



From the desk of the Executive Director

Happy spring!

Daffodils, forsythia, skunks, shorts, and radios blaring out rolled-down windows...you know spring has sprung!

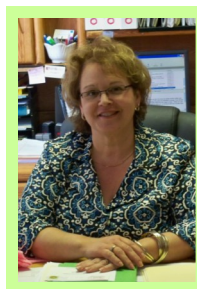
I know it's early to bring this up but I've recently been asked by several people if they could be added to our mailing list for next years Women's Wellness Conference. We've never actually had a mailing list. In the past we've announced the upcoming event in the paper and we've appeared on the local LCTV cable show. I've been told that many waited until the last minute to get their tickets this year and when they went to do so, we were sold out. Well, I'm happy to announce that next year's event should be bigger and better than ever and that we hope to increase our ticket sales to 200. In order to do this without overcrowding, we plan on renting two of the larger rooms at the Lockport Holiday Inn instead of one. We will hold all of the vendors and food in one area and will hold the audience with the stage located in the center of the room, in the other.

Other changes will include pulling participants out of the audience for the make-overs and adding larger sized (18-32) and older models (50-and above) to the Fashion Show. More than twice as many vendors will be participating, each bringing some of their wares to sell that evening. Of course, our famous goodie bags will be given to each participant, too. If you would like your name to be included on a "save the date" post card list for next year's event, please call us at 433-3780. It's a great evening to spend time with your mom, daughter, aunt, grandma or best friend while eating, learning and laughing, too! The tentative date is February 7, 2011.

Congratulations to our Board President, Howard Morgan for being awarded Alumni of the Year from Leadership Niagara and to Marg Raduns, Consumer Activities Coordinator, for being awarded the Community Service Award by Community Missions. We're proud of both of you!

Have a safe, fun spring and remember to share your knowledge, expertise and a smile with those around you!

Cheryl



Cheryl Blacklock

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TWIST (The Way I See This) Art Show

The Fourth Annual TWIST Art Show is going to be bigger than ever this year with two shows. The Market Street Gallery in Lockport and the Carnegie Art Center in North Tonawanda will both be showing new entries for a month apiece. Please submit your original, new art by June 1, 2010. Call 433-3780 to get an entry form.



Mom's Net and the Warm Line

by Carleen Stover,
Mom's Net Coordinator



Program Update

The Mom's Net Program, a program for new and expectant moms, is being well received and strongly utilized by women in the community. New and expectant moms have been delighted to have a place they can turn to when they need support, have parenting questions or concerns about their emotional health.

Since the program started (September 2009) we have worked with more than 200 women. The Mom's Net links new and expectant moms with our Warm-Line service, support groups and educational services. The Mom's Net Program also makes additional referrals to get

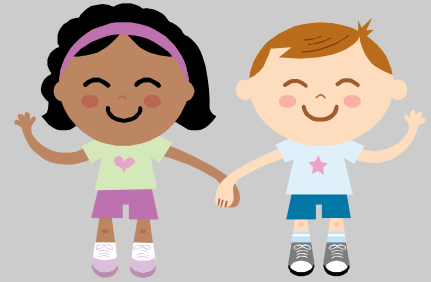
new and expectant moms as much support and guidance as possible.

PPD in Men

Recently we have had a few calls from people asking, "Do men suffer from Postpartum Depression?" Yes, men do get postpartum depression. It's a fact that most people - including many health professionals - don't know. As a result, most men with postpartum depression suffer in isolation. The Mental Health Association would like to reach out to help men with postpartum depression. For fathers who are experiencing bouts of depression, have questions, or need someone to talk to, please call us about starting a men's group at 433-3780.

In-Home Respite

by Marg Raduns,
In-Home Respite Coordinator



In Home Respite is looking forward to spring, warm weather and even summer vacation. Do you need a break? To go grocery shopping, have a lunch date with a friend, go to the library or just sit alone and enjoy a cup of coffee with no one calling your name? All great ideas for a respite! Look at your calendar and plan a couple hours to do something nice for yourself.

The Respite program provides a scheduled respite (break) for a family with a child or children with an identified emotional or behavior disturbance. The respite is a non-therapeutic break provided by screened and trained child care workers. A respite can help reduce the family's stress level and increase the caregiver's ability to care for the family.

A family may refer themselves, a family can be referred by another agency, or a family may be referred by a family already in the program. Maybe you already are in the respite program and know someone else that may benefit from the program. Call and talk to Marg at 433-3780 ext. 304. If you are interested in how the respite program works call and set up an appointment for an intake.



Coming Soon...

**An event in the park for new moms
to build awareness about
Post-Partum Depression**

Please call for more details!

433-3780, ext. 312

Compeer Friendship Connection

Sharing my story

As told by Maureen to Virginia Gonzalez

I have been with the Mental Health Association and Compeer since 1991 and both have played a part in my recovery. Mental illness was in my family so I had to deal with both my own illness and those around me. After being diagnosed with a mental illness as an adult I found myself volunteering at the Mental Health Association. Once I came to the MHA I branched out and was sent to classes. At that time I learned about stigma, recovery, and what people with disabilities are able to do! In addition, I learned about the significance of support groups! With the skills I acquired I was able to educate people just by being myself. Volunteering was a big part of my life and I strongly believe that volunteering is good for the soul!

While volunteering through the MHA I would tell my story to others. I wanted people to see individuals having a mental illness as a person and not a diagnosis. My first speech was to the Lion's Club and thereafter to students in human services classes at Niagara County Community College. Later, I told my story to students at Niagara University,

then a pastor's group and in time at my place of employment! By sharing my heart I found out other people deal with issues too, including a mental health diagnosis. Some individuals would open up to me about their struggles. My desire to help others also led to my talking to a legislator about stigma and recruiting volunteers for Compeer who were students in the mental health field.

As I said Compeer also played a part in my recovery. When I first began at MHA I was meeting new people at the agency. One of those individuals was Jimmie

Kowalchuk, former director of Compeer who is now retired. Jimmie persuaded me that I could use a friend and I joined Compeer.

My first Compeer volunteer was Marilyn. Our match ended some time ago and for a time we did not see one another but in later years we reconnected. Marilyn is a true friend and we will soon celebrate 20 years of friendship by going out for a special dinner.

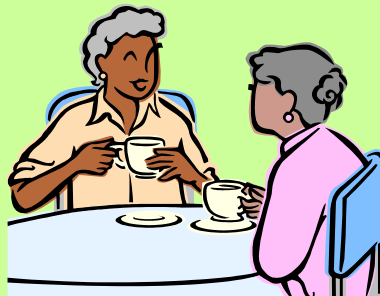
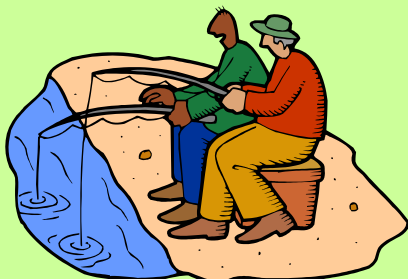
Not only have I been matched with Compeer but I was also a volunteer to a person who has since passed away. I miss Katie, my former match, so much. I never knew I could love someone so much until she became sick. Katie was older and so smart! She introduced me to Lockport architecture by our visiting places and even seeing buildings that were made from stones taken from the canal! Katie had been hurt and really tried to not always think about this but

wasn't afraid to talk about life. Having a Compeer friend and doing the simple things in life brought a lot of joy to Katie after her stroke. When the time came I visited her at the hospital. The essence of Compeer means being a friend. As a volunteer I was able to give back to someone in need. As a consumer Compeer provided me supportive friendship and community activities that I might not be able to afford.

In November of 2009 I was matched with Janet. In this current match we sometimes plan things spontaneously and I am grateful for this. It is nice to know that I can just call someone up and they will listen and be receptive. We are considerate of each others obligations and time limits. Last night I reviewed a list of plans I was trying to put into place. The mental health system can be fractured at times. A future hope is to help individuals peer to peer as this gets back to the principal of giving hope. Compeer also gives me hope. During times of illness it is hard to find and maintain friendships which is why it is wonderful to have volunteers that will bring support to consumers. I hope by telling my story that you understand the significance of the MHA and Compeer to the community. I am so grateful for these programs.

Virginia's note: In December 2001, Maureen received The Community Quarterback award, an initiative by the NFL designed to recognize outstanding volunteers.

"I strongly believe that volunteering is good for the soul!"

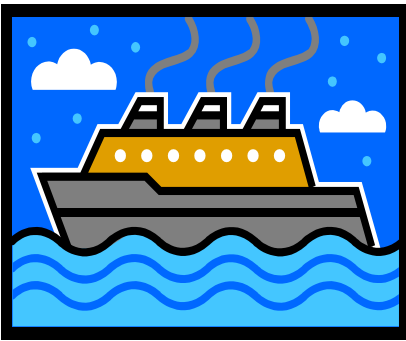


Compeer for Adults

by Virginia Gonzalez
Compeer Adult Coordinator

As summer approaches we are excited about all that is happening! Our spring activities have been well attended. One highlight was our evening at the Niagara Falls Aquarium that included taking in the exhibits, viewing a sea lion show, and enjoying time in the gift shop!

Upcoming Events



Our May activity begins with a wonderful meal before we dig into gardening with Ken Diegelman (Johnny Tomato Seed), our gardening expert! Compeer will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in June with a lunchtime cruise on the Grand Lady! Our guided tour on the Grand Lady will have us sailing the Niagara River, enjoying a scrumptious meal, learning about our area's history and having fun! In July, we will enjoy the live stage musical of "Annie Get your Gun" at the Palace Theater. Before summer draws to an end our annual August picnic will be celebrated at the West Canal Park & Marina in North Tonawanda.

Call for volunteers

We continue to recruit volunteers for our adult program. Volunteers play an important part in the lives of those we serve. Volunteers are matched with someone who lives nearby and

Compeer for Kids

by Darlene Paulson,
Compeer for Kids Coordinator

Program Update

Welcome Spring! We had a great and long winter and now we are ready for the April showers to bring May flowers. Happy Mother's Day to you all who are Mothers, Grandmothers or Special People in someone's life!

I will be going to the Annual "Families Together" New York State Conference in Albany on April 25th and 26th. I hope to bring back valuable information.

We have done a lot of activities, including visiting the Alpaca farm in April and bringing 5 teens to the Environmental Youth Summit in March.

Upcoming Activities

Here are a few activities we have in the works:

- A Pizza Hut tour where children will make their own personal pan pizza
- A trip to a museum



Here's an idea: Let's do a cook book! Send in your recipes. I would also like to work on more Community awareness programs for the children and get more children matched.

We always need volunteers for the kids program. We have opportunities for the kids volunteer, too! If you would like to help out at the garden on Walnut and Saxton here in Lockport, please call us. Our families are increasing in record numbers but our volunteers are few.

I hope you read the monthly Compeer newsletter. All of our events and activities are listed there. Also, because we purchase in advance, we do a count on who plans on attending. Keep this in mind and please RSVP when asked. Thank You and have a happy spring...

Darlene

spends about an hour a week bringing the gift of friendship. If you find that you don't have the time to meet with someone on a weekly basis, a once-a-month match to drive someone to a Compeer activity could be arranged. Spending one hour a week can make a difference in someone's life! Please consider becoming a friend to someone who doesn't know the joy of having a supportive friend. You may contact me at 433-3780 ext. 309 to learn more about our program.

Virginia



We encourage all clients, whether matched or unmatched, to enjoy our monthly activities!

Consumer Activities

by Marg Raduns,
CPAC Coordinator

Consumer Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) Meetings

CPAC (Consumer Planning Advisory Committee) has been growing! Fifty-five people came to the last meeting at the Public Library in Lockport. Jim Caughill from the Dale Association, Don Metzger from Community Missions and Dr. Herb Weis from Horizons all spoke on the subject of PROS (Personalized Recovery Oriented Services). The Dale Association will have their PROS program running July 1st. Jim explained their program and answered questions. Don Metzger

explained the services Community Missions will be offering and also answered questions. Dr. Weis spoke about finding a location in Niagara County and brought a consumer with him that is in the PROS program in Erie County.

CPAC has expanded to another location: Clubhouse Niagara in Niagara Falls. Meetings are alternating between Lockport and Niagara Falls, so the meeting in May will be held at the Lockport Library and the June meeting will be at Clubhouse Niagara. Also in the works already is

the annual CPAC Picnic to be held at Wide Waters in Lockport. More details to follow.



Support Groups

There are many support groups sponsored by the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, such as Depression and Anxiety group, Peer to Peer group for teens, and Grief Share.

We also offer Art for Relaxation, which gives consumers a creative outlet for their feelings, helps some to relax and also allows for socialization. Please call us for more information at (716) 433-3780.

Support Groups

New: Support Groups for New and Expectant Moms

2nd Thursday of every month
6:30pm - 8:00pm
Doris Jones Building
3001 Ninth Street, Niagara Falls, NY

Art for Relaxation

Every Wednesday, 12 noon - 3pm at the Urban Park Towers,
77 Main Street, Lockport, NY.

Depression / Anxiety Support Groups

The Mental Health Association,
36 Pine Street, Lockport. Meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 6pm - 8pm.

St. John's Outreach Center,
168 Chestnut, Lockport. Meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 6pm - 8pm.

DeGraff Hospital, North Tonawanda.
Meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 6pm - 7:30pm

GriefShare

A support group for adults coping with the sudden traumatic death of a loved one. Meetings are held at the following locations:

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, 6th Floor
621-10th Street, Niagara Falls, NY

Meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:00pm-7:30pm

Mental Health Association,
36 Pine Street, Lockport, NY

Meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month from 6:00pm-7:30pm

SMILE Family Support Group - Lockport

These meetings are for parents and caregivers of youth with mental health issues.

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7pm - 8:30 pm.

Meetings are held at The Dale Association, 33 Ontario Street Lockport, NY.

SMILE Family Support Group - Wheatfield

These meetings are for parents and caregivers of youth with mental health issues.

Meets the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 7:00pm - 8:30 pm.

Meetings are held at the Wheatfield Community Center, 2790 Church Rd, North Tonawanda, NY.

Teen Peer Support Group

This group is for adolescents, ages 13-19, who have a mental health concerns.

Lockport - Meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00pm - 8:30pm.

Meetings are held at the Dale Association, 33 Ontario Avenue, Lockport, NY.

Wheatfield- Meets the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 7:00pm - 8:30pm.

Meetings are held at the Wheatfield Senior Center, 2790 Church Road, North Tonawanda, NY.

Community Education

Take time to live your life well

Pamela Szalay,
Coordinator of Community
Education and Referral

People are carrying around a lot of stress these days. The majority of requests for community education and training over the past several months have been related to stress management. Difficult jobs, family challenges, financial strain and illnesses place demands on us, but so do positive events like promotions, marriages and family vacations. Fortunately, there are things we can do to reduce the impact and effect of stress: we can practice relaxation techniques, use various problem solving strategies and improve time-management skills. These are just a few examples. If you are not sure how to start, call the Mental Health Association: we can send you a brochure, you can borrow a self-help book or DVD, or you can request a training for your organization. It is time we all began to take the steps we need to live our lives well!

**May is Mental
Health Month!**

This Mental Health Month, Mental Health America is encouraging Americans to use these tools, which form the Live Your Life Well™ campaign. Live Your Life Well™ is a national public education campaign dedicated to helping people better cope with stress and enhancing their well-being. Stress can take a huge toll on a person's health, mood, productivity and relationships, but specific, evidence-based tools can help counterbalance these effects.

Mental Health America created Live Your Life Well™ to increase the number of people who take action to protect their mental health, both in the face of ongoing stress and in times of great personal challenge.

The heart of the program is the Live Your Life Well™ website—www.liveyourlifewell.org—that provides 10 research-based, straightforward tools and ways to apply them in everyday life. From relaxation techniques to journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, the materials offer a wide range of resources to build resiliency and well-being.

*Excerpt from Mental Health America website,
<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/pressroom/bell/2010spring/MHM.cfm>*

1. **Connect with others**
2. **Stay positive**
3. **Get physically active**
4. **Help others**
5. **Get enough sleep**
6. **Create joy and satisfaction**
7. **Eat well**
8. *Take care of your spirit*
9. **Deal better with hard times**
10. **Get professional help if you need it**



**Don't forget
about our
Resource
Library!**



Come take a look at our self-help library of books and videos! More new books have come in during the last month. Also, read some staff book reviews on our website at www.mhanc.com (select the resource library tab). Have you read a book or seen a movie that helps people understand or deal better with a mental illness? Let us know!

Stress Management for Dummies

by Allen Elkin, Ph.D.

Pam's Pick
Book Review by
Pam Szalay

This book is for anyone who wants a straightforward approach to managing stress. It's not overly technical, but provides enough substance to make strong arguments about why we all need to take steps to help ourselves in this stressful world. In addition to explaining the value of stress management, several types of strategies are offered for getting stress under control. An added plus: not only is the book informative and accurate, Dr. Elkin has a humorous side that makes the reading more enjoyable. For example, chapter 14 is titled, "De-stress at work (and still keep your job)".

This book is available from the MHA resource library and in bookstores everywhere. There is also a CD version which is great for long commutes.

Youth Education



By Cristin Scordato
Program Assistant

Helping kids with self-esteem

Back in February, the Youth Education program was asked to participate in a health fair at Barker Middle School. The students there had the opportunity to walk around to each table and gather information. At MHA's table, we asked the students to fill out a small, 10 question quiz about self esteem. Overall, they did really well. Out of the 113 students we saw that day, 54 students got 8 or more questions right!

The youth education program plans to use this information to create a new self esteem program for students for

the 2010-2011 school year. We would like to focus on the impact the media has on the self esteem of both boys and girls. We are also going to expand our bullying program to include more aspects of cyberbullying and how to deal with incidents of bullying.



**Mental Health Association
In Niagara County, Inc.**

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

Cheryl Blacklock - Executive Director
Howard Morgan - President
Susan Mason - Vice President
Dona Chase - Treasurer
Stacy Passino - Secretary

Board Members

Rhonda Bivins Frances Crosby
Rebecca Thompson Jeffery Peresie
Pamela Garlock

Funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, the Eastern Niagara United Way, the United Way of Niagara, the United Way of the Tonawandas, grants, memberships and voluntary contributions.

Become a Friend of MHA

Membership to MHA Niagara offers the opportunity to improve the services provided to individuals with mental illness, and also to promote mental health education.

To become a member:

- I would like to become a member of the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. I understand membership entitles me to receive the *VOICE* newsletter, use of the resource library and access to all Mental Health Association educational programs and conferences, as well as voting rights at the Annual Meeting.

Membership Rates

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student | \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Worker | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$500.00 |

To make a donation:

- Please accept this donation:
 In memory of In honor of

Person's Name _____

Amount of Donation: \$ _____

For Memberships and Donations:

Please fill out contact information below and mail this form to:

The Mental Health Association
36 Pine St
Lockport NY 14094

Make check payable to: "The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc."

Your Name _____

Address (Street and Apartment No.) _____

City State Zip

Phone _____

Go Green!

**Ask to receive
this newsletter
by email!**



Sending this newsletter by email saves us money and helps us reduce the amount of paper we use. We ask both new and existing members to consider an electronic subscription! Call us, use the form below, or send your request by email to web@mhanc.com

- Please send me the *VOICE* newsletter by email.

Email Address (please write clearly) _____



**Mental Health Association
in Niagara County, Inc.**

36 Pine Street
Lockport NY 14094

Phone: 716-433-3780
Fax: 716-4333847

We're on the web!
www.mhanc.com



Find us on Facebook
and Twitter at
"MHAniagara"

MHA 45 Years!

Volunteer and Paid Opportunities

Throughout the year, MHA in Niagara County provides wonderful programs that enrich the lives of children and adults. As word about our programs spreads, so does the need for volunteers to help us in our mission.

We are currently looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Warm-Line (answering calls)
- Compeer "Be a Friend" program.

Also needed are in-home respite workers, who are paid on a per diem basis.

Please consider volunteering for one of our excellent programs. We offer training and flexibility. For more information on how to get involved, give us a call!

Call MHA at 433-3780

**NON-PROFIT ORG.
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Permit NO. 453**

**"The Many
Faces of Mental
Health"**

A 30-minute program that tells you about our services, our impact in the community and informs you about mental wellness.

LCTV

**Channel 20
Tuesdays at 10 pm**

(see TV listings for additional times)



All programs produced by
MHA in Niagara County,
Inc.