



Just Do It!... Volunteer

BY PAM KETTERING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UNITED WAY & VOLUNTEER
SERVICES OF GREATER YANKTON

"Just do it!" Have you heard that phrase lately? I can recall my parents saying that phrase if I was asking too many questions or procrastinating. I even tell myself this phrase if I can find more appealing tasks at hand to delay the inevitable. It is a saying that can be motivational or encouraging for people to take that next hesitant step. If you or someone you know are hesitant to get involved with the community through volunteering, my words to you are, "Just do it!"

The past couple of years have been difficult for many people with loss of jobs or loss of hours, loss of retirement investments, increased anxiety to provide for the family – the list is endless! Community services have

seen increased assistance for food, house payments, utility bills, clothing, counseling, instances of abuse plus much more.

We have had people open our doors to seek opportunities to help others while helping themselves. It has opened the opportunity to learn new skills that has the potential to open new doors to employment. It has opened doors for sharing skills with others that have increased self-worth. It has the hidden benefit of while helping others, you help yourself!

Between September 2008 and September 2009, there were 1.5 million more Americans who volunteered than during the previous year. When communities were struggling to keep up with the needs, neighbors answered the call to provide those needs. From school children to service clubs to individuals – people in all walks of life stepped up to help.

JUST DO IT! Call a friend and ask what volunteering they do. Call an organization and ask for some time to talk about their volunteer opportunities. Look around the community with a new perspective in how you can make a positive change – either with a group of people working on that need or by advocating an issue. Find out if there are groups or individuals with common interests that you may want to join in their activities.

Want to feel better? Want to contribute back to the community? Want to be proactive rather than reactive? Want to share and grow your skills? Want to make life better for others as well as yourself? John Amerman wrote, "There is no greater commitment than when people give of themselves. Volunteer activity is the ultimate demonstration of caring." JUST DO IT!

This Emotional Life

BY SHERRI RODGERS-CONTI

South Dakota Public Broadcasting, and public television stations all across the country, recently aired the ground-breaking documentary, This Emotional Life. Over the course of six hours, viewers explored the ways in which we can improve our social relationships, cope with negative emotions such as depression and anxiety and become more positive, resilient individuals. The program wove together compelling personal stories with the latest scientific research on mental health.

"The secrets of happiness aren't secrets anymore," said Daniel Gilbert, series host, author and Harvard professor. "As scientists now know, social relationships, more than any other factor, are the key to human happiness."

South Dakota Public Broadcasting is conducting special community events in conjunction with This Emotional Life. Our projects touch on the topics of early attachment between infant and parent, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and resources for use by mental health professionals. SDPB will be co-hosting film screening/discussion events, military family fun events, and conference presentations, including a session at the Yankton Area Mental Wellness, Inc. Conference on June 9th.

Even if you missed the broadcast of This Emotional Life, a wealth of information is available online about happiness, resilience, the importance of early attachment, PTSD, Asperger's Syndrome, depression, resilience and other mental health issues. Go to www.sdpb.org/TEL to find the local resources available, and also a link to the This Emotional Life web site.

Sherrri Rodgers-Conti is the Director of the Education & Outreach Department at South Dakota Public Broadcasting. She is a regular presenter at the SD Human Services Center and at the YAMWI conference, and she is a collaborator with YAMWI for advocating, educating, and informing the public about good mental health.

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Board of Directors.

WRAP stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan. It is a self-management and recovery system developed by a group of people who had mental health difficulties and who were struggling to incorporate wellness tools and strategies into their lives. WRAP is designed to:

- Decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors
- Increase personal empowerment
- Improve quality of life
- Assist people in achieving their own life goals and dreams.

WRAP is a structured system to monitor uncomfortable and distressing symptoms that can help you reduce, modify or eliminate those symptoms by using planned responses. This includes plans for how you want others to respond when symptoms have made it impossible for you to continue to make decisions, take care of yourself or keep yourself safe.

People who are using WRAP say:

- "It helps me feel prepared."
- "I feel better more often and I'm able to improve the overall quality of my life."

The person who experiences symptoms is the one who develops their personal WRAP. The person may choose to have supporters and health care professionals help them create their WRAP.

The WRAP system was developed by people who have been dealing with a variety of psychiatric symptoms for many years and who are working hard to feel better and get on with their lives. Mary Ellen Copeland has shared it with people with other illnesses and they too believe that it can be easily adapted for use with other conditions.

JAMES B. BEDDOW

During Thursday's luncheon, conference participants will be treated with a presentation by James Beddow, Ph.D. founder and current senior consultant of the Rural Learning Center of Howard, SD. Prior to working for the Rural Learning Center, Dr. Beddow served as the Vice President of Learning for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society from 1995-2002 and a the President of Dakota Wesleyan University from 1981-1993. Beddow, a Woonsocket, South Dakota native, has worked in many capacities with various communities in the Midwest. He will present "Delivery of Healthcare in Rural Settings: A

Sea of Change?" Dr. Beddow received his doctorate in History from the University of Oklahoma in 1969.

36 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The YAMWI conference also has 36 breakout sessions featuring the following local and regional speakers: Tom Buckmiller of Drake University in Des Moines, IA; Joseph Carda of Department of Human Services in Pierre; Renee Christensen of Johnson & Christensen Law Office of Sioux Falls; Barbara Clinkenbeard of Alegent Health in Omaha, NE; Sara Cross and Kathleen Kane of People Incorporated's Riverwind Crisis Response in South St. Paul, MN; Kirsten DeJean, Karen Miller and Victoria Walker of the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton; Gerry Ebel, Paula Hendrickson, Elizabeth Rembold and Thomas Stange of Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services in Yankton; Kay Ermish of Black Hills Special Services in Rapid City; Jane Goeden and Teresa Henrickson of Yankton; Sarah Goeden of Sioux Falls; Kathy Hildebrandt of SD Bureau of Personnel Training in Pierre; Dan and Jill Johnson of Joyful Living in Sioux Falls, SD; Jen Karolski and Jeff Snell of Quality Living, Inc in Omaha, NE; Jeff Bayless and Dale Knode of IMPACT in Yankton; Lori Lincoln of Mount Marty College in Yankton; Mary Hochstein, Tami Mabee, Stacey Nickels and Mary Pistulka of Avera Sacred Heart in Yankton; Janice Mikesell and John Miller of the SD Humanities Council; Robert Perkinson, Diane Van Rooyen and Connie Presley-Marr of Keystone Treatment Center in Canton; Sherrri Rodgers-Conti of South Dakota Public Broadcasting in Vermillion; Doug Simmons of the Sioux Falls Police Department; and Faith Spotted-Eagle of Lake Andes.

MENTAL WELLNESS
CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Everyone interested is welcome to attend the Mental Wellness Conference. Professional credit for mental health professionals is approved, including teacher certificate renewal contact hours. Prompt pre-registration is encouraged with the registration fee of \$85 prior to May 28. Contact conference organizers to coordinate agency billing arrangements, if required. In addition one undergraduate credit is available through Mount Marty College, Yankton, and one graduate credit is available through the University of Sioux Falls. Registration materials are available online at www.yamwi.org. For more information contact Craig Sherman at yamwi.org@gmail.com or 665-4659, Ext. 218.

Sertoma and Hearing Charities of America announce Campaign for Hearing Access - A Sound Investment

Kansas City, MO — Sertoma and Hearing Charities of America, nonprofit organizations committed to raising awareness on issues related to hearing health in America, recently announced a new action campaign to address access to sound for the hard of hearing titled "A Sound Investment."

The Silence is Deafening

A sometimes bitter healthcare debate has added to the silence experienced by 37 million Americans dealing with hearing loss. Hearing health for many Americans, especially those near or below the poverty level, is considered a luxury item. Regardless of any new legislation on the horizon, hearing health education and access to hearing devices must have a new, louder voice.

According to Sertoma and Hearing Charities Executive Director Steven Murphy, the mission of the campaign is to assure equal access to a community often overlooked. "Nobody is listening, literally and figuratively," said Murphy. "We have the means to address this issue, what we lack is a commitment to act. This campaign is one of many planned to create action – to expand the delivery of education, services and hearing devices to the public."

A Sound Investment Campaign

The Need
In many ways, we have made the world accessible to all people through the Americans with Disabilities Act and other efforts. However, in some ways we have failed to make that access complete. We have worked hard to remove the barriers that limit use of a public facility for those who cannot walk, but have done little for those who cannot hear. For the millions of Americans using hearing assistive devices, the ability to hear in public facilities is limited. Yet all those sounds can be made clear by the simple act of installing an available, easy, and cost effective technology – the induction loop.

The Goal

The goal is to make the sounds through public address and amplified systems in public facilities readily accessible to those that use hearing assistive devices. We can achieve this goal by promoting and assisting in installing looping technology of public buildings and facilities. This effort will not only provide access that should be available, but will promote the value and importance of hearing health services and technology.

What is Looping?

Looping is a technology that allows hearing assistive devices to serve as wireless loudspeakers, delivering clear, sharp, customized sound right from inside the ears. It can be adapted to use in large public spaces, such as airports and auditoriums. But it can just as easily be installed in churches, drive-up business windows and even into a single room at home so the TV or stereo sound becomes a broadcast going directly through the hearing assistive device. The induction loop is to hearing aids, what Wi-Fi is to laptops.

Sertoma, Inc.

Headquartered and founded in Kansas City, Mo. in 1912, Sertoma is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, national civic organization with community-minded members in our service clubs across North America. Sertoma's national focus is on assisting the more than 50 million people with hearing health issues and educating the public on the issues surrounding hearing health. For more information about Sertoma and its community clubs, visit www.sertoma.org or call (877) 737-8662.

Hearing Charities of America

Sertoma created this social enterprise as a means to expand its 50 years service in the area of speech and hearing concerns. The April 20, 2010 public launch of Hearing Charities begins its efforts to develop community engagement in communities not served by Sertoma members. Hearing Charities of America activities will connect those who need information, education, hearing health services and assistive devices to those who can help meet their needs. The mission of Hearing Charities of America is to raise awareness and promote collaboration toward a hearing healthy world.

The Yankton Sertomans meet at noon every Thursdays at the Waterfront Restaurant. For more information about Yankton Sertoma's community service A Sound Investment contact Matt Rumsey at (605) 661-6219 or email at mrumsey@avera.org.

Planting Seeds

BY CHARLES BARRON

The title for this year's upcoming 12th annual Yankton Area Mental Wellness conference is "Counting on YOU to Make A Difference." Perhaps the title brings thoughts of adults to mind, but before adults can decide that they can make a difference, seeds need to have been planted about making a difference. The idea about being responsible to others is a value that needs to be started at a young age. We don't usually suddenly think "I can make a difference," after twenty or thirty years of life. It can happen, but that is not necessarily typical. The idea about making a difference needs to come to children from adults, and at an early age. While there are plenty of parents out there who begin to instill the idea about making a difference in the world that is not the case for all parents and their children. We have the fortune in this great nation of ours to have access to the institution of public education. When we think about teachers it is typical to think that they provide lessons to students in order to prepare them to eventually move into the workplace. That is true, but our teachers are also critical in providing lessons that foster moral responsibility, and to make a difference for others.

A short time ago I saw a first grade student help a classmate. That in itself is not especially unusual, but the student who was being assisted is visually impaired. The helping child was genuine and sincere with their effort to make a difference in the classmate's life. The child who was helping had to have had a lesson somewhere about caring for others, as well as the willingness to make a difference, and the confidence, to take personal action to help someone in need. The child made a difference that day, it felt good to the student to make a difference, and the "make a difference" seed will grow.

On the elementary playgrounds in Yankton there are "Peace Circles" to use in settling differences. The Peace Circles are seeds, they show that talking about conflicts between people can make and maintain friendships. This makes a difference. As adults, the children who have learned how to settle conflicts will be able to help their children settle conflicts without aggression and violence. The "Peace Circle" grows the "making a difference" seed.

This year there was a catastrophe in Haiti, and there is an ongoing catastrophe in the south-west corner of our great state of South Dakota. My office is at the Yankton High School, and I saw tables in the hallway fill with food and supplies that was sent to Haiti, and to the Pine Ridge reservation. Students did not have to bring supplies, but a large number of students did recognize that they could make a difference in someone's life. The "making a difference" seed is nurtured once again.

We need to take every opportunity to "water" the "making a difference" seed. As adults we need to make a difference so our children can see that making a difference is important. When our children make a difference we need to acknowledge that they made a difference to someone. As we help others, we help ourselves, and become stronger as human beings. As our world gets smaller, we need to become better at making a difference so that we can help guarantee our continued existence.

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