



Volume 55, Issue 2

# The Beacon

## A Message from Mary Steffy, MHALC Executive Director

May 2012



First and foremost I want to thank the many persons as individuals and with organizations who have, and do, and will

provide the human and financial resources to enable us to make life better for so many. Thank you for promoting mental well being for all, and improved quality of life for persons with mental and emotional illnesses through education, advocacy, direct non-clinical services, including the power and gift of friendship through Compeer.

What an amazing 30+ years this has been – I am privileged to have had the opportunity to be part of MHALC beginning as a board member in 1978, being the administrative assistant while Vivian Kunkel was the director, and becoming the director when she retired at the end of 1983.

I have worked with dedicated staff and board members, many of whom have given of themselves and their resources unselfishly

for many years. I applaud and honor Gretchen, Rene, Julie, Kim, and Deb for their current commitment to our cause.

I have been inspired by persons with mental and emotional illnesses who work hard to recover and live well with a mental illness. People with mental illnesses are pillars in our community, our family

members, doctors, nurses, agency employees and directors, storekeepers, clergy, lawyers, young and old and of every racial and ethnic group. No one is immune and 1 in 4 experiences a mental illness in any given year. The work of MHALC is critical to our community, especially in this year of drastic budget cuts.

Our activities over these 30+ years have changed and multiplied. We have done legislative breakfasts for more than 20 years. Alpha Clubs have been meeting for nearly 50 years. We grew from an office of 2, to 7 full and part-time staff: a budget of \$60,000 to \$345,000. We reached a couple hundred

people and 27,300 last year. We worked collaboratively to help create the Arch Street Center, Camp Briarwood, clergy-mental health professional breakfasts and much more. We provide classes to understand and resolve anger, manage stress and understand good mental health habits.

While the specific programs may change, our values have remained constant. We value every person every time.

Every person with or without a mental health diagnosis deserves respect, support and appropriate treatment. Each of us must be willing to speak up for those who need an advocate. It may be me; it may be you who needs support today or tomorrow.

YOU are a person who makes a difference. In each and every human interaction, YOU can enhance

or diminish the sense of well being of the other person. You have the opportunity to bless and affirm or to criticize and tear down the other, and consequently yourself. I challenge each of us to make a positive difference every day.

The Board has screened and interviewed strong candidates for the next director of MHALC and Jan Bailey has been chosen. I look forward to the ways she will grow and strengthen MHALC. Please welcome and support her as she works to fulfill our mission.

My heart is full of gratitude to each and every client, staff member, volunteer, public official, MHA board member, County staff, mental health professional, and my family who often saw less of me than they deserved. I have only been able to do what I have done, thanks to each of you.

**MENTAL HEALTH IS FOR EVERY... BODY**



## Mental Health Court Graduation by Juliana Arnold

Lancaster County's mental health court graduated their first two participants in March. This is not only a triumph for the two men who graduated, but for a system that has worked and fought hard to bring this program to existence.



Mental health court was set up to help people who committed a crime that was directly related to their mental illness. An example would be someone who has been arrested for writing a bad check. How can this be related to mental illness? People who live with bipolar disorder can go into a manic episode. There is a misconception that people living with bipolar disorder get happy highs and then lows of depression. Mania comes in many forms, some get a euphoric high while others can become very agitated and can be consumed with rage.

Some people go into spending sprees, with no impulse control, this may sound like an excuse to those who do not understand what bipolar and other mental illnesses are, but this is very real. Someone who bounces a check as a result of poor impulse control due to their illness does not deserve prison time, but needs

treatment. To incarcerate a person with an illness does not take care of the problem but only perpetuates the illness and stigma. Someone may be on medications and lose their health benefits. As a result they cannot afford their medication, which could lead to a manic episode. Mental health court is not a get-out-of-jail-free card. In fact, mental health court is tough. It is a very strict and intensely run program with no wiggle room for someone to use it to stay out of jail. It is a combination of many things, med management,

therapy, regular meetings with their probation officer and the judge; just to name a few things that mental health court entails. If the person chooses not to follow the rules and treatment plan imposed by the court they are incarcerated to serve the time they were sentenced, with no second chance. It takes courage and the willingness to work, hard along with a true desire to get well.

I had the opportunity to attend the graduation; the participants were glowing with pride. Family members and friends attended. It was not an easy road for them but they now have a chance to live a healthy life, restore broken relationships and become productive members of our community.

Congratulations to the graduates, Judge Miller, the Mental Health Court Team and others currently enrolled in this important program.



HOPE  
BELIEF  
CONNECTEDNESS  
EXAMPLE ACTION  
GIVING  
ENCOURAGEMENT  
POSSIBILITY

### Join us as we:

- Increase awareness of recovery.**  
ITE/MH aims to increase awareness that people recover from mental illness.
- Engage individuals, organizations, and communities in the support of recovery.**  
ITE/MH seeks to engage individuals, organizations, and communities in the support of recovery, by honoring human potential and inspiring hope, creating opportunities, and offering encouragement.
- Celebrate individuals, organizations, and communities that support recovery.**  
ITE/MH celebrates people who are living examples of recovery, and the individuals, organizations, and communities that support recovery.

### Get Involved:

- As a grassroots effort, the ITE/MH Campaign messages are carried forth by YOU, the individuals and organizations that are the Evidence.
- Help us spread the Campaign by:
  - Becoming a Partner.** Programs, groups, or organizations that actively promote, through word and action, the Campaign's goals, messages, and values.
  - Becoming an Ambassador.** ITE/MH Campaign Ambassadors are individuals who live the values of the Campaign and wish to be honored as the Evidence and/or spread the Campaign's messages to others.
  - Sharing your story of recovery or supporting recovery.**
  - Promoting the Campaign through ITE/MH products.** Our online store offers stylish, comfortable items. Sales profits help sustain the Campaign.
  - Donating to the Campaign.** Your gift supports the Campaign and enables us to honor the Evidence in Pennsylvania and beyond.



To get involved, visit [itecampaign.org](http://itecampaign.org), email [info@itecampaign.org](mailto:info@itecampaign.org), or call 717.346.0549 (Toll free: 866.578.3659)



### Do You Need Extra Help with Prescription Costs?

You may qualify for the Social Security Administration Low Income Subsidy (LIS) Benefit and a savings up to 75% of your prescription costs. To be eligible monthly income must be less than \$1,396/month for a single person or less than \$1,891/month for a married couple. (Not all income is counted.) Those eligible for this benefit may have no monthly premium to pay for drug coverage, and very low co-pays for medications.



Contact the APPRISE program at the Lancaster County Office of Aging, (717) 299-7979 or 1-800-801-3070, or e-mail: [aging@co.lancaster.pa.us](mailto:aging@co.lancaster.pa.us) for free, confidential information and assistance.

**The call will only take a few minutes, and you could save thousands of dollars!**

Mental Health America of Lancaster County's  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Jammin' Away the Blues!

Live Performance by Blue Light Special

Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012 7-10 pm

The Elks Lodge 219 N Duke St. Lanc, PA

\$25 per ticket per person or 5 tickets for \$100

Cash bar and light refreshments

So come on out and jam with Blue Light Special;  
the recent recipient of the Tri State Indi Award  
for the Best Blues Band.

[www.bluelightspecialblues.com](http://www.bluelightspecialblues.com)



# Lunch and Learn on Bipolar Disorder.

Lancaster General Hospital in collaboration with Mental Health America of Lancaster County is offering a **FREE** Lunch and Learn on Bipolar Disorder.

When : May 24<sup>th</sup> 2012

Time: 12-1 pm

Where: Lancaster General Hospital Stager #5

Who: For anyone interested in learning more about bipolar disorder.

What: A free lunch will be provided while we have a mental health professional, a consumer, and an advocate speak about bipolar disorder.

Cost: No cost this event is **FREE**

No need to RSVP, if you do have questions please contact Gretchen at MHA 397-7461.



## A Student Perspective

by Kelly Cuttitta, MHALC Intern

During my junior year of college I was able to do some volunteering with MHALC through a class at Millersville University. It was such a positive and enlightening volunteer experience that I was eager to learn more about mental health and recovery. I began my senior field placement at the end of January this year. I've had such a variety of opportunities, from attending and helping with Alpha Club, facilitating a support group, helping with advocacy and with presentations at local Senior Centers, and attending various trainings. These experiences are something I will carry with me for the rest of my life and will help me in my career no matter what field I enter. I thank the staff for being so helpful and supportive of my learning.



## New College Mental Health Guide Released

The Jed Foundation, a national non-profit group focused on preventing suicide by college students, and the Education Development Center have released a free resource, [Campus MHAP: A Guide to Campus Mental Health Action Planning](#), to guide colleges in developing plans to help students who are suffering emotionally. The guide details how to combat emotional distress and suicide on campuses, with prevention strategies and methods. It outlines a step-by-step process to define institution-specific goals, create programs and policies, and assess their effects. ([Chronicle of Higher Education](#), 3/1/12)

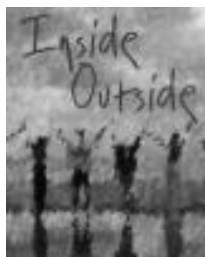
## Celebration Campaign Contributors Feb3,2012 –April 30, 2012

Ms. Jane Albright	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Hoover	Mr. & Mrs. Doug Stark
Mr. & Mrs. Barry Brandt	Mr. & Mrs. John Huber	High Company LLC
Ms. Beth Crosby	Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Kravitz	Ms. Mary Beth Stengel
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Crosby	Mr. George Kunkel	Mr. Rick Straub
Ms. Diane Dombach	Mr. & Mrs. Jack Leshner	Ms. Barbara Sweigart
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ebel	Mr. & Mrs. Richard McCarty	Ms. Tanya West
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Ms. Sally Garman	Ms. Marilyn Lee Olds	
Dr. Nancy Hall	Mr. & Mrs. Donald Spence	
Mr. & Mrs. James Hall	Ms. Mary Price	
Mr. & Mrs. John Hartman	Mr. Joseph Puskar	
Ms. Christina Hausner	Ms. Rose Rineer	
Mr. & Mrs. John Herr	Ms. Laura Schanz	
	Mr. & Mrs. Jon Singer	



### Recovery Library Materials

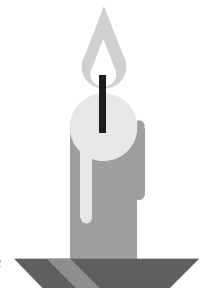
Inside Outside—Building a Meaningful Life After the Hospital is a DVD in which eight former hospital inpatients share with consumers, family members, and professionals how they overcame the odds and took back control of their lives. Their intent is to get the message out to others that the hospital does not have to be the center of the lives and that the cycle can be broken. They discovered that they had choices and were able to make their own decisions. Although things did not change overnight, these eight individuals want others to know that there is HOPE.



"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." - *Marcel Proust*



At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. *Albert Schweitzer*







# CSP's (Consumer Support Program) Annual Celebration of Recovery Picnic

A fun day filled with good food, dancing, games, and fellowship for consumers, family members, and professionals to celebrate that people can and do recover from mental illness!

Friday June 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-3 pm at Long's Park Pavilion #1

This year will be a western theme so make sure you wear your cowboy hats

We are looking for donations of items to give away as prizes at the Annual Celebration of Recovery Picnic. In the past we have received donations such as new or gently used stuffed animals and other items that would be suited for carnival game prizes. Please drop donations off at MHA's office; the deadline for donations is June 7<sup>th</sup>. We are also looking for volunteers to help the day of the picnic. Please call Gretchen at (717) 397-7461 or e-mail her at [grettyg@yahoo.com](mailto:grettyg@yahoo.com) to sign up or if you have any questions.

Address Service Requested

Lancaster, PA 17601-4585

630 Janet Avenue

*A United Way Partner*



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