



# Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015 

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2015  
CITIZEN OF THE  
YEAR!  
**BEVERLY  
LAZAR**

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**Beverly Lazar** is the SCCCMH 2015 Citizen of the Year. Beverly is being recognized for over 30 years of dedication to serving, promoting and advocating for the needs of people living with mental illness, especially children.

Beverly is a licensed clinical social worker at the Saratoga County Mental Health Center (SCMHC). In her current role, she is the supervisor of the Youth Services team. In addition to her work at the SCMHC, she has spearheaded a number of programs in the community. In 1976, she co-founded, with Judy Ekman, the Saratoga Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, which is now the Saratoga Center for the Family. In 1988, she was coordinator of the "Living in Harmony Festival" promoting peace in our community.

In 2004, she founded Youth<sup>2</sup> – Youth Helping Youth, a foundation that helps young people learn the art and practice of community volunteering and philanthropy. She has worked with disadvantaged youth as part of the World Quilt Project of the Saratoga Mentoring Program, and, as a volunteer for the Dance Flurry, she made it possible for young people to attend who otherwise could not afford to go. Beverly has also served on the boards of the SCCCMH, the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, and Children and Nature Saratoga.

**Beverly will be honored as the SCCCMH 2015 Citizen of the Year at the "SCCCMH Mental Health Matters Benefit" on May 13, 2015 at Longfellows Restaurant.**

## **CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES**

By Peggy Lounsbury

The SCCCMH Board approved the nomination of Melodie Masterson to a two-year term on the board. Melodie quickly assumed the role of Public Relations Chairperson and organized our participation in Mental Health Matters Lobby Day on March 11<sup>th</sup>. (The summary of the experience is on page 3, "In the News".)

The SCCCMH voted to overhaul the SCCCMH website (SCCCMH-Saratoga.org). So, in a few months we will have a dynamic home page and other cosmetic enhancements. Keep watch for the changes. Did you know you can now donate to SCCCMH on-line?

Another change this year will be a new focus on the annual dinner as a fundraiser. To facilitate this transition, we are moving the annual meeting to the June 4, 2015 Board Meeting. This meeting will be held at the TSA administrative building on 127 Union Street, Saratoga Springs at 5:30 pm. This meeting is open to the public and the 2014-2015 fiscal report will be presented for approval.

We were inspired by the mantra of lobby day, "Mental health matters!" So, the annual dinner will now be known as the **"SCCCMH Mental Health Matters (MHM) Benefit"**. We will have a silent auction, raffles and entertainment provided by "Annie and the Hedonists". Annie and the Hedonists perform at festivals, concerts, and swing dances. The band interprets the songs of the great female blues artists of the '20s, 30s & 40's. Other styles include western swing, bluesy country, and roots Americana. Also, please consider being a Mental Health Matters SCCCMH Benefit "Friend" or "Advocate". Those who participate as an "Friend" or "Advocate" will be recognized at the benefit. The SCCCMH is also accepting donations for the silent auction or for raffle prizes. Contact Leslie Ives if you would like to make a donation.

Mark your calendars for the MHM Benefit and look for the RSVP form in this newsletter.

## **Unlimited Potential Mission Changed After NYS Funding Cuts**

The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) eliminated funding for sheltered workshops for the Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI). Instead of the SPMI living in the community with support and being productive, OMH is directing that these people live in nursing homes or live isolated in the community with increased ER visits and hospitalizations. As the financial support for essential community-based services, like sheltered workshops, has decreased, news stories demonstrate the disastrous results of this irresponsible approach to community mental health services.

The NYS Legislature must intervene and restore state funding to sheltered workshops like Unlimited Potential (Saratoga Springs, NY) and prevent a misguided approach to the SPMI. NYS support for sheltered workshops for this vulnerable population is not only critical for the health and welfare of people living with mental illness but also to ensure that NYS tax payers are not burdened with unnecessary Medicaid spending (like nursing home, ER and hospital care). OMH is apparently of the opinion that all people living with mental illness, regardless of the severity of the illness are capable of competitive employment. That does not make sense for all people living with SPMI in the same way it does not make sense to say that all people with physical or developmental disabilities have the ability to be competitively employed. Unlimited Potential is still working hard to best address the needs of the clients despite the NYS funding cut.

**Contact your NYS Legislators now and tell them to restore state aid for Unlimited Potential and sheltered workshops.**

**Use the web address below to find your representatives and how to contact them. Copy this article and send it to them with your personal note and experiences.**

To find your NYS Senator, go to:  
<http://www.nysenate.gov/senators>

To find your NYS Assemblyperson, go to:  
<http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/>

To contact the NYS Governor, go to:  
<http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact>

**IN THE NEWS...**

by Melodie Masterson

Representatives from SCCCMH attended the Mental Health Association of NYS (MHANY) **Mental Health Matters Lobby Day** at the NY state legislative offices in Albany. While at the day the SCCCMH representatives spoke with the legislative aides for Senator Kathleen Marchione and Assemblyperson Carrie Woerner. The legislative aides were very receptive to supporting these important mental health issues. The SCCCMH representatives urged the legislators to:

- Intervene and restore state aid to sheltered workshops like **Unlimited Potential in Saratoga Springs** and prevent a misguided approach for the severely and persistent mentally ill. (See page 2, "NYS Cuts Program" for more information.)
- Support the "**Mental Health Public Awareness Tax Check Off Bill**" (A.833 in the Assembly and S.632 in the Senate) to help fight the stigma and discrimination of mental illness.
- Support funding in the proposed budget to continue Cost of Living Adjustments for direct care staff as well as adding more clinical staff for mental health services.
- Understand the unique housing issues for people living with mental illness.

(Continued)

- Support reinvestment of any funds saved by psychiatric bed closures back into services and support for the mental health community.

This year an Anti-Stigma Press Event took the place of the usual rally and march around the Capital Building. At this event several speakers spoke to the press about the importance of creating public awareness as a means of reducing the stigma associated with mental illness. Among the speakers were Senator David Carlucci, Senator David Ort of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, and Assemblyperson Amy Gunter of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

The representatives from SCCCMH (pictured below) felt this grassroots lobbying was a worthwhile and meaningful advocacy experience.



Leslie Ives, Amanda Blodgett and Tracey Fish at Mental Health Matters Lobby Day in Albany

SCCCMH Newsletter is the official publication of the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health,  
 P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
[www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](http://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 Editor's e-mail address. Articles not submitted electronically can be mailed to the address above.

## THE VIEW FROM HERE

### **What do we do when we lose someone while living with a mental illness?**

By Amanda R. Blodgett

This question came to mind on September 12, 2013, when I opened my e-mail to find a message that my best friend from high school had passed just two days before. Now you may be wondering isn't that a harsh way to find out? Well, I moved from Chicago to the Capital Region of New York when I was 22 years old. I left behind a lot of things and one of them was my best friend from high school, Celia Enid Rivero. We talked often on-line and she always picked my family and me up at the airport when we came into Chicago. However, in May of 2013, Celia actually called me. She had stage four uterine cancer! This was hard enough, but that September, things got harder.

When I read that e-mail on that fateful September day, I thought back to the summer of 2005 when I lost my Grandma. One of my uncles, knowing I had been diagnosed with a mental illness in 1999, wanted to make sure I knew what was normal grieving and what was a symptom of my mental illness. Sure, normally panic attacks have to do with anxiety, but people who are grieving get them without having any previous mental health issues. Now paranoia can be because one is not dealing with grief, but it's more likely to do with mental health issues. There are people who are completely healthy mental health-wise and go through a traumatic loss, then develop a mental illness. As an example of this, think of soldiers with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) or, more vivid in my mind, is the couple that has been married 50 plus years, then one of them passes, and the other goes through major depression. Now back to the topic, what do you do when you are a person living with a mental illness and you experience the loss of a loved one?

Well, first off, let me say I don't have a Ph.D. after my name nor am I a clinical social worker. But that's where you should start. That's where I started. I went to my therapist and talked through what I had been going through. Sometimes it just helps to hear a professional say that what you're going through is completely normal and not a flare up of your diagnosis. Then you have to take time to grieve.

Yes, when you probably were first diagnosed with that mental health issue you had people fighting in your corner to get up and get out of bed! However, sleeping all day or lying awake at night thinking of your loved one is what everyone does no matter how healthy they are mental health wise.

Taking some time off from work and not socializing as much are also completely normal. I would just say not to let it go on forever. At some point you need to dust yourself off and find yourself again. One of the things that really helped me was something I read in a grief book (which by the way is great for those nights you're up thinking of your loved one). Anyway, it said you will never be the same person again. You have to find the "new you."

So how do you find yourself again? Again there is no Ph.D. after my name! One of the best things you can do is to keep your psychiatrist and therapist appointments. Sometimes you will experience things to the point you need a medication adjustment or extra therapy. It's just a part of living with a mental illness. Then what can you do? What I did was join a grief support group. They never knew I had a mental illness when I went, but I just joined a group to hear people going through what I was going through.

My grief support counselor handed me an information packet my first day and she said, "This is so you know that you are not going nuts!" I thought, "Boy, if you only knew." Also it's good to have a strong support network. For some of us that may mean family, for others it means friends. Then allow yourself to feel! It's hard. As a person living with a mental illness, I can tell you sometimes it feels like my feelings "hurt." However, if you don't allow yourself to grieve then what could have been dealt with a good half hour cry, could turn into a four hour wait in the ER. When you find your "new self," you can let the person go. They will always be a part of you, but part of you has gone with them too!

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

***Join SCCCMH Today!***

### **New Director for the Mental Health Center**

Michael S. Prezioso, Ph.D., joined the Saratoga County Department of Mental Health as Director in September 2014. He served previously as the Director of Inpatient Services at the Capital District Psychiatric Center, a State-operated psychiatric center located in Albany, NY, and as the Director of Schenectady County's Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Diversion Project. Dr. Prezioso replaced Hans Lehr who retired earlier in 2014.

The Saratoga County Mental Health Center (SCMHC) is located at 135 South Broadway, Saratoga Springs. The Center consists of the:

- **Mental Health Clinic:** Provides outpatient treatment to adults, adolescents and children living with mental illness.
- **Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services:** Medically supervised outpatient program for individuals and families coping with alcohol and substance abuse.
- **Continuing day treatment program:** Formally the "Friendship House" program, on January 1, 2014 a new approach to the day treatment program was implemented, called Reflection PROS (**P**ersonalized, **R**ecovery-**O**riented, **S**ervice). Reflection PROS serves adults with a mental illness diagnosis who have a functional disability that interferes with their ability to live a fulfilling life.

Dr. Prezioso leads the staff of the Center is dedicated to the mission of providing accessible, integrated care. In this time of hyper change, the staff at the Center understands that mental health service delivery is an evolving system that needs to adapt to the changing needs of County residents.

Dr. Prezioso noted the importance of the SCMHC partnering with other agencies and community organizations that provide services to people living with mental illness and substance abuse to facilitate the necessary communication, collaboration, coordination, and integration to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective services for Saratoga County.

### [SCN-MHPA Spring Meeting](#)

The Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates met on March 11, 2015 at Wellspring offices on Broadway. Wellspring is the new name of the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of Saratoga County. The new name better reflects the mission of the organization with an emphasis on preventing relationship and sexual abuse, and not just responding to abuse. The group also discussed the NYS budget and impact on organizations that provide services to people living with mental illness.

If you would like more information, contact Peggy Lounsbury at [plounsbury@saratogacare.org](mailto:plounsbury@saratogacare.org) or 583-8371.

### **JOIN NOW!**

Consumers, family and friends, mental health professionals and others, please join the SCCCMH now for the new year. As a member of SCCCMH, you will get our newsletter, and more important, you will help SCCCMH carry-out our mission to be the voice of people living with mental illness in Saratoga County. The more members we have, the more power we have to influence local and state government.

Also, consider a charitable gift to SCCCMH. You can honor or memorize someone and help make a difference in the mental health community, too.

**Give power to the mental health community...join today!**

### **Apply for Grants from SCCCMH**

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health awards monetary grants to not-for-profit organizations that provide services or assistance to people living with mental illness in Saratoga County.

Awards are generally up to one thousand dollars and are distributed three times a year. Contact Peggy Lounsbury or visit our website for more information and an application. Applications for the next award cycle are due June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## President Obama Proposes Plan to Ensure the Future of SSDI

NAMI.org Author: Andrew Sperling - 2/20/2015

The Social Security Administration has projected that without a reallocation of funds, the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) trust fund will not be able to pay full benefits within two years. Unless Congress acts now, monthly cash SSDI benefits could be cut by as much as 19%. President Obama's 2016 budget includes a proposal to move funding among Social Security's trust funds to ensure that the fund that finances SSDI benefits is not drained as early as the end of 2016.

This movement of funds is called reallocation. Reallocation would mean a temporary shift of Social Security revenues to the SSDI fund reserves. This move will extend the SSDI fund for almost two decades, without cutting Social Security coverage, eligibility or benefits—and without increasing taxpayer contributions.

Contact your Senators today to ask them to support reallocation.

See more at: <https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/President-Obama-Proposes-Plan-to-Ensure-the-Future#sthash.hFYLi8cR.dpuf>

Albany Office for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, 11A Clinton Avenue, Room 821, Albany, NY 12207; Phone: 518-431-0120 Fax: (518) 431-0128



### Newsletter Submissions

Thanks everyone for sharing the news, viewpoints, and your opinions that contribute to our success! Submissions for the next issue are in the spring and need to be mailed or emailed by **October 15th**.

Please send your articles to:

Lorraine Gardephe  
Unlimited Potential  
P.O. Box 4656  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 587-2851  
(518) 587-4367 FAX  
or email them to me at  
[lgardephe@upsaratoga.com](mailto:lgardephe@upsaratoga.com)

## Study finds that prolonging dopamine's effects in the brain boosts compassion

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/291223.php>

What if there was a pill that made you more compassionate and more likely to give spare change to someone less fortunate? UC Berkeley scientists have taken a big step in that direction.

A new study by UC Berkeley and UC San Francisco researchers finds that giving a drug that changes the neurochemical balance in the prefrontal cortex of the brain causes a greater willingness to engage in prosocial behaviors, such as ensuring that resources are divided more equally.

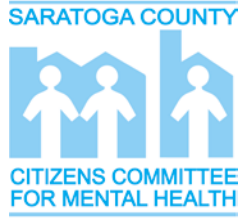
The researchers also say that future research may lead to a better understanding of the interaction between altered dopamine-brain mechanisms and mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia or addiction, and potentially light the way to possible diagnostic tools or treatments for these disorders.

"Our hope is that medications [like tolcapone] targeting social function may someday be used to treat these disabling conditions," said Andrew Kayser, a co-principal investigator on the study, an assistant professor of neurology at UC San Francisco and a researcher in the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at UC Berkeley.

"We typically think of fair-mindedness as a stable characteristic, part of one's personality," said Hsu. "Our study doesn't reject this notion, but it does show how that trait can be systematically affected by targeting specific neurochemical pathways in the human brain."

Computational modeling showed Hsu and his colleagues that under tolcapone's influence, game players were more sensitive to and less tolerant of social inequity, the perceived relative economic gap between a study participant and a stranger.

By connecting to previous studies showing that economic inequity is evaluated in the prefrontal cortex, a core area of the brain that dopamine affects, this study brings researchers closer to pinpointing how prosocial behaviors such as fairness are initiated in the brain.



For more information, contact:

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

Or visit our website: [www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org](http://www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org)

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016**

**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 and 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. For example, 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(s): 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 and Advocates (SCN-MHPA), then check here:

If you would like to participate in a mental health consumer workshop, 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.

**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!!**



[www.scccmh-saratoga.org](http://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 **increases public awareness** of the needs of people living with mental illness.



This publication was prepared  
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Four Winds -Saratoga  
[www.fourwindshospital.com](http://www.fourwindshospital.com)

Saratoga County Citizens  
Committee for Mental Health

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