



PLAN OF PA Network News

Planning. Trust. Care. For Adults with Mental Disabilities.

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Our Mission

The mission of PLAN of PA is to provide Planning, Trust and Care Management Services to families of adults with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, autism and brain injury as well as other lifelong disabilities utilizing a strength-based approach to maximize potential.

PLAN of PA Foundation Introduces The Nadine Hoch Fund to Support Innovative Programming

Nadine Hoch has given so much to PLAN of PA during her many years with our organization. And now her legacy continues.

PLAN of PA is thrilled to introduce the Nadine Hoch Fund, as part of the PLAN of PA Foundation.

Established by Nadine and Lewis Hoch, the Fund honors Nadine, who dedicated 14 years of her career to PLAN of PA supporting families of adults with lifelong disabilities in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Nadine started at PLAN as a Case Manager in 1997 and became Executive Director in 2001. In September 2010, Nadine moved to the position of the Director of Clinical Services, getting back to what she liked doing best—working directly with clients—before retiring in July 2011.

Nadine was passionate about the mission of PLAN and always was conscious of the needs of the clients and their family members. She recognized various needs that, if resources were available, would make a positive impact on the “forgotten members of our community.”

Nadine and Lewis welcomed family, friends and PLAN colleagues at the Philadelphia offices of Blank Rome on Oct. 16

to formally introduce the Fund and to celebrate Nadine’s contributions to PLAN. Support for the event was provided by Blank Rome LLP and the Hochs.

Purpose of The Nadine Hoch Fund

PLAN’s Executive Director, working with the Clinical Staff, will identify various client needs that will improve the quality of life of our client(s) or will keep the individual from getting overlooked or forgotten and spiraling downward in their health and well being. Nadine envisions that the Fund will support outreach such as:

- Social outings, including the necessary transportation, for the many PLAN clients who are isolated from their community.
- A group program for PLAN clients who fall through the cracks with regard to support services available through the County.
- An individual client in any one of PLAN’s services who may be on the brink of homelessness, and County services are not able to reach out to the client.
- Education of families on planning for the future.

For more information about the Nadine Hoch Fund, please contact Rosemarie DeLuca, Marketing & Development director, at 610-687-4249 or rdeluca@planofpa.org.



(Left to right) Melanie Lapierre, PLAN's new Clinical Director, and Executive Director Ginny Koehler recently spent time with Carolyn White in PLAN's offices. Carolyn is the daughter of Bernard H. White, a founder of PLAN of PA and for whom PLAN's Bernard White Community Service Award is named.

From the Executive Director

Connecting With the Past... Preparing for the Future

One of PLAN of PA's founding family members recently stopped by the office, and when she left it was as though we had connected with the past. Carolyn White, the daughter of Bernard and Frances White, was in town and wanted to get an update on PLAN.

Carolyn was interested in PLAN's staff, programs and the mission. We talked about our families and how they turn to PLAN to provide care for their loved one—not only as they age, but also when they are unsure of the path to be taken when navigating the mental health, Social Security or housing processes. Carolyn left the office reassured that 22 years later, PLAN of PA continues to move forward in the spirit of the Whites and our other founders in support of the families of adults with a mental difference.

In this issue, Peter B. has shared a part of who he is—a writer, an artist, a fiancé—and we are grateful that he was willing to take the risk! We are constantly being energized and encouraged by the strength of our families and our clients, as they are grateful for the good of today, and hopeful for a better tomorrow. What better way to go through life—filled with gratitude and hope!

New Faces at PLAN



Fran Bartlett joined PLAN in September as the new Office Administrator. Fran has extensive experience working for financial services organizations.

Annual Meeting

Please join us on November 9 at our Annual Meeting as we recognize our fourth recipient of the Bernard White Community Service Award. PLAN is honoring Nancy Weiman, Montgomery County Deputy Director of Mental Health Services for being a champion of individuals with mental health challenges. Additionally, several of PLAN's families and clients will be speaking about their connection with PLAN. We hope that you will be with us to recognize and connect with the "faces" of PLAN.

I am confident to say that PLAN of PA is here now and in the future for the loved ones in our care—given the dedication of all those who are helping to build the PLAN of PA Foundation by contributing to the Nadine Hoch Fund or by making a general donation. Thank you to all who recognize their ability to touch the lives of future generations.

May you be filled with gratitude for today and hope for tomorrow! ●



Jennifer Pacyon, MA, joined PLAN in July as a Care Manager and is responsible for assessing, planning and implementing family and client needs. Prior to coming to PLAN, Jennifer was an adjunct professor and worked with incarcerated individuals within the Niagara County (NY) Correctional System who had mild to severe traumatic brain injury, mental illness and various cognitive deficits.

In Memory of an ‘Unknown’ Gentle Man

by *Melanie Lapierre*

“Are you sure you want to be alone in the room with him?”

I am often asked if I am afraid to do my job and find myself baffled at the question, particularly when it comes from a health care professional. I was particularly frustrated by this question on a recent Friday afternoon when I was visiting my client Robert in the hospital.

What was there to be afraid of? Clearly, their concern was because he has schizophrenia—and yet these are health care professionals trained to work with mentally ill patients.

As Robert’s social worker for the past two and half years, and having worked with adults with schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses for many years, I have become sensitive to the unfair assumptions that so often plague such individuals. The stigma of this and other complex brain disorders often leads to isolation and disconnectedness, and Robert’s situation was no exception.

A man in his ‘50’s, Robert had been living on the streets by his own choice for the few weeks before he was hospitalized, as he hated to be boxed into a system he felt was unfair. He had very strong beliefs about religion, family and rock and roll. He never spoke positively about himself and was distrustful about living in a home where he didn’t always feel safe.

Robert’s connections with his siblings, who tried their best under the difficult strain of having a mentally ill family member, had been tenuous for most of his adult life. I was his social worker, hired by his family because they recognized that they were no longer able to be there for Robert

in a way that they once could.

In the two months Robert had spent in the hospital dealing with medical trauma, this was the first visit that I saw a smile on his face, heard him laugh and joke around. Robert asked if his restraints could be removed, so I pleaded on Robert’s behalf for them to release the restraints on his legs during our visit. With much hesitation, they complied. We spent a great deal of time talking—and even reminisced about rock bands he loved, especially the Beatles, Janis Joplin and Bob Dylan.

I left the hospital feeling hopeful for Robert’s recovery. He appeared to have finally turned the corner with his medical issues.

But fate had other plans. Robert passed away the next morning.

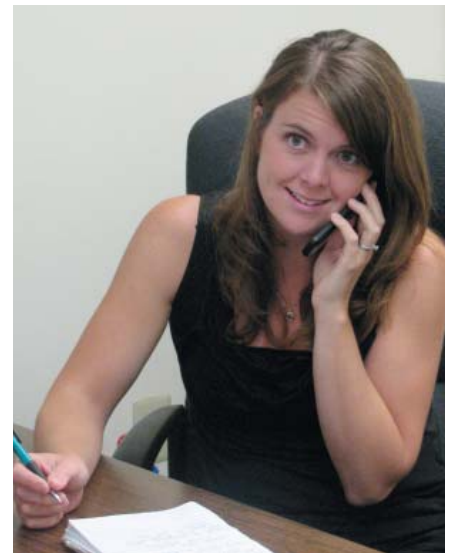
I was shocked when I received the news from his sister and found myself filled with sadness. This sadness was magnified on the day of the funeral, when the officiating priest asked attendees to share what they knew about Robert so he could gain a better understanding of who Robert was.

No one spoke.

How sad that a man could live 50 years with so few truly knowing him.

In that moment of odd silence, I became keenly aware that I was the primary connection to Robert. Because of the nature of his illness, I was the person who was closest to him in recent years and was fortunate enough to have known who Robert was as a whole person, not just the Robert who was labeled schizophrenic.

I set aside any fear that I had about speaking and quietly walked to the front of the service to paint a full picture of Robert. I shared a statement he made during our final visit, which I later realized was his way of



Melanie Lapierre, MSW, is Clinical Director for PLAN of PA.

coming to terms with his family and himself:

“Melanie,” he said, “there comes a time in your life when you’ve done everything you’ve wanted to do. And I think I’m at that point.”

While he may not have understood it to be this way, it was clear to me, on that final Friday visit, that Robert had made peace with some of his conflicting feelings about his family. And, he finally recognized their support.

Speaking at his graveside ceremony was the hardest thing I have ever done, not only during my five years as a Care Manager at PLAN of PA but in my 10-year career as a social worker. However, I was grateful to be able to help his family carry memories of the whole Robert, not just the Robert who was regarded as an unstable homeless man with mental illness.

Rest in peace, Robert. You are missed more than you know. ●

Robert’s name was changed for privacy purposes.

Coping with Grief and Loss

Losing someone or something you love is very painful. After a significant loss, you may experience all kinds of difficult and surprising emotions, such as shock, anger, and guilt. Sometimes it may feel like the sadness will never let up. While these feelings can be frightening and overwhelming, they are normal reactions to loss. Accepting them as part of the grieving process and allowing yourself to feel what you feel is necessary for healing.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve — but there are healthy ways to cope with the pain. You can get through it! Grief that is expressed and experienced has a potential for healing that eventually can strengthen and enrich life.

Common symptoms of grief

While loss affects people in different ways, many people experience the following symptoms when they're grieving.

- **Shock and disbelief** – Right after a loss, it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth. If someone you love has died, you may keep expecting them to show up, even though you know they're gone.
- **Sadness** – Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.
- **Guilt** – You may regret or feel guilty about things you did or didn't say or do. You may also feel guilty about certain feelings (e.g. feeling relieved when the person

died after a long, difficult illness). After a death, you may even feel guilty for not doing something to prevent the death, even if there was nothing more you could have done.

- **Anger** – Even if the loss was nobody's fault, you may feel angry and resentful. If you lost a loved one, you may be angry at yourself, God, the doctors, or even the person who died for abandoning you. You may feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was done to you.
- **Fear** – A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.
- **Physical symptoms** – We often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but grief often involves physical problems, including fatigue, nausea, lowered immunity, weight loss or weight gain, aches and pains, and insomnia.

When grief doesn't go away

It's normal to feel sad, numb, or angry following a loss. But as time passes, these emotions should become less intense as you accept the loss and start to move forward. If you aren't feeling better over time, or your grief is getting worse, it may be a sign that your grief has developed into a more serious problem, such as complicated grief or major depression.

When to seek professional help for grief

Contact a grief counselor or professional therapist if you:

- Feel like life isn't worth living
- Wish you had died with your loved one
- Blame yourself for the loss or for failing to prevent it
- Feel numb and disconnected from others for more than a few weeks
- Are having difficulty trusting others since your loss
- Are unable to perform your normal daily activities ●

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PLAN of PA Services

PLAN of PA offers three key services that emphasize long-term planning, clinical case management, and financial management:

Care Management Services, working with a social worker on supplemental support and care-encouraging independence, stability and security.

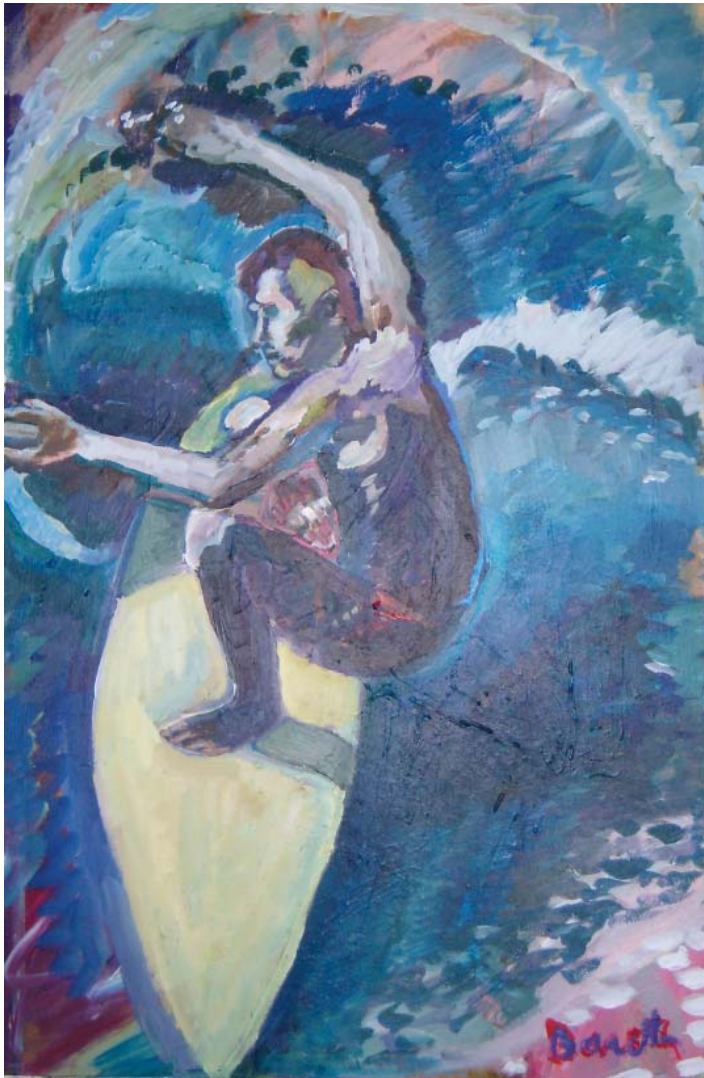
Trust Services for Special Needs Trusts, set up by families who wish to leave resources to support a loved one with a disability, or individuals looking to help preserve eligibility for public benefits.

Budget and Bill-paying Services, acting as Representative Payee for SSI & SSDI benefits to ensure prompt payment of bills, including food, shelter and medical expenses through the establishment of a realistic budget.

Client Spotlight: Peter B

At PLAN of PA, we celebrate our community and are instituting a new column in Network News that highlights the many accomplishments of our clients. Our first Client Spotlight illus-

trates the artistic talents of Peter B. Peter has chosen to share one of his unpublished poems, "The Seventies," as well as his beautiful painting entitled "Surfer."



About 'Peter B'

I am an artist, a musician, and a published poet. I was first diagnosed as bipolar in 1984, during my senior year in college. Several years later, I was diagnosed with kidney failure, the probable result of being on Lithium long-term. I am now on dialysis and awaiting a kidney transplant. I live with my partner and fiancée, an adjunct English professor, in Northwest Philadelphia. I have always enjoyed being creative. I have a Bachelor's degree as well as a law degree, the last of which I received from Temple University in 1990.

The Seventies

by Peter B

Yeah, that was the decade.
I was much older,
playing out my Dandy Don Meredith riffs
on the playing fields.
My first goal, first French kiss, so many firsts.
From the plains I watched society flower,
saw the many faces crowd its sidewalks,
new faces, liberated faces,
swinging hippy and skinny bodies below.
America finally looking like itself, and easily so,
in the mirror of its teeming crowds.
The crowds I wanted to join one day.
Do your thing, grow your hair, however it grew out.
I remember Alan Woodward, an English soccer player
who played for the Tulsa Roughnecks,
and his booming forty yard shots.
How great to play, to shoot so sweetly.
Whatever American town you may find yourself in.
A decade drenched in sweetness,
haloed by the looks of Oklahoma girls
at the sun-soaked university swimming pool.
We played keep away there, boys versus girls
and stole our kicks, with a grad student's ball,
which reflected the sky's light
as it trounced the spectral water's surface.
We celebrated our rebellion,
and our laid-back, oil-boom peccadilloes.
Somehow, it seems like we all eventually
crashed from that beautiful burn
like rocket ships gone disastrously errant.
Some nosing the earth harder than others.
And some,
further away from home.

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Celebrating Our Community

Please join us for PLAN of PA's Annual Meeting to celebrate our achievements, honor a member of the community, and educate about how PLAN has helped families.

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

6:00 to 7:30 pm

Wayne Presbyterian Church
125 E. Lancaster Avenue, Wayne, PA 19087

Bernard White Community Service Award Honoree

Nancy Weiman

Montgomery County Deputy Administrator for Mental Health Services

Guest Speakers

Two PLAN of PA Client Families

RSVP to 610-687-4036 or mail@planofpa.org by November 2.

May We Add You To Our List of Friends?

Please support PLAN of PA and help us to be here for our clients.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

I am interested in volunteering at PLAN of PA

Please make checks payable to

PLAN of PA Foundation P.O. Box 154 Wayne, PA 19087

Leave a legacy of hope for future generations.

Include PLAN of PA in your will.

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For more information on PLAN of PA, to schedule a presentation for your group, or for help with planning for a loved one's future, call us at 610-687-4036.