



The Chimes

Summer 2009

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Mental Health Association of RI



The MHA Bell Award to George A. Vecchione

At a reception at Patrick's Pier One on May 21st, the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island presented its annual award to President & CEO of Lifespan, George A. Vecchione.

Mr. Vecchione expressed his commitment to the continued work to improve the system of care for all Rhode Islanders and thanked MHA for its advocacy for our most vulnerable.

The planning committee included former Governor Joseph Garrahy, former Director of the RI Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals, MHA of RI Board President, Scotti Di Donato, and Board Members Joseph J. Bevilacqua, Jean Kelly, Deb Morais and Ruth Winograd. Stanley and Gale Aronson served as Honorary Co-chairs. The Program featured Reed Cosper, Mental Health Advocate for the State of RI and Board Member of MHA as Master of Ceremonies and remarks from Former Governor Garrahy, Dr. Bevilacqua, and Richard J. Goldberg, MD, MS, Chief of Psychiatry at Rhode Island and Miriam Hospitals. Dr. Goldberg noted the important role Mr. Vecchione plays in the integration of mental health care into primary care.

Photo: Lifespan Board Member the Honorable Bruce M Selya with awardee George A. Vecchione, President CEO of Lifespan. Photo by Ed LeDoux.

Live Your Life Well – New Tools for Preserving Mental Health Now

These proven tools can help you feel stronger and more hopeful. Check out each page of the website for specific, easy-to-follow tips, and interactive features.

The 10 Tools

The Mental Health Association of RI, a founding member of the National Mental Health Association (now known as *Mental Health America*) joins in the celebration of 100 years of advocating for the mentally ill, fighting stigma and now working to preserve mental health as we integrate mental health care with primary healthcare. As a partner we encourage all Rhode Islanders to do all they can do to reduce stress and preserve good mental health. To help you do this, we have introduced the scientifically based, and engaging Live Your Life Well Campaign. We have a link to *interactive website* www.LiveYourLifeWell.org.

1. Connect with others
2. Stay positive
3. Get physically active
4. Help others
5. Get enough sleep
6. Create joy and satisfaction
7. Eat well
8. Take care of your spirit
9. Deal better with hard times
10. Get professional help if you need it.

Why Be A Member?

When you join the Mental Health Association of RI, your voice for Mental Health is heard!

You are part of the movement to fight the stigma related to mental illness and build a system of care for all with behavioral health challenges.

As a member, you support our screening educational programs about mental health preservation, early detection and access to care.

You also support assistance and shelter for homeless persons with mental illness, and advocate for individuals with mental illness who are caught up in the criminal justice system.

You are part of the movement for fully integrated health care that brings primary care and behavioral health together in medical homes for children and adults.

Membership in the Mental Health Association of RI renews annually, as of each July 1. Memberships are only \$40 for individuals, \$75 for families and \$500 for corporations. Join or renew now, and thank you.

May – A Busy Mental Health Month A Rousing State House Kickoff

“The May is Mental Health Month Kickoff Youth performers-Tyler Lewis with his 1st original poem, ‘I AM’, and Kira Brown Tapozada singing ‘The Climb’ so moved the audience with hope and courage,” said Chairperson Christine Brown.

“Live Your Life Well –Thriving in the Community” was the theme heralded at The May is Mental Health Month kickoff in the Governor’s State Room at the RI State House. Mistress of Ceremonies Barbara Morse Silva (Health Check Reporter for WJAR-NBC-10) presided over a full program which included a presentation by Don Boucher (of Riverwood Mental Health Services) about Housing First, and first person experiences with recovery from Adam Alt, a student at CCRI, a member of Hillsgrove House and an accounting intern

at MHA of RI and nationally renown artist and co-founder of Peace Love Studios in Pawtucket, artist Jeffrey Sparr. The May is Mental Health Month Kickoff featured youth performers. “Tyler Lewis with his 1st original poem, ‘I AM’ and Kira Brown Tapozada singing ‘The Climb’ so moved the audience with hope and courage,” said Chairperson Christine Brown. The program was capped by the presentation of the Bell of Hope Award to RI State Senator Rhoda E. Perry for her outstanding leadership.

Special Thanks to May is Mental Health Month Sponsors, Presenters and Committee Members

Sponsors:

Access-RI, A New Leaf, Alive Peer Support Program (an affiliate of NRI Community Services), Bradley Hospital, Butler Hospital, Cookie Place Café, Inc., East Bay Center, Inc., Fellowship Health Resources, Inc., Gateway Healthcare, Inc., Mental Health Consumer Advocates of RI, Inc., NAMI Rhode Island, Newport County Community Mental Health Center, NRI Community Services, Inc., Office of the Mental Health Advocate, Parent Support Network of RI, Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, RI Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, Inc., Riverwood Mental Health Services, Inc., South Shore Mental Health Center, Inc., The Kent Center, and The Providence Center.



Crescent Park Looff Carousel Event

Saturday, August 29- “Wonderful time despite the rain!”

The Mental Health Association Members, Friends and Family came together at the end of summer for a special, private 11:00 AM opening of the famous Looff Carousel in Crescent Park, Riverside, RI. We had two hours of rides and raffles, the 1st hour before the noon public opening.

“We thank all who joined us bought tickets, and supported your Mental Health Association, with donated raffle prizes. We had a fine time at this beautiful, historic Carousel”, announced Jean Kelly, Event Chairperson.

Our next fundraising event is a Wine Tasting on Thursday, November 5, 2009. For further information, advance tickets or raffle purchases or more information contact the MHA of RI at 401-726-2285.



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

About Us – Why We Need Your Help

The Mental Health Association of RI (MHA of RI) was founded in 1916 to help break the chains of mental illness, and promote awareness of how fundamental mental health is to overall health and well-being, through the **promotion of mental health**, the **prevention mental illness**, the **removal of stigma** related to mental illness and substance abuse treatment and working to improve the system of care for mental health through advocacy, education, services and the dissemination of research.

To achieve this we promote the integration of behavioral health and general health, mental wellness and cultural and linguistic competency. The Association is committed to parity between mental health care and substance abuse treatment with general medical care in insurance coverage to ensure affordability of treatment. We are also active participants in collaborative efforts to achieve Health Reform and systems redesign to promote quality mental health care, which is accessible to all.



The MHA of RI

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*A proud member of
the Fund for
Community Progress.*

*The RI Affiliate of
Mental Health
America and the RI
partner of the
National Institute of
Mental Health*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.mhari.org

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Program Committee Updates

The **Corrections Committee** is very strongly committed to changing the RI system: one that incarcerates too many individuals who are mentally ill. Committee members have consulted on several occasions with the Director of the Dept. of Corrections, A.T. Wall, and the Director of MHRH, Craig Stenning, and their key staffs, and other advocates, on our concerns about this population of inmates. We are closely following national legislation, which would create a National Commission to investigate the high incidence of persons with mental illness who are imprisoned across the country.

The MHA of RI **Children's Mental Health Committee** is a diverse group of professionals from across child-serving agencies working to identify school and social-service initiatives that support community, family and child well being to recommend them for MHA's advocacy. The Committee also wants to help parents help their children, starting with an initiative called "Project Play."

The goal of MHA of RI **Mental Health System Committee** is to advocate for the improvement and enhancement of programs and services for adults and children receiving care in the community, and through its advocacy efforts, to work to help bring about a seamless system of care between and among inpatient facilities and community programs. Toward our stated goal we are now at work developing system wide performance measures.

The MHA of RI is also actively participates in collaborative efforts to achieve Health Reform and systems redesign to promote quality mental health care, which is accessible to all.

To e-subscribe to *The Chimes* just contact us at mhari@mhari.org or phone us at (401) 726-2285.

