

Summer 2009

Outreach



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By: Millie Tomidy, Executive Director

After a long winter, the warm weather is finally here, and thankfully, it looks like it is going to stay for awhile. Summertime just makes us feel good. For me, summertime brings back vivid memories of my childhood and counting down to the last day of school. When that day finally arrived and the school doors opened after the final bell rang, it meant pure freedom! Freedom from the normal routine of getting up early, going to school all day and then coming home and doing homework. Depending on how tolerant my parents felt on any given day, it meant that maybe I could sleep in a little longer, hang out with my friends, lie in the sun, eat ice cream for dinner or just goof off and do nothing. Looking back, it was a wonderful time in life.

Well, as adults, somehow you may not feel as free in the summer as you did in your youth. It seems the demands of adulthood don't recognize summer as a time of rest and relaxation. The bills still have to be paid, the house and family still need to be cared for and we may get a few days off, but most of us don't have the luxury of having the whole summer off anymore. It becomes important for us then to "find" pockets of time to enjoy summer and all that goes with it. Our mental and physical well being depends on it. Creating a healthy balance between work and leisure can reduce the stress and anxiety that we can experience from the pressures of everyday life. While it may not be in your budget to take a vacation away from home, there are many outdoor activities and community events in the summer that make it possible to have fun and enjoy the summer everyday.

If you are looking for ideas, the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce website has a complete list of local events on their community calendar that you can access at <http://www.geneseeny.com>

We recognize the mind/body connection and the importance of creating a healthy balance to maintain proper mental and physical well being. The summer is here, don't let it pass you by, take time to smell the roses, go to the park, ride a bike, fly a kite, or even eat ice cream for dinner. You have our permission to enjoy all that life has to offer this season and create a healthy balance in your life today.

The MHA wishes each and every one of you a safe, healthy and relaxing summer!

May WAS Mental Health Month!



The Constance E. Miller Award of Excellence was presented to Mary Ella Loos, Peer Advocate, for her endless contributions to the MHA and to the mental health community.

On May 12th, the MHA's Annual Meeting was held at the City Church Generation Center. The Honorable Robert T. Russell, Associate Judge for Buffalo City Court was the guest speaker and presented his insights and benefits of Mental Health Courts. Judge Russell is credited with establishing Buffalo's Mental Health Treatment Court in 2002, which oversees treatment cases involving individuals diagnosed as severely and persistently mentally ill.

On May 6th, the MHA held an open house in which individuals were able to bring their friends and family on a tour and meet the agency staff and board members. Open house is always a well attended event due to the curiosity of what exactly goes on at the MHA. If you missed the open house and would like to see what we do, feel free to give us a call and we can set up a tour.

Trauma Training

The Mental Health Association presented an "Introduction to Trauma" on Friday, May 29, 2009 at the Generation Center.

The training is designed to provide an increased understanding of how past traumatic events impact the lives of many of the individuals we work with.

Topics that were discussed were: The Basics, Diagnostics and Treatment. There were 40 people in attendance representing many different agencies throughout Genesee County.



Legislative Breakfast

We wish to thank the local Genesee County Legislators who attended the April 21, Legislative Breakfast at the MHA. This annual event is an opportunity for the Mental Health Association to discuss mental health issues and concerns at the county, state and national level.



Bob Fleming, Director of the Genesee Regional Independent Living Center, reads each name.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

In 2005, the MHA established a garden to memorialize those members that have passed away. Flowers were purchased and planted in the garden by volunteers. On June 8, 2009 a ceremony was held. Bob Fleming from Independent Living said a prayer, and a balloon was launched for each person who passed away during the years.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE DAY!

The definition of collaboration is to work jointly with others. The Mental Health Association is proud to be part of a network of organizations and agencies that are willing to come together to support efforts to promote a healthy community. Each year, the Mental Health Association sponsors Criminal Justice Day, in conjunction with National Crime Victims Rights Week. This year in April, *Animals in the Criminal Justice System: Use and Abuse* was presented and addressed the issues including signs of animal abuse and domestic violence in the home, animal assisted therapy for crime victims, animal hoarding, legal aspects, and humane education as a preventative tool for at-risk kids. We were fascinated with the accelerant detection program presented by NYS Fire Investigator Jim Ryan and his canine friend Shadow, as well as a search and rescue demonstration by Genesee County Sherriff's Officer Brian Thompson and his canine friend Finn.

The program was a huge success due to the Mental Health Association's partnership with the following: Genesee County Dept. of Probation, YWCA Domestic Violence Program, Genesee Community College, Genesee County District Attorney's Office, Genesee Justice, Genesee County Sheriff's Department, Justice for Children Center, Planned Parenthood, and Rape Crisis of Genesee County, and Dr. Beth Allen/The Village Vet. A special thank you goes out to Ray Chaya of the Best Center at Genesee Community College for making arrangements for us to use the lecture halls and classrooms.

Phil Arkow, Director of the American Humane Association's Link® program was the keynote speaker, followed by a day full of information sessions. Thanks to Kathy Gerbasi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at Niagara County Community College, Richard Gerbasi - V.P. of Operations and Field Service at Lollipop Farm, Sara Munger - CASA Director from Genesee County, Stephanie Lesch - Humane Educator from Erie County SPCA, Stephanie Hall - Adoption Supervisor at Erie County SPCA, Jim Ryan- NYS Fire Investigator and his dog Shadow, Deputy Brian Thompson of the Genesee County Sherriff's Office and his dog Finn, Ethan Thompson and Jim Morasco GCASA/CPS. Over one hundred people were in attendance.

THE WARM LINE

We are excited to Welcome Kendra Moak to our team at the MHA! Kendra has taken the position of Warm Line Coordinator following the departure of Cindy Earl. Cindy is now the Director of Domestic Violence Program at the YWCA -Congratulations Cindy!!

In short time Kendra has been on board. She has already conducted a training session for interested volunteer listeners. The training is designed to provide individuals with an overview of the Warm Line, expectations and procedures as well as proper phone skills to offer callers support and encouragement.

The Warm Line is operated 365 days a year from

5:30-8:30pm, offering support to individuals during a time when most other services are not available.

If you are interested in becoming a future volunteer, please give us a call at 344-2611.

Defensive Driving

In May, the Mental Health Association hosted a defensive driving course for over 40 individuals. This course will be offered again in the fall. Please contact Jeff at 813-0026 for more info.



Wellness Self Management

Congratulations go out to the June 2009 graduates of *Wellness Self Management*.

WSM is a year long program of the NYS Office of Mental Health designed to offer opportunities to improve quality of life. WSM helps individuals learn about; recovery and what it means, how to make the best use of mental and physical health services and how to stay well by decreasing symptoms of a mental health problems. WSM is about building on personal strength, making informed decisions, overcoming negative thinking, and taking action steps.

A new group session will begin in August. If you or someone is interested, please contact Samantha at 344-2611.

Warm Line Chicken BBQ

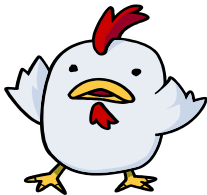
To benefit the Warm Line

Sunday, September 20, 2009
From 11am - SOLD OUT

NEW LOCATION - CLORS

**4169 West Main St
Batavia, NY 14020**

Call the Warm Line at 813-0072
for more information or for
pre-sale tickets.



Genesee Veterans Support Network

presents

VETERANS APPRECIATION "NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK"

Join us on Friday, July 3rd at Dwyer Stadium to honor & celebrate Veterans of all eras and active service men and women.

Game Time: 7:05 pm

(Fireworks immediately following the game!)

FIRST 100 VETERANS ARE FREE!!!! (with military ID)

Please show your appreciation by bringing in an item for the "WELCOME HOME BASKET" project . A joint effort of the Military Pride Network and Genesee Veterans Support Network

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