

Minding Your Health



Chester County Department of Mental Health/Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
601 Westtown Road, Suite 340, West Chester, PA 19380-0990 • www.chesco.org/mhidd

September 2015

Celebrating Recovery Month 2015

By 2020, mental health and substance use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide. This prediction, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), emphasizes the need for the National Recovery Month.

A valuable opportunity to increase awareness and educate, National Recovery Month promotes the message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. The observance, now in its 26th year, also highlights the achievements of individuals who have reclaimed their lives in long-term recovery, and honors the treatment and recovery service providers who make recovery possible.

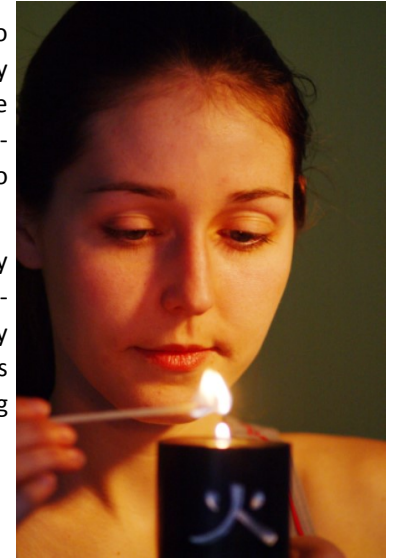
It's also fitting that mental health and substance use disorders are observed together, since they often occur together and research has shown that the first behavioral health symptoms typically precede a mental and/or sub-

stance use disorder by two to four years. Chester County has embraced this message with their system of care approach to individuals who need treatment and support.

This fall, Chester County is working with many partners to offer a wide array of free community activities throughout the month-long observance.

A calendar of events is posted at Chester County's Drug and Alcohol website. You may use this link to find the calendar:

<http://www.chesco.org/drugandalcohol>.



Suicide Prevention Highlighted in September

For more than a decade suicide rates have been on the rise, with more than 41,000 American lives lost each year. Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that more Americans die by suicide than die in car accidents.

The growing public health concern is getting attention this month, especially during World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 throughout Suicide Prevention Week, which runs September 7-13. Chester County's Suicide Prevention Task Force has established the Pin-

wheel Project, which will be displayed at various public sites, including the Government Services Center on Westtown Road, local hospitals and the Exton Square Mall. The displays will have information about suicide and the local crisis hotline number, as well as pinwheels representing each of the more than 35 people lost to suicide in Chester County so far this year.

The message is that suicide happens, but it is preventable. And there is hope. See display photo on page 4.

Inside this issue:

MHFA updates
Training opportunities & upcoming events
Spotlight on Allyson Mc Andrews, Advocate
Provider Newsflash



MH/IDD regularly posts on the Dept. of Human Services page

Chester County Commissioners — Terence Farrell, Kathi Cozzone, Michelle Kichline
MH/IDD Administrator—Gary Entrekin, MH Deputy Administrator—Caroline Smith

For mental health crises
call

Valley Creek
Crisis Intervention

610-280-3270

Toll Free
877-918-2100



Remember to check out the Chester County MHFA Facebook page!

Updates from Mental Health First Aid— Fall Schedule of classes now available

Mental Health First Aid classes are resuming this fall, and several classes have already been scheduled. The complete calendar, along with registration information, will be posted on the Chester County Mental Health website soon.

To save the date, there will be two morning sessions offered at West Chester University on October 13 and 14 from 8:00 AM until 12:30 PM. The class will focus on issues specific to individuals who work in higher education or attend college.

On Saturday, November 14, a full 9-hour day adult module class is being offered. It will run from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM at the Government Services Center in West Chester. Another adult module class will be offered at West Chester University on December 1 and 2, from

8:00 AM until 12:30 PM.

Look for more information on these and other classes at www.chesco.org/mhidd.

The Brandywine Health Foundation is also offering Mental Health First Aid youth module, which is for adults who work with youth, in the Coatesville area. Information for these classes may be found at their website. Go to www.brandywinefoundation.org.

All of the Mental Health First Aid classes noted here are offered at no cost to participants in Chester County. All require participants to attend the full session (9 hours with breaks) for certification.

Advanced Training Opportunities

Certified Peer Specialists and individuals who have completed WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) training may take advantage of two advanced trainings being offered in Chester County this fall. Each training has specific requirements and an application process, and both are offered at no cost to the participants.

The Certified Peer Specialist Supervisor's Training is a two-day class scheduled for October 5 and 6 at Crossroads Recovery Center in West Chester. The training is being provided by the Institute for Recovery & Community Integration, a program of the Mental Health Association of South East PA. To find out more, or to obtain an application, contact Dorinda Westmoreland at dwestmoreland@chesco.org. Completed applications are due by September 18.

A five day WRAP facilitator training is being offered on November 2 through 6 at Crossroads Recovery Center. The training certifies participants to co-facilitate WRAP classes and equips them with the skills and materials they need to facilitate classes in their communities and organizations. The program presumes a solid working understanding of WRAP, as well as other requirements. To find out more and obtain an application, contact Jeanette Easley at jeasley@chesco.org or call 610-344-6071. Completed applications are due by October 19. Both applications may be faxed to 610-344-5997 by the date they are due.



Spotlight on: Advocate Allyson Mc Andrews

Allyson Mc Andrews didn't expect her story would get much attention. She certainly didn't expect it to be accepted for publication by the online media company, "The Mighty," in a mere eight hours. But once that happened, the 29 year-old graduate of Villanova University and Conestoga High School was thrust in the limelight, quickly taking on the new role as a mental health advocate.

"I was shocked at how soon [the publication] got in touch with me," Mc Andrews said. "I hadn't even told my parents that I'd submitted the story yet."

Since her article, "I Faked Happiness Every Day," appeared on the media site in April of this year, Mc Andrews' has been overwhelmed by support, and encouraged to help others with mental health challenges.

Starting her story with the sentence, "From the viewpoint of anyone else on this planet, I had the world," Mc Andrews went on to explain that her seeming storybook life wasn't as carefree and happy as it appeared. The former Villanova cheerleader was close with sorority sisters, other friends and her understanding fiancé. She was motivated and intelligent, earning her Master's Degree and working as the marketing director in her family's business. She was admittedly privileged, vacationing at Martha's Vineyard and growing up on the Main Line. But something was wrong.

Mc Andrews wrote, "While it may seem to many people that the most difficult question I would face every day would be what I was going to wear, for me the real question was, How in the world am I going to get out of bed today and pretend to be happy? "

She even had the benefit of an informed, supportive family. Her mother is a nurse practitioner and her father, a former district attorney, owns a law firm that specializes in advocating for children with disabilities and mental illness and their families .



Allyson McAndrews, second from the right.

Of her parents, Mc Andrews wrote, "They accepted the fact with open arms that I needed help and got me into therapy with one of the most remarkable psychologists in the world ."

Diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression, Mc Andrews says that sharing her story has helped her as much as it has helped others.

"When the article first came out, so many people responded. It was so cool to see the support. I felt like people came out of the woodwork," Mc Andrews said, adding, "Honestly, this is one of the most rewarding things ever."

Although some have suggested she start a blog on the topic of mental health, Mc Andrews hasn't yet decided her next steps.

"I would love to speak about it; I'm not shy. I don't know how or where, but would like to continue to reach out and help others."

To read Allyson Mc Andrews's full story, go to the website:

<http://themighty.com/author/allyson-mcandrews/>

For Mental Health Providers — **Newsflash!**



Access Services, located in Montgomery County, is the new service provider for the Chesco LIFE Program, which serves Chester County families who have a child or adolescent that struggles with emotional, behavioral, social needs, intellectual disabilities, and/or have involvement with the dependency or delinquency systems. You may visit the website: www.accessservices.org

Please see training opportunities at the bottom of page 2! Note: both of these free classes have an application process and deadlines for submissions.

The Autism Fall Fest is being held Saturday, October 3 from 11 AM until 4 PM at 2488 Sanatoga Road in Pottstown. Check www.autismfallfest.org for more information.

BE ALIVE & THRIVE

AT THE EXTON SQUARE MALL
Saturday, October 17, 2015

A free, multi-generational community event to promote mind and body wellness, mental health awareness, and suicide prevention

For more info please visit: chestercountysuicideprevention.com

Chester County's Suicide Prevention Task Force and the Exton Square Mall are collaborating for the second Be Alive & Thrive event, Saturday, October 17 from 10 AM - 5 PM.

Aimed at promoting mind/body wellness, this event includes energetic demonstrations, fun & creative activities, health screenings, Reiki treatments and music!

Activities are posted at the website listed to the left, and www.extonsquare.com



EXTON
SQUARE MALL



Chester County Suicide Prevention's Pinwheel Project Display. For more information on the project, see the story on page 1 or go to the Task Force Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/ChesterCountySuicidePreventionTaskForce?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 17, 2015 | 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

4TH ANNUAL FAMILY RESILIENCE CONFERENCE

On the Road to Resilience: Mapping Your Family's Journey

Sponsored by:

Devereux
teaching hope. Empowering lives.

- **Every Mon.—Parent Support Group**; for parents whose families are affected by alcohol, drug abuse and related behaviors of their children. 7:00-9:00 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Grove Road, West Chester. Contact: Lyle or Deidre 610-793-3446.
- Every Tues. — Depression/Bipolar Support Group**; for those in recovery from affective disorders - 7:00-8:00 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact—610-429-1702.
- **Every Tues.—Transition Age Depression/Bipolar Support Alliance**; for 14-25 age group – 6:30-7:30 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact – 610-429-1702 or call Adessa at 484-706-2110.
- **1st Thur. — Let’s Do This Together**, support group for parents who have children with bipolar and other behavioral health needs. 7:00 pm at the Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester. 484-241-7860.
- **4th Thurs. — Parents Helping Parents** — For parents with children who have special needs. Dinner is provided - 5:30-7:00 pm at Devereux Community Services, 1041 W. Bridge St., Phoenixville. Contact - adannunz@devereux.org or 610-933-8001.
- **Every Tues.—Celebrate Recovery**; faith-based support for mental health and substance abuse; 6:00-8:15 pm at Hopewell UMC, 852 Hopewell Rd., Downingtown. Contact - 610-269-1545. **Every Thurs.—**6:45-8:45 pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Grove Road, West Chester. Contact - 610-399-3377x109.
- **Every Tues. & Thurs. — Double Trouble**; for those recovering from addiction and mental health problems - 3:30-5:00 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact – 610-429-1702.
- **Every Thurs.— Parent Support Group**; for parents whose families are impacted by alcohol & drug abuse of their children - 7:00– 9:00 pm at the First Baptist Church, 415 W. State St., Kennett Square. Contact - 484-888-9682.
- **Every Thurs.—Nicotine Anonymous—** All are welcome. 7:00-8:00 PM at Peer Support Center 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact John for information - 610-429-1702 or 610-696-0813.
- **Every Tues.—Parent Support Group**; parents whose families are impacted by alcohol, drug abuse and related behaviors of their children—(two locations) 7:00 - 8:00 pm, Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church, 1121 Octorara Trail (Rt. 10) Parkesburg. Contact - *betsy.kaciescaus e@gmail.com*. 7:00-9:00 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 10 West Pleasant Rd., West Chester. Contacts: Lyle or Deidre 610-793-3446
- **Every other Thursday — Eating Disorders Support Group**; for both genders aged 13 and older, family members and supporters - 6:30 - 7:30 pm at the Brandywine Hospital, 201 Reeceville Rd., Coatesville. Go to - *www.brandywineeatingdisorders.com*.
- **2nd Mon. — Adult MH Subcommittee of the MH/IDD Board Meeting** - 5:30-7:30 pm at the Peer Support Center 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Call to confirm meeting - 610-344-6265.
- **2nd Tues. — Chester County Children’s Subcommittee of the MH/IDD Board Meeting** - 9:30–11:00 am at Government Services Bldg., 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester. Call to confirm meeting - 610-344-6265.
- **2d Tuesday- CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD)**. Support, Education and Advocacy. Meetings 7:00-9:00 at Keshet Israel Congregation. Pottstown Pike, West Chester. *www.ccmichadd.com* or 610-429-4060.
- **1st Wed. — NAMI; West Chester Family Support Group** - 7:00 -9:00 pm at the Peer Support Center, 825 Paoli Pike, West Chester. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **2nd Wed. — Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force** - 3:00 – 4:30 pm Government Services Bldg. 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester. Contact - *ccsptaskforce@gmail.com*.
- **2nd Wed.— Survivors of Suicide (S.O.S.)** - 7:30 pm, Willistown Room, the Paoli Memorial Hospital in Paoli. Please contact - 215-545-2242.
- **1st Thurs. — Southern Chester County Family Support Group**; sponsored by Chester County NAMI 7:30-9:00 pm at Friends Meeting House, Rt. 82, Kennett Square. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **2nd Thurs. — Northeastern Chester County Family Support Group**; sponsored by Chester County NAMI. 6:30-8:00 pm at Phoenixville Medical Arts Building - 601 Gay St., Phoenixville, Penn Psychiatric Center - Suite 6. For information, contact Ginger Murphy at 610-348-9758.
- **3rd Thurs.— NAMI; PA Chester County General Meeting** - 7:00 pm at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Malvern. Contact - 484-947-5643.
- **4th Thurs. — MH/IDD Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting** - 6:00 pm at the Government Services Bldg., 601 Westtown Rd., West Chester, Room 149. Call to confirm meeting - 610-344-6265.