



2014 Annual Report

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston

Dear Friends,

While growing up, many of us plucked a dandelion, blew on its feathery head, and made a wish. You may be interested to know that the generic name for dandelion can mean “disorder remedy.” Individuals suffering from untreated mental disorders are like dandelions that were once in full bloom and have lost their vibrancy. No longer feeling productive, happy, or significant, they can languish until someone comes along and fills them with a breath of hope that gives them the chance to bloom again.

Looking for hope, 2,734 people attended Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston groups 18,767 times in 2014. These remarkable numbers highlight that our compassionate facilitators and supportive peer participants are touching people in fundamental ways that inspire connection, sharing, understanding, and restoration. We also welcomed 23,601 visitors to our website, which is a respected, regional resource for mental health and wellness. Of these visitors, 70% were new. We steadily continued lifting the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental disorders, enhancing group accessibility, and creating environments where people could talk openly about living with depression or bipolar disorder.

This year we will emphasize the importance of suicide prevention. Suicide often grows out of a mental illness so severe that the afflicted individual abandons all hope of survival. We will shine a light on this crisis and work to empower people with the knowledge to ask bravely, “Are you contemplating suicide?” Through your continued generous support and meaningful presence in the life of an individual who is struggling with a mental disorder, you are a part of our journey this year.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston can be the sweet breeze that fills individuals with hope and gives them wings to fly. Spreading the word about our free support groups is also spreading the word about hope. Doing so may change a life, prevent a suicide, or encourage a first vital step toward mental wellness. Next time you discover a field of feathery dandelions, please pluck one, give it a precious puff of air, and make a wish that individuals living with mental disorders will be infused with hope and healing. With your help, the dandelion will bloom again.

Sincerely,



Peggy Roe
2015 Chairman



Mary Collins
President/CEO

Gary Levering

1939 – 2014



*Isn't it strange how princes and kings,
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
And common people, like you and me,
Are builders for eternity?*

*Each is given a list of rules;
A shapeless mass; a bag of tools.
And each must fashion, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block, or a stepping-stone.*

—R. L. Sharpe

Using his tool bag of passion and personal contacts, Gary Levering recruited friends and community leaders to form the first Board of Directors of Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston in 2003. Through his leadership, dedication, encouragement, and enthusiasm, Gary invigorated DBSA and its mission to provide free support groups to individuals living with, and family and friends affected by, depression and bipolar disorders in Greater Houston. The active and committed Board of Directors added a professional staff and increased the program from two support groups in 2003 to more than 70 groups in 50 locations throughout Greater Houston in 2014.

Gary was an early mental health pioneer who worked tirelessly to realize his vision that everyone living with a mental disorder in the Houston area would have access to high quality, knowledgeable, and free peer support. Thanks to Gary, DBSA Greater Houston serves thousands of individuals each year whose lives are changed by attending DBSA support groups. The growing number of DBSA participants, facilitators, donors, partners, and referrals indicates that DBSA is now a permanent mental health service provider for Greater Houston and an established, invaluable resource for mental health and wellness.

What could have been a stumbling block became Gary's stepping stone for the greater good of the Houston community. Gary will be sorely missed for his gentle sense of humor, wisdom, boundless curiosity, inspirational authenticity, generosity, and loving spirit.

In 2014 DBSA Greater Houston created the Gary L. Levering Endowment to continue Gary's legacy, provide a foundation for anticipated growth, and safeguard the free support group program from economic volatility. The Endowment provides sustainability and ensures DBSA Greater Houston's ability to provide an invaluable program for years to come.

Mission Moment

“I have been battling depression and bipolar disorder for most of my adult life. For most of that time, I have felt compelled to keep this struggle to myself. Even though it dominated my life, I never felt like it was the kind of thing to share with my friends, family or anybody else.

I discovered DBSA at a particularly low point in my life. Ever since that time, I have been grateful for simply being able to go somewhere and share what is on my mind in an environment where I know everybody knows what I am talking about and will never judge me. I also find great benefit not only in learning from those who have learned to manage their condition and go on and build great lives, but also in being able to support those who are struggling in the moment.

I have certainly been on both ends of the spectrum during my time in a DBSA support group. Through DBSA I have become more comfortable with my condition, more optimistic and open to receiving help through therapy. DBSA also introduced me to an incredibly diverse group of people that I am proud to call my friends. I am a better and healthier person for having DBSA in my life.”

Whet Smith

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2014 Help...Hope...Healing Luncheon Donors

In 2014 Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston hosted its third annual *Help...Hope...Healing* Luncheon, a community-wide special event that increases awareness of depression and bipolar disorders, engages people in an open conversation about mental health, and raises money for the free support group program.

Terry Bradshaw, NFL legend and Co-Host and Analyst *FOX NFL Sunday*, spoke candidly about his life living with depression. DBSA was especially pleased to honor the John S. Dunn Foundation for its substantial and consistent support of mental health in our community with the 2014 Gary Levering Mental Health Impact Award. Palmetto Partners, Ltd. and The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation were the very generous 2014 Speaker Underwriters. Thanks to the superb leadership of luncheon chairs Jackie and Fred Dunlop, honorary chairs Phyllis and Jack Selber, and the Luncheon Steering Committee, DBSA raised more than \$460,000 for its free support group program.

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\$55,000

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Top left: Jack Selber, Phyllis Selber, Jackie Dunlop and Fred Dunlop. Top middle: Mano DeAyala, Melissa DeAyala, Janice Levering King and Allan King. Top right: Shelley Bracken, Jessica Brazelton and Shelley Brazelton. Lower left: Reverend Juanita Rasmus and Lisa Foronda. Lower middle: Robert McNair, Janice McNair and Terry Bradshaw. Lower right: Dagmar Gipe and Blake Williams.

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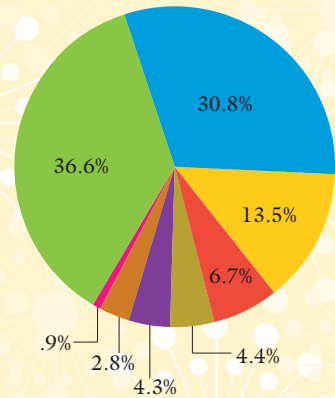
Special Event	\$466,295
Unrestricted Contributions	
Corporate	\$13,137
Foundation	\$553,658
Individual	\$204,231
Friends of Drew Webb	\$65,000
<i>Total Unrestricted Contributions</i>	\$836,026
Contributions to Endowment Fund	\$101,000
Investments	\$44,534
In-Kind Gifts	\$65,957
Total Income	\$1,513,812

Source of Funds

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- Contributions to Endowment Fund
- In-Kind Gifts
- Friends of Drew Webb
- Investments
- Corporate

Use of Funds

Personnel	
Staff	\$566,333
Program Facilitators	\$204,585
Contract Services	\$57,816
Additions to Reserves	\$307,292
Rent & Facilities	\$82,764
Marketing, Printing & Postage	\$66,839
Insurance	\$7,953
Office Expenses	\$51,175
Volunteer Support	\$3,829
Education & Training	\$4,628
Fundraising	\$8,553
Special Event	\$152,045
Total Expense	\$1,513,812



Audited financials available upon request.

2014 Board of Directors

Blake Williams, *Chair*
Peggy Roe, *Chair Elect*
Robert W. Paddock, *Past Chair*
Gary Levering, *Chair Emeritus*
Evelyn Jewell, *Secretary*
Joe Gorczyca, *Treasurer*

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Shelley Bracken
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Julie Crosswell, LMSW
Pam Erwin
Lisa Foronda
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Brett Hogan
James Jennings
Marjorie Bintliff Johnson
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Walt Parmer
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Phyllis Selber
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Mary Kristen Valentine
Dorothy Webb

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Margaret Bandy
Clyde Buck
Reverend Linda Christians
Emily Dalicandro
D. Michael Dalton
Lois E. Davis
John Eads
Jim Gasper
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Evangelina Hammonds,
LCSW, CTS
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B.D. McAndrew
Wells McGee
Sandra McHenry
Marcie Mir
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John Pipkin
Reverend Juanita Rasmus
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Ed McCullough
Will Penland
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2014 Medical Advisors

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James Lomax, M.D.
Sanjay Mathew, M.D.
Jair Soares, M.D.
Andrea Stolar, M.D.

President and CEO

Mary Collins

Depression
and Bipolar
Support Alliance
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P.O. Box 27607
Houston, Texas 77227
713.600.1131

www.dbsahouston.org