



Mental health recovery through the healing power of friendship

www.compeer.org

Social Media Initiative Launched by Compeer

Compeer Inc. launched its first social media platform in late spring as part of a plan to enhance the organization's online presence.

The new platform on Facebook achieved an objective early. The objective — to reach 100 people who "like" Compeer in 8 weeks — was achieved in half that time.

The Compeer Inc. Social Media Vision is to reach more people with a positive message about Compeer programs and mental health recovery.

Facebook, for example, will be a resource for Compeer to share news with a mental health recovery focus; to engage individuals and organizations at the volunteer / supporter level; to build affiliate capacity through event announcements and links; to promote the value of Compeer adult and youth

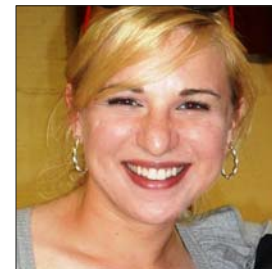
services; and offer inspirational stories about the power of friendship: Compeer makes friends and changes lives.

Strategies for expanding the social networking initiative include using other popular sites such as YouTube. Compeer will continue to monitor and analyse the impact of its platforms to maintain credibility, build more awareness, and empower communities.

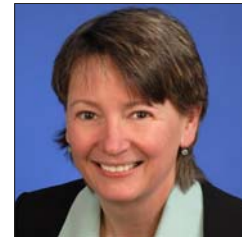
Danielle Abramson, who was a resource at the development stage of the plan, remains part of the team as a site administrator and message poster. Johanna Ambrose will continue in her role as strategist and additional site administrator.



Find Compeer on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CompeerInc.



Danielle Abramson, pictured above, will post to online sites, while Johanna Ambrose, photo below, oversees the social media initiative.



Compeer Welcomes Affiliates in West Virginia and Florida

Dunbar, West Virginia

Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action, Inc. (www.kisra.org) opened the doors of its new Compeer program in May. Pictured below, left to right, are Program Coordinator Season Lewis and KISRA CEO Michelle Foster, M.S., celebrating the launch of Compeer of Kanawha Valley.



Sarasota, Florida



Nancy Hobson is a senior program director in Sarasota.

Ann Hartka, whose cousin's life was positively impacted by Compeer, inspired Senior Friendship Centers Inc. to start a program in Sarasota. SFC was founded in 1973 by Brother William Geneen, who created a place of friendship for senior citizens combating loneliness.

Compeer Florida Gulf Coast became an affiliate this spring. Senior Program Director Nancy Hobson reports that the newly-hired Compeer program coordinator is expected to assume the position in mid-August.

Find program contact details at www.compeer.org/Locations or under the Info tab on Facebook.

Viewpoint: Finding ways to connect us all

Dear Compeer Friends,

This summer has brought some new and interesting adventures for me. My son William, 12, and I have begun Geocaching, which is, simply put, a worldwide treasure hunt. Using some simple tools -- a GPS (Global Positioning System) and our laptop -- we locate the treasure's waypoint (location) and use the GPS for the hunt and capture of treasures wherever we may be. What fun! Look it up on-line; there's a wealth of information about it. I am learning about new technology, having great outdoor excursions with Will, and meeting lots of new people.

The reason I share this with you is this is a great example of how far technology has come in the last fifteen years. Prior to 1996 we would not be able to play this game on a worldwide scale; "old-fashioned" scavenger hunting in our backyard was the platform. What's wrong with that, you say? Nothing, of course. But invention plus a congressional mandate to open the airwaves for personal use of GPSs brought this from a backyard adventure to a worldwide game: a new direction with technology connecting it all together.

This is my direction for Compeer Inc. and message to all Compeer affiliates: I am finding ways that connect us all. You are all familiar with the Compeer Inc. Web site, the online starting point and anchor for the Compeer message. Nearly three-fourths of affiliate programs use the Compeer affiliate-only information exchange page, known to you as the CAFÉ. We have mapped out a so-

cial media plan, and recently launched our first social networking platform on Facebook. This gives us another way to provide supportive leadership to all Compeer affiliates through the use of internet technology.

We like to think that the Compeer network is powered by friendship, so please connect with us on Facebook. Encourage your volunteers and friends to do the same as we spread positive news about mental health and promote the hope of recovery.

The treasure we are seeking has many waypoints. It is the intrinsic nature of Compeer: we Make Friends and Change Lives. This can be found in the heart of every Compeer affiliate community, and the many people's lives that you've touched. So please join us on the cyber superhighways as we learn new ways of connecting and working together.

Lida



Family Grief Resource Kits Available



When Families Grieve launched in April with a PBS television special featuring Katie Couric and the *Sesame Street* Muppets.

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When Families Grieve provides free resources in support of families with young children coping with the death of a parent. The initiative was launched by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*.

When Families Grieve is a continuation of Sesame Workshop's award-winning *Talk, Listen, Connect* outreach initiative launched in 2006 to families with children ages 2 through 8 facing challenging transitions in their lives. The multimedia and bi-lingual (English and Spanish) *When Families Grieve* resource kits are available in two customized versions — one designed to support the specific needs of military families and one designed for the general public — and includes a DVD, print materials, and the Sesame Street Web site.

Kits can be ordered at www.sesamestreet.org/grief, and through Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or www.MilitaryOneSource.com

Two New Regional Representatives Tell Their Compeer Story

Ann Tan

I manage Compeer in the state of Victoria, Australia, which has an affiliate program in metropolitan Box Hill and a satellite in semi-rural Bendigo. I joined the program in its infancy in Box Hill – nearly six years ago.

Originally my brief was to organize the professional aspects of the program – setting up our recruitment, screening, training, matching and ongoing volunteer support processes. I have been involved in the mental health, counseling and tertiary teaching areas for thirty years. I am a social worker with a Ph.D. (my specialist area being ‘emotion’).

Once involved with Compeer, I got ‘hooked’ because I found it to be a most exciting innovative approach to mental health and well-being from a real ‘grass roots’ perspective. Compeer has been set up on such thorough and well-thought-through lines and is a real credit to its founders and ongoing, committed staff.

I feel honored to be representing Australia as a regional representative.



Ann Tan represents Victoria and the Australia Capital Territory.

Lori Bonker

My family and I moved to our farm in 1992 from New Jersey. We had purchased the farm many years ago and because we loved the area, we decided to make the move to rural Pennsylvania. My husband continued to commute for a few years before retiring, while I decided to leave my professional life behind and join my girls on a new adventure. While they enjoyed their new schools and activities, I decided to get involved in my community.

I saw an article in our local newspaper about Compeer. It grabbed my attention and soon I was receiving my training as a Compeer volunteer, and finally matched. I remember that first meeting with my special friend and so does she. We have been together for 14 years and what a fantastic experience it is and what a beautiful friendship has developed. I also have been matched with another woman for five years who is pursuing classes at Bloomsburg University and has Parkinson’s Disease.

I was a Compeer volunteer before I became a staff member of the Mental Health Association in 2000. I currently serve as the executive director of the association and Compeer. And now I am the co-representative for the Pennsylvania region.

Lori is included in the photo below, middle row, fourth from left.

2010 Regional Representatives

Loretta Nichols, New South Wales; Ann Tan, Victoria and Australia Capital Territory; Patty Gnefkow, Kansas; Johanna Ambrose, New York; Lori Bonker, Elaine Callihan (co-reps), Pennsylvania; Shannon Jaccard, West



The Pennsylvania Compeer Coalition retreat in April included Compeer and Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pa. program staff. Bottom row, 1 to r: Joe Cruice, Ginny Mastriane, Eric Larson, Rob Chisholm, Julie Pulvers, Lida Riedlinger. Middle row: Michelle Wakeley, Dayna Shallenberger, Kathy Ferrell, Lori Bonker, Casey Garrett. Top row: Rochelle Scurry, Diane Lichtman, Olga Syabrenko, Gretchen Kelly, Susan McNamara, Ida Carvell.

Kansas Mentors Awards Grants to Three Compeer Affiliates

Kansas Compeer affiliates in Topeka, Ottawa and Wichita each recently received a \$1,500 mini-grant from Kansas Mentors. (www.kansasmentors.org)

Ottawa Compeer will use their funds for mentor retention while Topeka and Wichita affiliates will be focusing on volunteer recruitment efforts.

50 New Friends

On June 1, Wichita Compeer launched a “50 New Friends” campaign to provide additional mentors to children and adults.

Submitted by Patty Gnefkow

Compeer Founder is Featured Alumna in College Publication

Bernice "Bunny" Skirboll is a featured alumna in a college magazine.

Kaleidoscope, published biannually by the Division of Advancement, The College at Brockport, State University of New York recognizes Bunny's achievements with Compeer in the article "Bunny Skirboll: A Life Built Around Friendship."

The article notes that Skirboll "has brightened the future for thousands struggling with mental illness and has inspired countless community volunteers to give of their time, compassion and friendship to those most in need...you can't help but be moved by her drive to improve the quality of life for others through simple friendship."

Read the article at www.compeer.org, click on News.



Brown Joins Compeer Board

Michele Brown, Compeer Greater Buffalo executive director, has joined the Compeer Inc. Board of Directors.

Brown has been with the Compeer program in Erie County, New York since its inception in 1985. This year she celebrates both the program's and her silver anniversary.



Compeer Greater Buffalo holds a Miracle of Friendship Gala annually to honor outstanding individuals and volunteers. This year's Gala, in conjunction with their anniversary celebration, will be held on October 30.

For event updates, visit www.compeerbuffalo.org

Compeer, Inc. 2010 Board

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