



THE BEACON

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2011 MHALC Annual Meeting-Life stories and Mental Health Perspectives

MHA Celebrated their 47th Annual Meeting at the Jewish Community Center on September 19, 2011. The topic for the evening was "Life Stories and Mental Health Perspectives." Speakers for the evening included Valerie Case, Rick Kastner, Lancaster Co. Commissioner Scott Martin, Rita Smith Wade-El, and Allison Weber. Each shared information about their lives, why they care about Mental Health, why Mental Health America is important to our community. Speakers told of personal family experiences with mental illnesses and suicides and their courage. They spoke of how important MHA Services are to the community, including our work at the prison, support groups and work with students.

The evening proceeded by honoring award winners. We receive nominations from members of the community and members of our education committee review nominations and decide the winners. This year we awarded **Consumer of the Year** to Jose Figueroa-Zabala,

Educators Aavidum, **Staff Persons**, Anne Markel, and Tom Herr, **Volunteer** Stephanie Jones, and **Lifetime Achievement** Dr. Donald Rynier. Jose was chosen as Consumer of the Year for being an exemplary role model participant in mental health court. He encourages individuals new to the program to meet their goals. He is thankful for the opportunities provided to him and feels the need to give back. The late Dr. Donald Rynier was honored with Lifetime Achievement award. Julie Holtry remembered Dr. Rynier as a man with a good sense of humor, and availability to listen to patients and co-workers and love of game hunting.

Mrs. Rynier expressed on behalf of herself and their family the gratitude of warmth they felt

from patients and co-workers. She described many of things Donald did was because he thought they should be done and no award was needed. He will be greatly missed by his



Aveedium Students Sami Hoffman & Sawyer Martin, Tom Herr, Jose Figueroa-Zabala, Stephanie Jones, Mrs. Donald Rynier

family, patients, and co-workers. We are happy to have honored him and other award winners that evening.

The following individuals were elected to serve on MHA Board: Joe Puskar, **President**, Tim Caldwell, **The Vice President**,

Doug Hopwood, **Admin. Vice President**, Ann Woodland; **Admin Vice President**, Christina Hausner, **Secretary**, Patricia Doherty, Keith Shetter, Greg Amos, Diane Fleishman, John Hartman, Phil Hess, Candice Highfield, Kelley Hollow, Sandra Marie Johnson, Farah Kauffman, Penn Ketchum, Mary Lee Steffy, Jeri Stelson Weaver, John Tardibuono, Paul West, and Tanya West

When we look back on the evening, we realize that MHALC is an active community organization that helps, educates, advocates, and offers hope to individuals. Our speakers and award winners really tied together topic of "Life Stories and Mental Health Perspectives." We appreciate their openness in sharing their life experiences.

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Annual Pasta Buffet & Auction-Friday, November 18, 2011

We are excited to announce staff, Board, and volunteers are eagerly looking forward to our largest fundraiser of the calendar year. We invite you to attend an all you can eat pasta buffet which



includes: plain, meat and sausage lasagnas, penne and angel hair pastas salad, bread, drink and dessert. Many of our patrons look forward to the buffet every year!!! In addition to the amazing dinner served we will have a variety of silent

and live auction items for bid. Tickets can be purchased by calling our office 397-7461, or on our website under events tab.

Please visit our website in the next couple weeks for complete listing of auction items..



NAPAS Conference 2011 by Juliana Arnold, Peer Educator

This was the 5th annual conference for certified peer specialists. I find these conferences to be both educational and supportive. Peer support is evolving and each year there is new information. I found many interesting topics. I learned this year that peer support is reaching across different countries. Peers Specialists are now in Japan, Spain, Australia, the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico and Canada.

This year there was a lot of focus on certified peer specialists taking care of themselves, through various ways. Copeland center was very active at the conference with education and different WRAP's. A couple of them are WRAP P.A.L.S. (Peers, advocating, listening and supporting). The WRAP P.A.L.S. combines the evidenced based practice of the WRAP curriculum with the natural strength and power of peer support and friendships. Another one is WRAP for Compassion Fatigue in Peer Specialists. One of the problems they are finding is burn out. There are a great number of CPS taking their peers' problems home with them, along with struggles on shutting their phones off after hours. There are problems with not knowing where the support stops, some being available 24/7. Compassion fatigue is a growing problem.

Another topic was on the PERSONAL BILL OF RIGHTS, this is a list of 27 different rights for people with MH to use in their recovery.

We discussed The Eight Dimensions of Wellness. The eight dimensions are emotional, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual and environmental.

There was a session to examine the causes of workplace conflicts; there was dialogue on conflict resolution. A problem CPS is running into is the lack of respect for the position. CPS are still on the bottom rung of the ladder in some places, however more providers are starting to embrace the need for and importance of peer support. Peers are reaching others in a way that some professionals cannot. People struggling with their illness are more receptive to those who have walked in their shoes. Hope can come when a person who is struggling works with someone who has overcome some of the barriers they are facing.

The need for more peers working in MH units is another area that is gaining more focus. Because those on the units are in a more acute state of their illness the CPS needs to be more educated. There were discussions on what education is needed with some focus on trauma based treatment and the need for people to work through past traumas. Issues with veterans were also addressed.

Overall I found it to be a good conference with a lot of helpful information. I look forward to the evolving role of the Peer Specialists, the continuing education and the support I find at the conferences.

The Inevitability of Rising [for W.P.] by Brad Crothers

The speed of pain is far greater than the speed of healing.
Remind me of this when it all seems broken and lost.
There is always the possibility of finding a way out.

Sing me a song with broken notes in the wrong
Atonal and discordant.
To match the colors in my head.
Image of a small boy waving goodbye.
Inferiority complex that sometimes gets the best of me
tells me not to put this into words
because I'll only fail.

Some of us will sparkle
Like the waters of the sea
Reflecting the darkest of nights

A moment of Silence for the brokenhearted

And missing *"Used with Permission"*

Save The Date

4th Alternative Gift Fair

*Please join MHA at the fair on Sunday,
**November 20, 2011, 10AM-4PM at
Lancaster Farm & Home Center, 1383
Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA 17601***

Visit www.giftsthatgivehope.com/Lancaster.org for
more information

Annual Legislative Breakfast

March 2012

More information to follow...

All Alpha Halloween Party by Gretchen Gaudio

Every year in the summertime all 3 of MHA's Alpha Clubs get together to have a picnic and connect with friends they haven't seen in a while. Well this year's picnic was planned for one of the days in July when it was still 100 degrees in the evening. So for the safety of all involved we sadly had to cancel the picnic. What we decided to do was to invite all the Alpha Club's to my infamous Lancaster Alpha Halloween Party and have an All Alpha Halloween Party.

I love Halloween and have been throwing big Halloween parties for Lancaster Alpha for over 10 years now. I was excited to be able to invite the other Alpha friends and have them partake on the party! The hall that Lancaster Alpha meets in is a perfect setting for a spooky Halloween party. Over the years (and during many of the after Halloween clearance sales) I have collected lots of fun decorations to put around the room. I had the help of our intern from Elizabethtown College, Emily Blair, to make the room look like a haunted house. Lucky for me she too loves Halloween and hadn't convinced her roommates to let her decorate their apartment so she was excited to finally be able to put some Halloween flair on a room! After a few hours of decorating and preparing it was time for the members to arrive. We turned the lights down and patiently awaited the members' arrivals to see what they were dressed up as. I was dressed as a good witch, and to those that know me know that this was way out of character for me (HaHa). As they started to arrive we had everything from ghosts, clowns, zombies, witches, maids, Indians, werewolves, surgeons, graduates, and ninjas. Everyone that dressed up did such a great job with their costumes and really put a lot of effort into them, which I LOVE and appreciate!!



We started the evening with a costume parade and the picking of the best costumes. After the costume parade we sat down and had a nice meal that was brought in by volunteers from the Salem UCC in Rohrerstown. The ladies from this church love to bring refreshments around Halloween and have been doing it for more than 20 years. Each year when they come in they are greeted by the

members that remember them year in and year out. The ladies chat with the members about family and what they have been up to for the past year, I love to see the connections the members make. When we finished our meal it was time for the games to begin. We played one of my favorite games which in-

volves a big bag of random clothes (including night gowns, funny hats, dresses, men's sweaters and more) which is passed from person to person like a hot potato to the music. When the music stops whoever has the bag at that time must pull something from the bag and put it on wherever that item belongs. This game always gets a lot of laughs from everyone when you see what different things people have to wear. After this we had time for a few more games and then it was time to say farewell. The members had a great time being together seeing old friends and making new ones and just letting loose and enjoying the party. One member spoke to his director a few times just to tell her how much fun he had, and that my friends are why Alpha Clubs exist!

Ephrata Alpha meets the first Thursday of the month at Bethany UCC at 7 pm. Columbia Alpha meets first and third Tuesdays of the month at Salem UCC at 7 pm. Lancaster Alpha meets second and forth Fridays of every month at the St Andrews UCC at 6:30 pm. All Alpha Clubs are currently looking for volunteers to help with driving, and church groups or organizations to provide refreshments one time per year, if interested please call Gretchen at 397-7461.



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MHA-Holiday Gift Project

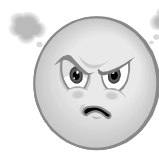
The holiday season is fast approaching. Holidays are a time of gathering with friends and family. There are persons living in Lancaster County who do not have the closeness of loved ones, and spend this celebrated time of the year alone.



Through Mental Health America of Lancaster County we spread Holiday cheer by purchasing gifts for persons living with a mental or emotional illness. Gifts are provided

to consumers living in Lancaster County as well as persons living at Wernersville State Hospital, and local acute care mental health units. There are two ways you can help! ***Make a financial contribution or purchase a specific gift.*** For more information contact MHA office 397- 7461.

Anger Workshop



Do people push your buttons and make life tough for you? Does your anger create problems? Do others tell you that you have an anger problem, even when you think you do not? Would you like to use your anger effectively? Want to know the underlying causes and to resolve those issues? If you answered yes to any of those questions, this workshop is for you Wednesday, January 11, 2012 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM in Room B-103 at 630 Janet Avenue Cost \$25 per person. Call 397-7461 to register, or with questions

MHALC is eligible to receive contributions through United Way Donor Choice program.