



Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021

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Walk, Run, Roll, Snowshoe, Ski or Stroll Mental Health Matters Virtual 5K NOVEMBER 26TH through DECEMBER 5TH

The pandemic is still upon us...so, the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health is having our first ever, virtual 5K fundraiser.

Grab friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors. Walk, run, roll, snowshoe, ski, or stroll at home, at work, around your neighborhood, on your favorite path or trail, or in the woods! Participate at your own pace and time it yourself.

Complete your 5K (3.1 miles) anytime between Nov 26th and Dec 5th. Do all at once, or a little each day. What works for you!

- Use a cell phone app to record your time and distance (or keep track of your time and distance the best you can.)
- Upload your pictures to Facebook and tag SCCCMH or email them to us.
- Prizes will be awarded for fastest male, fastest female, most creative outfit, and most scenic route. Random participants will also be drawn to win prizes.

*Donations are not required to participate or to be eligible for prizes!

Suggested Donations:
 Supporter: \$25, Advocate: \$15, Friend: \$10, Children: \$5.

Registration Forms, on-line pr-registration and more information can be found on our website: www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org



CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES

By Peggy Lounsbury

Another year living in a global pandemic. Thank goodness for the vaccine, and the patriots who have chosen to be vaccinated to protect not only themselves and their loved ones, but also to help our community and country get this pandemic under control so we can return to a more normal life.

In addition to my volunteer position with the SCCCMH, I am Director of the Regional Therapy Center of Saratoga Hospital. I have seen firsthand what COVID-19 does not only to the patients that are admitted to the hospital or need rehab for the after effects, but to the relentless stress and fatigue that our healthcare workers and hospital employees endure as a result of the COVID-19 surges.

As a community and a country, we are in this together! Children can now get vaccinated and also boosters are easily available to adults. I can finally see a light at the end of this very long tunnel!

Also, we were not able to have our major fundraising event, the Mental Health Matters Benefit, in 2020 and 2021,

However, in 2022, we will take that first step on the staircase and have scheduled the Mental Health Matters Benefit for April 30, 2022. Mark your calendars!

As an organization, I am pleased to inform you that we have remained financially stable even though we may not have had much income during the pandemic in terms of fund raising or donations. We have monitored and kept to a minimum all expenses and remain a strong viable non-profit organization for the Saratoga County mental health community.

As we are nearing and saying goodbye to 2021, let us all keep in mind the challenges faced by clients of our mental health community and reach into our hearts and feel the faith that will enable us to continue up that challenging staircase to eliminate the stigma that still faces us with regards to mental health issues and the mental health community.

SCCCMH TREASURER'S REPORT

by Robert Lounsbury

“Faith is Taking the First Step Even When You Don't See the Whole Staircase”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

During the past year and a half we have, as a nation, been stricken with a pandemic because of the Corona Virus or Covid-19. As current Treasurer for the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health, I can tell you we needed to take the first step in faith in believing we could maintain our financial stability through this crisis.

Due to the impact of this pandemic, we were unable to provide our regular activities for advocacy and education to support the local mental health community.



Submitted by Melodie Masterson

Donate your Birthday on Facebook to Benefit SCCCMH

Using Facebook's fundraising tool, you can now donate your birthday to a SCCCMH. In order to donate your birthday, simply click on the fundraising tab on your News Feed. From there, you can select SCCCMH as the charity you want to give to and set your fundraising goal as well as your fundraiser's end date. You can invite your friends directly to the fundraiser, so they can help you celebrate your birthday by helping the mental health community in Saratoga.

STOP THE SPREAD

Watch for Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are concerning or severe, Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

COVID-19 Resources – Continued...

NY State Covid-19 Hotline – (888) 364-3065
(For questions related to COVID-19)

NY State Project Hope – Emotional Support Helpline to help manage and cope with changes brought on by COVID-19: (844) 863-9314

Saratoga County COVID-19 Resources:
<https://www.saratogacountyny.gov/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Resources-for-Saratoga-County-4.2.pdf>

VACCINES are FREE. Locally, drug stores (CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, and others offer COVID testing and vaccines usually by appointment via their websites or cell phone apps.

JOIN NOW!

Consumers, family and friends, mental health professionals and others, please join the SCCCMH now for the new year. As a member of SCCCMH, you will get our newsletter, and more important, you will help SCCCMH carry-out our mission to be the voice of people living with mental illness in Saratoga County. The more members we have, the more power we have to influence local and state government.

Also, consider a charitable gift to SCCCMH. You can honor or memorize someone and help make a difference in the mental health community, too.

Give power and your support to the mental health community...join today!

SCCCMH Newsletter is the official publication of the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health,
P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866
www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org

The views expressed in this newsletter represent the opinions of the authors and do not represent the official position or opinions of the SCCCMH unless specifically stated.

The SCCCMH Board of Trustees reserves the right to decide the content of the newsletter, and reserves the right to review, revise, shorten or deny articles for publication. Articles submitted for publication consideration should not be longer than 250 words unless the author is specifically invited to do so. Also, submitting the copy as a Microsoft Word document or typed within the body of an e-mail message is preferred. Send articles to the Newsletter Editor's e-mail address. Articles not submitted electronically can be mailed to the address above.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

“Look How Far You’ve Come”

Dedicated to my Uncle Jim

By Amanda Blodgett

At 21, the second time I had a “break.” It was kind of like what people call a “break down.” My psychiatrist read my diagnosis from the psych evaluation, I thought, “My God this is a major mental illness and it’s a death sentence.” That was 2001. The next year in 2002, my parents and I moved to Upstate New York from Chicago. My dad’s family is from here, my mom’s family is from Chicago. Anyway, I got to know Dad’s side of the family better. Actually, when we first moved here, we moved into an apartment right across the street from my dad’s brother, my Uncle Jim. Before my favorite memory of him, was him taking the train at Christmas to visit and I was three. Also, there was long conversations on long distance phone calls. In my twenties were rough.

In those early stages, I definitely didn’t have many coping skills. I grew closer to my uncle. I was actually isolating only spending time with my parents and my uncle. He was fun, though, we both like to eat and watch animated movies! When you have an uncle that will laugh, at the same time as the children in the theater, watching kids’ movies doesn’t seem so embarrassing. Back in my 20s, when I would get episodes of my mental illness, I would cry and pull my hair out. The coping skills I had were not healthy. When my uncle would see this, he was unable to sleep at night worrying about me. Eventually, he came to find them as my “normal.”

Now fast forward to my 40s. My Uncle
(Continued, The View, page 6)

Mental Health First Aide Training

MHANYS’ is providing *free* Mental Health First Aid training to individuals who work with or support the **General Public** within Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. Mental Health First Aid is often referred to as CPR for the mind; it is an evidence-based training that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental illness along with a 3-year certification from the National Council for Behavioral Health.

You are more likely to encounter someone — friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, or member of the community — in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. **Mental Health First Aid teaches a 5-step action plan** to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care. Anyone can take the 8-hour Mental Health First Aid course — first responders, students, teachers, leaders of faith communities, human resources professionals, and caring citizens.

For more information, visit the MHANYS website:
<https://mhanys.org/products/mhfa/>

Become a part of the Voice of Saratoga County Mental Health Community.

Join SCCCMH Today!

SCCCMH Grants Available Now

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health awards monetary grants to not-for-profit organizations that provide services or assistance to people living with mental illness in Saratoga County. Awards are generally up to one thousand dollars and are distributed three times a year. Contact Peggy Lounsbury or visit our website for more information and download an application.

Community Outreach Court

In the fall of 2020, the Saratoga Springs Mayor's Office, City Court Judge, Francine Vero, and RISE Housing and Support Services worked together to design a Community Outreach Court (formally known as Homeless Court) which assists individuals who are experiencing homelessness and charged with non-violent offenses.

Since its inception, 38 individuals that have received services through the Community Outreach Court, 17 individuals are Adjourned in Contemplation of Dismissal (ACOD) through the Community Outreach Court which means the court has defer the disposition of each of these individuals' cases, with the potential that the individuals' charges will be dismissed if the individuals do not engage in additional acts prohibited by the court. To date, 2 of these individuals have completed (graduated) ACOD by remaining arrest free for 6 months, while the rest continue to work with the RISE Community Outreach Court Coordinators to complete ACOD.

The Community Outreach Court was designed in response to the concern by Saratoga Springs City Court officials of an increasing pattern of individuals experiencing street-homelessness and frequently failing to appear in Court or re-offending shortly after being convicted. City Police echo the Court's concerns. The pattern results in a backlog of warrants, as well as a significant amount of law enforcement time and resources spent policing individuals experiencing street-homelessness for minor, yet disruptive, offenses.

RISE Community Outreach Court Coordinators are present to work with participants outside of the courtroom – representing a single, and familiar point of contact for those appearing before the Homeless Court and providing an opportunity to develop a trusting relationship.

(Continued, Court, pg. 6)

Help SCCCMH Increase Awareness: "Like" our Facebook Page!

Currently the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health Facebook page has only 41 Likes. Please share with your friends and urge them to check-out our Facebook, and then then "Like" our page, and "Share" with your Facebook Friends

Thank you for your support! We continue to need your support to help us in our advocacy efforts toward improving Mental Health Services in our county, remove the stigma associated with those who live with Mental Health issues. We provide grant monies to those agencies that want to start up a new service or initiative that improves the lives of those they serve in Saratoga County! Please share our Facebook page to spread the news!



THE ART OF HOUSING BLOG

RISE Housing and Support Services "The Art of Housing" Blog contains a wealth of information -- information on housing for people experiencing life challenges, personal and recovery stories, empowerment, advocacy, and much more.

Each section of the blog contains a collection of articles and stories that uplift, educate, and most importantly, celebrate the individuals who participate in the services RISE provides. For example, the "Art as Therapy" section highlighting how art can be a therapeutic practice as well as containing submissions of poems, crafts, and woodworking from participants in RISE programs. The "Personal and Recovery Stories" are testimonials from individuals who have overcome mental health or substance use concerns, who are now living their best lives. And the "Spotlight on RISE Programs" and "Staff Recognitions" provides in-depth information about RISE programs, as well as recognizing the hard work and dedication of

(Continued, Blog, Pg.6)

The View, Continued from page 4...

Jim really is a little kid and I have loads of coping techniques. Today I live on my own and when I get an "episode" the worst that will occur is that I end up calling the Rise counselor on call. Most of the time, my go to is deep breathing. However, I've been known to draw a warm bath with classical music and aroma therapy bath essentials.

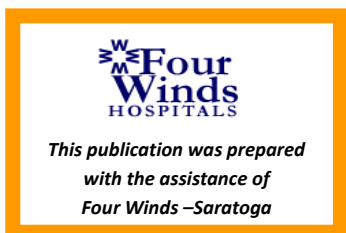
My Uncle Jim suffers from Parkinson's and the piece that affects him the most is dementia. As he became increasingly worse, my uncle chose me to be his health care proxy. Over twenty years ago, if you told me the man that couldn't sleep because I was "freaking out" from my illness, would choose me to accept phone calls at 4 a.m. to say he was being transported to the hospital, I would not think it possible.

There are many people to thank for me becoming more healthy, but my Uncle Jim tops the list with his faith and love in me both in my 20s and now! And when I talk about helping my uncle, in his final stages of life, my therapist says I talk about it with love!

**Share Mental Health news
and Views**

Please consider sharing your opinions and news of community efforts that address mental health issues in our local area!

We want to invite more readers to contribute to our newsletter, so we can continue to enrich, advocate, and educate all that happen to pick up a copy! Help us reach out and share what really matters to you!



Court, Continued from page 5...

The Community Outreach Court Coordinators connect individuals to services with the objective of preventing future cases.

Individuals who agree to participate are provided with individually tailored, case management services and connected to human service providers. This will assist a person with a mental health diagnosis or substance use disorder who is also experiencing street-homelessness from continuing the cycle of street, to jail, and back into the courts.

Additionally, The RISE Community Outreach Court Coordinators have made over 100 referrals for these individuals for housing assistance, mental health and/or addictions services, and other community-based services such as case management, legal aid, food, and financial assistance.

Of the 38 individuals who have agreed to work with the RISE Community Outreach Court Coordinators:

- 31 have remained in compliance with their court orders.
- 29 have appeared at all their court dates.
- 27 have remained arrest and conviction free.
- 25 have had no new contact with the police.
- 22 have refrained from substance use.
- 7 have been discharged from the court.
- 2 have graduated from Adjudicated in Contemplation of Dismissal (ACOD).

Blog, Continued from page 5...

the individuals who work in them. Additional areas of the blog focuses on advocacy- which recognizes that facilitating self-advocacy is the ultimate aim - health, wellness, and community partners - the organizations and businesses who give generously to our community and contribute to the economic and cultural richness of our area.

"The Art of Housing" Blog can be found at: www.riseservices.org/the-art-of-housing-a-blog/



For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury
E-mail: plounsbury@saratogacare.org
Phone: 518-583-8371

Or visit our website: www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org
and check out our **Facebook Page!**

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

SCCCMH Mission: The SCCCMH is a non-profit, charitable organization [501(c)3] whose mission it is to:

Program Development and Enrichment: Award grants of approximately \$1000 to agencies and programs in Saratoga County that provide services to people with mental illness or have mental and emotional needs so they can enrich existing programs or expand services.

Education: Provide affordable educational opportunities for mental health professionals and consumers of mental health services.

Advocacy: Advocate for improved mental health care and services by lobbying government and elected officials.

Increase Awareness: Increase public awareness of the needs of individuals with mental illness. For example, increase access to public transportation, decrease stigmas or stereotypes.

Member Benefits: Membership fees support the development of mental health services in Saratoga County through grants, educational opportunities, and lobbying, as well as the publication of the biannual SCCCMH Newsletter.

More Members. More Power. More Benefits.

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

New Member Membership Renewal Remove my information from the SCCCMH mailing list

First Name _____ Last _____ Prefix/Suffix: _____

Address Home Work: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number(s): Home _____ Work _____

If you want to receive the newsletter and other notices from the SCCCMH via e-mail, please provide your e-mail address:

If you are a provider of mental health services and would like to be included in the Saratoga County Network for Mental Health Professionals and Advocates (SCN-MHPA), then check here:

If you would like to participate in a mental health consumer workshop, then check here:

Membership fee is based on a “pay what you will” basis (Check One):

- I want to be a member, but I am unable provide financial support.
- I want to be a member. I will consider a contribution at a later date.
- I want to be a member, enclosed is my tax deductible donation of: \$10 \$25 \$35 Other: _____

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO: SCCCMH. Do not send cash in the mail.

MAIL TO: SCCCMH, P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

MAKE SURE THE VOICE OF THE SARATOGA COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY IS HEARD.....JOIN SCCCMH TODAY!!



www.scccmh-saratoga.org

For more information about
the SCCCMH, contact
Peggy Lounsbury,
Chairperson,
at 518-583-8371

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health (SCCCMH) is a non-profit, charitable organization that **distributes grant money** to agencies and programs in Saratoga County so they can enrich existing programs or expand services for people with mental illness. The SCCCMH also provides affordable **educational opportunities** for professionals and consumers, **advocates** for improved mental health care and services; and **increases public awareness** of the needs of people living with mental illness.

Saratoga County Citizens
Committee for Mental Health

P.O. Box 820

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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