

2009 Cross Cultural Conference _ Feb 22 — Feb 25, 2009

Landmark Resort Hotel, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

"Youth, Family and Community Violence: Strategies for Prevention, Intervention and Post-Treatment Support"

President's Message



Willie L. Bethune, LISW

Greetings!

We are living in times of great challenges. We are experiencing crisis at home and abroad. In the words of Phil Lader, former President of Winthrop University, U.S. Ambassador, candidate for Governor of South Carolina and now business tycoon, "crisis is

nothing more than opportunity riding a precarious wind." Many professionals working in behavioral health have noticed that people are more open to change in times of crisis than any other time in their lives. Could this be the reason the two major political parties in this country have nominated a diverse ticket for the Offices of President and Vice President of this great country?

The Education Committee has been busy planning for the upcoming Annual Board Retreat and Educational Workshops. The theme for the Retreat is "Violence in the Home, School, and Workplace: Implications for

Educators and Human Service Professionals." Come join us at the warm and inviting Santee State Park in Santee, S.C. for an enriching educational experience to include test preparation training for the License Professional Counselor's Exam.

In addition to the above, meals, refreshments, social, and excellent networking opportunities are included for the price of dinner for two at a local restaurant. On October 25, 2008 after the Retreat, the Action Council Board Members will invite at-risk youth to the S.C. State versus Hampton University football game at the Board members expense.

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From the Editor

Greetings!

First of all let me thank each of you who contributed to this eighteenth edition of **The Action Council Communicator**. The year 2008 has been filled with Action Council activities and accomplishments. The Cross Cultural Conference 2008, "The Impact of Poverty on Individuals and Families: Strategies and Solutions," was our first major event of the year. We are considering your feedback and recommendations from the evaluations received. In this Newsletter, Mr. Ernest Shaw, LMSW, Action Council Board member, contributed an article entitled, "The Conference Participants Speaks." It provides a thorough and very informative account of your impressions, suggestions and concerns which

are valued and very important to us. It is our goal that the participants of Action Council activities are satisfied and pleased with the quality of what is rendered.

As educators, as well as health and human services providers we must consider if we are accomplishing our objectives, **really** addressing the needs of the population that we serve and meeting the expectations of our customers. These are very difficult economic times and a lot of folk are struggling and in pain. Despite ones circumstances or resources we expect that quality care, services and treatment be provided to members of all populations, especially those stigmatized, impoverished and disenfranchised. An ever pressing question, How are we treating ourselves as well as those whom we are responsible for or called



Sharon Rice-Brown, MSW

to serve? The question is relevant in our unique workplaces, homes and communities. It has implications for members of our families, churches and communities, as well as patrons of our schools, and health and human service institutions. We as members of the Action Council are advocates and are charged to promote change with the hope of successful outcomes. These are some of the issues and questions we must consider and address in our quest to reduce violence.

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Sharon Rice-Brown,
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“Highlights of Annual Retreat 2008”

Carl E. Jones, Ph.D.



Carl E. Jones, PhD, NCC

The Education Committee of the Action Council has developed an exciting training agenda for the 2008 Annual Retreat. The retreat theme will be “Violence in the Home, School, and Workplace: Implications for Educators and Human Services Professionals.” Highlights include presentations by the Honorable Larry Williams, Sheriff of Orangeburg County and the legendary, Coach Willie Jeffries.

Sheriff Williams is one of the most outstanding law enforcement officers in the state and the nation. In fact, he was Sheriff of the Year for South Carolina in 2004. His department has been innovative and effective in addressing youth gangs and violence. His presentation at the retreat will focus on “Youth and Gangs: Implications for Educators and Mental Health Professionals.”

Coach Willie Jeffries, as trailblazer and the first African-American to become head football coach at a Division I university, is one of the most respected coaches ever in college football. However, his impact on society extends well beyond the gridiron.

He is the recipient of the Order of the Silver Crescent, which is the Palmetto state’s highest award for outstanding community service, as well as, The Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina’s highest civilian award. Most recently, Coach Jeffries was inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame. Coach Jeffries, using humor and psychological intent, will speak on “Academics and Athletics: Pathways to Violence Prevention.”

Other presentations will include “Youth Violence: Strategies for Prevention,” “Workplace Violence: Profiles of Perpetrators,” and “Ethical Considerations in Healthcare for Violent Offenders.” Moreover, there will be a panel discussion on “Violence in the Home, School and Workplace: Legal, Forensic and Psychiatric Perspectives.” Specialized training for persons interested in becoming licensed professional counselors will also take place.

In preparation for the 2009 Annual Cross-Cultural Conference, a press conference will be held at the retreat at 6:00p.m. on October 24, 2008. Representatives from the Action Council, led by President Willie Bethune, and representatives from South Carolina State University, led by President Dr. George Cooper, will make statements to the media and entertain questions

regarding the upcoming annual conference. South Carolina State University is partnering with the Action Council for Conference 2009.

The social highlight of the retreat will be a reception and social following the press conference. Networking, good food and music will close-out the first day of the retreat. Following a Board training on Saturday, October 25, a caravan of retreat participants will travel to Orangeburg to watch the mighty Bulldogs of S.C. State take on Hampton University in what is expected to be a fierce contest on the gridiron. Following the game we shall convene at the lovely home of George and Ghussan Green for a fish fry. I know some exciting stories will be told!

Register now for the Annual Retreat, and come enjoy a rewarding learning and social networking experience.

** Dr. Jones is Executive Director for Student Success and Retention at South Carolina State University. He is also immediate past president of the Action Council and present chair of the Action Council Education Committee.*

Who We Are

The Action Council for Cross-Cultural Mental Health and Human Services, Inc. (ACCMHS) is a voluntary organization dedicated to enhancing the involvement of minority citizens in the management, delivery and utilization of mental health and human services. The Council represents public and private business/industry and organization representatives, professionals, and volunteers who have an interest in cross-cultural issues.

The Council exists for the purpose of understanding diverse cultures, enhancing cultural relations and providing a forum for multi-cultural issues and management/personnel concerns. This includes educational training, resource management and networking toward providing service delivery and cultural awareness.

Why You Should Belong

Statewide and regional support is needed to make the Council’s goals a reality. By your membership and interest, you join in enhancing the participation of professionals from diverse cultures in mental health and human services.

“Attention: Nurses ”

The Education committee is excited about this year’s annual retreat that will be held Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25 at Santee State Park. The theme for this year’s retreat is “*Violence in the Home, School, and Workplace: Implications for Educators and Human Service Professionals.*” We believe that this is a timely and relevant topic given what is happening in our communities and schools.

The goal of the retreat is to provide information and networking opportunities to foster participants’ awareness of theories and best practices in responding to or preventing violence in the home, school or workplace. Implication for policies, programs and services will be deliberated.

We invite educators, community leaders, nurses, law enforcement personnel and human service professionals to take part in our retreat this year. We will again offer a licensure workshop for counselors during the retreat. This training is designed to give professional counselors with the appropriate educational background a basic understanding of test design, structure and content in an effort to enhance the likelihood of the participants receiving a passing score on the examination.

Given the budget restraints of our state agencies our fee for the remains low at \$40 for non-members of the Action Council and \$30.00 for members. The cost for the Licensed Professional Counselor Test Preparation Training is \$50.00.

We are pleased this year to offer **7.0 Contact Hours for Nurses** through the South Carolina Nurses Association; therefore we invite all nurses to take part in this retreat.

In addition to offering contact hours for nurses, the Action Council is approved by the SC Board of Social Work Examiners as a continuing education provider. Requests for approval will also be made to the SC Board of Examiners for Licensure of Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Psycho-Educational Specialists.

Submitted by:

Josephine L. Mitchell, MSN, RN
Orangeburg Technical College
Education Committee Vice-Chairperson

The Health of Hispanic Immigrants in the United States

Dr. Carol Apt, Associate Professor, SCSU



One of my signature courses at South Carolina State University is Medical Sociology. In that course I devote a lot of time to Social Epidemiology – the study of how social and cultural factors relate to the origin and distribution of disease, disability and death. Disease, like everything else, is not distributed evenly, and it is well-known that factors such as race, ethnicity, sex, social class and educational level have an effect on whether one becomes ill, what diseases one gets and what one’s likelihood of recovery is. In addition, epidemiologists also look at factors like marital status, literacy level, and religion as correlates of health.

As a Consultant to the South Carolina Medical Association Bioethics Committee, I was recently asked to make a presentation on cultural factors as they relate to health at the Medical Association’s Annual Meeting. I choose to focus on the health of Hispanic immigrants.

Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States, comprising about thirteen percent of the population, and they are the fastest growing population in South Carolina. While the vast majority of people of Hispanic origin are here legally, it’s estimated that over ten million are here illegally. Of those ten million, most are from Mexico.

As a demographic group, illegal immigrants from Mexico tend to be young, uneducated, and relatively unskilled. It is usually only the most physically hearty who will survive the trip to the United States, which can involve long hours spent in an enclosed vehicle in the heat of the Southwest. For some, the trip northward entails long walks through the desert, equipped with only whatever food or water one can carry. Once here, most will be doing physical work, such as that which is found in the construction and agricultural industries. These immigrants also tend to have large families. One of the most persistent demographic correlates is between educational level and family size; as level of education rises, family size drops, and vice versa. Most illegal Mexican immigrants arrive here in their prime childbearing years; their low levels of education often result in large families, and the majority are of the Roman Catholic faith, which prohibits artificial birth control.

When they arrive, their health status is usually good, but as with immigrants in general, as they become acculturated to traditional American eating habits and lifestyles, their health status deteriorates. Due to language barriers, and the fear of arrest and deportation, many Hispanic immigrants do not receive regular medical care. Their children, even those who were born on this side of the border, are less likely than other non-Hispanic white children to have had all the

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(continued from page 1— **President**)

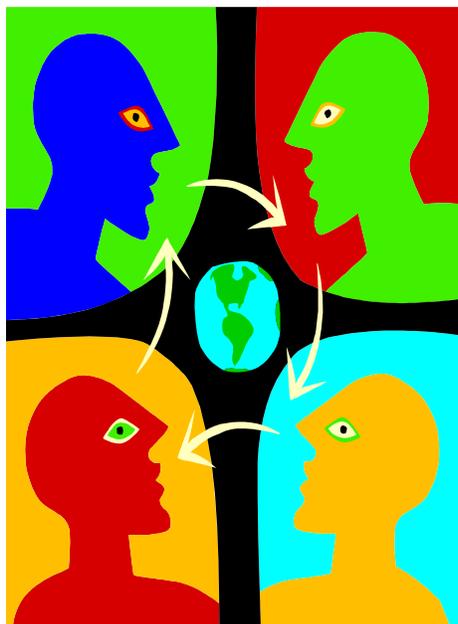
Following the game, the Action Council will sponsor a fish fry at the beautiful home of George and Ghus Greene. We thank the Greene's for agreeing to host us.

In looking at our theme this year, I started reflecting on last year's theme of poverty and the information and data that was shared. I noticed the areas of the state with high poverty rates had high rates of violent crimes per capita. I compared South Carolina Kids Count data and saw other negative indicators as well. Failing schools were also present in many of the areas with high poverty rates and violent crimes. These issues need to be addressed.

Please join the Action Council's Board and membership as we seek to sponsor quality educational and networking experiences that are culturally sensitive, intellectually stimulating and professionally enriching at affordable prices all can afford.

Peace!

Willie L. Bethune, M.S.W., L.I.S.W., CP/AP
President



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We are practically en route to Santee, South Carolina for our Fall Workshop Series and Board Retreat to be held at the Santee State Park and Conference Center on October 25-27, 2008. Our Fall Retreat theme, "Violence in the Home, Schools and Workplace: Implications for Educators and Human Service Professionals." There will also be a comprehensive training session for preparation for the Licensed Professional Counseling Exam. .

After a full day of training, we are excited and thrilled that a Pig Pic'n fellowship/ reception has been planned for Friday evening. Mr. Willie Bethune, Action Council Board President, and his staff from the Wateree Community Action, Inc will be our hosts. Our Board Planning Retreat will convene that Saturday morning at nine until noon.

As chairperson of the membership committee, I strongly encourage our members to attend our Board Retreat. During this session present and future Action Council fund raising opportunities, activities and programming needs will be discussed. We welcome your attendance and participation in our work groups that will be conducted to address the aforementioned.

Many of us will be traveling to South Carolina State University in Orangeburg following the Board Retreat for Youth Day to enjoy the football game between SCSU and Hampton University and other festivities. Immediately following the game, we will enjoy a fish fry at the home of George and Dr. Ghussann Greene in which we will educate and entertain youth and fellowship with each other.

Save the Date for Cross Cultural Conference 2009! It will convene February 22ndth through February 25th at The Landmark Resort Hotel, in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Our theme is "Youth, Family and Community Violence: Strategies for Prevention, Intervention and Post Treatment Support".

In closing, your membership and input is important to us. We desire to feature members in a **Spotlight on Membership** section of our Newsletter. If you would like to be featured please feel free to communicate with me by telephone at (803) 609-8859 or e-mail sdrcbrwn@aol.com . We encourage your contributions to our Newsletter and please visit our website at www.crossculturaltraining.org . Please share with us any news, articles of interest, special accomplishments, gifts or talents you may have.

Blessings,

Sharon Rice-Brown, LMSW,ACSW
Editor Action Council Communicator
Secretary, Action Council Board of Directors

“Spotlight on Members”

Lee McElveen

**Hispanic/Latino Program Coordinator
South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs**

Lee S. McElveen was born in Mexico City to a Puerto Rican father and a South Carolinian mother. She was raised in Puerto Rico and had the benefit of experiencing childhood in a bicultural and bilingual home. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Southern Wesleyan University and has had a rich background in her professional life, having worked at the South Carolina Department of Social Services, USC Center for Developmental Disabilities at the School of Medicine, The ALPHA Center-Kershaw County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services serving as the Region II Hispanic/Latino Program Coordinator for a 9 county area (Kershaw, Lee, Chesterfield, Lancaster, York, Fairfield, Richland Lexington, Chester) and is currently employed with the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs as the Hispanic/Latino Coordinator for the State of South Carolina. Ms. McElveen has also taught conversational Spanish at ATEC in Kershaw County and taught at a private school in Puerto Rico.



Ms. McElveen is fluent in both Spanish and English and has been certified as a South Carolina Qualified interpreter and translator through the South Carolina Department of Social Services and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

She has also spent many hours as a volunteer, assisting as a Board Member of the Mental Health Association, offering her services to the Kershaw County Medical Clinic, the Kershaw County Police Department, the Kershaw County Sheriff's Department and many more in her community. She is currently a member of the National Latino Peace Officers Association, Chairman of the Good Samaritan Medical Clinic, Columbia, SC, and Board Member of The Action Council for Cross Cultural Mental Health and Human Services.

Ms. McElveen has dedicated her professional and personal life to the betterment of people cross-culturally. She has worked in the Human Service field for the past 13 years, and

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“The Conference Participants Speak”

Ernest Shaw, LMSW



The 30th Annual Cross Cultural Mental Health and Human Services Conference was held February 24th - 27th, 2008 in Myrtle Beach, SC. The theme for this year's conference was, “The Impact of Poverty on Individuals and Families: Strategies, Best Practices and Solutions” The conference's mission was to provide information, education and practice skills based on outcomes of outreach studies, social policies and models for best practices.

A series of workshops provided a format for the discussion of research outcomes, public policy issues, and practical skills. The conference was designed to equip participants with the awareness, knowledge and skills to more effectively serve consumers and their families. The conference sought to expose participants to current theory and practice as they relate to the provision of mental health and other human services to diverse populations.

Participants were asked to evaluate each presentation by rating it as excellent, good, fair or poor with numerical values ranging from 4 to 1 assigned to the ratings. A review of those evaluations revealed the following: The Educational Value of Overall Conference was 3.79. The participants rated the Overall quality of General Sessions as 3.8. The Overall quality of Concurrent Sessions was also rated at 3.79. The Overall quality of Roundtable Discussions was rated at 3.79. The extent to which workshops were as stated in the program was rated at 3.75. The average rating for the conference was 3.784.

Dr. Ron Forbes, MD and Dr. Lewis M. Anthony, Pastor of Metropolitan Wesley AME Zion Church in Washington, DC presented the opening session titled *The Impact of Poverty on Individuals and Families: Strategies, Best Practices and Solutions*. One participant described their presentation as a “Powerful message” while another person wrote, “Opening session was exceptional introduction to what the conference focused on.”

In a plenary session Dr. Forbes and Dr. Anthony spoke on the topic, *Mental Health and Spirituality: Challenges and Opportunities in Working With the Poor*. One participant wrote, “The exchange/ conversation between Forbes and Rev. Anthony with us as listeners was superb.” Another person wrote, “Rev. Lewis is quite comical. Enjoyed hip hop association.” Dr. John

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necessary vaccinations by the age of three, and are far more likely to have no consistent source of health care.

Hispanic immigrants tend to find the American health care system daunting and impersonal. The traditional practice of separating a patient from his/her family during examinations and certain procedures is irksome; in many Hispanic cultures, when one member of the family is sick the entire family becomes the patient. Such individuals are also suspicious of the kind of whiz-bang Star Wars medical technology found in many parts of this country. The belief is that a physician who relies too heavily on machines to figure out what's wrong with a patient is shirking his/her duty by allowing technology to do the work that he/she should be doing. In addition, many illegal immigrants come here without their wives and children, although some are able to send for other family members as they become established. The disruption of significant sources of social support has been identified as a factor in the decline in health status among certain immigrant groups.

Another factor that contributes to poor health is the work environment; those who are here without benefit of appropriate documentation are unlikely to challenge an employer over unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. Illegal immigrants who work inside in factories, hotels, restaurants, and on some construction sites, are often on their feet for long periods of time, and are likely to be carting around heavy items such as construction equipment or trays of dishes. The people who work outside in the agricultural sector often have to spend their working hours bending, stooping and engaging in heavy lifting. They might be exposed to dangerous pesticides and other chemicals; clean water and sanitary amenities are often unavailable. If living quarters are provided for agricultural workers, they are likely to be overcrowded, with inadequate heating, cooling and ventilation.

Because of these and other factors, Hispanics who are in this country illegally often have poor health. Rates of heart disease, diabetes, alcoholism, smoking, and infectious diseases are higher than in the general population. When compared to other non-Hispanic whites, their life expectancy is lower, and their rates of infant mortality are higher.

What's the solution? Amnesty for people who have been in this country for a certain amount of time? Another 300 mile-long wall along the border with Mexico? Tougher laws for employers who hire illegal immigrants? The granting of more green cards? The granting of no green cards?

I'm glad that I'm not the one who has to decide.

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has been actively involved with the Hispanic community for many years, strengthening her role as advocate for the Hispanic/Latino population. She has found commonality among people of all races and cultures, bringing her unique perspective to the world around her. She has spent a great deal of personal time assisting organizations and individuals in identifying ways to lend a helping hand to Hispanic/Latino people as they work toward improving their lives and that of their families, assisting people with insurmountable task of starting a new business in a totally new language, culture and political system. Ms. McElveen is happily married and the proud mother of two wonderful sons. She resides in Kershaw County, South Carolina, and commutes all over the State to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.

(continued from page 5— **Participants Speak**)

Morris' presentation at the President's Luncheon was described as "Likely the most informative message I've heard delivered with humor." *Alvin Hinkle, JD, Executive Director of Carolina Legal Services* tackled the Pay Day Loan industry.

Joyce Houck, LMSW and Robert Caesar, PhD examined the topic, *Poverty and its Implication on Psychosocial Assessment Process*. "This workshop was described as "very informative and was very interactive." *Phil Bowman, MD, PhD, Executive Director, Pee Dee Mental Health Center* presented *How to Do a Good Clinical Assessment*. His presentation was described as, "Very helpful..."

James M. Wilson, MRC, NCAC and Jenny Bouknight, MSW, LISW spoke on the topic of *Alcohol and Other Drugs*. Mr. Wilson was described as an, "Awesome presenter. Invite him back!!" *Otis Corbitt, MSW, PhD, LCSW and Dr. John Head* spoke on the topic *Understanding and Overcoming Depression! The Silent Epidemic Among Black Men*. One of the attendees wrote, "The speaker should be commended for the courage to break the silence." Susan Jordan spoke on the topic, *Clinical Issues in Screening, Assessing and Treating Child Sexual Abuse*. Ms. Jordan was described as "very knowledgeable" and the writer would love for this workshop to be added every year.

Stephen McLeod-Bryant, MD, Associate Professor, MUSC, Department of Psychiatry gave a dissertation on *The DSM IV TR and Psychopharmacology*. One person summed up his presentation with, "Dr McLeod was very good, effective and

Dr. Jack Levin

The theme of the 2009 Cross Cultural Conference is **“Youth, Family and Community Violence: Strategies for Prevention, Intervention and Post Treatment Support.”**

In keeping with that theme, The Action Council is pleased to announce that the keynote speaker for the luncheon on Monday, February 23 will be Dr. Jack Levin, who will speak on **“Trends in Youth Violence: Gangs, Guns and Adult Guidance.”** Dr. Levin is the Irving and Betty Brudnick Professor of Sociology and Criminology and Director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University in Boston. He has authored or co-authored twenty-five books including: “Hate Crimes: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed,” “The Functions of Prejudice,” “The Will to Kill: Making Sense of Senseless Murder,” “The Violence of Hate: Confronting Racism, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Bigotry,” and “Extreme Killing: Understanding Serial and Mass Murder.”

Dr. Levin has published more than one hundred and fifty articles in professional journals, primarily in the areas of serial and mass murder, hate crimes, school violence, juvenile murder and workplace violence. He has also appeared on such national television programs as 48 Hours, 20/20, Dateline NBC, The Today Show, Good Morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show, and all network newscasts.

He is often interviewed by the national press, and has served as an expert witness or consultant in a number of cases involving murder, cults, hate crimes and the death penalty. He has been a speaker at a wide variety of colleges and professional groups, both nationally and internationally, including the White House Conference on Hate Crimes and the Paris Conference on Killing The Other.

JOIN US	
MEMBERSHIP FEES	
DUES	MEMBERSHIP TYPE
15.00	Senior Citizen
15.00	Student
20.00	Individual
50.00	Organizational
35.00	Family (2 or more)
5.00	Consumer
20.00	Board Member

(continued from page 6— **Participants Speak**

knowledgeable.” Please repeat. Add part II.” This workshop was rated very favorably. Dr. Carol Apt, *Professor of Sociology, SC State University* addressed *Functional Illiteracy and its Relation to Poverty*. Dr. Apt was described as a “captivating lecturer” and it was recommended that her presentation be “ongoing with updates.” *Ashlie Lancaster, Director, South Carolina Office of Economic Opportunity; Jessica McMoore, Executive Director, South Carolina Association of Community Action Partnership; Willie L. Bethune, MSW, LISW, CP/AP, Executive Director, Wateree Community Actions, Inc.* outlined the *Role of Community Action Agencies*, and one person wrote, “Good to know how these agencies are set up.” *Current Trends in Treating Co-occurring Disorders* was addressed by *Shelley McGeorge, PhD, MPA, LPC, LMFT*, and Director of the COSIG project at SCDMH, *Ethel Bellamy and Kisha Guess* and their effort was rated as “Outstanding.”

Dr. Gail Stuart, *PhD, Dean, College of Nursing, Medical University of South Carolina* was the Luncheon Speaker and one person described her as a “Good Presenter!!” Another person wrote that they didn’t expect things to be “as religious.” “Thank God for this conference,” one reviewer wrote about the workshop titled *Strategies and new Paradigms for Houses of Worship*. This workshop, one of the highest rated of the conference, was presented by *Pastor Ruben Navarrete; Primera Iglesia Bautista, Columbia, SC; and Dr. Lewis M. Anthony*. One person wrote, “I feel charged to go out and make positive changes and bring this critical issue on poverty back to my church.” Another wrote, “This presentation was perfect example of what cross cultural experience can be.”

Dr. Corbitt spoke on the topic, *The Emotional Impact of Divorce on Families* and the overall rating for this workshop was 3.89. Tammi Thomas presented a workshop on the topic, *Love Shouldn’t Hurt Like That*. “The formal presentation was short changed to a degree,” one person wrote in response to the significant audience participation in a workshop that was described as a “hot topic.” Dr. Carol Apt *PhD, Professor of Sociology, South Carolina State University* addressed the topic, *Love in Time of Poverty*. One writer described Dr. Apt’s presentation as a “Great offering.” However, another asked for visual aids.

Pam Davis, MSN, RN, CEO Little River Primary Community Health Center and *Duane Everett, Executive Director of Support Services, National Direct Home Pharmacy* Duane Everett spoke on the topic of *Health Disparities: Causes, Impact and Solutions*. Their presentation generated a wide range of opinions regarding its effectiveness. One person wrote that there was too much emphasis on one company rather than the area of health disparities. However, another writer described their offering as a, “great presentation.”

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Mark W. Binkley, JD, General Counsel, and Shirley Furtick, MSW, LISW, CP/APSC of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health and Shirley Furtick's, also of that agency are both Action Council Board members. They spoke on the topic, *Legal and Ethical Issues in Clinical Practice*. Their presentation was described as, "Very good." Mr. Mark Binkley presented on the topic, *Is Justice Blind? People Living in Poverty and Their Relationship to The Legal System*. His performance was evaluated in a very positive light. One writer wrote, "Mark did an exceptional job with the topic even though he was not the scheduled speaker and was not prepared to speak."

Gerod Gore, MSSA, LMSW, Director of Clinical Services and Terrence Wells, LPC, CAMF, CEO, Family Support Services: and Carl Jones, PhD, South Carolina State University presented *Strategies to Foster Emotional Stability, Social Maturity and Academic Success among Students*. "Very well. Wish we had more time," wrote one person. William J. Walker, PhD, Director, Georgetown Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and his guest, former professional football player Robert Geathers presented *Academics and Athletics: Portals to Social Mobility and Economic Success*. This workshop was called, "Simply the best workshop of the conference." However, one writer urged conference organizers to "involve students and school officials in future conferences."

Mark Binkley presented the closing plenary in the absence of a prominent individual. Assessments of his performance were positive. "It is always a pleasure to hear Mark Binkley speak," one person wrote. Another noted, "Again Mark did an excellent job speaking without prior notice." However, another person posed the following question: "Is having a 'big name' for the closing session more important and valued than ensuring probability of big name appearing?"

Participants were asked to name any speakers from the concurrent and general educational sessions they considered outstanding. Nationally known speakers and local speakers were named. Participants were asked to suggest speakers for next year's conference. A presidential candidate, television personalities, prominent actors, politicians, local professionals, current and recent speakers at the conference and several members of our board were listed.

Workshops on Youth Mentoring Programs that help young people who commit crimes, Victim witness to abuse, Anger/depression, Anger Resolution, Law enforcement education

(continued — **Participants Speak**)

and A&D. Focus on Hispanic Culture, Issues of Root and root doctors and Gang violence were suggested as topics for next year's conference.

Forty-three individuals addressed the question of whether or not their personal goals and objectives met during the conference. Forty-two answered yes and one said "maybe." Forty-seven addressed the issue of whether or not they planned to attend the conference next year. Forty-two said that they planned to return next month and five answered, "Maybe."

The annual conference presented by the Action Council for Mental Health and Human Services is a time-honored tradition for many professionals. While the conference does feature nationally known experts in a variety of fields, workshops conducted by our board members, human services professionals along with religious leaders also contribute greatly to our educational effort and the whole conference experience. A significant number of professionals use contact hours earned at the conference to satisfy their yearly requirements for licensure purposes. We believe that we play a major role in providing relevant educational opportunities to attendees while providing presenters with opportunities to present research findings and accounts of best practice models to professionals with direct care responsibilities.

Finally, it is crucial that we ask attendees of our conference to rate the effectiveness of our offerings and to suggest ways that we might improve our conference. The Educational Value of the Overall Conference was 3.79 and the average rating for several areas measured was 3.784. One person noted, "This was an informative conference. I am looking forward to next year." Another wrote, "The overall conference was great but I do recommend beginning the workshops on Friday (primary registration with an evening plenary running through Sunday.) I believe you would have a greater participation rate. Missing four days of work is an issue for those in nursing especially." Another person wrote, "There is more than one culture [including] the culture of poverty. It would have been helpful to learn how to work with Asian people, Native Americans etc. I know that poverty does not discriminate but learning how to do better case management with diverse groups would be helpful." Some attendees thought that there were not enough breaks and the workshops were too long and others thought that noise from concurrent session often made it difficult to hear.

We greatly appreciate hearing from the people who support our conference by attending each year and we look forward to your attendance next year.

