



Mental Health Association of Genesee and Orleans Counties
25 Liberty Street, Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 344-2611 www.mhago.org

Mental Health Association of Genesee and Orleans Counties 2015 Annual Report

Windy Tree
Think of the muscles
a tall tree grows
in its leg, in its foot,
in its wide-spread toes -
not to tip over
and fall on its nose
when a wild wind hustles
and tussels and blows.---
 ~Aileen Fisher

When I read this poem, I was reminded of the description of the trees of the Redwood forest, who can have an average age of between 500 to 700 years old. The strength and the size of these trees are stunning. They are giants, standing so close that their branches seem to filter the sun right out of the day, and their towering tops brush the clouds from the sky.

Most of the trees in the grove have burn and char scars recalling difficulties past. Some even have huge caverns carved out of their middles by gutting fires, so big that two or three people can stand inside. But they still grow, so full of life they can't be killed, and that makes all the scars seem unimportant.

So what's the secret of the redwood? How can it last so long and endure so much? Unlike the palm tree whose tap root goes down into the ground as deep as the tree is tall (30 feet up...30 feet down), the redwood has no tap root at all. That's why you never see a redwood standing alone. They are always in clusters, in groups called groves. The might of the tree is not in itself. Here is its strength...for every foot in height it grows up, the redwood tree sends its roots, not down, but three times that distance out.

If the tree is 300 feet tall, its roots go 900 feet out, intertwining with all the groping roots from the other redwoods in the grove. By the time a few hundred years go by, those fellow-shipping roots are so woven with one another, there is no way a tree could fall down. It's held up by the strength of those around it.

For the last 23 years, the MHA in a sense has created its own "Redwood Forest." Starting in 1993 with Connie Miller having the vision and planting the seeds, we have woven ourselves into the community by building a foundation to support individuals with mental illness and their loved ones on their journey of recovery. Collaborating and connecting with other organizations has also strengthened our presence in the community.

In September 2015, we *expanded our roots* by joining forces with Orleans County MHA to create the Mental Health Association of Genesee and Orleans Counties. We also established the Visions of Hope Recovery Program to provide one on one services to help individuals find their "spark of life." As we move further into the changing mental health system, a "*wild wind*" as some have called it, we look forward to continued community collaborations that will further enhance services to assist individuals in reaching their personal recovery goals.

On behalf of the MHA Board of Directors and staff, I extend our sincere appreciation for your continued support of the Mental Health Association. Together with the support of the community, the staff and I will continue to work to promote mental wellness, improve quality of life, and instill hope in our members and the entire community.

~Sue Gagne

Financial Performance

Financial Statement

Revenue	
New York State Office of Mental Health	\$455,254
Community Mental Health Project	\$ 1,500
Advocacy and Empowerment	\$ 2,000
Suicide Education and Prevention	\$ 1,340
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,551

Total Revenue **\$461,645**

Expenses (By Program)	
Mentally Ill/Chemically Addicted (MICA)	\$ 12,872
Social Club/Advocacy	\$169,451
Trauma	\$ 23,107
Warm Line	\$ 49,049
Transportation	\$ 49,145
Suicide Prevention and Education	\$ 1,340
Drop-in Center/Advocacy	\$ 27,087
Recovery Center	\$129,324

Total Expenses **\$461,645**

Unrestricted account balances for year ending 2015 total \$94,391

A copy of the 2015 audit, conducted by EFPR and Form 990, may be obtained by writing the MHA of Genesee and Orleans Counties
25 Liberty St., Batavia NY 14020.

In-Kind Contributions (con't)

Continental School of Beauty
Crosby Stores, Corfu
Ficarella's Pizza
Genesee ARC
Genesee County Community Services Board
Connie Grimsley
Human Energies, Skip Helfrich
Knitting Fever
Lambert's Design Jewelers
Lion Brand Yarn
Pauli Miano
Alan Moore
Muller Quaker Dairy, LLC
Museum Quilt Guild

O'Lacy's Irish Pub
Palm Island Indoor Waterpark
Quill
Liz Riter
Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Rochester Museum & Science Center
Roxy's Music Store
Sharpe Training, Holly Sharpe
Sformo Family
Stafford Trading Post
Subway
Sweet Pea's Cupcakery Café
Target
TechSoup
TF Brown's

The Yngodess Shop
Tops Friendly Markets
T-Shirts Etc.
Linda Tucker
Danette Turner
Yancey's Fancy
YMCA

Program Grants

Community Mental Health Project
GoArt!
Greater Rochester Health Foundation
Local Business Advisory Council

We apologize for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

We sincerely appreciate the support of all who gave in 2015. Because of your generosity, including grant and foundation funding, the MHA was able to raise \$28,077 for its programs/services. Thank you.

Members & Contributors

Major Gifts

GCC Forum Players
Douglas and Robin Miller
*For the Constance E.
Miller Scholarship*
Melvin & Dorothy Wentland

Leaders

Key Bank Foundation
*Leadership gift
program on behalf of
Julie Holman*
Jerry & Carmela Reinhart

Benefactors

Bank of America
Foundation
*Matching gifts for Mike
Grammatico & John Riter*
Charley & Linda DelPlato
Gary Horton
John and Liz Riter
United Memorial Medical
Center

Pacesetters

Dr. Beth Allen
Ruth Andes
Maryanne Arena
Linda Blanchet
George & Sandra Brady
Keith & Joan Burdick
*In memory of their son,
Doug Burdick*
City of Batavia Employees
Russell & Judith Cornman
Donna Ferry
GCASA Foundation
Theresa Fritts
Human Energies,
Skip Helfrich
Liberty Pumps
Mancuso Commercial
Realty, Tony Mancuso
Mancuso Real Estate,
Richard Mancuso
Richenberg's Repair Inc.
Linda Rost
Stafford Trading Post,
Michelle Mouery
Joan Stevens

Pacesetters (con't)

Tompkins Insurance
Agencies
Turnbull Heating & Air
Conditioning
Nina T. Warren

Patrons

City Church
Patrick & Barbara Corona
DelPlato Casey Law Firm
Sue Gagne
Lorraine Gluck
Julie Holman
Michelle McCoy
Paul & Donna Saskowski
Holly Sharpe
William Jr. & Shari Sheron
Stuart Steiner
Joseph Teresi Jr.
Dennis & Carol Wittman

Friends

Kimberly Ackerman
Carm & Debbie DelPlato
Daniel & Shannon Ford
Gary & Dena Graber
Bob Harris Realty, LLC
Earl & Pamela LaGrou
Dr. Sandra Licata
Gary Maha
Joan Marcus
Donna Mazurowski
Pauli Miano
Cheryl Netter
Mary France Rogers
SEFA (2)
Michele Sformo
Shell Associates
Cherylann Stephan
Eileen Tomidy
Tami Underhill
Williams Law Firm, LLC
Suzanne Winkleman
Ellen Wood

Supporters

SEFA (2)
Danette Turner

Mini-Golf Tournament

Grand Sponsors

Maryanne Arena
Gary Horton
Human Energies,
Skip Helfrich
NAMI Rochester
Salmon Orthodontics, PC
Toshiba Business Solutions
Melvin & Dorothy Wentland
Yancey's Fancy

Mini-Golf Tournament

Hole Sponsors/Donations

Mary Battaglia
Batavia Lions Club
Crickler Vending Company
GCASA
GCC Forum Players
Genesee County Deputy
Sheriff's Association
Genesee County Sheriff's
Employee's Association
Liberty Pumps
Living Opportunities of
DePaul
MHA Board of Directors
Senator Mike Ranzenhofer
RA Haitz Company
Tompkins Insurance
Agencies
Tonawanda Valley Federal
Credit Union
Toski & Company, CPAs
United Memorial Medical
Center
Patricia Zambito, LMHC

In-Kind Contributions

Adventure Calls Outfitters
Albright- Knox Art Gallery
Maryanne Arena
Batavia Muckdogs
Big Pauly's Pizza
Blue Pearl Yoga
Bourbon & Burger
Buffalo Bills
Buffalo Sabres
City Slickers
Coats Crafts

Board of Directors

Russell Cornman ~**President**

Maryanne Arena ~**Vice-President**

Linda Rost ~**Treasurer**

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Gary Graber

Julie Holman

Gary Horton, Esq.

Michelle McCoy

Valerie Pettit

Holly Sharpe

William Sheron, Jr.

Joan Stevens

Scott Wilson

Our Mission

*Meeting the needs
of the community by
promoting mental wellness
through peer support,
advocacy, and education
thereby improving
the quality of life
and instilling hope.*

MHA Staff

Sue Gagne

Executive Director

Michele Sformo

Assistant Executive Director

Linsey Vallett

Administrative Assistant

Ellen Wood

Recovery Center Director

Danette Turner

Wellness Director
Genesee County Site

Mary Pallister

Wellness Director
Orleans County Site

Cheryl Netter

Social Club
Peer Program Coordinator

Charley DelPlato

Transportation Coordinator

Ted Walker

Warm Line Coordinator

Nancy Stein

Peer Recovery Guide

Tracy Larish

Peer Recovery Guide

Alan Moore

Peer Program Assistant

Stan Farone

Program Assistant
Orleans County Site

Cherylann Stephan

Support Staff

Judy Elwell

Support Staff

Represents Staff and Board Members of the MHA as of May 2016.

The "Place To Be" Social Club

The Social Club was developed in 1993 as a place for people with mental illness to get together in a safe environment to socialize with peers. Since then it has grown to offer so much more than the original social component. It is a place where our members find empowerment, friendship, education and advocacy. In this environment, members quickly realize that they are more than their mental health diagnosis; they are artists, chefs, friends, leaders and community members. It is an environment that encourages growth and helps individuals to focus on their strengths instead of their weaknesses.

In 2015, the Social Club welcomed 30 new members. An average of 134 different individuals attended each month for a total of 3,801 units of service for the year. Members were offered a variety of workshops with topics including life skills, budgeting, professional art classes, understanding mental illness, conflict resolution, educational fun field trips, museums and many more. We are thankful for all the individuals and community partners who volunteered their time in 2015 to the Social Club including:

- ACE Employment
- Batavia City Police Department
- Batavia Youth Bureau
- Blue Pearl Yoga
- Care & Crisis Helpline
- Continental School of Beauty
- FoodLink/Say Yes to Fruits & Veggies
- Genesee County Animal Shelter
- Genesee County ARC
- Genesee County Farmers Market
- Genesee County Park Program
- GO ART!
- Holland Land Office
- Independent Living of the Genesee Region
- Lake Plains Community Care
- Um Too
- United Memorial Medical Center
- Nicole Ryan Creations

Orleans Drop-In Center

Months of meetings and preparation with directors from both the MHA Genesee and Orleans Boards led to an official merge of the organizations in September 2015.

During this transition, the members of the Orleans Drop-In Center were of primary concern. With a long term director retiring and a new director being brought on board, it was a big change for the members. Fortunately, these changes were embraced, and the center continued to thrive and be a safe place for individuals to come together and support each other in their recovery.

The Drop-In Center is a vibrant place! Walking through the doors you will find friendship, music, art, workshops, empowerment, cooking and socialization. What you won't see are people willing to let mental illness consume their lives in a negative way. It is an environment that encourages growth and helps individuals to focus on their strengths instead of their weaknesses.

Weekly educational workshops in 2015 included topics such as Healthy Relationships, Breast Cancer Awareness, and FoodLink's Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables. Other activities included volunteering at the Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing and Kids Drive for Orleans County Community Action. Members also worked on learning sign language to present a song at the MHA's Agency Christmas party.

We look forward to continuing and expanding services for the residents of Orleans County that coincide with our mission statement of promoting mental wellness, improving quality of life and instilling hope.

Special Events

Annual Meeting: The 2015 Annual Meeting was held on May 5th at Terry Hills Restaurant in Batavia to celebrate the work of the MHA. Mike Fleming, director of Genesee County Mental Health Single Point of Accessibility (SPOA), received the 2015 Constance E. Miller Award of Excellence. The guest speaker was Reverend Vern Saile from Northgate Free Methodist Church.

Legislative Breakfast: The Legislative Breakfast was held on March 20th and afforded the MHA an opportunity to meet with Legislators and key stakeholders to inform them about current mental health issues before the State budget vote in April.

5th Annual Mini-Golf Fundraising Tournament: The 5th annual tournament was held on Wednesday, June 24th. Fun was had by all and over \$4500 was raised for the MHA!

Agency Open House: The MHA hosted a *Friends and Family Open House* in December. The community was invited to meet board members and staff and take a tour of the agency.

Friend of the MHA Award: The Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) selected Gary Horton, Esq. for the 2015 Friend of the MHA Award for his guidance, leadership, and dedication to the promotion of mental wellness in the Genesee County Community.

Celebration of Life: The Mental Health Association in Genesee County sets aside a day each year to celebrate and remember those people who have touched our lives. As we honor these people with symbols of our affection, we remember their smiles and the joy they have given us in knowing them.

Mystery of Edwin Drood: MHA Board Vice President, Maryanne Arena and her cast and crew of the Genesee Community College Forum players performed four sold out shows of the unfinished Dickens mystery. A portion of the proceeds benefited the MHA.

The MHA works in partnership with a variety of community agencies to assure that individuals and families receive needed support and services in an efficient compassionate manner. This is accomplished by representation on the following committees and boards:

Genesee Area Personnel Association (GAPA)
Genesee County Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC)
Genesee County Long Term Task Force
Genesee County Mental Health Sub Committee
Genesee County Mental Health Court
Genesee County Interagency Council
GCC Human Services Advisory Committee
Leadership Genesee
Orleans County Mental Health Subcommittee
Orleans County Human Service Council
Single Point of Accessibility (SPOA)
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Genesee County
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Orleans County

We are always grateful to be part of the Genesee and Orleans communities.

Community Outreach, Education & Support

Psychosocial Self-Help and Support Groups: Self-help and support groups can help address feelings of isolation and help people gain insight into their mental health condition. Members of support groups may share frustrations, successes, referrals for specialists, where to find the best community resources and tips on what works best when trying to recover. They also form friendships with other members of the group and help each other on the road to recovery.

Depression/Bipolar Support Group: This peer-run group meets monthly at the MHA to provide support to individuals diagnosed with depression and/or bipolar disorder. This group is designed for the purpose of sharing information, experiences, gaining coping and problem solving skills.

Family Support: The NAMI Family Support Group meets the unique needs of family members and loved ones of those who struggle with mental illness. Trained NAMI volunteers facilitate this monthly group. The group support of family, friends and peers remain an essential element of recovery.

Life Bridges Support Group: The Life Bridges weekly support group for trauma survivors offers a supportive peer network aimed at helping individuals stay in treatment and gain support.

Survivor of Suicide Support Group: A monthly group for individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Other Collaborative Efforts to Provide Supports 2015:

Care-A-Van Ministries: Hosted the Foodlink Mobile Pantry that provides nutritious food items to locations in rural and under-served areas. MHA staff and volunteers helped set up and serve the community.

Compassionate Friends: A monthly group that met at the MHA to assist those in the grieving process after the death of a child.

In Our Own Voice: This NAMI program provides a first-hand account of what it's like to live with a mental illness. Presenters humanize this misunderstood topic by demonstrating that it's possible and common to live well with mental illness.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful
committed citizens can change the world:
indeed it's the only thing that ever has.*

~Margaret Mead

Suicide Prevention

The Genesee County Suicide Prevention Coalition includes individuals dedicated to providing suicide awareness and prevention training and post-vention strategies for organizations, schools, families and individuals in Genesee County. Please contact us if you are interested in attending. We value your input. Visit the Coalition web site at: StopSuicideGenesee.org or call the MHA at (585) 344-2611 for more information.



SafeTALK is a 3 hour suicide alertness workshop that prepares anyone over the age of 15, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper. Most people with thoughts of suicide don't truly want to die, but are struggling with the pain in their lives. Through their words and actions, they invite help to stay alive. Safe-TALK trained helpers can recognize these invitations and take action by connecting them with life-saving intervention resources. The coalition has two SafeTALK trainers available to provide this training.

Adult Mental Health First Aid: (AMHFA) The Adult Mental Health First Aid course is appropriate for anyone 18 years and older who wants to learn how to help a person who may be experiencing a mental health related crisis or problem. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, psychosis, and addictions.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA): This training is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health & human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

Transportation

Providing safe, reliable transportation to our members is the primary goal of the Transportation program. The mission of the Transportation program is to reduce isolation that can lead to loneliness and depression. This valuable resource is offered to our members who may not have access to other transportation. Assisting members in getting to necessary therapeutic or medical appointments, MHA programs, shopping and other locations as needed, reduces isolation.

Highlights of 2015 include:

- Provided 2,322 transportation units.
- Provided 15,722 accident free miles of service.
- The Defensive Driving Program is held two times per year for members and the community. It was offered again in partnership with DePaul Community Services.

Warm Line

Phone Support and Encouragement 365 days a year!

Since 2005 the Warm Line Program provides needed support and encouragement to mental health consumers who are not in crisis but want to hear a friendly voice. Through this service their isolation can be reduced and consumers can be provided with a link to the community. This program has proven to be a valued resource to the community by addressing the needs of persons affected by isolation associated with mental illness.

In addition to providing support for callers the peer run phone service also provides work experience and training for volunteer peer listeners.

The Warm Line continued to receive financial support through the Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS), Community Mental Health Promotion Initiative. Each year, through this initiative, a team of listeners has the opportunity to travel to Albany to attend Mental Health Legislative Days. This trip gives peers the opportunity to reach out beyond Genesee County to talk about the Warm Line and advocate on the steps of the Legislative Building for current mental health concerns and issues.

Highlights of 2015:

- The Warm Line continued to offer support and encouragement to callers from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, 365 days per year.
- Provided over 11,187 contacts.
- Provided trainings for potential Warm Line Listeners.
- Provided outreach visits to individuals who are not able to leave their home environment by providing reassurance that they are not alone.
- Listeners attended The Annual Community Mental Health Project (CMHP) Statewide Training in Albany.



Charley DelPlato (left), retired Warm Line Coordinator, shares the successes of the program in Albany during Legislative Days 2015. (Above) MHANYS supporters and Warm Line representatives rally on the steps of the Capital Building.

Visions of Hope

What is Recovery?

Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life and strive to reach their full potential.

The Visions of Hope Recovery Center is a peer-driven program designed to assist individuals in finding their "*spark of life*" through support and encouragement.

The program serves individuals 18 and older with mental health challenges in Genesee and Orleans Counties. Together, the trained peer guides are matched with program participants, working on a self-focused plan toward wellness and a healthy empowered life.

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is utilized as one of the tools in the program. WRAP is a self-management recovery system developed by Mary Ellen Copeland for people who experience mental health and other health/lifestyle challenges. People learn that they can identify what makes them well, and then use their own self determined Wellness Tools to relieve difficult feelings, maintain wellness and enjoy improved quality of life. The result has been recovery and long-term stability. The program is designed for individuals in practical, day-to-day terms, and holds the key to getting and staying well.

Be it education, employment and/or increasing social or recreational opportunities in the community, our peer guides walk beside participants during various stages of recovery assisting individuals in helping to understand the impact of mental illness, promoting the thought that living life is not limited because of their illness. Participants are encouraged to know that change and wellness are possible.

Highlights of 2015 include:

- The Birth of the Recovery Center program.
- Hosted OMH Trainings "*Integrating Peers into the Workplace*" and Train the Trainer "*Trauma Informed Care 2.0 and Recovery 101.*"
- Hosted & organized a community event "Yarn Along" which allowed visitors to join in for a day of wellness, relaxation and fun. Participants had the opportunity to work on yarn and needle projects.
- Staff and program participants volunteered for Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing and participated as TOY SHOP shopping escorts during the holidays.

**Promoting Mental Wellness
Improving Quality of Life**