



from the desk of **Bridget McKenna, Ph.D.**
Peer Volunteer Consultant

Hi Everyone,

First and foremost I would like to thank all of you who attended All Peer Day on May 14th. It was an inspiring day and obviously we could not have done it without you. For those of you who were unable to attend, you were missed and I look forward to seeing you at next year's All Peer Day.

And you thought it would never happen ...We finally hired a full-time Peer Volunteer Program Administrator. Please join me in welcoming Karen Brandman, MFT. I am thrilled she is here and am looking forward to working with her on the Peer Volunteer Program.

With the arrival of Karen comes the opportunity (at last!) to formally roll-out GO. I will be contacting supervisors and managers here at GO to schedule opportunities for Peer Volunteers and myself to give talks/presentations about the Peer Volunteer Program. Please give Camille or me a call if you are interested in speaking to a group in San Francisco. That's it for now, and thanks for being a Peer!



from the desk of **Karen Brandman, MFT**
Peer Volunteer Program Administrator

Hello,

Let me start by saying how excited I feel about my new job. I am thrilled to be working with the Peers, and excited about making a contribution to what seems like a wonderful program. The Peer Volunteer Program appealed to me from the minute I heard of it. I thought what an innovative idea. How wonderful that a large company like PG&E stands behind such a creative venture, and what a powerful way to decrease isolation, which is such a big component of the disease.

A little about me and my background: I have a broad range of practice in treating chemical dependency, both in inpatient and outpatient settings. I have worked with adults, adolescents, families, and individuals. In addition, I most recently spent the last few years working in an EAP program. Finally, I have experience working with and training peers, many of whom were former drug and alcohol addicts.

I feel fortunate that this position allows me to utilize all these skills in one full-time position. I look forward to meeting all of you, and plan on visiting as many locations in the near future as possible.

Until then,

AREA UPDATES



GO

Gale Sikes and Steve Miramontes spoke at the Safety, Health, and Claims meeting in San Ramon in June to an audience of about 150. It was Gale's departmental meeting, and she pressed for the PVP to be on the agenda. Thanks Gale! They were both very well received. Great work Wayne for getting the first GO employee into treatment! GO Rollout has been tentatively scheduled to take place by October- please spread the word and help us find some new Peers!

AREA 1

Jose Prieto has joined area 1 PVP and brings with him wonderful energy and a strong commitment to the program. Area 1, already a great group of employee volunteers, is made even stronger with this new addition. Karen Brandman, our new PVP Administrator, joined Area 1 for the first time and, along with Bridget McKenna, the PVP Consultant, will be overseeing the Area 1 PVP. Arlene Reiss, EAP on-site counselor, will resume her usual EAP activities, but will no longer be participating in PVP meetings. "I'll miss you guys!" she says.

AREA 2

Bridget McKenna, Peer Volunteer Consultant, will join EAP counselor Gerry Marcus in attending the monthly PVP meetings. Mike Harris will be joining Area 2 as a new Peer, and will attend the PVP training in the Fall. Debbie Rose-Calilan reached out to Cindy Whitchurch, Director of Utility, and asked for her support of the Peer Volunteer Program. Cindy responded by inviting Debbie to give a talk at the Technical Services Managers' Meeting on August 17th in San Ramon. Amazing work, Debbie! We will look forward to the PVP talk on August 17th and the additional exposure it will give the Peer Program.

AREA 3

We had a great Area 3 meeting in June. All Peers attended & there was much energy (could it have been the chocolate cake?) and support in the room. The two new Peer Volunteers in Area 3 are getting acclimated, and it's great to get to know them and feel the new enthusiasm they bring with them. We are happy about bringing on another female Peer to Area 3, Bobbie Grimm. Karen looks forward to continuing to work with Area 3 Peers, and wants to thank Rose for all of her efforts.

AREA 4

Mike Varni, a strong supporter of the PVP moved to Area 3. Mike Swanson took his place as Area Director. Area 4 is planning a field trip next month to Yosemite Connections, a new treatment facility in North Fork. Welcome to Tim Dixon, new Peer in Area 4, who is eager to get going. Thanks for the enthusiasm Tim!

AREA 5

All the Peers from Area 5 came to the monthly PVP meeting in July. It was wonderful to meet everyone and feel the commitment and eagerness this group has. Sean Parker, our new Area 5 Peer, will be attending the new Peer training in the Fall.

AREA 6

We had a lively PVP meeting in Area 6 this month. It was wonderful to meet the five Peers who attended. Karen announced that she would be taking over the Area 6 meetings. Judith announced that she wanted to remain available should Area 6 need her. Her efforts were much appreciated.

AREA 7

Ellen and Bridget will be co-leading Area 7. We are actively seeking new Peer Volunteers for Area 7. Please contact Camille Aguilar (C1A3) or Karen Brandman (K1BH) if you know anyone who is interested. On August 13th, Area 7 Peers will be participating in two talks. Thank you Brent and John.

Up and Running

By the time you receive this newsletter, our new Program Administrator will have visited ALL 8 of the PVP sites!!!



In my very first PVP meeting, Steve Miramontes said something that I liked so much, I wrote it down. Seemed appropriate for me at the time, and something I could hold on to in the midst of so much change.

-Karen



"It's not what we do,
it's how we conduct
ourselves while we do
it."

**SO FAR THIS YEAR
PEER VOLUNTEERS
HAVE:**

**GIVEN 46
TALKS/MEETINGS**

**SHARED THEIR MESSAGE
WITH 3262 PG&E
EMPLOYEES AT
TALKS/MEETINGS**

**MADE 98 FIRST-TIME
CONTACTS**

**BEEN CONTACTED BY
238 INDIVIDUALS**

**REFERRED 16 PEOPLE
TO CHEMICAL
DEPENDENCY
TREATMENT**

Impressions of ALL PEER DAY

Wayne Swisher, GO Peer:

"It only happens once a year, but it was worth the wait! On May 14, 2009, the PG&E Peer Volunteers and other invited guests were able to gather in San Ramon for a very uplifting, invigorating, and fun-filled day. This was an opportunity for the Peers to mingle with other Peers, meet our leadership who support this program, and enjoy the fellowship we all need. It's an opportunity to share our disappointments, victories, and challenges of being a Peer Volunteer, a human being, and a member of a very elite group – addicts or victims of addicts.

Besides the usual safety message provided by Steve M., awards (Bob Haywood Ten Year Service Award), and awesome food, we had two fantastic speakers who inspired us all. Judith Boyd spoke to us about relapse prevention and how we can protect ourselves from relapse. I know I needed to hear that and can never hear too much no matter how long I have clean. Then we had a comedy hour or so with Mark Lundholm – WOW that was funny, but authentic and from the heart. I hope we'll see more of him.

It was a fantastic day to reflect on the meaning of our roles and the accomplishments we have had. At the same time, we were able to laugh at ourselves and each other through humor and I love the way Mark Lundholm expressed how to break through the thick skin. He said, "Break from within by opening the mind and softening the heart." I must always remember both of those as I go through my daily life. Thanks Vanita, Bridget, Camille, and Lara Belden for a wonderful and memorable day!"

Steve George, supervisor of a GO Peer:

"It sure was a pleasure to be invited to a wonderful learning opportunity. The program is clearly staffed with a very special group of PG&E volunteer employees. Their backgrounds, training and subject matter expertise are quite impressive. I am most inspired by the openness, honesty, and down to earth approach to helping fellow PG&E'ers with incredibly sensitive and personal struggles. Thank you all for your service, and I wish everyone many successes in the struggle to change and save lives!"

DO YOU HAVE NEWS you would like to share with fellow Peers? Or a personal share that might inspire us all? Send any original content or ideas for the PEER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM Newsletter to Karen Brandman at k1bh@pge.com or Camille Aguilar at c1a3@pge.com.

Quotes from feedback forms:

"The day was filled with joy! Thank you! Good job!"

"Great comedian!"

"Thank you for all the hard work!"

"The updates were informative, and I really enjoyed the sharing circle."

"Everyone here wanted to be here- a good thing."

SAFETY PLEDGE
I ALWAYS PUT SAFETY FIRST.
I LOOK FOR AND ACT TO RESOLVE UNSAFE SITUATIONS.
I HELP AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ACT SAFELY.

