

Outreach

Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties

Winter/Spring 2017

-A Letter From the Executive Director-

Happy Spring Everyone!

Spring is the season of renewal. This includes us at the Mental Health Association as well. You may be interested to know that we actively collaborate with other MHA affiliates across New York State (MHANYS) to support a system of care that promotes peer support, advocacy, and education for mental wellness. Our local team includes the area's most dedicated persons who are inspired every day to live this mission. As the new Executive Director, I am inspired also by you, our members and supporters. Just as Spring brings growth to the world around us, your support turns our mission into action.

Family members' experience as consumers of mental health service motivated my own 30-year career as a Mental Health Counselor. And, my new position at the Mental Health Association renews my spirit. Today I feel proud that our daily Warm Line service, providing encouragement to callers during critical evening hours, was praised as a model program by Ann Marie Sullivan, NYS Commissioner of Mental Health. Our Social Club and Drop In Center also offer flexible support when members want it without imposing restrictive appointments or a waiting list. Our transportation services help members get to where they want to be. Our Recovery Center helps members experience their spark of life again.

As the saying goes, we "stand on the shoulders of giants." We would not be where we are today without the leadership of our past Executive Directors. Nor without the foresight of our local founder Constance E. Miller; whose children generously sponsor our scholarship dedicated to her memory. Beyond these persons, we are unique in this area for belonging to state-wide MHANYS which has been working over 50 years to end stigma and promote mental wellness. Also impressive is that our national affiliate, Mental Health America, has been advocating for Americans to live mentally healthier lives since 1909, one year after founder Clifford Beers first published his autobiography A Mind that Found Itself.

I feel proud to be part of the actual organization that created the mental health reform movement in our country. I am humbled by our deep local roots. And, I thank you personally for your continued support of the Mental Health Association. Just imagine all the good we can accomplish together!

Tom Christensen

Executive Director

*Mental Health Association of
Genesee & Orleans Counties*



MHAGO Staff

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Ellen Wood
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Tracy Larish
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Peer Recovery Guide
Nancy Stein
Peer Recovery Guide
Charley DelPlato
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Jessica Polk
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2016 Members and Contributors

We sincerely appreciate the generosity shown to us by all who gave in 2016.

On behalf of everyone at the MHA, please accept our heartfelt gratitude. Thank you!

Major Gifts

Douglas & Robin Miller
*Given for the Constance E.
Miller Scholarship*
Melvin & Dorothy Wentland

Leaders

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In-Kind Contributions

For mini-golf gift baskets,

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In-Kind Contributions

Rochester Memorial Art
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& More

In-Kind Contributions

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Program Grants

Community Mental Health
Project
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MHANYS/Local Business
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NYS Office of Mental Health
Suicide Prevention Coalition

**Please accept our sincere
apologies for any errors or
omissions that we may have
made.**

**Special Recognition
to our Mini-Golf
Tournament Chair,
Skip Helfrich
and to our
Wine Pairing Hosts,
Liz and John Riter.**

Constance E. Miller

MHAGO Scholarship

The Mental Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties Scholarship Application is now available!

The mission of the MHA is to meet the needs of the community by promoting mental wellness through peer support, advocacy and education, thereby improving the quality of life and instilling hope. This scholarship program is designed to provide financial support to individuals who are pursuing their education at an institution of higher learning in the fields of human or social services. Three separate scholarships are awarded annually, one being the Constance E. Miller Scholarship.

For more information, a copy of the scholarship criteria and application can be found at our website: www.mhago.org.

Applications are to be submitted no later than **April 17, 2017**, and can be mailed along with required paperwork to:

Scholarship Program
Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties
25 Liberty Street
Batavia, NY 14020

Constance E. Miller

Award Nominations

Constance E. Miller, along with a small group of dedicated volunteers, founded the Mental Health Association in 1993. This award honors her commitment to excellence by recognizing those individuals and organizations who are working to promote mental wellness, instill hope, and improve the quality of life for people living in Genesee and Orleans Counties.

To print and submit a 2017 Nomination Form, you can find it at our website: www.mhago.org.

All nomination forms must be submitted no later than **April 15, 2017** to:

MHA Board President
25 Liberty Street
Batavia, NY 14020

Or email the form to mhboard2016@gmail.com

Past Constance E. Miller Award Recipients:

1997: Constance E. Miller	2004: Mark Fuller	2011: Maryanne Arena
1998: Richard Dowhy	2005: Ruth Andes	2012: Genesee ACE Employment
1999: Ted Miller	2006: Richard Chiarelli	Services
2000: Mary Pat Hancock	2007: Betty Raponi	2013: Eric Weaver
2001: James Parker	2008: Robert Fleming	2014: Millie Tomidy Pepper
2002: Gary Horton	2009: Mary Ella Loos	2015: Michael Fleming
2003: Dorothy Wentland	2010: Dennis Wittman	2016: Holly Baxter

∞SAVE THE DATE∞

The Mental Health Association of Genesee & Orleans Counties Scholarships and the Constance E. Miller Award will be presented at our Annual Meeting on

Tuesday, May 23, 2017!

JustTellOne.org: An 8-County Awareness Campaign

The Campaign: JustTellOne.org

The Mission

JustTellOne.org is a public awareness initiative focused on mental health and behavioral health in youth led by the Mental Health Association of Erie County and the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance abuse (ECCPASA), in association with Millennium Collaborative Care and Community Partners of WNY. Along with huge support from organizations representing Niagara, Orleans, Erie, Genesee, Wyoming, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany Counties. One of MHAGO's staff members was chosen to share her story in this campaign! (See Below.)

The Power of Conversation

If someone's suffering from depression, suicidal thoughts, alcohol abuse, or substance abuse, on average it takes up to 10 year for that person to get the treatment they need after the first symptoms appear. This can create an issue going from manageable to a life-altering crisis.

JustTellOne.org's mission is to give Western New York youth and young adults the tools and confidence to start the conversation about their mental health or behavioral health issues. By helping a young person reach out for help as early as possible, we can increase the use of intervention services and decrease the likelihood of the issue turning into an emergency.



To learn more about this campaign,
please visit their website at
JustTellOne.org.

Behind the Scenes: The Power of Speaking Out

By Jessica Polk

It all started on September 20, 2016, at our Orleans County Open House. I was approached by Carol Doggett, Director of Community Awareness at the Mental Health Association of Erie County. As we engaged in a friendly conversation, Carol asked if I would like to share my personal story in a new campaign called, *Just Tell One*, and said she'd like to interview me.

No big deal, right? I thought maybe write something up and have it published in a newsletter. Little did I know, this would involve a video interview and a photoshoot! At first, I was extremely nervous, but since the campaign's focus is about being brave enough to reach out to just one person, how could I refuse?

After taping the interview and posing for the photo shoot, everything sort of took off from there. I had the privilege of meeting the Executive Director of the MHA of Erie County, Ken Houseknecht, and learned that the photos taken would be on billboards, possibly buses, and there would be a website! What!

With the campaign spreading quickly and the official launch coming up, I was very overwhelmed. But any anxiety I felt took a backseat, because thinking about how my story could hopefully help others in similar situations, made it all worth it.

After all the hype, things started to settle... Until the billboards went up.

I was then constantly being called, text messaged, and notified on social media that everyone has seen my billboard! Co-workers and friends alike became curious as to what it was all about.

Even my family members have been approached by others asking about this campaign. Due to my anxiety and social disorders, I was really unsure how to feel about all of this and didn't know how to respond.

"...in order to help people, I must put aside my fears, take in the discomfort, and know that if I've helped just one person... I've done my job."

Like most people who have a mental health diagnosis, it was important for me to remember to process how I was feeling. Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that in order to help people, I must put aside my fears, take in the discomfort, and know that even if I've helped just *one* person... I've done my job. I choose to remain positive, and take solace in knowing that this campaign will affect our youth in amazing ways.

Now that I'm known as, "Mrs. Billboard", being seen across eight different counties in Western New York, it still seems so surreal. Just last year, I, Jessica Polk, was a Listener-turned-Coordinator of MHAGO's Warm Line; now, I can be seen on billboards, on YouTube, JustTellOne.org, and all their social media accounts. It's been such an amazing experience being involved with this campaign! ∞

Drop-In Center in Albion Sees a Rise in Members

The Drop-In Center at our Orleans County location is a social club available to all MHAGO club members. Along with a newer location, we've had a growing number of members as well.

The Drop-In Center has expanded to utilizing various activities and workshops that inspire, educate, and enhance each member's experience. Some activities include: various card games to promote number and math skills; Job Club, which educates those who are looking for employment and wants to understand how that will affect their benefits; 'Just Say Yes to Veggies', a program to learn how to prepare healthy meals at home; and our Visions of Hope Recovery Center is at this location every week to offer various ways to find wellness in recovery for those with a mental health diagnosis.

Our Drop-In Center Coordinator, Mary Pallister, and our Transportation and Drop-In Center Assistant, Stan Farone, have made it their goal to truly impact the lives of each of the members that walk in the door. By being supportive,

encouraging, and highly motivating, each of them have put a focus on using tools for coping, the importance of education, and how to care for yourself mentally and physically.

Currently, the Drop-In Center is open—to members of both locations—**every Monday and Wednesday 12:00PM-4:00PM, and Friday 12:00PM-6:00PM**. On Wednesdays, the center is open to the community, and a light lunch is offered. If interested in becoming a member, come by and see us!

The Orleans County Drop-In Center is located in the Arnold Gregory Office Complex

243 South Main St., Suite 101
Albion

For more information about the Drop-In Center and transportation information, please call (585)589-1158.

Growing Beyond Trauma

Life Bridges Trauma Support is a support group newly designed for those who have experienced any traumatic event(s) in their lives.

While Life Bridges has been a support group here at MHAGO for some time, we are always seeking ways to rebuild and reevaluate how we can provide the best support we can.

Participants will be able to connect with others who have had similar life-experiences, gain compassion and understanding, and learn new coping skills that work for them, in a fully supportive environment.

Cheryl Netter, facilitator of Life Bridges, says that a primary goal of hers isn't only to help people figure out what trauma is, but to offer useful tools to enable them to grow beyond it. Some exercises and activities such as breathing techniques, expression through art, and more, may be included in this support group.

It's important to remind ourselves that traumatic experiences do not have to define us, and that the transformation of suffering into strength is what builds us up.

Life Bridges Trauma Support Group will be held
every fourth Thursday of each month.

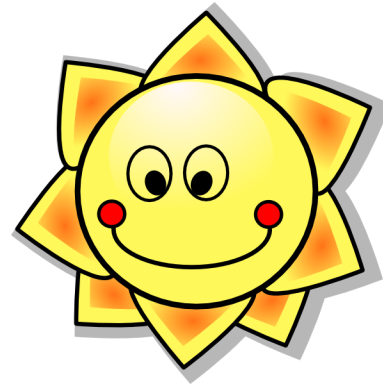
2:00 PM—3:00 PM

25 Liberty St, Unit 4

Batavia

For more information, please call (585)344-2611.

Warm Line is Here For You



The Warm Line is a peer-run, non-crisis phone service based in our Batavia location at MHAGO. The Warm Line Team consists of our Warm Line Coordinator, Jessica Polk, and several trained volunteer listeners. **Every evening from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM, 365 days per year**, they're here to take your call!

If you're having a difficult time and need support and encouragement, you can call and speak with a peer listener. A peer is someone who has lived-experience with struggles and barriers, and can relate to callers on a deeper, more personal level. Peers are prepared with information and resources of local area agencies, organizations, and community events that may be of service to callers. Callers may also request to be on the Warm Line's call list. These calls are made to you whenever you'd like; to simply check in to say hi and to see how you're doing. All calls made and received are free and private.

5:30 PM—8:30 PM

(585)813-0072

MHAGO Events: December 2016



2016 brought a lot of changes to MHAGO. To showcase this, we chose to celebrate what was and what will be... with cake! We also officially welcomed MHAGO's new Executive Director, Tom Christensen!



Light-up snowmen created by one of our crafty Social Club members were available for purchase at our annual *Friends & Family Open House* in Batavia!



The Visions of Hope staff and all of the wonderful holiday helpers and volunteers that truly made our *Make & Take* a hit!



Sleds were available to make at our *Holiday Make & Take*; courtesy of our Albion staff and members!



Scan here...



...to learn more about all the services MHAGO offers, upcoming events, and
to view club calendars, and more!

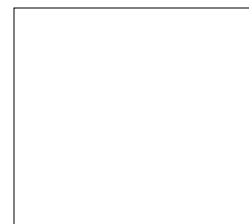
sign me up!

GO GREEN!

The Mental Health Association of
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, or e-mail admin@mhago.org.



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



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:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500.00 | Leader |
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