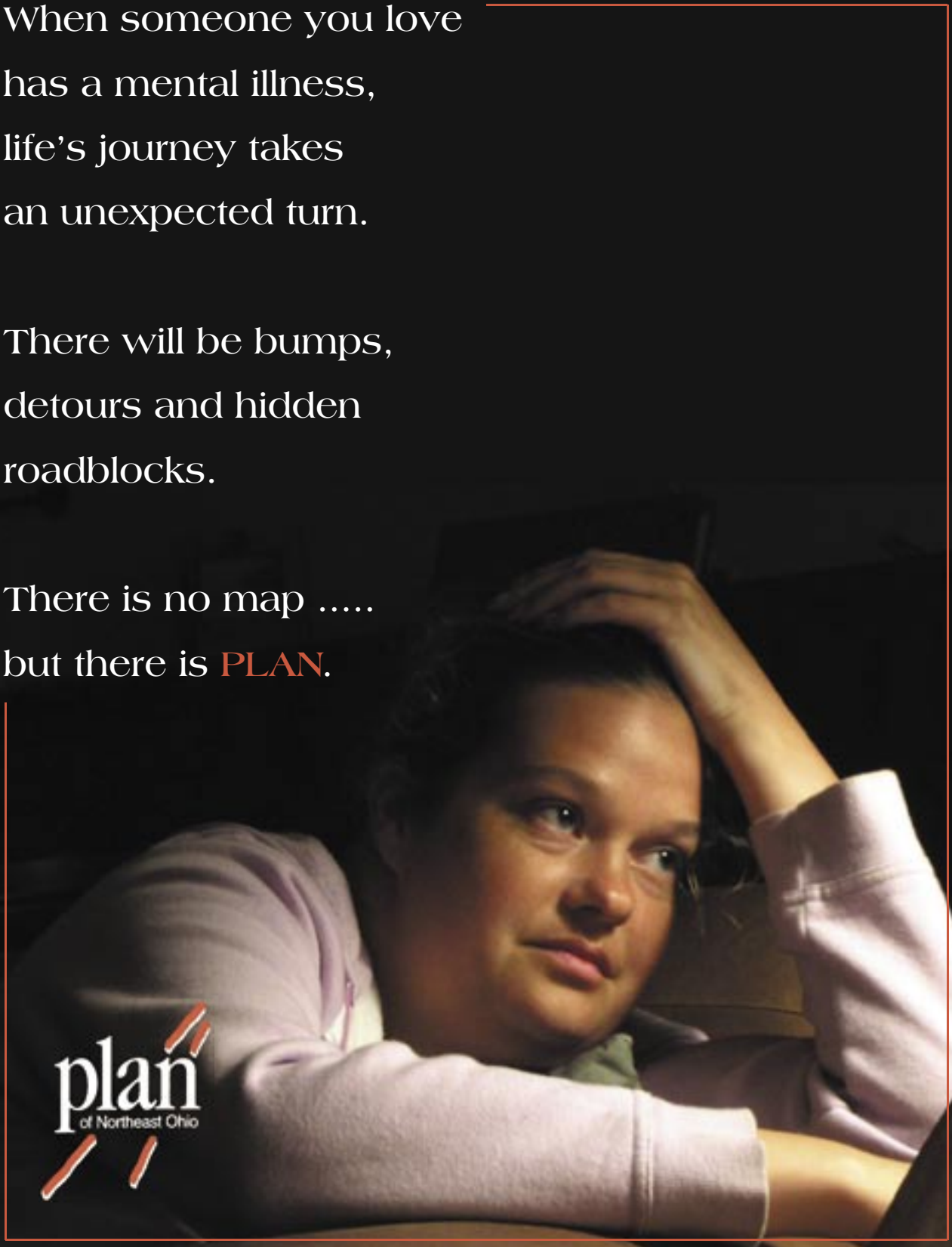


When someone you love
has a mental illness,
life's journey takes
an unexpected turn.

There will be bumps,
detours and hidden
roadblocks.

There is no map
but there is **PLAN**.



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Since 1989, PLAN of Northeast Ohio has been helping hundreds of men and women who have been diagnosed with chronic mental illness, and their family members.

Our primary mission has been to help people challenged by mental illness progress in their recovery by providing **individualized and innovative treatments and services**, throughout their lives, in a supportive community of families, friends and specially trained professionals.

PLAN's success has been profound.

We have provided the treatments and tools necessary to allow hundreds of members (our term for clients) diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, mild mental retardation, obsessive compulsive disorder, personality disorder and debilitating depression to achieve enduring emotional and cognitive growth and recovery.

To reach these ends, we provide a variety of services and programs like those described on the following pages.

Family Advocacy

is a program using highly trained, Masters level social workers to provide a full range of family-centered services to each member in their own homes. We know that mental illness affects the entire family and that working with just one member of the family won't help our members to the fullest extent. Through our Family Support Network and in conjunction with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), PLAN organizes information and education for our family members on topics such as housing, estate planning and future care planning.



Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (CET)

is a program utilizing specially developed treatments to improve the cognitive and social functions of persons with schizophrenia, a mental illness which can have severe functional disabilities. This highly structured program uses individual therapy, group therapy and specially designed computer software to increase each member's attention, memory and problem solving abilities. The outcomes of CET have been extremely dramatic.



Holistic Recovery Programs

work to reduce isolation and increase physical and social activity, engage in meaningful vocational activities, improve physical health and in general, to give our members the tools to become self-sufficient. This is one of PLAN's most popular programs, and includes a wide array of events and outings including a supper club, outdoor hikes, basketball, softball, bowling, game nights, dances, water exercise, talent shows, festivals and entertainment.





Vocational Counseling is an important part on the path to recovery. On average, only 17% of persons with a severe mental illness have meaningful work but PLAN clients have a rate of 54%. Since vocational counseling began in April of 2002, counselors have assisted 1/3 of all members in finding work, retaining their jobs and achieving promotions. Others have been placed in volunteer roles with non-profit organizations.

Volunteering Project is a great, free service that PLAN members offer non-profit organizations to help with mailings and other volunteer work. Volunteering provides a meaningful role for our members as they serve the community.



Creative and Expressive Arts

opportunities promote recovery by using the arts as a therapeutic medium to enhance socialization, develop problem-solving abilities, reduce anxiety, build effective coping capacities, achieve personal growth and enjoyment.

The Supportive Housing Program is a form of assisted living for our members that provides a living situation with built in supports that promote recovery from mental illness. We teach independent living skills and provide assistance with routine tasks such as grocery shopping and paying bills.



But we think the best way to truly understand what PLAN provides is to follow the growth and recovery of one member.

We'd like to introduce you to Tasha.

Almost from the time Tasha was born, her parents, Greg and Edie, noticed something didn't seem quite right. She struggled with breastfeeding, didn't like to be cuddled and cried a great deal. As she got older, Tasha seemed delayed in her fine motor skills and socially withdrawn. "She simply didn't seem to connect with the world around her" reflects Greg.

Tasha's kindergarten teacher told her parents she had increasing difficulties with other children and was having minor behavioral problems. Tasha's first diagnosis was AD/HD, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and she was held back a year in school.

Tasha recalls always feeling different and picked on. Being pulled out of class for special help or having to spend time in the principal's office for discipline issues made her feel singled out. Her teachers simply didn't understand her and treated her harshly. "I used to have to sit in the front of the room next to the teacher's desk. It was so embarrassing."

Eventually Tasha was placed in special education classes because she was "slow" and had frequent behavior problems. To make it worse, the classes were held in trailers outside of the school." She became one of "those kids" and she hated how that made her feel.

Tasha's school days were anything but happy. She recalls having little positive reinforcement, with the exception of one teacher, and virtually no positive social interactions, though she had one friend, Jamie. "When it was someone's birthday at school, everyone would bring that kid a balloon. The popular kids would have 20 or more balloons on their birthday. I would get three, one from the teacher, one from my parents and one from Jamie.

I hated riding the school bus. I was always afraid to get on the bus because I was picked on all the time. The kids told me I had to sit next to the windows because only the popular kids got to sit on the aisles. Most of time, I would sit by myself. One time a kid put some smelly spray in my hair and I had to walk around all day smelling awful. There were days I was afraid to go to school."



Tasha's school days were anything but happy.



Sadly, Tasha never told her parents about the bullying and the fears. Today when they hear her talk, their eyes well up with tears.

The only bright spot in Tasha's days in elementary and middle school was sports. She was good at volleyball and basketball and her coach made her feel special.

During this time, Greg and Edie recall feeling very alone with little help or resources for Tasha. "Services were difficult to find and no one referred us to anyone who could help us. We made it through each day as a team. When one of us got frustrated or exhausted, the other would just take over. Our faith got us through."

Tasha has a sister four years younger with whom she never wanted to play and she freely admits to beating her up on occasion. In general, Tasha felt quite ambivalent about her little sister.

When it was time for high school, Tasha hoped it would be better, but it wasn't. Though she still had sports, she got into frequent fights. On top of the AD/HD diagnosis, Tasha's hormones were kicking in and making her even more moody, distant, angry and aloof. She had no friends, never dated and hung out with a tough crowd.

After six months in high school, Tasha's family was transferred to Orlando. Tasha was looking forward to warm weather, Disney World and a new start. Once in Orlando, she began seeing a psychiatrist who prescribed various medications, though it was hard to get her to stay on her meds. Eventually, between fights and emotional issues, Tasha was kicked out of high school after only six months. After a succession of different high schools, vocational school and home schooling, Tasha was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for a week during those turbulent years.

When it was time for high school, Tasha hoped it would be better, but it wasn't.



Tasha's entire adolescence was peppered with anger, failure, frustration and unhappiness.

After three years in Orlando, Tasha's family was transferred back to Cleveland where Tasha was tutored at home. With a lot of hard work, she received her high school diploma but never had a chance to walk down the aisle like the other kids to get her diploma, something Tasha misses to this day.

After graduation, Tasha went on to Hocking College where she lived and had a taste of "real" college life. Greg and Edie were excited for her. She seemed to be living a more mainstreamed life, had a few friends and earned 26 credits. But things caught up with her and after a year and a half, Tasha left school and was hospitalized for severe depression.



Over the years, Tasha recalls having 60 different jobs from McDonalds to Marc's. In 2001 she landed a part-time job in security at Gund Arena which she liked. Eventually she moved into floor security and had the chance to meet many visiting celebrities including Paul McCartney, REM, Kid Rock, Cher, Eva Longoria and even LeBron James.

Things were going well for Tasha. She was upbeat, holding down a steady job, found a psychiatrist who seemed to understand her depression and got on the right medication. "I felt free for the first time. Depression was a weight that was lifted off my shoulders when I got the right meds." In 2002, Tasha even got her own apartment.

Unfortunately, as with many people with depression, Tasha's medications began to wane and she went in and out of depression. Fortunately, in February of 2003 Tasha and her family found out about PLAN.

She was assigned to a PLAN Family Advocate, Loretta Geyer whose job was to provide individualized services. She also worked with Tasha's existing therapists and service providers to coordinate care that would ensure the optimum level of services were being provided.

On Labor Day of 2003, Tasha's depression reached a new low and Loretta urged her to go to the Cleveland Clinic for help. "That saved my life", Tasha says today. "For the first time I had a real diagnosis – bipolar, manic depressive, minor schizophrenia. If it wasn't for PLAN, I would never have met Loretta, I would never have gotten to the Clinic, I would never have gotten the right diagnosis and I would never have gotten new meds."

She was assigned to a PLAN Family Advocate, who worked with Tasha's existing therapists and service providers to coordinate care.

"I don't mind being labeled" says Tasha. "I know what's wrong with me now and that it has a name and I can deal with it."

Tasha has taken full advantage of all PLAN has to offer. Perhaps the most helpful part of her involvement was her participation in the fourteen month long CET program from which she graduated in 2006. CET or Cognitive Enhancement Therapy uses specially developed treatments to improve the cognitive and social functioning of persons with major mental illnesses through individual therapy, group therapy and computer software programs which increase member's attention, memory and problem solving.

"CET helped me learn to look at other people's perspectives on things and how to deal with my anger, one of my biggest problems my whole life." Tasha's parents, who are extremely proud of her achievements

with the CET program agree. It was through CET that she learned the expression, "Let it slide." Though she still gets angry she has learned how to "Let it slide." "Now I can talk about my anger rather than showing my anger," Tasha says.

She also participates in a number of PLAN's social activities including the Supper Club which meets at restaurants like the Tasty Buffet, Geraci's, Jack's and other locations.

But perhaps most importantly, PLAN has given Tasha someone to talk to, confide in, listen to her and help her with problems. Currently, Vicki Elsoffer is Tasha's Family Advocate. Vicki and Tasha meet at least weekly and talk about everything. "Vicki provides me with a level of comfort knowing that I have someone I can call and talk to and air my feelings with."

Today, in addition to her security job at Quicken Loans Arena, Tasha works at a child care center with developmentally delayed children. She also has a part time job with PLAN helping out at social outings. Tasha has been very open about her problems with all of her employers and they have been very accommodating.

Tasha has her own car, a job she likes, her own apartment, new friends, a closer relationship with her family and most importantly, her own life. She has a psychiatrist she sees regularly who helps adjust her medications when they need it and she is totally compliant with her meds and her programs. And Tasha has a PLAN Family Advocate she trusts and can depend on to help her continue in her recovery from mental illness.

As for her future, Tasha wants to make up for lost time. She wants to get closer to her family and especially her sister. She wants to travel. She wants to find a boyfriend. She wants to live the kind of life that other 29 year old girls lead and she wants to keep feeling good.

When Tasha was asked what she thought she'd be doing if she had never found PLAN, she quickly answered, "I'd probably be in prison. I would have never gotten my stuff together. I feel less alone with PLAN. I feel lucky. PLAN was a turning point in my life."

Ray Gonzalez, PLAN's Executive Director since it was founded, often says, "medication opens the door to treatment and then our programs turn on the lights and open the windows so we can get the real person back again."

With your help, hundreds of other men and women just like Tasha will benefit from PLAN.

PLAN has given Tasha someone to talk to, confide in, listen to her and help her with problems.



As part of PLAN's 2006-2009 strategic plan, a vision statement was created with specific goals to be reached by 2009. They include:

- increase from 120 to 160 members
- increase family centered social services
- pilot at least one new innovative treatment or service
- staff will develop specialties for unique populations, ie; the elderly, substance abuse
- at least 55% of members working, volunteering or attending school
- provide the CET program to at least six new local and regional mental health agencies and 3 outside of Ohio
- positive awareness of PLAN's CET program among 75% of northeast Ohio mental health community and funders
- have an unrestricted cash reserve equal to one quarter's operating expenses (\$330,000)
- increase annual campaign to \$170,000
- obtain commitments of a minimum of \$1.5 million for an endowment fund

PLAN utilizes a wide variety of strategies to reach our financial goals so we can continue to flourish. We are a private, nonprofit organization and do not accept government funding by choice. Therefore, we rely on fees for our services and fundraising from foundations, corporations and individuals in our community to meet our annual budget.

Now it is time to insure our future.

To this end, we are embarking on an Endowment Campaign which will insure not only that we reach these goals but that we provide for the future of our members and the very existence of PLAN well into the future.

Below are just some of the ways you can help.

Leave a bequest to PLAN in your will.

Consult your attorney to arrange for a Charitable Remainder Trust.

Purchase an insurance policy with PLAN as the owner and ultimately, beneficiary.

Consider transferring appreciated securities to PLAN.

Make PLAN your charity of choice when you are called upon to make contributions in memory or in honor of someone.

Help us connect with other individuals, foundation and corporations you know who might be interested in hearing PLAN's story.

PLAN needs the help of everyone who has been touched by mental illness and those who understand its devastating outcomes.

PLAN is a private, non-profit 501 (c)(3) mental health organization whose Board of Directors is composed of clients, PLAN family members and community volunteers who bring special expertise and knowledge to the agency.. The board meets regularly throughout the year to make sure that PLAN programs and services are among the best and most relevant and are responsible for continually reassessing programs and services as resources shift.

All contributions to PLAN are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



PLAN of Northeast Ohio, Inc.
2490 Lee Blvd. Suite 204
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
216-321-3611
www.planneohio.org
info@planneohio.org