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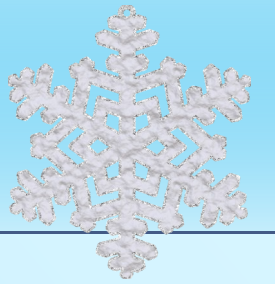


The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, the United Way of Greater Niagara, grants, memberships and voluntary contributions.

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Winter Edition: 2023  
**The Voice**



**2022 – A YEAR IN REVIEW**

I hope everyone's New Year has started out on a positive note. In this article, I'd like to recap what has transpired at the MHA in 2022, as well as provide a little teaser for what we're working on for 2023.

We said goodbye to two of our long-tenured Directors, Crys Hites – Director of Peer Services, and Rhiannon O'Shea – Director of Community Education. Both re-located out of the area and are definitely missed. Fortunately, we hired two excellent people to fill their roles: Chris Warden – Peer Services, and Breanna Lockhart – Community Education. Their bio's are in this newsletter.

We partnered with Mental Health Advocates of Western New York to implement mental health-related presentations on several different subjects in Niagara County schools, while also offering youth peer support to any student who wanted the support.

We started a new program in collaboration with the Niagara Falls Housing Authority. We now have staff that travels throughout the NFHA properties providing peer support and any additional assistance to the NFHA's residents.

We have added three new support groups to our offerings: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Mental Wellness, and Suicide Survivors. For more information on these three groups, along with our other groups, contact the facilitator, Chris Warden, at [cwarden@mhanc.com](mailto:cwarden@mhanc.com) or 716-433-3780.

We have expanded our Respite program thanks to a grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health. Any parents of a child with a mental health diagnosis that needs FREE emergency childcare can contact our Respite Director, Sara George at [sarndt@mhanc.com](mailto:sarndt@mhanc.com) or 716-433-3780.

We held some great FUNdraisers in 2022. Our Bowl-a-Thon in April, our Cornhole for a Cause in August, and our wreath and poinsettia sale in November. See our Meat Raffle flyer on page 2 of this newsletter for information about our next FUNdraiser.

- Here are some things we're working on for 2023:
- Expand Compeer Niagara's "The Couch" programming
  - Implement a Grief/Loss Support program
  - Provide Mental Health First Aid training to county residents
  - A major volunteer appreciation and volunteer recruitment event for our Compeer Niagara program.

You'll be hearing about these as we progress through the year. I thank everyone for their support of the agency and here's to a fantastic 2023!

Sincerely,

Daniel Colpoys  
Executive Director



Saturday, February 18th 2023

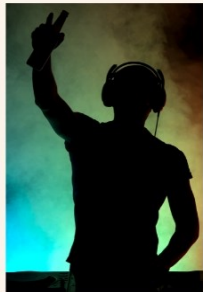
St Johnsburg Fire Hall

7165 Ward Rd.

North Tonawanda, NY 14120

\$12 per ticket OR \$80 for a table of 8.

\*Tickets Include: beer, wine, and soda



**\*DJ Bonkrz to MC!**

Bring your own snacks!

\*\*NO OUTSIDE ALCOHOL ALLOWED

**Ages 21+ Over**

- Wine/Liquor Ring Toss

-50/50 Raffle & More!

Call (716)-433-3780 or contact [Dcolpoys@mhanc.com](mailto:Dcolpoys@mhanc.com) for tickets

Doors Open  
@ 5:45pm

First Draw  
@ 6:30pm

**A Compeer Niagara Celebration!**

**Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**12-6pm**

**The Ship Bar & Grill**

**5612 Tonawanda Creek Rd.**

**Lockport, NY 14094**

**becomes...**

**“The FRIENDSHIP”**

**DJ, \$5 Drink Special, Give Aways**

[tporter@mhanc.com](mailto:tporter@mhanc.com) or 716 433-3780  
for more information



The Mental Health Association in Niagara County would like to thank the following donors for their recent support:

James + Karen Grundy

Lewiston Kiwanis Club

Sherry Savage

Terri Arendas

Pattie Hickman

Peter Schlichting

Matt Natali

Stephanie Arendas

Samantha Garretson

Greater Niagara Mechanical, Inc.

# THANK YOU!



Compeer Niagara is a program of friendship. The friendship we share is proven to "make life better" as shown in 100% of our survey responses, but most importantly-in our day to day lives.

We are saddened by the recent passing of our friend Tim Murphy. Tim's friendship was full of positivity due to him loving with an open heart and open mind. Tim used his humor, openness, and kindness to give support and fun to all those around him. He gave the best compliments- the kind that makes one smile and say, "oh stop" while they are being lifted up with a giggle. Tim is loved and missed, our thoughts are with his fellow friends and family.



Tim is known to bring awareness and support to moments that can educate and help others. To honor this trait of our friend, we will be donating CO Detectors to fellow Compeer Niagara friends. We would also like to use this forum to provide basic information on Carbon Monoxide (CO). More detailed information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/copoisoning/index.html>

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels (coal, wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, and natural gas). Equipment powered by internal combustion engines such as portable generators, cars, lawn mowers, and power washers also produce CO. When winter temperatures cause home heating systems to run for hours the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning increases. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

#### CO Poisoning Prevention Tips

- Check or change the batteries in your CO detector every six months. If you don't have a battery-powered or battery back-up CO detector, buy one soon.
- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Keep vents and flues free of debris. Debris can block ventilation lines. **\*\*This includes SNOW.**
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine less than 20 feet from an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- If you suspect CO poisoning, call 911 or a healthcare professional right away.

Please call the MHA at 716.433-3780, if you would like information on local grief support groups.

Tara Porter, Compeer Niagara Director

# MENTAL WELLNESS Support Group

hosted by



'An empowering group that focuses on mental wellbeing, resilience and strength.'

**1st & 3rd Tuesday Of Each Month  
11:30AM - 12:30PM**

**@ Save the Michaels House of Hope**

**81 Walnut Street  
Lockport, NY**

## Meet Our New Hires!



**Chris Warden, Director of Peer Services**

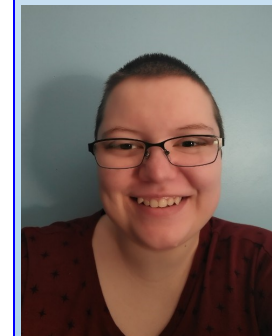
I took over as Director of Peer Services for the MHA of Niagara County on October 17, 2022. I have spent much of my career working in the mental health/addiction field. I am certified in a number of modalities including Peer Support, Recovery Coaching, CarePath Coaching, Mental Health Community Partners and Mental Health First Aid. I have also been teaching the Japanese martial art of *aikido* for over 30 years. I have a master's degree in Human Service Administration and am currently finishing my doctorate in Mental Health Administration from D'Youville College. My personal mission is to help others remember that they are far more than just their mental health diagnosis. I also have two wonderful children, Lorissa and Michael.

**Breanna Lockhart, Community Education & Information Referral Director**



My name is Breanna Lockhart and I'm the new Community Education & Information Referral Director as of October, 2022! I'm 22 years old, and a 22 year resident of Niagara County. I was born in Newfane and I grew up in Gasport. When I'm not at work I'm spending time with my family, painting, or hanging out with my dog, Ben. I'm currently in training to become a Certified Peer Specialist, and I'm looking to go to school for Human Services. I hope to help others and to show members of the community that recovery and living a satisfying life can be their reality, too.

**Jessica Drake, Respite Staff**



Hi, my name is Jessica Drake and I just started working for MHA in the respite program. I'm 28 years old, born and raised in the city of Lockport. I love video games, poetry, crafting, and spending time with my family. I also love spending time with my dog and three pet rats. I hope to become a peer specialist and spend more time helping out in our community.