

NEWS RELEASE - Immediate Release

MindFreedom International & California Network of Mental Health Clients
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Mental Health Clients and Psychiatric Survivors to Lead Protest of American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting

Protesters Say, "Our Creative Support Will Overcome Psychiatric Corruption!"

When: Sunday, 17 May 2009, 1 PM. Where: Moscone Center, San Francisco

When psychiatric drug companies open up their famously lavish exhibits inside the American Psychiatric Association's Annual Meeting at Moscone Center, mental health clients and psychiatric survivors plan to hold a "Nonviolent Festival of Resistance" directly in front, with speakers, music and free refreshments.

The protest is part of a growing "Mad Pride" movement that has been seeking change in mental health care for 40 years, and is finally gaining more public attention, such as in a recent two-page feature in *Newsweek* (2 May 2009, page 54, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/195694>). The Sunday, May 17 event is co-sponsored by nonprofit groups MindFreedom International (MFI) and California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHC). The action is completely independent, with no connection to a protest the day before by the Church of Scientology's organization Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR).

Delphine Brody, a protest organizer with CNMHC, said, "We intend to celebrate the healing power of peer support, and wellness/recovery-based alternatives to the 'medical' model upheld by a psychiatric profession that has sold out to the drug industry. Psychiatric corruption kills. But mad pride heals!" Protesters are calling on the public to join in with costumes, props and signs, and hope to create a YouTube video of the street theater.

David Oaks, Director of MFI, said, "Martin Luther King often called for us all to be 'creatively maladjusted' to overcome injustice and embrace dignity and freedom. We mental health clients and survivors of psychiatric abuse have a resiliency that can help a world in crisis. All are welcome to join us!"

Ashley McNamara with Bay Area Radical Mental Health Collective, one of the protest endorsers, said, "In a world where we are overwhelmed by so much violence and catastrophe, on scales both personal and global, I find it astounding that the 'medical experts' favor biological diagnoses and pharmaceutical treatments above all other ways of understanding mental distress and engaging in healing." The protest is also endorsed by the Social Accountability Work Group.

Mental health workers, family members and the general public are all invited to participate in the legal and peaceful festival. San Francisco mental health counselor Matthew Morrissey said, "I'm protesting against the APA's insistence on reducing the meaning of our thoughts and feelings to brain diseases and also for the adoption of safer, more empowering alternatives."

Other confirmed speakers include: Larry Belcher, Executive Director, CNMHC; Frank Blankenship, psychiatric survivor organizer from Florida; Leonard Roy Frank, activist, author & electroshock survivor; Al Galves, PhD, of New Mexico: psychologist, mental health consumer, author, MFI board member; Ellen G. Levine, PhD, MPH., Psychologists for an Ethical APA; Ron Unger, mental health counselor from Oregon; Sally Zinman, long-time client/survivor activist; and many more.

For more information phone David Oaks at (541) 345-9106 or Delphine Brody (916) 443-3232, Ext. 19. E-mail to action@mindfreedom.org. Info and a flyer are also on the web at www.mindfreedom.org.

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