallet, and left their home in Florida to live with her daughter.

At her daughter’s urging, Maria eventually entered the women’s residential program Sisterhouse, where she made rapid progress. “I learned a lot from my counselors,” she says. “I learned how to talk about what was happening with me instead of keeping it inside. I learned how to forgive and be humble.” At Sisterhouse, Maria learned strategies for coping with everyday life. She was also able to “get rid of some garbage,” including her violent relationship with her own mother, that had made recovery difficult.

Maria’s life is now dramatically different than it was before she entered treatment. She is grateful for her job, her new apartment, her improved relationships with her family, and “even my cat, Rocky.” Maria now appreciates the challenges she faces, because she knows she has the skills she needs to meet them: “I’m living life on its own terms, now,” she says, “and I would never go back. Treatment here worked for me, and I want to be here to help it work for others.”

From THP, p. 1 “When people get here, they have treatment down,” Harshbarger observes. “They’ve been through it. What they don’t know is how to live afterward. That’s what we’re all working on.”

THP also develops participants’ leadership capacity. Participants are instrumental in developing the schedule. They lead groups, orient new residents to the program, and accompany them to meetings. “Participants carry the energy of the house,” says Harshbarger.

In addition, participants engage

with the community surrounding THP. Through a Governor’s Neighborhood Recovery Initiative grant, THP works with neighborhood youth involved in the criminal justice system. THP residents also serve as mentors at local community-based organizations. Resident Victor A., who is preparing for the GED exam and for college enrollment, is grateful for the chance to help other young people ready themselves for their futures and believe in their own potential. “Just because you’re young, doesn’t mean you can’t be clean, he says. “It’s all about giving back.”

“I’m living life on its own terms now, and I would never go back. Treatment here worked for me, and I want to be here to help it work for others.”

—Maria K., THP Housing Specialist



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What's NEW



Dr. Choucair and Ana Belaval

May 6 Over 140 friends of the HAS PPD program turned out to support our 4th Annual Treating Moms Well luncheon. This year's event honored Joan Mudd of the Jennifer Mudd Houghtaling Postpartum Depression Foundation, and Modern Wave Salon, which has been supporting PPD participants since 2009. Chicago Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Bechara Choucair and Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services

Michelle Saddler provided opening remarks; WGN 9's Ana Belaval served as Mistress of Ceremonies. The event raised over \$50,000 to provide services to women who could not otherwise afford treatment.

June 9 HAS visited Edgewater's Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies to talk about the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol—and to thank Spanish teacher Maria Roche and her class for their support. Earlier in the year, Ms. Roche's class completed a research project on substance abuse and organizations that offer help. After selecting HAS, the class held a Saturday bake sale and donated the proceeds—\$31.00—to our programs. "It helped explain that even though we were just seventh-graders, we could still change the world," says student Jessica M. HAS plans to continue working with the school, hosting a tour of our youth programs in the fall.



Maria Roche and Julia Romero

Upcoming Events

GOLF HAS Golf Outing
September 12, 2011

Join us at Prestwick Country Club for lunch, dinner, golf, and a silent auction in support of HAS programming. Call (773) 252-3100 ext 242 or go to www.hascares.org to register.

4th Annual Alumni Event
September 17, 2011

Please join us in recognizing participants in recovery. Call (773) 252-3100 ext 227 or go to our website for more information.

For more coming events, please see the event calendar on our website.

About HAS: Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc. was established in 1974 as Hispano Alcoholism Services, a non-profit created in response to the critical lack of clinical and social services for Hispanic Americans on Chicago's Near Northwest Side. Over the years, HAS has created a continuum of care for substance abuse patients that includes prevention, outpatient, residential, and transitional services. The agency takes a holistic approach to health and recovery and offers a wide variety of programming addressing family and community issues including domestic violence, postpartum depression, and HIV. HAS is a CARF-accredited 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. It continues to be recognized as Chicago's leading provider of bilingual, culturally sensitive behavioral health care services for Hispanics and has expanded to provide quality services for other culturally and racially diverse populations. HAS accepts most major insurance, and all services are available on a sliding scale.