



# Making Health Our Own NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2008



Sponsored by Whatcom County Health Department  
In collaboration with the Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities  
Made possible, in part, by a grant from The Case Foundation

## **PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

### **Health Counts Community Conversations:**

**The Foothills 4/23 (6:00-9:00 PM)** at Kendall Elementary; **Note:** Russian translators will be available for this event.

**Fairhaven 4/30 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at Fairhaven Middle School

**Blaine 5/6 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at Blaine Middle School

**Ferndale 5/7 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at Ferndale High School

**Everson-Nooksack-Sumas 5/13 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at Nooksack Valley HS

**Bellingham 5/14 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at St. Luke's Community Health Education Center

**Farm Workers Forum 5/19 (6:30-9:30 PM)** at Everson Senior Center; **Note:** Spanish translators will be available for this event.

Please call 676-6724 #50838 for additional information.

## **CASE FOUNDATION Voting Ends April 21st**

### **WIN \$2,500 FOR YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY:**

From March 26th-April 21st, you can vote for Susan Sloan's project Making Health Our Own and three others at: <http://casefoundation.org/myvote> (one vote per e-mail address)

If you correctly identify the top four projects—those receiving the most votes—the charity of your choice could win \$2,500. There will be 10 such awards. If Making Health Our Own is in the top four, we will receive another \$25,000 to support grassroots citizen input to the Comprehensive Health Plan. THANKS FOR VOTING! A special thanks to those who have encouraged others to vote! Remember, The Case Foundation will send you an e-mail confirming your vote. Be sure to respond to that e-mail for your vote to count.

## **INTRODUCING OUR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PLANNING TEAM**

In the beginning, the idea of developing a comprehensive health plan for the county was hatched by Council Member Ward Nelson in June of 2006 and carefully fostered by Chris Phillips and the Public Health Advisory Board beginning in January 2007.

Whatcom County Health Department and the PHAB then assigned the day-to-day facilitation of the process to Susan Sloan, Health Information Specialist. Meanwhile, the Health Board formed a standing Health Committee to provide overall leadership of the processes.

Since that humble beginning, we

have noticed that our facilitation team continues to expand. So, we thought you might find the following contact information useful:

\* Susan Sloan (CHP Facilitator): 676-6724 #50838  
ssloan@whatcomcounty.us

\* Michael Shepard (Focus Group Scheduling & Publicity/ Recruitment for Fairhaven & Bellingham events): 676-6724 #50867,  
mshepard@whatcomcounty.us

\* Kaylee Knowles (Publicity & Recruitment for Blaine & Ferndale events): call 676-6724

\* Susan Schuler (Support Staff):

call 676-6724

\* Faith Stewart (Professional large group facilitator for public forums): call 676-6724 #50838



Here's a photo of Faith Stewart explaining the Open Space Technology guiding principles at our first Health Counts Community Conversation on March 19th.



Information for all upcoming Health Counts Community Conversations is available under "Features" at the top of the Whatcom County home page at: [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/)

## HEALTH ISSUE OF THE MONTH: The Importance of MENTAL HEALTH

Increasingly, good mental health has been acknowledged as a major element in our overall health and happiness. Undiagnosed and untreated mental conditions such as depression, anxiety and trauma have significant negative impacts upon education, employment, and our family and social lives. The President's New Freedom Report indicates the annual economic impact at approximately \$79 Billion in lost productivity. Undiagnosed and untreated mental conditions are also now being acknowledged as a causa-

tive factor in our increasing abuse of alcohol, street, and prescription drugs.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for males age 20-34.

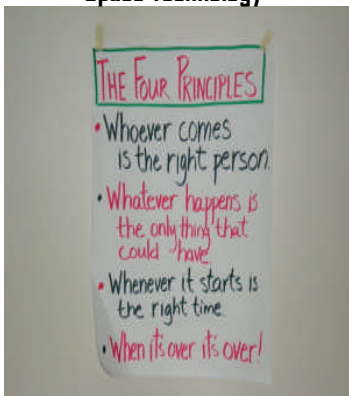
Untreated mental health conditions in children and youth adversely affect educational performance and the ability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers and family. Mental health conditions

can lead to a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. This can lead to drug use and problems with the police and courts.

Mental Health services must become more accessible and affordable.

Author: Gary Williams

### The 4 Guiding Principles of Open Space Technology



## THE ORIGAMI CRANE PROJECT

On March 31st, St. Joseph Hospital and NAMI of Whatcom County launched a countywide fun and inspirational service project—*14,000 Cranes for Whatcom County: Hope and Support for People with Mental Illness.*

Community groups from across the county are creating origami

cranes as symbols of hope and support for the estimated 14,000 families living with mental health conditions in Whatcom County.

The cranes will fly from the Rotunda of the County Courthouse on October 5, 2008, the first day of Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Co-chairs of this initiative are Senator Dale Brandland and State Representative Kelli Linville.

To learn how you can participate, contact the NAMI office at 671-4950.

Author: Betty Scott

## Support Officers Report on Suicides in Whatcom County

On March 31st, at the Children's Mental Health Coalition meeting, Support Officers Kendra Cristelli, Rob Main, Barb Skudlarick, and Colleen Ingalls described the impact of suicides and sudden fatalities in Whatcom County.

They reported that there were six suicides within a 30-hour span between March 15th and 16th.

During the first three months of 2008, they responded to 55 deaths from various causes and there were 41 children in the homes where these fatalities took place.

In 2007, they responded to 219 fatalities, 90 suicide attempts, and 28 suicides. There were a total of 91 children in these homes.

Our Support Officers and NAMI call upon Whatcom County professionals and private citizens to be aware of the social and health impacts that these deaths have on our community's children.

For more information, please call NAMI at 671-4950 OR contact Betty Scott at [betty@mamascott.net](mailto:betty@mamascott.net)

### 24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line

- \* Are you feeling depressed?
- \* Do you need someone to talk to?
- \* Are you concerned about a friend?
- \* Is worry keeping you up at night?
- \* Do you want help with your problem?

### CARE CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES:

(425) 258-4357  
(800) 584-3578  
TTY (800) 846-8517

...always here and ready to listen.

