

CONNECTIONS

JULY/AUGUST 2009

THE FIRST WORD

DEVELOPING NEW LEADERS

Our member surveys reveal that developing new leaders who embrace Anabaptist faith and values is an ongoing concern. MHS Alliance shares this concern as we reach for our vision to be “a community of vibrant Anabaptist health and human service ministries committed to God’s work of healing and hope in Jesus Christ.”

Three MHS Alliance resources can help us identify and nurture leaders:

- Our executive search and transition service focuses on identifying the core character and competencies for a chief executive and other senior administrators. After a new executive is hired, we want to help ensure a successful transition. Our resources include coaching, performance assessments, and Executive Circle.
- The Values-based Leadership Program is designed for new leaders or rising senior staff members. The program promotes understanding of one’s own leadership style and encourages appreciation for the leadership styles of others. The next two-session program begins in September. To nominate someone for the program, contact me at mim@mhsonline.org.
- Coming this summer are *A Quick Guide to Anabaptist Values* (a booklet) and “Quickest Ever Guide to Anabaptists and Their Values” (a DVD). Look for your free copy. We guarantee that no one will fall asleep watching the DVD!

Mim Shirk
Vice President



SUNSHINE SEARCH PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS VALUES FOR CEO

When an opening developed for a new chief executive officer at Sunshine of Northwest Ohio, the issue of identity and values, as reflected by both the organization and its candidates for the position, came into sharp focus.

Board chair Julie Brotje Higgins was asked to lead the search committee, and early-on they addressed identity and values. She recalled, “We needed to articulate what Anabaptist values we expected candidates to own. Interestingly, we found that Sunshine’s board had formally adopted an elegant set of Mennonite values that shouted out our purpose.”

The committee’s next challenge was to select a CEO candidate who represented a best fit for Sunshine’s values. “We had several highly qualified candidates, so it was an agonizing process to try and eek out the best of the best,” said Higgins. “The committee members were fabulous. They worked tirelessly. We talked often and at length, on weekends and into evenings. Our committee actually became a community, and the process was one of the most rewarding ones in which I’ve had the privilege to participate.”

Higgins also attributed the committee’s eventual success to guidance by MHS Alliance consultant Kirk Stiffney. She commented, “I can’t emphasize enough the importance of a professional recruiting partner.”

Stiffney remembers well his role in helping the search committee choose Betty Holland as the next CEO for Sunshine. When he first met her, he was impressed by her warm and gracious spirit. He said she also “demonstrated keen listening skills and quickly asked insightful questions.”

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Julie Brotje Higgins

“What stood out to me was the importance of community, of always seeing the dignity in people, justice for the vulnerable, care of the spirit and stewardship.”

— Betty Holland

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Stiffney continued, “Betty’s listening spirit wore well with the committee. In describing her faith journey from a Catholic background, she described her values related to peace and social justice, and these values resonated well with the committee.”

As Holland prepared for her interview, she recognized ways that Sunshine implemented its unique values. “I knew they had developed a coffee shop to employ people with disabilities, but it was not just any coffee shop – it was a fair trade one. Also, I noted that supervisor training at Sunshine set a tone that told me all people there are to be treated with dignity and respect.”

As part of the interview process, Holland talked with Mim Shirk, vice president at MHS Alliance, about Mennonite values. Holland said, “What stood out to me was the importance of community, of always seeing the dignity in people, justice for the vulnerable, care of the spirit and stewardship. I felt that these values very much captured what I had been working to achieve for people I served, many of whom had complex disabilities. In exploring a new position, I believe it’s important to find an organization where your values do match, and Sunshine’s values drew my attention.”

Higgins and the board appreciate what Holland has brought to them: “We are thankful for God’s blessings in bringing Betty to Sunshine at a time when her thoughtfully exacting leadership style is crucial in our current environment.”



Betty Holland

JUBILEE STRENGTHENS SERVICES FOR AUTISM



Tim Wiens

*By Tim Wiens
CEO at Jubilee*

In recent years, parents of adult children with high-functioning autism approached Jubilee Association of Maryland and asked for help. So, Jubilee set a strategic goal of developing services for people with high-functioning autism, who now comprise about 10 percent of our clients.

MEMBER PURCHASING SERVICE LAUNCHED

Member organizations are invited to join a new program, MHS Alliance Purchasing Services, as a way to save on costs and increase efficiency.

This program builds on the success of Peace Church Purchasing Group (PCPG). MHS Alliance has contracted with Care Purchasing Services, Inc. (CPSI), the same organization that served PCPG, to negotiate prices and contracts with vendors across the nation. PCPG members may continue using the program just as they have in the past.



Tim Stair

Tim Stair, consulting project director, said, "While many members benefited from the Peace Church Purchasing Group, we hope even more will find ways to participate in MHS Alliance Purchasing Services."

Stair pointed to the following benefits for participants:

- Employee programs that create new staff benefits at no cost;

- Assistance with any vendor conflicts or service issues;
- Access to more than 100 vendor agreements; and
- Selection of specific vendors for particular needs.

One great way to use this service, Stair said, is for capital purchases. MHS Alliance member Harmony Village of Columbiana, Ohio, bought appliances through CPSI. Administrator Cheryl Luli commented, "We replaced our electric stoves using the GE direct purchasing program and saved about \$7,000."

Members interested in joining MHS Alliance Purchasing Services are invited to make contact with Stair at 574-534-9689 or tim@mhsonline.org. More information is also available from Judy Spencer, business development manager for CPSI and account representative, at 1-800-543-3491 or spencerj@lcsnet.com.

Our program has grown. In the past year, Jubilee started serving five new clients with at least 10 hours per week of services; they are living either with their parents or in their own apartment. We have also run three support groups for people with high-functioning autism.

At Jubilee, we address autism by partnering with mental health professionals. For example, one of the support groups is called emotional regulation, and a

Jubilee staff member co-leads this group. Another group meets with a therapist to focus on acquiring social skills, and then we provide activities for group members to practice those skills.

Our goal is to help people with high-functioning autism move toward independence. We want them to be able to develop skills that will enable them to move out of their parents' homes into apartments or shared housing.

AUTISM FACTS & STATISTICS*

- 1 in 150 births
- 1 to 1.5 million Americans
- Fastest-growing developmental disability
- 10 to 17 percent annual growth
- \$90 billion annual cost (projected to grow to \$200+ billion in 10 years)
- 90 percent of costs are in adult services
- Cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention

* Source: Autism Society of America

MEMBER NEWS

New chief executive officers have been announced for three MHS Alliance member organizations:

New Executives

- **Jim Sommer** has been appointed CEO at Maple Lawn Homes, Eureka, Ill., after serving as interim CEO.
- **Kathy Yoder** has been named interim executive director at No Longer Alone Ministries, Lancaster, Pa.
- **Pedro Melendez** has been appointed CEO at Hospital General Menonita, Aibonito, P.R.

New Member

- **Sunny Crest Home, Inc.**, Morgantown, Pa., a personal care home that provides care for both physically and mentally disabled adults.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Midwest Development Network
July 15, Goshen, Ind.

Plains Human Resources
July 29, South Hutchinson, Kan.

Executive Circle, Session 3
Sept. 9-10, Cincinnati, Ohio

Values-based Leadership Program
Sept. 15-17 and Feb. 23-25, 2010
Laurelville, Pa.

MEP Governing Council
Sept. 17-18,
Chicago, Ill.

Midwest Chaplains
Sept. 23, Goshen, Ind.

MHS Alliance Board
Sept. 23-25, Kansas
City, Mo.



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THE LAST WORD

Developing an organization's leadership is an important responsibility of the board, both to develop its own members and also the CEO and staff. MHS Alliance organizations have a unique opportunity to foster leadership development by participating in Mennonite Health Assembly.

When I sat in the CEO chair, this assembly put it all together for me like no other conference. Sometimes I benefitted especially from a workshop or educational session, sometimes from networking with colleagues, and sometimes from worship. I recall one year, in particular, that I stayed over for the Sunday morning closing worship. I sat with a colleague CEO, and we experienced a warm spiritual re-charging that motivated both of us to say at the end of the service, "This is why we continue doing this kind of ministry."

Mennonite Health Assembly blends spirituality with sound input about leadership. We will convene next in Norfolk, Va., March 4-7, 2010, on the theme of "Navigating in a Sea of Change."

You can help optimize the value of Mennonite Health Assembly in these ways:

1. Suggest speakers and topics that you would find valuable.
2. Submit a proposal to present a workshop to share insights from your organization.
3. Encourage as many people as possible in your organization to attend assembly.

I hope you will join us in Norfolk in 2010.

Keith R. Stuckey, Vice President

