

# Minding Your Health

June 2016



Chester County Department of Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD)  
601 Westtown Road, Suite 340, West Chester, PA 19380-0990 • [www.chesco.org/mhidd](http://www.chesco.org/mhidd)

## Mental Health Month Celebrations Continue in June with "Walk This Way" Wellness Event

Last month, National Mental Health Awareness Month, Chester County residents had many opportunities to learn about mental health and emotional wellbeing. Throughout May, hundreds of people participated in the observance by attending free education programs and special events, or by taking part in mental health awareness campaigns. This month the celebration continues with *Walk This Way*, a day devoted to celebrating recovery and promoting wellness for individuals using mental health services.

*Walk This Way* is scheduled for Friday, June 17 at Crossroads Recovery Center in West Chester, from 10:30 AM until 3:00 PM, with registration beginning at 9:30 AM. The day's activities include gentle yoga, a drum circle, singing, jewelry making, chair massage, make-and-take healthy snacks, flower planting, and interactions with a therapy dog. Some activities require pre-registration. Lunch will be provided and those who have questions or would like to attend must contact Dianne Heverly at Chester County MH/IDD via email by June 14 at [dheverly@chesco.org](mailto:dheverly@chesco.org).

A highlight for the day will be the presentation of awards

and prizes for those who participated in Chester County's Mental Health

Month activities this year. Individuals who took up the challenge to volunteer in their communities, those who submitted writing samples, and those who entered the 2016 Photo Contest will receive recognition and/or prizes. Photo contest winners and some of the photos will be announced in the July issue of *Minding Your Health*, and some of the writing will be published at that time.

Deputy Administrator for Mental Health Services, Caroline Smith, PhD., has led the planning of *Walk This Way*, and the event will also be a time to wish her well on her retirement at the end of June.

See page 3 for a "spotlight" article on Caroline Smith.



## CareLink Awards Dinner Recognizes Achievement

CareLink Community Supports Services held its 22nd Annual Award Dinner in Newtown Square in May. The event recognized individuals for achievements in employment, as well as recognizing and thanking community partners. Twelve awards were presented, with several Chester County residents among the honorees.

Crossroads Recovery Center was recognized for its Supervisory Team, Nick DeSantis, Calvin Johnson and Nathan Mumper. The New Employment Award was given to Joseph Olmstead and Valerie Ward of Chester County, as well as Julie Baker from Delaware County. Mark Daly, pictured to the right, was one of two recipients of the Peer Support Award, along with Steven Roarty from Delaware County. Peter Staskin, who was featured in the December issue of *Minding Your Health* received the Marc Kravitz Memorial Award, established in 1999 by the Kravitz family to recognize people who show particular spirit and determination in achieving and maintaining employment. Congratulations to all the honorees.



Mark Daly, one of the award winners at the CareLink Dinner last month.



Chester County Commissioners — Terence Farrell, Kathi Cozzone, Michelle Kichline

MH/IDD Administrator—Gary Entrekin, MH Deputy Administrator—Caroline Smith



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For mental health crises  
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Valley Creek  
Crisis Intervention

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## MHFA— Let's Talk Numbers



Chester County's Mental Health First Aiders know that they are part of a movement, but they may not know how quickly our local ranks are rising. At the May 18 MHFA-er gathering held at COAD, we announced that Chester County's MHFA-ers were more than 1,200 strong. Since then, 7 more classes have been completed, and almost 150 more MHFA-ers are on the street, increasing awareness, supporting their peers, and acting as ambassadors for mental health. The energy has become so infectious that there is no slowing down for the summer.

On July 27 and 28 an adult MHFA class will be held to accommodate individuals who had been previously on waiting lists for other trainings. Throughout the summer, additional classes are being held. Some classes are for specific groups who have made re-

quests and not open to the public. The upcoming Youth Mental Health First Aid classes are held in collaboration with the Brandywine Health Foundation.

To handle this volume, Chester County MH/IDD, The COAD Group and West Chester University are collaborating to hold a five day instructor course, which will increase our stable of local certified instructors and meet the growing need.

The National Council on Behavioral Health has the goal of reaching one million Mental Health First Aiders in the U.S., and is looking to communities across the country to count their MHFA-ers. Chester County is certainly one of the leading contributors to the cause.

Look for information on upcoming classes at [www.chesco.org/mhidd](http://www.chesco.org/mhidd).

## Congratulations to Chester County's Newest Certified Peer Specialists



The photo to the left is of the May 2016 Certified Peer Specialist class.

Last month, twenty-one Chester County residents completed the 10-day Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) course held at Community Crossroads Recovery Center in West Chester. It was the 13th CPS class held in Chester County since the program began in 2009, and the graduates join almost 200 other locals who have completed the certification program.

The Certified Peer Specialist class is taught by instructors through the Mental Health Association and individuals applying to the program must have a lived experience with mental illness. To be accepted into the program, everyone must complete the application process, which includes an interview with two members of a review team.

Jeanette Easley, who coordinates the classes for Chester County MH/IDD, said Chester County offers the class once a year at no cost to participants, but acceptance to the program is very competitive. This year there were 62 applicants for the spaces available. Upon graduation, many of the CPS's are hired by local mental health providers. Some obtain jobs in other fields. All graduates must maintain their certification with 18 hours of continuing education annually.

"I've seen many participants start the class with their heads down, not talking to anyone," Easley said. "But by the end of the 10 days, they've changed. They're smiling, they've bonded with their peers, and they realize they were teachable. It's great to see that happen."

## Spotlight: Caroline Smith, A Mental Health Champion Retires

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To be a champion, one must have passion, determination, patience, and no small amount of courage. Dr. Caroline Smith, the Deputy Administrator for Chester County MH/IDD, has often demonstrated these characteristics in her distinctive unassuming and thoughtful style. Now, as she prepares for her retirement at the end of June, Smith took time to reflect on her career and her tenure at Chester County's office of Mental Health.

"I've been lucky, I think, to have seen, and participate in, some really meaningful system changes [in mental health] over the years," she noted.

The mental health system transformation, ignited by Pennsylvania's *A Call For Change*, was especially significant for Smith, who sat on state level work groups and steering committees reviewing the document in the early 2000's. In 66-pages, the document called on counties across the state to embrace the concept of recovery from mental illness and offered guidelines to initiate and lead service providers as well as individuals, to a recovery-oriented system of care.

"People were just really beginning to think about recovery at that time," Smith recalled. "I remember being so enthusiastic about [this change]."

In the past decade, Smith has had the opportunity help lead the system transformation, which has included administrative changes and new procedures, as well as developing many new programs. Peer services through Crossroads Recovery Center and Certified Peer Specialist trainings, supported employment services, increased housing options and integrated healthcare are just a few of changes that have taken root in recent years.

"I've always had the conviction about the basic needs we all have for living a healthy life," Smith said, going on to name three important concepts. "To live in our home communities, to pay attention to our whole lives [not just mental health diagnoses] and to create partnerships among the service providers and those using services."

The changes and Smith's leadership have resulted in a significant reduction in Chester County residents living in the state hospital in Norristown, with Chester County having fewer patients per capita than other counties in the region.



Caroline Smith

"We were at the forefront, taking people out of Norristown and having them live and be treated in their own communities," Smith noted.

Gary Entrekin, the Administrator for Chester County MH/IDD said this of Smith, "I will miss her strong passion for making Chester County a recovery haven ... a place where everyone gets the service and supports they need while accessing all the opportunities for natural supports and full community inclusion."

Smith has worked for almost 20 years at the county's office of Mental Health and more than 15 years as the program's director, but her career began in England, when she worked as a teacher, research fellow and a child behaviorist. When she and her family moved to Chester County in 1986, she stayed home with her two children for a couple of years before deciding to return to work. She worked at what is now Holcomb Behavioral Health for nearly eight years.

Looking ahead to retirement, Smith, an avid gardener, and lover of the arts, will no doubt have much to fill her days. She and her husband, Dr. Gary Smith, the Professor of Population Biology and Epidemiology at University of Pennsylvania, have planned to retire at the same time, and immediately take an extended trip across the country.

"It's bittersweet to be leaving this work and such a rewarding career, but Gary and I both are really looking forward to our trip and the next chapter in our lives," Smith said.

### Newsflash—For Mental Health Providers

June 30 is the end of the 2015-16 fiscal year. Providers are reminded to submit their revalidations if they have not already done so.

The Bright Futures graduation is scheduled for Wednesday, June 22. Please look for information on this class next year.

Hope to see Chester County mental health providers at the celebration on Friday—Crossroads Recovery Center in West Chester—10:30 until 3:00 PM.



Chester County Mental Health Stakeholder Meetings — For resources check out [www.referweb.net/chesco](http://www.referweb.net/chesco)

- **Every Mon.—Parent Support Group**; for parents whose families are affected by alcohol, drug abuse and related behaviors of their children. 7:00-9:00 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Grove Road, West Chester. Contact: Lyle or Deidre 610-793-3446.
- **Every Tues. — Depression/Bipolar Support Group**; for those in recovery from affective disorders - 7:00-8:00 pm at Community Crossroads Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact—610-429-1702.
- **Every Tues.—Transition Age Depression/Bipolar Support Alliance**; for 14-25 age group – 6:30-7:30 pm at Community Crossroads Recovery Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact – 610-429-1702 or call Adessa at 484-706-2110.
- **Every Tues.—Celebrate Recovery**; faith-based support for mental health and substance abuse; 6:00-8:15 pm at Hopewell UMC, 852 Hopewell Rd., Downingtown. Contact - 610-269-1545. **Every Thurs.—6:45-8:45 pm** at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Grove Road, West Chester. Contact - 610-399-3377x109.
- **Every Tues. & Thurs. — Double Trouble**; for those recovering from addiction and mental health problems - 3:30-5:00 pm at Community Crossroads Recovery Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact – 610-429-1702.
- **Every Wed.— Recovery Group** to help with “Hurts, Habits or Hang-ups,” 7:15 pm (immediately after community dinner at 6:15 pm) at Cornerstone Christian Fellowship Church, 426 West Gay Street, West Chester. Contact— 610- 430-3508.
- **Every Thurs.— Parent Support Group**; for parents whose families are impacted by alcohol & drug abuse of their children- 7:00– 9:00 pm at the First Baptist Church, 415 W. State St., Kennett Square. Contact - 484-888-9682.
- **Every Thurs.—Nicotine Anonymous—** All are welcome. 7:00-8:00 PM at Community Crossroads Recovery Center 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact John for information - 610-429-1702 or 610-696-0813.
- **Every Tues.—Parent Support Group**; parents whose families are impacted by alcohol, drug abuse and related behaviors of their children—(two locations) 7:00 - 8:00 pm, Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church, 1121 Octorara Trail (Rt. 10) Parkesburg. Contact - [betsy.kaciescaus@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.kaciescaus@gmail.com). 7:00-9:00 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Rd., West Chester. Contacts: Lyle or Deidre 610-793-3446
- **Every other Thursday — Eating Disorders Support Group**; for both genders aged 13 and older, family members and supporters - 6:30 - 7:30 pm at the Brandywine Hospital, 201 Reeceville Rd., Coatesville. Go to - [www.brandywineeatingdisorders.com](http://www.brandywineeatingdisorders.com).
- **2nd Mon. — Adult MH Subcommittee of the MH/IDD Board Meeting** - 5:30-7:30 pm at the Community Crossroads Recovery Center 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Call to confirm meeting - 610-344-6265.
- **2d Tuesday- CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD)**. Support, Education and Advocacy. Meetings 7:00-9:00 at Keshet Israel Congregation. Pottstown Pike, West Chester. [www.ccmlchadd.com](http://www.ccmlchadd.com) or 610-429-4060.
- **1st Wed. — NAMI; West Chester Family Support Group** - 7:00 -9:00 pm at Community Crossroads Recovery Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **2nd Wed. — Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force** - 3:00 – 4:30 pm Government Services Bldg. 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester. Contact - [ccsptaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:ccsptaskforce@gmail.com).
- **2nd Wed.— Survivors of Suicide ( S.O.S.)** - 7:30 pm, Willistown Room, the Paoli Memorial Hospital in Paoli. Please contact - 215-545-2242.
- **1st Thurs. — Southern Chester County Family Support Group**; sponsored by Chester County NAMI 7:30-9:00 pm at Friends Meeting House, Rt. 82, Kennett Square. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **2nd Thurs. — Northeastern Chester County Family Support Group**; sponsored by Chester County NAMI. 6:30-8:00 pm at Phoenixville Medical Arts Building - 601 Gay St., Phoenixville, Penn Psychiatric Center - Suite 6. For information, contact Ginger Murphy at 610-348-9758.
- **3rd Thurs.— NAMI; PA Chester County General Meeting** - 7:00 pm at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Malvern. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **4th Thurs. — MH/IDD Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting** - 6:00 pm at the Government Services Bldg., 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester, Room 149. Call to confirm meeting - 610-344-6265.

Please email [tbehringer@chesco.org](mailto:tbehringer@chesco.org) with additions or updates!