

# Parent to Parent Network

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER, 2012

## From the Director

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***The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.***

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Nestled among the snowcapped peaks of the majestic Himalayas lies the fabled “paradise” of Shangri-la. Resting comfortably in the warm embrace of a fertile valley between the peaks, it is shielded from all but the best of weather conditions. Sometimes described as ‘utopia

on earth’, Wikipedia describes it this way:

“Shangri-La has become synonymous with any earthly paradise

but particularly a mythical Himalayan **utopia** — a permanently happy land, isolated from the outside world. In the novel *Lost Horizon*, the people who live at Shangri-La are almost immortal, living years beyond the normal lifespan and only very slowly aging in appearance.”

Wanting for nothing, the children and families of Shangri-la experience life not as some boring, semi-medicated absolute tranquility, but find meaning in challenge, purpose, and harmony. It’s just that they have learned

how to cope with the travails of life that send mere mortals into whatever craziness we need to get by.

Above all else, the children want for nothing. No child goes hungry, or freezes in the frigid mountain air. Santa

***He was touched by many of the requests the children made. But none stood out more than those young children who asked for a “warm coat for Christmas”.***

Claus does not visit Shangri-la there is no need.

But our existence is quite different, isn’t it? Beset by the tyranny of need, pride, and fear, we are often driven to find solutions that are worse than the problem, and certainly are not in the interests of the greater good. But sometimes we can’t ignore the needs of others, and the better angels of our nature emerge, if only for a moment.

No need tugs more at the heart than the unmet needs of children.

At our recent Christmas party, brave volunteer (perhaps Amanda may have exerted some pressure) Jesse Dunbar sat in for Santa Claus, suit and all. Many of the requests he received were made by children asking for something for someone other than themselves.

Jesse reports he was touched by many of the requests the children made. But none stood out more than those young children who asked

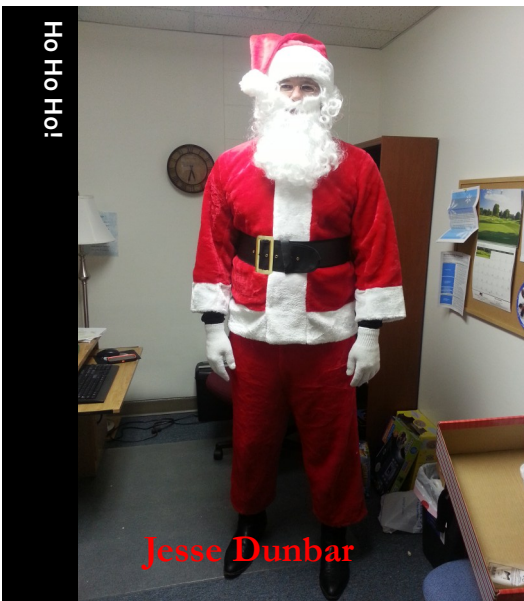
for a “warm coat for Christmas”. Jesse and the staff all expressed, in various ways, the critical importance of helping these children, particularly since we know enough background to be sure that this is no idle or whimsical request. So, if the reader wants to help, contact me.

*“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”*

—Maya Angelou

### *Christmas Family Support Group Well Attended*

19 Adults and 20 Children attended the annual Parent to Parent Christmas party hosted on December 17, 2012. Each child was presented with a pair of gloves or mittens, and a light meal was provided by the staff. Jesse Dunbar, husband of our newest employee (Amanda) added real energy to the event, playing the role of Santa Claus for the children. Staff and families alike verbalized how much fun the event was. For some families, this event is the most significant of the holiday season. Thanks much to Jesse for his bravery and patience!



**Representative Photo Only! No photographs of clients were used in this or any other publication.**

### THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

38 persons attended “A Taste of Thanksgiving” held on November 19, 2012. Family support activities and special games highlighted the event. As usual, the staff worked overtime to make this event the rousing success that it was!

Special thanks to JoAnn Pieper and Amanda Dunbar for their assistance in making the event happen, including all of the running around to get items needed.

Flatter not thyself in thy faith in God if thou hast not charity for thy neighbor.  
 Author: Francis Quarles

# Active Parenting Now

Parent to Parent Network

**February 5 - March 12, 2013**

## ACTIVE PARENTING

**NOW** is an entertaining and informative, 6-week program for parents of children ages 5-12 that uses video, activities and discussion to show you ways to **raise responsible, cooperative children** who are able to resist negative peer pressure. You'll learn a proven approach to parenting developed by Dr. Michael Popkin that will lead to more harmony and happiness for you and your children.

### Six topics every parent needs to know:

Session 1 The Active Parent

Session 2 Winning Cooperation

Session 3 Responsibility & Discipline

Session 4 Understanding & Redirecting Misbehavior

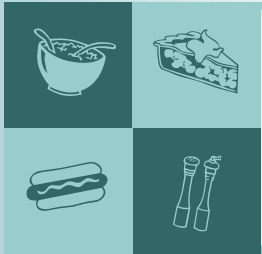
Session 5 Building Courage, Character & Self-Esteem

Session 6 The Active Family Now

**The cost for this class is \$40 per person, and will include all materials.**

Tuesday Nights  
6-8 pm  
Parent to Parent Office  
201 Miller Ave  
Norfolk, NE  
1-877-379-9926





# Staff Notes



Some staff changes occurred within the past month. **Amanda Dunbar** is our newest Family Advocate. She and her family moved here from Virginia:

*I am a mother of 3 active boys, ages 8, 19 months and 7 months. I grew up in Dayton, Ohio and graduated with my Bachelor's degree from Ohio University in 2007. I majored in Child and Family Studies-Health and Human Services. My previous employment history includes working for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio as a youth counselor and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Texas as an after school program director for middle schoolers. I also have over 2 years of experience working with kids on the Autism spectrum as an ABA therapist. I love working with families in helping them accomplish their goals and meet their needs.*



**Tonda Cranor** returned with her family to Indiana. We will miss an outstanding Advocate.



**Tawna Lichty** was promoted to Family Services Supervisor. While she is relatively new to our organization, Tawna has a ton of experience working in helping organizations and programs.

# Movie Night!!

**Parent to Parent Network**

**Invites you and your family to join us for:**

## MOVIE AND POPCORN NIGHT!

**When: Monday, January 28th 2013**

**6:00pm-8:00pm**

**Where: Parent to Parent Office-201 Miller Ave.  
Norfolk, NE.**

**Registration is Required!**

**Please Call by Jan. 24th at 5pm**

**1-877-379-9926 or 402-379-2268**

## **Jen's Story** (Taken from the Bring Change 2Mind website- <http://www.bringchange2mind.org>)

I have fought and lived with depression for over half my life. I was 10 years old when I was first diagnosed, and I will be 21 soon. A few weeks after my 10th birthday, I started having uncontrollable thoughts that made me feel so guilty. I washed my hands constantly; I couldn't stop. I thought I had lost my mind.

The thought that I was going insane sent me spiraling into a deep, dark depression. I cried all day everyday, and my mother couldn't get me out of bed. I tried to end my life by drowning myself in my family's pool in our back yard, because I felt that was the only way to escape the place I feared most in the world - my mind. Luckily, I didn't know it's impossible to hold yourself underwater.

My parents were aware that I was very ill, but they had no idea what was happening to me. As an adult, I now think that they were just as frightened as I was. They told me constantly that they loved me, and that everything was going to be alright. After my mom found out that I had tried to hurt myself, she admitted me to a children's mental facility because she thought I was a danger to myself.

I was there for a total of 3 hours. I cried the whole time. I was afraid of the kids there. They told stories of stabbing their teachers and trying to push their little sisters out of cars on freeway overpasses.

When my mom came back to visit me that night, I was crying hysterically and begged her to take me home. I told her I was scared, and to just please, please, please get me out of there. She talked to the psychiatrist on duty and told him what had been happening to me. She talked to him for what seemed like an eternity while I waited outside the door. Finally, she came out, and knelt down to me.

She smiled and said "You're coming home."

"I-I am?" I asked

"Jen," She said "The doctor says there's a name for what you have and that you shouldn't be here. He says you have obsessive compulsive disorder and depression. You can be helped, sweetheart."

I felt as if a 1,000 pound weight had been lifted from my shoulders. What I was going through had a name. I wasn't losing my mind. It wasn't my fault. I could be helped. I started crying, but not out of fear or sadness. These were tears of joy.

I went home with my family that night, and the next day my mom took me to see a child psychologist and psychiatrist, both of whom helped me on my long road to recovery. I began taking anti depressants, which I still take to this day and I may have to for the rest of my life. My psychologist taught me to regain control of my mind. He helped me understand my illnesses, and he helped me realize that having a mental illness doesn't make you weird or crazy. He taught me that it's okay.

Eventually, I grew out of the OCD, but the depression still lingers. As I've grown up, though, I've learned to control it. But most of all, in the last 10 years, I've learned that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel, and that you are never, ever alone.

## Parent to Parent Network

Parent to Parent Network  
201 Miller Avenue  
Norfolk, NE 68701

### Board of Directors:

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Parent to Parent Network is affiliated with the  
Nebraska Federation of Families for Chil-  
dren's Mental Health

### Members of:

National Alliance for Mentally Ill (NAMI)

National Federation of Families for Children's  
Mental Health

Parent to Parent Network is a private, non-profit, commu-  
nity based organization devoted to strengthening families  
in Nebraska. Organized in 1998, the program has grow  
substantially through the years, including outreach to sev-  
eral communities in Northeast Nebraska.

We hire people who are or have been primary care-givers  
for children with behavioral health, emotional, or school  
issues. Our Advocates are trained to help, but their  
strength lies in having "been there", and having found  
ways to navigate the systems affecting their child.

We charge no fees for our services. We're members of the  
Nebraska Federation of Families for Children's Mental  
Health and the National Federation with the same name.

Services are provided confidentially. You determine what  
services you want. We may make suggestions, but you  
have the final say!

Advocacy on behalf of the families we serve is an integral  
part of the services we provide. We look upon those to  
whom we advocate as being partners rather than oppo-  
nents. We prefer what we call collaborative advocacy. We  
know that our families are best served when we make and  
strengthen partnerships with other helping organizations.  
Our advocacy is done with regard for one overriding princi-  
ple: ***that the family voice be heard.***

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OUR WEB ADDRESS IS:  
**WWW.PARENT-PARENT.ORG**

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### Staff:

**Robert Gereaux, Executive Director**

**Tawna Lichty, Family Services Coordinator**

**JoAnn Pieper, Office Manager**

**Cliff Hogancamp, Information Systems Specialist**

**Kimberly Dye, Family Advocate**

**Amanda Dunbar, Family Advocate**

**Vacant, Family Advocate**

**Maribel Bernal, Office Assistant**