



# Saratoga County Citizens' Committee for Mental Health Newsletter

*Fall* 2009

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## Annual Dinner and Silent Auction Fundraiser a Successful Event



Dr. Edmond Amyot accepts "2009 Citizen of the Year" award from Peggy Lounsbury

The SCCCMMH Annual Dinner and Silent Auction Fundraiser was held at Longfellows Restaurant on May 6, 2009. The MC for the evening was SCCCMMH Chairperson, **Peggy Lounsbury**. Several businesses and organizations donated items for the Silent Auction and as a result the fundraiser was successful. Also, Stephanie Lounsbury donated her talent as she entertained guests during social hour with violin solos. The evening went off without a hitch thanks to the dinner chairperson, **Collette Fox**.

A 2008-2009 SCCCMMH grant recipient was Saratoga Bridges. **Lynn Haggerty**, Behavioral Specialist for Saratoga Bridges, reported on how Saratoga Bridges used the money to help with educational resources for their staff. Also, Chairperson Lounsbury announced that the SCCCMMH is concerned, like everyone, with the state of the economy and the impact on organizations that provide services and support to people with mental illness. So, SCCCMMH decided to implement their own "Economic Stimulus Plan" and provide a \$1000 donation to a worthy organization. Chairperson Lounsbury announced that the SCCCMMH chose the Samaritan Counseling Center and **Michael Quinn** was present to accept the donation on behalf of the Counseling Center. He spoke briefly about services the Samaritan Counseling Center offers.

However, the highlight of the evening was honoring a true mental health "Citizen of the Year", Dr. Edmond Amyot. Dr. Amyot's first job was with the Saratoga County Mental Health Clinic

**Continued on Page 2-Annual Dinner**

## **CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES**

By Peavy Lounsbury

The SCCCMH Board of Directors welcomes new board members **Carol VanGundy and Susan Moseley**. That brings our total number of board members to twelve! Each board member brings a unique contribution to the board and it is these varied contributions that have allowed the SCCCMH be effective. It is a privilege to work with such a great team.

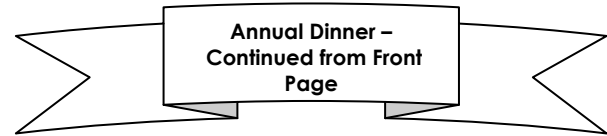
We will not be resting any time soon because we established two major objectives for 2009-2010: to develop a SCCCMH web site; and to plan and carryout two "Town Hall" meetings" in Saratoga County.

For the last few years, the Board of Directors has discussed the idea of a SCCCMH web site. This year, we are going to do it! The first step was to identify our audiences. We came up with four primary audiences: the public, the consumers of mental health services, the friends and families of people with mental illness, and professionals who provide services to people with mental illness. Now we need your help...

**Please contact me at [plounsbury@saratogacare.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogacare.org) or 583-8371 and tell me what you would like to see on the SCCCMH website. What would help you? What might be interesting? We will be building the website soon, so please contact me soon.**

I met with representatives of the NYS Office of Mental Health Services and Saratoga County Mental Health Clinic in the spring. The SCCCMH was asked to facilitate "Town Hall" meetings to find out from the citizens of Saratoga County how well the County is meeting the needs of people with mental illness, and what might the county and state do to better meet their needs. So, stay tuned. We are probably conducting these meetings in the spring of 2010. Finally, we must continue to be vocal to our elected state and county officials regarding how the

government must ensure that all citizens, especially those with mental illness, receive the care and support that they need to live life to its fullest.



where he worked for 24 years. He has also been a member and leader of the medical staff of Saratoga Hospital. He is also now the Director of the Saratoga Hospital Inpatient Mental Health Unit. Several people spoke of Dr. Amyot's contributions to the mental health community and how personally they were impacted by his caring and professional skills. Dr. Amyot was very honored and delighted to share the evening with his wife and family.

## **Clinician's Corner**

by Andrea DeGeorgio LCSW-R

Now that we are into the school year, it seems like a good time to review some helpful parenting tips. Some may seem obvious, but with the stress of hectic schedules and homework some reminders may be helpful. It is especially important when dealing with a child or teenager with mental health issues - or perhaps it is the parent who is struggling with depression, anxiety or another mental disorder, which can adds to the stress of parenting.

Defying parent's authority and challenging boundaries is part of growing up. It's part of developing individuality. Other children don't obey because they want attention. Some are angry about a family or school problem.

Here are some tips that can help stay organized and keep the peace.

- Talk issues over with your child. Ask if there is a reason they are frustrated or upset instead of just reacting negatively to their mood..
- Make sure your child understands your requests. Establish eye contact and be clear and specific.  
Remain calm and cooperative – your child will respond better and is more likely to mirror you if you show them respect.
- ✓ If your child becomes out of control, impose and enforce a time out until they calm down.

**Continued Page 6 –Clinician's Corner**

**SCCCMH Receives Donation  
from the  
Saratoga Hospital  
Medical Executive Committee**



**Sue Getsch and Peggy Lounsbury, on the left, accept a \$1500 donation from the Medical Executive Committee of the Saratoga Hospital Medical Staff from Chairperson Dr. Carolyn Slatch and Treasurer Dr. Gregory Pinto as Dr. Edmund Amyot looks on.**

The Medical Executive Committee of the Saratoga Hospital Medical Staff awarded the SCCCMH with a \$1500 donation on October 20<sup>th</sup>. SCCCMH Chairperson Peggy Lounsbury and Vice Chairperson Sue Getsch accepted the donation on behalf of the Citizens Committee from the Chairperson of the Medical Executive Committee, Dr. Carolyn Slatch.

Dr. Slatch praised the SCCCMH for the good work the organization does to advocate for, and support the needs of, people with mental illness. Chairperson Lounsbury stated that it was likely that the money would be used to assist the Citizens Committee to develop a website and thanked the Medical Staff for their unexpected and generous donation.



**Saratoga County Network of  
Mental Health Professionals and  
Advocates Fall Meeting  
Announcement**

The next meeting of the Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates (SCN-MHPA) is **Thursday, November 19, 2009 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm in the Saratoga Hospital Cafeteria**. Agenda items will include lobbying initiatives and ideas for the SCCCMH website. Refreshments will be served. If you are planning on attending or would like more information, contact Peggy Lounsbury at [plounsbury@saratoga.care.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratoga.care.org) or 583-8371.

As always, this is an informal meeting to network and collaborate regarding issues the network can work together on. In addition to state and county budget woes and potential cuts, the network can provide input on how the SCCCMH can carry out "Town Hall Meetings" in the spring 2010 in order to gather information from consumers, professionals and others regarding how well the county meets the needs of people with mental illness. Also, it is hoped that the meetings will result in ideas about what the county can do to better meet the needs of people with mental illness.

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**SCCCMH GRANT SUBMISSION  
DEADLINES**

December 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for grant applications to the SCCCMH in 2009. Grants of up to \$1000 are available to assist agencies and organizations improve or expand services for people with mental illness in Saratoga County. February 1, 2010 is the next deadline for grant applications. For more information or obtain an application, contact Caroline Russel Smith at 518.857.9361. **HURRY – we want to help!**

## Viewpoint From Here

Submitted by Amber Christian Osterhout

**"For me, insanity is super sanity. The normal is psychotic. Normal means lack of imagination, lack of creativity."  
– Expressionist French painter, Jean Dubuffet**

As a child, I had a hard time conforming to the ideals that society had set in stone. I found pleasure in challenging the norm and questioning just about everything. My family encouraged this curiosity and for that, I thank them. I could never imagine, though, that an early brush with nonconformity would prepare me for my life's greatest challenge.

My name is Amber Christian Osterhout and my brother was diagnosed with schizophrenia over three years ago. After he endured many, involuntary hospital stays, countless pills, and relapses; I realized I lacked the ability to cope with my brother's pain. That shy, little boy I grew up with was now consumed with terror and paranoia. I wanted to protect him. If only I could free him from his pain, I certainly would. However, I would come to learn there are only two things you can depend on: hope and time.

Everyone handles grief in their own way. In my case, it's through dwelling on the past. I am haunted by memories from a much simpler time. Worse than not having the power to turn back time was accepting that the disease does not choose whom it affects—even the most sensitive and kind individuals, like my brother. He is fighting two battles: one against his disease, and one against the stigma of the disease. I never realized how stigma could impact one's recovery. As a family member, you encounter this discrimination almost daily. Everything we see in the movies or on the news seem so inaccurate. My anger toward this stigma caused me to become very protective of my brother's dignity and the respect he deserves. The only healthy way for me to heal was to try and educate others about the reality of mental illness. I feel that this education can only come from someone who has been through it. I understand that this may be a very long and difficult battle, but I know there will be others to join me in this fight.

My first attempt to fight stigma resulted from my own art therapy. In order to heal myself, I did

## Fall Workshop for Professionals and Parents a Success

On October 29, 2009 at the Knights of Columbus in Saratoga, the SCCCMH and the Saratoga County Mental Health Clinic Youth Services co-sponsored a day long workshop on: "Dyadic Developmental Therapy Attachment-Focused Treatment". The program was presented by *Daniel Hughes Ph.D.* The workshop was open to not only professionals, but to parents and guardians, as well. Children with serious psychological problems secondary to histories of abuse, neglect, and/or multiple placements provide a serious challenge to parents and therapists, and in the school setting.

For the past 20 years Dr. Hughes has specialized in the treatment of children who manifest serious deficits in their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, and at the same time demonstrate considerable difficulty establishing and maintaining secure attachment relationships. Dr. Hughes' treatment is family based and focused on facilitating the child's ability to establish a secure attachment with his/her caregivers. Developmental attachment theory and research is the primary model for relationship development and trauma resolution.

The program was attended by over 100 people and Dr. Hughes was well received. **Diane Fitzgerald and Tammy Horan** were instrumental in organizing the event for the SCCCMH and Youth Services. Proceeds from the event are used to support Youth Services and future educational programs.

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

**Join SCCCMH  
Today!**

**Viewpoint (continued from page 5)**

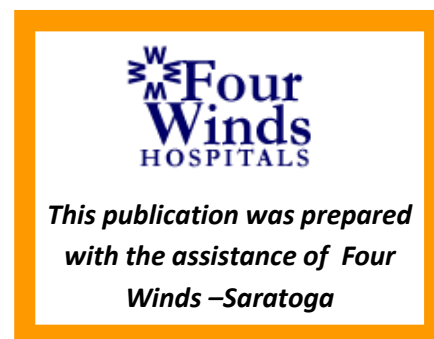
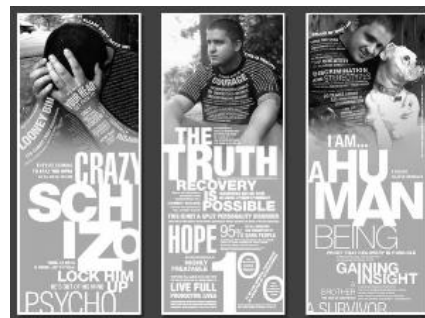
what came naturally: art. I created a six painting series with accompanying audio. My goal is to visually demonstrate how the road to recovery could be paved with many obstacles, as well as milestones. In my eyes, the courage and strength required to reach recovery is unimaginable so I look at those who recover from mental illness as the silent heroes. Their voices are silenced by the intense discrimination and stereotypes that invade our media. My paintings were intended to honor the millions of silent heroes since they are too often misunderstood.

After six months, my paintings were complete. My last painting titled "Recovery" was especially difficult because my brother had not yet reached this stage. Instead, I created a vision of recovery. NAMI welcomed the exhibit by featuring my show at the 2008 NAMI NY Educational Conference in Albany, NY. I was overwhelmed by the response. One moment stuck with me: a mother, who was clearly struggling with her son's diagnosis, walked up to me in tears. She wanted to thank me for my efforts. She finally had the chance to experience what her son struggles with daily. I honestly never expected the kind of impact I would make.

My experience at the conference encouraged me to develop other mediums to raise awareness, including film. I spent many long nights working on my first documentary.

My hope was to show this film to college and high school students to eliminate stigma and encourage treatment, much like the AIDS education I had as a student. I am currently working on the second edition of my documentary, which follows four

individuals who are affected by mental illness in different ways. I don't think my brother realizes the impact he will have on others. I am forever grateful for the lessons he has taught me. His return home from a 7-month hospital stay brought me to tears. During this hospital stay, convinced that we were not his family, my brother became an uncle. Thankfully, with the aid of medication and therapy, this delusion has passed. Just a few days ago, I watched him hold his newborn niece for the very first time. I hope that in that moment, he realized how recovery could lead to peace and happiness. For more information about my cause and to view the Gaining Insight exhibit, please visit: [www.gaining-insight.com](http://www.gaining-insight.com) or [www.gaining-insight.blogspot.com](http://www.gaining-insight.blogspot.com)



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

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 Editors e-mail address. Articles not submitted electronically can be mailed to the address above.



Earlier this year, the nation's public mental health care system for adults received the average grade of *D*... the same grade it received three years ago!

Despite the ghastly grade, many lawmakers continue to cut funding to mental health services as a way to offset the struggling economy. The state of our mental health care system is frightening.

You can make a donation to support the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) fight and help awaken our nation from this nightmare and continue the work to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental illness in the United States.

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### **Clinician's Corner – Continued from pg. 2**

- ✓ Use punishment sparingly and only when you have control of your emotions. Physical punishment can lead to even more disobedience.
- ✓ Have your child apologize if she is disrespectful.
- ✓ Be sure to praise your child when he is cooperative and respectful.
- ✓ Don't give in to your child's pleading and whining. This reinforces the behavior you don't want.

Children living with more serious mental health problems may need additional help and more personalized behavior plans. Nevertheless, the suggestions above are a good place to start.

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### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- One in five people worldwide have a mental or neurological disorder at some point in their lives.
- 90% of people with mental illness are never violent.
- 4 out of 10 leading causes of disability in the US and other developed countries are mental disorders.
- Stigma erodes confidence that mental disorders are real, treatable health conditions.

### **The President's Speech & Mental Health Care @ [WWW.NAMI.ORG](http://WWW.NAMI.ORG) 9/10/09**

Washington, D.C. – Michael J. Fitzpatrick, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), released the following statement on President Obama's remarks on health care to the Joint Session of Congress:

"NAMI agrees with President Obama that the time for action on health care is now. It is time for both Democrats and Republicans to come together and deliver on what, for too many years, have only been promises.

Mental Illness – like most illnesses- does not discriminate. It affects Democrats and Republicans alike. It affects the young and the old. Too many parents are forced to confront "the sheer helplessness and terror" that comes when their children – at any age – become gravely ill. That is the experience of NAMI members. It is the experience of too many Americans. For those who already have health insurance, health care reform will prohibit denial of coverage due to pre-existing conditions, arbitrary caps on annual or lifetime coverage or excessive charges that are out-of-pocket expenses.

NAMI is working toward four key areas of reform:

\*Full parity of insurance coverage for mental illness and addictive disorders in all private and public health plans.

\*Full integration of mental and physical health care. Those with serious MI die on average 25 years younger than the rest of the population. On average, a gap of almost 10 years exists between the onset of symptoms and intervention.

\*Elimination of the existing prohibition against Medicaid dollars being used for inpatient psychiatric or substance abuse treatment – the kind of discrimination that leads to dumping people from hospitals into homeless shelters.

\*Improved data collection, outcomes measurement and accountability to develop a more comprehensive system of MH care.

**We call on Congress to move forward. Do not forget that MI can strike anyone at any time. The time for action is now.**

# Saratoga County Citizens' Committee for Mental Health Newsletter

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For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury  
E-mail: [plounsbury@saratogacare.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogacare.org)  
Phone: 518-583-8371

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

### SCCCMH Mission:

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

Education: Provide educational affordable 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. E.g., increase access to public transportation, decrease stigma's or stereotypes.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix/suffix: \_\_\_\_\_  I am a new member  I am renewing my

Address:  Home  Work \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I do NOT want to be a member, remove my information from the SCCCMH mailing list.

Phone Number:  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, then check here:

If you would like to participate in a mental health consumer workshop that is organized by consumers, then check here:

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

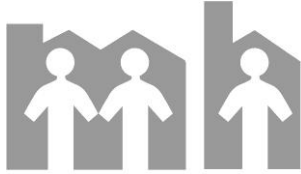
- I want to be a member, but I am unable provide financial support.
- I want to be a member. I will consider a contribution at a later date.
- I want to be a member, enclosed is my tax deductible donation of: \_\_\$10 \_\_\$25 \_\_\$35 Other:\_\_\_\_\_.

**MAKE CHECKS OUT TO:** SCCCMH. Do not send cash in the mail. Appreciated if submitted before **April 30' 2009.**

**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!!**

SARATOGA COUNTY



CITIZENS COMMITTEE  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

*For more information about the  
SCCCMH,  
contact Peggy Lounsbury,  
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 is committed to **increasing public awareness** of the needs of people with mental illness.*

**Saratoga County Citizens  
Committee for Mental Health**

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