

Fall Edition: October 2021

The Voice

A letter from the Executive Director



Hello, all. Welcome to the latest edition of the Mental Health Association in Niagara County Newsletter. It is also my introduction to you all, our MHA community, as the new Executive Director of the agency. I started in my new position on August 23rd and am so grateful to have been given the chance to serve in this new capacity. The Board of Directors of the MHA has entrusted me to ensure that MHA operates in a fiscally responsible manner while providing quality services to our consumers, and also to help the agency grow in terms of revenue and number of people served, and I promise to work very hard to not disappoint the Board or those we serve.

Some background on me professionally: I have served in senior management positions over the past 14 years with agencies serving people with disabilities: Goodwill Industries of WNY from 2007 to 2014, Compeer of Greater Buffalo from 2014 to 2017, and most recently, with WNY Independent Living from 2017 to August of this year. In these positions I have done a lot of grant writing, program development and supervision, marketing and outreach, collaboration-building, and quality assurance. Basically, I've had to "get more money" and "get more people to serve".

Some background on me personally: I was born and raised in Niagara Falls and lived there for 31 years. I have one 18 year-old son who is a freshman at SUNY@Fredonia and a 16 year-old daughter who is a junior at Williamsville South H.S. I currently live in Hamburg with my girlfriend, Lynnette (yes, it is a long drive to work every day – we REALLY need to look for a place closer to Lockport). For hobbies I enjoy music - especially live music, sports – especially football, and volunteering for different charitable activities. I also have been a High School Football Official for 28 years now – so if you're not happy with something within the MHA feel free to call or visit the office and yell at me because I am used to getting yelled at on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons in the Fall.

I look forward to meeting, and getting to know, as many of you as possible. Feel free to call me at 716-433-3780 or email me at dcolpoys@mhanc.com.

Best Regards,
Dan Colpoys

Mental Health Association Highlights

- Congratulations to Rhiannon O'Shea on her new position as Community Education & Information Referral Coordinator and continued success!
- Congratulations to Tara Porter, Compeer Niagara Director on such a successful park program at Rogers Park in Lockport, NY this summer!
- Welcome the new Compeer Niagara Program Assistant, Jake Maurer! Jake is a Niagara County resident and is excited to make impact in his community.



MHA's very own television program airs on LCTV Channel 1301 on Tuesdays at 8:30pm and Wednesdays at 7:00am, or watch at lctv.net on demand! You may also stop into our office to view the program on DVD.

Poinsettia & Wreath Sale to benefit the MHA 2021



Orders Due: November 18th, 2021

**Payment: Checks payable to
Mental Health Association**

**Send to: MHA 36 Pine St.
Lockport, NY 14094**

**Order Pick up: November 30th,
2021 / December 1st 2021**

**Order form can be found in the middle of the
newsletter*

NIAGARA FALLS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER PEER SPECIALIST'S CLOTHES CLOSET

The MHA in Niagara County Peer Staff who work with individuals in NFMMC's Behavioral Health Unit have implemented, in partnership with NFMMC, a Clothing Closet for those who are in need of clothing once they are discharged from the Hospital. It is very common for individuals who end up in the Behavioral Health Unit to have ripped/torn clothing, blood-stained clothing, or in some instances, NO clothing upon admittance to the hospital.

The MHA Peer Staff have collected both men's and women's clothing and footwear for those individuals, who after having received services from our staff, can go back out into the community looking and feeling better than when they came into the hospital.

Whether we're ready for it or not, winter will be here before you know it so there is a need for winter clothing including: sweaters/sweatshirts, jackets, hats, gloves and boots. But all clothing will be accepted and put to good use.

If you would like to make a donation of new or gently-used clothing or footwear to our Clothes Closet, donations can be brought to our office.

Address: 36 Pine St., Lockport, NY 14094

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30am and 4:00pm.

**For questions about the Clothes Closet please contact
Crystal Hites at 716-255-0334 or chites@mhanc.com.**

Hope House—The Peer Respite Center

Need a break and some time to think? Hope House is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To learn more about what Hope House can provide, including peer services please use the contact information below.

**344 Walnut Street
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone: (716) 433-6543
Fax: (716) 433-2921**

The program is made possible through funding from the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, and the New York State Office of Mental Health and partnership between Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc., the Mental Health Association in Niagara County and the Niagara County Department of Mental Health.

Dan Colpoys
Executive Director
ext. 310

Mary Ann Scales
Finance/HR Director
ext. 302

Crystal Hites
Peer Activities
Director
ext. 311

Tara Porter
Compeer Niagara
Director
ext. 307

Mara Scive
In-Home Respite
Coordinator
Compeer Niagara
Coordinator
ext. 313

Rhiannon O'Shea
Community
Education & Referral
Coordinator
ext. 309

**Program
Assistants**
MHA Main Desk
ext. 301



Niagara

Mental Wellness Starts With Friendship

Same great program with a fresh new look!

What does Compeer Niagara look like??

Compeer Niagara looks like the things we do everyday! We may not think these things are special, but they truly are. We are changing the world by enjoying and spreading friendship!

If you ever thought you wouldn't be a good volunteer or that volunteering is difficult or not meaningful... I hope this will change your mind. Anyone can be a good friend! Call at 716-433-3780 or email me at tporter@mhanc.com! Become an official part of the Compeer Niagara friendship!

Take a look at the pictures on the next page to see more of what Compeer Niagara looks like.

Tara Porter
Compeer Niagara Director

Loretta & Colleen's Friendship:

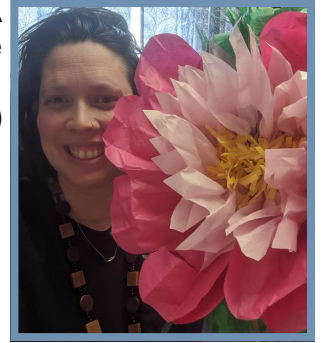
Adult Volunteer & Adult Member

Loretta has recently become a volunteer for Compeer Niagara and she is excited about the difference she is making in the life of her friend and match, Colleen. Colleen has been a part of Compeer Niagara for many years and she is grateful for the opportunity to be matched! Loretta knew that she wanted to donate her time to an organization with a meaningful cause and when she found out about the work that Compeer Niagara does she thought to herself, "what better way to help people than directly through friendship and fun?"

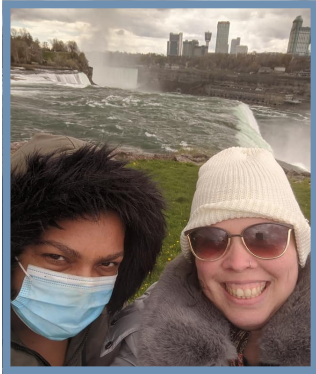
Although Loretta has only been with Compeer for a short time, she enjoys knowing that her friendship with Colleen is truly making a positive change in her life. Loretta can see Colleen coming out of her shell and trying new things even if she might not be comfortable. For example, Colleen and Loretta went to the Compeer Picnic where Loretta encouraged Colleen to get out of her comfort zone and play Kan-Jam with some of the other participants! Colleen thought that was a great way to start their friendship and was grateful for Loretta's support. Since then, Loretta has continually challenged Colleen to try new things and build connections with others.

The friends talk on the phone weekly and get together at Compeer Niagara events or just hang out in the community. Both Colleen and Loretta are greatly enjoying their friendship and getting to know one another better. Compeer Niagara...changing the world one friendship at a time!

It looks like a person smiling from ear to ear because they were thought of. A member brought me this paper flower on a very busy day. She said how she really wanted to get me a bouquet but couldn't afford it, but found this instead. Now I'll have her kindness forever. (Picture 1)



Picture 1



Picture 2

It looks like a friend working up the courage to enjoy a majestic site in their own backyard that they were afraid to check out by themselves. (Picture 2)



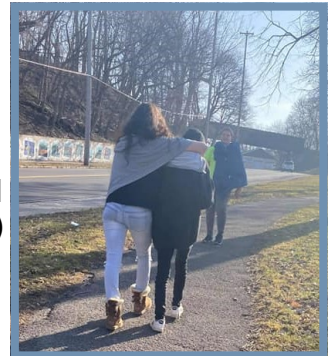
Picture 3

A group of people getting together and enjoying the weather, food, games, music, friendship. (Picture 3)



Picture 4

Adults & Kids trying and learning new things like learning about Space and having a blast doing it! (Picture 4)



Picture 5

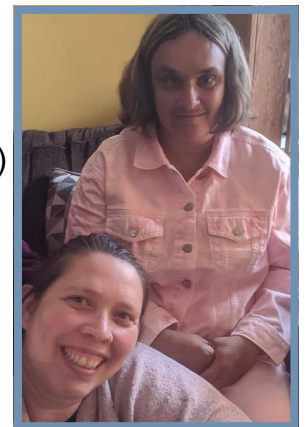
Going on walks in your community, supporting one another by being a friend and sometimes a person to wrap an arm around. (Picture 5)



Picture 6

Bringing happiness through little things like Frisbees. (Picture 6)

Showing up to celebrate a friend's birthday! (Picture 7)



Picture 7



Picture 8

Sometimes, it is honoring a friend who has passed. It is with happiness I am able to call Fred my friend. Oh my, he is such a character, between his humor, art, musical, and writing talents. You could never be bored around him. Fred will be long remembered! He even donated his guitar to Compeer Niagara so that other members can embrace their talents! (Picture 8)

ANTI-STIGMA COALITION



NEW MEMBERS



MHA

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
in Niagara County

We need to talk.

If you're dealing with a mental health challenge, you are not alone. Approximately 1 in 5 Western New Yorkers are living with a mental health diagnosis, yet many of these people suffer in silence because of the discrimination that goes along with it. So, the Anti-Stigma Coalition is starting a conversation to end the stigma surrounding mental illness. Join us as we share our stories, our struggles and our successes. When we talk about mental health, we help everyone find their voice.

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County has joined the conversation! What about you?

To support the Anti-Stigma Coalition or join the conversation visit
letstalkstigma.org

Mental Health Association Library

The library at the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. has been updated! Mental Health Association Grigg – Lewis summer intern, Sydney Wolf, went through all of the books, movies, puzzles and magazines and recycled outdated materials to make space for new additions. The new additions are on a variety of topics, including the trending needs of our community members.



Sections have been created for movies, puzzles, adult fiction books, youth fictions books, and reference for mental health related topics. You can now easily find books on topics like anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, relationships, self-identity, and more in the reference section. If you find something you like you can check it out with the front desk staff. Additionally, a group puzzle table was created so you can add a piece or a bunch to the puzzle and build something beautiful with the Compeer Niagara Community! We invite you to come in and take a look at the fresh library space and find a book, movie, magazine, or puzzle to borrow!

In-Home Respite

The MHA provides *free* childcare to families with a child (or children) with a current mental health diagnosis and their siblings. Respite is provided with the goal of reducing a family's stress and increasing the parent/guardians ability to meet the needs of their children.

To determine if you and your child are eligible for respite services, call (716) 433-3780 and ask for Mara, In-Home Respite Coordinator or visit www.mhanc.com

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36 Pine Street
Lockport, NY 14094

Office: (716)433-3780
HELPLINE: (716)433-5432
www.mhanc.com

 @MHANiagara

 @MHANiagaraCounty

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The Mission of The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is to promote mental wellness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs.

Executive Board

Board President: Emily Shields
Board Vice President: vacant
Secretary: Alix Hutchison
Treasurer: Joel Grundy

Board Members

Brian Bloom
Kristen Braunscheidel
Sarah Mack
Robert Richards
Kyle Zunner



The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, the United Way of Greater Niagara, grants, memberships and voluntary contributions.