

# Minding Your Health

## Chester County's Mental Health Newsletter

December 2017

*Wishing everyone a safe & happy holiday season  
~ Chester County MH/IDD*

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### A Program to Empower Students *to Launch in Chester County Next Month*

On January 30, students from across Chester County will gather for a launch of [Aavidum](#), a youth-driven program, focused on raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention. Ten local high schools are being asked to participate in the launch event, called **The Talk**, a day-long gathering in West Chester.

Offered to schools at no cost, Aavidum transforms schools and communities by providing students with a platform to use their voices and talents as they pledge to look out for one another, have each other's backs, and promote help-seeking. The word Aavidum, which means "I've got your back," was created by students from Lancaster, PA after they lost a friend to suicide. [Aavidum](#) is also the name of the non-profit organization that oversees the program, now in schools across PA.

There are currently open spots for Chester County high schools to participate on January 30. If a school would like to find out more about **The Talk** and how to implement the Aavidum program in their school, [contact us](#).

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### A Clinic for the Community

In just four months of operation, [West Chester University's Community Mental Health Clinic](#) has become a trusted resource for local individuals and families, providing comprehensive, cutting-edge service at low cost. Under the direction of Leanne Valentine, Ph.D., pictured to the right, the clinic serves as a non-profit training center for graduate students in the Psychology Doctoral program, as well as a clinical research site for faculty in the Psychology Department.

Among the general services offered to the public, as well as the campus community, are treatment for anxiety and depression, grief and loss, couples and family counseling, and concerns related to trauma. In addition, the clinic provides psychological assessment services and offers [wellness programs](#).

In an article published by the university in August, Valentine, a Pennsylvania-licensed psychologist said, "We serve children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families from all backgrounds. Our providers strive to be culturally sensitive and compassionate and are committed to the highest ethical standards."

Located on the West Chester University Campus, the Community Mental Health Clinic is at 125 West Rosedale Avenue, Wayne Hall, on the eighth floor. Find out more about the clinic and the fees for services at [the website](#).

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## Marilyn Baker, Community Champion

Marilyn Baker was recognized for her decades of service to Chester County's mental health community on Saturday, Dec. 2. She was among 10 individuals nominated for the [Phoenixville Community Health Foundation's](#) (PCHF) 2017 Champion of the Community Award, and one of four selected for the honor. Champions of the Community, as defined by the Health Foundation, are individuals that serve others in a way that contributes to the overall health of the Phoenixville community. The awards come with a \$2,000 grant, in the the award winners' name, to be given to a charitable organization of their choice. Baker's prize will be divided between Cornerstone Clubhouse and Compeer Chester County.

Baker, pictured above between David Gautreau, PCHF Board Chair and Lou Beccaria, PCHF President & CEO, was nominated by Elissa Llorens, the program director at Cornerstone Clubhouse in Phoenixville. In her nomination, Llorens noted Baker's community and political advocacy in the Phoenixville area and throughout Chester County, as well as at the state levels, since 1966. Through the years, Baker has used her personal story of having a loved one with a serious mental illness to help and empower others. An active member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness since 1982 and a member of the Cornerstone Clubhouse Advisory, Baker has also served on many advisory boards, joined focus groups, and volunteered for local mental health organizations.

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## Suicide Prevention *in Chester County*

Public transportation shelters, at various locations throughout the county, are now helping deliver suicide prevention information and messages of hope.

Beginning in October, and continuing through much of 2018, posters, such as the one pictured to the right, will be displayed in county transit shelters, giving bus riders information about signs of depression and where to call for help. Chester County's Crisis Intervention hot line, available at no cost to anyone in the county, regardless of their income or insurance status, is featured prominently. The national crisis line, veterans line and national text line are included.

This effort is part of a larger suicide prevention campaign supported by Chester County's Departments of Mental Health and Human Services, and Chester County's Suicide Prevention Task Force. The campaign includes short billboard messages on selected roads in Chester County.

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**Chester County's Suicide Prevention (CCSP) Task Force** meets quarterly and introduces informative speakers at each meeting. Anyone may attend and learn about this important public health concern.

The next CCSP Task Force meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 14 from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM** at the Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester. Find out more about the group at [the website](#).

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## *Happy Holidays, Happy Recovery*

The holiday season is a joyful time, but often a stressful time as well. Maintaining wellness and managing recovery can be challenging. Mental health and recovery experts stress the importance of taking care of our overall health and wellness with enough sleep, a healthy diet, regular exercise, and social connections.

For those in Recovery, Chester County's PRO-ACT group schedules activities and events throughout the month. [Click here for the December Calendar](#). More information is available at [Chester County's Drug and Alcohol Services website](#).

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## Stay Connected!

[Accessing the Adult Serving Systems in Chester County](#) - a free training is scheduled for Jan. 17, 2018.

[Chester County/Main Line CHADD](#) (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder) has local meetings and events.

[Mental Health First Aid Training](#) is still free in Chester County. Check out the MH/IDD website for fliers on upcoming classes.

[Calendar of Events](#) - info on monthly meetings and support groups.

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