



# Persons Points of View

WINTER 2008-2009

HAPPY NEW YEAR

## Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency

### Voices for Action 2008 Poverty Summit

#### Consumer Driven Newsletter Staff:

Michael Shaw—Editor-in-Chief

Joan Barefield—Layout

Patricia Sargent—Layout

Sheldon Hill

Heather Clay

Gabriel Williams

Mary Ann Bozenski

Linda Payne

Charles Stedman

Michele Vasconcellos & Steve Kuhlmann  
Customer Service

Communications & Community Collaboration Team

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By Michael Shaw

The Voices for Action 2008 Poverty Summit was held Thursday, November 13, 2008 at Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI. from 7:00am to 6:00pm. This conference was the first poverty conference held in Detroit, MI and was designed to address the growing problem of poverty being faced by many in Michigan and the entire U. S. It featured such keynote speakers as Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm, Martin Luther King III (the son of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed, Chairperson Sonia Harb, Donna Beegle, Ph.D., Reverend Oscar King, Reverend Robert Jones, and others.

and acknowledged as the person who thought of and organized the event. He did a fine job. About 5000 guests attended the conference. Governor Granholm was the first keynote speaker. She talked about the issues facing Michiganders with respect to the changing job market. Martin Luther King III spoke after Governor Granholm. He started by saying that poverty is a “level of violence.” He spoke about Dr. King and his belief in and pursuit of non-violence as a means for social change.

After the morning breakfast, keynote speakers, music, and other activities had taken place, conference attendees left the main dining area and went to conference rooms where various “Themed”

breakout sessions were held from 11:00am to 12:30pm. These sessions were designed to educate participants about various poverty related issues and also allowed participants to voice their opinions, concerns, and provide important information to the sessions’ moderators, advocates and presenters. Afterwards, lunch was served. After lunch and the second set of keynote speakers finished their presentations, guests left the main dining area and went to a another set of “Regional” breakout sessions that were held from 2:15pm to 4:15pm in various conference rooms. After the second breakout sessions ended, the “Voices for Action Network Launch and Reception” was held until 6:00pm.

### The Recovery Highway

By Monica Wafford, Certified Peer Support Specialist

Being a Certified Peer Support Specialist is an equally rewarding and challenging responsibility. It requires mentorship and leadership in the system’s environment that once fostered dependence. In my role as a Peer Support Specialist, I provide the assistance a client needs to navigate the recovery

highway that I still travel.

There are many jurisdictions along the way, just as it is with any other highway. While I am employed in Wayne County, I receive mental health services from Macomb. That difference between myself and a lot of my Wayne County colleagues allows me to by pass the obstacles and stigma of working with agen-

cies that know my history. Stigma is a series of rather large speed bumps. Stigma rattles you and slows you down, but you need to keep moving forward. Unfortunately it must be navigated along with services. Stigma impedes, hinders and blinds.

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