

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Melvin McClintock, Commission's President
Cynthia A. Brown, *Commission Liaison*



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Kenneth R. Dement, Commissioner
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Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr., Commissioner
Daniel H. Raley, Commissioner

St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission
September 6, 2006
Minutes

Attendance: Joyce Dyson, Betty Quinn, Sanjay Apte, Jim Hanley, Barbara Hendricks, Mac McClintock and Rose Ervett.

Excused: Bernadette Lewis, Joseph Bush and Norma Pipkin

Staff: Stephanie Roach, Division of Community Services

The meeting convened at 5:15 by Commission's Chairperson, Mac McClintock.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes were approved for March and accepted to be posted on the Commission's website.

Finance Statement: Stephanie Roach gave a financial report of \$2000.

Guest Speaker: Alexis Zoss from Mental Health Authority of St. Mary's County (MHA) introduced the guest speaker, Tim Jansen, a specialist on suicide intervention. Ms. Zoss also announced that October 1 – 7, is Mental Illness Awareness Week. On October 5, St. Mary's Hospital, along with MHA, will conduct a two hour workshop for primary care doctors on the early warning signs of suicide. Mr. Jansen spoke on the warning signs of suicide and how it was once a topic people would rather not speak about. Over the past 30 years, there has been, on an average over 30,000 suicides a year making it the 11th leading cause of death and the 4th leading cause of death for people under 25. Mr. Jansen advised that the first step in prevention is to take all threats seriously. No one jokingly talks about killing themselves. Some indications that someone may be considering suicide are giving away prized possessions, talking about it, or making final arrangements. People may choose suicide for many reasons but the major reasons are loss of loved one, loss of job or forced into retirement. Other warning signs may be depression, eating pattern changes, sleeping often or not at all and the loss of pleasurable activities. Research has shown that white males complete suicide using guns when women may use pills. It is only a myth that suicide is higher among younger people. The percentage rate for completed suicide is higher for older people, however, since the 80's numbers have doubled for young black males. Suicide prevention advertisements are now on My Space targeting adolescents. The Maryland's Crisis Hotline number is 800-422-0009, 800-SUICIDE and Walden's hotline number is 301-863-6661. All crisis numbers are answered by trained counselors. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Study Circles: Preparations are being made to recruit volunteers. Meetings have been scheduled at each library in the county to make this a county wide effort.

Announcements: St. Mary's County Fair is coming up at the end of September. Brochures will be provided at the county's table for distribution. Barbara Hendricks announced St. Mary's Hospital is training and hiring Nursing Techs. This is an entry level position. Training will be provided for 16 individuals at the College of Southern Maryland for eight weeks. Applicants must have a High School diploma and a background check will be done.

Bonnie Hernandez, a Senior Investigator for the State Human Relations, was introduced. Her office is located in the Carter Building and she provides full services for the Tri-County area excluding housing complaints. Her number is 301 880-2740.

The next meeting will be October 4, 2006.

Adjournment – 5:40 p.m. Minutes submitted by Stephanie Roach