

HEALTH

Living with Mental Health Issues

Maranatha to host free course for families

Maranatha Church will host a nationally recognized class for families whose loved ones live with mental health issues, starting Saturday, Sept 8, according to the Rev. Dr. T. Allen Bethel, pastor of Maranatha and president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance.

The free, 12-week course for people whose adult family members live with mental illness is conducted by volunteers of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

While more than 700 people have taken the course in Multnomah County over the last five years, this is the first time it has been offered in



Rev. Dr. T. Allen Bethel

a predominantly African-American church.

That's appropriate, says Rev Bethel, since one in four families is affected by mental health issues.

"There is still so much stigma around these issues," he said. "We can't deny that this is an issue for families, and we must use all our tools to deal with it."

Saturday morning classes begin Sept. 8 at Maranatha; Thursday evening classes begin Thursday, Sept. 6 at Legacy Emanuel Hospital. Exact times and locations will be provided upon registration. Registration is required. To register, call 503-206-6155.

The course is for parents, spouses, children, siblings and friends of adults with mental illness. Designed by a NAMI mental-health professional, the instruction is

taught by specially trained volunteers whose own family members live with mental illness.

In evaluations, 98 percent of those attending say they feel more confident dealing with their loved one as a result of taking the class. Many participants have described the class as "life-changing."

Classes cover communication skills and problem-solving skills for family members; how to deal with a crisis; the biology of brain disorders; co-occurring addiction disorders and mental illness; the criteria doctors use to diagnose the major mental illnesses; as well as psychiatric medications and other issues.

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A University of Colorado freshman joins a crowd smoking marijuana during a pot smokeout.

Teen Pot Use Hurts IQ

(AP) — Teens who routinely smoke marijuana risk a long-term drop in their IQ, a new study suggests.

The researchers didn't find the same IQ dip for people who became frequent users of pot after 18. Although experts said the new findings are not definitive, they do fit in with earlier signs that the drug is especially harmful to the developing brain.

Study participants from New Zealand were tested

for IQ at age 13, likely before any significant marijuana use, and again at age 38. The mental decline between those two ages was seen only in those who started regularly smoking pot before age 18.

Richie Poulton, a study co-author and professor at the University of Otago in New Zealand, said the message of the research is to stay away from marijuana until adulthood if possible. "For some it's a legal issue," he said, "but for me it's a health issue."

Breast Health Exams Expand

Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette is starting a new fund to help ensure its breast health patients in Oregon and southwest Washington can afford access to follow-up diagnostic services.

The Breast Health Patient Assistance Fund will provide financial assistance to low-income patients who need diagnostic follow-up testing, such as ultrasounds and mammograms, following a clinical breast exam at Planned Parenthood health clinics.

The announcement is part of a nationwide ex-

pansion of Planned Parenthood's breast health programs, made possible by an outpouring of donations from the public, after the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation stopped providing grants to Planned Parenthood because of pressure from political groups before quickly reversing course earlier this year.

Last year, local affiliates of Planned Parenthood provided 9,764 clinical breast exams to screen women for breast cancer.

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