One unique aspect that sets Maria Droste Counseling Center apart from other counseling centers is our intake department. Our intake counselors are warm, knowledgeable, and welcoming. They are familiar with the schedules, specialties, personalities, and accepted insurance of all members of The Therapist Group as well as our interns and are skilled at matching each client with the right therapist.

When a client calls our intake department, they are guided through an assessment to determine if our therapists have the right skills to work with them. If not, we refer them to other organizations that we believe would be a better fit, so they can get the help they need. Sue Kamler, Director of Intake Services said, “In intake, we get the opportunity to help someone feel like they’ve been heard, and that in and of itself gives people hope.”

Last year, the most prevalent problems for which callers sought help were depression and anxiety. Sue said one of the main causes for this is chronic or long-term unemployment. “The pressure of still being out of work may not have presented with depression and anxiety a year ago, but if they are still unemployed, that depression becomes greater, and the person’s ability to cope breaks down.”

Continued on Page 4
From The Executive Director

Mental health is talked about more now than ever before. Due to the high profile media coverage of the shootings in Aurora and at Sandy Hook elementary school, mental health is now the subject of discussions at national, state, and community levels. But what are people saying? How are you talking about it with your friends and neighbors?

Are we talking as if mental health issues are still something that “happens to someone else?” Is our attitude that “Yes it’s important, but it’s not a problem in my family?” The reality is that psychiatric conditions, which include everything from mental illness to emotional problems and depression, are common and will affect 46% of adults at some point in their lifetime. The stigma around mental illness and emotional problems is the number one reason that many people, especially men, do not seek help and therefore suffer from emotional pain, depression, and other complex conditions.

But we know that “mental health is fundamental to health.” This is one of the key messages conveyed in the first ever Surgeon General’s report on the topic of mental health and mental illness released in 1999. One of the dangers of mental health issues being linked to these high profile cases is that people inaccurately believe that those with mental illnesses are dangerous. Multiple studies have shown that this is not true. “People with psychiatric disabilities are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violent crime” (Appleby, et al., 2001). Inaccurate information leads to more stigma, which in turn prevents people from accessing the help they need.

Finally, there is a documented shortage of affordable mental health care in our community. This has been true since Maria Droste Counseling Center was founded in 1989, and it continues to be true today.

My hope is that as a community, we can realize that mental health care is a community responsibility and impacts our community health. Instead of isolating or dehumanizing individuals who are suffering with mental health issues, we need to look at ways we can respond as a community to make appropriate care accessible and affordable.

I am truly grateful to all of you who help us work toward this important goal.

- Linda E. McKinzie

A Lifelong Journey of Learning

Albert Einstein once said, “Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.” We at Maria Droste Counseling Center recognize that lifelong learning is a key component in the mental health field. Just as lawyers need to continually educate themselves about new laws, therapists need to stay up to date on the nuances of how people connect with one another and communicate.

One way we support lifelong learning and continued education is through our commitment to training, not only for those who are working toward a degree, but also for those who have already achieved a degree and are looking to get licensed or become more proficient in a particular area. We refer to those who fall into this category as externs. Our extern program is vital to our organization because externs help us serve additional clients, many of whom would not be seen within our agency without this program.

Along with seeing clients, externs also volunteer for the agency. For many externs, this means working in our intake department. Kim Fossel, a previous intern who has been an extern with us since June 2012, said, “As an extern, I really enjoy not only the opportunity to work with children, adolescents, and adults, but also working in intake screening potential clients, assigning clients to therapists, and offering referrals to clients who are unable to be seen at Maria Droste. I enjoy helping people take their first step in their healing journey.”

However, not all externs work in our intake department. Elizabeth Klaers, a previous extern who has been an extern with us since September 2012, sees clients in our Options program, co-facilitates graduate level intern groups, and assists with fund development and grant writing. She explained, “Gaining clinical hours toward licensure is part of my professional goal, but the draw for me was the way the externship at Maria Droste Counseling Center meets my need for professional development.”

In addition to seeing clients and volunteering for the agency, a key component of our training program is providing supervision as well as access to ongoing in-services. Elizabeth said, “The dynamic responsibilities and unique challenges faced by psychotherapists and social workers seeking licensure demands the need for quality supervision in clinical settings.

“The supervision I receive is truly exceptional. I am achieving my goal to become an effective and skilled licensed clinical social worker; I feel so fortunate to be here. I have deepened my understanding of what is most effective when working with clients, received quality supervision and gained valuable non-profit leadership mentoring.”

We highly value our externs, as we couldn’t serve nearly as many clients without their hard work and dedication to our mission.

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Kim Fossel, working in our Intake Department
Continued from Page 1

Intake also noticed an increase in calls about relationship issues. Claudia Gray, Intake Manager, said, “This year in particular, we had a lot of people requesting couples and family therapy for a variety of reasons.” One of those reasons is the correlation between the economic downturn and communication. Sue said, “If couples are already struggling with communication skills, and you add the stress and struggle of economic and financial worries, the weaknesses in communication become more pronounced. Couples will start to seek out counseling to help them find better ways to communicate with each other.”

Sue explained that the calls coming in last year also seemed to be more complex. “For example, someone will call in saying they are experiencing depression and anxiety, but during the assessment process, we discover a history of childhood abuse or domestic violence. The depression is actually secondary to unresolved issues of loss or abuse.”

In 2012, our intake department also noticed a change in why and how people are finding us. Some organizations offering mental health services closed last year, so people who may have been receiving services elsewhere are now seeking services at Maria Droste.

Also, more people are using the internet as a way to find resources, and with the development of our new website, potential clients can find us more easily. They can also use our website to find a therapist through our online directory or take our online mental health screening, which can be a great first step in helping them discover if mental health counseling might be helpful.

In looking ahead to 2013, we expect that the request for our services will continue to grow. Recent traumatic events like the Aurora theater and Sandy Hook shootings have brought mental health to the forefront of people’s minds. “Mental illness is now in the media and awareness is increasing. Because of that, more people may be seeking help for a loved one or friend,” said Claudia.

When people do decide to seek help, our intake department will be there to guide them through the process.

Brandon's Story

Brandon is an energetic eight-year-old in the third grade. He was initially referred to Karen, one of our CHILDREN FIRST counselors, by his teacher. She said Brandon would leave the room without permission for extended periods of time as well as clog toilets with paper towels “on purpose!”

When Brandon started to meet with Karen, he would rarely make eye contact. He would make up stories that he hoped would impress her. She said, “He once told me his family was on the TV show Jersey Shore and that his mom was Snooki!”

Over time, Brandon became more relaxed around Karen and started to open up about his anger and what was bothering him. He admitted that making up stories had made him feel more important. One session, while they were working on identifying different emotions, Karen asked Brandon what it looked like for him to be angry. He replied, “Well … I used to clog toilets … but I don’t do that anymore!”

Brandon’s teacher reported that his classroom behavior has improved and no toilet clogging incidents have been reported. Brandon’s self-esteem seems to have greatly improved, and he no longer causes disruptions in the classroom.

Thank You

We want to thank all of our foundation and corporation major donors who contributed to Maria Droste Counseling Center in 2012!

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2012 By the Numbers

2,155 - the number of calls to our intake line in 2012
557 - calls screened and placed with a therapist
667 - the number of clients served in 2012 through our CHILDREN FIRST program, which serves the unique mental health needs of children and their families with on-site counseling services at 20 local elementary schools.
572 - the number of clients served in 2012 through our Options program, which serves adults, children, and families who lack health insurance, have inadequate health insurance for mental health issues, or have limited income to access counseling through the private sector.
42 - the number of clients served in 2012 through our Survivor’s Mental Health Program (SMHP), which provides comprehensive mental health care to adult survivors of violence who have serious mental health problems.
Thank You

We thank all of our generous supporters who contributed to Maria Droste Counseling Center in 2012!

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Cassie Ricks, Communications Manager
Derek Linscott, Administrative Assistant
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The second annual David L. Swenson Charity Golf Classic, benefiting Maria Droste Counseling Center, will be held Monday, September 9, 2013. The event will include a 4-person scramble, dinner, silent auction, and an awards reception. If you are interested in participating, please contact Cassi Ricks at 303-867-4609 or cassi_ricks@mariadroste.org.

Team Mind Body and Sole, benefiting Maria Droste Counseling Center, will be participating in the Sports Authority Rock 'n Roll Denver Marathon and 1/2 Marathon October 22, 2013.

Contact Cassi Ricks at 303-867-4609 or cassi_ricks@mariadroste.org.

Staff

Judy Wilkinson, Director of Intern Education
Julie Chrzanski, Director of Children First
Sue Cameron, Director of Intake Services
Cassie Ricks, Intake Co-Manager
Jo Blihart, Director of SMHP
Cassie Ricks, Communications Manager
Derek Linscott, Administrative Assistant
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The Therapist Group At Maria Droste Counseling Center
Excellence in Psychotherapy & Personal Growth

Phone: 303-756-9052 • MariaDroste.org
Maria Droste Counseling Center was founded in 1989 to bridge the gaps in available counseling services for underserved populations in the Denver area. Since its inception, and with your support, the organization has grown in targeted ways to meet significant, unmet mental health needs in the community.

In 2014 you will be invited to join with us in celebrating our 25th Anniversary.