



The VOICE

Brought to you by MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION in Niagara County, Inc.

Fall 2017

36 Pine Street | Lockport, NY 14094 | (716) 433-3780 | www.mhanc.com

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Our HELP Book is ONLINE!

Take our HELP Book with you everywhere you go! Computer & smart phone accessible. Our HELP Book can be found at: www.helpbookniagara.wordpress.com

Become a Member

Call us for a membership form at 433-3780 or submit online at www.mhanc.com.

From the Desk of the

Executive Director

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Ext. 302

Greetings,

Fall is my favorite time of the year. I love watching the leaves change into their majestic colors, the smell of an outdoor fire, the taste of a crisp apple, and the warmth of freshly baked acorn squash.

This morning, I got up an hour early so I could sit on my back porch and enjoy a fresh perked cup of coffee. (Yes, perked coffee from one of those old fashioned coffee pots!) The birds were starting to gather around the bird feeders and I could hear a rooster crowing somewhere down the road. Squirrels and chipmunks were collecting food for the long winter and I was just sitting there all snug and cozy, smiling to myself. Life sure is good right now.

I am thankful for many things this year. The health of family, the love of friends, the new relationships that have been formed through work and my personal life, and the fact that the Mental Health Association continues to do so many great things. We work very hard to eliminate the stigma that is associated with the diagnosis of a mental illness all too often. It's not an easy task. That's why we've turned our attention to "Turning Illness Into Wellness".

Mental illness cuts across all social, economic, ethnic, age and gender lines. It touches us all. Everyone has family members, friends or co-workers who may be affected. Knowing how to recognize when someone needs help and when to give it can help our community become a better and safer place to live.

Did you know that in America, almost 44 million adults experience mental illness? That's about 1 in 5. Why not help the MHA eliminate this stigma by becoming an agency member and showing our community that we care, and that we can and will support those diagnosed with a mental illness and their families? Call (716) 433-3780 and ask for a membership letter to be mailed to your home. It's as simple as making a very small or large donation which will allow us to continue doing the work that is so greatly needed. Remember, the MHA offers a comprehensive set of programs that target the many different aspects of mental health. Whether it's one of our referral, support, educational or legal advocacy services, we have something to help you.

May you, too, enjoy the bounty of everything fall has to offer and experience the overwhelming satisfaction of knowing you are helping those in need by becoming a member of the Mental Health Association in Niagara County.

Peace,

Cheryl



Cheryl Blacklock

Our Favorite “Fall” Things



Fall is the season of change, preservation, and comfort.

It welcomes the holiday season and prepares us for the new year ahead.

Here are some of our favorite things about the fall season:

- ◆ “It kicks off holiday time. Thanksgiving is special because you not only get to spend time with loved ones, but you also get to reflect on everything you have and show your gratitude for it all.”
-Mary Ann Scales, HR & Finance

- ◆ “I love fall because it is the season of change! Not only are things coming to and end, like leaves falling from the trees, but new things are starting, like the school year. Fall is the perfect balance of reflection and aspiration!” -Tara Porter, Compeer Niagara

- ◆ “Crunching leaves underfoot, the colors of the trees, the snap in the air, apples and pumpkins – everything!” -Jackie Kenney, Program Assistant

- ◆ “I love the cooler weather, the fun outdoor activities, the clothes, and the beautiful changing leaves that fall brings. One of my favorite things to do is curl up on my couch with a blanket and fall candles lit and watch Halloween movies!” -Emily Darnell, Publications



- ◆ “Apple Cider!” -Steven Ferguson, Consumer Activities

- ◆ “I like the smell of fall and the sound it makes when I step on the crunchy leaves.” -Cathy Metlak, Respite Program

Wishing you a healthy and happy fall season!

- Your friends at the MHA

PROGRAM UPDATE: Compeer Niagara

Tara Porter, Director
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Ext. 307

Compeer has been very busy lately! The summer season was filled with fun and friendship, with a strong focus on community awareness. Compeer Niagara walked in the Lockport Independence Day Parade, hosted a free car wash at the Fieldstone Country Inn, updated the Compeer page on the MHA website to display a video of some of our participants and volunteers sharing what they love about our program. Compeer was featured in the Lockport Union Sun & Journal recently, and we also enjoyed our summer events, including kayaking, cooking, and spending time at the beach.

Our community awareness efforts have been a success! These past few months we've welcomed five new volunteers! In November, Compeer Niagara will be hosting our Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon at the Fieldstone Country Inn to celebrate our awesome volunteers. We currently have 19 wonderful people sharing their time and talents — and some have been volunteers of Compeer for over 20 years! We'd love to welcome you as a Compeer volunteer! Please visit the "Compeer" page at www.mhanc.com.

We recently had a creative collaboration with the YWCA of the Niagara Frontier, serving the Lockport Universal Pre-K Program, and we are looking forward to working with the City of Niagara Falls and City of Lockport on some upcoming community beautification projects. We've had fun experiencing what Niagara County has to offer, such as attending the Somerset Farm Festival, learning about wildlife, exploring old growth trees, and enjoying our Annual Harvest Banquet.

Fall has marked my one year anniversary serving as the Director of Compeer Niagara. As I reflect on the past year, I'm full of gratitude. The relationships I've made within the program and within the community are nothing short of great. I've tried new things and visited new places, all while being in the company of wonderful people! Many of those people, like myself, have blue t-shirts with the words "Compeer Niagara" and our logo on them. If you see a blue Compeer t-shirt in the community, please say hello! A little hello can go a long way and could be the start of something great!

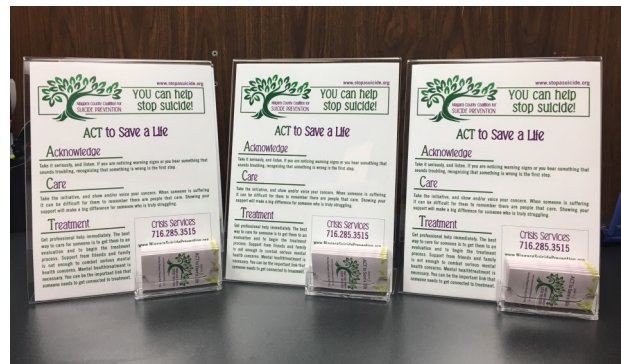


Compeer Niagara is a non-profit, volunteer-based program in Niagara County, NY that serves adults and children who have a mental health diagnosis and limited social supports. Our aim is to improve the quality of life and self-esteem of our clients through social inclusion and enjoyable activities. To learn more please visit <http://www.mhanc.com/compeer-niagara.php>.

PROGRAM UPDATE:
Community Education

Pamela Szalay, Director
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- ◆ In recognition of National Depression Screening Day, the MHA and the Lockport Public Library hosted an event featuring our Executive Director, Cheryl Blacklock, as the speaker. With a focus on tackling the stigma around mental illness, the title of her talk was *"Professionally Crazy: Living with a Mental Illness and Making it in the Real World"*. At times hilariously funny despite the serious topic, she shared her personal stories of overcoming adversity as a young woman and later as a working professional, wife and mother managing Bipolar Disorder.
- ◆ The Niagara County Coalition for Suicide Prevention is launching a campaign, *ACT to Save a Life*. ACT was developed by Screening for Mental Health and stands for *Acknowledge, Care, Treatment*. We have posters, table stands and brochures already placed throughout Niagara County. To learn more about the coalition, please visit our website at www.niagarasuicideprevention.org, and we invite you to get involved!



PROGRAM UPDATE:
Consumer Activities & Peer Services

Steve Ferguson, Director
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Ext. 311

- ◆ Our support groups at the HOPE House continue to provide needed aid to many people in the community. The groups range in topics from creativity and employment to using humor and laughter to heal. For dates and times of the HOPE House support groups, please call the HOPE House at (716) 433-6543.
- ◆ Our annual CPAC Picnic was a lot of fun. I would like to thank Community Missions in particular for continuing to support CPAC and for assisting in transportation to and from our events.
- ◆ Earlier this year, our Executive Director, Cheryl, and I went to Albany and completed our training to become certified Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructors. Along with the Youth Mental Health First Aid, we provide the Adult training as well. Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental illnesses, builds understanding of their impact, and overviews common supports. This 8-hour course uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis and connect persons to the appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care. The program also teaches the common risk factors and warning signs of specific types of illnesses, like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

**If you or someone you know is interested in Peer Support or Mental Health First Aid,
please contact me either by phone or email.**

PROGRAM UPDATE:**Respite**

Cathy Metlak, Coordinator
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 Ext. 312

I'm very grateful for the job I have. My coworkers, Margaret and Sara, are an awesome team to work with and they do a great job helping the program run smoothly. Katie, Billy and Catrina do a wonderful job volunteering at group respites, where they spend time engaging in activities with the kids and helping with clean-up. The kids we work with are a lot of fun and their parents really appreciate the opportunity for some much needed respite.

We are very grateful for a couple of donations the Respite program has received recently. Tara from Compeer Niagara donated craft supplies, and Margaret's sister, Ann Marie, donated toys. If you have any easy-to-use craft supplies that you would like to donate, the kids would appreciate them very much, so please give me a call.

We find many different activities, games and crafts that the kids are interested in so we can keep them engaged throughout our time with them. Some activities that have been a big hit are painting, Dominos Knockdown, and creating stepping stones and clothespin puppets. We can't leave out board games, cards, and Playdough, which are fun for any age!

This year-to-date we have provided 90 in-home respites, 13 group respites, and 9 intakes for new families. We are currently serving 12 families, and have 5 families on a waiting list.

Ideally, we would love to be able to provide each family with two in-home respites a month. In order to do that, we need to hire more Respite staff. If you or someone you know is looking for per-diem employment, please have them contact me by phone or email, or stop into our office to pick up an employment application. This is a fun and rewarding job! Our schedules are very flexible, since we schedule your hours according to your availability, even if it's only seasonal. In my opinion, this is the perfect job for the stay-at-home mom, retiree, or someone who wants to pick up a few extra hours here or there, whether it's a few days a month, or a few days a week. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you are interested in learning more about becoming a Respite staff member.

Here are some photos of the fun activities from some of our recent Respites!



Sara helping the kids set up Dominos Knockdown



Margaret helping the kids make things with Playdough



Stepping stones that the kids created



These clothespin puppets were so much fun for the kids to make!

Media



This past July, the MHA was chosen to be part of the 2017 Create-a-thon, put on by local marketing firm, J Fitzgerald Group. They created incredible pieces for us, including billboards, digital ads and a brochure. Look for these out in the community!

Effective in November, and running through the holiday season, the *Many Faces of Mental Health* will be focusing on a conversation about coping with “ho-ho-ho” when you are feeling more “ho-hum.”

Our guests, Nancy Faery and Maggie Campbell, will be sharing viewpoints about the holidays and stress, depression, anxiety and grief. Nancy is a hospital chaplain at Kenmore Mercy Hospital and Maggie, a licensed social worker and grief counselor, leads a grief support group at the MHA. Both have generously agreed to share their experience and expertise with the audience of our show, and their insight will certainly benefit us all.

Watch *The Many Faces of Mental Health*
 Channel 20
 Tuesdays at 5pm and 10pm
 Wednesdays at 7am Fridays at 6:30am
 Or watch online at lctv.net

All programs are produced by
 MHA in Niagara County, Inc.

LCTV



“Like” us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on MHA news and events!

Find us at: www.facebook.com/MHANiagara

Bottle Returns to Benefit MHA

Did you know your bottle returns can help support the Mental Health Association? They can! All you have to do is return your empty returnable bottles and cans to one of the locations below, and tell the staff at the bottle return companies that you'd like your funds to go to the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. The funds that we receive from your generous contributions go right out into the community through the services we provide and the many activities the MHA offers throughout the year.

Bottle return locations:

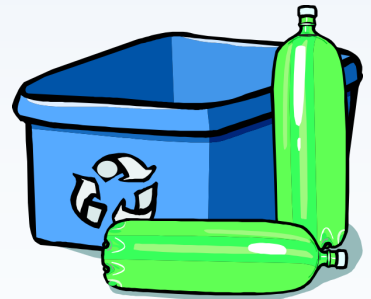
Fast Cash Bottle & Can Retrieval Centers
5714 S Transit Rd, Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 433-3608

Niagara County Bottle Redemption Center
4022 Lake Ave, Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 438-7117

'Thank you' to all who contribute to the MHA through bottle returns.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Please give us a call at (716) 433-3780 if you have any questions about bottle return donations.



Upcoming Trainings

- ⇒ **Support Group Facilitator Training - Level 1** (\$25)
Thursday, November 30, 9 am to 12:30 pm
- ⇒ **Support Group Facilitator Training - Level 2** (\$20)
Thursday Dec. 7, 2 pm to 4 pm

Trainings will be held at:
Orleans/Niagara BOCES
4124 Saunders Settlement Road, Sanborn, NY 14132



At our Support Group Facilitator Training, you will learn how to provide a safe, productive environment for those in your support group! MHA in Niagara County periodically offers a half-day training for new or veteran leaders of mutual-aid, non-therapeutic support groups. Plus, if you are interested in starting a support group, we have resources to help you!

Visit our website www.mhanc.com to learn more or to register. You can also call us at (716) 433-3780.



MHA
 MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
 in Niagara County, Inc.

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Mission Statement

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. will offer programs and services aimed at promoting mental health while advocating for individuals with mental illnesses and working toward dispelling commonly held misunderstandings regarding mental illnesses.

Executive Board

Executive Director: Cheryl Blacklock
 Board President: Rebecca Wydysh
 Board Vice President: Emily Shield
 Secretary: Alix Hutchison

Board Members

Christopher Aiken	Ryan Parisi
Lawrence Eggert	Christopher Roche
Lauren Hearn	David Skiba
Isaiah Jordan	

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, the United Way of Greater Niagara, the United Way of the Tonawandas, grants, memberships and voluntary contributions.