

JCC's OTA Interns Make Invaluable Contributions to MHA

While they are learning, the students in Jamestown Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program bring their own magic to the Mental Health Association.

The Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County (MHA) became a placement for students in Jamestown Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (OTA) in 2010 and began having both Levels I and II students in 2015.

"It would be tough to say who's benefitted more from this collaboration: the students or the MHA," said Ken Yergens, MHA Director of Student Activities. "We know from the feedback we get from our interns that it is a valuable learning experience for them. And all we have to do is take a look around our cheerful space to be reminded of all they've done for us!"

Ken was referring to the brightly painted walls of MHA's common area. Under the direction of JCC's OTA Program Senior Project Manager Mike Nordin, interns designed murals to cover the broad expanses. Participants and interns worked together to bring the images to life.

Earlier OTA students had created the sensory room, dedicated as Rick's Room on the retirement of former MHA CEO Rick Huber. Others started coffee houses that evolved into open mic nights. Last fall's interns organized their entire class to present a Healthy Habits Wellness Fair.

Meredith Sheesley recently completed her JCC OTA internship at the Mental Health Association. She explained, "Focus was put on the crucial importance of how OT can heavily impact an individual's recovery process. Occupational therapy practitioners have the ability to address common struggles within the mental health patient's community, like organization, money management, and time management.

"The participants have taught me so much, but most importantly, I know I've made a positive impact on some-



Interns from JCC's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program have become an integral part of the Mental Health Association. Standing in front of one of the murals of earlier OTA students are, from left, the Program's Senior Project Manager Mike Nordin, MHA's Director of Student Activities Ken Yergens, and current intern Justin Jimenez.

one's life. They are some of the most driven and intelligent people I know; they deserve all of the time, trust, and effort from their support systems."

Meredith concluded, "Life begins at the end of our comfort zones. MHA is giving individuals the opportunity to stare life in the face, sit in the driver's seat, and take control of their futures. I am forever grateful to be a part of something so unique and life changing."

Mental Health Association Hours

Monday: 8:30 am - 7 pm

Tues., Wed. & Friday: 8:30 am - 4 pm

Thursday: 8:30 am - 8 pm

Saturday: 9 am - 2 pm

Interested in a Speaker or Mental Health First Aid Trainer?

Contact us at (716) 661-9044 or
chautauquamha@gmail.com.

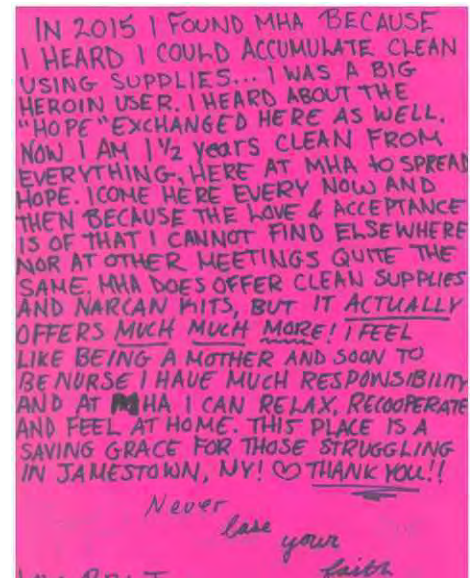
Evergreen Health at the MHA

In addition to Narcan training and the syringe exchange program, the Evergreen Health Exchange at the MHA offers HIV and Hepatitis C testing by appointment Monday-Friday. You can count on its team to be non-judgmental, affirming, educational, and understanding. Testing is free and confidential. Linkage to appropriate medical care is provided to anyone who tests positive for HIV or Hep C.

What happens when you get tested?

- A counselor will ask you about your health, and answer any questions you have.
- You'll give blood by a finger prick.
- You'll receive your results in about 20 minutes.

For most patients, Hepatitis C can be cured in several months with very few side effects. Call (716) 541-0678 for more information or an appointment, or come to the Evergreen Exchange at the MHA.



MHA gives me a place to go when I don't know where to turn, yet know I need non-judgemental support to get through my day.

...Message on MHA's Facebook page

Bob Tomb Remembered...

Participants, staff, board, and friends mourn the recent passing of MHA treasurer and former Chief Fiscal Officer Bob Tomb.

Bob's volunteering ranged from running the computer lab to becoming MHA's first CFO in early 2016. He was nicknamed the "Wizard" because anyone could always go to him with any question about anything, from computers to policies and procedures.

As one staff remembers him, "Bob was family to all of us. He left us with many amazing gifts: his sense of humor, the confidence and skills to all be better people, and the ability to keep the MHA open to everyone. Thank you, Bob, for being the kind, wonderful person that I will always look up to."



At his January 26 retirement celebration, Rick Huber was surrounded by MHA staff (from left): Mark Lehere, Jenny Rowe, Kia Briggs, Rick, Luis Rosa, Steven Cobb, Walter Westerdahl, Joe Anderson, Tina Ellsworth, and Jennifer Diamond (seated).

I love my little family there at MHA and all they do to help us- they are super awesome. I love my knitting classes too.
...Message on MHA's Facebook page

MHA Board Members

- Carm Micciche, President ♥ Mary Keeney, Vice President
- Marie Anderson, Secretary ♥ Kim Carlson ♥ Ian Eastman
- Peggy Hallberg ♥ Lindsey Isaac-Lopus ♥ Sharon Lawson
- Kimberly Lombard ♥ Heather Panczykowski

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- Dr. Lillian Vitanza Ney, Chair ♥ Dale Robbins, Vice Chair ♥ Leanna Luka-Conley ♥ Betsy Kidder, M.D., Ph.D. ♥ Jim McElrath, Jr. ♥ Christine Schuyler ♥ Harry Snellings ♥ Todd Trantum ♥ Michelle Hammond Turner



A Message from MHA's Executive Director

by Kia Briggs

I first tried a cigarette in 5th grade after being curious from seeing adults.

I was perceived as a normal adolescent and graduated from high school with honors.

My experiences eventually led me toward addiction and anxiety, but today I have a wonderful family and job. Numerous people had an impact on my recovery that started at the age of 23. Each person went the extra mile to help me through my low points, the lowest being when I was angry for waking up from another day in addiction.

Today, I am grateful to help others and want to stress the importance of acceptance of anyone who has a mental health diagnosis or addiction. At the MHA, we will walk beside you to navigate the road to recovery. There is no wrong door in accomplishing your aspirations.

The future will always bring adversities, but hope is possible. Live free of pain and come see what we have to offer.

Community Groups Contribute to MHA

The **Busti Church of God** recently made a significant donation to the MHA. Pictured at the occasion were (from left) congregants Carna Pierce and Lana Keller, MHA CFO Jenny Rowe, Pastor Roy Ferguson, MHA Associate Director Steven Cobb, and congregant Norma Jean Angelo. **JCC's Occupational Therapy Assistant interns** planned and participants painted the cheerful new murals in the common room.

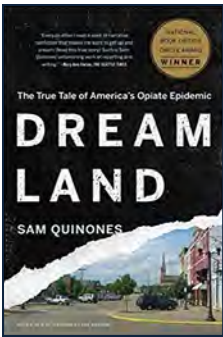
From the brochure describing the many services of the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County:

We're here because we've been there!



Those present when the **Winged Ox Players of St. Luke's Episcopal Church** in Jamestown made a donation to the MHA were (from left) MHA Peer Specialists Jennifer Diamond and Louis Rosa with St. Luke's parishioner Shar Maisto. The donation from St. Luke's theatre ministry came from their production last spring of *Least Resistance*, written by British-born Jamestown resident and playwright Richard Olson-Walter and directed by MHA Associate Director Steven Cobb. The play addressed the local drug epidemic through the words of those who have personally struggled with or been affected by addiction. Winged Ox Players are presenting *It Can't Happen Here*, a new stage adaptation of Sinclair Lewis's 1935 semi-satirical political novel, on May 11 and 12, 18 and 19, at the Willow Bay Theater.

Worth Reading/Worth Watching



Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic gives an explosive and shocking account of addiction and black tar heroin in the heartland of America. Acclaimed journalist Sam Quinones weaves together two classic tales of capitalism run amok whose unintentional collision has been catastrophic. The unfettered prescribing of pain medications during the 1990s reached its peak in Purdue Pharma's campaign to market OxyContin. Meanwhile, a massive influx of black tar heroin originating from one small county in Mexico's west coast assaulted small town and mid-sized cities across the country, driven by a brilliant, almost unbeatable marketing and distribution system. Together these phenomena continue to lay waste to American communities. *Dreamland* is a revelatory account of the corrosive threat facing the U.S. It is available at Jamestown's Prendergast Library.

In his book ***Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of The War On Drugs*** and his TED Talk ***Everything You Think You Know About Addiction Is Wrong***, British journalist Johann Hari describes how after watching loved ones struggle to manage their addictions, he started to wonder why we treat addicts the way we do -- and if there might be a better way. In his world-wide search for "What really causes addiction -- to everything from cocaine to smart-phones? And how can we overcome it?," he unearthed some surprising and hopeful ways of thinking about this age-old problem. He discusses the available research into the underlying causes of addiction and concludes: the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it's connection. "A core part of addiction, I came to think...is about not being able to bear to be present in your life." The book is at the Prendergast Library; the TED Talk and "**What You Can Do**" are at ChasingTheScream.com.



Understanding the Opioid Epidemic is a nationally televised documentary produced by Buffalo's WNED-TV that traces the causes behind the unprecedented growth in the use of prescription opioids and the devastating impact these drugs are having in virtually every part of America. Drug overdoses have increased among men and women, all races, and adults of nearly all ages. The film reveals the tragic impact of the overuse of prescription painkillers on individuals, families and communities. It explores the dramatic increase in the use and acceptance of prescription painkillers and addresses possible solutions to the opioid epidemic including more non-drug treatment for pain, improved opioid prescribing, and reducing the amount of opioids produced and prescribed in America. The best solution is preventing people from becoming addicted in the first place. This program aired nationally on PBS and can be seen in its entirety at pbs.org/wned/opioid-epidemic/watch.

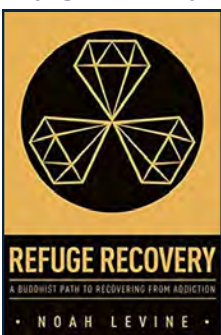


Because "the opioid crisis is the worst addiction epidemic in U.S. History," in March *Time* magazine published a special issue: "**The Opioid Diaries.**" This documentation of the crisis by veteran conflict photographer James Nachtwey can be found at time.com/opioids, complete with videos and resources.

As the "Behind the Project" segment concludes: "First, we need to recognize that addiction is a disease. The opioid epidemic must be seen as a public-health crisis rather than a moral failure....We must enhance efforts to reduce the supply,....(A)nd, finally, we need to confront problems such as the growing economic divide, unaffordable health care and the diminished employment opportunities for those without a college degree which are helping fuel demand in the first place."



Refuge Recovery's author Noah Levine adapts the Buddha's Four Noble Truths and Eight Fold Path into a proven and systematic approach to recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. *Refuge Recovery* includes daily meditation practices, written investigations that explore the causes and conditions of our addictions, and advice and inspiration for finding or creating a community to help you heal and awaken. It is designed for anyone interested in a non-theistic approach to recovery and requires no previous experience or knowledge of Buddhism or meditation.



Sheridan Smith and Steven Cobb jointly facilitate two Refuge Recovery groups in Jamestown. The 9:30 a.m. Tuesday group is at the MHA. The 7:30 p.m. Thursday group meets at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 410 North Main Street. Smith is the creator of ***Recover Jamestown***, the film that tells stories of addiction, recovery, and loss, and explores what hope lies in new solutions and community efforts; a trailer and the full movie can be seen on YouTube.com. Cobb is MHA Associate Director and a member of St. Luke's.