

Network

A publication of
Sertoma Centre

Consumer Tequila Williams makes a
statement at Southland Rally



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 **Sertoma
Centre, Inc.**

Discovering the
potential in all of us

Letter from Gus van den Brink, Executive Director



A primary topic of this newsletter is advocacy. At Sertoma we highly value advocacy for and by individuals with disabilities. Our consumer self-advocacy group "Sertoma United" is very active in training other consumers to advocate for themselves and the needs of all individuals with disabilities. They are not a shy group. They have written and met with state legislators and even made a trip to Springfield to talk with state legislators during the spring session.

Advocacy is everybody's job and we need everybody joining in with our consumer self-advocates to make an impact. Right now like never before advocacy is important to keep community services strong, growing, and improving to meet the needs of the individuals being served in the community as well as, the new individuals that are moving into community services from public and private institutions as they continue to be downsized and closed.

So what do we need to advocate for and why? The following is a partial list:

- We need a state budget passed now. Although Medicaid and certain other payments are being made there are many smaller state grant funded programs that have closed or are struggling to continue providing necessary services to their community.
- As more individuals are moved from institutions into community services the funding is not following the individuals at the same rate to provide adequate resources to serve these individuals, who in many cases have much greater needs.
- Reimbursement rates for community services have not been increased to provide the needed clinicians and support staff to serve the individuals presenting for services. Most payment rates for services have not been increased more than nine years.
- Community providers across the state are unable to hire adequate numbers of direct support and clinical staff due to the low wages they pay. Staff turnover is constant and increasing for the same reason.
- There are federal and state mandates including "Employment First" and New "Home and Community Based Services Waiver" requirements that current state funding cannot support and need to be addressed by our public officials.

We need everyone who supports individuals with disabilities and community services to be an active advocate now! It is our job as advocates to work to resolve the challenges we face and assure adequate services and choices for individuals with disabilities, so they can more fully participate in their community. To learn more how you can become an advocate with us here at Sertoma Centre contact me at 708 730-6216 or gvan denbrink@sertomacentre.org.

2015-2016 Board of Directors

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Sertoma Centre, Inc.'s Mission Statement

At Sertoma Centre, Inc., our mission is to provide opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve personal success.

CARF Accredited, 501(c)(3) Organization

Sertoma Centre, Inc. Code of Ethics Policy

Sertoma Centre has the obligation to act in ways that will merit the trust, confidence, and respect of individuals, their families, and the community. To this end, we have a Code of Ethics. Our commitment is to ensure any allegation of violation of this Code by individuals, family members, guardians, staff, and members of the community are investigated and addressed. For a complete copy of the Code and the complaint process, please visit the Sertoma Centre website: www.sertomacentre.org.

Sertoma Centre Provides Training to Alsip Park District

Sertoma Centre provided training on the proper use of wheelchair lifts to ten of Alsip Park District's employees from the maintenance and other departments. Thank you to Sertoma employees who helped train and answer questions: David Stubitsch, Porter Brooker, Wayne Thomas, and Lucus Iverson.



Sertoma Centre staff giving wheelchair training to Alsip Park District

S.T.A.R. Program Lends a Hand to the Animal Welfare League

Sertoma Centre collected items for the canine and feline residents of the Animal Welfare League which has been volunteering services to the S.T.A.R. Program (Shelter Dog Training and Rehoming Program) since



its inception in 2010. The S.T.A.R. program serves a dual purpose to benefit homeless dogs and Sertoma Centre consumers. The mission of the S.T.A.R. program is to promote humans and animals learning together through a community collaborative effort and to find homes for these animals. The league

brings homeless dogs to a facility for Sertoma consumers to train and prepare for adoption, thereby reducing the number of dogs who are destroyed.

Podiatrist Brings Comfort to the Sole

Dr. Elipas provides services to residential consumers in need of foot care. He recommended SureFit, a company which provides specialty shoes, for consumers living with diabetes. Consumers can choose from work boots to casual shoes. These shoes are



important, because people with diabetes are at high risk for complications stemming from circulatory problems. This is the first time the clinic has ordered these special shoes. Consumers are eligible for one pair per year covered under Medicare/Medicaid.



Meet Chris Van Eck-Our Associate Board's Dynamic New Leader



Chris Van Eck was recently unanimously chosen to lead the way as President of Sertoma Centre's Associate Board. He passionately leads a dynamic group of professionals and emerging leaders who share an interest in helping individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities and/or mental illness. The Associate Board strives to promote the mission of Sertoma Centre through education, fundraising, community service and fun initiatives.

"I first got involved in fundraising efforts at Sertoma three years ago. Since then, I have been blessed to help lead a fundraising effort that has each year outdone the previous one. When I was presented with an opportunity to not only join the Associate Board but to find the right candidates to fill the spots, I was truly honored. I reached out to the most driven, successful, and caring people that I knew. I was overwhelmed with the responses. All invited people were delighted to join. We look forward to coordinating new fundraising efforts in 2016 and beyond!"

The current members are: Teresa Chavolla, Terra Jacobson, James Johnstone, Thomas Kopko, Caitie Cross Lombard, Jeff Lombard, Tom Matug, Alicia McWilliams, Anne Murphy, Michael Murphy, Zach Reid, Joseph Rivera, David Troy, and President Chris Van Eck.

Benefits of Sertoma Centre's Associate Board:

- Serve as an Ambassador of Sertoma Centre
- Enhance your resume by learning new marketable skills
- Network with other passionate philanthropic individuals who care about their community
- Expand your leadership potential through new and innovative initiatives

Applications for the Associate Board are now available. We have many ways to get involved through our Committees. To find out how you can become part of this group, contact staff liaison Lisa Molloy at lmolloy@sertomacentre.org or 708.730.6210.



Sertoma United holding protest signs during Southland Rally

Sertoma Centre Consumers Make a Statement at Southland Rally

Sertoma United made a stand with community leaders and non-profit organizations at a southland rally held on August 27, 2015 in Oak Forest to express their concern about the state budget impasse and its impact on Illinois' citizens. Brendan McCormick organized the rally, which quickly attracted participants who wanted to voice their frustrations and concerns. Also in attendance were State Representatives Will Davis, Al Riley, and Kelly Burke, Senator Bill Cunningham, and long-time Sertoma Centre supporter Senator Michael Hastings. The state has yet to pass the budget that would have gone into effect July 1, 2015. Due to this delay, non-profit agencies have had no state payments for services the last several months. Advocates gathered at the Oak Forest Village Hall to set off an emergency alarm from the South suburbs to Springfield. Agencies throughout the state are barely operating, with their minimal reserves, but are still providing senior care, child care and early intervention services despite no financial resources in months. About \$3 billion in projected spending on social services is tied up and has not been resolved. Let's hope in the coming months there will be a resolution and a state budget passed that adequately funds all human services.

Hallway Makeover: Keeping Up With The Times

Sertoma Centre's self-advocacy group, Sertoma United, wanted to make a positive impact at the 127th Street facility. They wanted to update pictures and picture frames to show that Sertoma Centre is keeping up with the times. The outdated pictures were over 15 years old, displaying outdated fashions, hair styles and machinery. The group feared that visitors would think that our programs and thinking were outdated too. The new pictures show an updated view of jobs on the work floor and several other activities that consumers participate in including the Annual Dinner, helping at the housewares show, attending rallies, trainings, and the annual trip to participate in classes at Moraine Valley Community College. The cherry wood frames lend color to the hallway and direct attention to the new photos showcasing Sertoma consumers.

Sertoma United wanted to thank a few individuals that helped with this project by donating to costs and ordering the prints. Many thanks to Debbie Sands, Dina Raya, Michelle Gonsiorek, and Dawn Cox for helping Sertoma show others what we can do.



Beautiful photos taken by Melissa Sands, Consumer Support Services Specialist of Sertoma Centre Consumers



Kathryn Groenendal stops by for a visit at Sertoma Centre

CMHC Receives SAMHSA Grant

Sertoma's Community Mental Health and Counseling program (CMHC) in Matteson, IL has been awarded a three year Project AWARE-Community grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support the training of a diverse group of adults in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). This training will help adults detect and respond to mental illness in transitional youth in Bloom Township. MHFA is a public education program that introduces participants to the risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems and builds an understanding of the importance of early intervention. Participants are introduced to local mental health resources, national organizations, support groups, and online tools for mental health and addictions treatment and support. For more information or to attend a training, contact Sertoma's Community Development Manager, Gia Washington at gwwashington@sertomacentre.org.

CMHC Makes Strides in Community Education

Over the last two years, CMHC has interacted with over 3,000 members of our communities and recently partnered with both Metra and Cook County Probation by providing a series of trainings to support their workers. Gia Washington, Sertoma's Community Development Manager, leads the program. She was actively involved in organizing the Prairie State College Mental Health conference, served on the New Lenox Suicide Prevention Task Force and hosted a "100 Conversations on Mental Health" supported by the Kennedy Forum. Making a difference isn't always about having the most beautiful garden, but as Gia often says, sometimes it's just about "planting a seed." Our



Community Development program makes a difference every day by "planting the seeds" of understanding and responding to the mental

health needs of communities, creating a more accepting environment for consumers as they work toward recovery.

Donors Visit Sertoma Centre

Kathryn Groenendal, President of the Benjamin B. Green-Field Foundation visited consumers who participated in the Music, Art and Nutrition Program. A grant from the foundation made it possible to purchase art, music and cooking supplies.

South-Southwest Suburban United Way's Stephen Samuels, Program Coordinator, and Ayom Siego, Senior Manager of Financial Capability, visited Sertoma Centre's Employment and Training Program in November. United Way supports this program which specializes in preparing and placing consumers in community jobs.



United Way Representatives sit in on job coaching session for consumers facilitated by Director of Employment Services Dana McFarlin

Consumers enjoy doing crafts during MVCC Community Service Day



Volunteer Day with MVCC Faculty & Staff

For the second year in a row, Sertoma Centre was chosen by Moraine Valley Community College to be a volunteer site for their Community Service Day. This year approximately 30 staff volunteered at both Sertoma Alsip locations. Consumers enjoyed several craft classes including an iron-on crayon t-shirt craft, confetti paper bowl craft and several Halloween crafts with ghosts and jack-o-lanterns. Consumers also enjoyed a pizza class while others in Employment Services participated in mock interviews to prepare them for jobs in the community. The MVCC volunteers also donated personal hygiene items and toiletries for consumers in need. But all the fun didn't



MVCC volunteers brought nature and crafts to the classrooms for a fun day!

just occur at Sertoma Centre that day. Consumers from Sertoma United at 127th street and individuals from Sertoma's Community Mental Health and Counseling site in Matteson visited Moraine

Valley's Campus for the first ever tour of the college held on this day. Consumers participated in a music class, art class and a science class which included a nature walk. After "classes" were over both groups were invited to eat lunch on the campus with the faculty and staff. Everyone had a wonderful time that day and we are so grateful to Moraine Valley Community College for partnering with us on this special volunteer day.

Super Sale Planned for Early Spring

Attention shoppers: Are you looking for some amazing bargains and a way to help others? Sertoma Centre is planning to hold the Housewares Super Sale for two days in the early spring of 2016 and there promises to be a variety of great deals. A post card announcing the exact dates and location will be mailed out within the next few months. Make sure you are on our mailing list to receive it and please send your contact information to Lisa Molloy at lmolloy@sertomacentre.org or call her at (708) 730-6210.

Last year, shoppers saved more than 50 percent on brand new houseware items from the International Home + Housewares Show. If you missed it last year, make plans to attend and take advantage of the amazing Super Sale prices. All proceeds support Sertoma Centre and the individuals with disabilities we serve.

We need volunteers!

If you are interested in volunteering at the Super Sale, please contact Laura Gardner at lgardner@sertomacentre.org or call (708) 730-6211. This is the perfect opportunity for businesses and organizations, as well as those who are seeking high school and junior high community service or volunteer hours.

Mark your calendars – Volunteers Needed for Housewares Pack-up, March 8, 2016

Sertoma Centre is one of only five charities allowed to receive donations from McCormick Place's International Housewares Show. Products from this event benefit the individuals with disabilities served each year and we need more than 150 volunteers to make it all run smoothly. Volunteers will be assigned to booths at McCormick Place and will pack up donated houseware items. This one-night volunteer opportunity is Tuesday, March 8, 2016, from 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Buses load and leave from Sertoma Centre at 4343 W. 123rd Street, Alsip, at 1:00 pm sharp.

This is a great opportunity to volunteer and give back to your community for one night. Transportation will be provided via luxury coach bus. Food and beverages will be provided. Participants must be 18 years or older to volunteer; community service hours are available if needed. We look forward to a day of fun and camaraderie!

Volunteer Opportunities

Booth Workers

Volunteers will be assigned to booths to wrap, pack, box, and place houseware items on pallets. Please note that booths are located throughout all of McCormick Place, making even the closest booth a far distance to walk from the buses. Comfortable shoes and clothing are recommended.

Booth Leaders

We need individuals to manage several booths and oversee the volunteers assigned to the booths. This person will maintain contact with our Communication Hub and oversee other booths as needed. Organizational skills, flexibility, and problem solving skills are a must.

To register, see the form below.

Four Ways to Register

1. Complete the form below and mail to: Laura Gardner
Sertoma Centre, 4343 W. 123rd Street, Alsip, IL 60803
2. Complete the form below and fax to:
Laura Gardner at (708) 371-9747
3. Email the same information below to:
Laura Gardner at lgardner@sertomacentre.org
4. Call to register over the phone:
Laura Gardner at (708) 730-6211

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____

_____ Yes, I will volunteer and ride the bus to McCormick Place.

_____ Yes, I will volunteer, but I will have my own transportation to McCormick Place.

Are you a part of a group or would like to be grouped? _____

For more information or questions, contact Laura Gardner at (708) 730-6211.



Giving Tuesday Comes to Sertoma Centre



#DiscoverMe
#SertomaCentre
December 1

Sertoma Centre had the opportunity to be involved in a global movement called Giving Tuesday on December 1st for the first time. The #DiscoverMe campaign that launched was meant to bring awareness and financial support through social media. Consumers as well as staff showed their support through an unselfie challenge in which they wrote either why they support Sertoma Centre and/or what they learned at Sertoma Centre. It was a powerful

campaign that raised over fifteen hundred dollars. Giving Tuesday began 4 years ago by a group called 92nd Street Y—a cultural center in New York City. It was started to harness the potential of social media and the generosity of people around the world to bring about real change in their communities. Be sure to get involved next year!



Sertoma Centre staff and consumers showed support of #DiscoverMe campaign

Holiday Bazaar Impacts the Lives of Consumers

The fourth Annual Holiday Bazaar was a huge success! The general public and consumers were able to shop with some old and a couple of new vendors on the second floor consumer lunchroom and classrooms at 123rd Street. Filled with beautiful and unique hand crafted items, free gift wrapping stations, and delicious treats at Mrs. Claus' Bake Shop and North Pole Cafe, it was a fun time for all. The proceeds from each of Sertoma Centre Vendor Booths go directly to



the programs that participated, and support people with disabilities. The consumers had a great time, but what got their attention was the appearance of the big man himself, Santa Claus, played by Associate Board President, Chris Van Eck and new this year his trusty

sidekick elf, Zach Reid and extra helper Joseph Rivera, both members of the Associate Board. Santa Claus made his rounds throughout the second floor and also stopped by to visit all the program rooms. The consumers were excited to see him, but there was one consumer that just walked straight over and embraced him and laid her head on his chest. It was a touching moment that served to remind us that a small act of kindness may seem insignificant, but makes a huge imprint on the hearts of others' forever.

Coat Drive 2015

Sertoma Centre was able to provide new warm winter coats to 60 consumers due to the generosity of United Sertoma Lemont Chapter, POW-R and Action Sertoma Clubs and the Chicago Local 1001 Laborers' Union. A big thanks to JC Penney's Orland Square and Mokena stores for providing large discounts in order to purchase many coats, hats, gloves and scarves!



Victor Roa, Treasurer (L) & Nikki Hayes (R), President of Local 1001 Laborers Union and Debra Marillo, Director of Adv. Sertoma Centre (C)



Gus van den Brink (C) with Denise Smith (L) & Kaley Keeley Buchanan (R) from PNC Bank come bearing gifts for residential consumers

Adopt-a-House

There was an outpouring of generosity in the Southland community to provide Christmas gifts to consumers residing in Sertoma's ten residential homes this year. Leading the way was Family Harvest Church of Tinley Park which adopted four homes joined by PNC Bank of Tinley Park, First Midwest Bank of Alsip, Pam Kerr and volunteers, board member Larry Owens, and Sertoma staff members Debra Marillo and Deborah Macenas, who all adopted a house. We are so happy that all the consumers in our ten homes received their gifts.



Mary Beth Luchene & Kim Gunaka from First Midwest Bank and Family Harvest Church brought a smile to consumers on Christmas day with gifts

Holiday Card Contest Winner

Every year we hold a contest for Sertoma Centre's holiday card. Consumers are provided with paper, markers, crayons and from there use their imagination. Many consumers from 123rd, 127th and Matteson locations participated this year. A committee then reviewed all submissions and voted for the chosen card. This year's winner was Cheryl Wieck from CMHC in Matteson who was excited to be chosen.



MVCC Shares Their Talents Through Music

The Moraine Valley Flute Choir, led by Tammi Carlson, stopped by on December 2nd at 5:00 pm to share their talents through music. They played Christmas favorites with some audience participation in the form of ringing hand-held sleigh bells and singing well-known carols. About forty consumers with family and/or guardians were in attendance and smiled and clapped with delight as they heard familiar holiday music.





"Quest for the Cup"
Trivia Night Winners

Trivia Night!

In mid-June Sertoma Centre held its inaugural "Quest for the Cup" Trivia Night fundraiser at Durbin's in Tinley Park. Trivia hostess Nicki Serbin bent our brains a bit (and sometimes made us look willingly silly). Everyone enjoyed delicious pizza and took advantage of the open bar of draft beer and wine.

We had many donations from local area businesses and restaurants, as well as our hometown Chicago Blackhawks! Of course, the Blackhawks items were very popular, but we also had ten baskets full of goodies that helped raise funds for Sertoma Centre consumer programs!

The best part of the night was witnessing all the camaraderie amongst the trivia teams and the delight of sharing some time together in the name of a great cause! We hope that you will consider joining us for this super fun fundraising event in 2016. Keep an eye out for a Save-the-Date!

Beep! Beep! Special Delivery! The RoomPlace stops by Sertoma Centre bearing gifts

August 11th and 12th were big days for Sertoma Centre. Three big trucks delivered donated tables, beds, sofas, recliners and tons of home decor from The Room Place. These beautiful pieces will be a huge asset to our ten residential homes. Always in need of furniture, these new items will benefit the lives of 62 consumers. Sertoma Centre is truly grateful for the donation of space by The Lombard Company to house all the pieces until they found a home.



Ben Macias, Director of Clearance Operations of The RoomPlace, facilitated this donation, which was initiated by the store's owners.

A HUGE thank you to The RoomPlace and The Lombard Company for your generosity and kindness to Sertoma Centre.

Paint It Forward

Over 50 of our supporters gathered at Sertoma Centre's 127th Street location to experience a night of creativity, raffles, and BYOB. Our art instructor, Leanne Wargowsky, was an amazing teacher and pulled out the inner artist in so many of us. And a huge thank you and shout-out goes to Nancy Gibson after she donated the \$225 she won in our Split-the-Pot raffle right back to individuals with disabilities so they would have funding for programs!



Paint it Forward instructor Leane Wargowsky and ladies from Proven Business Systems show their beautiful creations.



State Representative Fran Hurley, former U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, President and CEO of IARF Janet Stover & Gus van den Brink

Sertoma Attends IARF (Illinois Association for Rehabilitation Facilities) Conference

Gus van den Brink and several Sertoma employees attended the 40th Annual IARF Educational Conference & Exposition in October. The purpose of the 2-day conference was to address and discuss the challenges professionals are facing in the field of rehabilitation services. The Keynote Speaker for the conference was Patrick J. Kennedy, a former United States Representative and advocate for access to mental health services. He discussed his own journey toward mental health and recovery, and how he sees the world today.

Sertoma Centre's Wish List

Our programs could use any of the following: a variety of music CDs, puzzles of various difficulty, games (family games/card games/outdoor games), and fitness equipment (stationary bikes, treadmills – in good working condition). If anyone has such connections we can also always use tickets to events for outings (sports games, Navy Pier Winter Wonderland, museum passes). We are also asking for yarn and crochet needles to be used for relaxation activities, journals, and colored pencils. For a complete wish list of items, visit our website at www.sertomacentre.org.

If you would like to donate any of these items or prefer to make a financial donation to underwrite a purchase, please contact the Director of Advancement and Communications at (708) 730-6206.

Join Our Silent Partners In Supporting Our Mission

Do you share a strong commitment to our mission of providing opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve success? Do you have an interest in supporting Sertoma's mission on a committed, personal level? Would you like to be part of an elite group of donors who are making a difference in the lives of others?

Silent Partners consist of donors who make an annual contribution of \$750 or more and these donors are the foundation of our annual individual giving campaign. We recognize these donors in our annual report, on our website, at an invite-only dinner in February, and as part of our golf outing in September.

Silent Partners not only help us provide programs and services to more than 1,200 people each year, but they also have the opportunity to network and establish relationships with other partners who share the same philanthropic goals. We would like to welcome you to this partnership. If you are interested in becoming a Silent Partner, contact the Director of Advancement and Communications at (708) 730-6206.

Sertoma Centre Severe Weather Announcements: Important Notice for Parents, Guardians, and Third-Party Providers

The cold weather will soon be upon us! We think.

If temperatures are at a high of zero degrees or below, transportation services will not be provided. The facilities will, however, be open. You can find up-to-date information regarding Sertoma Centre transportation and possible closings on the home page of our website at www.sertomacentre.org. Facebook fans can like Sertoma Centre's page (facebook.com/SertomaCentreInc) and you will see the announcements as they are posted. Announcements are also posted on Sertoma Centre's LinkedIn (linkedin.com/groups/SertomaCentreInc) and Twitter (twitter.com/SertomaCentreIn) pages. Additionally, our facility closings will be listed at www.EmergencyClosing.com. Stay warm this winter!



Discovering the
potential in all of us

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Mark your calendar with these important upcoming events:

POW-R NFL Bash – Sunday, January 24, 2016

Housewares Pack-up – Tuesday, March 8, 2016

BIG Event – Firefighter Cook-Off – Saturday, April 30, 2016

Watch our website and social media pages for events happening through our partner Sertoma Clubs and other Sertoma Centre events!

For More Information, Call or Write:

Sertoma Centre, Inc.

4343 West 123rd St. Alsip, IL 60803

Phone: (708) 371-9700 | Fax: (708) 371-9747

info@sertomacentre.org | www.sertomacentre.org

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