



## **“My Recovery”**

### **Personal Stories of Strengths and Hope**

Meet the speakers:

#### **Renee Ramcharitar**

After a series of transitions, Renee found herself working to bridge the gaps of spiritual growth and wellness. Renee lost her much-loved grandmother, experienced marital issues, moved from LA to Bay Area under financial duress and spun out under her utter disappointment in the difficulty of fulfilling the American Dream. She didn't have the skills to know about having a wellness plan, or how to grieve losses. Although she has been diagnosed with mental illness, Renee prefers to think of wellness as being balanced in many dimensions. She says, "I had to lose everything to start fresh, focused on Spirit and living a life in which I see the Divine within myself." Renee has raised a son who is now 22, has a BA in Liberal Studies and a multiple subject teaching credential, and serves as a leader in the Lift Every Voice & Speak! speakers bureau. She has a passion for people, and has worked in array of teaching and social justice roles.

#### **Guy Kerr**

Guy was a designer, builder and sculpture who left college as a young man to go to Arcosanti to apprentice with Paolo Soleri and later attended the Rhode Island School of Design. He experienced extreme altered states and was a client in the public mental health system when he moved to California. Living in Nevada County, Guy became active in peer support and co-founded the SPIRIT Peer Empowerment Center. He worked there, serving as Executive Director, then went on to work for Behavioral Health where he provides counseling and leads the Saturday Adventure, which gets people out to actively learn together in an open setting.

#### **Yaffa Alter**

Yaffa Alter is an Afro Caribbean consumer who has transformed her life as a mental health patient to a mental health advocate. She promotes wellness and recovery through facilitating WRAP groups, conducts self-esteem groups, writes/performs inspiring and uplifting poetry, as well as addresses others like Law Enforcement and Intern Therapists about the infinite possibilities available for everyone who experiences mental health challenges.



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#### **Sharon Kuehn**

Sharon Kuehn, panel facilitator, is a member of the faculty for the Advancing Recovery Collaborative, representing the consumer perspective. An outspoken advocate for peer support, peer employment and mental health alternatives, Sharon consciously makes life choices every day to maintain her wellness and recovery. She currently directs the Social Inclusion Campaign in Alameda County, provides leadership to the current statewide efforts to establish certification of Peer Specialists, and loves being alive!