



The ANSWER

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration's Newsletter

Summer 2012

Inside This Issue

Mental Health Awareness Month

Recovery Corner

C.A.L.L. for Hope

Recognizing Excellence

Board Meets Board

Making Miracles Happen

Here's the Buzz

Kid Talk

Upcoming Trainings

FCBHA CLOSINGS

Labor Day
September 3 2012

Columbus Day
October 8, 2012

VBH Recovery Awards



Dayna Shallenberger, Fayette MHA; Dr. Mark Fuller, Medical Director, VBH-PA; Ford Lowry; Suzanne Ralph, Keynote Speaker and Audra Dudek, OMHSAS.

Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania held its Annual Consumer Recovery Forum on April 20th to recognize individuals for their Leadership in Recovery. Providers who support individuals in the recovery process nominated consumers who have been most actively engaged in their recovery journey. This year's Fayette County award recipient, Ford Lowry, was nominated by Dayna Shallenberger, Consumer Family Satisfaction Team (CFST) Director at the Fayette County Mental Health Association (MHA).

Ford suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a drunk-driving accident when he was 18 years old. Since then, he has been in recovery from drugs and alcohol and lets nothing stop him. Despite the physical limitations he has endured since his accident, he successfully graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Psychology and the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in accounting.

Currently, Ford works for MHA as part of the CFST. He intends to spend the rest of his life convincing people that they do not have to let drugs and alcohol control their lives and often presents his story at schools, meetings and drop-in centers.

FCBHA would like to thank the agencies who sent in applications and congratulates Mr. Lowry and all the other outstanding nominees.

Mission

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration enriches lives by providing access to and assuring choice among the best behavioral and developmental resources that promote recovery and resiliency.



Fayette County Committed to Mental Wellness



Commissioner Vince Zapotosky, Miranda Dice, Commissioner Alfred F. Ambrosini, Chairman, Commissioner Angela M. Zimmerlink, Chuck David, and Lisa A. Ferris, FCBHA CEO.

May 2012 was recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month in Fayette County. Lisa A. Ferris, CEO for FCBHA, Miranda Dice and Chuck David joined the Fayette County Commissioners as they officially made this proclamation at their April 17th public meeting.

Ms. Dice proudly shared her story of recovery so that others could see and understand the importance of strong community supports and services, which she credited as a major component to her success. “Mental health conditions are real, but with effective treatment, individuals can recover and lead full, productive lives.” Miranda and Chuck are both active members in Crosskey’s Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program.

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, an array of community events and educational activities were designed to enhance the community’s understanding of mental health issues and address the stigma and negative attitudes commonly associated with mental illness.

FCBHA works to assure that every person has access to evidence-based treatments, services, and supports leading to recovery. The Fayette County Commissioners called upon all citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to openly discuss mental health issues and work together to raise awareness of the need for appropriate and accessible services.

Recovery Corner

After 36 years of living with a mental illness, my recovery began in November 1987. I went to the Community Residential Rehabilitation and Social Rehabilitation programs at Crosskeys. I had blamed my parents and grandparents for my two breakdowns. I learned no one causes a breakdown; it’s just a chemical imbalance. While there, I learned how to live independently and how to act socially. I was introduced to the Director of the S.R. program, Rick Olesky and also Valerie Brady. Both of them were my driving force and helped support me over the years. I have gotten involved with NAMI, Clubhouse, Oak House and even worked at the Mental Health Association. At CRCSI, I have had many therapists and doctors, but no one compares to my present therapist, Christine Freeman and my doctor, Dr. Eberts. Recently, I became involved with Crosskey’s Psych Rehab program. There we have groups on many subjects. Before that, I didn’t like groups. With Bernadette Behary and the rest of her staff, the groups are quite interesting and I don’t mind going to them. Something new to me and the mental health system is Peer Support. I think it benefits the consumer and the peers themselves. What I have learned over the years is to take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor; talk to someone who will listen and you can live a normal life.

Bernie



C.A.L.L. for Hope



Fayette County's Suicide Prevention Taskforce, C.A.L.L. (Community Awareness of Life and Loss), has been in existence for five years, providing community outreach through trainings and events. This year, C.A.L.L. held its first county-wide awareness event on May 15th at the Ivory Ballroom in Uniontown; a space graciously donated by Representative Timothy Mahoney. Over 55 community members gathered to begin a journey of understanding, that suicide is a preventable health problem and to share local supports and resources.



The C.A.L.L. for Hope Event was a touching evening that included stories from individuals who have lost loved ones to suicide, open forum discussions conducted by Dr. Jo Jankowski, informational presentations by Bethany Connors, a poetry reading by Stacey Poirier and live music presented by Jordan Hasley-Ziegler and Riley Harbarger. The event also offered an art gallery featuring 166 entries submitted by local elementary school students for FCBHA's *Heroes of Hope Art Contest*,

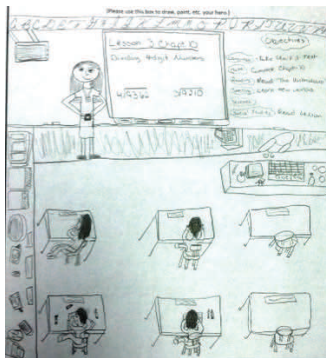


held in recognition of Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. Throughout the evening, members of Allegheny and Fayette County's Youth MOVE chapters had the honor of reviewing the artwork and essays submitted for the contest and chose the following winners:

First Place Winners



Alexes Gomez, 4th Grade
Laurel Highlands, S. D.



Bailey Rohm, 5th Grade
Laurel Highlands, S. D.



Brianna Bittinger, 6th Grade
Brownsville, S. D.

Second Place Winners



Tatem C. Conway, 4th Grade
Brownsville, S. D.



Jessica Ricco, 5th Grade
Brownsville, S. D.



East End Community Center
6th Grade Group



Recognizing Outstanding Employees



On May 18th, Carol Jenkins said goodbye to her FCBHA co-workers and friends and eagerly began a new chapter in her life: retirement .

Two weeks after graduating from Redstone High School Carol moved to Washington DC and worked as a civilian for the United States Air Force for a year. Upon returning to Fayette County she was employed by the Fayette County Assistance Office, where she worked for 13 years.

Carol began working at FCBHA on March 12, 2001 as an Administrative Secretary where her first assignment was as the main receptionist at the National City Bank office. She was reassigned to the Medical Records Department in December 2003, where she remained until she retired. “I can honestly say that I enjoyed coming to work each and everyday,” said Jenkins of her time at FCBHA.

Carol looks forward to spending more time with her 4 children and 12 grandchildren and traveling.

Congratulations Carol and thank you!



First Row: Mary Vail, Michelle Bennett, Susan Wilson, Pam Anderson, Karen Santo, Christine Jones. Second Row: Karen Cogar, Vivian Coddington, William Prioletto, Michael Wesolowsky, John McDowell, Tanya Dvorchak

The FCBHA Advisory Board held it's 10 Year Service Recognition Luncheon at Duck Hollow Golf Course on June 13th. FCBHA CEO, Lisa A. Ferris, welcomed and thanked this year's recipients for their dedication and achievement.

The Advisory Board also utilized this event to thank long-time Board Member, Tammi Stuck. Throughout the past 20 years, her contribution of knowledge and expertise of the public state of mind has been invaluable to the development of a wide range of services available to residents of Fayette County.

Following lunch, Phil Michael, FCBHA Advisory Board Chairman, and Bob Calisti, FCBHA Director of Operations, acknowledged the following recipients for their 10 years of service:

ARC, Fayette ~ Robert Weyant

Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services, Inc. ~ Cindy Artis, Tanya Dvorchak, Mary Vail, Dawn Wilhelm

Crosskeys Human Services, Inc. ~ Pam Anderson

Diversified Human Services, Inc. ~ Karen Santo

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration~ Susan Wilson

Fayette Resources, Inc. ~ Vivian Coddington, Karen Cogar, John Garcia, Marvin Wright, Karen Yagla

Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania ~ Michelle Bennett, Rachel Parker, Michael Wesolowsky

Laurel Highlands Foundation, Inc. ~ James Kpokou, John McDowell, Jr., Yvonne Maier, William Prioletto

Southwest Behavioral Care, Inc. ~ Holly Dennis, Christine Jones

Twin Trees, Inc. ~ Wanda Pletcher, Carol Shultz, Leta Wynn



Board Meets Board



Front row: Julie Weible, Tina Wingrove, Ida Croushore, Monica Argot, George Hudak.
Back Row: Zachary Fisher, Courtney Fisher, Sharon Weible, Jason Sproul, Lorine Sproul, Sue Baughnan, Vincent Baughman, Jay Argot.

Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month (March 2012) in Fayette County concluded with the 21st Annual Board Meets Board event on March 28th. This was an evening for staff, advisory board members, consumers and providers to come together to network and share in a truly heartwarming and uplifting event.

Lisa A. Ferris, CEO of FCBHA was the keynote speaker and Lynn Orawiec, Developmental Program Director of FCBHA had the pleasure of introducing this year's amazing guest speakers pictured above. Each person shared their triumphant story of success, candidly speaking about their lives with humor and compassion, touching the hearts of everyone in attendance. Thank you to everyone who, once again, helped to make this event a memorable evening.

For more information about Intellectual Disabilities or Early Intervention services and initiatives in Fayette County, please visit us at www.fcbha.org or call (724) 430-1370.

Making Miracles Happen

Bailey Field in Uniontown will be brought back to life when the Miracle League of Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands (MLPLH) takes the field later this summer. Thanks to the City of Uniontown and the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau (LHVB) who awarded the league a Fayette County Tourism Grant in the amount of \$25,000, Bailey Field will be the new home of the MLPLH, an adaptive baseball league formed especially for players with physical and/or mental challenges.



Together with a commitment from the City of Uniontown to participate in updating and maintaining the field, the grant will be utilized to make renovations to the playing surface and surrounding structures with a goal of creating a wheelchair-friendly environment for the players, buddies, and fans. In Phase 1, bleachers and dug-outs will be constructed to accommodate wheelchairs and other adaptive equipment, and then play for 2012 will begin. Eventually the MLPLH hopes to raise enough funds to complete a Miracle League-sanctioned playing field with a special playing surface for the seasons to come.

Everyone involved in the Miracle League of Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands is thankful to the LHVB and the City of Uniontown for kick-starting both the project and the 2012 season.....PLAY BALL...!!!



Here's the Buzz...



Empty Shoe Memorial

C.A.L.L., Fayette County's Suicide Prevention Taskforce, and students from Albert Gallatin High School collected shoes that were used to erect a local empty shoe memorial. The shoes represented people who lost their lives to suicide and was displayed at the Fayette County Courthouse May 7 - 11th. All the shoes collected for this display were later donated to local charities. Thanks to all who participated!

Baseball League Registration

The Miracle League of Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands/CHAMPIONS PONY League is an adaptive baseball league designed for youngsters with varying levels of ability. Each player is assigned a volunteer who helps with all aspects of the game (hitting, fielding, running, etc.) based upon the skill and abilities of the player. Registration has begun for this season so please go to www.mlplh.com or call Wilma King at 724-366-6605 if your child would like to play.

Designing Independence, Empowerment and Hope

These tee shirts were designed by the members of Fayette County Youth MOVE. The design reflects the unity of the group and their mission of "Independence, Empowerment, and Hope". This youth-driven group, funded by a grant through the Staunton Farms Foundation, includes members 15-25 years old. Each person participating in the group has been or is currently involved in one or more of Fayette County's serving systems. The purpose of Youth MOVE is to reach out to peers in the community and inspire them to share their stories, support advocacy, and help make changes to the system of care in order to better support the community's youth population.



Our Voices Were Heard

Recently the Let Our Voices Be Heard advocacy group sent post cards to their local representatives and state senator asking them to stop the proposed 20% cuts to Mental Health Services. The members, whose mission is to advocate for people with mental illness, consist of people from the Crosskeys Site Based Psych Rehab and Oakhouse Drop-In Center and is always open to anyone who would like to join. Meetings are every other month at the Psych Rehab Site on Gallatin Avenue in Uniontown. Please call Dayna at (724) 438-6738 for more information .

Aging Conference



On May 25th, over 80 people attended a day long training sponsored by Fayette County's Intellectual and Developmental Disability/Aging Coalition at Fayette County's Vocational Technical School. This event is held each year to bring citizens, providers, and governmental agencies together to share information and collaborate on how to access and improve services and supports for aging individuals with intellectual disabilities.



Kid Talk

Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders

The term pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) refers to a group of developmental conditions that involve delayed or impaired communication and social skills, behaviors, and cognitive skills (learning). Because autism is the best-known of the PDDs, the disorders also are known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). PDDs include Asperger syndrome and two less common conditions, childhood disintegrative disorder and Rett syndrome. PDDs usually are diagnosed during infancy, toddlerhood, or early childhood. Signs of ASD's are usually recognizable before a child is three years old. However, symptoms can range from severe to so subtle that they seem to be normal aspects of childhood development. For that reason, it can take a few years for an ASD to be fully identified. That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends pediatricians look for early signs that suggest the possibility of autism at every visit and formally screen for autism at 18 months and 24 months, and any other time there is a concern. Early signs can include:

- * trouble interacting, playing with, or relating to others
- * avoiding eye contact; not looking at people
- * not pointing to objects to call attention to them
- * unusual movements, such as hand flapping, spinning, or tapping
- * delays in developmental milestones or loss of milestones already achieved
- * playing with the same toy in a way that seems odd or repetitive
- * not using or understanding language
- * not exploring surroundings with curiosity or interest

Kids who show a pattern of these behaviors should be evaluated by a doctor. No blood tests or brain tests (such as MRIs) can diagnose ASDs, although such tests might be done to check for other conditions that could cause the symptoms. A child with suspected ASD should be evaluated by a doctor with expertise in the disorders, such as a pediatric neurologist, developmental pediatrician, pediatric psychiatrist, or pediatric psychologist. Parent questionnaires, educational and cognitive assessments, language assessments, or play and behavior assessments might be used to help diagnose autism. Causes of autism are not yet well understood. Scientists believe they're complex neurobiological (brain biology) problems, which might have a genetic basis like other conditions that stem from abnormalities in the chromosomes a child inherits. Some studies have suggested that autism might stem from a host of causes, including food allergies, excessive amounts of yeast in the digestive tract, and exposure to environmental toxins. However, these theories aren't scientifically proven. The vast majority of scientific studies have found no link between vaccines—or any of their ingredients—and autism. The 1998 study that suggested such a link has since been retracted by the medical journal that originally published the flawed research. It's also important to remember that autism is not caused by parenting or bad experiences. Earlier notions that suggested this have been debunked.

Although there's no cure for autism, early intervention and treatment can help kids develop skills and achieve their best potential. No medications can cure PDD's, but sometimes they're used to treat certain symptoms, such as aggression toward self or others, problems of inattention, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and mood swings. Individually tailored programs can include behavior modification and educational interventions which can help shape a child's behaviors and improve speech and communication. Therapy should be individualized because each child's disorder is distinct and presents specific needs and ASDs can range from mild to severe. Some kids do well in small classes with lots of one-on-one attention. Others do well in standard classrooms with support. The goal of treatment is to get kids with PDDs to a point where they can be mainstreamed into a regular classroom, although they also might require special programs and support services, including speech-language therapy. Gluten-free and casein-free diets have been reported to show some positive results in helping some children with autism, although more research needs to be done. Other vitamin and herbal remedies have not been specifically proven, although they may have value for some kids. Families who are considering using these or other treatments will want to discuss any possible benefits or risks with their doctor before beginning.

Once you learn your child may have autism it's important to get help. Even before a formal diagnosis is made, your child can begin early intervention to address language and other delays. Kids with disabilities are entitled to free preschool services at three years of age under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Check services offered by your school district and the Intermediate Unit. Because the needs of kids with autism spectrum disorder vary, any education program must be tailored to the individual child. You can set up an individualized education plan (IEP) for your child through your school district. An IEP should incorporate social skills and communication and be very structured. As with all developmental concerns, talk with your doctor about how to find local resources for the services your child needs.

This information was provided by [Kids Health](#), one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more information like this one, visit [KidsHealth.org](#) or [TeensHealth.org](#) © 1995-2009. The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.)

The ANSWER

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**Fayette County
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www.fcbha.org

Lisa A. Ferris
Chief Executive Officer

**Fayette County
Board of Commissioners**

Alfred F. Ambrosini, Chairman
Vince Zapotosky
Angela M. Zimmerlink



July 17, 2012 10:00AM-12:00PM

Osteoporosis

at FCBHA

Register at:

www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com

August 16, 2012 10:00AM-12:00PM

Hearing and Visual Impairment

at FCBHA

Register at:

www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com

September 11, 2012 10:00AM-12:00PM

Abuse: Recognizing and Reporting

at FCBHA

Register at:

www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com

The ANSWER is a publication of the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration.
Any comments, questions or suggestions may be submitted to the Newsletter Editor at www.fcbha.org or
Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration, 215 Jacob Murphy Lane, Uniontown, PA 15401.