



SHARE! the Self-Help And Recovery Exchange
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 1, 2016

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American Psychological Association honors SHARE!

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — At the American Psychological Association (APA) convention SHARE! was honored with the Distinguished Contributions to Practice in Community Psychology Award. Ruth Hollman, the Executive Director of SHARE! the Self-Help And Recovery Exchange, received the Award on August 6, 2016 in Denver, Colo.

The award, given annually by the APA's Society for Community Research and Action, honors "an individual whose career of high quality and innovative applications of psychological principles has significantly benefited the practice of community psychology."

Hollman is Founder and Executive Director of SHARE! the Self-Help And Recovery Exchange, which started in Los Angeles, Calif. as a small grassroots place for self-help support groups. Two decades later, SHARE! has become a thriving organization serving more than 5,000 people a month, with two self-help centers, a short-term residential program, referrals to self-help support groups in the community, and SHARE! Collaborative Housing, a community-based housing program that is a vital part of the solution to homelessness in Los Angeles. SHARE! empowers people to change their own lives and provides them a loving, safe, non-judgmental place where they can find community, information and support.

SHARE!'s two self-help centers in Culver City and in the Skid Row District of Downtown Los Angeles provide meeting space for a combined 140 weekly self-help support

groups, along with opportunities to volunteer, connect with others and pursue personal growth and change.

SHARE! also operates the SHARE! Recovery Retreat, a two-week residential program known as “peer respite care,” in which people with mental health challenges are encouraged and supported to develop their own plan for recovery and pursue it. The Retreat is one of three peer respites in California. An external evaluation of the Recovery Retreat by the University of California, San Diego and Harder & Company found that participants had high degrees of satisfaction in the program and frequently achieved significant milestones, such as getting jobs, housing and maintaining sobriety.

In 22 years, SHARE! has welcomed everyone who walks through the doors and never asked a single person to leave. That is largely due to the promising practices identified in Hollman’s “SHARE! Community Tools,” which ensure that SHARE! remains an environment of recovery as people pursue personal growth and change. The Tools engage and support people in making dramatic changes in their lives while diverting and de-escalating conflicts and adverse situations.

SHARE!’s peer staff has grown to more than 50 employees. Hiring peers is not easy as there are few effective training programs for such work. Hollman is now developing a statewide peer certification program to bring her approaches to the public mental health system at large.

Hollman’s broad vision incorporates the best ideas from psychology, anthropology, economics, sociology and other fields to improve people’s lives through innovative, cost-effective programs and public policy. “Ruth is a unique practitioner who is not afraid to challenge traditional thinking. Her vision for self-help support groups represents a paradigm shift from traditional approaches to mental health promotion, which has been remarkably effective in engaging those individuals who are most difficult to reach,” said Louis D. Brown, Assistant Professor of Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Brown nominated Hollman for the Award after having collaborated with her over the past 10 years in the Society for Community Action and Research (SCRA).

Hollman has worked closely with Brown and other social scientists to encourage research on self-help support groups, as well as to bring evidence-based best practices into the self-help support group community. She got the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) to incorporate self-help support groups into their scope of treatment. Most recently, she served on a committee of the SCRA to develop a resolution encouraging the federal government to make self-help support groups part of healthcare reform.

Hollman has authored two articles, “Best Practices for the Structure of Self-Help Support Groups” in The Community Psychologist Vol. 48 and “The Structure of Social Exchange in Self-help Support Groups: Development of a Measure” in the American Journal of Community Psychology 53:83-95 (co-authored with L.D. Brown and X. Tang).

Hollman received her B.A. in anthropology from Australian National University (Canberra, Australia) and her Ph.D.(ABD) in anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

To learn more about SHARE! visit www.shareselfhelp.org. Links to Ruth's acceptance speech, the introducer's speech, photos and previous recipients of the award are at <http://shareselfhelp.org/blog/ruth-honored/>

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