Conference participants were actively engaged in this year’s workshops.

Everyone had a great time while raising over $2,500 at Buckley’s Tavern Happy Hour for E-Racing the Blues for Mental Health.

Runners and walkers take off at 13th annual race.

Inside:
• Q & A with Mike Barbieri
• E-Racing the Blues® for Mental Health

Learn how you can get involved!
(302) 654-6833
(800) 287-6423
www.mhainde.org
A message from Jim Lafferty

Executive Director, Mental Health Association in Delaware

It’s a pleasure to write to you and wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. All of us at the Mental Health Association in Delaware are extremely grateful for your continued support of our programs. Your generous support each and every year is essential to us and allows us to continue our education programs and other peer support groups in the community. On behalf of the board and staff of MHA, thank you very much.

In this newsletter you will read about the new Division Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. His name is Mike Barbieri. I have known Mike for many years as a legislator in the Delaware’s House of Representatives. Dr. Barbieri has a wealth of knowledge in the areas of mental health and substance use treatment and I am thrilled that he accepted the position of Division Director. Mike has talked to me about his focus on ensuring that service providers through his division are offering high quality treatment services to the community. While doing this, he will also be implementing a new array of services aimed at providing expanded access to substance use treatment services.

We’ve been busy here at MHA over the last year planning and offering conferences and other educational events to update and educate the community about the importance of mental health and substance use treatment and to emphasize that these are medically treatable illnesses.

The Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition which the Mental Health Association co-chairs worked with the National Guard to plan and offer a military conference. You’ll read more about that in this issue of the newsletter.

National Depression Screening Day, which we sponsor with the help of our community partners, was very successful. Dr. Elizabeth Davis who coordinated screening day will tell you more about it in her article.

With your support we had a very successful E-Racing the Blues© event. This race is a major fundraiser for us and all of the funds raised go towards our community programs. You’ll find more about the race in this issue.

MHA applied for and received one of four national grants to provide peer support groups for folks who experience hearing voices. We hope that the sharing of experiences will benefit all who attend these groups. Training for group facilitators is scheduled for early December and the class is full.

We appreciate your past generosity to MHA and we continue to rely your continued support.

We look forward to the holidays and we are excited with the prospects of a very busy and productive 2016.

Thank you from the Board and Staff of MHA.

Jim
Q&A with Mike Barbieri
Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Michael Barbieri has looked at mental health and substance abuse from both sides now. He’s been a health care provider and a public policy maker. While running Crossroads of Delaware, the Newark resident was elected as a representative in the Delaware General Assembly. He resigned from the House and sold Crossroads when he recently became the director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health in the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

Barbieri grew up in South Philadelphia. His father was a laborer at RCA Victrola in Camden, New Jersey, and his mother looked after Barbieri, his older sister and his younger brother. A football star at Bishop Neumann High School (now Saints John Neumann and Maria Goretti Catholic High School), Barbieri was recruited to play at the University of Delaware.

It was 1967, and the move to Newark, Delaware, gave him culture shock in more ways than one. “I’d lived my entire life in South Philadelphia not seeing anything but Wildwood, New Jersey, on occasion,” he says. “I felt like I was going to a new world. It was very pastoral. It was a shock just being around different people.”

A course in sociology led to his career path. After graduation, he became a probation officer for drug units in Philadelphia and got his master’s degree in social work from Temple University. He’s been the executive director of a youth counseling facility and a regional vice president for Recovery Centers of America. He moved to Delaware while finishing his PhD at the University of Delaware and working at a treatment facility in Bel Air, Maryland. In 1991, after managed care prompted his employer to leave that line of business, he started Crossroads of Delaware, which provides behavioral health care to adolescents.

Are you proud of any particular legislation passed during your time in the General Assembly?

Most of it was in regards to mental health and substance abuse services. I was sponsor on House Substitute 1 for House Bill 311, [which significantly reformed the way emergency mental health screenings are conducted, modernized Delaware’s involuntary commitment laws and provided people with a wider array of appropriate treatment options]. A piece of legislation that did not get passed, House Bill 88, basically said that if a clinical professional determined that a person was a potential threat to self or others, the court could require that their guns be taken away and they’d be a person prohibited from purchasing a weapon. This right would not be restored until it was determined the person was no longer a threat to self or others. It went through the House with a 40 to one vote. It did not get out of the Senate. That was my best and the worst moment.

What prompted you to take the position heading up the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health?

One of the really good things that happened to me after I became a legislator is that I became chair of the Health and Human Development Committee. As a result, I did a lot of work with Rita Landgraf, [secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services]. We met regularly to discuss legislation that had an impact on DHSS, and we also talked about substance abuse and mental health services and how to handle the heroin epidemic. I always said, “You’re doing exciting stuff – you’re getting the opportunity to create new policies and change the way we deal with mental health and substance abuse.” So when I got this opportunity it was like “Wow. I have a chance to have more of an influence.”

What are your goals for the division?

Rita and Kevin Ann Huckshorn, [the division’s former director], began to put together some really good things. I would like to take what they’ve done and strengthen the infrastructure, so it can be supported over time. I think the department is moving in a very positive direction as far as trying to develop more community-based services and reshaping our whole substance abuse delivery systems so there are more services at different levels – people aren’t stuck in residential [treatment facilities] for a long time but can go through different levels of care. All those things are on the books, and I want to see them come to fruition and make sure there’s an infrastructure to support them.

You’ve been involved in helping people with addictions for a long time. Will addiction always be with us in some shape or form?

Yes. We have a society that is adverse to pain and looking for a quick cure. Whenever you’re set up like that, you’re very vulnerable to addiction. That’s not going to change any time soon. You have to become better at identifying addiction early and to intervene and to support a person in sobriety. The pressing issue is to get a full continuum of care and to get to people early.

What’s your idea of perfect happiness?

There’s nothing more pleasurable than being with family – my wife, two children and my grandson. Honestly, work for me is very rewarding. I will continue to do this as long as I can and as long as Rita wants me. I’m doing this because I enjoy it.
By Lauren Golt, chair

This year marked the 13th annual E-Racing the Blues© For Mental Health. The air was crisp and the energy was high as 700 men, women and children met at the Riverfront on Sunday, October 25th to support the Mental Health Association in Delaware. At 8:30am the 10K runners stepped up to the starting line, then the 5K runners at 9:45am took their mark and, just before 10am, the 5K competitive and recreational walkers hit the pavement. At the end of the day over $80,000 was raised!

Currently 1 in 4 people suffer from a form of mental illness, but 75% of them do not receive the treatment they need. Stigma and discrimination are two big obstacles in the mental health industry, which is why the MHA is working hard to “e-race” the stigma associated with mental illness in our community.

Thousands of adults in Delaware suffer from depression and a suicide takes place every 3.5 days. Our mission is to increase awareness of the symptoms of depressive and anxiety disorders so that people will seek early treatment. MHA provides suicide prevention training, education and advocacy throughout the state, as well as support groups for those with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and those who have lost a loved one to suicide or violence.

If you missed this year’s E-Racing the Blues© for Mental Health you can still donate to the MHA by visiting www.mhainde.org or call 302-654-6833 to find out how you can get involved. Your support helps to improve the community’s understanding of mental health and funds the comprehensive programming that the MHA provides to thousands of Delawareans each year.

Check out and support our sponsors of the race on this page as well as the winners of each event.
ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day training for anyone who wants to feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. Over one million caregivers have participated in this evidence-based two-day, highly interactive, practical, practice-oriented workshop. ASIST is the most researched suicide prevention skills training worldwide, and evaluations have shown that interventions skills learned at ASIST are retained over time and put to use to save lives.

The Outcome
The emphasis of the ASIST workshop is on suicide first aid, on helping a person at risk stay safe and seek further help. Attendance at the full two days is essential.

Learn how to:
- recognize invitations for help
- reach out and offer support
- review the risk of suicide
- apply a suicide intervention model
- link people with community resources

Who to Contact:
Mental Health Association in Delaware:
(302) 654-6833 or (800) 287-6423

safeTALK: a 3-hour training that prepares anyone over the age of 15 to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources. As a safeTALK-trained suicide alert helper, you will be better able to: move beyond common tendencies to miss, dismiss or avoid suicide; identify people who have thoughts of suicide; apply the TALK steps (Tell, Ask, Listen and Keep Safe) to connect a person with suicide thoughts to suicide first aid, intervention caregivers.

Why should I come to safeTALK?
In only a few hours, you will learn how to provide practical help to persons with thoughts of suicide. Expect to leave safeTALK more willing and able to perform an important helping role for persons with thoughts of suicide.

Why is safeTALK for everyone?
Most persons with thoughts of suicide go unrecognized—even though most all are, directly or indirectly, requesting help. Without safeTALK training, these invitations to help are too rarely accepted, or even noticed. With more suicide alert helpers, more people with thoughts of suicide will get connected to the intervention help they need.

safeTALK is a comprehensive suicide awareness and responsiveness program for middle schools. This is a whole-school program made up of three unique components: Lifelines: Prevention, Lifelines: Intervention, and Lifelines: Postvention. This trilogy of programs is the only existing model of its kind available for schools. The complete Lifelines Trilogy is based on over 20 years of suicide-in-youth research that indicates an informed community can help to prevent vulnerable teens from ending their lives.

Workshop Details:
Lifelines prevention program can be done in as little as 45 minutes to one hour. The program was created for school staff and parents but can be utilized in a variety of community settings including churches, community centers and after school programs. These workshops can be ideal for parents & families, clergy, educators and others, who will learn about the problem of suicide in Delaware, basic myth and facts about suicide, and signs of suicide risk. We can customize the workshops to address the needs of your community or organization. The student curriculum must be done in two 90 minute sessions or four 45 minute sessions.
National Depression Screening Day
A Day That Can Change Your Life

By Elizabeth A Davis Psy.D.

With this tepid economy and increasing security threats against America, no one can blame you for feeling anxious or overwhelmed. These days, it is common and understandable to be angry, worried and even gloomy, especially if you lost your job, your house, or are stressed about paying bills. Although worry, anger, and stress seem to be normal, appropriate and even necessary during life’s difficult moments, many times they are warning signals that something is not right. Some of the symptoms of depression include feeling fatigued, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, difficulty falling asleep, sleeping too much, feeling hopeless, blaming yourself for things and poor appetite.

When negative feelings make it difficult or prevent you from doing your daily activities or interfere when interacting with friends and loved ones, it might be time to seek help.

Each year, Delaware participates in an event called National Depression Screening Day (NDSD) which is designed to call attention to the illness of depression and to help those in need. Initiated by Screening for Mental Health on a national level in 1990, this event is designed to educate the public about symptoms and effective treatment for depression, to offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for depression and to connect those in need to the mental health care system in Delaware. Depression screenings are not a professional evaluation, but are a quick and easy way to spot some of the early signs of trouble and then make a referral to a mental health professional. Since we know that over 84,000 adult Delawareans suffer from serious psychological distress including major depression or bipolar disorder and two out of three people affected are either undiagnosed or not in treatment, this means that over 56,000 people are in need of help. We know that 80% of the people with depression who receive treatment will improve. Treatment may include cognitive behavioral therapy and medication. Medication may be very important as in many cases of depression, the biochemistry of the body has changed. Medication may restore the balance of neurotransmitters (chemical messengers) in the brain. Thus, we want to raise awareness in our communities about the facts regarding depression and the resources that are available.

To assist in the goal of raising awareness about depression and treatment options, the Mental Health Association in Delaware helped to coordinate National Depression Screening Day on Thursday October 8, 2015. The event took place at 21 sites across the state. The results are still being tallied. With 16 of the sites having been counted, the number screened thus far is 163 individuals with 50% of those screened being referred to treatment. For those who were referred, it was a day that changed their lives.

We would like to thank all the screeners who assisted with National Depression Screening Day 2015! Thank you to Emily Vera, Holly Dixon, Rosemary Joseph-Kappel, Glenn Owens, Linda Connors, Andrea Mancini-Smith, Michael Betts, Jeff Maddox, Felicita Gontang, Carolyn Stepis, Kimberly Taylor, Amber Pennel, Kathy J. Law, Linda Williams, Janet Ray and Janet Urdahl. Also, thanks to Amanda Meade who helped coordinate this event in Sussex County.

We would also like to thank all of the following sites for participating in National Depression Screening Day 2015!

Nicotine and Mental Health

By Emily Vera and Jennifer Smolowitz

Research shows a correlation between smoking and the development of depression and anxiety, as well as a worsening of symptoms of mental health disorders. Nicotine is known to be one of the leading causes of illness, disability and death in the United States, but these problems are preventable, and there are resources that can be used to fight nicotine addiction.

According to the Center for Disease Control, more than 1 in 3 adults (36%) with a mental illness smoke cigarettes, compared to 1 in 5 adults (21%) with no mental illness. Three out of every 10 cigarettes smoked by adults in the United States are smoked by those with mental illness. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is associated with a smoking rate of 60%. Studies indicate that teens who smoke are four times more likely to develop depression than those who do not smoke. Tobacco related deaths in the United States are at 430,000 annually, with nearly half of those deaths occurring in people with mental illness.

Additionally, people who are diagnosed as schizophrenic smoke cigarettes at three times the rate of the general population. The Center for Disease Control shows that tobacco use relates to the person’s perception of having an auditory hallucination while simultaneously blocking the ability to filter out distracting noises.

Nicotine is absorbed quickly into the bloodstream, reaching the brain within 10 seconds, and causing the release of adrenaline, dopamine, and serotonin. This creates a pleasant but short lived sense of well-being and energy. However, when this sensation subsides it leaves a feeling of mild fatigue, low mood and craving for another buzz.

Those who suffer from depression and anxiety may use smoking and other forms of nicotine to cope with symptoms, but unfortunately over time, this may exacerbate symptoms instead. Individuals who smoke will develop a tolerance to the nicotine and it will take more nicotine to achieve the same effects. Smoking also increases the breakdown of medicines in the body, requiring higher doses for medications to work.

Studies show that while people with mental health disorders may be more prone to use nicotine, and may need support in order to quit, they also want to and are able to quit. There are many resources available to those who want help to quit smoking and using other forms of tobacco.

The Mental Health Association in Delaware has published a Nicotine and Mental Health brochure that is made possible through the Delaware Division of Public Health’s Tobacco Prevention Community Contract. Funding for the Contract is provided by the Delaware Health Fund and managed by the American Lung Association in Delaware. The brochure highlights the correlation between mental health and nicotine and provides information about quitting and available resources.

Nicotine increases the risk of depression, along with its many other negative effects including heart disease, cancer and other life threatening illnesses. Take control of your life by quitting. Call 800-287-6423 to request a brochure to be sent to you free of charge.

A.C.E. Peer Resource Center
547 N. Bradford St. Seaford, DE 19973

Adams State Service Center
546 S. Bedford Street Georgetown, DE 19947

AIDS Delaware
100 West 10th Street Suite 315 Wilmington, DE 19801

Bayside Chapel UMC
38288 London Ave. Unit 9 Selbyville, DE 19975

Beautiful Gate Outreach
604 Walnut Street Wilmington, DE 19801

Career Team
964 Justison St. Wilmington, DE 19801

Christ Our King Parish Health Ministry
2810 North Monroe Street Wilmington, DE 19802

Claymont Community Center
3301 Green Street Claymont, DE 19703

Delaware Technical Community College- Dover
100 Campus Drive Dover, DE 19904

Delaware Technical Community College- Stanton
400 Stanton Road Newark, DE 19713

Delaware Technical Community College- Wilmington
333 N. Shipley Street Wilmington, DE 19703

Dover Behavioral Health
725 Horsepond Road Dover, DE 19901

Easter Seals
61 Corporate Circle New Castle, DE 19720

Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
601 New Castle Ave. Wilmington, DE 19801

Metropolitan Community Church
19369 Plantation Rd. Rehobeth, DE 19971

Mobile Crisis Intervention Services
700 Main Street Ellendale, DE 19941

Neighborhood House INC
1218 B Street Wilmington, DE 19801

Newark Senior Center
200 White Chapel Drive Newark, DE 19713

SODAT - DE
625 N. Orange Street Wilmington, DE 19801

Rick Vansory Center
500 E 2nd St. Wilmington, DE 19801

Williams State Service Center, Kent PAC
805 River Road Dover, DE 19901

If you would like to participate in National Depression Screening Day 2016 or if you have a site to hold the screenings, please e-mail edavis@mhainde.org or call (302) 654-6833. Please participate in changing someone’s life for the better.
For more than a decade the Mental Health Association in Delaware has been an Outreach Partner of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Our partnership provides us with the opportunity to bring state of the art research to Delaware through various pamphlets and brochures. These brochures cover topics such as Post-Partum Depression, Suicide, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, and many more. To learn more about the brochures available or to request some be sent to you free of charge, call 800-287-6423.

Additionally, NIMH is actively looking for people to participate in clinical research studies. Recruitment is currently taking place for the following pediatric bipolar disorder and severe mood dysregulation study:

(Inpatient: 12- to 15 weeks) This study tests the efficacy of different treatments for decreasing irritability in children with severe mood and behavioral problems. Participants have symptoms of severe irritability and are not doing well on their current medications. The child must be currently in treatment with a physician, medically healthy and not currently hospitalized, psychotic or suicidal. The study includes day or full hospitalization to discontinue medication, followed by either methylphenidate plus citalopram, or methylphenidate plus placebo. Recruiting ages 7-17. [09-M-0034]

To learn more about the clinical research process and the current studies available, visit NIMH’s website at http://www.nimh.nih.gov. If you do not have Internet access, call them toll-free at 1-866-615-NIMH (6464).
By Jennifer Smolowitz

On Thursday, November 12, 2015 the Mental Health Association in Delaware hosted our 14th annual Community Mental Health Conference at the Chase Center in Wilmington, DE. More than 250 mental health providers and consumers, as well as community advocates, students, and representatives from various faith based communities were present. Presentation topics included the Eight Dimensions of Wellness, Suicide Prevention, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and Mindfulness. There was also a panel discussion in which peers from the Delaware Psychiatric Center shared their perspective on mental wellness and their work mentoring others on their mental wellness journey.

Back by popular demand was our Creativity Table. Conference participants had the opportunity to create personal wellness recipe cards along with other wellness crafts to take home. Various exhibitors, including those representing state agencies and local non-profit organizations, were present to provide participants with community resources and additional information.

This year’s conference could not have taken place without our generous sponsors: AstraZeneca, United Healthcare Community Plan of DE, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Janssen Pharmaceutical, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the City of Wilmington – Office of the Mayor, the Rockford Center, Dover Behavioral Health, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, Money Follows the Person program, and Horizon House.

Thank you to this year’s planning committee members:

Conference exhibitors sharing their community resources with those in attendance.

Healthcare Community Plan of DE, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Janssen Pharmaceutical, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the City of Wilmington – Office of the Mayor, the Rockford Center, Dover Behavioral Health, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, Money Follows the Person program, and Horizon House.

Thank you to this year’s planning committee members:

Co-chairs: Jennifer Smolowitz (MHA) and Frank Hawkins (AIDS Delaware), Belinda Cridell (Dept. of Labor), Pat Evans (SODAT, DE Inc.), Bryan Gordon (DSAMH), Cereza Hanksley (DPC), Tom Johnson (DSAMH), Olga Matias (Henrietta Johnson), Rob McCready (Family Counseling Center of St. Paul’s), Dona Mesko (MHA), Audwin Odom (Horizon House), La Vaida Owens-White (DE Regional Health Ministry), Meedra Surratte (Parent Information Center), and Franzwa Watrra (MHA).

Fifth Annual Military and Veteran Mental Health Summit

By Emily Vera

The Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition presented the 5th annual Delaware Military and Veterans Mental Health Summit in support of suicide prevention month on September 10th, 2015. The event took place at the Chase Center on the Riverfront, and focused on presenting and disseminating information and resources to veterans, service members, families, and providers who work with the military community in Delaware.

Along with several workshops, the Summit included a Theater of War performance. The Theater of War is a national project that presents dramatic readings of Sophocles’ Ajax – an ancient Greek tragedy about the suicide of a great, respected warrior- to diverse military and civilian audiences in order to engage communities in discussions about suicide, combat stress, alcohol and substance abuse, and the impact of military service on families and communities. It was followed by a panel of military and community members who have been affected by mental health problems and suicide themselves.

The keynote address was given by Carol Graham, a military mother who lost two sons – one to suicide and one in combat – and devoted her life to fighting the military’s high suicide rates and mental health stigma. She and her husband, Major General Mark Graham, US Army (Ret.), are outspoken advocates for both civilians and soldiers who suffer from Depression, PTSD, and Traumatic Brain Injury. Her presentation was entitled, “A Legacy of Hope: A Mother’s Story.”

This day-long event was an excellent forum for sharing resources and increasing understanding of mental health issues in the military population in Delaware. Over 250 individuals attended the summit, which included a presentation by film-maker Carol Dysinger, a presentation on community resources, a panel of veterans in recovery who shared their experiences, and over 20 exhibitors.

The event was planned and executed by the Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition Military Subcommittee, which includes representatives from the Delaware National Guard, ContactLifeline, and the Rockford Center, as well as the agencies which were the main sponsors of the event - the Mental Health Association, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Delaware Commission of Veteran’s Affairs.

GETRIGHTSIDEUP is a subcommittee of the Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition. The subcommittee is made up of various organizations and schools in Delaware. The mission of GETRIGHTSIDEUP is to promote mental well-being and suicide awareness to the youth population and is focused on raising awareness on the topic of youth suicide by promoting help seeking behavior in youth. Did you know that suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 13-24 years old? The aim is to educate parents, youth and the community of Delaware, and help individuals play an active part in suicide prevention. The hope is to provide youth volunteer opportunities and plan events and activities for the school year.

The group also wants to provide resources for the community so that all feel ready, willing and able to help. Teens can get involved in GETRIGHTSIDEUP through the Youth Council or by volunteering their time for website maintenance, flyer designs and other various tasks. The Youth Council is a group of students who help with planning activities during the school year. In order to be in the Youth Council, students will need to be present at the monthly meetings and find their own transportation to and from meetings. Adults can volunteer on GETRIGHTSIDEUP as a subcommittee member. Those who are interested in working with youth or are working with youth currently are welcome to join. The group hopes to expand in the upcoming years by holding events and having more activities throughout the school year. Through GETRIGHTSIDEUP, the goal is to let people know that suicide is preventable and that individuals contemplating suicide can get help. If you are feeling suicidal or are in crisis and need help, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Someone is available to talk 24 hours a day, every day when you call this number. If you are interested in joining GETRIGHTSIDEUP or would like more information on the group, please contact Jennifer Smolowitz at jsmolowitz@mhaingde.org or by calling 302-654-6833 x 19. Please visit www.getrightsideup.org for more updates.