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Dear MHALC Supporters,

May was Mental Health Month, and kept us all pretty busy. One of the highlights of the month was the Let's Talk, Lancaster Mental Health Expo on May 21. MHALC was instrumental in the planning of this event and we were a significant part of the day itself. Joe Mills presented two breakout sessions on Compeer. Gretchen Gaudioso facilitated two breakout sessions featuring a panel of mental health consumers discussing their recovery. Board member Jon



Coren also participated in the discussions. I presented two sessions on MHALC services in general, and specifically on training available through our Wellness Academy.

We've added two new members to the Suicide Prevention Coalition's executive committee, one from County Behavioral Health Services and one from a managed care provider. They bring a wealth of knowledge and connections that I believe will help us to have a much greater impact.

We continue to add strong members to our board, which is critical to the long-term success of MHALC. We have a great mix of mental health professionals, mental health consumers and passionate community members. You can see a full board listing on our website at mhalancaster.org/who-we-are/board-directors.

We held our annual pasta dinner on April 1, which was a great success. We set a record for funds raised at over \$29,000, and as always, the food and fellowship made the evening special. Make sure to save the date for next year, March 31, 2017.

As you can see, we are working hard to improve infrastructure and effectiveness so that we can continue to provide high quality services to those who need them most. Thank you for being on the journey with us.

Sincerely,

Scooter Haase
Executive Director

Questions or comments about the newsletter?

Contact us at:

Mental Health America of Lancaster County
630 Janet Avenue, Suite B-110 | Lancaster, PA 17601
Phone: 717-397-7461
Website: www.mhalancaster.org

MHALC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MHALC STAFF

Scooter Haase*Executive Director***Gretchen Gaudio***Client and Family Advocate***Joe Mills***Compeer Program Manager***Barbara Perry***Administrative Assistant***Kaitlin Specht***Marketing Coordinator***Peggy Shaffer***Accountant*

UPCOMING EVENTS

QPR Suicide Prevention Training | Fri., Oct. 7 | 1:00 to 4:00 PM

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer. This training will teach you how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. This course costs \$15; some scholarships may be available. Please call the MHALC office at 717.397.7461 to sign up.

Youth Mental Health First Aid | Wed., Sept. 14 | 7:45 AM to 5:00 PM

Learn to identify, understand, and respond to the signs and symptoms of addiction and mental illness in youth and how to assess a situation to provide appropriate help. This course costs \$25; some scholarships may be available. Please call the MHALC office at 717.397.7461 to sign up.

International Suicide Survivor's Day | Sat., Nov. 19 | 7:45 AM to 5:00 PM

One day a year, people affected by suicide loss gather in their local communities to find comfort and gain understanding as they share stories of healing and hope. Stay tuned for future updates by visiting stopsuicidelancaster.org.

Walk for D.E.S. | Sat., Sept. 10 | 7:45 AM to 5:00 PM

5k Walk/Run held at Manheim Township Park, 209 Petersburg Rd., Neffsville, Pa. Contact 717.207.9634 or visit walkfordes.org for more information.

FREE DROP-IN SUPPORT GROUPS

*Unless otherwise noted, groups meet at the
Community Services Building
630 Janet Ave, Lancaster, PA 17601*

Most support groups are peer-facilitated, which means that the individual leading the group has walked in your shoes. Peer-facilitated support groups are a great place to start your recovery journey. We hope you'll find that by hearing others' stories, you'll feel less alone in your experiences.

Reach out today – we're here to support you.

Anxiety, Panic & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group1st, 3rd, 5th Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room B-103**Bipolar Educational Group**1st & 3rd Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Blair Room**Bipolar Discussion Support Group**2nd & 4th Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Blair Room**Bipolar Support Group**2nd Thursdays | 12:00 pm (lunch provided)

Hempfield United Methodist Church | 3050 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster PA

Depression Awareness & Men's Needs Support Group1st, 3rd, 5th Tuesdays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room D-155**Depression Awareness and Women's Needs Support Group**1st, 3rd, 5th Tuesdays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room B-107**Moms Supporting Moms Group**2nd & 4th Fridays | 9:00-10:00 am | Room B-107*For women experiencing postpartum depression | Nursing infants welcome*

ADVOCACY UPDATES

THANK YOU LETTERS FROM PRISON

GRETCHEN GAUDIOSO, CLIENT AND FAMILY ADVOCATE

Almost every week I get a letter from a state prison or the Lancaster County Jail. They are mostly letters from people that were in my mental health group and have either moved within Lancaster County Prison to a different pod, or they have been transferred “upstate”. The letters range in things like: “I wanted to let you know I made it here,” “I am okay,” “I just wanted to reach out to tell you that I have brought all of the information you gave us with me, and I will be in touch when I am finished,” and “Thank you.”

Recently I received a note from a gentleman that had been in my men’s mental health group, which meets every Wednesday, for six months. He said, “Thanks for all of your help, and thanks for giving me the tools I need to get help and for showing me I can be helped and that I am not a piece of crap.”

This note resonated with me because I try my best to inspire them to feel better about themselves. Being in prison, you are made to feel like you are nothing and that you can not amount to anything. Teaching people that all along it is their mental health that has gotten in the way of them leading a rewarding life and giving them the tools to change is my goal.

I was glad and touched that he has recognized that he can change and get help and be the man and father he wants to be. Important programs like this are often forgotten, and because of generous donors like you, we are able to continue to help in the prison. We believe that everyone’s journey is different, and we are here to help those be an important part of the community once again.

FEATURED VOLUNTEER

ROBBIN HIGGINS, SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR

For many years, I had been familiar with Bipolar Disorder because my daughter was diagnosed with it in her late teens. I never could understand why she would act the way she did or do the things she did until I was diagnosed with Bipolar also. I was working full-time in the banking industry and due to a very stressful circumstance, I became very sick. I was misdiagnosed with major depression, anxiety and PTSD, and I could no longer work. I was a wreck. That happened about 15 years ago, and it wasn’t until 10 years ago that they finally gave me the right diagnosis... Bipolar 1.

I stumbled upon the Bipolar Support Group on the internet about 9 years ago and my daughter and I started attending it together. I tell people that the medicine I take every day and the therapist and psychiatrist that I see are important, and without the support of the Monday night group, I probably would not have survived. I developed a bond with the people in the group and it became my safe place where I could be open and honest and not afraid that I would be judged. I am so thankful for MHALC for providing that outlet for people like me.

I have been stable now for about 5 years. When I was asked to help out the facilitator at the time in case she needed time off, I jumped at the chance. Shortly after, I was facilitating every Monday and I started gaining more confidence and feeling better about myself. As the facilitator, I make sure that the rules are followed, and I keep the meeting flowing smoothly. I ask questions, and most importantly, I am there to listen. On educational nights, I will provide a topic to be presented and discussed. I look forward to Monday nights because it was a major part in the road to my recovery.

If you or someone you know are in need of Client/Family Advocacy Services or education for your school or community group please contact MHALC at 717-397-7461 or email gretchen@mh Lancaster.org.

UPDATES FROM COMPEER

15TH ANNUAL FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON

JOE MILLS, COMPEER PROGRAM MANAGER

On a snowy Saturday, April 9th, over 60 volunteers and friends joined to celebrate our 15th Anniversary. Although the snow kept some folks home, those attending enjoyed reminiscing, looking through history-filled scrapbooks and pictures, storytelling, and sharing good times.

We honored and presented gifts to friendships celebrating 5 and 10 year anniversaries. Sarah Myers, Compeer Lancaster Founder, presented the first 15th Anniversary Compeer Friendship gift.



Fifth Year Award: Ethel & Alta; John & David; Dawn & Barbara; Dawn & Nancy

Tenth Year Award: Mary Ann & Becci; Valerie & Sally; Barbara & Lucinda

Fifteenth Year Award: Doug & Seth

“This has been an amazing experience. It’s my first time here at this luncheon, I just want to thank you all for coming here. Ever since I’ve been connected with my friend, Emily, my anxiety has gone way down, my depression has totally gone down.” Cynthia, Compeer Friend

“Barry has taught me a lot, and it goes both ways. Barry has taught me how to stay positive, and he’s one of the most positive people I’ve met in my life.” - Gary Yoder, Board Member



(From left to right: Emily, Cynthia)



(From left to right: Gary, Barry)

FRIENDSHIP STORY

Chris and Sarah got together in December 2014. These friends have a unique beginning. Chris tells the story that she could not find Sarah’s house for their initial visit, then Sarah said that she could not find Chris’ house when she went there for the first time. From their story, it is pretty certain that they now have found each other! Here is what Chris had to say:

“My friend and I have enjoyed common interests: walks at various parks/trails, we try a different one just about every week! Window shopping or getting a bargain at a discount store. Coffee at McDonald’s. Talking about the day, the week. Weekly phone calls to say Hello. Praying for one another throughout the week, especially if we know the other is having a rough week. My friend and I find ourselves living alone and this has helped us both to get out and not be isolated.”

ANNUAL SURVEY

The Compeer model of intentional friendship has been added to the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). The Annual Compeer Survey went out this spring, and 85% or more responded positively to: feeling a sense of belonging to others and feeling connected to other people; participating in more leisure activities in the community; and having more confidence in managing their health concerns. There was also an increase in interests like joining a faith/religious group, volunteering in the community, and participating in more activities. All comments to the survey included how important their friends make them feel.

“Having someone who takes the time out of her life and family and busy day to call, keeps me in touch to get together weekly, even if it’s a call. My other friends and counselors hardly have time for me.” - Anonymous

COMPEER AND COMPEERCORPS VET2VET

CAN YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A COMPEER FRIEND?

Compeer volunteers commit to a **1-year match** and spend about **4 hours per month** with their friend.

Friends are matched based on age, gender and general interest and **spend time together doing things they both like**, such as going for a walk, watching a sporting event, or getting coffee together.

If you know how to be a friend, you can be a Compeer volunteer.

To find out more about getting matched, visit our new website at www.compeerlancaster.org or contact Joe Mills at jmills@compeerlancaster.org.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR FRIENDS: KIM AND TINA *MATCHED SINCE JANUARY 2016*



Tina and Kim became friends in January 2016. Here's what they have to say:

KIM: "You certainly found a wonderful match! We have so many things in common! I was ready to give up on you finding me a "compeer friend!" And Tina and I do not think of each other as "compeer friends!" But, rather, friends for life! I am so glad you didn't give up on me, when I was too afraid to go to the college coffee shop to meet Tina! Thank you for insisting you, Tina, and Jade come to my house, after I would not come to the coffee shop! Tina and I will always remember that day we met on my front porch! It was definitely worth the wait!"

TINA: "I became involved in Compeer through the Veterans Expo. Having my friendship means a lot to me because I have a lot of the same issues and would have loved having this service available to me during my rough times. I know how important a support network can be. We go shopping for different things, mainly thrift shopping or grocery shopping, but they are things that help her get out of the house. She even came to my house one night! I've invited her to my wedding-that's how close I feel we've gotten. I just want to share the joy with her. I enjoy seeing her happy when I am around and we go places to shop or eat."

(Kim and Tina trying on different hats to match their personalities during a fun shopping trip)



Save the Date for these Upcoming Compeer Lancaster Events:

15th Annual Compeer Picnic | Thursday, August 4th, 2016 | 5:30 PM—7:30 PM
Long's Park: Pavilion #2 | US-30 & Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, Pa. 17601

Compeer will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks, and table settings. Please bring your favorite snack, salad, fruit, or dessert. You are welcome to bring one friend or family member with you. Please call the Compeer office at 717.397.7461 to RSVP and to let us know what you will be bringing. We can't wait to see you there!

MENTAL WELLNESS NEWS

LIMITING SCREEN TIME, IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH

REGAN BOLOTIN, MHALC INTERN

Our advice to you: Put your phone down and connect with the people around you.

For many of us, smartphones have become part of our daily routine – they are our alarm clock, provide us with music on the commute to work, and make it easy and timely for us to answer emails and connect with people.

While these devices undoubtedly make our lives easier and provide us with entertainment, they may also be negatively affecting our mental health. It is important to know these facts about smartphones, and be conscious about how often we glance at our screens.

- When you choose to put your phone down and listen, you are giving someone the gift of your full attention, and also living in the moment. Both of these things will benefit your overall mood (4).
- Spending time staring at a screen has been shown to affect our impulsivity, mood and our ability to pay attention (2).
- The amount of time we spend looking at our phone screen increases the negative thoughts that come into our head. These are the thoughts we try to push away, but can sneak back in when we spend time on our smartphones (3).
- Many of us seem to get in the routine of browsing social media or the internet on our phones before we fall asleep, however, studies show that this habit actually makes it harder to fall asleep (2).
- Sometimes we may look to our phones to connect us with other people, but it turns out that smartphone dependency increases feelings of loneliness. Making new friends and building relationships is only harder when you are focused on your phone (1).

Let's challenge ourselves to try limiting the amount of time we spend on our smart devices. The next time you sit down for a meal with family and friends, suggest that everyone puts their phone in the middle of the table for the remainder of the meal, and discover how much more engrossed everyone is in conversation.

1. Bian, M., & Leung, L. (2014). Linking Loneliness, Shyness, Smartphone Addiction Symptoms, and Patterns of Smartphone Use to Social Capital. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(1), 61-79. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0894439314528779>
2. Dong, Guangheng, Yanbo Hu, and Xiao Lin. "Reward/Punishment Sensitivities Among Internet Addicts: Implications for Their Addictive Behaviors." *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology & Biological Psychiatry* 46 (October 2013): 139-145. doi:10.1016/j.pnpbp.2013.07.007.
3. Han, Doug Hyun, Nicolas Bolo, Melissa A. Daniels, Lynn Arenella, In Kyoong Lyoo, and Perry F. Renshaw. "Brain Activity and Desire for Internet Video Game Play." *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 52, no. 1 (January 2011): 88-95. doi:10.1016/j.comppsy.2010.04.004.
4. Roberts, J., Pullig, C., & Manolis, C. (2015). "I need my smartphone: A hierarchical model of personality and cell-phone addiction." *Personality And Individual Differences*, 79, 13-19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.01.049>



GIFTS OF JOY

PEGGY SHAFFER, ACCOUNTANT

Last year, our offices turned into wonderfully wrapped gifts for people with a mental illness. We were fortunate to have partners in the community who helped fulfill the gift request of the individual. Our offices are so colorful during the month of December.

Each year, the counselors ask their clients what they would like as a Christmas gift, and MHALC compiles the list. We are fortunate to have churches, organizations, as well as monetary contributors to help fill the requests. Often times this is the only gift that an individual will receive. Last year, we were amazed that we were able to provide well over 800 gifts to at least 500 people.

If you belong to an organization, your organization may want to consider receiving gifts to be purchased. Your gift of \$25 or more helps us bring happiness to those in need during the holiday season. Help make the season brighter for hundreds of local people by contributing to MHALC's Gifts of Joy Holiday Drive this upcoming holiday.

WELLNESS ACADEMY

BRAIN HEALTH | JANET BRIAN MILLS

Description: Much is said about maintaining healthy bodies, but what about our brains? The brain is our master control center. Healthy brains are key to a holistic approach toward, “change and transformation.” This interactive workshop will include: basic brain information, reworking our brains for happiness, and an exploration of the work of psychologist Paul Nussbaum, Ph.D. His research indicates that physical activity, socialization, mental stimulation, spirituality, and nutrition are essential for good brain health.

Details: To be determined. Please refer to our News & Events Calendar for updates: mhalancaster.org/news-events

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (ADULT & YOUTH) | BRENT SWOPE & JAYNE MILLER

Description: Learn to identify, understand, and respond to the signs and symptoms of addiction and mental illness; recognize the risk factors and warning signs of mental health difficulties; how to apply the 5-step action plan to assess a situation and provide help; and understand what local resources are available and where to turn to for help to guide someone towards getting appropriate professional help.

Details: \$25 per training (includes a light breakfast and lunch; scholarship opportunities are available) | Community Services Building, Blair room (unless otherwise noted) located at 630 Janet Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601.

Trainings for 2016: Adult Training: Wed., Sept. 14, 2016 | Youth Training: Wed., Nov. 9, 2016

OFFICE YOGA | PEGGY SHAFFER

Description: Come for an hour of yoga and relaxation, learning simple movements you can incorporate into your work day. MHALC’s Peggy Shaffer, certified yoga instructor, will lead this session.

Details: \$5 suggested donation | Noon to 1 PM | Held on the 2nd Friday of every month | Community Services Building in Room B-107 (Unless otherwise noted) located at 630 Janet Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601

QPR SUICIDE PREVENTION | GRETCHEN GAUDIOSO OR TRAINED QPR VOLUNTEER

Description: QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer; the acronym is a play on CPR training, another important life-saving method. This training will teach you how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. As with CPR training, this training is appropriate for all; we never know when we may find ourselves supporting someone through a mental health crisis. This training is particularly useful for individuals working in social services, education, faith-based groups, and medicine.

Details: \$15 per person | Held on the first Friday | 1 PM–4 PM | Community Services Building, Blair Room (unless otherwise noted), located at 630 Janet Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601.

Trainings for 2016: Fri., Oct. 7, 2016 | Fri., Dec. 2, 2016

PLEASE REACH OUT TO KAITLIN SPECHT AT 717.397.7461 OR KSPECHT@MHALANCASTER.ORG FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR INFORMATION REGARDING THE WELLNESS ACADEMY.

Don’t forget to follow us on social media!

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Twitter: twitter.com/mhalancaster

Pinterest: [pinterest.com/mhalancaster](https://www.pinterest.com/mhalancaster)

Youtube: [youtube.com/channel/UCAdXrupT7u1PL3d9FPRQeUQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAdXrupT7u1PL3d9FPRQeUQ)





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We invite you to join us in our journey
toward building that community **today**.

We envision a society where mental wellness
is the foundation of a healthy community.

Our mission is to promote optimal mental health
through access, awareness, advocacy, and education.

