

**St. Mary's County Human Relations Commission  
November 7, 2005**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:** Mac McClintock, Joyce Dyson, Kathleen Lyon, Joseph Bush, Pam Oravcz and Bernadette Lewis.

**Excused:** Tyrone Harris and Betty Quinn.

**Staff:** Cynthia Brown, Division of Community Services.

The meeting was convened at 5:10 by the Chairperson, Mac McClintock. Mr. McClintock introduced the guest speaker.

**Guest Speaker:** Alexis Zoss, Mental Health Authority.

Ms. Zoss spoke on the many factors that influence good mental health (productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people and an ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity.) From early childhood until late life, mental health is the springboard of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem. Any given day people find themselves moving up and down along the line of optimal mental health and serious mental illness. Most people exist somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. However, statistics show that during the holiday season many people fall into mental illness for a variety of reasons. Ms. Zoss advised viewers that the best way to control holiday stress is to first realize that it's not unusual or abnormal to have feelings of anxiety, sadness, loneliness and even depression. Secondly, analyze what makes you feel that way and do something different when you find yourself in that predicament. Third, know how your body adapts to stress and avoid stressful situation. Fourth, learn some coping skills, for example, taking deep breaths. Whenever you seem out of control or unable to cope, seek assistance. Know that you are the only one who can control you and you can't change anyone else. Slow down and take time for yourself. There are pamphlets available to the public on relaxation techniques at the Mental Health Authority located at 22655 Washington Street (301-475-4361.)

**Approval of Minutes:** The September's minutes were accepted with the correction that Betty Quinn was excused.

**Finance Statement:** Stephanie Roach gave a financial report of \$1,490.

**Website:** It was advised not to list the names of commission members because the names are already in the minutes. Bonnie Hernandez has submitted a request to the Maryland Commission for Human Relations to have a link from the county's website to theirs. Cynthia Brown is modifying the nomination form for the Recognition Breakfast. The form will be accessible from the website.

**Announcements:** On November 14, St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) will have a Diversity Forum at the Teen Center located at Chancellors Run Regional Park at 6:30. This forum is open to the general public.

The next meeting will be December 7, 2005.

Adjournment – 5:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Stephanie Roach