

SUMMARY OF REMARKS TO SECOND HOME BOARD
MIKE EVANS, NOV. 15, 2010

1. You are sitting on a vast reservoir of resources, especially talents and capabilities of all the Second Home clients. There is a high level of various skills, creativity and knowledge ready to be tapped. (native American tradition: mentally ill people are a gift from the Great Spirit for the good of the community – their insights and spiritual beings are a blessing)
2. Peer to peer support is the largest and most useful process available now. Recent cut backs in SSI, MediCal funding and in most mental health programs both county-wide and state-wide are depriving many clients of any help whatsoever. Their only alternative is to rely upon the community support they find in programs such as Second Home.
3. Past lobbying and advocacy efforts by clients, committees and even NAMI seem to have fallen on deaf ears in the bureaucratic process and among decision makers in local and state government. The new funding is often being used to supplant old programs which have been cut to the bone. A new cadre of support is needed from clients, caregivers, friends, family and community organizations to advocate for mental health programs, funding and action. Boards of Supervisors and legislators and state departments must begin to realize the power of an organized response on behalf of those who desperately need human and social services. Ultimately we are all in this together.
4. “Friendship Program” an example of peer to peer support: This is based on a system of telephone contact used in Solano County by Solano Catholic Social Services for support of the elderly. People who are on a list (voluntary inclusion) are contacted by a telephone volunteer twice a week. The purpose of the call is to ‘check-up’ on the client to see that they are ok, not needing any major assistance, staying current on their medications, and for simple encouragement and social support. It is so important to these elderly folk to know that someone cares about them and will talk to them on a regular basis. It overcomes the sense of being isolated and alone which can lead to rapid mental and physical deterioration. Such a program could be easily adapted to Second Home users.
5. Second Home folk have a lot of good things to share:
 - Hobbies and crafts
 - Art – all kinds and various media
 - Cooking and food preparation: demonstrations possible
 - Gardening: community gardens, garden in a bucket, bonsai, etc
 - Talent exchange: trade expertise in many occupations and abilities
6. Service projects bind people together in helping others:
 - Food pantries
 - Christmas gift wrapping

- Toy collection for distribution to poor families
 - Computer tutoring and repairs
7. Social programs give people a reason to mingle and ‘belong’
- Potlucks
 - Birthday/anniversary celebrations
 - Movie nights
 - Exhibits & shows
 - Travel tours (safety in companionship)
 - Kinect or Wii games
8. Outreach to both Second Home clients and the wider community:
- Attractive and exciting Web site
 - Develop mailing lists
 - Produce newsletters – tell positive stories of recovery and service
 - Public presence (mall displays, news articles, TV coverage)
9. Overcome budget constraints:
- Recruit donors to underwrite certain programs and supplies
 - Make needs known – develop a ‘wishlist’
 - Become organized with fund-raising, sponsor a community event
 - Many people in the community are just waiting to be asked...
 - Seek some grants: Episcopal Community Services, McConnell Foundation, Shasta Regional Foundation, Catholic Charities, Sierra Health Foundation, United Way (check off as designated recipient), etc.
10. Brainstorm at every meeting. No idea is too wild or off the wall to be considered. Be creative, aggressive and active. Get people excited! A couple of times a year, hold large group meetings to report and listen – find an appropriate place to hold a large crowd, especially during Mental Health Awareness Week.