



Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011

Highlights:

DBSA News	1
Chairman's Notes	2
Grants Available	2
Citizen of the Year	3
In the News	3
The View From Here	4
Fall Conference	5
Saratoga Co. Aging & Disability Network	6

DBSA Saratoga News: First Annual Walk a Success!

By Chris Jasikoff, President, DBSA Saratoga, (518)580-1064



The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) of Saratoga County has lots of news to update all our friends and benefactors. We shall start with May 2011, as this is where we left off.

The walk was a great success for the DBSA and we have to thank anyone who made a contribution, a sign or a sponsorship. As you know, the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health and NAMI Saratoga were sponsors of our walk and we couldn't have done it without them. We sold approximately 200 shirts for the walk this year which is the major source of revenue for the walk. All told, the walk raised \$1900 for DBSA!

Mark your calendars, the Second Annual DBSA Walk for Mental Health Awareness will be on Saturday, May 19, 2012. Can't wait to see the new shirts?? Well, you'll just have to wait!!! I am looking for more people to get involved with our 2012 Walk Committee. If you are interested in helping in any way, please call me at 580-1064.

I planned on going to the National Association of Peer Specialists Conference (NAPS) in Raleigh, NC on August 22nd through the 24th. However, at about 9PM the day I was to fly out, my plane was cancelled due to Hurricane Irene and there weren't any more flights out. I was so disappointed but I am instead going to the NAPS conference in September 2012 which will be held in Philadelphia, PA. In July 2011, NAMI alerted us to a grant from the AMI High Tea Project, Inc. and we were awarded \$1500 for this conference. I was very excited to be able to practice my skills and get interactions that can be used at our support groups. I really feel like I need to reconnect with other peer specialists and advance my training. With some of the grant money, we are experimenting with a newsletter or blog so that DBSA will have an up-to-date page on the internet. We are experimenting with this during this last quarter of 2011. Any suggestions are welcomed.

(continued on page 2)

SCCCMH Board of Directors

Peggy Lounsbury
Chairperson
plounsbury@saratogacare.org
518.583.8371

Susann Getsch
Vice Chairperson
Grants Chair

Collette Fox
Treasurer
Annual Dinner Chair

Amanda Blodgett
Secretary

Lorraine Gardephe
Newsletter Chair
lgardephe@upsaratoga.com
518.587.2851

Susan Filburn
Public Relations Chair

Chrissy Hechemy
Social Chair

Amber Christian Osterhout
Website Chair

Susan Moseley

CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES

By Peggy Lounsbury

The SCCCMH is delighted that the Guardian House for Homeless Female Veterans in Ballston Spa opened on August 1st. The Committee was pleased to provide a grant for the Guardian House.

In September, the SCCCMH provided a grant to the Saratoga County Youth Services Team so they could show the film, "Race to Nowhere". The movie is a "grassroots sensation" to raise awareness and is a call to mobilize families, educators and policy makers to challenge the current assumptions on how to best prepare the youth of America to become healthy, bright contributing citizens. The movie features heartbreaking stories illustrating how students have become disengaged, acquired stress-related illness and been entering the workplace unprepared and uninspired.

Also, the SCCCMH will sponsor of the 2012 DBSA Mental Health Awareness Walk. All efforts are individually important to the mental health community, but together these efforts demonstrate the commitment of many people to continually strive to meet the mental health needs of people with mental illness.

Continued from front page:

On March 11, 2012, training for support group facilitators will be held in Albany, NY. Trainers from Chicago DBSA are trying to get as many people involved as possible. More details will follow as the weeks ahead draw near. Anyone interested in becoming a facilitator is welcomed and encouraged to call me. Training is being offered for all of NY State.

We have been blessed with the SCCCMH newsletter and the Committee has been very happy to keep our news current. Thank you Peggy Lounsbury and congratulations on your award! (Peggy was recognized at the NYS Occupational Therapy Association annual conference on October 23rd by being presented with the Association's highest honor, the President's Award)

WANTED: Board Member

The SCCCMH Board of Directors would like a mental health professional for the Board. The Board of Directors meets the first or second Thursday of the month at 5:30 - 6:45 pm at the TSA administrative building in Saratoga Springs. If you are interested, please contact Chairperson, Peggy Lounsbury at 583-8371 or e-mail plounsbury@saratogacare.org for more information or to arrange to be a guest at a Board of Director's meeting.

WANTED: Members

Please join or renew your membership in the SCCCMH now for the 2011 - 2012 membership year that started April 1, 2011. SCCCMH has a "pay what you will" approach to membership **Please join now!** Even if you are unable to provide financial support, returning the form allows us to keep our mailing list current and joining helps give voice to the mental health needs of our community.

WANTED: Citizen of the Year

The Citizen of the Year Award recognizes people and organizations that directly or indirectly stand out in the mental health community or among consumers in Saratoga County. SCCCMH honors one worthy nominee annually. Nominations are due by February 1st. To nominate, contact Peggy Lounsbury or visit: www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org

SCCCMH Grants Available to Organizations

The SCCCMH awards monetary grants to not-for-profit organizations that provide services to people with mental illness.

Awards are generally up to \$1,000 and are distributed in December, March and June. For an application and more information, go to our website www.scccmh-saratoga.org.

December 1st is the next deadline for grant proposals to be reviewed at the January SCCCMH Board meeting. Grant recipients and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in by February.

IN THE NEWS...

Friendship House Moves to Geyser Rd.

Peter Lacy, Program Coordinator for Friendship House, announced that they have moved to a new location on Geyser Road. Friendship House Continuing Day Treatment Program had been operating at 228 Church Street for over 30 years as part of the services provided by Saratoga County Mental Health Center. Hundreds of service recipients, treatment staff, volunteers, and visitors share memories of the large Victorian building on the corner of Church and Van Rensselaer Streets.

On January 1st of 2011, Friendship House moved its entire operation to 433B Geyser Road. Of course, the transition period was difficult in the beginning, as with any major move. However, the move was completed quickly in order to minimize the loss of treatment services. Within one week, we were totally out of our Church Street location and set up for business on Geyser Road.

We have had to adjust to the many changes in our new location. We went from a Saratoga Victorian building to a one-level office building; from a city environment to the suburbs; and from three bathrooms to two. Although we are a little cramped for space at our new facility, we have successfully gone through our adjustment period.

(continued on Page 5, see IN THE NEWS)

Annual Dinner and Fundraiser



Chris Jasikoff, on left, receiving the award from Peggy Lounsbury

The SCCCMH had another successful Annual Dinner and Fundraiser on May 12, 2011. Chairperson Peggy Lounsbury emceed the event. The highlight of the evening was honoring the Citizen of the Year, Chris Jaskikoff. Chris is the founding member of the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance – Saratoga.

The SCCCMH also recognized 2010-2011 grant recipients: TSA, Shelters of Saratoga and the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company, the organization behind the Guardian House for Homeless Female Veterans. Also, SCCCMH also made an "Economic Stimulus" Donation to the Saratoga Center for the Family and was a major sponsor of the DBSA Mental Health Awareness Walk.

Peggy reviewed the state of the organization and Collette Fox, treasurer, reviewed the finances of the organization. The silent auction and raffle was also fun. In total, the dinner raised about \$1300 for the SCCCMH for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

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

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 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.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

My name is Jennifer and I have Bipolar. I maintain my own apartment, have a part time job and do some volunteer work. I had to work hard for everything I have today including a good and healthy relationship with my family. My life wasn't always in order; you could say it was chaotic. I was diagnosed with depression brought on by prolonged anxiety when I was eighteen. It wasn't until I was twenty that the doctors realized I have Bipolar. I was young and didn't want to have to deal with an illness; the medications, the doctors, therapy and day programs. I just ignored all the things to help me get better and entered a cycle of repeated hospitalizations, never understanding why this kept happening to me. I thought all I would ever be was Bipolar, poor Jen. Even when I would ask for help, I expected everyone else to get **me** better, and blamed him or her when I didn't change. It took me years to realize that my support system, service providers, and family and even the hospital staff were not capable of offering a quick fix. But they consistently offered the tools to help me get up and out to understand that I must take responsibility for myself. I'm not saying it was easy or that I no longer have to deal with my illness. I still have symptoms, still have to be hospitalized at times but I am able to recognize these issues before I'm back at rock bottom.

I am no different or better than anyone is, but my issue is with people in my life that I see have so much potential, but they themselves don't see it. Only they can help themselves. They believe that they are their illness, symptoms instead of accomplishments. "No one understands, and the service providers who don't have mental illness, what do they know?"

These service providers see someone who is full of such promise, someone who can do so much more, than they think, is possible.

They believe in you even when you don't believe in yourself. The people in my life held me accountable for my actions; they supported me without enabling me.

Because of their patience, I now stopped expecting the world to take care of me. I have grown; and am able to see that I had those same unhealthy feelings in me. So now, I find myself getting frustrated when I see a peer fall back on excuses like: I have a mental illness so everyone has to take care of me; I have a mental illness so I can't work/volunteer; or I have a mental illness so don't hold me responsible for my actions.

I know that like any illness there are individuals who will require more intensive or prolonged treatment. My issue is how some of these individuals seem to have fallen into comfortable rut acting like everyone else is responsible for their well being. I want to shake them and scream, "You can do this. You have everything you need except the desire to change!"

I understand that not all people or situations are the same but I too felt that I was one of the hopeless. I want others to see that your illness does not define you. Everyone has a right to live fully. Those service providers and even your families won't be there forever. If a person never learns the skills to survive on their own then what happens? This is a question they need to answer for themselves, are they ready to take the necessary steps to start taking complete control of their life? This isn't meant to come from a judgmental place but out of my concern for others in my life that I know. My life may be boring at times or not at all spectacular, but it is more than I could have imagined for myself ten years ago.

(continued on pg 5, see The View)

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

Join SCCCMH Today!

(Continued from IN THE NEWS, pg. 3.)

Having all the services on the first floor makes it much easier for people who have difficulty with stairs and being on a CDTA bus line is a convenience. It is nice to have a more up to date building that is clean and modern, with a more professional and clinical feel. Clients and staff alike appreciate the wide variety of lunch options in our new neighborhood. Although a difficult change for everyone, we are now settled in our new home!

**Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates
Fall Meeting Date is Set**

The next meeting of the Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates (SCN-MHPA) will be on **Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 4:30 pm at Saratoga Hospital.** We will have a guest speaker, Amber Christian Osterhout. About six years ago, Amber Christian Osterhout embarked on a journey to raise awareness on the topic mental illness. After her brother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, she felt that media sensationalism was doing a large disservice to the millions who deal with mental illness. In her words, "brave heros have been silenced by discrimination, shame and fear". Since then, she's created an art series to illustrate the journey one must take to reach recovery. She also developed various videos which aim to replace fear with empathy, and shame with courage. During the meeting, Amber will present some of her work.

She is looking for feedback and ideas regarding her mental health awareness art and videos in order determine the appropriate audiences and shape her message. Amber feels, "When it comes to raising awareness about mental illness, the audience is broad. You have consumers to inspire, the public to enlighten and the media to correct."



THE VIEW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

With hard work, a sense of awareness, and using the tools laid out in therapy, I learned that only I could make the necessary changes and have good things happen in my life. I had to learn to believe in myself and believe that the supportive people around me only want what is best for me. The road is not an easy one but all these small steps add up to a life full of possibilities and unforeseen rewards.

Submitted by Jennifer Hayes

Fall Conference a Success

The SCCCMH and the Youth Services Team of the Saratoga County Mental Health Clinic worked together once again to create a successful conference held on Thursday, October 20th entitled "Complex Trauma: A Community Approach- Implications for Treatment, Parenting, Child Welfare, Family Court and Education." This conference was presented by Dr. Arthur Becker-Weidman, Director of The Center for Family Development, an internationally recognized training and treatment center.

Eighty people from various disciplines attended the conference. Testimonials given include: "This training was effective in helping me plan future sessions with children and families as well as providing a great understanding of complex trauma and the depth it runs." "Appreciated the view of alliance with parents/family. Noting the difference between connections versus compliance relationships was very important." "The goal of building connections and emotional safety among family members is very important across systems as we work with families." "Information on how educators and foster care workers can help was valuable."

A special thank you goes out to Tammy Horan, Case Manager of the Youth Services Team, Collette Fox, Treasurer of the SCCCMH and Beverly Lazar, LCSW, Supervisor of the Youth Services Team for making this educational day worthwhile for all.

SARATOGA COUNTY AGING AND DISABILITY NETWORK

As an advocate for mental health awareness, I'm appreciative of any opportunity that comes my way. My brother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia over five years ago. Having been involved with the SCCCMH for three years, I'm able to advocate on a local level. Thanks to our dedicated Chairperson, Peggy Lounsbury, I was selected to speak at the Saratoga County Aging and Disability Network meeting (spring 2011). Their mission, "To promote community awareness of the programs and services available to Saratoga County residents who are aging and/or disabled, and their caregivers, so as to better meet the needs of these ever increasing populations." But I had to ask the question. How could a mental health advocate contribute to their mission? It was an eye opening experience, to say the least. My view of recovery was reinforced. Society needs to understand that the act of overcoming this type of disability is what makes my brother (along with many others) a true inspiration.

Most people develop mental illness during their 20's-30's. My speech focused on how disability impacts the life of a rather unassuming, young adult. I described to the group, how sudden onset of this disease can impact an entire family.

My brother's first brush with psychosis occurred while studying abroad, during his last semester of college. Up until that point, his future was bright. He could do almost anything he set his mind to. With four sisters, my brother was the last male to carry on the family name. To say that we had expectations would be an understatement. Not only was he highly intelligent but extremely kind to others. We still ask ourselves, did we miss the warning signs? Could we have prevented this from happening? It took a long time to accept reality. In the end, we came to realize that no one could predict my brother's fate

I pointed out that this type of disability did not result from a gradual progression. For many, an acute psychotic break is the equivalent to hitting a brick wall. Reality is lost or at the very least, left hanging by a thread. How could such a delightful young man be faced with something that would rob him of the most promising chapter in his life? How can a 21 year old be forced to live on Medicaid and SSI? My empathy has always run very deep. I still recall a time when my brother refused to take a volunteer position at the local vet. He was embarrassed. He said, "what will they say when they see I have a BS degree in political science?" My heart sank. It must be very difficult to swallow your pride, time and time again.

A decrease in normal function has so much to do with what are called negative symptoms. "They commonly include flat or blunted affect and emotion, poverty of speech (alogia), inability to experience pleasure (anhedonia), lack of desire to form relationships (asociality), and lack of motivation (avolition). Research suggests that negative symptoms contribute more to poor quality of life, functional disability, and the burden on others than do positive symptoms." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schizophrenia>)

There are very few illnesses which will decrease overall function at such a young age. In order to reinforce this message, I played an 8 minute video which illustrates the road to recovery, and incorporates my artwork. The negative portrayal of mental illness in the media only reinforces shame and fear. Could you imagine being silenced by stigma? All while you battle an invisible, yet consuming disability. The courage required to reach recovery is unlike anything I've ever seen.

I received such a warm reception from the group. I thank Peggy and the Saratoga County Aging and Disability Network for allowing me to speak about a topic that is very close to my heart. They have given me hope that, with a little inspiration, society can embrace those who are less fortunate. Now, more than ever, I am convinced that self expression could make this world a better place, and heal a sister who was overcome with grief. My brother may be viewed as disabled but he has enabled so many to replace fear with empathy and shame with courage. – Submitted by Amber Christian-Osterhout, website: www.gaining-insight.com



*This publication was prepared with
the assistance of Four Winds –
Saratoga
www.fourwindshospital.com*



For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury
E-mail: plounsbury@saratogacare.org
Phone: 518-583-8371

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012

SCCCMH Mission: The 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 & 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. E.g., 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 the SCCCMH mailing list.

First Name _____ Last _____ Prefix/Suffix: _____

Address Home Work _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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):

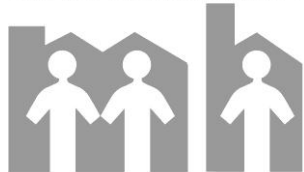
- I want to be a member, but I am unable provide financial support.
- I want to be a member. I will consider a contribution at a later date.
- I want to be a member, enclosed is my tax deductible donation of: __\$10 __\$25 __\$35 Other.

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

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

www.scccmh-saratoga.org

*For more information about
the SCCCMH, contact Peggy
Lounsbury, Chairperson,
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**

P.O. Box 820

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Saratoga Springs, NY
12866
PERMIT NO. 69