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Dear MHALC Supporters,

I am happy to be back – temporarily. Retirement is amazing and I appreciate it every day. Very few causes could have enticed me to leave retirement, but ah, MHALC. The community needs our advocacy, efforts to prevent suicide, Compeer friendship matches, and focus on promoting mental well-being.

We are blessed to have talented staff and board members, and we are making a difference in our community. I invite every reader to join our efforts in whatever ways they can – if you have not made a financial contribution recently, please consider it. Every dollar helps us provide support groups for individuals who are experiencing depression, for persons with bipolar disorder, or panic and anxiety.

You will know you are helping match persons who struggle with mental health issues with a community volunteer friend to have important support and fun. We are part of two critical coalitions: the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Lancaster Mental Well-Being Collaborative. In addition, you can check our newly refreshed website www.mhalancaster.org—lots of exciting change around here!

I'm back for a while and I hope you will reconnect with us as well. Reach out to us by phone, email, or through our new website and choose a way you can help promote mental well being in our community.

Sincerely,
Mary Steffy, Interim Executive Director



*Mary Steffy,
Former and Interim ED*

I/WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A GIFT TO

MHALC OF: \$1000 \$500 \$250

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$25

Other amount (please specify): _____

I've enclosed a check made payable to
Mental Health America of Lancaster County
630 Janet Avenue, Suite B-110
Lancaster, PA 17601

NAME(S) _____

PHONE () _____

Please specify how you would like your name listed for acknowledgement purposes:

I would prefer to remain anonymous.

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

THIS GIFT IS:

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

PLEASE NOTIFY: Name(s) _____

Address _____

MHALC

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebration of Recovery Picnic | Friday, June 12th | 10:00 – 3:00 pm
Long's Park, Pavilion #1 – All are welcome, no RSVP needed!



Tom's Project Hope Golf Outing | Friday, July 31st | 11:30 am
Meadia Heights Golf Club | 402 Golf Road, Lancaster, PA 17602
Benefitting the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition
More info at: <http://tomsprojecthope.eventbrite.com>

Walk for DES 5k | Saturday, September 12th | Registration at 9:30 am
Neffsville Community Park | 209 Petersburg Road, Neffsville, PA 17543
More info at: <http://walkfordes.org>
Read more on page 9!

FREE DROP-IN SUPPORT GROUPS

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

All 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.

Bipolar Educational Group

1st & 3rd Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Blair Room

Bipolar Support Group

2nd & 4th Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Blair Room

Bipolar Support Group

2nd Thursday | 12:00 pm (lunch provided)
Hempfield United Methodist Church | 3050 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster PA

Women's Depression Support Group

1st, 3rd, 5th Tuesdays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room B-107

Men's Depression Support Group

1st, 3rd, 5th Tuesdays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room D-155

Anxiety, Panic & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group

1st, 3rd, 5th Mondays | 7:00-8:30 pm | Room B-103

UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AND QPR

PROVIDING TRAINING AND DISPELLING STIGMA

Throughout the past several months, MHALC has provided a number of mental health trainings to members of our community. Both mental health professionals as well as those from other professions have come out to learn more about helping other individuals through two trainings: Mental Health First Aid and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training.

Since October, four sessions of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) have been offered with the support of trainers from Philhaven. In this day-long training, participants are given an introduction to mental illnesses and given the tools to help someone facing a mental health crisis. The content presented in the course is broad, covering information on anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance abuse.

Feedback on the course has been positive, with most participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel more confident in recognizing the signs of a mental health problem or crisis and being able to reach out to someone who may be dealing with a mental health problem or crisis. Many commented that the course itself as well as the facilitation of the course has been excellent as well as “entry-level friendly” to those without extensive prior knowledge of the field.

What is perhaps more compelling is the number of participants who indicate that they’re more able to recognize and correct misconceptions about mental health and mental illness as they encounter them. One participant writes, “I appreciated how [the course] challenged my own views of mental health and mental illness,” pointing to the role of courses like MHFA in eliminating the stigma of mental illness in our community.

In addition to MHFA, the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition has brought QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Trainings to the community. Trainer Govan Martin facilitated six sessions throughout April and May, providing this important training to about 100 individuals.

Like its lifesaving counterpart of CPR, QPR prepares individuals to save a life from suicide. Participants are taught ways to start the difficult conversation about suicide with someone who may be considering ending their own life, and are given opportunities to role-play the act of having a life-saving QPR conversation. Through the training, many myths about suicide are dispelled, helping to eradicate the stigma surrounding suicide, which often prevents this important conversation from happening when someone needs it most.

Plans are underway to host additional sessions of each training over the next year. If you’re interested in learning more, reach out to Sara at SMohler@mhalancaster.org.

Training Information

Confused about what’s what?
Here’s a breakdown explaining the
key facts about each training.



Duration: One 8-hour session, dates TBD
Cost: \$25, which includes your course manual and certificate of completion, continental breakfast, and light lunch.
Information Covered: Participants learn to identify, understand, and respond to the signs and symptoms of addiction and mental illness and how to apply the 5-step action plan to assess a situation and provide help.
Appropriate for: Anyone, and especially for someone with no background in mental health. The course will go over all the basics.



Duration: One 2-hour session, dates TBD
Cost: \$15, which includes your course manual
Information Covered: Participants learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide, how to ask the right questions and offer hope, and how to get help to save the life of someone considering suicide.
Appropriate for: Anyone. We may all find ourselves in a situation where QPR is needed.

COMPEER AND COMPEERCORPS VET2VET

SPRING UPDATES FROM COMPEER

JOE MILLS, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



Another spring has come, and like the returning flowers, more friendships continue growing and blooming here. As of this writing there are 70 one-to-one Friendships, including three CompeerCORPS (Vet2Vet) friendships and 32 Compeer Calling Friendships. There are seven new Compeer volunteers in process for new friendships in May and June. Currently there are 44 individuals in the Friends Group waiting for friendships. Since July 2014, 47 volunteers were trained, although not everyone chose to become active, the majority are now matched or are in process to be matched. It's certainly been a busy time here!

The Annual Friendship Luncheon was held on Saturday, April 11th with over 70 volunteers and friends enjoying an afternoon of relaxation, conversation, and music. In attendance were our longest friendship (almost 15 years) and our newest (three days)! Everyone enjoyed the catered meal of stuffed shells, breadsticks, green beans, and delicious cake with ice cream. Ken Gehret provided beautiful Celtic music using a variety of instruments.

As always, special recognition was given to our five- and ten-year friendships. Five-year friendships were given a blue Compeer tote and pin and a card; ten-year friendships were given a card and a restaurant gift certificate to share a meal.

Getting together year after year for the friendship luncheon is a wonderful reminder of the friendships forged through Compeer. To see so many friends who stay matched for five and ten years and beyond demonstrates that Compeer creates true matches who know how to support each other. If you know of someone who may benefit from Compeer, or someone who could be a great volunteer, reach out to our office today to get more information.

It's not how many friends you can count, it's how many of those you can count on.
-Anthony Liccione

2015 FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON SNAPSHOTS



COMPEER AND COMPEERCORPS VET2VET

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR FRIENDS: KIM AND MONICA

MATCHED SINCE SEPTEMBER 2014



Why did you become involved in Compeer?

M: I was looking for volunteer opportunities when I came across Compeer. After meeting with Joe, I liked the approach the organization took connecting people with similar interests. I was a bit hesitant about the time commitment because I have a demanding job, but as I spend more time with Kim, I enjoy our time together and think of it as a

mutually beneficial relationship that truly feels like a friendship. And who doesn't enjoy spending time with a good friend?

K: I became involved in Compeer through my counselor. I became involved to get to know more people and to do some things I haven't done before.

What does your Compeer friendship mean to you?

K: Our friendship means a lot to me. I look forward to getting out and going places, and also having someone to talk to when I'm having a bad day or week.

M: My friendship with Kim is time I get to spend away from the hustle and bustle of life. We laugh, try new foods, and enjoy each other's company. It's also reliable and easygoing, making for a great friendship.

What kinds of things do you and your friend do?

M: We live about 30 minutes apart and spend a good bit of time in the car. We like to play cards and try new diners. Most importantly we catch up and talk about life, which is simple but enjoyable for both of us.

K: We enjoy playing cards and going to diners. We've even taken my dog to the pet store to get him some treats. Now that the weather's getting nice, hopefully a trip to Long's Park is in the near future.

What do you like best about your friendship?

K: What I like best about our friendship is having someone to talk to and looking forward to our outings. I'm ever so grateful for the match up. I probably wouldn't do it on my own.

M: I like how easy it is, since we get along, have similar interests, and take everything we try together with ease and laughter. I'm surprised at how much we've meshed in such a short time.

FRIENDSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

A time-honored tradition at Compeer's Annual Friendship Luncheon is honoring matches whose friendships have spanned 5 and 10 years. Here are this year's special friendship anniversaries.

See page 7 for photo.

10-Year Matches

Leanne & Joanne

Ken & Marvin

Elaine & Maribeth

Don & Richard

Tina & Barbara

5-Year Matches

Rita & Angela

Deb & Kathleen

Martha & Rose

Fern & Tammy

Save the Date for these Upcoming Compeer Lancaster Events:

Game Nights: June 1st and July 9th | 6:30—8:30 PM
Rossmere Mennonite Church

Annual Compeer Picnic: August 6th | 5:30—7:30 PM
Long's Park

Uniquely You: October 20th | 7:00—8:30 PM
East Petersburg Mennonite Church



WHAT HAS MHALC BEEN UP TO?



This page: MHALC brought back the long tradition of the Pasta Buffet and Auction on March 27th. Friends and volunteers, both new and more familiar, came together to prepare a huge meal and organize hundreds of live and silent auction items. Read more about the event on page 11.

Do you have photos to share?

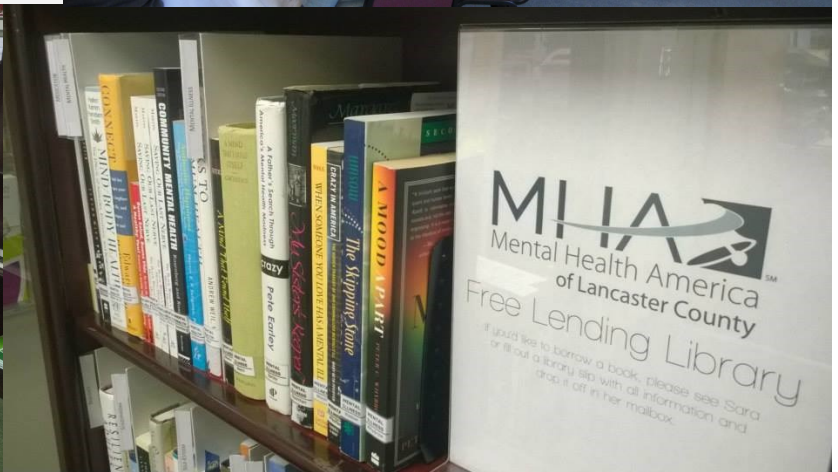
If you attend an MHA or Compeer event and take photos, we'd love to see them! Email Sara at SMohler@mhalancaster.org with any and all of your favorite shots.

Check out these photos from some recent MHA happenings to see where we've been and what's been going on!



Above: Compeer's 5- and 10-year matches were honored at the Annual Friendship Luncheon on April 11th.

Right: Sara reads a blessing of friendship poem before lunch at the Friendship Luncheon. **Below:** It's hard to believe that MHALC's holiday gift project wrapped up five months ago! Over 600 gifts were distributed this year, and we'll be gearing up again in just a few short months to bring holiday gifts to individuals with mental illness in our community.



Above: The makeover of the MHALC library that was mentioned in the last newsletter is now complete. Stop by anytime to check out a book!
Left: We've been out in the community at many wellness fairs throughout the county. We've begun taking a tablet to fairs so that individuals who stop by the table can take a free mental health screening.

ADVOCACY NEWS

GIVING HOPE TO INMATES IN LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON

GRETCHEN GAUDIOSO, CLIENT AND FAMILY ADVOCATE

For the past several months, Marty Mohn (MHALC's Peer Educator) and I have been facilitating five weekly inmate support groups through a partnership with Lancaster County Prison, including three new-inmate orientation sessions, one men's group, and one women's group. The goal of leading these groups is to throw a line of hope to inmates and help them begin a journey toward mental health and healing during their time in prison.

It was just a regular Wednesday afternoon session with the men's group, and Marty and I were sitting at a table with the 12 men who chose to attend that day. The men in the group are all from different backgrounds but have two things in common: they are all currently serving time in Lancaster County Prison, and they attend the men's mental health group to better themselves.

On this particular day, the topic up for discussion was forgiveness and mending relationships. The group was learning about how to forgive people who have hurt them in the past and also considering the hurt that they may have caused others. During the discussion, Tom* raised his hand and began, "This doesn't really have a lot to do with the topic, but I have some news that I just learned that is really bothering me. I would like to talk about it."

Tom went on to tell the story of when he was using and addicted to heroin. During that time, he pawned something for money at a pawn shop that his friend owned. This friend told him he would keep the item for him, knowing that Tom would eventually be in to buy it back.

This wasn't just any item: Tom and his father had worked together to restore this antique, spending a lot of quality time together in the process. Tom's father had since passed, giving the antique a very special meaning. It meant the world to Tom, but in the throes of his addiction, all that really mattered to him was finding his next high.

Tom continued telling the story and began crying. The letter he received that day broke the news that his friend could not hold onto the item any longer and had to sell it. Tom cried even more, saying that he never once shed a tear for his father until now.

As he told his story, the others around the table began consoling Tom and giving him positive feedback. Tom looked up from his wet eyes to tell the group how much he appreciated everyone's support and being able to participate in the group, because he would never be able to tell this story while on the block.

Tom's story reflects the way many of the men feel that come to MHALC's mental health group. The environment allows them to feel comfortable sharing their stories, knowing that the other 11 men in group with them will support them both in the room and outside the group on the block. Being in the group helps them to know that when they are struggling, they can go to someone to talk about it who knows more about what they're going through.

When we ask the men about the group, the guys tell us that it is one of the very few things that they look forward to every week. They explain that they want to come to this group and learn about mental health and mental wellness, but also that coming to talk about their struggles is something that gets them through the week.

After being released, some former inmates call on MHALC to advocate for them to get services on the outside, some attend Marty's weekly RMO (Re-entry Management Organization) support group, and some unfortunately head upstate. The guys who go upstate take all of the materials with them and write letters to us here at MHALC. Not a week goes by that I don't get a letter from one of our former group attendees.

What MHALC provides for these men is something that they would not otherwise have access to in prison. Following MHALC's mission and vision, we are proud and happy to be able to continue providing this service and help inmates find what they need, both inside prison and out.

*Name has been changed

**If you or someone you know are in need of any Client or Family Advocacy Services
please contact MHALC at 717-397-7461 or email gretchen@mhalancaster.org.**

LANCASTER COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

YOUR LIFE MATTERS EVENT

Back in November, the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition hosted an event for International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. After the event, it became clear that another event — something targeted at suicide attempt survivors — should be planned to discuss suicide prevention and giving hope to those who have walked in darkness.

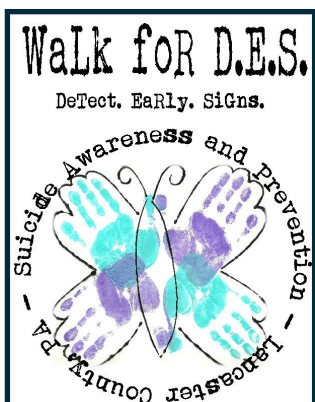
On May 2nd, the Coalition hosted just that, calling the event “Your Life Matters.” A new documentary titled *A Voice at the Table* was screened, which presents the need to include the voice of the suicide attempt survivor in suicide prevention efforts. Small groups discussed their reactions to the film, giving rise to a range of conversations about personal experiences, the need for better accessibility of mental health services, and even issues surrounding mental health within the prison system.

The event culminated with a panel discussion about staying well following a suicide attempt or bout of mental illness. As the group’s conversation continued, many voices from different parts of our community were heard. Panel member Mary Theresa King-Linares provided a powerful closing to the day’s conversation, offering the group a spoken-word poem and movements which all attendees performed together.

The Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition intends to continue offering opportunities for open community conversation about mental health and suicide. If you’re interested in becoming a part of the effort to plan and organize these events, there is room on the Education Committee for you. Reach out to Sara at SMohler@mh Lancaster.org with more details about how you can make a difference.



LANCASTER COUNTY
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
COALITION**



WALK FOR DES ESTABLISHES THE DES FOUNDATION

In 2011, Mark and Debbie Schantzer faced the unthinkable: the death of their 21 year-old son Desmond to suicide without any signs or warnings. Out of their grief, the Schantzers and their daughter Danielle formed the Walk for D.E.S. 5k walk/run with the hope of raising funds so that no families should have to face what they did.

The Walk for D.E.S. has been held yearly since 2012, raising the funds that were used to establish and operate the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition and becoming a mainstay event for survivors of suicide loss in Lancaster and beyond.

As the Walk has grown and raised more funds yearly, the time has now come for Mark Schantzer to establish his own 501(c)(3) nonprofit to independently operate the Walk as well as the larger DES Foundation, as it is now known.

Mental Health America of Lancaster County is proud to have supported Mark in his vision of building hope for others out of his grief and loss. The Walk has been the single funder in establishing the Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and Mark will remain an important player at that table.

The Walk for DES is still going strong, with planning for the fourth annual event to be held on Saturday, September 12th now underway. If you’re interested in signing up to support this meaningful 5k, find out more on <http://walkfordes.org>.

MENTAL WELLNESS NEWS

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPRING CLEANING TIPS FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Many of us engage in yearly spring cleaning, giving some attention to our crowded closets, disorganized cupboards, and neglected gardens. Getting our physical spaces in order can be such a help to our mental health, but we could help ourselves even more by doing some spring cleaning specifically for our mental health!



Since May is Mental Health Month around these parts, we've brainstormed a few tips to help start your spring cleaning:

1. Spend time in nature.

After a long winter, spending time outside, whether by going for a relaxed walk or engaging in an activity such as gardening can be one way to spring clean your mental health. A study conducted in the UK found that being outdoors can improve mental health, boost self esteem, help people with mental health problems return to work, improve physical health, and reduce social isolation.¹

Try this: Go for a walk through your neighborhood, and stop to admire the newly-bloomed landscape.

2. Create a mental health to-do list.

Beyond your regular to-do list of your home and work tasks, make a separate list of some mental health goals to get your spring cleaning on track, whether it's connecting with an old friend or trying out a new support group.

Try this: Take a mental health screening at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screening-tools to check in with your mental health, and reach out to MHALC to see how we can help you set some mental health goals.

3. Get moving!

Keeping our bodies healthy is one way to boost a healthy mind. Regular moderate exercise (like walking) has been shown to improve mood in people with mild to moderate depression.² Be gentle with yourself, and start slowly.

Try this: Write simple exercises, like doing 10 jumping jacks or jogging in place for 30 seconds, on a deck of index cards. Play a game with a friend by taking turns drawing cards and doing the exercise you pull.

4. Invest in your spirit.

Trying new ways to nourish your spirit is one way to clean out some of the dust of winter. Starting a new practice of daily meditation, even for as short as five minutes daily, can focus and center you so that you can face the day.

Try this: Sit quietly in a position that feels comfortable to you. Close your eyes, and bring your attention to your breathing. Count 20 slow inhales and exhales, guiding your mind back to the counting if your attention strays.

5. De-clutter your environment.

Spring cleaning your home and work spaces can have a positive effect on your mental health, as a cleaner space helps to reduce stress and anxiety. So use that regular spring cleaning to support your mental health spring cleaning!

Try this: If you're having a hard time getting started, set a timer for 15 minutes and focus on just one task for the entirety of that 15 minutes. Splitting the de-cluttering into shorter chunks helps make it manageable!

6. Give yourself time to play.

As we get older and face more of life's demands, we can forget that play is just as important for adults as it is for children. Give yourself time to forget about work and commitments, and to be social in an unstructured, creative way and reap the benefits of reduced stress, increased brain function, and improving relationships with those around you.³

Try this: Clear your schedule for an evening, and do your best to turn off devices like your television and cellphone. Return to activities you loved as a child, such as throwing a Frisbee outside or starting a craft project. There's no single right way to play, so be creative and get others involved!

Making a few small changes to your everyday routines can help boost your mental health and jolt yourself out of habits you'd prefer to change. Just like each new season, each day is a fresh start — make the most of it.

1. <http://www.mind.org.uk/media/336359/Feel-better-outside-feel-better-inside-report.pdf>

2. <http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/exercise-and-depression-report-excerpt>

3. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>

RECAP OF PASTA BUFFET AND AUCTION

OVER \$20,000 RAISED FOR MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LANCASTER COUNTY

As has been MHALC's tradition for many years, our Annual Pasta Buffet and Auction was resurrected as a spring event on Friday, March 27, 2015. After just a few short months of planning, our dedicated committee of staff and volunteers were able to host an event that fed over 300 people and brought in more than \$20,000 of funding for the organization.

Auction highlights included the generous donation from Bill Puffenberger of a week-long stay at Regal Vistas Resort in Massanutten, Virginia, which brought in \$1,140; a craft beer gift basket, which fetched a price of \$100; a gift certificate for 6 home-baked, made-to-order desserts that sold for \$140; and numerous restaurant gift certificates for casual and fine dining and everything in between.



Whether MHALC's guests went home with a full belly from the delicious pasta or a belly to be filled with delicious treats purchased from the auction itself, we can certainly say that no one went away hungry!

The Annual Pasta Buffet and Auction has always been a time for family fun, delicious food, and enjoyment for all. What is more important, however, is what the funds raised allow MHALC to do. Every item donated and purchased represents funding that can go to much-needed services in our community. We are proud to be able to offer so many mental health services for free — support groups, advocacy, special programs like the Compeer friendship program, and so much more — and we are only able to do this with the generous support of those who believe in us.

MHALC's Board of Directors and Staff send a very sincere thank you out to all who made this event possible — from the dedicated committee who canvassed the community in search of donations and sponsorships, to the perennial supporters who came out to enjoy a delicious meal and bid on special items, to the new faces who came to see what the event is all about. You make a difference every day by believing in us and helping us to provide important mental health services and advocacy in our community. **THANK YOU!**

WAYS TO GIVE

Wondering how you can support mental health in the Lancaster community? You could:

⇒ **DONATE**

There is no contribution too modest. Every gift of financial support is utilized to support the work of MHALC and to further our efforts to support mental health in our community.

⇒ **VOLUNTEER**

There is no effort too small. Whether you'd like to contribute a few hours to help with an event or project, or commit to a friendship with Compeer Lancaster, we are always happy to accept volunteers.

⇒ **PROVIDE**

There is no gift too insignificant. Gift cards to grocery stores and area restaurants go a long way in helping us support clients in need and express gratitude to volunteers.

Reach out to MHALC today at **717-397-7461** to find out more about these opportunities to give.



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Lancaster, PA 17601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: (717) 397-7461
Fax: (717) 517-8446

mha@mhalancaster.org
www.mhalancaster.org

Like us on Facebook!

Mental Health America of Lancaster County

Our mission is to promote optimal mental health through access, awareness, advocacy, and education.
We envision a society where mental wellness is the foundation of a healthy community.
We invite you to join us in our journey.