

CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

THE FIRST WORD

MENNONITE HEALTH ASSEMBLY FOSTERS THOUGHT, DIALOG

Where do you go with questions or ideas about your work as a senior leader or about your service as a board member?

For MHS Alliance members, such conversation starts at Mennonite Health Assembly. There, you meet hundreds of colleagues from other Anabaptist organizations across the country. In plenary sessions, workshops and informal fellowship times, you can learn about emerging trends and best practices, strengthen connections with others in your organization, and be refreshed in your commitment to God's work of healing and hope.

Come to Louisville, Ky., March 1-3, 2012. Christine and Tom Sine will explore a Biblical vision of the good life. A panel of innovative leaders will talk about what happened when they developed a passion for an idea and took it into the marketplace. Prepare your mind to see new possibilities with the help of Rob Levit, award-winning musician, community leader and creativity promoter.

Leaders in nursing will engage ethical issues from an Anabaptist perspective and explore a servant leadership model intertwined with the concept of sacred covenant of relationships.

Chaplains, in an extended session, will expand their knowledge in three key areas: pastoral formation, pastoral competence, and pastoral reflection.

Registration opened Nov. 1. Sign up now at www.mhsonline.org.

Mim Shirk
Vice President



MAINTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AMID RAPID EXPANSION: OAKLAWN'S STORY



Oaklawn, Goshen (Lakeview Drive)

Oaklawn, headquartered in Goshen, Ind., is part of a network of 25 community mental health centers (CMHCs) in Indiana. Since 1973, Oaklawn has served as the designated CMHC for Elkhart County. Madison Center in South Bend had been responsible for coverage of neighboring St. Joseph County.



Former Madison Center Building

When Madison Center encountered strong financial headwinds in the summer of 2010, Oaklawn began conversations about the possibly taking on some of the services Madison Center had been offering. Things unraveled more quickly than first expected, so a decision had to be made quickly. On September 24, 2010, Oaklawn became

the state-designated CMHC for outpatient and community-based services in St. Joseph County, with a lot to accomplish in short order.

Oaklawn CEO Laurie Neumann Nafziger said, "The work was a perfect fit with our mission, it was work we know how to do, it's our passion, and because Madison Center was geographically close, it made perfect sense to consider this expansion."

However, such a major move also raised a number of questions for the Oaklawn board and staff. Nafziger recalled these:

- Would this move stretch us too much financially?
- Did we have the time and energy for such an undertaking in a small window of time?
- Would we risk our identity and culture?
- Did we have adequate psychiatric coverage?

Oaklawn, as a well-respected mental health provider with a good reputation in the region, had some concern about becoming associated with Madison Center's problems. Assuming responsibility for another organization meant adding many of their employees and using some of their buildings.

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Laurie Nafziger

The challenge, said Nafziger, was “to differentiate ourselves from the reputation of the previous organization. We hoped that our faith-based culture and service excellence would now be evident in St. Joseph County as well as Elkhart County.”

In a very short time frame, Oaklawn began training staff in Oaklawn policies, practices, and language. The reconfigured management team included a combination of Oaklawn and former Madison Center administrators. Very intentionally, each vice president has duties that extend beyond the county line, and each one works with staff and teams in all three Oaklawn locations.

Nafziger noted that such an approach eliminates “silos” and serves to integrate the Oaklawn way consistently throughout the organization. This integration of staff and training were the keys to Oaklawn’s ability to provide services seamlessly, she said.

After a year, Nafziger said routines have settled in. “Our first year was focused on operations and systems. Oaklawn’s leaders work hard at modeling good supervision and communication. We need to continue to emphasize Oaklawn’s unique culture through ongoing orientation and training.” She said another goal for the year ahead is to engage the community in St. Joseph County.

During the transition process, MHS Alliance President and CEO Rick Stiffney and Vice President Mim Shirk also provided counsel and support. “Rick and Mim were both helpful in listening and asking questions throughout the decision-making process and early planning,” Nafziger said. “There were also phone calls and times of informal consultation with CEOs from other MHS Alliance organizations. It has been helpful to draw on the experiences of Mark King, CEO of Greencroft in Goshen, who has led his organization through system expansion.”

All in all, Nafziger said that she has “really enjoyed the challenge and watching this process unfold. It was an unexpected opportunity, and we needed to make quick decisions. My advice to other CEOs is to embrace such opportunities – be bold and do it! Also, communication is key – you can’t over-communicate to supervisors and staff.”



MEMBER NEWS



Jim Sommer

The board for the **Communities of Maple Lawn**, Eureka, Ill., has announced the retirement of CEO Jim Sommer effective May 30. He has served as CEO since February 2009. Board chair Don Litwiller praised Sommer’s leadership: “Jim has embodied our mission and values, creating a spirit of warmth and hospitality for residents and staff.”

Mennonite Village, Oregon Mennonite Residential Services, and Hope Village have become affiliates of **Mennonite Services Northwest**. Mennonite Village in Albany is a continuing care retirement community with 700 residents. OMRS serves adults with developmental disabilities in group homes in the central valley. Hope Village, Canby, provides housing for 250 seniors.

For several years, the boards and administrators have been exploring ways to work more closely together. Mennonite Village has provided management services for OMRS for six years and has provided management services for Hope Village since January 2010. Ron Litwiller, President/CEO, said, “The driving force was the desire to be good stewards of the resources available to us and to find new expressions of our mission.”

GREAT TRANSITIONS: A RETREAT FOR CEOs 55 AND OLDER

Executive Circle has been a service for MHS Alliance member CEOs for a number of years. The one-year program has offered CEOs multiple opportunities to develop trusted, supportive relationships under the guidance of a trained facilitator. Applications for the 2012 program are now being received at MHS Alliance. For more details, go to the program's web site: <http://mhsonline.org/php/members/executive.php>.

Another program for CEOs age 55 and older is The Great Transitions Retreat, which is being planned for CEOs who want to consider options beyond their current positions. The two-day retreat will provide time for CEOs to share their personal stories, reflect on best practices for transitions from the perspectives of both board members and CEOs, and discuss ideas stimulated by reading *A Leader's Legacy* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner.

The Great Transitions Retreat will be held September 13-14, 2012, at a place to be determined. On-site costs will be the same for all participants, with a shared pool for travel costs.

The resource person for The Great Transitions Retreat will be Lavern Yutzy, MHS Alliance consulting associate, who himself recently made the transition from CEO to his current work. To indicate interest in participating in the retreat, make contact with Emily Reese at emily@mhsonline.org or 1-800-611-4007.

APG MEMBERS LAUNCH STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Anabaptist Providers Group, including seven MHS Alliance members, has launched an environment and resources stewardship program. APG members developed these key energy stewardship goals:

- **Educate** members for increased awareness and understanding of issues and practices in environment and resources stewardship.
- **Benchmark** member practices and growth in stewardship.
- **Encourage** ongoing efforts to increase environment and resources stewardship.
- **Share** insights and progress toward increasing stewardship.



Moniqua Acosta

Leadership for the meetings has been provided by Keith Stuckey and Moniqua Acosta, APG staff members provided by MHS Alliance. Since its beginning in early 2011, the group has discovered comprehensive energy audit guidelines at greennonprofits.org.

Members decided to choose a small number of measures to use as ongoing indicators of stewardship practices. Even selecting a sub-set of measures proved to be challenging because of each organization's uniqueness – for example, the availability of local recycling services.

The APG stewardship group plans to issue a progress report after compiling benchmark data for three months. Then the group will meet again after six months to identify additional areas for data collection. The long-term goal is to work continually at being good stewards of the resources God has provided.



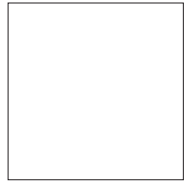
NEW AND IMPROVED MHS ALLIANCE WEB PAGES

Have you poked around in the MHS Alliance web pages recently? It includes more information than ever before and some new features. For starters, you might want to consult a really cool Calendar of Events that includes clickable links:

<http://www.mhsonline.org/php/join/calendar.php>



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www.mhsonline.org



COMING ATTRACTIONS

Nov. 2 10:30 - 1:00	Chaplain and Human Resources Affinity Networks Mt. Gretna, Pa.
Nov. 9 1:00 - 2:00 EST	Aging Services Marketing Network By Teleconference
Nov. 9-10	Developmental Disabilities Network Fresno, Calif.
Nov. 10-12	MHS Alliance Board Meeting Goshen, Ind.
Dec. 1-2	Peace Church Risk Retention Group Members Meeting Baltimore, Md.
Dec. 14 1:00 - 2:00 EST	Aging Services Finance Network By Teleconference
Feb. 21-23	Values-based Leadership Program Session II Mt. Pleasant, Pa.
Feb. 29-March 1	Executive Circle Louisville, Ky.
Feb. 29-March 1	APG Leadership Formation Louisville, Ky.
March 1-3	Mennonite Health Assembly Louisville, Ky.

THE LAST WORD

Board members who elect the governance track at Mennonite Health Assembly in Louisville, Ky., March 1-3, 2012, will have the privilege of learning from John Eby, a veteran administrator, educator, and currently board chair at Landis Communities, Lititz, Pa. He has thought seriously about the challenge of integrating an Anabaptist worldview and core values into organizational design and practice.

During his keynote presentation, John will explore issues related to executive compensation. In addressing this topic, which is one of the more perplexing ones that boards face, he will respond to questions such as these:

- What benchmarks should we use?
- What is fair?
- How do we balance appreciation and stewardship?
- What are the relationships among performance, accountability, and compensation in organizations that value collaborative leadership?
- Broadly, how can or should our core values and convictions shape this important dimension of board-room decision-making?



John's input will provoke our thinking. He may challenge some of our practices. We will also have the opportunity to participate in learning labs to explore promising practices and to go more deeply into applications for our particular organizations.

Rick Stiffney, President/CEO