



## Mission Statement

The Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc.'s mission is to promote mental health in Westchester County, New York, through advocacy, community education and direct services.

# New Treatment Option for Young Adults Experiencing Psychosis

*One-year pilot project explores effects of adding social network meetings to OnTrackNY @ MHA*

OnTrackNY @ MHA was recently chosen for an exciting research initiative exploring the effects of a treatment model for young adults experiencing their first episode of psychosis. As part of a one-year grant from the Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health Care, this pilot project will investigate the outcomes of adding the option of social network meetings with family and close friends to OnTrackNY @ MHA's menu of services.

Introduced at MHA in 2014, OnTrackNY is an innovative early intervention service that helps people ages 16 to 30 who have had unusual thoughts and behaviors or who have started hearing or seeing things others do not. Designed to help individuals get back "on track" with their lives, OnTrackNY offers clinical and support services, substance use treatment, social skills training, family and peer support, and education and employment services. MHA is the only agency in Westchester offering OnTrackNY, which has additional program locations throughout New York State.

This one-year pilot project introduces social network meetings, which bring together the young adult receiving OnTrackNY services and members of his or her social circle. Meetings are facilitated by two staff members, who assist the group in creating specific individualized treatment plans and help them learn how to collectively anticipate and negotiate crises if they occur.

*continued on page 2*



## Table of Contents

- New Treatment Option* .....1
- CEO Letter* .....2
- Color Run* .....2
- Get On Your Mat!* .....3
- Book Reading* .....3
- Chief Planning Officer* .....4
- MHA In Our Community* .....4
- Living Proof* .....4
- Mental Health Month* .....5
- New Board Members* .....6

# NEWS

# A Letter from the CEO

Dear friends,



*As the field of behavioral healthcare continues to rapidly evolve, so must we. We are continually making great strides in positioning MHA as the agency of the future, and our unwavering vision and commitment to person-centered and recovery-oriented care has helped us to emerge as a leader in the ever-changing landscape of healthcare in New York State.*

*Developing thoughtful solutions to some of the most pressing changes—including navigating new reimbursement systems for the shift to value based payments—has kept us quite busy.*

*One of the primary goals of New York's healthcare reform—and ours—is to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, which can be costly and disruptive. In a careful examination of our work, it quickly became apparent that physical and mental health can have significant impacts on each other, and that care cannot be delivered in a silo. Integrated care is a primary component in achieving this goal.*

*To that end, our growing team of Care Managers works closely with clients in order to improve health outcomes by coordinating access to services such as chronic disease management and substance use disorder resources. We have also expanded our clinical team to include nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, and—most recently—a Medical Director. With these teams in place, we are able to provide health screenings and referrals to primary care physicians and specialists, as well as offer support groups related to common issues like smoking cessation.*

*Our focus on taking care of the whole person has spread to every part of our agency, including to our own employees. Stemming from our ongoing trauma-informed care transformation, a committee of staff members of all levels meet regularly to explore how MHA can best encourage and support wellness among staff—both in times of crisis and on a daily basis.*

*Our commitment to whole health will be on display on Wednesday, June 20th as we roll out hundreds of yoga mats in downtown White Plains at our annual outdoor mega-yoga event. An important resource in one's wellness toolbox, yoga can help reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety and more. I hope to see you at this empowering and invigorating event, which highlights the intersection of physical and mental health while raising awareness and support for MHA.*

*Your commitment is vital to our success, and your belief in the important work we do each day fuels us as we continue to transform and improve our behavioral health programs and services. On behalf of our Board of Directors, MHA staff and our clients, thank you for your ongoing generosity and partnership.*

Warmly,  
  
Charlotte Östman, LCSW-R



## New Treatment Option for Young Adults Experiencing Psychosis

*Continued from page 1*

Each member of the network participates fully, expressing their thoughts and feelings while creating opportunities to understand each other's experiences and perspectives. This dialogue is the core element of social network meetings. Reaching consensus is not the goal; instead, the focus is on facilitating dialogue and understanding among participants.

By increasing family engagement, social network meetings can reduce family stress and anxiety, as well as the urgency of a crisis situation. A greater tolerance for uncertainty allows the network to consider a range of crisis responses, which may eliminate unnecessary emergency services while promoting communications.

Social network meetings are a central element of the Need-Adapted Treatment Model (NATM) for people experiencing their first episode of psychosis. Similar models have evolved from NATM and have been shown to enhance effective treatment, leading to some of the best outcomes.<sup>1</sup> By enhancing OnTrackNY with the option of social network meetings, we aim to replicate improved treatment and recovery outcomes.

The project was awarded an "Expanding the Science and Practice of Recovery-Based Mental Health Care & Supports" grant, funded by an individual with lived experience of the mental health system. When asked about the motivation and hope for their gift, the funder stated, "I meet a lot of people who feel shamed and angry and traumatized by their experience with the mental health system. This was certainly my personal experience. We are hoping these grants will help better care gain traction, develop an evidence base, and become widely available and inspire others in the philanthropic world to join in and help change the system."

<sup>1</sup> *Seikkula, J., Alakare, B., & Aaltonen, J. (2011). The comprehensive open-dialogue approach in Western Lapland: II. Long-term stability of acute psychosis outcomes in advanced community care. Psychosis, 3(3), 192-204.*

## Save the Date: Manhattanville College 5K Color Run to Benefit MHA

**Sunday, April 29, 2018 at 12:30 pm**  
**\$10 pre-registration, \$15 day of race**

Join us for a 5K in which runners and walkers are showered with colored powder at points along the course. The result is an energetic, cheerful and, yes, slightly messy event for the whole family! All proceeds benefit MHA.

**At the Manhattanville Campus, for more information visit [www.mhawestchester.org](http://www.mhawestchester.org)!**



# Your Presence Makes a Difference!

Join Us At Our Upcoming Events



**Wednesday,  
June 20, 2018  
at 5:30 pm**

**\$30, \$15 for little yogis  
12 and under**

**Court Street between Main  
Street & Martine Avenue**

**Visit [www.mhawestchester.org](http://www.mhawestchester.org)  
to register today!**

## Get On Your Mat For Mental Health Returns to White Plains This Summer!

Tell the world you believe **#MentalHealthMatters** on Wednesday, June 20th as our annual, outdoor mega-yoga event returns to downtown White Plains!

Get On Your Mat For Mental Health is an empowering and energetic event dedicated to celebrating whole health, spreading awareness for mental health issues, and raising funds to support The Mental Health Association of Westchester's community-based behavioral health programs and services.

Get on your mat alongside hundreds of others who are passionate about wellness, and send a strong message to our community: that you believe **#MentalHealthMatters**. Together, our collective physical movements are more than just synchronized stretches and poses—they are part of a true movement to end the stigma that so often surrounds behavioral health issues.

Engaging in meaningful conversations about mental health makes it easier for others to speak up and seek help. Your voice makes a difference!

Leading us through a gentle hour-long flow suitable for all levels will be Sarah Platt-Finger, Deepak Chopra's private yoga teacher and co-founder of ISTHA Yoga. Sarah teaches trainings, workshops and retreats internationally with her husband, Yoga Master Alan Finger. Prior to the yoga class, enjoy live music and our yoga marketplace, where you'll have the chance to meet sponsors and community partners.

**Register now—  
we need you to show the world  
you believe **#MentalHealthMatters!****

## Book Reading Shines a Light on Mental Health and Motherhood

Please join us for a riveting evening on Wednesday, April 11 as we welcome Pound Ridge author Nyna Giles and co-author Eve Claxton for an exclusive Westchester reading of their poignant and unflinching portrait of Nyna's mother Carolyn, whose glamorous life was sidelined by mental health issues.

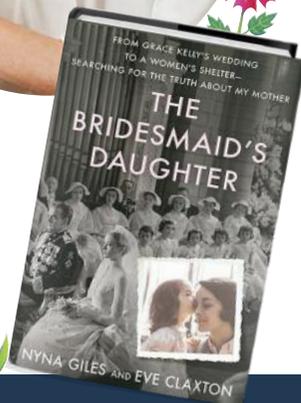
***The Bridesmaid's Daughter: From Grace Kelly's Wedding to a Women's Shelter—Searching for the Truth About My Mother*** is a riveting investigation to unearth the lost pieces of Carolyn's remarkable life story.

At 29 years old, Nyna was in line at the supermarket when she saw the tabloid headline: "Former Bridesmaid of Princess Grace Lives in Homeless Shelter." Nyna was stunned: her family's private ordeal

was front page news. The woman on the cover was her mother Carolyn, who had arrived in New York in 1947 to launch a modeling career and roomed at the legendary Barbizon Hotel for Women, where she'd met the young Grace Kelly. The two had become fast

friends, and Nyna had seen the photos of her mother at Grace's wedding, wearing the bridesmaid gown that had hung in her mother's closet for years. But how had the seemingly confident, glamorous woman in those pictures become the mother she knew growing up—the mother who told her she was too ill to go to school and kept her isolated at home?

The book launch reading includes a Q&A, a book signing and refreshments. This special event—a rare occurrence to hear from both authors in person—raises awareness for mental health issues and benefits MHA.



**Wednesday,  
April 11, 2018  
at 7:00 pm**

**\$25**

**The Walker Center for the Arts  
at the Harvey School**

**Visit [www.mhawestchester.org](http://www.mhawestchester.org)  
to buy your tickets today!**

**Visit us at [www.mhawestchester.org](http://www.mhawestchester.org)**

## Dr. Barbara Bernstein Named Chief Planning Officer

MHA is pleased to announce the appointment of Barbara Bernstein, PhD, MPH to the role of Chief Planning Officer (CPO). Dr. Bernstein has been a long-time member of the MHA family, providing valued expertise and leadership of agency-wide initiatives, initiation of innovative practices, and development of the critical area of staff and professional development.

Among our agency-wide change initiatives, Dr. Bernstein co-led a Person-Centered Care Transformation and is currently co-leading a transformation to the delivery of Trauma Informed Care across services. Addressing suicide risk and prevention in a multitude of ways, Dr. Bernstein initiated the integration of emerging suicide-specific protocols into routine practice, championed the creation of a position offering suicide-specific bereavement support, and has been a driving force behind MHA's Community Conversation series that addresses suicide risk and prevention through a variety of lenses. Currently, she co-leads an agency wide approach toward implementing the "Zero Suicide" model—a model embraced by the New York State Office of Mental Health.

"Dr. Bernstein will be a tremendous resource to our leadership team during this time of rapid change in health care delivery," said MHA CEO Charlotte Östman, LCSW-R. "She brings a wealth of knowledge, clinical expertise, meaningful external relationships and sincere passion for our work."



## MHA In Our Community

We are proud to be Westchester's go-to resource for mental health advocacy and community education. In the past year, our passionate and dedicated staff have presented on a variety of topics, including trauma informed care, understanding psychosis, person-centered practices, the impact of substance use disorders and student mental health. We have presented to audiences of community members, educators, law enforcement, Court officials, and more. Our staff also serve on numerous local and state-wide task forces and advisory groups.

Throughout the year, we respond to community needs during times of crisis. Our staff work closely with the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health and area schools to educate, inform and advocate, including after a loss to suicide. From prevention and intervention trainings to postvention presentations, MHA remains a resource for information, guidance and support.

Do you have some thoughts about how MHA can assist your community? Please email us at [development@mhawestchester.org](mailto:development@mhawestchester.org)—we'd love to hear from you!

## Living Proof: Evening of Multi-Arts Performance Dedicated to Mental Health and the Power of Music

On Saturday, March 10, MHA joined forces with The Lagond Music School and Music and Miles: Changing Minds for a powerful, one-night-only performance featuring artists and musicians sharing their personal stories of resilience and how mental health has shaped their lives.

Held at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center, Living Proof raised money to support MHA services and the Miles Applebaum Music Scholarship Fund at The Lagond Music School. Established to honor and remember Miles Applebaum—a former Lagond student and an immensely talented young man who died by suicide at the age of 21 in 2014—the Scholarship Fund was created to carry on Miles' dream of providing aspiring musicians with the opportunity to study music at Lagond, a nonprofit musical haven for students of all ages.

"The essence of the evening was resilience," said Shari Applebaum, Miles' mother and a Suicide Bereavement Specialist at MHA. "Each and every performer and artist touched a chord

with someone in the audience who experienced having or knowing someone with mental health challenges or a physical illness."

Audience members were delighted by the variety of talent showcased during the evening and, more importantly, inspired by the stories that were courageously shared on stage. Event attendees walked away with a strong reminder of the power of—and need for—a collective voice in order to normalize the mental health conversation each and every day.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this inspiring evening and for helping us to shine a spotlight on the importance of speaking openly about mental health issues!

**Top Left: Bruce Figler, Rebecca Haviland, Chris Rodriguez**

**Top Right: Scholarship Winners Liam Kharem, Audrey Pretnar**

**Middle Left: Rosanne Lana, Charlotte Östman, Shari Applebaum**

**Middle Right: Bruce Williams**  
**Bottom: Performers**



# May is Mental Health Month!

*Your support has a tremendous impact in our community*

Your commitment to MHA makes an incredible difference in the lives of thousands of people with mental health issues each year right here in Westchester. From award-winning bilingual and bicultural support and employment services to community-based treatment and advocating on behalf of children in foster care, MHA is there for those who need it most.

In addition to these vital services, your generosity helps us be a true resource to our neighbors. Through rapid responses for community requests for educational programming, as well as urgent support following community tragedies, MHA is a presence beyond services.

## **And it's all thanks to you!**

Will you stand with us this May and tell the world you believe #MentalHealthMatters? Your gift is more than just a donation—it sends a message of hope, opportunity, resilience and belief in recovery.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- Donate to MHA online at [www.mhawestchester.org](http://www.mhawestchester.org). There are many ways to make a financial contribution, such as through stock gifts, planned giving or monthly recurring gifts.
- Submit a matching gift through your employer. Contact your HR department to learn how to increase the impact of your donation.

- Volunteer. It only takes a little time to make a big difference! Visit [www.mhawestchester.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://www.mhawestchester.org/get-involved/volunteer) to learn more about our volunteer opportunities.
- Honor a loved one with a tribute gift and let the world know you both believe #MentalHealthMatters.
- Host an event to raise awareness for mental health and donate the proceeds to MHA.

**To learn more about these options and get involved, please contact Director of Development Connie Moustakas at 914-265-7511 or [development@mhawestchester.org](mailto:development@mhawestchester.org)**

## How to Talk About Mental Health

The words we use when talking about mental health matter. Words have a direct impact and can be a powerful force to reduce—or *perpetuate*—stigma. From casual conversations and flippant phrases to serious discussions with someone experiencing a mental health issue, your words are important.

We know that navigating what to say—and how to say it—can be difficult. Often we are at a loss, and sometimes we worry about making a difficult situation worse. We hope the following suggestions will be helpful. We welcome your thoughts and feedback at [development@mhawestchester.org](mailto:development@mhawestchester.org).

- Person-centered, person-first language. People are so much more than their diagnosis. Refer to an individual as someone who has “been diagnosed with schizophrenia” or “is living with schizophrenia” rather than “a schizophrenic.”

- Individuals who live with mental health issues are coping with significant challenges that may impact every aspect of their life. Your understanding and respect is clear if you refrain from invoking diagnoses in “humorous” or deprecating ways in casual conversation. For example, joking about being “OCD” about cleaning trivializes the experience of someone actually living with the disorder.
- Being compassionate when talking about suicide helps remove stigma. Language such as “died by suicide” is preferred to “committed suicide,” which is understood to evoke negative connotations such as in “committed a crime” or “committed a sin.”
- Model appropriate language to express strong feelings.
- When someone is struggling, often the most valuable assistance you can provide is by listening. Listen empathically, without judgement,

advice-giving, or minimizing their experience of the problem. This is especially important if you are talking with someone who is thinking of suicide.

- Check in with friends, family, coworkers and neighbors. Asking “how are you doing?” or “how can I help”—and meaning it—provides an opportunity for open conversation. It also fosters a sense of community and camaraderie that can have a powerful and positive impact on everyone involved. In an age where technology can often isolate us, make the effort for a face-to-face conversation. Pick up the phone, meet for coffee, make a real connection.

By making slight changes to how you talk about mental health, you can take an active role in breaking down stigma. Your voice matters. Thank you for using it to make a difference in someone else's life!

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### *CEO*

Charlotte Östman, LCSW-R

### *MHA is a member of CBHS:*

*Coordinated Behavioral Health Services, a partnership of 9 not-for-profit agencies that together provide behavioral health and developmental disability services. We provide care management services for both of Westchester County's New York State Department of Health approved Health Homes.*

## New Members Join MHA's Board of Directors



**Brendan Arniel**

We are pleased to announce the recent appointment of two new members to our Board of Directors: Brendan Arniel and Jeanette Fairhurst.

As an Assistant Vice President supporting Pickwick Capital Partners' investment banking efforts, Brendan focuses on origination, structuring and execution of the firm's mergers and acquisitions transactions. He is also part of the firm's executive team responsible for business development, strategy and marketing. He holds a B.S. from The Ohio State University and an MBA from the University of Manitoba Asper School of Business.

Jeanette is an Associate Director of Therapeutic Antibodies at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, where her focus of identifying and characterizing antibodies has contributed to approved new medicines for conditions such as atopic dermatitis, rheumatoid arthritis and high cholesterol. She volunteers regularly in the "Regeneron In the Community" program. A graduate of Williams College, Fairhurst resides in Thornwood.

We are excited to welcome Brendan and Jeanette to our Board of Directors, where their professional and personal experiences will contribute immensely to our talented and passionate leadership efforts!



**Jeanette Fairhurst**