

Threshold Services  
ANNUAL REPORT  
Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007)

Fiscal Year 2007 was the second year in a three year strategic plan. This report describes results during Fiscal Year 2007 relative to organizational goals in the strategic plan.

**Compeer Program**

Compeer matches volunteers with people in recovery from major mental illness for the simple purpose of friendship. There are 83 Compeer programs across the USA and in two other countries. All are affiliates of Compeer, Inc. in Rochester, NY. Compeer of Montgomery County, a program of Threshold Services, is the only Compeer program in Maryland. Compeer of Montgomery County is funded entirely by voluntary contributions.

Compeer offers one to one matches, with pairs spending at least four hours together each month. Compeer Calling involves weekly 15 minute phone calls. Skill Builders are monthly social/educational activities, in which approximately equal numbers of mental health consumers and volunteers participate.

Compeer of Montgomery County achieved or exceeded all of its goals for the year. In Fiscal Year 2007, there were 24 one to one matches and 10 Compeer Calling matches. 163 people participated in one or more Skill Builders. In an annual survey, participants reported major gains in feeling cared about, feeling understood, and feeling less lonely and isolated.

**Treatment of Co-occurring Major Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders**

Half of all people with major mental illness also have a substance use disorder (either abuse or dependence) at some time during their lives. Research has shown that care for both disorders by the same people in the same place at the same time is most effective in the treatment of co-occurring disorders. Such integrated care is still relatively rare, but there is a growing national movement to initiate it. In Maryland, Threshold Services is a leader in that movement.

The major goal for the year with respect to co-occurring disorders was enhancement of staff skills. The goal was accomplished. During Fiscal Year 2007, Threshold Services provided an extensive training program for its staff, conducted by the Dartmouth University Evidence Based Practice Center, who are world leaders in the treatment of co-occurring disorders. Implementation of integrated treatment is now getting under way.

**Adrienne House**

Adrienne House is one of the few group homes in Montgomery County for people with mental illness, that are staffed 24/7. It is home to 8 people. After 21 years, it was in need

of major renovation and refurbishing. During Fiscal Year 2007, Adrienne House was completely renovated and refurbished. The house is owned by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which extended the rent-free lease for another 7 years. Funding for the work was provided by the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development.

### **Hiring and Retention**

Hiring and retention of qualified staff is a serious problem in mental health programs throughout Maryland. It has been characterized as a crisis. About half of Threshold Services' 95 member staff are in entry level positions, requiring a Bachelor's degree in psychology, social work or a related field. The problem is most severe in those positions. Many staff members in those positions go on to graduate school. To alleviate the problem, Threshold Services provided a 4% pay increase for all personnel in Fiscal Year 2007. The previous year, a tuition reimbursement program was instituted, which benefits primarily staff members in entry level positions.

### **Outcome Measurement**

Threshold Services provides comprehensive community mental health services, including treatment, psychiatric rehabilitation, housing and supported employment. Staff members include physicians (psychiatrists), therapists, and rehabilitation counselors. All work toward the same goal: recovery, which means, in the words of Charles G. Curie, "reengagement with life – a fulfilling life that includes a job, a home, and meaningful relationships with family and friends." Consequently, the success of all Threshold Services programs can best be measured by improvement in the quality of clients' lives outside the mental health system.

During Fiscal Year 2007, Threshold Services made significant progress toward a recovery oriented outcome measurement system. Indicators were identified that apply across all programs. Software was developed to collect, sort and compare data. Collection and analysis processes were developed, and hardware was purchased to input data with minimal response cost. The next step will be implementation in Fiscal Year 2008.

### **Securing the Future**

In Fiscal Year 2004, Threshold Services began setting aside a small portion (1.5%) of its annual income in long term investments to secure the organization's future and eventually to generate income to support services. This continued in Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006. In Fiscal Year 2007, Threshold Services incurred an operating loss of 1.5%. With total assets at 213% of total liabilities, Threshold Services remains fiscally sound. Nevertheless, in order to continue securing the future of Threshold Services, a vigorous program of cost containment and revenue enhancement has been instituted.