

# T THE SUITCASE CLINIC MONTHLY TELEGRAPH



November 2007

Issue 1

570 University Hall

Berkeley, California 94720

## The Wright stuff; mental health at the General Clinic

BY DAN GREEN

The Wright Institute, a local private graduate school for Clinical Psychology, is now offering free mental health services to Clients of the General Clinic.

Students from the five year doctorate program come to General Clinic to offer one-on-one services, and aid in the medical clinic. Their aim is promote and evolve integrative medicine that focuses on the mind and body.

Currently, Dr. Brac Selph and second year student Leon Wann

are in charge of the program at Suitcase. They aim to get the program fully accredited by the American Psychologists Association, which would allow the Suitcase Clinic to be a functional internship for new students.

“Integrative psychological and medical care is on the cutting edge of wellness programs. We want to expand to other types of psychological services” said Dr. Selph. He continued, “maybe groups, crisis management, and services to help [Suitcase] students address barriers between them and the clients.”

Wann and Selph are working



KELLY VITZTHUM

**NEW FACES; Wright Institute student Leon Wann and his adviser Dr. Brac Selph run the mental health service offered at the General Clinic. This new service aims to integrate medical with mental health care.**

closely with the JMP, the Berkeley-UCSF Joint Medical Program, to find ways to expand the medical intake process to include some mental evaluations.

“It’s still very new at the moment, we are still trying to fig-

ure out how it is structured,” said Wann.

“Our goal is to be self sufficient, so we are looking for funding. We want eight Palm Pilots so we can teach with the aid of technology” said Selph.

## Women’s spearheads Wellness Initiative

BY JUGGY SIGH

This semester marked the beginning of the Wellness Initiative. We felt that there was a lack of services that empowered our clients and tapped into their talents.

Client expression was promoted in the past but was not emphasized in the Suitcase Clinic model of provide acute care. Now we hold workshops that clients can participate in to help improve their self expression.

We have also began to provide professional counseling service with a collaboration with The Wright Institute, the Psychology graduate school mentioned in the story above.

We have also collaborated with Cal student groups. The Movement and CalSlam

Poetry are to hold workshops at the Women’s Clinic. The Movement comes in once a month to teach clients at the Women’s Clinic a few dance moves while CalSlam conducts poetry workshops to help give the women a medium to write about their lives.

Suitcase’s goal in involving different student groups is to raise awareness of homelessness and the Suitcase mission in addition to including as well as empowering many different organizations and clubs.

In addition, there is also an outreach component involved with the Wellness Initiative.

Earlier this semester, Women’s Clinic clients were given disposable cameras with different prompts and were asked to take photos. We also took portraits of the clients

dressed nicely and gave them wallet-sized copies. With their permission, we also took additional photos to display in an exhibit.

This will all culminate in a movie screening and photo exhibit that is being put on by the Women’s Clinic small group in the Suitcase training class. The photos by the clients and the portraits of the clients will be displayed in manner that tell the stories of the clients through photography and break down borders of homelessness.

The future goal is to expand different wellness workshops to all of Suitcase Clinic’s satellite drop-in sites and have greater outreach and educational events on campus. We are in the beginning phases of the Wellness Initiative and hope to solidify our different projects by next semester.

# Health cards ensure long term client care

BY TANVIR KAPOOR

The Suitcase Clinic is expanding its preventative healthcare services by providing blood pressure monitoring. In doing so, it hopes to raise awareness about hypertension and provide basic risk factor management for cardiovascular disease (CVD) for its clients.

CVD is a broad term used to describe a range of diseases that affect the heart or blood vessels. Many diseases fall under the umbrella of CVD: coronary artery disease, heart attack, heart failure, high blood pressure and stroke. These maladies make cardiovascular disease the leading cause of death in America. Prevention is therefore an important public health goal.

Though research has focused on the socioeconomic disparities in the risk factors, prevalence, and treatment of CVD, little attention has been paid to cardiovascular health in one of the most disadvantaged groups in society—the homeless. Homelessness is a widespread problem in America: It is estimated that 800,000 Americans are homeless in any given week and that 5-8 million have experienced homelessness in the past five years.

CVD is a major cause of morbidity and mortality among homeless adults. Homeless men 45 to 64 years old are twice as likely to die of heart disease than men in the general population, and heart disease is the leading cause of death in older homeless men:



KELLY VITZTHUM

**120/80:** Health Educator Robert E. Lee III checks a client's blood pressure and documents it on the new Suitcase Health Cards. These will help clients track of their weight and blood pressure consistently, each time they visit clinic.

exposure and drug overdose combined barely compare. This may be explained in part by a high prevalence of traditional cardiovascular risk factors among homeless people, as well as barriers to appropriate risk factor management.

The Blood Pressure Initiative at Suitcase aims to remove some of those barriers. By providing access to blood pressure monitoring devices, as well as informational pamphlets on hypertension and coronary artery disease, the Initiative strives to further incorporate basic disease prevention principles into Suitcase Clinic's medical care. We hope that by raising awareness about CVD and risk factor management services in Alameda, we'll empower our

clients to better address their health needs. Now, we can provide more complete healthcare than just the diagnosis and treatment of acute illness.

Last month, we saw over 30 clients, handed out countless brochures, referred four to smoking cessation programs and another two to professional medical care.

We are still looking to expand. All of our supplies are donated, including a \$100 b.p. monitor from Longs Drugs and \$25 worth of business cards with b.p. logs on the reverse side from Kinko's on Shattuck. We still need weighing scales and waist tape measures. Cash donations are also welcome and tax deductible. Contact Tanvir Kapoor for more info: [tanvir.kapoor@gmail.com](mailto:tanvir.kapoor@gmail.com).



SINDHU KUBENDRAN

**DINNER IS SERVED:** The Dinners group served a free and delicious Thanksgiving meal to clients at General Nov. 13. Dinners are sponsored by Cal Dining, Starbucks Coffee, and others. Each dinner is either donated or potluck, and serves between 50 and up to 100 clients. For more information, email Joy Bhat: [jlbhat@gmail.com](mailto:jlbhat@gmail.com) and Sam Tran: [samvitran@berkeley.edu](mailto:samvitran@berkeley.edu)

## Where it happens: times and location



Map of Berkeley's "South Side"

### Women's Clinic

Mondays, 7:30 - 9:30 PM  
Dwight Way Women's Shelter  
2140 Dwight Way between Shattuck Ave.  
and Fulton Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704-2015

### Youth Clinic

Mondays, 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
2300 Bancroft Way at Ellsworth Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704-1604

### General Clinic

Tuesdays, 6:00 - 9:00 PM  
First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley  
2407 Dana Street at Haste Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704-2207  
Voicemail: (510) 848-6242 ext. 510

The services offered are based on availability and services differ between clinics. Please call voicemail for a weekly update of services. All are Wheelchair Accessible. Typically, The Suitcase Clinics' offer Medical, Chiropractic, Optometry, Dental, Haircutting, Legal, Footwashing, Housing & Unemployment Assistance, and Mental Wellbeing Counseling, Hygiene Supplies, Career Counseling, and much more.

## Our Mission:

To promote the health and overall wellbeing of underserved individuals through service provision, cooperative learning, and collective action among community and professional volunteers, students, and participants.

And you can help...

Suitcase Clinic c/o (name of clinic)  
570 University Hall #1190  
University of California, Berkeley  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1190

**YES! I want to become a Suitcase Provider! I would like to donate one or more of the following to any or all of the three Suit-case Clinics:**

- Money** (This gives us the greatest freedom in purchasing/funding exactly what we need)
- Clothing** (fresh socks, undergarments, shoes, shirts, pants, hats, work attire, etc.)
- Hygiene Supplies** (toothpaste/brushes, soap, hair products, deodorant, lotion, shaving supplies, Q-tips, nail clippers, or other obscure but desperately needed supplies.)
- Footwashing Supplies**
- General Supplies** (chairs, coffee supplies, cups, etc.)

**Thank you for supporting us. Your donations will help us tremendously in attaining our vision. Go Suitcase!!!**

## BRIEF-CASE NEWS

Thank you to Dr. Ed Green for volunteering his time all the way from Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. Green's son, Daniel, is a Suitcase volunteer. Dr. Green has offered his time twice this semester and we look forward to seeing him again soon.

Suitcase Clinic submitted a grant for the First Congregational Church of Berkeley and we were named one of the two recipients! This is the highest honor that the Church gives organizations and we out-competed over 30 other local and international nonprofit organizations. We will be given half of all proceeds that are collected during Christmas or Easter, which ranges from \$4000-\$5000!

Suitcase Clinic Elections are coming up. Applications are due Nov. 21. Look for more information about elections protocol on our web site.

[www.Suitcaseclinic.org](http://www.Suitcaseclinic.org)

# 'Computing is not about computers... it's about living' ; a call for retired computers

BY ADDIE CUNEO

No matter who you are, access to computers is a necessity. Every one can use them to keep in touch with family, to find resources when needed, to get directions, and to learn about the greater world we live in. Moreover, if an individual hopes to hold a job in the United States, it is likely that he will have to interact with a computer.

Many of the places where homeless were formerly able to use computers have been closed. There are new rules in many libraries that discriminate against homeless, which prohibit too many personal belongings or offensive smells.

Similarly, the University of California, Berkeley Library system has required university affiliation for full use of the

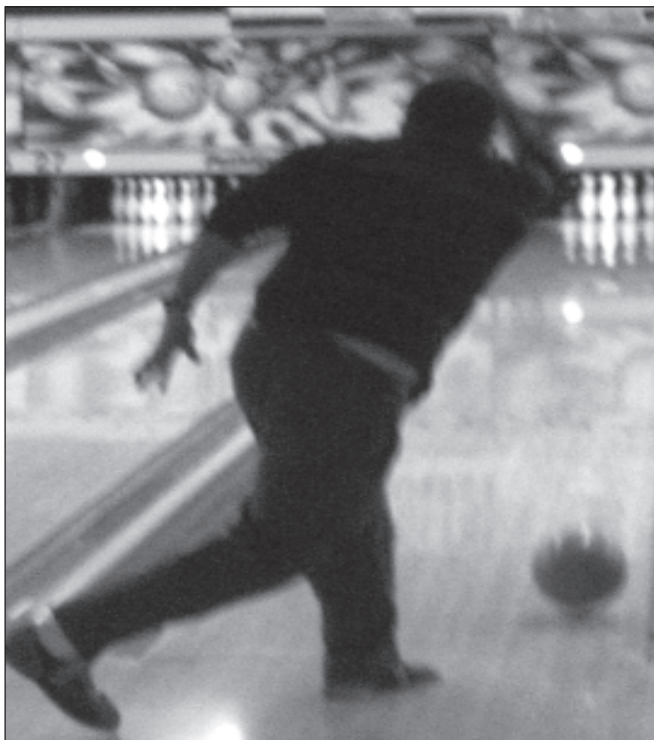
Internet. Suddenly, the number of computers available to homeless in Berkeley is waning.

Stop and think. If you were homeless, why would you need a computer? Job searches are mainly conducted on the Internet, and a computer is required to create a professional resume. Many companies such as Walgreens and Safeway have online application processes. Additionally, social isolation, an inevitable consequence of homelessness, can be thwarted through the Internet. Access to information is a right. Services like Google share the notion of information for all, and with computers, our clients could use these sites to gain knowledge about the world and how it affects them.

Here at Suitcase, we hope to set up a media center to help homeless in the Berkeley area have regular access to computers for the purpose of general

education, job applications, and staying in touch with family and friends. The Suitcase Clinic does an amazing job serving the immediate needs of our clients. Unfortunately, there are many times when we wish we could do something more substantial to help transition clients out of homelessness. We have limited resources, but with your help we could give our clients access to a world of unlimited help – the Internet.

Make permanent change! Please contact us if your family or company has extra computers or printers that are in working order and which they would be willing to donate towards this cause. Due to limited storage, we highly prefer laptops, but our volunteers and clients would be grateful for any contribution. Title quote by Nicholas Negroponte, Chair of One Laptop per Child.



DAN GREEN

**STRIKE; Suitcase Clinic Alumnus Daniel Khakshooy demonstrates perfect form at the Suitcase Case Social on Nov. 3. Students bonded over four lanes at Albany Bowl. Who says volunteer work can't be fun?**

## Youth to 'connect' at 4th event

BY EVA KERSEY

Suitcase's Youth Clinic is gearing up to participate in the fourth Youth Connect, an event planned and staffed by volunteers from the clinic, the City of Berkeley, and various service providers in Alameda County.

These events bring a wealth of service providers together in one place for one afternoon. Visitors will be able to see a doctor, get a rapid HIV test, have their eyes examined, get their teeth cleaned, get acupuncture, look for housing, get a library card, stock up on hygiene supplies and clean clothes, and eat a hot meal. The exact date and location remain to be determined, but it will take place in late January at a Church in the downtown Berkeley area.

Project Homeless Connect began in San Francisco in 2004. Homeless Connect now happens several times a year.

In 2006, Rachel Larson, a volunteer with the Youth Suitcase Clinic, noticed that clients were not attending the Connect event held in the East Bay.

Mirroring the creation of a separate youth clinic within the Suitcase Clinic framework, she recognized that the homeless youth, street kids, and travelers she saw at the clinic would not feel comfortable or welcome at the adult-dominated Project Homeless Connect. She worked with City of Berkeley staff and Suitcase Clinic service providers to plan the first ever youth-centered Homeless Connect event.

For more information, visit us at [Suitcaseclinic.org](http://Suitcaseclinic.org).