What’s New at MHA?

We are excited to highlight promotions of some of our outstanding staff members who have grown during their years at MHA.

Nicole Perefeg (above) has been promoted to Manager of Peer Education Curriculum, a reflection of her excellent curriculum writing abilities. Her presentations are well-researched, clear, accurate and engaging. Nicole has decades of experience in the realm of training, within and outside of MHA, and she is now responsible for keeping all of our peer-related education up to standard and up to date, and for developing our library of Continuing Education.

Natalie Klaus Rogers (right) has been promoted to Manager of Education for the Department of Corrections. Natalie works with kindness and empathy to help others succeed, and is skilled at recognizing and fostering the strengths of those she serves. She will manage our new training program in the Department of Corrections, where we will provide Peer Certification Training to inmates and mental health training to staff.

Gina Atencia (left) has been promoted to Manager of the Mental Health Court Peer Program, where she goes above and beyond to serve clients of the mental health court. Gina is hardworking and has been instrumental in helping many clients stay well and graduate successfully from the program.

We are proud of our colleagues and congratulate them on their achievements!
Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the year draws to a close, we want to thank some very special people who have spent the last 6 years supporting MHA with their time and expertise, as wonderful and committed board members. We are so grateful to each of them for serving two three-year terms, and want to recognize them as their terms draw to a close at the end of 2022.

Thank you to Victoria Chang, who is a former employee of MHA, where she worked as the Project Director for Suicide Prevention. I always say that she was such a great boss to me, that I went ahead and asked her to keep being my boss as a board member! Victoria has been a wonderful friend to myself and many others at MHA, and continues to always be a supportive force for the agency. She has been the board Vice President for several years as well.

Thank you to Lauren Golt (below) who has so generously given of her time as an expert in digital marketing, and social media management. Lauren is the founder of Social Stylate, where she uses her creative skills to create digital marketing strategy and content for a wide variety of clients. We are grateful to Lauren for using both her creative skills, and her personal experience to support and help others.

Thank you to Dr. Ellison (opposite page, right) who has provided education, connected us to wellness resources, and been a strong voice for older adults with mental illness, especially those also struggling with dementia/Alzheimer’s. Dr. Ellison’s clinical specialties include the assessment and treatment of neurocognitive disorders in older adults and the evaluation and treatment of resistant mood disorders in later life. Dr. Ellison moved to Delaware in 2015 to become the first Swank Foundation Endowed Chair in Memory Care and Geriatrics.

Director’s Note

Victoria (right) is an academic counselor at Delaware Technical Community College, where she serves students with empathy and puts to use her great skills in guidance and encouragement. We will miss her on the board, but we know that our friendship will continue.

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Dr. Ellison writes: “How can a psychiatrist contribute to the workings of a peer support group such as MHA? That’s the question I asked myself when an admired colleague encouraged me, 6 years ago, to join the MHA board. When learning about the organization, I quickly appreciated its many activities, from advocacy and public education about addiction and suicide, to training of peer counselors. These services fill an important gap in services that is not sufficiently addressed by the traditional health care system. I have been impressed at the diversity and impact of MHA’s initiatives and grateful for the opportunity to assist when input from a physician could play a helpful role. I hope to remain a supporter of this valuable agency even after my current board term comes to an end.”

His objective in this role is to enhance the care of older adults with neurocognitive disorders in Delaware by increasing their access to state of the art diagnostic tools, clinical assessment and treatment approaches, caregiver support resources, and research trials. He is a wonderful resource here in Delaware and we are grateful for his 6 years of board service!

Thank you to Carlton Lampkins (below) who has consistently supported our staff’s needs and our mission as an advocate for mental health in schools, including access to treatment and resources for students. Dr. Lampkins has had a long and successful career in education, specifically with Colonial School District, and continues to tirelessly serve students and educators through Communities in Schools.

We are grateful to each of our board members for their ongoing support of MHA as we continue to grow and respond to the changing needs of our community.

As always, we sincerely thank our supporters in the community for helping us achieve our mission of advocacy, education, and support for mental health in Delaware.

Warmly,
Emily Vera, LCSW
Join us for our Virtual Empowering Community Wellness Symposium on November 10th

Keynote speaker Dr. Tyreese R. McAllister, LPC, CSOTP, CCTP, has over 25 years’ experience in the fields of emergency mental health, helping individuals experiencing crisis and/or traumatic events. She has worked in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area as a licensed mental health practitioner. Dr. Tyreese R. McAllister gained her doctorate degree at the University of Arizona in Psy.D. with a concentration in Criminology and Justice. She received her Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology and a postmaster’s certificate in Addictions Counseling from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. McAllister was credentialed as a Criminal Justice Addictions Professional in 1999 and licensed as a Professional Counselor in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. She is a certified clinical supervisor in Maryland and Virginia. She is a Certified Sex Offender Treatment Professional and Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist. She earned various other certifications and has extensive forensic and Disaster Preparedness, Recovery and Response training and experience.

Keynote speaker Michelle R. Ratcliff, MSS, DMFT, LSW is a goal oriented, highly skilled, compassionate, trauma focused clinician and educator with 21 years of social work experience serving families. She has served in many populations, such as homelessness, pregnant and parenting teens, drug and alcohol, physical abuse and neglect, as well as sexual and domestic abuse/violence in communities, schools and shelters. She has experience with providing Trauma informed care, managing programs, facilitating parenting education and Healthy Sexuality to teenagers in middle and high school, Self – Care, and Life Skills classes, supervising case managers, instructing bachelor’s and master’s level social work interns, and enhancing program capacity. Additionally, Dr. Ratcliff provides family therapy at a non-profit program in Media, PA where she works with clients who have endured trauma, sexual abuse, depression, anxiety, behavioral issues, and other mental health disorders. She is an Assistant Professor at Delaware State University, teaching in the social work department. Dr. Ratcliff has been a professor at this institution for 4 years teaching students in their first year of college to their fourth year. She also provides mentoring and career counseling.
Join us as we continue this year's theme of the Pandemic State of Mental Health. At our in-person ECWS in May, we began looking at some aspects of the mental health field that have been greatly impacted by Covid-19. We will be joined in this session by guest Keynote Speakers Dr. Michelle Ratcliff and Dr. Tyrese McAllister, who will be addressing the topics of Grief and Radical Resiliency.

Date & Time: Thursday, November 10th from 9am to 12pm
- 9AM to 9:30AM: Opening Remarks
- 9:30 to 10: Keynote I
- 10:30-10:45: Break; Visit Exhibitors
- 10:45-11:45: Keynote II
- 11:45-12: Closing

Location: Zoom

Cost: Free!

Thank you for Making E-Racing the Blues a Success, and helping us surpass our goal of $30,000!
Fall is the most wonderful time of the year! Or, wait, was that Christmas? Well, fall for me is the most wonderful time of the year. For some people, fall may simply indicate the end of summer and the start of colder weather, allergies, and an earlier nighttime. For me, however, it symbolizes comfort and change. As F. Scott Fitzgerald quoted, “life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.”

Along with crisp air and new beginnings, fall can also bring fun, seasonal activities. This is also a good time to practice self-care (although anytime is good for that). Here are five ways to take care of yourself this fall:

1. **Have some Fall fun.** This can come in many forms, but some activities may include apple picking, hayrides, painting pumpkins, leaf peeping/enjoy the fall foliage, or baking your favorite fall treats. It doesn’t have to be elaborate or expensive – there are many free/low cost, fun seasonal activities to enjoy!

2. **De-Clutter.** I’m sure a lot of people have heard of “spring cleaning” – but de-cluttering your home doesn’t only have to be for the springtime. As the weather continues to get colder, we tend to spend more time indoors. If our homes are messy and cluttered, this could cause an increase in stress. Not only that, but it may be good to clean and de-clutter before the fall/winter decorations come out!

3. **Spend time in nature.** This may be the last thing someone who is experiencing seasonal allergies would want to do, but time outside and breathing fresh, fall air is good for our mental health (and health, in general). This is a good time to spend time in the sunshine, go hiking, and watch the leaves change.

4. **Slow down.** Fall is my favorite time of year, but it also seems like one of the busiest times, as well. It is the time of the year when most children are back in school and the start of the holiday season for those who celebrate, which usually results in an increase in holiday parties/events. With everything going on, it is important to remember to slow down and take time to rest, when necessary.

5. **Practice self-care.** Similar to “slowing down” is ensuring that you take care of yourself. Unfortunately, fall also happens to be cold and flu season, so make sure to take the appropriate methods to prevent sickness, such as washing your hands, getting a flu shot, and staying home when you don’t feel well to avoid spreading the sickness around.

Along with cold and flu prevention, you can also practice self-care in the form of taking a nice bubble bath, lighting a fall-scented candle, reading a good book, and really doing anything that you enjoy, but also helps promote wellness!

Fall can be a very busy season, but it’s also the season of new beginnings and cozy comfort. So, in the middle of running around to parent-teacher conferences, work meetings, or holiday shopping, remember to slow down, relax and enjoy all fall has to offer!

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**Staff Blogger:** Mollie Clupper works for MHA as a Communications and Support Specialist. Using her own experiences, she wants to help bring awareness and end the stigma surrounding mental health. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, drinking coffee, and spending time with loved ones.

For more blogs from Mollie and others, visit us at Mhainde.org/blogs
National Depression Screening Day is designed to call attention to the illness of depression on a national level and designed to educate the public about symptoms and effective treatment, to offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for depression and to connect those in need to the mental health care system in Delaware. On Thursday, October 6th, 2022, many organizations participated with MHA in providing quick, anonymous screenings in various locations throughout the state. There are also many sites who provided screenings throughout the month of October, not just on Thursday, October 6th, 2022. These screenings are often the first step for individuals with depression in getting help. Like other health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure or diabetes, many people with depression are not aware of their illness. The depression screenings are not a professional evaluation, but are a quick and easy way to spot some of the early signs of trouble. Clinical Depression is a common medical illness affecting more than 15 million American adults each year. Over 84,000 Delawareans reported experiencing serious psychological distress in the past year, with depression being among that distress. Importantly, 80% of those diagnosed with depression who seek treatment, experience a decrease in symptoms within 4-6 weeks. It is very important for people to understand the connection of mental health to physical health and overall well-being. An initiative such as National Depression Screening Day 2022 works to provide Delawareans options if they are reluctant to seek help. It also establishes prevention and early intervention. Even if you missed National Depression Screening Day this year, you can access the screens 24 hours a day/7 days a week. There are 13 screens including depression, bipolar, anxiety disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, gambling, substance abuse, psychosis and several more on our website. Visit and take a screening at: mhainde.org
While we all try to adjust to the “new normal” after the COVID 19 pandemic, it is important to recognize that for many of us, the effects of COVID continue to linger. Many who were impacted by the virus have lingering health effects such as pain, fatigue and brain fog, making it difficult to manage daily life. Others are impacted by grief from loss of loved ones or other important aspects of their lives, such as businesses or simply a way of life that was less fearful. For some, fear of contagion has developed into anxiety that has made it difficult to return to regular activities.

We have all been impacted one way or another, and for those having difficulty managing the impact, we want to provide support and education to help. Please reach out to us to request a presentation on the mental health impact of COVID 19 and coping strategies that can help, or join us for a support group to help find mutual encouragement and support around issues related to the stress of the pandemic. Remember that you are not alone, and that reaching out for help is a sign of strength.
There is a strong link between smoking and mental health. Smoking 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.

Delaware QuitLine
1-866-409-1858
*Offers stop smoking resources and counseling on the phone or in person, as well as online support.*

American Lung Association HelpLine
1-800 LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)
www.lung.org
*Offers a telephone counseling program, online chat, materials and resources to help you quit.*

Teen Cessation (under 18 years)
Not on Tobacco (NOT) 1-800-LUNG USA
www.lung.org