



Newsletter of the
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

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National
Conference:
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MISSION

The mission of the
Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance (DBSA)
is to improve the
lives of people living with
mood disorders.

NEW ONLINE CREATIVITY CENTER!

Spark your imagination
in the Dave's Spark
Creativity Center at
[www.FacingUs.org/
Creativity](http://www.FacingUs.org/Creativity).

Find podcasts, work-
shops & online courses
to help you use your
own creativity as a
wellness tool, and make
a playlist of the
2008 Music Contest
winning songs!

Making Dreams Come True

The 3rd Annual Rebecca's Dream Gala & New Online Family Center



"Thank you for making Rebecca's Dream a reality. Embracing mood disorders publicly for progress is an incredible mission and opportunity. Your dedication and unwavering love to take this mission on is inspiring. Motherhood with a mood disorder is a challenging place to be, and I need to identify ways to cope continually. Thank you for opening my eyes even wider."

These words belong to a mother who lives with anxiety and depression and who was one of the 225 guests touched at the 3rd Annual Rebecca's Dream Gala, a beautiful celebration of compassion, hope and understanding. Depression or bipolar disorder affects nearly 21 million families in America ... families like the Cutlers of Chicago, who honored the memory of their beloved daughter, Rebecca, at the Gala held this month at the Chicago Cultural Center. With guests dining and dancing under the soft glow of candlelight to the music of The Glen Traeger Orchestra, the Gala also paid tribute to Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn. In recognition of his hard work supporting our veterans who struggle with illnesses like mood disorders, DBSA Board Chair Steve Propst presented Quinn with the Rebecca's Dream "Legacy of Life Award" (pictured in above photo).

Proceeds from the evening, which included a special silent auction, will help DBSA and Rebecca's Dream in the coming year to foster awareness and

compassionate understanding of depression and bipolar disorder as real diseases.

As one Gala guest said, the evening "struck a wonderful balance between, on the one hand, the seriousness of the illnesses ... and, on the other hand, the positive atmosphere of hope and belief in the future." Through the Gala and the programs its proceeds support, Rebecca's Dream helps those who live with mood disorders—and their loved ones—find that hope for the future. Thanks to the funds raised at last year's Gala, the Cutler family, Rebecca Lynn Cutler Legacy of Life Foundation and DBSA are able to offer and celebrate that hope in the new online Rebecca's Dream Family Center, at www.DBSAAlliance.org/FamilyCenter. Family support is crucial for those affected by depression or bipolar disorder, and the Family Center is a central place for a wide variety of family-focused multimedia tools.

As a family member, you'll find resources to help you learn the facts about these illnesses, take care of yourself and let your loved one know you're there to listen and help. And if you live yourself with a mood disorder, you'll find strategies and tools to help you improve relationships with those closest to you—a partner, parent, sibling or child—and let them know what helps and what hurts on your recovery journey. The resources you'll find in the Rebecca's Dream Family Center include

- **An audio library:** Listen to podcasts with authors, consumers, leaders in the mental health field, clinicians and researchers, each with a unique perspective for you and yours.
- **A video library:** Watch presentations and personal video stories, offering tips, insight and educational information.
- **A reading library:** Read family-focused brochures, books and personal stories.
- **Information on support groups and events:** Learn about face-to-face and online support groups and online discussion boards specifically for families, as well as events such as upcoming online workshops.

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President's Outlook



Peter Ashenden

No One is an Island

They sometimes call Puerto Rico the "Island of Enchantment." With its beautiful Caribbean coral reefs and beaches, it's easy to see why. But I learned this past October that, when we're talking about mental health, island life is difficult ... not enchanted. Barely a month into my new role as DBSA president, I had the honor of visiting San Juan, Puerto Rico, for our first-ever peer specialist training in the Spanish language. (*Muchas gracias* to our bilingual trainers—Jana Spalding, a DBSA-trained peer specialist from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and David Gonzalez, founder of Recovery x-Change, a wellness management training partnership of peer specialists and providers in New York.) In my short time on the island, I was struck by the challenges faced by those living with illnesses like depression and bipolar disorder. Sun and surf are plentiful, but resources for people trying to work toward recovery are not. There are few places available for support group meetings, for example. And in Puerto Rico's mental health system, the budget is small and models of recovery are virtually nonexistent. The words "peer support" are not part of the island's vocabulary. This is slowly changing, but as is true of many Hispanic cultures, when it comes to mental health, the tendency is to keep those concerns within the family.

System and cultural barriers like these are tough to address. I truly admire the courage of our training participants that week to take those issues on, in addition to their own very personal struggles. It turned out we all needed courage for another reason that week: We found ourselves in the midst of Hurricane Omar! This Category 3 storm brought a fair amount of wind, rain ... and anxiety. But, we fortunately stayed safe and continued the training.

And I was fortunate, despite Mother Nature's interruptions, to meet with Dalimarie Pérez-Arzuaga, Puerto Rico's assistant commissioner of Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services Administration. We talked about their hope to offer more mental health services and to promote peer support and the recovery movement. Being part of this conversation was incredibly inspiring, and I'm excited to say that, in 2009, DBSA will be collaborating with ASSMCA to open six peer support centers. And we'll also be working with them to host a conference there for both consumers and providers that models the promise—and reality—of recovery!

The day I left Puerto Rico, saying good-bye to the training participants, I was brought to tears. So many obstacles lie ahead of them, challenges I know all too well. It cut me to the core to leave, knowing that, were there time, there was so much that could be shared with them. But I left with a passion in my heart to find, back home here in the U.S., ways that we at DBSA can help them as they help more people know they're not alone.

DBSA AND ME

This October, I took cupcakes to my DBSA support group to celebrate my first year of stability! It marked an enormous milestone for me, given the fact that, in past years, I experienced about 13 cycles of depression and hypomania a year. My life amounted to one crisis after another. I could no longer work and spent days in agonizing despair, wishing to die. At my lowest point, I was admitted to the hospital for electric shock treatment.



Norma Jean Wilkes

The treatment failed horribly and left my family worried that I would be totally disabled. It was around that time that I shuffled in to my first DBSA support group meeting, disoriented and heavily drugged. I was welcomed with open arms and have been a loyal member ever since.

For those first years, the DBSA group was the only place I interacted with people outside my immediate family. It was the only place where I knew that others truly understood what it was like to be severely depressed. The tone of my weekly sharing began to change last fall. Miraculously, after 30 trials of different medications, I discovered the "secret combination" that balanced my brain! I soon became my DBSA group's "poster child" for stability. I started to lead the group about once a month. I wanted newcomers to know that, if I could get better, so could they. My formula for balance was taking my medications religiously, attending my weekly DBSA support group and seeing my therapist.

Unfortunately, in November of 2007, while on a walk, I was assaulted and raped. My friends, family and DBSA members rushed to my side fearing that the trauma might send me into a deep depression. But with a balanced brain chemistry, I've been able to process this trauma without becoming depressed or manic.

In the summer of 2008, I started waking up in the morning with anxiety tinged with depression. Although my moods had stabilized, I felt like something was missing. I felt like my soul had been destroyed by the years of struggling with bipolar disorder. Around that time, I heard about the DBSA 2008 Conference and applied for a scholarship. I was thrilled when I received a Rebecca's Dream Scholarship. For me, it was affirmation from the universe that my life was about to change in a powerful and meaningful way.

And the DBSA Conference did mark a turning point in my journey. I realized that it wasn't enough for me to just achieve mood stability. I learned that I needed to strive to live a full and rich life with meaning and purpose. Now, I see myself on a journey of wellness. I have signed up for peer specialist training in January and, for the first time in years, I feel optimistic and excited about my future!

A member of DBSA Winston-Salem, N.C., Norma Jean Wilkes also volunteers for the Mental Health Association. She has been a therapist, public speaker, workshop leader and storyteller and hopes to revive these skills as she begins working to become a peer specialist.

To find a support group near you, visit
www.DBSAAlliance.org/FindSupport.





Stephen Propst, MBA

Santa Claus Gives Me Pause to Make Some Lists of My Own

The holidays are upon us. Thinking about Santa and his list of who's been naughty and who's been nice made me pause to make some lists of my own.

I'd like to share my filled-with-gratitude thank-you list and my looking-to-the-future wish list.

There are so many people I need to thank:

- **Our donors ...** for ensuring that DBSA continues to have the financial resources it needs.
- **The staff members ...** for your daily dedication to making our mission a reality.
- **Our chapters and support groups ...** for empowering, equipping and enriching lives.
- **My fellow board members ...** for ensuring that we remain strategically focused and fiscally sound.
- **The Scientific Advisory Board ...** for your medical expertise and professional input.
- **Our professional advisors ...** for sharing your insight and knowledge throughout our support group network.
- **The Rebecca Lynn Cutler Legacy of Life Foundation and the Cutler family ...** for making a loving young lady's dream a reality. (Learn more about this foundation at www.RebeccasDream.org.)
- **Our peer specialists ...** for using your life experience to help others.
- **Our many constituents (consumers, family members and friends) ...** for your support and participation.

And I thank each of YOU ... for whatever role you play in helping DBSA do what it does best!

Here are a few things that I wish for in the future. I hope....

- That DBSA will always be on the leading edge when it comes to developing recovery-oriented wellness initiatives.
- That we can continue to attract the most dedicated, qualified staff possible and the most capable, passionate board members. It is a pleasure being associated with such an incredible team.
- That we'll all keep battling for better treatment options and easier access to care. Even with the recently passed federal parity legislation, there's still much work to be done.
- That one day mood disorders and other so-called "mental" conditions will be seen as being just as real as any other physical illness. We need to continue the fight to end the rampant stigma that exists.
- That you will choose to get more involved with DBSA. Log on to our Legislative Action Center at www.DBSAlliance.org/Advocacy and contact your legislator. Make a donation to support our efforts. Visit a support group in your area. Take advantage of our online wellness tools at www.FacingUs.org.

Well, those are my lists. Again, I'd like to *en-list* you to take a more active role with DBSA so that we can continue to work to improve people's lives. Your time, talent and treasure enable DBSA to keep offering much-needed hope, help and support.

On behalf of my fellow board members and all of the staff at DBSA, I wish you and yours a happy, safe holiday season. And may 2009 be your best year ever!

Making Dreams Come True

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As Rebecca's mom Gail says, "Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people will be so much better off because Rebecca lived ... and because Rebecca's family and friends loved her enough to carry forward with her dream and her legacy." The new Family Center celebrates that dream and that hope.

Visit the Rebecca's Dream Family Center at www.DBSAlliance.org/FamilyCenter. Learn more about this year's Rebecca's Dream Gala at www.RebeccasDream.org.



DBSA 2008 Board of Directors

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Chapter Highlights

New Chapters

Chapters affiliating between August 1, 2008, and October 31, 2008

DBSA West Phoenix (Ariz.)
DBSA Conejo Valley (Calif.)
DBSA La Mesa (Calif.)
DBSA Los Angeles (Calif.)
DBSA Morro Bay (Calif.)
DBSA Pasadena Wellness Center (Calif.)
DBSA South Bay (Calif.)
DBSA Gunnison Valley (Colo.)
DBSA Metro Denver (Colo.)
DBSA Branford (Conn.)
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DBSA Hancock County (Ind.)
DBSA Council Bluffs (Iowa)
DBSA Central Kentucky (Ky.)
DBSA Acadiana (La.)
DBSA Northeast Louisiana (La.)
DBSA Spring Harbor Hospital (Maine)
DBSA Western Maryland (Md.)
DBSA Westminster (Md.)
DBSA Grand Blanc (Mich.)
DBSA Manistee (Mich.)
DBSA Muskegon (Mich.)
DBSA Twin Cities (Mich.)
DBSA Mayo (Minn.)
DBSA Mississippi Gulf Coast (Miss.)
DBSA St. Louis Christian Community (Mo.)
DBSA Greater Seacoast, NH (N.H.)
DBSA Grants-Cibola Counseling (N.M.)
DBSA Putnam County (N.Y.)
DBSA Bethany (Okla.)
DBSA Oklahoma City Southside (Okla.)
DBSA North Oregon & South Washington Coast (Ore.)
DBSA Rio Grande Valley (Tex.)
DBSA Burlington (Vt.)
DBSA Virgin Islands (Virgin Islands)
DBSA Harrison County (W.Va.)
DBSA Jackson-Roane Counties (W.Va.)
DBSA Kanawha City (W.Va.)
DBSA Rock County (Wis.)
DBSA Sauk County (Wis.)

2008 Chapter Leadership Forum (CLF)



Thanks to all for making this year's CLF a success! Over 85 representatives from chapters across the country came together after the "Power of Peers" Conference. Highlights included

- Jerry Teplitz, PhD's keynote on how new effective leadership promotes productive groups
- Hearing from our inspiring 2007 Chapter Service Award winners
- Discussions on hot topics like keeping support group participants, developing new leaders and creating effective group policies and more
- Geran Capewell's keynote on the seven revenue sources for event fundraising

Participants left with new ideas, a renewed spirit and contact information for some of their best resources—fellow chapter leaders!

Recovery Dialogues

Introduced this fall in DBSA's Chapter Quality Teleconference series, *Recovery Dialogues* are now being offered by chapters themselves, like DBSA Lane County (Ohio). With a trained facilitator, these discussion groups help participants realize they can begin to take more control of their lives. The groups encourage people to identify and reflect on times when they acted on their own behalf and affected their lives in a positive way.

Unlike traditional support groups, *Recovery Dialogues* are structured around a particular topic—usually taken from a handout or a story—so that people first focus on something other than themselves. With follow-up questions, they then reflect on how the handout or story relates to their lives.

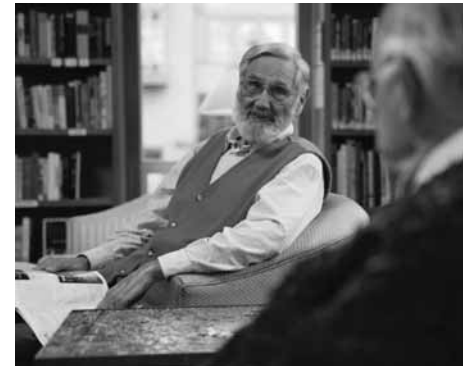
To learn more about Recovery Dialogues, visit www.DBSAlliance.org/QualityRecordings or the Chapter Resources Section at www.DBSAlliance.org/RecoveryCenter.



Older Adults: The Importance of Support

The Geriatric Mental Health Foundation estimates that depression affects 15 percent of those over 65. This is increasingly important, because the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that, in 2030, the number of older adults will be 70 million, double what it was in 2000. Many think that, as you age, it's natural to feel depressed. But depression isn't "natural," and several DBSA chapters have special programs and groups to help older adults.

Bryce Miller, current leader of DBSA Kansas and DBSA Topeka, has long researched older adults' mental health needs. This population can't be served by the same mental health centers that care for other popula-



tions, and many people, he says, often don't understand why. He explains that there's a great deal of stigma—many older adults are afraid that, if they enter one of these centers, they won't be allowed back out. When this generation was growing up, mental illnesses were even less understood than they are now. There was no hope for recovery; there were only mental asylums. Also, he says, many seniors have fixed incomes and can't always afford therapist or psychiatrist visits. Many are also on Medicare. Parity will help, he says, but mental health professionals who take Medicare are still hard to find because of the low reimbursements they receive.

To help break down such barriers in Kansas, Bryce is working with the state's Department of the Aging to try to pass a Geriatric Mental Health Act. And he is focusing on support groups: DBSA Topeka has four facilitators over age 60 who actively reach out to their older peers.

As Alan Rosenthal of DBSA Branford (Conn.) says, seniors can "become depressed ... in

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Scientific Advisory Board Update

Thoughts on the New Parity Law

Greg Simon, MD, MPH
SAB Chair



With all the economic and political “buzz,” you might have missed the wonderful news that parity is now federal law! (Many thanks to advocates like Randy Revelle, vice chair of DBSA’s board of directors, who worked tirelessly for this goal!) While some state parity laws are “better” (and have existed longer), the new federal legislation is, without doubt, a major step toward breaking down the barriers to mental health treatment. And it was written, thankfully, to be a starting point—a “floor,” not a “ceiling.”

Unequal coverage has had many negative “side effects.” High mental health co-pays made it less likely that people would seek help. They also increased the chance of dropping out of treatment. Any money “saved” by treatment limits was spent many times over in lost work productivity, increased disability, etc. With limits on inpatient care, a hospitalization could lead to thousands of dollars of debt. In some cases, limits even led parents to give up custody of their children, as a last resort, so the child could receive critical mental health care.

Now, though, insurers must offer equal coverage—no more higher co-pays or lower annual limits. But equal coverage doesn’t necessarily mean equal access. It might even mean unequal access for those with mental illness. Research shows that, as the price of mental health co-pays goes up, the demand for mental health services goes down. This was misinterpreted to mean that mental health care was “less necessary” (than general medical

care). Why does the demand for services actually decrease? Two reasons. One, mental health consumers (including those with mood disorders) have less money, on average, than those who don’t live with these illnesses. Higher co-pays mean fewer people can actually access care. And two, many consumers struggle with low self-esteem, and as health care gets more expensive, some find it harder to say, “My health’s worth it.”

To help consumers save, in recent years we’ve seen employers and insurance companies shift to so-called “consumer-directed health plans,” with higher annual deductibles than traditional plans. Now, those of us involved with DBSA support the “consumer-directed” concept; consumers should be able to “direct” their health care dollars. But it’s a fact that some consumers (especially mental health consumers) start out with fewer dollars, so we must beware of how such plans impact those with limited resources.

Reforming health care, and how we pay for it, is an increasingly hot topic. Rather than radical reforms like a new U.S. health system, we’re more likely to see gradual ones like expanded coverage with controlled costs. Other gradual changes might include moving health care costs from insurers/states to consumers. As we and our elected officials advocate for reform, the most important question to consider is not how that change impacts our nation’s economy or employers but instead, how it impacts our nation’s consumer, the person who most needs our care.

Older Adults

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their experiences ... of loss of independence, death of friends and family and bodily functions, illness and isolation. Then, there are the more existential concerns of death and dying.” Recently, Alan started a support group in a local senior center to “facilitate human contact and connection ... an intrinsic need for all of us.”

A retired RN, Betsy Pollard leads the “later life” support group for DBSA Colorado Springs, taking turns with others over age



60. Discussions cover topics like loneliness, lack of understanding from family members and non-psychiatric medical problems and suicide. Because El Paso County, Colorado, has the second highest suicide rate in the U.S., this is also a topic they address. As chapter president Steve Bell says, “Since many of us ‘baby boomers’ will soon find ourselves in later life ... these specialty support groups should be a top priority for DBSA.”

Support groups for seniors are much like any DBSA support group, but there are some special considerations. Some older adults don’t drive, especially after dark, so chapters may need to consider daytime meetings accessible by public transportation. Chapters may also need to spend more time educating older adults about the illnesses and the concept of recovery.

Questions? Contact
Chapter Relations at
(800) 826-3632 or
chapters@DBSAAlliance.org.



Make a Gift of Hope to DBSA

Help Others Find the Gift of Recovery

American poet Walt Whitman wrote, “Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity. When I give, I give myself.”

These words absolutely ring true as we think of the support that makes our work possible.

Whether you participate in a DBSA chapter, submit a personal story for

FacingUs.org, or contribute time or dollars, your generosity to DBSA is a hopeful gift that can help thousands discover the gift of recovery.

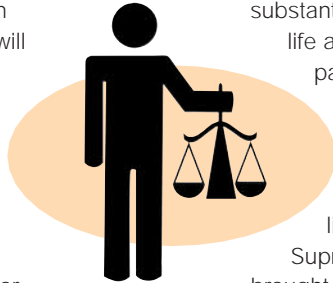
As 2008 comes to a close, we hope you will, as Whitman said, give of yourself and make a gift of hope to DBSA. Donations at every level help us provide educational information to people when, where, and how they need it. Please use the envelope in this newsletter, or visit www.DBSAAlliance.org/Donate, to make a tax-deductible gift of hope that will touch so many lives.



ADA Protection Restored for Those with Psychiatric Disabilities

Beginning January 1, the term “disability” in the workplace will include real protection for psychiatric disabilities, thanks to an amended Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed into law this past September. “As of 2009, the ADA will cover consumers [with depression or bipolar disorder who are] taking medication and in remission,” says Ron Schwartz, a DBSA founder and former board member who practices employment law in Chicago. “They’ll no longer face the frustrating situation of not being considered ‘disabled,’ and therefore not protected, by the ADA.”

The original ADA, passed in 1990, was a comprehensive law protecting people with disabilities against discrimination—in employment, public services, public accommodations and telecommunications. It defined disability as “an impairment that



substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment.” Congress intended the law to apply to a wide range of “impairments” and “major life activities.” But the U.S. Supreme Court, in ADA cases brought before it, has always interpreted those words in a very strict and narrow way. The Court’s rulings made it very hard for those with disabilities to receive the protection—special accommodations or services—they needed.

But this year’s amendment overturns those decisions, making it clear that the law offers broader, wide-ranging coverage. For example, courts can’t rule that taking

medication (including psychiatric medicine) for a condition, or illness, means someone is no longer disabled. The new law also says that important bodily functions like brain and neurological functions are among the “major life activities” that a disability impacts, or limits.

The “new ADA” will be life-changing for many people, especially in the workplace. But, as Ron Schwartz points out, “Employers who aren’t aware of their employees’ disabilities can’t be held liable under the ADA. This presents a dilemma for consumers who are able to work—to tell or not to tell.” For legal advice on this question, Schwartz recommends contacting NELA, the National Employment Lawyers Association. Their website www.NELA.org has a directory of NELA lawyers throughout the country.

To read more about the amended American with Disabilities Act, visit www.ADA.gov.



Spark Your Imagination Online in New Creativity Center

Find out who won the Facing Us 2008 Music Contest ... and find your creative outlet in the **Dave’s Spark Creativity Center**,* the newest addition to the Facing Us Clubhouse! This part of the Clubhouse celebrates the creative spark and the important role it plays in living a full and meaningful life. Learn how to use your own creativity as a wellness tool!

In the Creativity Center, you can

- “Eavesdrop” on musicians, authors, researchers, artists and other experts as they talk about the creative process in our podcasts.
 - Participate in workshops like “Spark-ing Creativity in Healing: Expressing Yourself on Paper,” a 50-minute video on how journaling, blogging and/or creative writing can help ease emotional trauma and depressive symptoms.
 - Take an online course on creativity as a recovery tool. We hope to have this self-paced course available in time to ring in 2009 ... incorporating creativity into your wellness plan is a great New Year’s resolution.
- Listen to the Facing Us Radio. Tune in to the winning songs that were voted finalists in our 2008 Music Contest. Create a playlist of your favorites, and listen to them while you visit other rooms in the Clubhouse.
- Be inspired in the Art Gallery, featuring art created by peers that have found strength and purpose through their drawing, painting and photography.
- Create a personal playlist, or buy a digital album, of the ‘08 Music Contest winning entries. You’ll find love songs, personal stories and musings that run the gamut of musical styles—rock, bluegrass, instrumental, folk, experimental, country, alternative, hip hop, contemporary piano.

**Dave’s Spark: Start Something is a special fund established in 2006 by the friends and family of musician Dave Kaplan in conjunction with DBSA; its mission is to provide support to families confronted with bipolar disorder.*



Facing Us 2008 Music Contest Winners

1st Place
“Never Mind”
Radio Jesus (Ray Henry Ulrich)

2nd Place
“Break Your Heart”
Miria (S. Miria Jo)

3rd Place
“Lifetime”
Ben Mitchell Arthur

Spark your imagination at www.FacingUs.org/Creativity.



Peer Specialist Training: Across the Country . . . and the Caribbean

This fall, DBSA's national training team was on the road every week between Labor Day and October, taking peer specialist training from the West Coast to the East Coast . . . and even across the Caribbean to Puerto Rico! By the end of 2008, we will have offered 18 peer specialist training courses, including the following:

- Faith-based training in Illinois and Tennessee
- A "Teens Reaching Teens" course, in partnership with the Chicago Area Project
- The very first Spanish-language course, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in association with the Puerto Rico Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services Administration

We also continued collaborating with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities nationwide, training veteran peers in

- California
- Colorado
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Massachusetts
- Missouri



¡Bienvenidos! DBSA welcomes newly-trained peer specialists in San Juan, Puerto Rico, this past October.



Peer Perspectives on the DBSA 2008 National Conference

This September in Norfolk, Virginia, the "Power of Peers" truly shone through at the DBSA 2008 National Conference. The weekend's highlights included the all-new Power of Peers Roundtables, an engaging stand-up comedy night and moving keynotes by Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison, Dr. Pat Deegan and Larry Fricks! Stay tuned to DBSA's website for the videos of these inspiring speakers. And be sure to visit www.DBSAlliance.org/paperless08 to share in the wisdom of your peers; here, you'll find summaries of the notes and comments participants made in each of the five Power of Peers Roundtable discussions:

- Communities of Support
- Helping Others Help Us
- Strategies for Bipolar Disorder
- Strategies for Depression
- Strategies for Co-Occurring Conditions

Many people told us how powerful these discussions, and the conference in general, were for them, and we would like to share some of their perspectives:

|| [I enjoyed] learning! First, I was not alone...second, how to cope better...and third, skills to take to my family to better understand me."

|| I just had to contact you to say how phenomenal and appropriate the 'Stand Up for Mental Health' with David Granirer was as an ending to an informative, helpful and...entertaining conference. I was able to attend with my husband Friday and Saturday. We are so glad we came...We both found the classes and speakers to be wonderful... The 'Peer Roundtables' on Friday were amazing. You could see the light-bulb moments for people with the exchange of ideas! My only dilemma was WHICH topic to attend when all 3 were applicable! Victoria Maxwell was an incredible speaker. No one can ever know the depths of [bipolar disorder] until one hears their triumphs and ongoing challenges. Speaking of 'challenges,' the 'Successful Career Planning' speaker never used the word PROBLEM...but challenge. That was a very subtle but positive message to the audience."

|| [What I enjoyed most was] the energy, excitement, passion and humor of every attendee, from the keynote speakers to the last-minute arrivals. Last year's conference was outstanding, but this beat it in enthusiasm and the deep desire to connect—it was powerful, moving and life-changing."

Headline News

Jim McNulty Appointed Vice President of Peer Services
www.DBSAlliance.org/McNulty

U.S. Congressmen Receive Awards from DBSA President
www.DBSAlliance.org/DCawards

DBSA Brings Training to Puerto Rico
www.DBSAlliance.org/PuertoRico

New Website, DBSAIianza.org, for Spanish Speakers
www.DBSAlliance.org/Spanish



|| Keep up the good work! DBSA...save[s] lives and restore[s] spirits."

|| Instead of merely surviving bipolar, I am now ready to consider thriving despite my diagnosis....I am honored to have received a Rebecca's Dream scholarship and vow to take what I have learned and pass it on. I really feel that participation in the conference has dramatically altered my life and put me on a course to live a life that is rich and meaningful. Thank you!"

