



THE BEACON

Mental Health America of Lancaster County, A United Way Agency

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February 2008

MHALC President's Message by Chris Wise

As 2008 begins, I am excited about the year ahead for Mental Health America of Lancaster County (MHALC). I look forward to working with the Board of Directors, committees, staff, and many volunteers to continue our organization's mission of promoting mental health, contributing to the quality of life of persons suffering from mental and emotional problems and working to prevent mental illnesses. I am truly honored to have been elected to serve as President of the Board of Directors of MHALC in October 2007. Thank you to Kathy Kravitz for her leadership of our organization over the past several years.

Thank you to the dedicated staff of Mental Health America of Lancaster County for all of your hard work. Thank you to the mental health professionals and many volunteers who assist with alpha clubs, support groups, educational programs and advocacy as well as to the consumers and families who participate in these programs. Thank you to the many individuals who made end of year gifts in 2007. Your gift will bring help and hope to people who have mental illnesses as they continue on their path to recovery. Thanks to each of you who have generously supported Mental Health America of Lancaster County in the past. We hope that you will continue to support our organization through the giving of



your time, talents, and financial gifts as we move forward in 2008 and the years ahead.

One of the highlights for 2008 is MHALC's Annual Legislative Breakfast on Friday, March 28. We hope that you will be able to attend this educational program. In addition, we will have a Chili Cook-off fundraising event on Saturday, April 12. Please call MHALC's office at 397-7461 or visit our website at www.mhalancaster.org for more information.

Wishing you good mental health and wellness in 2008!

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Special points of interest:

- The Compeer Program realizes how valuable friendship is to people who are recovering from Mental Illness
- They need support of a friend
- They need a Compeer Volunteer

MHALC Welcomes Compeer

Mental Health America of Lancaster County warmly welcomes Compeer Lancaster as one of our programs. We acknowledge with appreciation No Longer Alone Ministries for being instrumental in bringing this important program to our community. You have seen several articles in our Beacon about Compeer and we have worked closely with Compeer.



Both our board president Chris Wise, (currently) and Gretchen Gaudioso have served on the Compeer Advisory Committee.

We are delighted to become their sponsoring agency and look forward continuing to work together, even more closely on behalf of local persons who have mental illnesses. Welcome, Sarah, Sheryl and Amy.

MHALC Annual Legislative Breakfast



Please join us for breakfast on Friday, March 28, 2008 at Eden Resort Inn & Suites from 7:45 AM-10:00 AM.

Menu will include: Sliced fresh fruit, Silver dollar pancakes with warm syrup, fluffy scrambled eggs, American fried potatoes, bacon, as-

sorted breakfast pastries, chilled juices, coffee, decaffeinated coffee, herbal teas, and milk.

Topic of discussion will be: **Housing options for persons with mental illness.** There will be a discussion of what is working and what more is needed.

Reservations are required. Call MHALC @ 397-7461 to register, or remit \$15.00 per person on or before March 24, 2007 made payable to MHALC, 630 Janet Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17601. We hope you will be able to join us!

MHALC announces new training

“CEU's offered to Licensed Professional Counselors and Social Workers”

On **Friday, May 2 from 9 till noon** in Blair Room of the Community Services Center at 630 Janet Avenue. In collaboration with Alvernia College the course on **Workplace Ethics** will be taught by **Dr. Paul West** with CEUs offered to Licensed Professional Counselors and Social Workers. The \$35 fee will include refreshments and handouts. Call MHA at 397-7461 for a registration form.

Celebration of Recovery Picnic



Join us for a Hawaiian style Luau on May 9, 2008 from 10:00 AM– 3:00 PM at Long's Park Pavilion #1

A fun picnic for consumers, family members, and mental health professionals celebrating recovery from mental illness. There will be a lot of food, games, door prizes, and friends!

We are looking for many volunteers to help throughout the day, if interested please call Gretchen at 397-7461.



Words Can Work - New Resource available

DVD – **Depression: True Stories** Personal stories are told by Chamique Holdsclaw a professional basketball player called the female version of Michael Jordan, whose severe depression began after the death of her grandmother, who was her most important adult. Mike Haas and his parents discuss his mood swings and anger problems starting in 1st grade. Without words to process it, his mood swings and depression deepened till he considered suicide. Angie Vasquez, whose parents died when she was young, was raised by an aunt and as a

teen she moved in with her sister. She eventually got into therapy and learned not to self-medicate with alcohol. Useful strategies included individual and group therapies, and medications for Chamique and Mike, who was also hospitalized more than once.

The DVD is 26 minutes long, includes sets of discussion questions for adolescents and parents, and one can choose the individual stories or see the entire program. The DVD is well done, introduced by Jeanne Blake, President of Family Health Productions and Blake

Works. She is a medical reporter, author and affiliated faculty member at Harvard Medical School.

There are many other topic DVDs available – for instance about bullying, alcohol, steroid use and AIDS – either in personal story format or when talking with teens format. For additional information go to www.wordscanwork.com

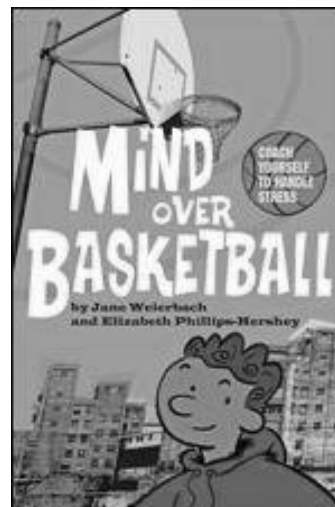
Book review-Mind Over Basketball: Coach Yourself to Handle Stress

by Jane Weierbach, Ph.D. and Elizabeth Phillips-Hershey, Ph.D. and illustrated by Charles Beyl

The book is available in both hard back and paperback and is primarily for kids ages 9 -14. It is 48 pages long, in full color and has 6 chapters with self-coaching guides, starting with “What is Stress?” Become your Own Coach, The Power of the Breath Visualization: The Power of Imagination, Choose Your Behavior, Talk Positively to Yourself, Focus on Now, Coach Yourself to Handle Stress.

It is the story of Tuck, who moved to a new town after his parents divorced and while he lives to play basketball, he is challenged by a bully who tries to keep him off the court. His new coach Walton has a lot to teach him about stress – what causes it, how it can make us feel and how we can shrink it to a healthier, manageable level.

In addition to the easy-to-read story and good illustrations, it includes check lists, and questions to discuss. MHALC has copies which may be borrowed, or feel free to order at www.Amazon.com or www.Maginationpress.com



Educating our youth by Juliana Arnold

As I pass out papers on mental illness our family advocate is giving out name tags: dog, nerd, dumb blonde and freak just to name a few. We can hear the giggles and comments floating around the class room at one of the local high schools. "Today we have two guest speakers from Mental Health America so try to pay attention" says the teacher trying to pull their focus together. "Please put your name tags on your shirts."

MHA's family advocate, Gretchen Gaudioso introduces herself and with a giggle, says this is Julie of the Gretchen/Julie show I, Julie Arnold then introduce myself as an educator.

Gretchen tells the class that one or both of us has a mental illness and at one point we are going to ask you to vote for one of us. "Make sure you watch closely what we do" explains Gretchen. We ask the class, "when you hear mental health or mental illness, what is the first thing that pops into your head?" The answers are pretty much the same in every class: crazy person, retarded, psycho, people in strait jackets. We are there to hopefully break the stigma that society has on mental illness, and give a better understanding of it.



Gretchen and I take turns explaining the different illnesses and describing real people with these real illnesses. Mental illness is a serious subject, but adding a bit of humor and calling on the young people using their name tag labels keeps them attentive. Explaining schizophrenia can be difficult so we do an exercise with the class. We play 'Simon says' with the teacher being Simon. Simultaneously, they must keep a large punching balloon in the air as a tape of many voices plays in the background. The lights are turned off and on rapidly and Gretchen walks around the class to try to distract them even more. After the class sits down they close their eyes and focus on the voices on the tape, simulating virtual hallucinations, like voices that someone with schizophrenia may hear in their head. Many voices are saying negative things all at the same time. After the lights go on, we ask whether they think they could take a science or an English test with all this noise?" Usually one of the kids says yes, we then jokingly tell the student that they will have to take the next test with the tape playing and lights flashing. We get a chuckle from the class, but the comments and reactions from the class are pretty powerful. "I couldn't imagine, that is terrible" is what many of the students exclaim!

Then comes the question, about whether Gretchen or I have a mental illness?" "How many of you think it is Julie?" Gretchen asks the class. Very few hands are raised. Most of the hands usually go up, sometimes all of them, when she asks if it's her. "Nope, it's Julie, but they just think I haven't been diagnosed yet," she says with a giggle. The students are taken back.

I then tell them about my struggles with bi-polar disorder and my recovery. I usually start by telling them that I come from a family where mental illness exists. Just like I got my mother's eyes I got my mother's illness. I talk about my struggles with mania and depression. I am open about my suicidal thoughts, and the role my family plays in my recovery. The most powerful part of my story is when I accepted my illness, which took the triple murder/suicide of my sister and her family. My sister and her husband made a life choice not to seek treatment and it ended in tragedy. The most important message I want the students to walk away with, is that you can have a mental illness but with treatment and support can go on to graduate from college, have a family and be successful in life. I have an illness my illness does not have me. One of the most common responses on the evaluation forms is that they didn't realize you can't just look at someone and see that they have mental illness. Their understanding and attitudes when they leave that class are forever changed. "Why do you think we make you wear these name tags?" Gretchen asks. People are called all kinds of cruel names and we wanted you to get an idea of what that is like to be called a mean name, so in turn you will not do it to other people, whether it be individuals with mental illness or other peers. Many times students stay and share about their illness or their family member with an illness and ask questions. When we speak to a class we can tell that we connect with them and we really think that it is because many of the kids relate to a lot of what we are talking about and can't always talk about it. Many students thank us as they leave the class. They appreciate our teaching style, our openness, and honesty about a subject that desperately needs to be shared in our schools with our teens.



MHALC Chili Cook-off and Festival

By Sandy Hall, MHALC Board Member

The event will be on **April 12th, 2008** from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, in Hempfield High School Cafeteria. For \$5.00 admission, you will be able to sample 20 different chilies being served by local restaurants. Then you can vote for your favorite chili. There will also be music by **Stu Huggens** and his band, children's activities, and more food. If you can volunteer or provide baked goods for the cook-off contact the MHA office 397-7461.



Susquehanna River Band
Published: June 1998, Fly Magazine
Photo: Brent Buzby

Memorials

In Memory of Jebb Moore

Steven & Cindy Armer

Rebecca Mohr

Lucretia Patton

William & Dorothy Sheaffer

Martha Weaver

In Memory of Timothy Swisher

James & Sandy Hall

Words of Appreciation

Sincere thanks to all who contributed to the self support dollars. Each donation— given directly to MHA , through donor designations or United Way campaign— helps make possible our services.

Mental Health America of Lancaster County

Audited financial statements for FY 06-07 are available in our office and can be viewed by making arrangements at 717-397-7461.

SAVE THE DATE...

Friday, May 30, 2008 (8:00 AM-12:00 Noon)

Lancaster County Mental Health Summit

Come To Create A Vision

And Be A Part of The Solutions

Identifying 1-2 Key Impact Areas

For All To Work On 2008-2010

For More Information Call MHA @ 397-7461



Mental Health America Response to New England Journal of Medicine Study, "Selective Publication of Antidepressant Trials and Its Influence on Apparent Efficacy"

"Study should not discourage people with depression from seeking appropriate care and evidence-based treatments that work for them."

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (January 17, 2008) - Mental Health America, one of the nation's leading mental health advocacy groups, views the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's study of antidepressant trials published today in the New England Journal of Medicine as a diligent measure, but cautions that this easily misinterpreted study not discourage people with depression from seeking appropriate care and evidence-based treatments that work for them.

"Selective Publication of Antidepressant Trials and Its Influence on Apparent Efficacy," which appears in today's issue of the NEJM, surveys the results of both published and unpublished antide-

pressant FDA studies.

This is a very important paper, and we applaud the FDA for moving toward greater transparency," said David Shern, Ph.D., president and CEO of Mental Health America. "It is critical, however, that people understand that antidepressants do work and continue to help millions of Americans recover from depression and other mental health conditions."

"Historically, papers that get published have been those with positive results. This study highlights what is known as the "waste basket" problem in which studies with positive outcomes are more likely to be published than those with neutral or negative out-

comes," added Shern. "This study is a diligent follow-up detailing estimated effects and perhaps the oversimplification of the effects of antidepressants."

The fact remains, antidepressants do work and help millions of Americans to recover.

Mental Health America is the country's leading non-profit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 320 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation - everyday and in times of crisis.

Article courtesy of Mental Health America, 2000 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor Alexandria, VA 22311
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Toll free (800) 969-6642
TTY Line 800/433-5959

2007 Year End Fundraising Events by Michele Hartman, MHALC Board Member

During the month of November, MHALC staff and board members sold Cloister Car Wash tickets which are redeemable at any of the Cloister Car Wash facilities until June 2008. Over 100 tickets were sold and MHALC received 50 % of the ticket sale proceeds, netting us \$852.00

The weather was cold and the winds were blustery, however, 44 supporters of MHALC traveled to New York City on December 1, 2007 for a "Do As You Please" day trip. Included with the ticket price was an enjoyable bus ride provided by Executive Coach, a snack bag, and a showing of the must see movie of the Christmas holiday season, Polar Express. In NYC, MHALC travelers had free time to enjoy the shopping for that special holiday gift, see a Broadway show, eat at one of the many popular restaurants, check out the window decorations at Macy's, or just enjoy the sights and sounds the city has to offer. Our net proceeds were \$550.00.

On Saturday, December 8th and Tuesday, December 18th several MHALC board members and volunteers were on hand to offer gift wrap at Borders Book Shop across from Park City. There was no charge for the gift wrapping services, though donations were accepted. Information regarding MHALC mission and services were provided to customers wanting to know more about our agency. Proceeds to MHA were \$261.91, thanks to Evelyn Coldren, Melissa Daly, Joe Fox, Rene Fox, Gretchen Gaudio, Sandy Hall, Michele Hartman, Linda Irvin, Rob Irvin, Kathleen Kirk, Samantha Mintz, Marj Paradise, Cheryl Paxson, Rhonda Slinghoff, Amy Slody, Pamela Strock, and Tanya West.

MHALC staff and board members would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all volunteers and supporters who made these fundraisers a success!

All event proceeds will be used for ongoing education and advocacy services of Mental Health America of Lancaster County.

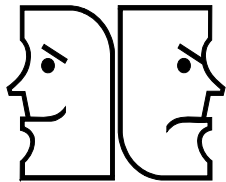


"MHALC staff and board members would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all volunteers and supporters who made these fundraisers a success!"



**630 Janet Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17601-4585**

Address Service Requested



Anger Workshop

Join us for a workshop which will address the causes, beliefs, results, and expressions of anger. In the workshop we will talk about strategies to resolve and understand Anger.

The Workshop will be held on:

Thursday, April 10, 2008

6:30 until 9:30 PM

Room B-103

Community Service Center-630 Janet Ave.,
Lancaster PA 17603

Cost is \$25.00, Scholarships are available

For more information or to register,

Please call 397-7461



Attention MHALC Members! We would like to thank everyone for responding with generous End of Year gifts totaling **\$6,365.00**. Your 2008 membership renewal appeal will arrive in your mailboxes in the next couple weeks.