

Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County Celebrates Overdose Awareness with Art in Recovery Exhibits

The Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County (MHA) recognized International Overdose Awareness Day with 2024 Art in Recovery exhibits on separate weekends in Jamestown and Dunkirk.

Artists, friends, supporters and the public came to see the works created by participants in Art in Recovery groups in the MHA's Jamestown and Dunkirk recovery centers.



Jamestown's exhibit was presented in the Undercroft of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. After the Sunday Recovery Service, an Overdose Awareness Prayer Walk was held from the church up Spring Street to Love Elementary School, the neighborhood where 30% of Chautauqua County's fatal overdoses have happened.



International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held August 31 each year to remember those gone too soon from overdoses and to commit to preventing these deaths, from the workplace to anywhere.



Facilitators of the Jamestown Art in Recovery group are MHA Activities/PR Coordinator Dianne Valvo and volunteer Brandon Griggs. Volunteer Wing Haight-Wills facilitates the Dunkirk group.



Both exhibits were made possible in part by support from the United Arts Appeal of Chautauqua County Projects Pool Grants Program.

Pictured clockwise, from top right, are some of the artists whose work was on display at the Art in Recovery exhibits: Melita Lyon, Mike Cain, Wing Haight-Wills, Brandon Griggs, Mike Norberg, Becky Hemmis, and Pete Carcione.



News of Changes

On September 2, Steven Cobb took on a new role as Project Manager for the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County. He now has direct oversight of the OPEN (Occupational Peer Empowerment Network) program funded by a federal Appalachian Regional Commission grant as well as responsibility for improving our presence in Dunkirk. Michael Nordin is serving as Interim Executive Director.

Monthly Recovery Luncheons at the Jamestown Recovery Center



St. Luke's volunteers from left are Sandy Harle, Sandy Kearney, and Fran Lapinski.

Special volunteers were recognized at the **June recovery luncheon**. Gordy Frederes and Blain "Buddy" Carlson provide invaluable service running the reception area at the Jamestown recovery center and were honored that evening at the United Way of Southern Chautauqua County's annual Volunteer of the Year ceremony. Executive Director Steven Cobb thanked Rev. Tom LeBeau for his years facilitating the faith-based PTSD recovery group and continuing to serve on the MHA's board of directors as he moves from the area in retirement. The Mexican-themed meal was prepared and served by volunteers from St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



From left are Gordy Frederes, Blain "Buddy" Carlson, Steven Cobb, and Rev. Tom LeBeau.



From left are Rod Dorchak, Diana Bloom, Steven Cobb and Pete Carcione.

Lovely weather added to the pleasure of the **July recovery luncheon**. The picnic meal was prepared and served by MHA staff and board of directors. MHA Executive Director Steven Cobb recognized participants Diana Bloom, Rod Dorchak and Pete Carcione for their work on the flower garden behind the Jamestown recovery center.



From left: IT Manager Joseph Vaughn made popcorn on the recently donated popcorn machine; Finance Manager Jill Marsh, volunteer Mike Norberg, and Activities/PR Coordinator Dianne Valvo served.



From left: Administrative Manager Michelle Colaiacovo, volunteer Buddy Carlson, and participants Joe Wisnewski and Jonathan Graham. Not pictured is Director of Student Activities Ken Yergens.

At the **August recovery luncheon** Interim Executive Director Michael Nordin awarded certificates to participants for achieving milestones in their recovery, including one and two years of sobriety and gaining employment. Activities/PR Coordinator Dianne Valvo presented participant Shawn Hastings with a certificate recognizing the great personal strides he has made and in appreciation for the makeovers he did for ladies for Pride Month. Staff and volunteers served the turkey dinner provided by St. Susan Center.



Participant Shawn Hastings and Activities/PR Coordinator Dianne Valvo.

Because celebrating positive milestones increases long term recovery, the Mental Health Association has monthly recovery luncheons that provide positive reinforcement to those in addiction and mental health recovery.

MHA Interim Executive Director Michael Nordin welcomed everyone to the **September recovery luncheon** and awarded certificates to participants for achieving milestones in their recovery, including for two years of sobriety and for completing rehabilitation and gaining employment. He reminded participants that rides would be available to the Seventh-day Adventist Church food pantry.

Jamestown’s St. Luke’s Episcopal Church members Cathy Johnner, Terri Rettberg and Kim Mann served the meal they prepared.



From left are Cathy Johnner, Terri Rettberg and Kim Mann.



Volunteer Tina Morgan

At the MHA’s **October recovery luncheon** volunteer Tina Morgan talked about the new **Suicide Loss Survivor Support Group** she is leading for people who have lost a loved one to suicide. The group recognizes that suicide loss is grief unlike any other and that those who have not been through it don’t necessarily understand. Tina, who lost a son to suicide, shared that she started the group so others won’t feel as lonely as she has. The group meets 4:45–5:45 p.m. on Thursdays at the Jamestown recovery center. It is a safe place that offers support, where confidentiality is of the utmost importance. Whatever participants’ beliefs, they are welcome to share without fear of judgment.

Announcements included the opening of the **Chautauqua County Code Blue Warming Center** at 917 Washington Street, November 1 - April 30, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 a.m. whenever the nighttime temperature is freezing or below. A new **All Addictions Anonymous group meets on Mondays at 5:30 p.m.** and is open to anyone with any addiction issue. Children ages birth to 12 can be registered for **Toys for Tots** at MHA’s front desk until the November 27 deadline.

The meal was prepared and served by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Jamestown, under the direction of Betsy Trusel.



Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Jamestown from left are Patrick, Lydia, Pam, George, Gail, Ashley, Betsy and Gary.

Can Your Business, Church, or Group Support Recovery Luncheons?



Celebrating positive milestones increases long-term recovery. The MHA has monthly luncheons that recognize progress in mental health and substance use disorder recovery. For some of our participants, the third Tuesday is when they experience their most nourishing meal of the month.

With upwards of 80 visitors each time, the MHA needs help providing these meals. To participate in making the meal or sharing its cost, contact Finance Director Jill Marsh at 716-450-0504. You will be recognized in our widely-distributed news releases that report all our luncheons.



Jamestown Pride 2024

The weather was perfect and the crowd was large for the Saturday, June 8 Jamestown Pride Festival!



Variety show awards were presented for:
Queer Radio Hit – Jo Hyatt
Gay Hero – DM “Dani” Flexer
Tear Jerker – Harik
Juiced Up – Queue Queer
Rising Star – Alix Sandberg
Most in the Flow –
Hooper Chick (Brandy Welch) and
Transcendance (Melissa Stockwell)



St. Luke’s Youth Group volunteer Eve Kushmaulat assists with rainbow sand art to take home.

Community support made Pride 2024 possible. Thanks to Evergreen Health, Jamestown Pride, Jamestown Public Market, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, City of Jamestown, Jamestown Police Department, Sneakers Bar, Knights of Enchanted Dreams, Robert H. Jackson Center, First Presbyterian Church, Cattaraugus County Bank, Rose and Grace Studio, and many volunteers and vendors.



Drag Performer Katrina Twerk Island on the Rainbow Walk.



Linda Lloyd poses with a well-dressed bear.

You can learn more about this MHA program at JamestownPride.org or [Jamestown Pride on Facebook](#).



Karen Hewes Suber performing as Alyx Bean at the Variety Show.



St. Luke’s Episcopal Church’s Pride Frontal decorated the altar for Pride Month and the June 9 Pride service.

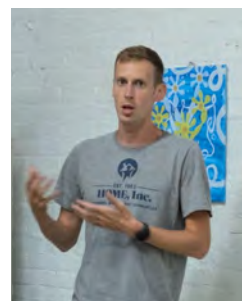


The crowd for Lips Poppin’ Productions drag performances at Wintergarden Plaza.

HOME: Housing Opportunities Made Equal

In July, Steve Haagsma, education specialist with HOME (Housing Opportunities Made Equal), presented a training seminar on tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities at MHA.

No appointment is necessary to meet with a representative of the Buffalo-based program the second Tuesday of every month, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. in the Department of Development on the fourth floor of Jamestown City Hall. Services are also available through 716-854-1400 or HOMENY.org.



Thank You To So Many For All Your Support Last Summer!

There were several opportunities to support the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County this past summer, and you definitely came through! Just like Giving Tuesday on December 3, all the money raised through these special events goes into our Donation Fund that directly assists the participants MHA serves – for diapers, bus passes, clothing for work, drivers licenses and non-drivers ID, emergency housing, food...and the list goes on.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity!



By the June 30 **Target Circle** voting deadline, your votes earned \$2,962.56 for the MHA! If you're not part of the Target Circle, here's how to join:

- Step 1: Choose "My Target" in the Target app
- Step 2: Tap on "Target Circle™"
- Step 3: Select "Vote for nonprofits"
- Step 4: Find us and vote!

Give Big CHQ, the Chautauqua Region and Northern Chautauqua Community Foundations 24-hour online fundraising event, was on June 13 this year. Your support raised \$2,040 for MHA.



Give 716 is the collaborative effort between the Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres Foundations with the goal of uniting Bills and Sabres fans with the Western New York community in an epic giving event. The July 16 fundraiser brought in \$726.32 for the MHA.

Shopping for MHA....

There are many ways you can help us achieve our vision for "a rich and satisfying life for people in recovery." **Financial donations** are always appreciated, or you might have more fun shopping for **items we need**, from office and cleaning supplies to warm socks for participants. **Coffee** is welcome year round: any brand, basic flavors, bulk packages for making 100 cups a day.



It's the time to think about **cold weather items** that are so appreciated from October through March: men's and women's hats, gloves, socks, and scarves. (No clothing, please.) Check out our [donations page](#) and wishlists for all kinds of ways you can help at MHACHautauqua.org/donate.



The work of the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County is made possible by funding from Appalachian Regional Commission ♥ Hultquist Foundation ♥ Lenna Foundation ♥ Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation ♥ Chautauqua County Departments of Mental Hygiene and Health & Human Services ♥ NYS Office of Mental Health ♥ Chautauqua Region Community Foundation ♥ Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation ♥ United Ways of Chautauqua County ♥ United Arts Appeal of Chautauqua County ♥ and others, like you....

Wound Care Summit

A capacity audience participated in the Regional Harm Reduction and Xylazine Wound Care Summit at Celoron’s Chautauqua Harbor Hotel in late May. Co-hosted by the MHA, the Northeast and Caribbean Opioid Response Network and New York City’s Columbia School of Nursing, the event offered continuing education credits in a number of professional fields. Then MHA Executive Director Steven Cobb is pictured, center, leading one of the panel presentations.



Not approved for use in people, Xylazine is a tranquilizer being used as a cutting agent for heroin and other street drugs. When not fatal, it can cause skin sores and infections so severe they can lead to amputation. Summit topics included best practices for identifying and treating wounds and harm reduction-focused resources. Organizer Shannon Fisk reported great positive feedback from attendees. A grant in New York City covered the costs of the free event.

The MHA provides **free xylazine wound care kits and free fentanyl test kits** at the Dunkirk and Jamestown recovery centers. **Narcan**, the brand name for naloxone, an over-the-counter opioid overdose reversal drug, is also available **free at both MHA locations**.

Goodskills Career Builder

MHA staff were delighted to participate in Jonathan Graham’s June graduation from Goodskills Career Builder, the Goodwill of Western New York program on the Jamestown Community College campus that provides free targeted skills training and job placement services into higher wage careers (GoodWillWNY.org/workforce). Pictured with Goodskills staff and Jonathan (center) are Steven Cobb (second left) and Peer Specialists Jessica Crooks and Justin Jimenez.



Conservation Wellness Workshop

The MHA partnered with the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy (CWC) and the Roger Tory Peterson Institute (RTPI) to restore native wildflowers along the Chadakoin River. In a June workshop at MHA, artist Sara Baker Michalak described the spiny softshell turtles that live there. After she showed how to make seed balls, everyone received their own ball and shaped it into a turtle. Part of the “Art that Matters to the Planet 2024: Clarity” exhibit at RTPI (RTPI.org) through late October, the seed ball turtles were released along the river shoreline to support the CWC’s river restoration efforts (ChautauquaWatershed.org).



MHA on WNY News Now

In a September interview with **WNY News Now**, MHA Interim Executive Director Michael Nordin and Administrative Manager Michelle Colaiacovo discussed the various resources and services the MHA provides for the community.



Michelle described the **CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) program** she facilitates. The 12-week group program is focused on helping family members of addicts learn self-care and how to communicate with their struggling family member, with the ultimate goal of getting their loved one to seek treatment. She also sees people individually, in her office or sometimes in their homes. In recovery herself, Michelle has found that sharing her own experiences has helped participants open up to her.

In recovery herself, Michelle has found that sharing

Mike explained that in addition to offering groups and classes to meet many needs, MHA provides a variety of services, including finding housing, going to rehab, connecting people with primary care, a counselor, or insurance. "All services are free. Anybody can walk in and we will do our best to help them." In closing, Mike stressed, "Don't judge people. You never know: You could be in their shoes someday."



In September volunteer Tina Morgan (left) and Activities/PR Coordinator Dianne Valvo represented the MHA at the **Suicide Prevention Alliance of Chautauqua County's Out of the Darkness Walk** at Jackson Taylor Park. They gave out brochures, bracelets and Narcan, an easily administered medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. Like fentanyl test kits and drug deactivation bags that destroy leftover prescription drugs, Narcan is available free at the MHA recovery centers in Jamestown and Dunkirk. See page 3 to learn about the **Suicide Loss Survivor Support Group** Tina is leading.

MHA Vision Statement

The Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County envisions a time when the peer recovery model is widely relied upon as a foundation of support and advocacy to address the total needs of all individuals and their families challenged by the effects of mental health or substance use disorders. We will persevere in changing our local culture to one of hope, kindness, and justice, redefining and expanding the possibilities for a rich and satisfying life for people in recovery.

<http://mhachautauqua.org/email>

Join MHA's
email
list!

Keep up on all that we do
in our community.

MHA Board of Directors

Sarah Tranum, President 🛎 Kimberly Lombard, Vice President 🛎 Jake Kohler, Treasurer 🛎 Julie Apperson, Secretary
Judy Anderson 🛎 Jennifer Howe 🛎 Lindsey Isaac-Lopus 🛎 Sherry Lawson 🛎 Tom Lebeau 🛎 Sara Luther 🛎



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Email: info@mhachautauqua.org
Call or Text: (716) 661-9044

MHA Mission Statement

The Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County commits to radical acceptance, empowerment, and advocacy for our community members who struggle with mental health and substance use.



You can make a difference in someone's life!

When you're living on the edge financially, it doesn't take much to fall off the cliff. When you can't afford transportation, you could lose that new job. When you don't have money for food, your kids could go hungry. When you can't make a rent payment, you could find yourself living on the street.

The Mental Health Association uses donations received on **Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024**, the international day of charitable giving, to directly assist the participants it serves – to provide emergency housing, food, transportation, or even a small treat to celebrate achievements or provide a needed lift.

Please reach out and make a difference with your donation at MHACHautauqua.org/Donate, on the [MHA Facebook page](#), in person, or by mailing a check to MHA, 31 Water Street, Suite 7, Jamestown NY 14701.

OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS US HERE

- FITNESS & HEALTH
- RECOVERY LUNCHEONS
- CREATIVE OUTLETS
- VETERAN SUPPORT
- PEER SUPPORT
- SOCIAL SUPPORT
- SECURE HOUSING
- SYSTEMS NAVIGATION

MHA Support Groups

Anger Management

Working to develop skills for dealing with anger.

Art in Recovery

An artistic expression of your personal recovery.

CRAFT Community Reinforcement And Family Training

Support for families and friends of those in recovery.

Depression & Anxiety Support

For those facing depression & anxiety in their daily lives

Grief Support *

Discussion for those that have experienced loss of any kind.

Knitting for Well-being

Use knitting to improve your wellbeing.

Wellness Warriors

Exercise for healthy recovery. *Low-mobility accessible*

Positive Parenting Program from

Free discussion workshops for parents of kids & teens.

PTSD Groups - Men*, Women*, Co-ed, and faith based

Skills to heal trauma for people in recovery.

Recovery Dharma

Based on principles of mindfulness and meditation.

Recovery Yoga by Jen Raines

Yoga techniques to support a healthy body and mind.

Rockin' Recovery

Discussion on our favorite songs & how they make us feel.

SMART Recovery

Self-Management And Recovery Training with secular and scientific motivational recovery methods.

Suicide Loss Support

For those who have experienced the loss of suicide.

Unwind Your Mind by

For those facing depression & anxiety in their daily lives.

Veterans Group




Open support group for veterans and their families

Women's Group *

Open topic support group for women.

Newsletter Staff:
Editor: Pat Brininger Layout: Joseph Vaughn

For up-to-date info, find our calendars at
MHACHautauqua.org/groups.

- * **Restricted** - Access only for certain people
-  **Classes** - Full attendance required for completion
-  **12-Step** - Structured format
-  **Unaffiliated** - Hosted at MHA by other organizations

Featured Groups

CO-ED TRAUMA SUPPORT

This group meets in Jamestown two times each week - 2:15-3:10 p.m. on Tuesdays and 6-7 p.m. on Thursdays - to accommodate people's schedules. It is for anyone who has dealt with trauma of any kind. You can talk openly, freely, and everything is confidential. If you need further assistance getting set up with a doctor or counselor, we will help you with that as well. This is an amazing group where you can talk, face, work through, and be supported by individuals who have suffered trauma in their lives, too. To learn more, contact facilitator Ken Yergens at 716-661-9044 or Yergens@MHACHautauqua.org



GRIEF SUPPORT

Meeting Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m. in Jamestown, this group focuses on grief of any kind. Some of us don't realize we can be grieving over the loss of a relationship, job, pet, or the loss of ourselves. Having worked as a coroner and owned a funeral home, facilitator Ed Lloyd has over 30 years experience dealing with grief issues. Here you can open up about any grief in your life or current challenges you are facing. Each session is confidential. We have all suffered a loss: This group allows you to not suffer alone. For more information, contact Ed Lloyd at 716-661-9044 or ed.lloyd@mhachautauqua.org

12-Step Groups

AA Living Sober

12-step alcohol recovery group based on the book.

AA Look to This Day

12-step alcohol recovery focused on living each day

All Addictions Anonymous

12-step recovery for all addictions

CMA Crystal Clear

12-step support for crystal meth.

We Believe

12 Step recovery group based on biblical principles.

Room for More

If you would like to see a group focused on a particular topic or for more information on our groups and other services, contact our Program Director at programs@mhachautauqua.org

Major Programs of the Mental Health Association in Chautauqua County

Personal Coaching

Individual peer support, recovery coaching, access to care, referrals, advocacy, and community support for individuals & their families affected by mental health & substance use issues

Peer Support Groups

A variety of groups take place at the MHA supporting multiple pathways of recovery and support.

Treatment Court Navigation

Support toward following the guidelines of and completing treatment court, as well as access to video conference court attendance.

Family Support

A peer coach meets with parents and guardians to help them navigate issues with CPS and meet goals to keep or return their children.



A cooperative endeavor with a local network of organizations to provide peer support and connections to resources for moms, moms-to-be, & all new parents dedicated to building bright futures for Chautauqua County children and their families.

Peer Training

Training, support, and resources to help people use their experiences to help others and join the growing professional peer community.

Transportation

Provides participants with free transportation to medical, court, employment, or treatment-related appointments.

Student Activities

Internships and project support for students from JCC, Fredonia State, St. Bonaventure, PennWest Edinboro and more.



OCCUPATIONAL PEER EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

A career-focused support system providing education, resources, advocacy, & encouragement to attain, retain, and maintain stable employment.

Advocacy and Community Outreach

Offers groups at other locations in the community; holds events to educate, advocate, and connect the public; supports positive and healthy activities.

Better For Families Program

Offers guidance, encouragement, and resources for individuals engaging with the family court system in partnership with the Chautauqua County Department of Health & Human services.

Treatment Connections

Peer advocacy in the hospital Inpatient, Outpatient, and Emergency Departments, as well as rehab centers, to provide guidance to individuals with mental health and chemical dependence issues in stressful situations, as well as educate staff on resources and techniques available for treatment.

Overdose Recovery Support

Connect with individuals and their families shortly after an overdose event to provide comfort, support, education, guidance, resources, and encouragement toward safer habits and practices with cooperation from area law enforcement and critical responders.



Narcan Training

Individual and group training for identifying an overdose in progress and the proper steps for administering Narcan and getting help, as well as free Narcan doses to keep on hand.

Scan here to get



trained for Narcan

Scan here for



the MHA website

Scan here for our



current schedule