

Outreach

Fall/Winter 2016

Onward & Upward

MHAGO Marks a Change in Leadership

After 16 plus years, Sue Gagne is leaving the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Genesee and Orleans Counties. Sue began her career at the MHA in a part-time support position. After several promotions over the years, she was named Executive Director in 2013. She is only the third Executive Director to serve the organization since its founding in 1993.

Incorporated 23 years ago, the MHA was started by a dedicated group of volunteers, led by Constance E. Miller. Their vision was to provide support services for those suffering from mental illness in Genesee County. After years of planning, the Social Club opened in a small space on Main Street in Batavia. Dorothy Wentland was the agency's first Executive Director, and those who walked through the door in those early years were welcomed by both their peers and a small but caring staff.

In the intervening years, the MHA expanded both its space and its services to include transportation, outreach, community education, advocacy, and services to individuals diagnosed as mentally ill and chemically addicted. And in 1995, under the leadership of its second Executive Director, Millie Tomidy-Pepper (herself a 20 year employee of the MHA), the MHA received funding to start a peer-to-peer Warm Line. The Warm Line is a model in New York State, and the MHA of Genesee and Orleans Counties remains one of only a few MHA's statewide to provide this service.

Ever responsive to the growing and changing needs of its consumers and the community, in 2015, the MHA launched the Visions of Hope Recovery Center, a peer-directed program designed to help individuals with mental health challenges reach their full potential through support and encouragement. And, in the Fall of 2015, the Mental Health Association of Genesee County joined forces with Orleans County to become the Mental Health Association of Genesee and Orleans Counties. Office and program sites are now in both Batavia and Albion.

"We've had three extraordinary executive directors over the course of our history", stated Russell Cornman, Board President. "All have had a deep, shared commitment to our mission and, at the same time, each has brought their own unique skill set and passion to the position." The search process for the new executive director has begun. Michele Sformo, Assistant Executive Director, will serve as interim Executive Director. {www.mhago.org}



Change is hard at the beginning,
messy in the middle,
and gorgeous at the end.

-Robin Sharma-



MHAGO Staff

Genesee

Michele Sformo
Assistant Executive Director
Linsey Vallett
Office Assistant
Danette Turner
Programs Director
Cheryl Netter
Social Club Peer Program
Coordinator
Ellen Wood
Recovery Center Coordinator
Tracy Larish
Marketing Assistant &
Peer Recovery Guide
Nancy Stein
Peer Recovery Guide
Charley DePlato
Transportation Coordinator
Jessica Polk
Warm Line Coordinator
Alan Moore
Peer Program Assistant
Judy Elwell
Relief Staff
Beth Allen
Social Club Volunteer

Orleans

Mary Pallister
Drop-In Center Coordinator
Stan Farone
Drop-In Center &
Transportation Assistant

MHAGO Board of Directors

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6th Annual Mini-Golf Tournament,

A Great Success!_____

On Wednesday, June 22nd, the **MHA** hosted its 6th Annual Mini-Golf Tournament Fundraiser at Terry Hills Miniature Golf Course. The weather was fantastic, and we had a full slate of teams on the golf course. The evening included golf, trivia, and a variety of raffles, followed by a dinner under the pavilion.

The event raised just over **\$5,000** -and by all accounts- was **our best tournament yet!** All of the proceeds go to help fund the many valuable programs and services that the MHA provides to both Genesee and Orleans Counties.

We would like to send out a special **Thank You** to the many event supporters. Without you, we could not have reached our goal. So again, Thank You for believing in our mission, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2017!

Orleans County Open House_____

MHAGO celebrated our Orleans County Open House on Tuesday, September 20th! With a brand new spacious location and a full-house, other community agencies and organizations came to learn about the programs and services the MHA offers. Guests enjoyed light refreshments, great conversation, and a basket raffle held by the Drop-In Center members!

We send a **big** thanks to those who came to support the MHA, and shared this wonderful evening with us! We hope to make this an annual event!

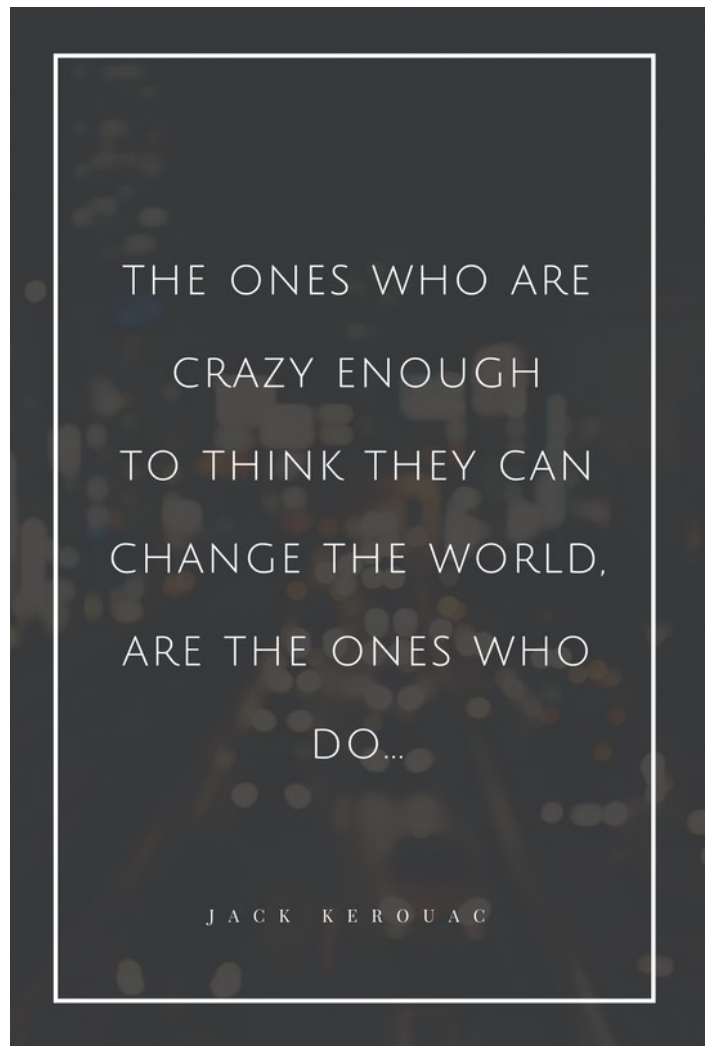
Hollywood Beauty Salon_____

A night full of laughs and tears, this docu-film screening presented by MHAGO, had all who attended feeling every emotion.

On Tuesday, October 11th, guests came to watch a phenomenal film which follows star, Rachel “Hollywood” Carr, as she faces many of life’s challenges. Those challenges include violence, trauma, and mental illness. Carr wasn’t the only one with a story; many of her clients agreed to share their stories as well.

Carr, along with filmmaker, Glenn Holsten, and Dr. Lawrence Guttmacher of the Rochester Psychiatric Center and Reel Mind Film Series, joined us during the screening. They also participated in a panel discussion in which the audience asked questions and praised Carr for her bravery.

“I’m not brave,” Rachel said, “I’m just telling my story.”



The Takeaway

With traveling around the country sharing her story, Rachel hopes her message will get across that everyone has a battle, has a story to tell, and they should continue to fight against the stigma surrounding mental health. Most importantly, that **recovery is possible**.

We’re positive that every single person who attended the screening event with us went home with quite a different perspective on life.

From all of us at MHAGO,
Thank You.



A Tale of Two Counties

In the Fall of 2015, the Genesee County Mental Health Association in Batavia and the Mental Health Association of Orleans County in Albion, began our new journey together by merging both agencies. Our name then became the **Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties**.

Coming Together

Since 2015, becoming united has been a positive and beneficial experience for both members and staff alike.

Orleans County now has a new location in Albion at 243 South Main Street, Suite 101; the second move within a 6-month span. This location is now more accessible for members, staff, and other visitors of the programs and services we offer.

We currently have three part-time staff working at this location; Drop-In Center Coordinator, Mary Pallister, Drop-In Center and Transportation Assistant, Stan Farone, and Relief Worker Jessica Polk.

With the merge and new location in tact, we are able to provide additional services and workshops to our growing number of Social Club and Drop-In Center members. Members from each location often gather for fun activities, celebrate holidays throughout the year, and create new experiences. This allows both counties to come together while creating a friendly and safe atmosphere.

Programs & Workshops

The programs and workshops provided by MHAGO are vital components of what we do and why.

Offering the wide-range of services are our way of fulfilling the need for education, important life skills, empowerment, socialization, and personal growth within the mental health community, while simultaneously providing support, encouragement, and compassion amongst our members and staff.

The Visions of Hope Recovery Center's '8 Weeks to Wellness' series, Social Club's "What's On Your Mind?", Microwave Cooking 101, and Adult Coloring - just to name a few - are meant to spark the creativity of each individual, promote recovery, and increase mental wellness.

To learn more about our growing agency and the services we offer, and to keep up-to-date with news and events, please visit www.mhago.org.

Everything is
Figureoutable.

-Marie Foleo-

Service Spotlight- "The Place to Be" Social Club, Batavia

"The Place to Be" Social Club is a place for individuals, ages 18 years old and older, with a mental health diagnosis. A Social Club member receives peer support and establishes long lasting friendships. They explore their creativity through art, cooking, music, games and more!

As the Social Club Peer Program Coordinator, Cheryl Netter works directly with our Social Club members to lend support throughout their journey, and encourages them to maintain recovery. In doing so, she also hosts many workshops, and plans the club calendar for outings and activities. Each of these carefully planned-out activities focus on self-care, basic life skills, how to adapt to social settings—among many other things—all with a fun twist.

Being a peer amongst the members, Cheryl can relate on a personal level with her lived-experiences. Knowing what it's like to have been in their shoes, gives her an edge when it comes to those who have faced—or still face—mental health struggles.

Cheryl, along with Peer Program Assistant, Alan Moore, Peer Relief Workers, Judy Elwell and Jessica Polk, and Social Club Volunteer, Beth Allen, create a very inviting and positive environment to welcome members.

Currently, the Social Club is **open to the community on Fridays 12:00PM-4:00PM, which includes a FREE light lunch 12:30PM-1:30PM!** Come and join us to learn more about club and how you can become a member today!

For questions or for more information, please call (585)344-2611, and we'd be happy to speak with you!



Mental Health First Aid_____

Thanks to the funding from the **Greater Rochester Health Foundation**, the Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties have been able to provide free Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid trainings throughout 2016.

The mission of the MHA providing these trainings is to ensure the appropriate plan-of-action should an individual directly, or indirectly, experience a mental health crisis. Since mental health-related emergencies should be handled more delicately and cautiously, it requires a knowledge of the best approach to handle the situation at hand.

The MHA's Programs Director, Danette Turner, who is also a certified Mental Health First Aid facilitator, led each of these trainings. They've been offered in-house at the MHA, and other various locations throughout both Genesee and Orleans counties.

By having a trained facilitator on staff, the MHA has been able to offer the 8-hour training where participants learned a 5-step plan with a focus towards various mental health diagnoses. This includes role-playing and other hands-on activities to get the mind rolling.

By the end of the training, participants will have learned*:

- the signs, symptoms, and risks involved with mental illnesses and addictions
- to identify professional and self-help resources
- to have confidence in helping loved ones in distress
- to improve their own mental wellness

Law enforcement, firefighters, direct-care workers, both mental health and general health care workers, peers, family members, and beyond, were amongst the many participants in the trainings. With classes filling up at such a rate, it confirmed that this was—and still is—needed, and wanted, within our community.

As 2016 is coming to a close, there are only two free trainings left; both a Youth Mental Health First Aid and an Adult Training. Contact Danette Turner at (585)344-2611 for more information.

*Research provided by mentalhealthfirstaid.org.

Upcoming Events at MHAGO_____

Here's a peek at what's coming up at the Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties!

Social Club Community Days
(at Batavia)

Every Friday, 12:00PM-4:00PM

Halloween Costume Party
(at Batavia)

Monday, October 31st
(Members Only)

Euchree Tournament
(at Albion)

Wednesday, November 9th
(Members Only)

Say Yes to Fruits & Veggies
(at Albion)

Friday, November 11th
(Members Only)

Thanksgiving Dinner
(at Batavia)

Friday, November 18th
(Members Only)

Friends & Family Open House
(at Batavia)

Tuesday, December 6th

Holiday 'Make & Take'
(at Batavia)

Tuesday, December 13th, 10:00AM-5:00PM

Polar Express Movie Night
(at Batavia)

Friday, December 23rd

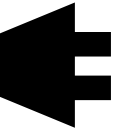
New Years Eve Party
(at Albion)

Friday, December 30th

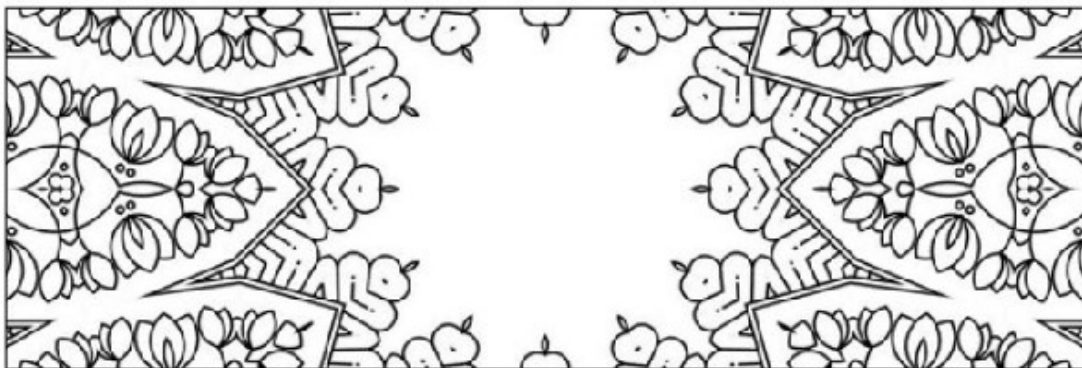
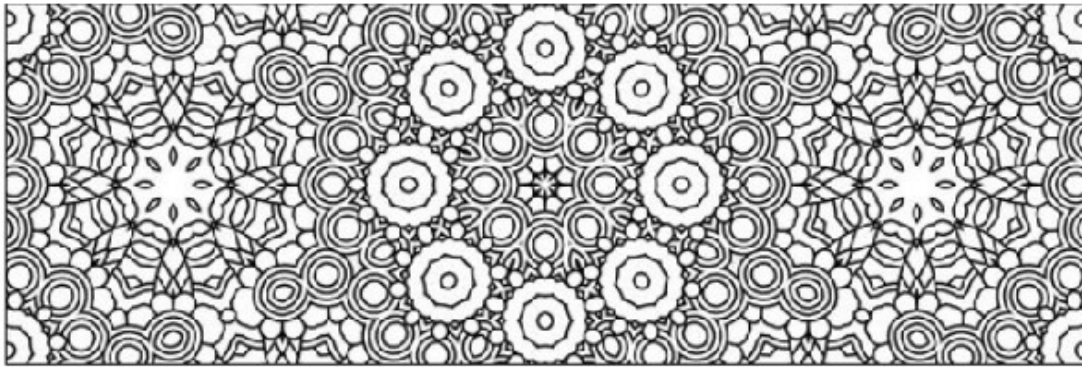
GET connected



www.mhago.org



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GO GREEN!

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Genesee & Orleans Counties would like
to give you the opportunity to go
PAPERLESS! If you would like to
receive our newsletters electronically
via e-mail, please contact us at
(585)344-2611



Mental Health Association of
Genesee & Orleans Counties
25 Liberty St.
Batavia, NY 14020

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"Great things are done by a series
of small things brought together."

- Vincent Van Gogh-

2017 Annual Appeal Campaign

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/St./Zip: _____

Phone Number (optional): _____

Your gift to this appeal will provide you with membership to include voting privileges in the 2017 calendar year. You will also be recognized in the MHA's 2017 Annual Report.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWABLE BY THE LAW.

Please return this portion with your contribution to:

MHA of Genesee and Orleans Counties, 25 Liberty Street, Batavia, NY 14020

**I would like to support the MHA
of Genesee and Orleans Counties
in the amount of:**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25.00 | Friend |
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