

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The recently completed fiscal period marked the 64th year of MHA service to the community. This year has been and continues to represent significant challenges to our ability to reach the people we serve. Due to the Corona Virus this year we had to drastically alter our provision of services quickly and expeditiously. Our entire way of delivering services changed almost overnight. We had to close the 9MusesArtCenter, had to stop all in-person visits in parenting and halt all in school mentoring services in the schools. This resulted in reductions in services initially however our staff proved to be resilient and innovative as we rolled out new initiatives including telephonic visits, extensive use of social media and increased hours for our Seth Line.

We are appreciative of our funders, BBHC, Broward County, Childrens Services Council of Broward and Child Net for their cooperation in allowing us to change our business model while continuing to bill for services as contracted.

This report will outline many of the efforts and outcomes over the past year that Mental Health America of Southeast Florida has been proud to produce. The efforts of the Board and staff have been tremendous in supporting the mission. **The Mission is to promote mental health and victory over mental illnesses and related challenges through education, prevention, advocacy, research and empowerment.**

While the Board continues to guide the organization's goals and future, the staff and volunteers work tirelessly to bring the vision to life. We are proud of their achievements and the impact that their efforts have made in advancing the mission.

MHA – SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

CHILDREN'S PREVENTION: Listen to Children, I'm Thumbody and Thumbody, Too

- 63 schools requested I'm Thumbody for Grade 2 classes in the 2019-20 school year. All of the classes at 57 of those schools were completed, and one was partially done before schools closed. In total, 6,080 students from 336 classes learned to respect themselves, respect others, be responsible, and know where to go for safe help.
- 98% of classroom teachers completed short-term surveys assessing the content of the I'm Thumbody program. Over 99% of them gave overwhelmingly positive responses. Because of the abrupt closure of schools, we only had time to collect one-third of long-term surveys. 100% of teachers who returned those surveys thought the program was beneficial for enhancing students' self-esteem and wanted it to continue for second grade. 95% observed an increase in level of responsibility and improved self-control, and 96% noted improvement in some students' respect for others.
- 92 kindergarteners from 5 classes at one school enjoyed Thumbody, Too and the puppet. Because of the coronavirus, more schools were scheduled and not completed.
- Over the years, more than 400,000 children have participated in I'm Thumbody (since 1983) and Thumbody, Too (since 1999). With their focus on social and emotional learning and good mental health, the programs remain as relevant today as they were when they began.
- Despite the closure of schools due to the pandemic, Children's Services had a successful year and helped 6,503 children gain resiliency skills including positive self-esteem, communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Thanks to the generous donors to our Children's Programs: Diane Johnson of the AJ Johnson Foundation, Coral Springs Community Chest, The Hartford, Broward Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Trust Fund, and our amazing private donors who make it possible to provide services to children in Broward.
- The beneficial services MHA provides to children could not exist without the contributions of all our donors, and we thank you.

CONSUMER SUPPORT SERVICES:

- 3,380 individuals completed member applications and attended programs at 9Muses Art Center, with 123 new members registered.
- 23 different peer facilitated support groups are hosted at 9Muses weekly
- 157 members engaged in Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)
- 547 individuals participated in individual and group peer mentoring activities
- 8 six-week curricula covering diverse arts modalities have been executed by staff & members
- 917 members engaged in organized course work following the new curricula
- 36 unique weekly opportunities for member participation are executed by staff and members.
- 9,486 Adult Mentoring contact units were delivered
- 1,633 empowerment and training hours were contributed to 9Muses Art Center by five (5) different Universities
- 1,247 unduplicated callers were supported by the SETH Line Warm Line
- 6,000+ calls were supported by 29 SETH Line volunteers
- 512 guests attended performances performed by the Muses
- 417 individuals have been enrolled in the Power of Peers Program from In-Patient Mental Health facilities in Broward County.
- 9Muses received \$51,000 in new grant money from the Community Foundation to provide support services to LGBTQ individuals

PARENT-FAMILY SERVICES:

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- 200 individuals participated in Child Net or Court directed parenting education classes or groups. 15 families have engaged in Child Parent Psychotherapy.
- 80 community-based families participated in parenting, co-parenting and anger management classes.
- 180 classes were conducted by trained educator/facilitators
- 100 parents earned certificates for course completion
- 150 parent behavioral observations were conducted
- 90% of Child Net referred parents who completed the program had no indicators of abuse/neglect in the 12 months following their participation
- 120 inmates in Broward's jails have participated in MHA facilitated Fatherhood Classes to help them to better engage with their children upon their release
- 15 parents were served at The Village in the area of parenting and Child Parent Psychotherapy.
- PEPS educators have collectively logged in over 300 hours of professional training to enhance their ability to deliver quality services
- PEPS continues to offer an array of services, including anger management classes, supervised visitation, Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Circle of Security, Fatherhood groups and classes for parents with development delay. Classes are offered in English, Spanish and Creole.
- MHA's two trained CPP therapists working in conjunction with Broward County's Early Childhood Court are rostered by the CPP Board and two additional staff have been trained to teach The Circle of Security Parenting that focuses on bonding and attachment theory.
- 60 Kinship families have been served in our program that supports families raising children who are not their own. Families receive a vast array of services such as case management, in-home parenting, legal assistance and respite care. They also attend family building events and bi-monthly activities at no cost to the family thanks to this grant from the Children Services Council.
- PEPS staff have received training in 24/7 Dad through Fatherhood Initiative, Nurturing Parenting, Circle of Security Parenting, Co-parenting and STEP. Instructors are certified to teach these programs. Three of the PEPS staff are Certified Family Life Educators that deems them experts in 10 areas of Family Life including child growth and development, internal dynamics of families, family resource management, parent education and family law.
- The Parent and Family department has successfully transformed to a completely virtual platform to provide services during the pandemic. We have collaborated with **Fellowship Living Facilities, Inc.** to provide fatherhood and anger management classes to their residents while they are receiving substance treatment. Our Kinship Cares Program staff are providing families needed supplies, food and household items, offering zoom support groups, on-line respite care and activities for the Kinship children. Some of

the favorites have been a virtual African Safari, Bingo, Uno, scavenger hunts, movies and more. Families were invited to a private Facebook group for added support and information sharing. Emails go out several times a week to keep families informing them about resources in the community during the pandemic. We have also partnered with the Children's department to offer *Listener's* to our Kinship kids. Future ventures are on-line cooking classes and possible art lessons to integrate all of MHA's programs.

Parenting client comments in response to parenting classes:

- *"I am extremely grateful that I found this class and instructor. She always had the time and patience to listen to us and gave the best ways to look at our current situations. Thank you-this has opened my eyes to move forward in my future as a mother."*
- *"My teacher taught me a lot. She really took the time to help me master the new skills"*
- *"I received help and support from parenting that was so helpful at a time when I felt judged and misunderstood by everyone. My instructor explained things clearly to me and I was treated with respect"*
- *"My teacher was my only sanity during this time; she really helped me to understand my children better. I learned so much!"*

Parenting Responses after receiving Parenting Classes:

- *That there are different styles of parenting and the styles affect how our kids act*
- *To accept my child for whom they are*
- *How to cope with my children's behavior and how to give them options and how to talk to them instead of being angry with them*
- *Spending time with your child is the best way to build a bond with them*
- *Physical discipline is not the answer*
- *That I want to raise my children differently than I was raised*
- *Consistency and routines make sense for kids*
- *I learned there is always more to learn*
- *To be proactive with my parenting.*

Kinship Responses:

- *"Thank you so much for having a program that supports me as a grandparent! I've felt so isolated and scared about being there for my young grandson as he grows. Now I know that I am not alone."*
- *"Having activities and support have made all the difference to me! I have more hope for the future having these kind and caring people in my life!"*
- *"Having someone to go with me to the lawyer to help me with the complicated legal issues that comes along with taking custody of my grandchild made all the difference to me."*
- *"Having financial help has been invaluable. I couldn't have done it without you!"*

OUTREACH/EDUCATION:

- 13 Professional Education Seminars were hosted with 712 attendees confirmed
- 34,612 received training including staff training and CEU's
- 4,435 participants attended health fairs or resource fairs at which MHA services were featured
- 523,987 received e-mail outreach via Constant Contact (est)
- CEO elected to represent the community as the Chair of the Provider Advisory Council reporting directly to the BBHC Board.
- Multiple trainings offered by staff and peers in the community.
- Community boards and networks include, House of Hope Board, Broward Coalition on Aging, Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce, Tobacco Free Partnership, BPHI, among many others.

MHA SERVICE IMPACT

Numbers tell only a part of the story. Far more important is the impact of our efforts on those we serve. Here are but a few examples:

COMMENTS FROM TEACHERS WHOSE STUDENTS HAD LISTENERS

- *"(Child) was helped tremendously from having a Listener. Not only did he look forward to her visits every week, but I definitely observed that he had reduced anger and more ability to control his anger in difficult situations."*
- *"I have seen tremendous positive change in (child), both academic and emotional."*
- *"Since (child's) mother is not communicative or present in the household, the listener program has given her a female role model to look forward to in order to share her feelings and special moments."*
- *"Spending time with the listener changed my student's demeanor. He always came back smiling like he was doing something special. This is priceless for kids who don't have a support system in place at home."*

COMMENTS FROM SCHOOL COUNSELORS ABOUT LISTENER PROGRAM

- *"I absolutely love this program! The students anticipate seeing their Listeners weekly and overall the students make progress academically and socially."*
- *"I feel that the Listener program is a vital part of the social and emotional development of students who participate in the program. This program gives students the one on one attention that is so important and necessary as we are limited in staff available to meet the high need for this interaction with our students."*
- *The LTC program allows the students to thrive and build confidence. The program provides an extra caring ear, meeting the social emotional needs of the students. It has a huge impact on enhancing students' strengths and skills to progress both socially and academically."*

COMMENTS FROM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS ABOUT LISTENER PROGRAM

- *"I'm so glad that my daughter is able to speak to someone about things that may cause stress in her home and family life."*
- *"I'm grateful for my son's listener. He empowered my son by validating how he felt."*
- *"The one person my son misses the most, is his listener. He mentioned that he thought he was the only person at school that listens and supports him."*
- *"(Child) still talks about her listener and the activities they did together. She enjoyed it very much and it helped her build more confidence."*

COMMENTS FROM CHILDREN ABOUT HOW THE LISTENER HELPED

- *"Listening to me and he just let me say how I felt"*
- *"Building my confidence to face new things"*
- *"Listening to what was stressing me out"*
- *"Making me feel good when she talked and listened to me"*

TEACHER COMMENTS ABOUT I'M THUMBODY

- *"The students enjoyed and benefited from the message about being positive and feeling good about themselves. This program is great for the students' self-esteem."*
- *"In my opinion, this program would benefit any grade. All of my students participated, learned, and use the concepts."*
- *"Great program and discussion of emotions, behaviors, and responsibilities."*
- *"The program is a positive addition to our SEL (social and emotional learning) lessons."*

CHILDRENS COMMENTS ABOUT THUMBODY

- *"You should always (sic) be positive (sic) and not negative (sic)."*
- *"Always believe in yourself."*
- *"I shouldn't give up and I should make better choices (sic) and be nice."*
- *"It's awesome (sic) to be different."*
- *"Evrey one (sic) is speshl (sic) but different (sic) cus (sic) of thum prents (sic)."*

CONSUMER VOICE AND EMPOWERMENT

- 9Muses artwork has been exhibited as part of the leased art work program at locations such as Correct Care/South Florida State Hospital, Dania Medical Center, Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services and Henderson Behavioral Health, NOVA University and Magellan Health.
- 9MusesArtCenter hosts a mobile site for the Connections Behavioral Health Guidebook. www.browardconnections.org
- 9 Muses was selected by Community Foundation of Broward to provide art based support services to the LGBTQ community for support services

In their own voice, 9Muses and PROSPER participants offer the following comments:

- *It really is a wonderful, safe place to come and socialize. The peer support meetings are something I look forward to every week.*
- *9Muses helps me stay busy. This is a place where I can come every day and get a lot of support and help when I need it.*
- *I always admired the work of painters but thought this was something I could not do. After attending classes at 9Muses, I can see the progress I have made and I continue to improve.*
- *It has improved my confidence. I have also learned to be more patient with those around me.*
- *The class was well orchestrated and very informative.*
- *I have learned a lot of things such as how to organize my house, keep track of my appointments and how important it is not to isolate.*
- *I have always struggled with water color but I have learned more how to control it.*
- *9Muses allowed me to be of help to others.*

Medical providers who exhibit the works of 9Muses artists at their facilities report it as a tool to easily include mental health and wellness in their everyday language. Hospitals that exhibit 9Muses work in their psychiatric units report it as a bridge to community opportunity for individuals in treatment. Those patients say that the work is a reminder that there is something to look forward to in their journey to recovery.

REPRESENTING INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY

LOCALLY: MHA staff and volunteers are actively engaged in numerous community boards and committees addressing services and issues that cross the lifespan. They include:

- BBHC Consumer Advisory Council
- Broward County Disability Expo
- Community Solutions
- Broward Coalition on Aging
- Alliance for Aging Advisory Council
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless Program Committee
- Correct Care/South Florida State Hospital Governing Board
- BBHC Board of Directors
- Suicide Prevention Task Force
- House of Hope Board of Directors
- State Hospital Discharge Committee

NATIONALLY & BEYOND: Mental Health America and World Federation for Mental Health provide resources and resource opportunities that expand our vision. MHA was again approved as the NIMH Outreach Partner for Florida providing us with a wealth of free materials and resources that we share locally and with affiliate partners statewide. The free materials distributed by MHA are valued in the thousands of dollars, a benefit to our community and a gift to those we serve. Due to reductions and a change in direction for NIMH, this will be our last year as this program has been cut from their funding priorities.

LOCAL UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Mental Health America of Southeast Florida established increased visibility in its work with local Universities offering training and intern placement opportunities. Those include:

- Keiser University
- Nova Southeastern University
- South University
- Broward College
- Chamberlain College

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

MHA is appreciative for the broad support that allows us to provide our programs and services. Our diverse funding sources have allowed us to be creative and responsive to emerging needs. We value the positive relationships that we have evolved with our primary funders, the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, Broward County, Broward Children Services Council and Child Net. We continue to benefit from the support of local municipalities: Coral Springs, Tamarac and our home base of Lauderhill as examples.

Unfortunately due to the Corona Virus we had to cancel a number of fundraising events including a comedian show and our Annual Epic event. This is the first time that we had to cancel the event however we look forward to hosting the event in May 2021. This was a financial loss to the agency however it should be noted that in December of 2019 we were fortunate to realize a highly successful Annual Appeal Campaign which raised more than \$20,000 thanks in large part to the efforts of our Children Services volunteer staff who stepped up and raised nearly 90% of these funds to help continue the efforts of I'm Thumbbody and Listen to Children programs.

NEW INITIATIVES

Our contracts with BBHC for peer support and drop in center was renewed. MHA applied for and was awarded a new contract with Children Services Council of Broward County to continue providing Kinship services. The Batchelor Foundation awarded a \$15,000 to MHA to provide Fatherhood Initiative classes to fathers who are incarcerated. Despite the jails closing outside services, MHA was able to secure the ability to provide these same services for a local respite recover center for fathers.

The new Connections Guidebook is available on line through the website www.browardconnections.org and is free of charge. It has all the information available in the Connections Guidebook but offers direct links to agencies listed and is updated annually to ensure the information is up to date.

MHA is the Fiscal Agent for Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention (FISP) which provides Suicide support and intervention services in Broward County.

FROM THE CEO

The staff here at Mental Health America of Southeast Florida are incredibly dedicated and committed to the mission. They continually step up whenever requested and regularly go above and beyond the expected call of duty. I am proud to be associated with this organization and envision our future as being bright and the opportunities endless. This year has proven to be particularly challenging due to the unexpected closure of in person services to the people we serve. Our staff changed direction "on the fly" and continued to provide support and services to all we serve. The only place we couldn't provide the

service was in the schools due to the shut-down of all schools. However the Director of the Children Services has found alternative ways to reach children through the Kinship program offered in the Parenting Program.

The Board of Directors continues to be an active partner with the staff and persons served to ensure that services are delivered in a caring and reasonable fashion. The Board has been a tremendous asset to the organization and I thank them for their time and expertise.

We continue to work with all the behavioral health providers in the county in a highly collaborative manner fostering the commitment to those people we serve. The MHA has been in the forefront in the development of exciting new peer opportunities and we look forward to an exciting year in developing even more programming around this initiative.

MHA's commitment to the community remains strong and I am proud to be part of this commitment as we move forward at a very challenging time. Early Intervention is the key to mitigating the devastation that mental illness can significantly impact an individual's life. Stigma still remains a constant battle to overcome and while we have made strides we continue to find challenges, we remain resolute in our mission and look forward to another year with your support.

As MHA celebrates its 64th year of operation in Broward County we continue to be a vibrant and ever changing agency ensuring our future and the future of the many individuals who have come to rely on our services over the years. I continue to be amazed at the hard working individuals who help keep our agency providing these vital services to our community. Our volunteer corps of Listen to Children and I'm Thumbody and Seth Line volunteers continue to sustain these two programs who have existed for many years due to their selfless duty to community. An agency like the MHA cannot survive without the contributions of these volunteers as well as the dedicated staff who have provided many years of expertise and devotion to this work. Our Board deserves recognition for their years of dedicated service as well. There are a number of Board members who have served for many years and value the contributions of the organization and remain committed to the mission.

Thank you all for your dedication and service!