



Bringing Hope to Life

Annual Appeal/Newsletter

Fall 2013

Our Mission. "To provide professional counseling and holistic therapies with respect and compassion so that each person may recognize his/her individual worth and find reconciliation with oneself and with others."



Maria Droste Counseling Services Remembers

Sr. Lorraine M. Bernier, RGS

July 1, 1944 - April 26, 2013

"Sr. Lorraine embodied the spirit of Maria Droste by her passion for individuals needing help and by her belief in God's providence. All who knew her saw in her a deep commitment to the mission of Maria Droste Counseling Services. She is greatly missed by our clients, family, and staff, but her desire that this work and the agency continue long after she is gone is being carried forth by all of us."

Michael Shanahan, Executive Director, Maria Droste Counseling Services

Maria Droste Counseling Services Welcomes Michael Shanahan

Dear Friends of Maria Droste Counseling Services,

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd want to share with you our joy at welcoming Michael R. Shanahan as the new Executive Director of MDCS. Michael joined us last June after the sudden death of our beloved Sr. Lorraine Bernier. We feel Sr. Lorraine had a guiding hand in shepherding Michael to us. She had met Michael earlier that year and was very impressed with him. She told me that he had great experience, tremendous skills and was someone who resonated with our philosophy of compassion and deep regard for the human person. She expressed a hope that he would join the staff at some point in the future. Little did we know that we would be reaching out so soon to him, but we are delighted that Michael has become part of the Good Shepherd family. His background includes a Masters of Divinity degree from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, CA, and he is licensed in the state of Massachusetts as a Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT). He comes with over 15 years experience as a service provider in the mental health field as well as administrative and managerial skills in running outpatient mental health clinics.

The Sisters thank you for all the support you have given to MDCS during this time of transition. We are confident that with your help and Michael's leadership "Bringing hope to life" will continue to be reflected in the excellent work done by Maria Droste.

Please know the Sisters of the Good Shepherd will keep you in our prayers.

Sr. Ellen Kelly
Province Leader



Bringing Hope to Life

A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am writing to introduce myself, Michael Shanahan, as the new Executive Director of Maria Droste Counseling Services. I assumed this job in mid-June after Sr. Lorraine Bernier, who led the agency since 2006, died suddenly on April 26, 2013. I would like to tell you how I became involved with Maria Droste Counseling Services because my story, as I have come to see with more clarity, reflects not only the spirit of Maria Droste, but also the charism of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. As many of you know, Sr. Lorraine was a passionate and dedicated leader of this agency and its future was very important to her. She was looking five and ten years down the road and realized the need to hire qualified people who would carry the agency forward beyond her time. Conversations she had about looking toward a successor brought us together. After several phone conversations, we finally met face-to-face. We had been discussing her plans to bring me into the agency as a first step toward succession planning. Sr. Lorraine wanted the transition to begin within the coming year if possible. She intended to mentor me into the agency and gradually scale back her role. I left her office feeling joyful having made such an exciting connection, but also wondering what it all meant since nothing was likely to take place for many months. Eleven days later, Sr. Lorraine died and soon after I interviewed with board members for the position of Executive Director. I was moved when I learned that June 8 happened to be the feast day of the Blessed Maria Droste...this was the day I had been praying about the decision to accept this position.



Sr. Lorraine knew that I shared her commitment to the mission of this agency and her passion for working with individuals, couples, and families in need of mental health care. My vision is to live out the spirit of Maria Droste herself, exemplified by all of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and the staff associated with Maria Droste Counseling Services, both current and retired; and to continue to offer the best of what we do, providing mental health and holistic services to all in need of such care, regardless of their ability to pay, so that they find peace and reconciliation within themselves.

Perhaps you've heard the expression that *we become what we pay attention to*. As you and I and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd pay attention to serving those in need, we are able to do what we do here! Their need remains the source of our mission. Each of you reading these words is part of that mission. You may feel your role is limited, but let me assure you that your prayers, your time spent volunteering, and your gifts in support of the agency, truly make this work possible. Very few agencies offer their services at a reduced rate, much less decrease fees to just five or ten dollars a session, as we do in many cases. We can do so because *you allow* the vision to continue. We all know that one person cannot run Maria Droste Counseling Services. **It takes all of us to say YES to an agency that dares to serve the poor who walk, work, and live among us.**

In closing, I ask for two things. First, I invite you to read the article in this newsletter by Stella, one of our staff, who herself was touched by the spirit of this agency and now gives her hope and her talents to clients. **Second, I ask you to consider making a donation to Maria Droste Counseling Services if you believe in what we do and if you are willing and able.**

Thank you from all of us!

Michael Shanahan



HOPE

Our Appeal to You...

Stella's Story

My name is Stella and I'm honored to share how I ended up at the healing offices of Maria Droste Counseling Services. I grew up with divorced parents, an abusive alcoholic father and a mother who attracted abusive alcoholic men. I began smoking marijuana at the age of 12 and had my first alcohol blackout at 13. After failing classes and school suspensions, my mother took out a CHINS (Child in Need of Services) and I was sent to foster care. My father, who disciplined with his fists or a belt, decided to take custody of me. He was heavy into using and selling drugs and was the one who introduced me to cocaine. After a severe beating, I found myself hitchhiking to school having nowhere else to go for help. The social worker that picked me up was very kind to me and I always looked forward to her visiting the homes I was placed in. My last foster mother was an extremely kind woman who got me into a night program when I got kicked out of school at 16. I stayed with this family and received my high school diploma before becoming an emancipated minor at 17. At this time, I moved in with a friend who drank and drugged the way I did.

Unemployable and unable to support myself, I met an Air Force recruiter while drinking underage at a bar. A week later I was on a plane to Texas to become a security police officer. A year later, I was caught doing drugs and was referred to rehab. I partied hard the night before, didn't show up for treatment, and was discharged from the service. I moved to my younger sister's couch, who was an active heroin addict at the time and led what I felt was a scary lifestyle.

During a short period of sobriety in my late 20's, a friend in AA suggested a therapist who saw clients on a sliding scale. While it took me several years before I was finally able to truly engage in therapy, these services paired with the unconditional love and support of AA, enabled me to repair relationships with family, heal resentments and stop blaming them for my problems. I learned to value myself and finally realized I didn't deserve abusive men in my life! These positive steps encouraged me to take my first college course. This one class turned into an associate degree, followed by a bachelor's degree in psychology from the Harvard Extension School. I was now on my way to my childhood dream of helping others.

As my life continued to improve, I remained active in AA and attended ongoing counseling. But, by 2006, I was a dry-drunk with low self-esteem, working at a job I hated, and in another abusive relationship with an addict in early recovery who was cheating on me. Shortly after, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and endured 5 surgeries in the next year with a continuous supply of opiates. I also began seeing psychiatrists who diagnosed and medicated me for sleep disorder, anxiety, depression and bipolar! After receiving inadequate services through my health insurance, it was AA, my cancer support group and my sliding scale fee therapist that saved me.

As I maintained my sobriety, I enrolled in the Alcohol and Drug Counselor program and began a master's degree to become a licensed Mental Health Counselor. In 2009 I needed an internship for my LMHC program. Looking back at my recovery, I realized how important access to services was in helping to save my life. Without my therapist and the support of AA, I don't know where I would be today. I knew I wanted to find an agency for my internship that offered the same type of support I received. ***I am happy to say I found what I was looking for at Maria Droste Counseling Services.*** I completed my internship in 2010 and never left. My connection with the agency was a real turning point for me in my own recovery and now I am so grateful to be able to give back as a staff member. The ability to serve clients, regardless of whether or not they have health insurance or the means to pay, is truly a gift!

Stella's story reflects the foundation that our agency is built upon. the belief that each person has the right to a quality life.

We understand at Maria Droste Counseling Services that a large percentage of people in our very own community encounter barriers preventing them from being able to afford services or access the care they so desperately need. It is this population that our agency is committed to serving!

**Help Make
a
Difference!**

**DONATE
TODAY!**

We depend heavily upon the generosity of our supporters in order to continue doing this important work.

Please consider making a donation today!
Donations can be made by check to our agency address (or) by calling Stacey Campbell at 617-471-5686

SAVE THE DATE!

9th Annual Darlene Sheehan Fashion Gala

Where: The Lantana in Randolph
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2014

Please join us for a fun filled evening of wonderful food, fashions, raffles, live and silent auctions!

9th Annual Maria Droste Award

Maria Droste Counseling Services is proud to announce the recipients of our 2013 Maria Droste Award!

Honoring,

Paul Hart, CEO, The Lantana

Chris and Jim Driscoll

The Bernier Family

Grants Awarded!

Maria Droste Counseling Services has been fortunate to receive the following grants this year:

- Cummings Foundation
- Alice Willard Dorr Foundation
- City of Quincy- Community Development Block Grant
- Clipper Ship Foundation
- Sisters of the Good Shepherd

We are very grateful for the generosity and support of our grantors! This funding will help us carry on our mission of serving all in need of counseling and holistic therapies.

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Our Services

We offer Mental Health Counseling and Holistic Therapy Services to nurture body, mind and spirit for adults, youth and children. Our staff, interns and volunteers represent a cross section of backgrounds and religious affiliations.

Mental Health Counseling Services

Individual Therapy
Couples Therapy
Family Therapy
Group Therapy

Holistic Therapy Services

Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy
Massage Therapy
Polarity Therapy
Reiki Therapy

Good Shepherd's
 Maria Droste
Counseling Services



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Stand up for Mental Health Awareness

DID YOU KNOW,

- Approximately 1 in 4 adults are affected by mental illness.
- Mental illness does not discriminate based on age, race, religion or income, it can affect ANYONE!
- Having a mental health diagnosis is a medical condition like any other illness and does NOT mean you are weak or less than anyone else.
- Most mental illnesses are treatable.

SPEAK UP

**STOP THE
STIGMA!**



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