



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
in Niagara County

A Letter From Our Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Mental Health Association in Niagara County,

As we reflect on the year 2024, I am filled with immense pride in the work our staff put in and the outcomes we achieved for those Niagara County residents who trusted us enough to let us help them on their road to mental wellness and recovery.

In a time when mental health struggles have reached unprecedented levels, the work we do is more important than ever. Throughout this past year, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that those in need have access to the resources, care, and support they deserve. From expanding our services to embracing new partnerships, we have remained committed to creating a compassionate mental health landscape.

Some of the new services the MHA launched in 2024 include:

- Adult “Couch” – modeled after our popular after school program for youth, The Couch, the MHA started an adult version as a way of getting adults out of the house and engaged in their community. Thursday afternoons you can find several adults at our office playing games, doing arts and crafts, eating, drinking, and having a good time, in general, with their new friends.
- New Support Groups – the MHA now offers a Grief Support Group in Niagara Falls at Heart, Love, and Soul. The MHA has partnered with the group, “Love Never Dies’ to also help facilitate Grief Support Groups at the YMCA in Lockport, as well as at All Saints Parish. We also added a Mental Wellness Support Group, also at Heart, Love, and Soul.
- Mental Health First Aid – the MHA has a certified Mental Health First Aid trainer who can conduct trainings to groups of people, for FREE, who want to learn more about what they can do, personally, to assist someone struggling with their mental health.
- School Presentations – the MHA has partnered with the North Tonawanda Youth Court to conduct mental health-related presentations in schools within the North Tonawanda District, as well as other districts in the county.

And we have to mention that the MHA in Niagara County celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024! Here’s to 60 more.

As we move into 2025, we are more determined than ever to continue the work we’ve started. We know that there is still much to be done—whether it’s improving mental health care access, reducing stigma, or ensuring that mental health services are available to all who need them. Our vision for the future is one where mental health is prioritized and where individuals of all backgrounds feel empowered to seek help and lead fulfilling lives.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our incredible staff, volunteers, board members, and donors. You are the backbone of this organization, and for that, I am deeply grateful. Thank you for being part of this important journey.

Together, we are making a difference.

Sincerely,

Daniel Colpoys, Executive Director



MHA in Niagara County Volunteer Board Roster

Officers:

- Kathy Zunner, Board Chair
- Joel Grundy, Vice Chair
- Tracy Diina, Secretary
- Jaime Lubs, Treasurer

Members:

- Sarah Lanzo
- Emily Shields
- Jake Moskal

Mission Statement

The Mission of The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is to promote mental wellness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs.

Vision Statement

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. will create a community where mental health disorders are treated in the same manner as physical disorders; where stigma no longer exists; where recovery is an expectation following mental health diagnoses; where finding meaningful employment is possible; where living a safe, satisfying life with meaningful relationships is a reality.



Programs, Services, & Outcomes

Community Education



Breanna Lockhart
Community Education Director

MHA is dedicated to promoting mental wellness, while providing valuable information and education about mental illness. Our programs and resources benefit children, families, professionals, consumers of mental health services, and the general public.

Through our Community Education program, you can:

- Request a mental health-related presentation for your school, business, group, organization or house of worship
- Receive free agency informational brochures, packets, and access our FREE lending library
- Request an MHA representative to attend a health fair or other event

With our Community Education Department's Information & Referral services you can find out about valuable service agencies and how to connect with them. You can easily find services related to topics such as: addictions, children/youth, crisis & emergency services, education/training, employment, family, financial, food & clothing, LGBTQ+, government, health insurance, health services, housing, law enforcement, legal issues, mental health, senior citizens, transportation, and veterans' services.

98

Mental Health-Related Presentations to Community Groups

875

People Referred to Community Service Organizations

5,953

Attendees at Mental Health-Related Presentations

Peer Services



Shannon Veiders
Peer Services Director

We offer a variety of peer-led programs to consumers who may need help navigating through the different stages of a mental health diagnosis. There are many benefits to seeking help from a certified peer. When receiving peer-led services, you're learning from someone who has been where you are and speaks your language. Certified peers have navigated their way through the mental health system, which can often be difficult to understand. Certified peers are a reminder that you are never alone and that recovery is possible. Our peers will advocate for you, support you, and help you find the programs to best aid in your recovery.

We have peers located at:

- Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center
- Trott Access Center
- Shaw Building
- Hope House

We also offer a variety of support groups. Support groups provide the opportunity for anyone who wishes to benefit from shared experiences, encouragement, and information. We sponsor several support groups throughout Niagara County. For schedules, please call our office at 716-433-3780.

Some of our support group topics include:

- Suicide Survivors
- Mental Wellness
- Grief Support

97%

Program Satisfaction Rate Among Clients

528

People Attending Support Groups

2,513

People Receiving Peer Services

Respite



Sara George
Respite Manager

The Respite Program through the Mental Health Association provides free childcare to families with a child (or children) with a current mental health diagnosis and their siblings. Respite can reduce the family's overall stress level and increase the caregiver's ability to provide childcare that best suits the needs of their children. The Respite Program gives the primary caregiver a reliable and planned break from parenting. Whether the caregiver needs time to relax or just clean up around the house, the In-Home Respite Program is here to help.

The caregiver may use the respite time to:

- Run errands
- Attend professional or personal appointments
- Spend time with family and friends
- Take a class
- Renew old hobbies
- Enjoy quiet time
- To spend valuable one-on-one time with their other children

100% Program Satisfaction Rate Among Clients

171 Children Served

50 Families Served

Compeer



Tara Porter
Compeer Niagara Director

Compeer Niagara is a volunteer-based program that serves adults and children who have 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. Compeer recruits, screens, and matches trained volunteers and mentors for one-to-one supportive friendships with children and adults. A "Compeer" is a companion who is also a peer or equal. Those diagnosed with a mental illness may experience the loss of self-esteem, the fear of failure, loneliness, and the need to build support systems; this is where Compeer can help. The goal of Compeer is to provide a caring friend who can offer support through social inclusion and mutual understanding. Compeer participants must be referred by their Mental Health professional.

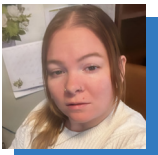
96% Program Satisfaction Rate Among Clients

103 Events and Organized Activities

61 Youths Served

59 Adults Served

Hope House



Rosemary Marvin
Hope House Director

Hope House provides temporary housing for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The program was developed to provide services to Niagara County adults in a home-like, safe and secure environment. Unique to this program is its peer-operated aspect, where the program's staff identifies as having lived experience themselves. The Center offers four respite beds for hospital diversion, temporary housing, symptom management, and as a rest or relief from stressors to current living situations. Also offered is Recovery Line, providing face-to-face meetings and/or phone support to prevent the onset of an emotional crisis. Therapeutic support and intervention services are offered through the Mobile Transitional Support Team, specifically helping those in transition during this critical time.

243 Instances of Hospital/Emergency Room Diversions.

57 House Guests

Statement of Financial Position

2025 Budget

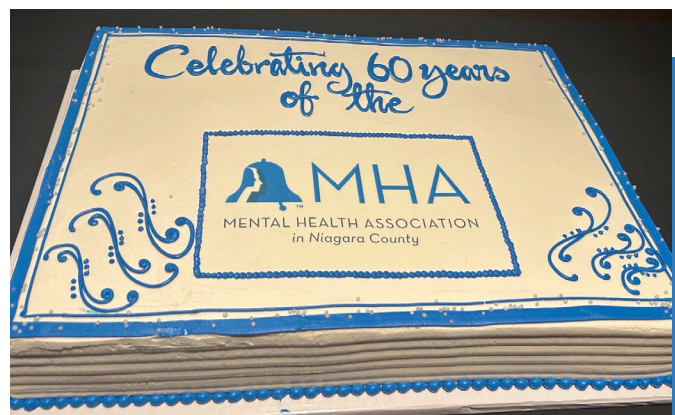
REVENUE	Comm Ed	Respite	Compeer Adult	Peer Serv.	Compeer Youth	MTS	Hope House	Peer Well.	Kids/GL	Ag Adm.	
Niagara County Dept of MH	40,145									40,145	
Local Assistance	72,991									72,991	
CSS-Peer Advocacy				78,576						78,576	
Adult Case Management Compeer			123,123							123,123	
Adult Family Service				7,772						7,772	
Outreach-Kids Compeer					74,135					74,135	
In Home Respite		72,468								72,468	
Mobile Transport Support						55,137				55,137	
Peer Wellness Coach								50,847		50,847	
Min. Wage Inc. Respite		9,791								9,791	
Min. Wage Inc. Outreach					4,162					4,162	
Min. Wage Inc. Comm. Ed.	11,548									11,548	
Min. Wage Inc. Peer Advocacy				17,777						17,777	
Min. Wage Onc. Adult Compeer			4,300							4,300	
United Way Donor Designated Funds	1,000									1,000	
Donations	8,496									8,496	
Grigg Lewis Foundation, Inc.	10,000									10,000	
Grigg Lewis Workership	5,350									5,350	
MHA of NYS Grant	2,000			2,000						4,000	
Compeer Inc. Grant			8,000							8,000	
Grigg Lewis Foundation for Kids									12,859	12,859	
Mental Health Advocates of WNY	6,000									6,000	
Community Missions for Hope House							130,120			130,120	
Shaun Rocco Foundation				800						800	
TOTAL REVENUE	157,530	82,259	135,423	106,925	78,297	55,137	130,120	50,847	12,859	106,448	809,397



Grants & Donors (Over \$100)

To our financial supporters, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your indispensable support and commitment to mental wellness.

- Niagara County Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Niagara County Youth Bureau
- Mental Health Association in New York State
- Grigg Lewis Foundation
- Mental Health Advocates of Western New York
- Matthew Natali
- Terri Arendas
- Zonta Club of Lockport
- NY State Senator Robert Ort
- Connected Path Partners
- EFPR Group
- James & Karen Grundy
- Tru Commercial Development LLC
- Cornerstone Community Federal Credit Union
- Sigmamotor, Inc.
- Alternative Grounds Coffee
- Northwest Bank
- Omega Phi Alpha - Binghamton University
- Greater Niagara Mechanical, Inc.
- Niagara County Municipal Clerks
- Kiwanis Club of Lewiston, Inc
- Niagara County Legislator Chris McKimmie
- Zajac Funeral Home
- Jeffrey Williams
- Azuna
- Stephanie Arendas
- Rebecca Wydysch
- Phyllis Badali
- Shaun Rocco Foundation
- Angela Stamm Philipps
- Suzanne Taylor
- Compeer, Inc.



Dear Community

In the heart of Niagara County, we stand united—a beacon of compassion, resilience, and hope. The Mental Health Association invites you to join hands in our mission to transform lives, one step at a time.

Why “Turning Illness into Wellness”? We believe that every challenge holds within it the seed of growth. Mental health struggles are no exception. By nurturing understanding, empathy, and support, we turn the tide. Together, we rewrite the narrative—from illness to wellness.

How Can You Make a Difference?

Advocate: Raise your voice for mental health awareness. Break down barriers, challenge stigma, and foster understanding.

Volunteer: Be a lifeline. Volunteer with Compeer Niagara, offering companionship and friendship to those who need it most.

Donate: Your generosity fuels our programs—support groups, respite care, education, and more. Every contribution counts.

Attend: Join our community education sessions. Equip yourself with knowledge to support loved ones and promote mental well-being.

Share: Spread the word. Let others know that healing is possible. Share stories of resilience and recovery.

Together, we thrive. Let’s weave a safety net of compassion, lifting each other toward brighter days. Join us as we turn illness into wellness—one connection, one smile, one act of kindness at a time.

Together, we heal. Together, we thrive.

Facebook: @MHANiagara

TikTok: @mhaniagaracounty

Instagram: @mhaniagaracounty

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