



Kim McDevitt
Executive Director

Dear Friends of Mental Health of America of Lancaster County,

What an amazing year it has been. In some ways it feels like I am still new, yet in others, I feel that I have always been a part of MHALC. One thing has been constant, I am inspired and proud of our team, our partners, and the community at large for the work that is being done to support those struggling with their mental health. And to you, thank you for being a part of this movement.

Closer to home, we have been in a flurry of activity with our move to 245 Butler Ave (read Gretchen's update). We invite you to our open house on November 7, 2019 from 3-6 pm. This transition has not stalled the MHALC team from providing support to individuals. In fact, this year, we have served over 30% more individuals by connecting them to services, educating our youth, and by providing one on one support. But with 1:5 experiencing a mental health challenge, we still have a lot of work to do.

In late spring, MHA identified several priorities for its 3 year strategic plan. We are working diligently to increase our quality of services, as well as scale education and advocacy support. In order to make MHALC a viable organization for many decades to come, we are building a plan of sustainable income streams.

Legislative advocacy is essential and provides the voice and information to our legislators to make informed decisions for our support. After a 7 year absence, we brought back the Legislative Breakfast. Our legislators and the community are listening, evidenced by the passionate engagement of the nine legislators and over 100 community members in attendance at the breakfast in May.

The work we do at MHALC leads to Suicide Prevention. As lead on Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition, we are being proactive to the needs brought to us. Coalition attendance has increased by 80%. We have partnered with Teen Hope and Avedium to provide more education in schools, to reduce stigma and increase access for those that need support. We began the Gun Lock Project and are promoting increased participation in support groups. We ask for your continued support. More directly, we ask for your help on November 22nd during Extraordinary Give. If everyone who receives this letter will contribute the minimum \$25, we will be able to close the end of year funding gap. In addition, you will find a Catalogue of Holiday Giving at the end of this newsletter. Please support us by selecting one or several action items. Together we can make a difference.

With immense gratitude and wishes for a blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

Kim McDevitt



THE EXTRA
ORDINARY
GIVE

November 22nd

LANCASTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Rodgers & Associates
HIGH FOUNDATION

MHA Sponsors



Lancaster Behavioral Health Hospital

WELLSPAN Philhaven

Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health

UHS

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Charlotte Leckow

Marketing Coordinator

Carol Bowman

Administrative

Assistant

Peggy Shaffer

Staff Accountant

Amanda Katchur

Support Group

Facilitator

UPCOMING EVENTS

QPR Suicide Prevention Training

Oct. 4th, Dec. 6th, Feb. 7th, April 3rd and June 5th from 1 to 4 p.m.

Training can be abbreviated and customized for your group on or off-site. This training will teach you how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis, as well as how to Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) someone to help. Cost \$15/person. Inquire about available scholarships. To discuss, please call the office at 717-397-7461.

Suicide Prevention Coalition Meetings

Nov. 21st & Jan. 23rd from 12 to 1 p.m. Everyone welcome. Topics: The Love Letters Project on 11/21; How to support the aging with depression & isolation on 1/23.

Gifts of Joy | Donate starting October 1st at 245 Butler Ave, Ste 204 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donate a "wish list" gift for someone in mental health recovery. Recipients have a behavioral case manager with Lancaster County. See page 8 for details.

www.mhalancaster.org/news-events

COMPEER EVENTS

Oct. 8th & 10th (Jen's Pottery) 2-4 p.m. | Nov. 14th (Bingo) 6:30-8:30 p.m. Friends, look for Joe's emails that provide details.

Annual Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 3rd at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren at 7-8:30 p.m.

In Brooke's Words...

"My time at MHA was very rewarding. I learned so much in such a small amount of time and acquired opportunities I never would have had in absence of this internship. During my time, I developed relationships with the staff members that I will always cherish. Amazing people work at MHA! I became a Compeer volunteer, which is truly something I am so genuinely happy about. This is such a feel good place. Every experience I had was memorable."

FREE DROP-IN SUPPORT GROUPS

Unless otherwise noted, all groups meet at 245 Butler Avenue, Suite 204, Lancaster, PA 17601

Most support groups are peer-facilitated, which means that the individual leading the group has walked in your shoes. These groups are a great place to begin your journey through recovery. We hope you'll find that by hearing others' stories and sharing only if you want to. You'll feel less alone in your experiences.

Anxiety, Panic & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group

Weekly on Thursdays | 7-8:30 p.m. | Conference Room Entrance

Bipolar Educational Group

1st & 3rd Mondays | 7:15-8:45 p.m. | Conference Room Entrance

Bipolar Discussion Group

2nd, 4th & 5th Mondays | 7:15-8:45 p.m. | Conference Room Entrance

Bipolar Support Group

2nd Thursdays (lunch is provided)

Hempfield United Methodist Church | 3050 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster PA

Depression Support Group (Finding Our Way)

Every Monday | 6-7 p.m. | Conference Room Entrance

Depression Awareness and Women's Needs (D.A.W.N.)

1st, 3rd & 5th Tuesdays | 7-8:30 p.m. | Suite 204

Moms Supporting Moms Group & Playdate

2nd Wednesdays | 6-7 p.m. H Hamilton Park UC of Christ | 1210 Maple Ave, Lancaster PA

Community groups available are Sibling Support, Family Support, Combat Veterans and Survivors of Suicide. Contact Amanda at 717-397-7461 or visit mhalancaster.org/support

STUDENT INTERNS AT MHA

INQUIRE ABOUT INTERNING FOR MHA

A huge thank you to our summer 2019 interns Nicole, Brooke & Ben!



A CALL FOR EVENT AND OFFICE SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE EVEN JUST A FEW HOURS A MONTH OF YOUR TIME.

PLEASE CALL 717-397-7461 OR EMAIL MHA@MHALANCASTER.ORG TO LET US KNOW YOUR AVAILABILITY & SKILL SETS.

CLIENT AND FAMILY ADVOCACY UPDATE

A PLACE TO SEE OUR TROUBLES ARE ALL THE SAME

CLIENT AND FAMILY ADVOCATE & MHA LIAISON TO THE COUNTY PRISON

630 Janet Avenue was the home of MHALC for 56 years. It was also my second home for more than 21 years. On July 31st MHA closed that historic chapter and started a new fresh chapter in a new space at *245 Butler Avenue*— a new construction build out with fresh paint & new work stations (we are all about stretching our dollars). We are looking at this move as more than just a physical move... it's a metaphorical move as MHA moves to grow exponentially in the upcoming years.

Years ago, I remember Mary (Mary Steffy MHA's former E.D.) having **a picture on her wall of the shackles that were once used to bind people that had mental illness.** It was a reminder of how far we had come in mental health advocacy. We were working to give people (treated inhumanely without a voice) to speak up about their treatment, have their opinions be heard, and to empower them to advocate for themselves. Now, in our new space we have our walls filled with pictures of people that are in recovery, and brilliant art work from people who have struggled with their mental health. Walking in the new space, you can feel the positive energy and all of the wonderful work that we are doing.

You can only imagine what packing up 50 years of an agency, and moving it to a tighter space, is like. I have always been the type of person that sees value in everything. "We can't throw away the homemade "Pierre the Pelican" we used to include in our former parenting newsletter!" I bargained. But we could not bring everything with us. A Hug E Bear costume for giving hugs out downtown? Sorry, Hug E had to go. Slides of old pictures back in the day? We kept those along with newsletters since day one, lists of every single person that has ever served on the board and Mary's infamous gavel. Definitely a keeper!

Of all the history that we found, it was amazing to reflect on how far we have come. For instance, we have grown from 3 employees to 8. Also, **we are no longer fighting to get into schools. Early on, I was told "we don't have problems with depression or suicide here at this school district."** Now we get calls asking us to educate kids in schools.

So you can imagine what I uncovered after 21 years in the same office and my trip down memory lane. I found a magazine, published in 1998, with Seinfeld on the cover stating "the end of an era," as their show concluded. I also found thank you letters from my clients over the years. (We should really get back into that as a society, but I digress.) I found a letter from one of the original Community Support Program chairs, the late Nancy Glusker. This letter was typed (on a typewriter) and on CSP letterhead, that said "sorry I missed your call." I discovered photo albums of all three Alpha programs, which were social groups for people with serious mental illness that had been around for more than 40 years.

I found pictures of my first pasta event, my dear friend Rene and the lovely Betty, our senior aide that was the youngest looking senior I've ever met. I also found gifts from previous interns, like a Wonder Woman lasso given to me from an Elizabethtown intern.

I was almost a KID when I started at MHA in that 630 Janet Avenue office. I was fresh out of college trying to change the world. Thinking back now on all of the people I worked with...people who just accepted me. They accepted me as this young girl coming in without a clue and taught me so much about life, friendship, and the ability to fight even when times were tough.

My last time leaving the empty office, I walked through each room turning off the lights as I reflected what this space had meant to me. For some reason I had the Cheers theme song in my head. Afterwards I thought about why (this is going to age me) and I remembered the very last moment from the last episode where Sam turned the lights off at the bar one last time. Then I thought about lyrics to that song I was singing in my head...

(Feel free to sing it to yourself or out loud)

Sometimes you want to go, Where everybody knows your name...And they're always glad you came

You want to be where you can see, The troubles are all the same...You want to be where everybody knows your name.

Okay, I know MHA is not Cheers, but the words are what MHA has been for me and many other people that have come through our doors over the years – a place where people are comfortable being themselves and feel like they belong.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR OPEN HOUSE!

After 56 years at 630 Janet, we welcome you to an Open House at our new location at 245 Butler Avenue.

"Transitions give us an opportunity for growth"

You are cordially invited to help celebrate our new office on November 7th from 3 pm – 6 pm. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. At 5:30 Kim McDevitt will give a brief presentation of MHA. Enter the raffle for a 3-month Universal Athletic Club membership.



GRETCHEN GAUDIOSO

PEER ADVOCACY UPDATE

GROUPS PROVIDE FRIENDSHIP & COPING TOOLS

SUE TUSHINGHAM

PEER EDUCATOR TO ALL ADULTS IN LANCASTER COUNTY

CHAIRPERSON, LANCASTER COUNTY COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM



Support groups are vital to many people. I, myself, went to support groups for many years and found it extremely helpful to my recovery at different periods in my life. **Support groups help to lessen the internal sense of shame because we see others in our shoes and hear them talking about their personal struggles, which oftentimes mirrors ours.** When attending support groups, people build a sense of community and support, and discover they aren't alone. While at support groups, people learn healthy coping skills, such as setting boundaries, honoring personal feelings and experiences, and figuring out what to start letting go of. The people who attend support groups are all equals, each with lived experience who share with one another. Support groups are a safe place to share struggles and joys, where anonymity is maintained.

Some people find attending a support group **a great addition to counseling.** Others may find that attending a support group is all the help they need, and may opt not to attend therapy. Personally, I went to support groups and attended counseling at different times during my 30 years in recovery. Each person is on their own journey and needs to find what best suits their needs, knowing it changes as we grow, evolve, and age. When I began my journey in recovery, I attended individual therapy, support groups, and read self-help books. That was what I needed at the time. As I now share with participants of the groups I lead, it is a sign of strength to ask for help. It shows spiritual maturity and a willingness to grow and change. No one can change anyone else, but **we do have power over what we think of ourselves,** how we treat ourselves, and who we choose to spend time with.

For additional information or for support working through treatment and services, please call me at 717-397-7461. There are many community resources in Lancaster County where people can reach out for help and support. I can help guide you or a family member to them.

JOIN ME AT AN EDUCATIONAL EVENT

St. Peters Apartment Health and Community Resource Fair on October 8th, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

400 Union Street, Columbia, PA 17512, Phone: 717-684-7972

This event is for residents and the Lancaster community to learn about local and at-large resources and services for the aging. I will be representing Mental Health America at this event to provide information and resources on mental health to the community. Specifically, the vendors in attendance will all be geared toward the aging population, senior concerns and overall health issues.

Come learn about the resource programs you have available locally and from MHA.

Bites to eat will be available as well.

COMPEER FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE



JOE MILLS
COMPEER
PROGRAM MANAGER



Volunteer to change a life...just by being a friend.

Compeer Lancaster, a program of Mental Health America of Lancaster County, has been connecting friends since 2001. We simply connect volunteers and individuals who have a mental health diagnosis as friends. Compeer means Peer – Equal.

A MESSAGE TO ANYONE SEEKING A LIFE-IMPACTING VOLUNTEER ROLE

ELAINE, A COMPEER VOLUNTEER ON HER 5-YEAR FRIENDSHIP WITH DONNA



*“Several years ago I was looking for an opportunity to volunteer and came across a column in the Lancaster Sunday News giving information about Compeer. When I was very young I had a few people close to me that suffered from mental illness and **I’ve always regretted not being a better friend to them during their difficult journey.** I was young, afraid, and didn’t understand the disease.*



*I decided to check out Compeer as I thought it would be a way to “right a wrong.” Donna and I have been matched nearly five years. It’s an easy way to volunteer, as I really enjoy her company. She is one of my best friends and we do fun things together such as go on walks & picnics, watch movies, go to breakfast & lunch, play cards, go to the farm market, play miniature golf and also go to several of the Compeer events throughout the year. **I’m very grateful I have Donna in my life.**”*

Is your business looking for a community outreach program to offer your staff?

Compeer Lancaster provides an excellent opportunity for businesses who encourage their employees to give back to the community. We can come to your business to explain the program and even conduct the volunteer orientation/training at a time that is convenient to everyone. Contact Joe Mills, Program Manager at 717.397.7461 or email him at jmills@compeerland.com to inquire into this program.

SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION PROGRAM UPDATE



LANCASTER COUNTY
**SUICIDE
 PREVENTION
 COALITION**

**CHARLOTTE
 MOUSSEAU-LECKOW**

**MARKETING COORDINATOR &
 CO-CHAIR OF THE SUICIDE
 PREVENTION PROGRAM**



WHAT IS SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS WORK?

People often ask, what is suicide prevention? One of our answers is our community outreach work to educate people on local resources, and more importantly, how to actually get them.

MHA will bring materials, resources and workshops to any business, school or special event to encourage people not to be ashamed to ask for help; to treat a struggle with mental health with as much openness, understanding and attention as a struggle with high blood pressure or a physical long-term illness, like cancer. Advocate for yourself. Ask for help. Don't become isolated by the struggle. Understand that you matter.

Here are some examples of ways MHA has been working recently for suicide prevention & awareness in our community:

- ⇒ WGAL mental health series, which ran during Suicide Prevention Awareness Week: Sept. 8th—14th.
 - What Child Advocacy is in schools, and how families can get it for their children from MHA.
 - Seniors & The Aging – How MHA support groups are helping seniors with depression and isolation.
 - Free MHA Support Groups for bipolar, depression, anxiety, OCD, Panic and Moms Postpartum.
 - MHA's Partnership with Teen Hope: Partnering our education with their screening program in high school classrooms.
 - Compeer Lancaster – How to become a volunteer friend and its role in the mental health community.
 (Videos can be seen at www.wgal.com/article/is-your-child-struggling-in-school-mental-health/28963525)
- ⇒ The SPC Gun Locks Projects: Passing out gun lock kits, crisis & resource wallet cards at all events.
- ⇒ July 25th SPC meeting: Lancaster District Attorney's Office on Children & Online Posting.
- ⇒ August 6th National Night Outs for Manheim Township and West Lampeter Township.
- ⇒ August 14th Manheim Township Resiliency Event titled "The Intersection of Poverty and Trauma."
- ⇒ August 17th Morr's Gun Range Community Days Event.
- ⇒ September 26th SPC meeting on Local Veteran Mental Health Support and Suicide Prevention.
- ⇒ September 11th Mt. Joy Library & Rotary Club Panel Discussion suicide prevention.
- ⇒ September 14th Walk for DES in Manheim Township.
- ⇒ September 18th The Jay Groups Annual Health and Safety Fair.
- ⇒ September 14th Empty Shoes Walk for Suicide Prevention & Awareness in Mt Joy.
- ⇒ September 21st 2nd Annual Richard Oehme Memorial Golf Tournament for Suicide Prevention & Awareness.
- ⇒ September 29th The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride in Downtown Lancaster for men's mental & prostate health.
- ⇒ October 27th Downingtown's Miles for Mental Health Race—A Suicide Prevention & Awareness community event.

UPCOMING COALITION (COMMUNITY EDUCATION) MEETINGS

NOV. 21ST THE LOVE LETTERS PROJECT | JAN. 23RD THE AGING & SUICIDE PREVENTION | MARCH 19TH TBA

EVERYONE IS WELCOME | FREE & DROP IN | A WAY TO BE INVOLVED IN PREVENTION

BRING A LUNCH, FRIEND, STUDENTS OR A COLLEAGUE | 12 TO 1 PM

VISIT WWW.STOPSUICIDELANCASTER.ORG FOR DETAILS. 11/21 MEETING: 630 JANET AVE, BLAIR ROOM

SUPPORT GROUPS PROGRAM UPDATE



MOMS SUPPORTING MOMS SUPPORT GROUP AND PLAY DATE

AMANDA KATCHUR, PSY. D.
MHA SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR



According to the Centers For Disease Control, as many as 1 in every 5 women experience symptoms of post-partum depression (PPD). Additionally, a potentially even higher number experience post-partum anxiety (PPA). These numbers are staggering, and yet, many women are not getting the support they need. There are many reasons why a new mother might not seek help: shame, worry about judgment, feeling like a “bad” Mom, lack of support system, no childcare, and many others. Oh—not to mention the fact that they have and are caring for a new baby!

I myself am one of the 1 in 5 women who have experienced PPD/PPA following the birth of my two children. I also am a psychologist who works with individuals experiencing similar symptoms. These two identities have allowed me to learn about, experience, and recognize the importance of post-partum mental health awareness and find ways to assist new moms in maintaining wellness. One of the ways in which this can be done is through peer support.

MHA, along with the Lancaster Osteopathic Health Foundation, has begun a new peer-led support group for post-partum mothers experiencing symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. This group meets once per month on the second Wednesday of the month for one hour (6:00 pm-7:00pm). During this time, members have the opportunity to share their experiences (or just listen!) and build their support networks by connecting with other mothers. The group is held in a playroom at the Hamilton Park United Church of Christ, which is a safe and ideal place for mothers to bring their infants and young children. This wonderful space was obtained so that childcare does not have to be a barrier to attendance. We also have an active Facebook presence where group members can reach out to one another between meetings. There is no cost to attend the group.

If you are interested in reaching out or attending a meeting—please know that we would love to meet you and have you join us. There is no expectation for how much or how little you share or participate. On another note, women often express concern to me that if they brought their infants or young children to group, their little ones might cry or need to be attended to during the course of the meeting. Please do not let this stop you—we have all been there and had similar fears and experiences. There will always be another mother to lend you support while you are in our group.

During this time in your life when things might feel new, different, overwhelming, joyful, stressful, exhausting, exhilarating (or some combination of all of the above), I hope you will consider joining us. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 570-561-8845 or akatchur@mhalancaster.org.

A HOLIDAY CALL TO ACTION

GIFTS OF JOY DECEMBER 2019

In 2018, MHA's Gifts of Joy provided 800 presents to 463 children & adults who have been diagnosed with a significant mental health illness and have a county case manager. These are Lancaster residents who would receive little to nothing during the holidays. We could not do this without the support of the community and those who donated the personalized "wish list" gifts.

This year, with your help, we hope to bring joy to even more individuals in Lancaster County during the holiday season. Recipient's names are written on an individual gift tag with a few gift suggestions and given out by the middle of November. Donors purchase the new gift(s) - not reused or recycled with a minimum value of \$25.

So we can be assured gifts arrive for the holidays, we ask that gifts be dropped off at Mental Health America of Lancaster County, 245 Butler Avenue, Suite 204, Lancaster, during the week of December 9th – December 13th.

IT'S THAT EASY!

Please call MHA at (717)397-7461 or email mha@mhalancaster.org to donate a gift this year. Thank you for considering giving a Gift Of Joy.



Kelly from NYC moved to Lancaster and has a mental health story in her family. She saw our appeal last year and wanted to donate.



Gretchen, the GOJ program coordinator with Sari, a gift giver from Community Services Group (CSG).



Gifts of Joy piled high and all around at the MHA Lancaster office 2018.



China and Cierra, case workers at Lancaster County BHDS, at MHA picking up lots of gifts to give to the clients they service at BHDS.

REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS

ARE YOU OVER 70 1/2 AND HAVE YOU MADE YOUR RMD?

Your first withdrawal needs to be made 6 months after you turn 70 1/2, and then by December 31st of each year thereafter. A gentle reminder about the need to follow the IRS guidelines in taking your Required Minimum Distribution, also known as RMD.

If you don't remember to take the required distribution, the IRS will tax you at the rate of 50%.

The deadline for the December 31st distribution is approaching. An option to consider is making the RMD directly to Mental Health America of Lancaster County as your donation to us, which provides the added benefit of avoiding taxes on the amount sent to Mental Health America of Lancaster County. Remember, the funds must come directly from the company that handles your retirement fund.

EMAIL MHA@MHALANCASTER.ORG OR CALL 717-397-7461 TO LEARN MORE.



Peggy Shaffer, Staff Accountant



CATALOG OF HOLIDAY GIVING

How can you check off you are supporting MHA this year?

**MHA OPEN HOUSE
NOVEMBER 7th 3 PM - 6 pm**

After 56 years at 630 Janet, we welcome you to celebrate our new location at our Open House. Hors d'ouvres will be served. 5:30 there will be a brief presentation by MHA Executive Director, Kim McDevitt.

NOVEMBER 22, 2019



Donate online by searching for Mental Health America of Lancaster County from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. at www.extragive.org. Lancaster's biggest fundraiser of the year.

ANNUAL PASTA BUFFET & AUCTION FUNDRAISER ON APRIL 24, 2020

Attend an evening of food and auction fun to support MHA at our **one and only** fundraising event of the year. Visit mhalancaster.org for tickets.in November.

BE A CORPORATE OR INDIVIDUAL SPONSOR OR DONOR

Call E.D. Kim McDevitt at 717-397-7461 to ask for sponsorship details. To donate now visit mhalancaster.org and click "give now".

GIVE YOUR UNITED WAY PLEDGE TO MHA

Designate MHA as the Agency Name for your United Way pledge and submit the form to your employer. For a form, visit www.mhalancaster.org/donate-now or call United Way at 394-0731 for guidance on pledging.

USE YOUR MINIMUM REQUIRED DISTRIBUTION FOR MHA THIS YEAR

Your first withdrawal needs to be made 6 months after you turn 70 1/2. Read page 8 to learn how you can support MHA in this way.

GET THE MHA SEMI ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Request our newsletter to learn about the many free services and programs we provide our residents through your donations and sponsorships! Sign up a friend who might benefit from calling, and giving to, MHA.



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Vision:

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

Mission:

To promote optimal mental health through advocacy, education and support.

WHAT WE DO:

Advocacy:

- Educational Mediation
- Adult Empowerment
- Prison Services

Education:

- School Programs
- Community Programs
- Work-Place Programs

Support:

- Compeer Friendships
- Peer Assistance
- Support Groups