

# The Counseling Center Inc.

## Newsletter

MARCH, 2007

### Welcome

We are well into the New Year and the staff at The Counseling Center has spent time evaluating the way we work together and with our clients. At a staff retreat last fall we discussed how most of our work with clients, whether individuals, families or children, revolves around the transitions in our lives. As is presented in our feature article this month, written by Ken Ruge, how we handle any life transition is a "major factor in determining the quality of our lives". Ken is a Marriage and Family Counselor who writes frequently on this subject. In addition to speaking at our evening seminar last fall, Ken will be presenting at two events for The Junior League of Bronxville this winter, and at many other outreach events this year. Jennifer Klein, our child psychologist, writes briefly about our intentions for the study of life transitions in this letter and more information will follow on our website soon. We are very excited to be offering this perspective to our current and new clients.

On Friday, April 20, 2007 we will be hosting our annual spring benefit: "La Joie de Vivre" at the Bronxville Public Library. This year we honor our Chairman of the Board, David McBride, who has been a long time supporter of The Counseling Center. We look forward to showing our appreciation for his service, and welcoming many current and new supporters of our work in the community. For information on attending this event contact The Counseling Center office at 914-793-3388.

Be sure to check our "What's Happening" and "Outreach Events" sections to see what else is going on with us at The Counseling Center. We welcome your interest, comments and support. Please contact us if we can be of help.

Dick Shoup,  
*Director*

## Coping with Life's Transitions

Life is all about change: growing up, finding our life's direction, marrying and raising children, seeing our children mature and leave home, questioning our career and life priorities in mid-life, the list goes on. How we cope with these life transitions is a major factor in determining the quality of our lives. There are tools that can be helpful in navigating these changes.

Take, for example, the transition to parenthood. Dr. John Gottman, in his extensive research on marriage, has found that in many marriages, marital satisfaction plummets after the birth of the first child and can remain at a low ebb for five to seven years into the marriage. It is during this period that many marriages flounder and fail. However, Dr. Gottman has found that much of this marital distress can be avoided if the couple seeks even brief marital counseling when the wife is pregnant with her first child. The targeted counseling seems to re-orient the couple and help them manage their expectations.

In many life transitions we often experience losses, for example, when our children leave the nest or with the death of a loved one. How we manage and grieve those losses while embracing new challenges and possibilities can make the difference between a confused, embittered future and one full of hope and promise. Martin Seligman,

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Dr. Kenneth Ruge

Dr. Kenneth Ruge is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, frequent speaker in Bronxville and NYC, and the author of *Where Do I Go From Here?* (McGraw-Hill).



# Clergy Support and Wellness Program Expands

The Counseling Center has expanded its “Clergy Support and Wellness Program” as a continuing part of its mission to the Westchester community. The new “Seminar Series” will present three programs this year to assist clergy and congregations in their ministry.

- On December 11, 2006 *Meet the Chaplain* was the topic and Reverend Sim Gardner, the new Chaplain at Lawrence Hospital, joined Dr. Kerriane Page and Nurse Practitioner Maura Del Bene to present “Palliative Care at Lawrence Hospital and Community Clergy: How can our partnership help you and your congregation?”
- On February 7, 2007 *Dying and Transforming: Self and Congregation!* was the topic presented by Fred Shilling, Bruce Tischer, and Barbara-Jone Hagedorn, members of VITAL, a ministry team working with congregations on the journey of transformation.
- On May 7, 2007 Sara Fogg, Chaplain at St. John’s-Riverside Hospital will present *Pregnancy Loss/Miscarriage: A Special Opportunity for Pastoral Care*. Sara has had years of experience helping families through the difficult loss of a pregnancy.

On the second Tuesday of each month a “Clergy Support Group” meets and offers a time for sharing and reflecting on the important ministry of congregation life and leadership. All meetings are held in the Calvin Room at The Reformed Church in Bronxville.

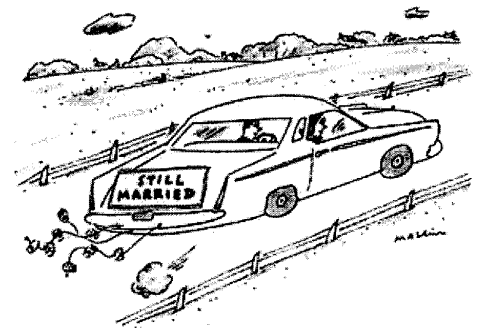
The “Clergy Support and Wellness Program” is offered to the community as a free gift with generous financial support from The Counseling Center and the Mission Committee of Hitchcock Presbyterian Church. For more information about our Pastoral Counseling programs, contact The Counseling Center at 914-793-3388.

John Hagedorn, a staff psychotherapist at The Counseling Center and Lutheran clergy, is the Coordinator of the Clergy Support and Wellness Program. He is available to discuss issues of pastoral care, ministry resources, support services, congregational leadership, and parish systems. He can be reached at The Counseling Center: 914-793-3388.

## COPING (Continued from page 1)

noted psychologist and author of *Authentic Happiness and Learned Optimism*, believes that having an optimistic attitude toward adversity and change can greatly contribute to our ability to move through life with greater satisfaction and efficacy. Optimists, in his view, tend to see adversity, failure and stressful situations as temporary conditions while pessimists view tough situations as permanent. Optimists usually see mitigating factors in their failures or in the disappointing behavior of others. This gives them a more forgiving attitude, which adds resilience to their relationships and aids in problem solving.

The presence of resilience in the individual and in one’s marriage is another predictor of health and happiness. Several of the factors that make for personal resilience include sufficient, high quality sleep, regular cardio-vascular exercise, good nutrition and the presence of trusted friends. These factors together form a platform of health and resilience that are crucial in helping us weather life’s challenges. Marital resilience, which has been studied by Dr. Gottman, appears to be based on a couple continually replenishing their reservoir of goodwill and strengthening their marital bond. This happens by spending more time together, through acts of tenderness, through sexual intimacy and by a willingness to accept the influence of one’s spouse. Another strong predictor of marital resilience in the Gottman research was a couple’s ability to repair and “make up” after a conflict. John Gottman’s book, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, describes his research findings in detail. If you have further interest in the area of life transition, please call The Counseling Center for guidance or counseling.



# Variations on a Theme: *Life Transitions*

Through our work at the Counseling Center, it has become clear that there are some common moments of change and transition in peoples' lives that can create challenges to all of us. Moments such as marriage, the introduction of the first child to the family unit, sending children off to college, retirement, and many more, may be life's most rewarding times. These times, however, may also create unexpected stressors in the home. The clinicians at the Counseling Center would like to help families and individuals take a closer look at these moments, discover what pitfalls may exist, how to avoid them, and explore how to get the most out of these transitions.

Through our newsletter, public presentations, and articles available online at our website, we would like to explore common life transitions with our community. Please watch for our spring newsletter, in which Lynn Evansohn will address becoming a grandparent, and shifting from parenting young adults to parenting parents. In the fall of this year, our director, Richard Shoup, will author an article for our newsletter exploring career transitions, and the possibility of creating a "new chapter" in one's life through the development of a new line of work. We hope this innovative series will provide thought-provoking articles and presentations.

Jennifer Naparstek Klein, Psy.D.

## IN MEMORIAM

**ROGER DVORAK** – Roger served as Chairman of the Board for The Counseling Center and was a good friend and wise counselor throughout the years. He will be missed.

**BARBARA G. YEAGER** – Barbara was a long-time friend of The Counseling Center, a member of the Board of Directors and head of our strategic planning committee. She was an enthusiastic, dedicated and generous supporter of The Counseling Center and we will miss her.

**FOR INFORMATION AND APPOINTMENTS: Call Catherine Nicholas at 914-793-3388**  
Visit our website: [www.counselingcenter.org](http://www.counselingcenter.org)

## The Counseling Center – OUTREACH

Therapists and Pastors at The Counseling Center regularly speak and preach on diverse topics at different events for the public. The following are the events, topics and therapists or clergy who will be speaking in the next few months:

SPEAKER	DATE	TOPIC	PLACE
Dr. Kenneth Ruge	February 13, 2007	<i>Nurturing the Soul of Your Child</i>	Junior League Of Bronxville
Dr. Kenneth Ruge	March 6, 2007	<i>Balancing Life's Demands</i>	Junior League Of Bronxville
Dr. Richard Shoup	April 15, 2007 11:00 a.m.	<i>Beyond Belief The Psychological/Scientific Approach To Belief</i>	The Reformed Church of Bronxville

# What's Happening.....

## **The 10th Annual Chamber Music Series –**

Held at Christ Church, 17 Sagamore Road in Bronxville on three Sunday afternoons: **February 18, March 18, and April 15.** Musicians with national and international reputations, including members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, will perform. Funds raised subsidize those individuals and families who cannot afford the full cost of our services. Support for this concert series is provided through subscriptions. For more information or if you or someone you know would like to sponsor a concert or become a donor, please call Catherine Nicholas at The Counseling Center (914-793-3388). Individual tickets at the door are \$25 and \$15 for seniors and students.

## **A Counseling Center Educational Luncheon –**

In **March, 2007** (date to be determined), The Counseling Center will hold a discussion and luncheon on “Technology and the Loss of Solitude” with Jane Benjamin, a therapist at The Counseling Center. This on-going series provides opportunities for community

members to learn more about issues relevant to psychological well-being in a small group setting that we hope encourages discussion. If you are interested in attending one of these meetings, please call The Counseling Center at 914-793-3388.

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **Our Annual Spring Benefit –**

On **Friday, April 20, 2007**, friends of The Counseling Center will celebrate “La Joie de Vivre” at the Bronxville Public Library from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. This event will honor David McBride, the current Chairman of the Board of The Counseling Center, for over 20 years of service to the organization. For more information or to join the Benefit Committee please call The Counseling Center at 914-793-3388.



David McBride

## The Counseling Center Inc.

### Staff

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# Newsletter.....

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