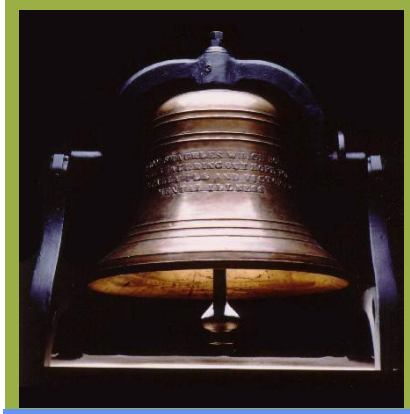
The Mindful Messenger:
A publication by MHA in Putnam County

May 2021

MHA PUTNAM
Mental Health Association in Putnam County

May is Mental Health Month!

May is Mental Health Month….it is the time of year when we work hard to raise the visibility of mental health and remind everyone that mental health issues are like diabetes and heart disease, with proper care, they can be treated and recovery is not merely possible, but expected. This is a far cry from the history of mental health in our country. Here is the history of the MHA bell:



The Mental Health Bell, recognized throughout the nation as the symbol of the mental health movement, is one of the most distinguished bells in the world. Cast from the shackles and chains that once restrained people in mental hospitals, the bell is a dramatic representation of hope, vision and liberty for people with mental illness in our country.

During the early days of mental health treatment, asylums often restrained persons with mental illnesses by iron chains and shackles around their ankles and wrists. With better understanding and treatments, this cruel practice eventually stopped.

> "Cast from shackles which bound them, this bell shall ring out hope for the mentally ill and victory over mental illness."

In the early 1950s, the National Mental Health Association (NMHA) issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. On April 13, 1953, at the McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore, MD, NMHA melted down these inhumane bindings and recast them into a sign of hope: the Mental Health Bell.

Now the symbol of NMHA, the 300-pound Bell serves as a powerful reminder that the invisible chains of misunderstanding and discrimination continue to bind people with mental illnesses. Today, the Mental Health Bell rings out hope for improving mental health and achieving victory over mental illnesses.

Over the years, national mental health leaders and other prominent individuals have rung the Bell to mark the continued progress in the fight for victory over mental illnesses.

This issue features our new MHA in Putnam logo which includes the bell as an important symbol of our past, that it may inform our future. Join us as we celebrate mental health month. This issue includes ways that you can join us in promoting wellness for yourself, your loved ones, and our community. Join us in ending the stigma that for too long has been a barrier to care….let freedom ring for those with mental heath issues. Combat stigma and embrace recovery.

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TALK SAVES LIVES™

A Brief Introduction to Suicide Prevention

Suicide can be prevented. Talk Saves Lives is a 45 minute presentation that covers what we know about this leading cause of death, the most up-to-date research on prevention, and what we can all do to fight suicide.

Participants will learn the common risk factors for suicide, how to spot the warning signs in others and how to keep ourselves, our loved ones and those in our community safe.

We have a series of trainings scheduled as part of May is Mental Health Month, each Tuesday throughout the month of May. They are FREE but pre-registration is required.

Attend an upcoming training by using the registration links below and be a lifesaver!

Upcoming Talk Saves Lives (TSL) Trainings:

Talk Saves Lives (TSL)– 5/4 @ 7pm via ZOOM - https://tsl5-4.attendease.com/

TSL Seniors-5/11 @ 9am via ZOOM - https://tslsr5-11.attendease.com/

TSL LGBTQ+-5/18 @ 4pm via ZOOM - https://tsllgbt5-18.attendease.com/

TSL Workplace 5/25 @ noon via ZOOM - https://tslw5-25.attendease.com/

TSL Firearms 6/1 @ 7pm via ZOOM - https://tslf6-1.attendease.com/

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

May is SELF CARE month!

If the pandemic has had any silver linings, it might be that self-care is now "a thing" and trending now. Some may have the mis-perception that self care is selfish...not true! Self care is important, especially right now when we all have so much to do to just get through the day. Create your own "self care" tool kit using the suggestions here, in addition to some recommendations from the experts, our staff!

Two things I would like to share that I have been doing since COVID is to get out on my bicycle and enjoy nature. You would be amazed what a bike ride (or walk) on the bike path will do for your mood. And let's not forget we get to enjoy the fresh air.

I also started meditation. I was able to find an app that has all kinds of meditation. There is no better way to start your day than doing a 5 minute happiness or gratitude meditation.

Good self-care can improve your mood and reduce anxiety.
Alice Herde, Deputy Director

For me personally, running and yoga are really important parts of my self-care routine. Both help me to clear my mind, get some endorphins going, and keep my body healthy so that my brain can function in a healthy way as well. I also like to make sure I set aside an hour each night before I go to bed to turn my electronics off and write in my gratitude journal. It's nice to unplug and take the time to recognize all the things in my life that I am grateful for, which helps to keep me motivated to move into the next day with a positive attitude.

Amanda Boccardi, Youth Services Coordinator

My motorcycle, slightly distracted but not completely, so I don't run into trees.

John Bourges, Dwyer Vet2Vet Putnam Program Coordinator

I schedule a self care appointment in my appointment book every day and have a alarm on my phone to remind me that it's time to unplug and take a time out.

Megan Castellano, Executive Director

World Schizophrenia Day

By Jessica Ryan-Peer Bridger

May 24th is World Schizophrenia Day. This day aims to educate people about the illness and eliminate myths. The National Schizophrenia Foundation chose May 24th to honor Dr. Philippe Pinel from France. He is a significant figure in early efforts to provide humane treatment for the mentally ill.

Schizophrenia affects more than 21 million people worldwide. It is a mental disorder that affects how the brain usually works. It interferes with a person's ability to act, think or feel. People who have Schizophrenia have a disordered way of thinking. Day to Day activities can become complicated and confusing. They often experience hallucinations and delusions.

Schizophrenia has a social stigma associated with it. This stigma makes it very difficult for people with the illness to adjust to society. The cause of Schizophrenia is unknown. It can be inherited, caused by environmental factors, or because of an overproduction of dopamine in the body. Schizophrenia is treatable. Treatment with medicines and psychosocial support is effective.

To learn more about Schizophrenia visit:

www.who.int

www.rethink.org

Myths and not facts greatly influence how many people view Schizophrenia. Here are some common myths and why they are **false:**

1. People with Schizophrenia have a split personality.
Schizophrenia often includes a variety of symptoms, but not one involves a split personality. (People with split personalities are living with Dissociative Identity Disorder)

2.Violence is common among people with Schizophrenia.
In our society, people with Schizophrenia are seen as violent. Although it's true that some individuals with Schizophrenia commit crimes, most are nonviolent.

3.Schizophrenia can't be treated.
Although Schizophrenia can't be cured, it can be successfully treated. Medication and psychosocial therapies can help people with Schizophrenia lead independent and productive lives.

While we were not able to have our MHA Mental Health Recognition Breakfast again this year because of COVID –19 and the enduring social distancing requirements, please join us in recognizing and celebrating our award winners:

Dennis Ullman is awarded the 2021 Rabbi Solomon B. Acrish Humanitarian Award

Jessica Ryan is awarded the 2021 Arthur R. Lewis Outstanding Achievement Award

Carmen Serrano is recognized as the 2021 MHA Employee of the Year

Lilianna Alexander from Carmel High School is awarded the 2021 Joan Connelly Memorial Scholarship