

SUMMER 2024

HOOPS AND SCOOPS

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TREASURE HUNT

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TORRANCE

10 & 20 YEARS
OF SERVICE

MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS MONTH
SUMMER KICK-OFF

L.I.C.C. PICNIC



Office Hours
8:30 AM-4:30 PM
Mon-Fri

Upcoming Office Closure Dates

9/2/24—Labor Day

10/14/24—Columbus Day



9th Annual
U N I O N T O W N
HOOPS
AND **scoops**



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
Tuesday **2024**
August 6
5-8 PM
Grant Street Park



**Free
Community
Event**

Come join us for

- Free throw Competition-Prizes for each age group. T-shirt for contest participants.
- Free ice cream (while supplies last)
- Community Resource Fair~See what Fayette County has to offer.
- Positive engagement with first responders
- Musical entertainment



SPECIAL NEEDS PROM



For four years in a row, three women have given residents in the county with an intellectual disability something that many of them have never experienced – a prom.



And while they don't do it for the recognition, Glenda McLaughlin, Rita Rosensteel and Kelly Linko were honored in May by Fayette County and the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration (FCBHA) Advisory Board. These ladies were presented the 2023 FCBHA Advisory Board Community Recognition Award by Sherri Mitchell, Intellectual Disabilities Deputy Administrator at the May 16, 2024 Commissioners' meeting. Mrs. Mitchell stated the women are deserving of the recognition because of the kindness and caring they show in all of the activities they plan for the "Under the Stars" special needs prom. They help the attendees find attire for the event and arrange for the night's food and musical entertainment. She went on to say "Most of our individuals didn't have the opportunity to go to a prom when they were in school. This is an amazing opportunity (for them)." Because of the expense in planning such an event, the women welcome any donations for future events. "There's no dollar amount you can put on it for how happy the individuals are after this occurs," said Mitchell. This year's prom was held on July 13, 2024.



Pictured from left: Commissioner Scott Dunn, Sherri Mitchell, Kelly Linko, Rita Rosensteel, Glenda McLaughlin and Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites

Community Partnerships

At our April staff meeting, FCBHA recognized the Stern Center as a valuable community partner. Jennifer Warrick introduced representatives from the Stern Center, Danielle Rowan-Clinical Director, Uneika Mitchell-Family Based Therapist and Mandi Mihelic-Family Based Program Director. Family Based Mental Health Services is an 8-month intervention program that serves the entire family. The family has access to a 24-hour crisis team so as to avoid inpatient hospitalization and out-of-home placement when challenges occur. The Stern Center is used frequently for Family Based services for children with severe MH needs and trauma. Feedback from families receiving this service is always positive. Ms. Rowan expressed appreciation for this recognition and the collaboration within Fayette County.



Pictured left to right: Jennifer Warrick, Uneika Mitchell, Danielle Rowan and Mandi Mihelic.



May's community provider partner is Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc. (SPHS). The May staff meeting fell on a holiday therefore SPHS was recognized at the June staff meeting. Nicole Barak introduced Jeff Serra, a Blended Case Management (BCM) Supervisor with SPHS. Nicole advised that SPHS has helped thousands of consumers, even working after hours taking on complex and difficult cases. SPHS works well with other providers in the best interest of their clients. They are an integral part of 7-day follow up care with those discharged from Penn Highlands Hospital. Mr. Serra informed staff of SPHS' case management services and simple referral process. He talked about their mobile psych and peer specialist programs. Mr. Serra graciously accepted this acknowledgement on behalf of SPHS.

Pictured left: Nicole Barak and Jeff Serra

Autism & Wandering

According to data published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, nearly half of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) go missing from their environment, with a substantial number at risk for bodily harm or drowning. Children on the autism spectrum may seek out small or enclosed spaces, head toward water or places of special interest to them, or they may try to escape overwhelming stimuli such as sights, sounds, surroundings, or activities of others. Children on the autism spectrum may exhibit behavioral characteristics that threaten their safety such as:

- Attractions to bodies of water, roadways/highways, trains, fire trucks, or traffic signals
- Experiencing sensory/stimuli overload and bolting from their environment
- Being non-speaking/non-verbal or unable to respond to searchers when their name is called

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has free resources and training to help support caregivers, first responders, and search teams to help mitigate missing incidents for children on the autism spectrum and to foster relationships and understanding in order to better support children on the spectrum.

Go to missingkids.org/theissues/autism for more information, checklists and sensory friendly resources.

Sensory Friendly Treasure Hunt



Sensory issues are common in people with autism and are even included in the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder. Each person with autism is unique, and this includes their personal sensory sensitivities.

People with autism might have sensitivities to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, balance, awareness of body position and movement and/or awareness of internal body cues and sensations. Having unique sensitivities to certain types of environmental input can create challenges in everyday situations like school, work or community settings. With that in mind, FCBHA conducted a sensory friendly treasure hunt to accommodate sensory issues and ease discomfort and increase opportunities for persons on the autism spectrum to learn, socialize, communicate and participate in the community. The event took place on April 25th at Hutchinson Park.

Spotlight on Torrance

In honor of Mental Health Awareness in the month of May, Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration (FCBHA) acknowledges Torrance State Hospital's (TSH) social service department in appreciation of their valuable partnership with FCBHA and the ADAPT team. The ADAPT (Admission, Discharge and Priority Treatment) Team works as a liaison to TSH to provide our residents with support and to ensure a successful discharge back into our community. In addition, FCBHA presented each of our 13 residents at TSH with a deposit into their commissary accounts. Most of our patients at TSH receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is stopped when they are hospitalized. This money can be used by our patients to purchase items they may need or want while a patient at the hospital.

Pictured below, bottom left to right: Melissa Murphy-Social Worker, Karla Shaffer-Human Service Program Representative, Barbara Cox-Social Worker. Top row, left to right: Tammy Bowers-Social Work Manager, Brittany Weaver-Social Services Clerk, Kim Stewart-Social Services Clerical Assistant and Shelby Gray-Social Work Supervisor. Missing from the photo are Gabriel Phillips-Social Worker and Heather Stoykovich-Social Work Supervisor.



10 & 20 Years of Service



FCBHA employees that have hit their 10 and 20 year milestone are shown appreciation and recognized for their dedication to the agency and our mission. Employees with 10 years of service are given a plaque and gift card. Those with 20 years of service are given a beautiful commemorative clock. We are very grateful for your hard work and commitment.

Congratulations!

Pictured left: Crissy Collier and Nicole Kmetz.

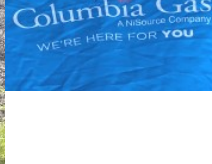
Pictured right: Brenda Buskirk.

John Zurick (not pictured) has also reached his 20 year milestone.



Mental Health Awareness Month Summer Kick-Off

May is recognized nationally as Mental Health Awareness Month. During this month, there were many activities and trainings conducted in Fayette County to raise awareness and provide a connection to area resources and information. The pictures below and at the top of the following page include some of the many agencies that attended the kick-off event at the Yough River Park in Connellsville to provide the community with fun activities and information on how to access services and resources in our area.





L.I.C.C. Picnic



The Fayette County Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) is comprised of families of children receiving Early Intervention services and various professionals representing the Infant/Toddler and Pre-School (Birth to Kindergarten) community. The LICC hosted a picnic at the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration building for our Early Intervention families and professionals on June 20, 2024. The 'Picnic in the Park' was going to be held at Areford Park, however due to the heatwave we had been experiencing, having it at an air-conditioned setting was safer and more appropriate. The day was filled with both educational and recreational fun. Families were provided with information on summertime safety. Event attendees enjoyed a picnic lunch as they connected with others and shared their Early Intervention experiences. The children had the opportunity to explore various sensory activities, make crafts, and engage with a therapy support dog. Parents and children were encouraged to select a book to take home for summertime reading. The next LICC meeting will be held at FCBHA in September, date and time to be determined.

If you would like more information about Early Intervention services or would like to make a referral, call 724-430-1370.

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration
215 Jacob Murphy Lane
Uniontown, PA 15401

24/7 Crisis Hotline
(724) 437-1003



**Fayette County
Behavioral Health
Administration**

(724) 430-1370

David W. Rider
Administrator/CEO

www.FCBHA.org



**Fayette County
Board of Commissioners**

Scott Dunn, Chairman
Vincent A. Vicites, Vice-Chairman
Dave Lohr, Secretary

**FCBHA Fraud and
Abuse Hotline**
1-866-275-6467



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The ANSWER is a publication of the Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration.
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.