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Mental Health Matters Benefit

April 18, 2026

Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge

The SCCCMH Citizen of the Year



Sybil Newell, CEO RISE Housing and Support Services

Sybil Newell is the Chief Executive Officer of RISE Housing and Support Services in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she leads a community-based organization dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance use challenges. A longtime nonprofit leader, Sybil began her career in the human services field in 2000. Her early work included providing direct mental health support at Four Winds Hospital, spending nearly a decade providing frontline services at Unity House in Troy, and then working at the NYS Department of Health before joining what is now RISE, where she stepped into executive leadership in 2016.

Continued on Page 2

CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES

By Peggy Lounsbury



Robert & Peggy Lounsbury

As we welcome spring, we continue our commitment to advancing accessible, compassionate mental health care across Saratoga County while promoting understanding and reducing stigma.

This season, we are proud to advocate on behalf of our community by presenting our 2026 legislative agenda to local representatives, ensuring mental health remains a priority in policy discussions. We remain encouraged by the ongoing collaboration with community partners who share our mission and vision. These partnerships are essential to expanding access and improving outcomes for those we serve.

We also look forward to the Mental Health Matters Benefit 2026, an important opportunity to raise awareness and support local programs. We hope you will join us.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to build a stronger, healthier community.

Citizen of the year Continued from Page 1

Over the course of her tenure, Sybil has played a pivotal role in expanding RISE's programs, strengthening community partnerships, and advocating for innovative housing solutions across Saratoga County. As Executive Director, she oversees organizational strategy, program development, fundraising, and public engagement, helping the agency serve hundreds of individuals annually through supportive housing and care management services. Her leadership reflects a deep commitment to client-centered care and community impact, shaped by years of hands-on experience within the organization and the broader human services sector.



Sybil received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Skidmore College, and her master's in Community Psychology from Sage Graduate School. Outside of her professional work, Sybil values time with her family and remains deeply connected to the Saratoga community she serves. Since coming to Saratoga Springs for college, she has fallen in love with the area and has made it her home for the past 32 years. She is known for her thoughtful leadership style, her dedication to uplifting others, and her belief that stable housing is the foundation upon which individuals and families can rebuild their lives.

A VIEW FROM HERE

Reflection

by Amanda Blodgett



Amanda Blodgett

I remember when I first heard of the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health. It was in the early 2000s, when I was a patient at the “Friendship House,” which would later evolve into the much larger program, Reflections PROS. During a group session, the therapist asked when we were younger, what we wanted to be when we grew up. She said that while most people change their minds, there’s usually a reason behind what we chose as children.



Amanda with Leslie Ives and Tracey Fisch

Well, I wanted to be President of the US. Next the therapist asked us why. I said because I wanted to make a difference. And SCCCMH was brought up because one of its missions is to bring attention to local leaders, concerns of the mental health community.

It would be another two years before I joined the board. I still love Lobby Day, even though it looks a bit different now than when I first started.



Amanda Advocating for Mental Health

Back then, SCCCMH would travel together to Albany to meet with politicians’ aides. Today, instead of taking a bus to the Capitol, the group meets directly with local leaders in their offices. I will continue to take part in this effort, because you don’t need to be on the board to participate.

I also look forward to SCCCMH’s fundraisers—they offer delicious food, good company, the chance to honor deserving members of the mental health community, and a fun way to support a meaningful cause.

A View from Here Continued from Page 3

Serving as secretary for 16 of my 18 years on the board gave me a deeper understanding of how meetings work. They can sometimes feel confusing, but the board has always been incredibly supportive, helping me learn what should be included in the minutes and what could be left out. I had hoped to train the next secretary, but no one has stepped forward yet. If you're interested, SCCCMH has a wonderful board that will support you in learning the ins and outs of the role.



Amanda with Peggy and Bob Lounsbury

The board members are people I truly admire. There have been many over the years, and I feel a little sad that I can't mention everyone here. But if I didn't name you and you're reading this, please know that you touched my heart in some way. Every member has contributed to shaping my understanding of what the board can do—and even who I am—as we work to support our community.



Amanda and Chrissy Hechemy

I do want to recognize a few individuals. Collette Fox was the only person who knew me before I joined the board. She saw something in me and believed I would be a good addition. Christine Hechemy is a kindred spirit—insightful, capable, and someone I can easily see stepping into a larger leadership role.



Collette Fox

Melodie Masterson is driven, with a sharp attention to detail; she keeps us all on track and steps in wherever needed. Our newest members, Steve Bault and Meghan Bowish, have shown up with dedication and commitment. And finally, our longest-serving current member and fearless leader, Peggy Lounsbury—she has a deeply compassionate heart for the mental health community and will always be a lifelong friend.

It has been an incredible honor to serve on this board for such a significant part of my life. I will continue as a member at large. If you believe in supporting the mental health community, I encourage you to take a few minutes to fill out the form to become a member at large—you don't have to serve on the board to make a difference. You'll stay informed about what's happening in your local area and be part of something meaningful.

Thank you—and thank you to the SCCCMH board.

I am enough.

Golden Club at Unlimited Potential

By Chrissy Hechemy



Chrissy Hechemy

The Golden Club is a social club offered by Unlimited Potential, part of the Northern Rivers Family of Services. Unlimited Potential is located at 36 Cady Hill Blvd. in Saratoga Springs. There are three requirements for joining the Golden Club: individuals must be residents of Saratoga County, be 50 years of age or older, and have a diagnosed mental health condition.

Kimberly Martin, Golden Club Coordinator, along with Steve, a client worker, and myself, also a client worker, facilitate the club. The goal of the Golden Club is to promote socialization and fun through a variety of social, physical, and educational activities. We like to start the day on a positive note by offering coffee, tea, or hot chocolate along with snacks, which members truly appreciate.

Members enjoy a range of activities, including puzzles and games. At lunchtime, they often play Yahtzee and other card games. On Mondays, Kimberly leads a cooking class, where members enjoy volunteering to help prepare meals.

At the same time, Steve hosts trivia for those not participating in cooking. Everyone looks forward to enjoying the food together afterward.

On Tuesdays and most Thursdays, members participate in crafts. Their creativity is always impressive, and Kimberly and I enjoy supporting them as they bring their ideas to life. Throughout the week, members also take part in exercise sessions that I lead.

Fridays offer the opportunity for community outings, which are very popular. When an outing isn't scheduled, members enjoy watching a movie with popcorn.

Each Monday through Thursday, the day wraps up with bingo after lunch. Members eagerly anticipate this time, especially the chance to win prizes. Winners receive candy, and those who achieve a "coverall" can choose a special item from the prize bucket.

For more information or to inquire about joining, please contact: Kimberly Martin, Golden Club Coordinator at 518-982-2164

Using Facebook's fundraising tool, you can donate your birthday to a SCCCMH



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.

Advocating for Mental Health



SCCCMH Board Members sharing the legislative Agenda with Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh

The 2026 Legislative Agenda calls for immediate action to strengthen New York’s mental health system through strategic investment in workforce stability, early intervention, and crisis response. A 2.7% funding increase for community-based, not-for-profit human services in the FY 2026–2027 state budget is essential, as the proposed 1.7% falls short of addressing critical staffing shortages fueled by demanding work and inadequate wages.

Support for Bill S.3627-A will equip school personnel with mental health response training, addressing educator burnout and promoting safer, more supportive learning environments. Early identification and intervention are key to improving long-term outcomes for young people and reducing strain on the broader system.

Support for Bill A.4108 will secure sustainable funding for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, ensuring New Yorkers have access to a complete crisis system—someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere safe to go. This investment is vital to reducing emergency room visits, law enforcement involvement, and long-term system costs.

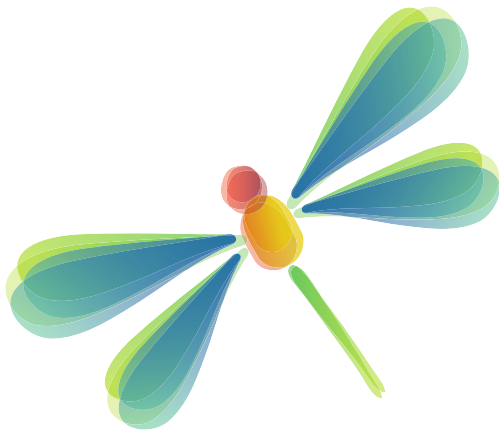
In Saratoga County, these needs are especially urgent. Gaps in supportive housing and a shortage of mental health professionals—particularly in crisis and residential services—continue to limit access to care. Without decisive investment, these challenges will persist. With it, we can build a system that delivers timely, effective, and compassionate care for all, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Submit Mental Health Articles to the Newsletter

Consider submitting an article for the “View From Here” column. This is a powerful way to share your experience as a consumer, family member, professional, or advocate.

Also, appreciated are mental health-related news and stories. Articles can be around 150 to 250 words. Submit your articles via e-mail to info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org.

Spring is Here!



Help improve your mental health by getting outside and enjoying nature

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.

Mental Health First Aid Training

MHANY provides 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 is a 5-step action plan that offers 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/>



MHANYS
Mental Health Association
in New York State



JOIN SCCCMH!

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

Please consider a charitable gift to SCCCMH. You can honor or memorialize someone while making a difference in the mental health community.



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

**Help SCCCMH Increase Awareness:
Follow our Facebook Page!**

Please share the SCCCMH Facebook Page with your family and friends and ask them to follow our page!



**Thank You for
Your Support!**

We need the continued support of people like you to help in our advocacy efforts toward improving Mental Health Services in our county and to remove the stigma associated with those who live with Mental Health issues. We provide grant money to agencies that want to start up services or initiatives that improves the lives of those they serve in Saratoga County! Please follow and share our Facebook page to spread the news!

The 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 SCCCMH unless specifically stated.

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



Saturday, April 18, 2026

Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge

6:00 – 10:00 pm (Reservations Required)

Honoring Citizen of the Year:

Sybil Newell, CEO RISE Housing and Support Services

Buffet Stations – 6 to 7:30 pm, Cash Bar 6 to 10 pm, Program 7:30 to 8 pm, Photobooth 6 to 10 pm, Dancing 8 to 10 pm, Raffle Drawing & Live Auction 8 pm
DJ Music Entertainment, 6 to 10 pm, provided by Michael Rafferty

Basic Reservation is \$55.00 per person

Discounted Reservation is \$25.00 per person (if needed)

Consider one of these special reservations to help SCCCMH reach our goal:

Honorary Committee: \$100.00 per person

Advocate: \$75.00 per person

Value of goods and services \$35.00 The SCCCMH is a 501(c)3 charity, contributions are tax deductible.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Number of Persons Attending: _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I am unable to attend but enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

**RSVP by April 18, 2025, registering online at scccmh-saratoga.org
or by sending reservations and check payable to:
SCCCMH, PO Box 820, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.**

**For questions or more info,
Call SCCCMH Chairperson, Peggy Lounsbury, at 518-583-8371 or
e-mail: info@SCCCMH-Saratoga.org**



For more information, contact:
 Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury
 Phone: 518-583-8371 Email: PLounsbury@saratogahospital.org
 Or visit our website: SCCCMH-Saratoga.org and check out our Facebook Page!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

Revolving Membership for one year from the date you join SCCCMH

SCCCMH Mission: 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 SCCCMH mailing

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Prefix/Suffix: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

Email 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. Please 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!!