

LIVING

WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

R E P O R T I N G O N R E I N T E G R A T I O N I N T O S O C I E T Y
P U B L I S H E D I N T E R N A T I O N A L L Y A S A P U B L I C S E R V I C E O F E L I L I L L Y A N D C O M P A N Y

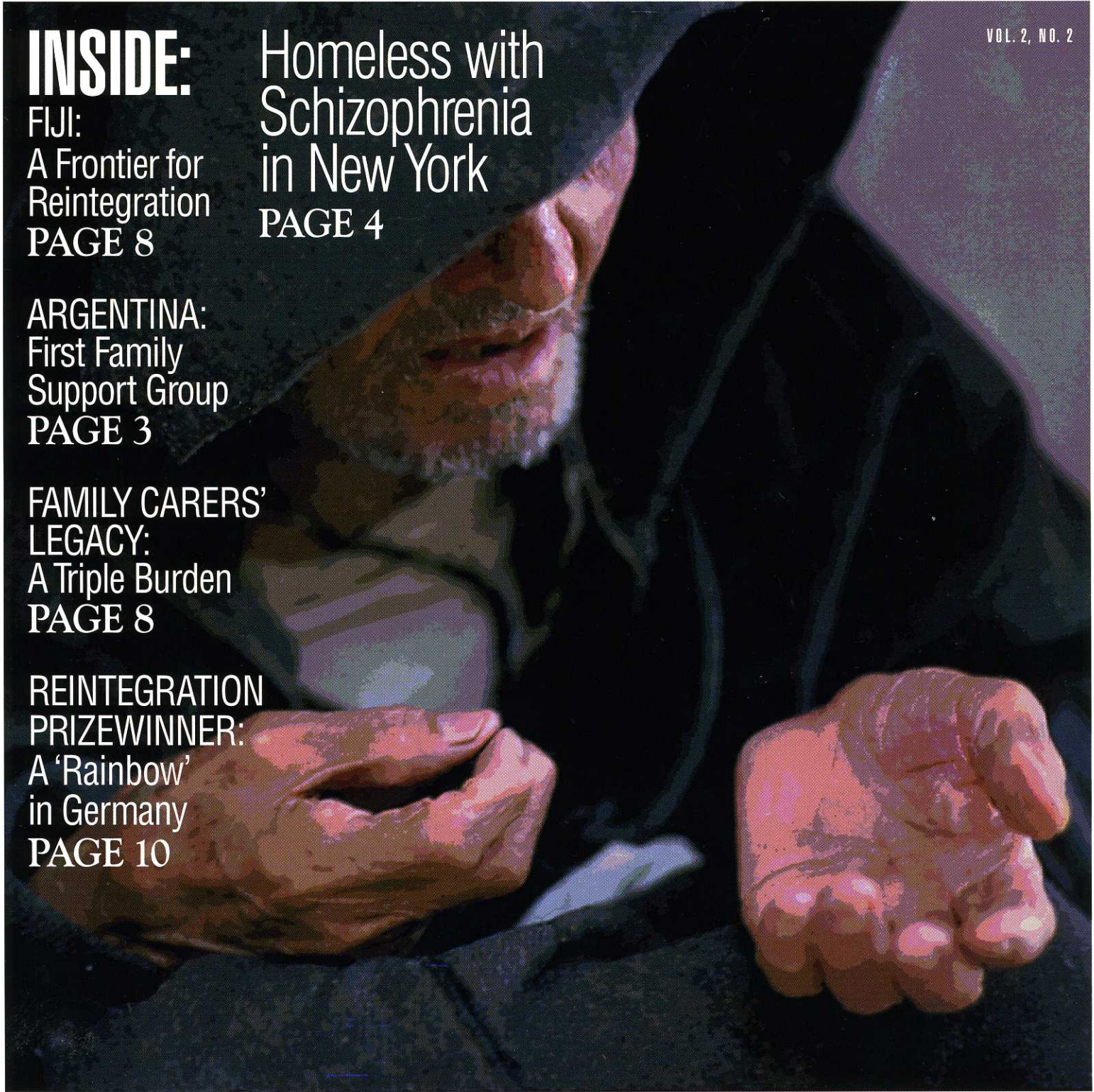
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W Ü R Z B U R G ' S ' R A I N B O W S O C I E T Y '



A BRIDGE BACK TO LIFE

W Ü R Z B U R G G E R M A N Y

Awards for scientific achievement in medicine abound. But what about recognition for the tireless care that social workers give people with mental illness—day in and day out?

BY CHRISTINE KERN
FRANKFURT/MAIN

Through its Schizophrenia Reintegration Awards, Eli Lilly and Company recognizes social workers, as well as physicians and nurses—and now, journalists—for outstanding promotion of reintegration. In 1996, Ursula Berninger, social education worker and chairperson of the Rainbow Society, was awarded the prize in social work for her program at the Psychiatric Day Clinic of Würzburg University.

Selected by an international panel of psychiatrists, she received a cash contribution in behalf of the reintegration program, as well as a memento,

From a dearth of dwellings, long waiting periods for benefits and frequent staff turnover sprang 'The Rainbow Society' in 1987.

at the Ninth Congress of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) in Amsterdam late in 1996.*

"The first therapeutic steps for reintegrating patients should be attempted individually and as soon as possible after the acute treatment of a schizophrenic episode," Berninger said. Together with her colleagues at the Psychiatric Day Clinic here, she strives for smooth reintegration of patients by combining public projects and private enterprises.

From her work in the day clinic, she became chairperson of "The Rainbow Society

of Friends and Patrons of the Psychiatric Day Clinic Würzburg." She is also head of a model project conducted by the government of Germany's Lower Franconia region, giving patients a "Helping Hand in Professional Life" and easing them from partial inpatient treatment to a "normal" life.

Clinic-Outpatient Link

The day clinic opened here in 1981 as a contact point for psychiatric patients to shorten their inpatient stay or to avoid it altogether. Patients are offered medical care provided at the university's psychiatric hospital, as well

as rehabilitation programs at the day clinic—work therapy, teamwork and independent living guidance—and therapeutic services provided in the Würzburg area.

Sixteen patients who live "outside"—with their families or in board-and-care apartments—come to the outpatient clinic daily. About 75% suffer from schizophrenia or related symptoms. "These symptoms can only be successfully treated with a therapy that combines medical treatment and psychotherapeutic management, as well as gradual social reintegration," Berninger said.

After morning group sessions with therapists, they practice their working skills for three hours—office skills, computer operation and crafts such as making doll houses or toys in the carpentry shop. Others sew bags, baby blankets or weave rugs. They are compensated for their work based on joint assessments by patients and staff and paid on a weekly

