

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The recently completed fiscal period marked the 65th 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.

Despite the challenges of the year, we have experienced a significant improvement of our overall financial status as an organization resulting in a very positive cash flow. Budget issues related to specific programs being underutilized for services continue to challenge our financial status moving into a new fiscal year. Those challenges include funding for children's programs resulting in a new initiative for a Listen to Children Program now an Evidence Based Program which should result in more funding opportunities without a large change to the services provided.

This past fiscal year has brought a new partnership with Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention (FISP) who has joined with MHA at the beginning of 2021 which allows MHA to expand services to provide much needed support services to the community in the area of suicide prevention which has been identified nationally and locally as an area of great concern. FISP has allowed MHA to work more directly with survivors and families impacted by suicide. We look forward to this very exciting opportunity to support our community.

We are appreciative of our funders, BBHC, Broward County, Children 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 numbers will show decidedly different levels than past years and that is clearly tied to the impact of the service delivery system devastated by the pandemic.

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 and the Thumbody Programs

- Because Broward County Public Schools did not allow in-school volunteers due to the pandemic, neither second grade nor Kindergarten classes participated in 'live' Thumbody Programs in the 2020-21 school year. We did tape virtual Thumbody presentations using puppets to help teach the concepts associated with social and emotional learning. Because the City of Pompano Beach provided funding, we are inviting sites serving Pompano children in to view the programs.
- Listen to Children took place on a limited level on a virtual platform. Fifteen schools participated. A total of 46 school children and 445 meetings took place.
- Our pilot Kinship LTC program served 7 children, and 103 meetings took place.
- Thanks to the generous donors to our Children's Programs: The Hartford, Broward Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Trust Fund, the City of Pompano Beach. A special thank you to our amazing private donors who provide much-needed support to Children's Services.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

COMMENTS FROM TEACHERS WITH STUDENTS WHO HAD LISTENERS

- *"___ has enjoyed working with the listener and it has helped her self-confidence."*
- *"This program has enhanced my student's quality of life. It has truly been beneficial."*
- *"___ has shown much growth and improvement."*
- *"I have seen significant and positive changes in ___."*
- *"___ enjoyed her time with the Listener. I think it helped her cope and share what she's going through."*

COMMENTS FROM SCHOOL COUNSELORS ABOUT LISTENER PROGRAM

- *"We love LTC. It gives our struggling students an opportunity to express themselves comfortably with a positive role model."*
- *"Overall I just feel the students grew a lot socially and emotionally. They became more confident in themselves."*
- *"This is an awesome program to help promote children's self-esteem and foster social skills."*
- *"A second grade student was always angry and seeking attention in the classroom. His peers did not like being around him. As he met with his listener, I saw changes in his behavior, especially towards his peers."*

COMMENTS FROM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS ABOUT LISTENER PROGRAM

- *"It has helped my daughter open up and not be afraid to ask questions. It made her feel comfortable and happier all around."*
- *"I think this Listener Program is the MOST EFFECTIVE mental health tool I've seen within the public schools since my children began in 2011."*
- *"The Listener program kept my boys happy during the pandemic. Please, please keep this program going."*
- *"It works and I support this program."*

RESPONSES TO THE STATEMENT "My Listener helped me by..."

- *"always encouraging(sic) me and showed me how to trust people."*
- *"Talking to me and being there for me and for listening(sic)!"*
- *"She helped me communicate with my dad better. I was afraid to talk to him but now I am much more comfortable and our relationship is better."*
- *"She helped me a lot because she made me feel happy and I wish she could see me all the time."*

CONSUMER SUPPORT SERVICES:

9Muses Art Center made the 2020-2021 fiscal year into a year of expanded programming, services and outreach. Our organization saw the challenge posed to us by the pandemic and used it as an occasion to increase service availability and create educational opportunities in the community. Our service expansion was accomplished through multiple approaches and sectors: inclusivity, technical expansion, and educational outreach, while maintaining the same great, peer-driven services we are known for.

December 2020 marked the end point for our IRIS Year initiative, which was partially funded by the Broward Community Foundation. This initiative allowed 9Muses to develop and retool programs to be more LGBTQIA+ inclusive. Our grand finale- the Exhibit 302.0, saw new community engagement and entry from persons who had never felt the urgency to tap into community mental health services before. IRIS Year was praised by the Broward Community Foundation for its unique approach to celebrating and integrating LGBTQIA+ persons into our programs.

Our technical adaptations and rebranding initiatives resulted in an upgraded website and more accessibility for the community. In order to continue services during the pandemic, wellness and arts classes shifted online to skype. This allowed for individuals who may already face barriers to care through transportation and physical limitations to access our services from the comfort of their home. The use of perpetually open Skype chats for the classes meant that individuals could participate in

continued discussion off-hours that was then moderated by the instructor. This digital environment fostered a community focused on continued wellness, mutual support, and co-learning.

The transition to Skype classes allowed former members who had moved out of the area to engage in classes and support. The nationwide shut-down established an unforeseen opportunity to reengage with members who have moved out of our service area and even established new formed relationships from as far away as the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada.

This digital expansion also provided a learning opportunity for members. Staff often aided and taught members with little technical fluency how to access these classes. This included helping members and guests learn basic, necessary skills in how to create an e-mail account, how to create a skype account, how to use search engines, and more. This digital expansion has been so successful and positively received, we have opted to conduct classes both digitally and in-person while reopening to the public.

Our new website updated our collective image and made much of this technical adaption possible. c. This years-long endeavor celebrates 9Muses history and also aids our continued branding efforts to reassert ourselves as an essential, dynamic, and unique, peer-run service center. We've made all links and course descriptions easily available on the website, and our matching social media efforts have garnered community engagement and increased program interest.

Our other community-support programs also adapted to the challenges and likewise saw an expansion due to increased interest in mental health services. Power of Peers also moved towards telehealth, aiding in developing client technical fluency as well. Although the program has moved back into in-person services, the POP program still provides Telehealth services as well.

The Sethline experienced an immediate increase in callers due to the pandemic. First time callers reporting they never experienced feelings of anxiety, isolation and even depression. In order to stop the spread of misinformation, 9Muses included cited Covid-19 wellness information that was easily, publicly available. Sethline volunteers were also given verifiable information to disseminate to callers.

While our community was adjusting to a new process of living safely we watched our membership become more engaging and empowered. 9MusesArtsCenter reopened twice with safety precautions in place only to close again as the pandemic numbers increased in our community. Now, fully opened to our member we will maintain the virtual platforms established during the pandemic and form new relationships while providing opportunities for those who may not be able to make it to the center. 9MusesArtsCenter has established a calendar of activities on its website that provides hybrid opportunity for services.

We look forward to our continued efforts to make our services more accessible and beneficial to the public at large.

1,643 individuals completed member applications and engaged in services provided by 9MusesArtCenter, note: 9Muses waived membership registration during the pandemic providing access to anyone who wished to attend.

27 different peer facilitated support groups are hosted at 9Muses both in person and virtually.

212 established a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

798 individuals participated in individual and group peer mentoring activities

17,436 Adult Mentoring contact units were delivered in 2020

10,422 unduplicated callers were supported by the SETH Line Warm Line

11,200+ calls were supported by 24 SETH Line volunteers

167 individuals were enrolled in the Power of Peers Program from In-Patient Mental Health facilities in Broward County.

9MusesArtsCenter was asked to take over operations at Forest Park drop-in center on the grounds of the state hospital

9MusesArtsCenter engaged in service with BSO diversion program providing peer support services with those who are identified by BSO

PARENT-FAMILY SERVICES:

- 150 individuals participated in Child Net or Court directed parenting education classes or groups. 12 families have engaged in Child Parent Psychotherapy.
- 80 referred and community-based families participated in parenting, co-parenting, anger management and fatherhood classes.
- Co-parenting referrals have increased by over 50% this year. Being able to deliver services via Zoom allowed us to include clients residing out of county. This has served as a benefit to co-parents living in different states who are trying to comply with court orders. Zoom will continue to be utilized to serve this population.
- 90% of Child Net referred parents who completed the program had no indicators of abuse/neglect in the 12 months following their participation.
- 15 parents were served at The Village (via zoom) 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), Co-parenting and Divorce, 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 4 out of 5 parenting 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 continue to serve families via virtual platform. We have recently revamped our playroom to conduct supervised visitations and observations in person.
- We continue to collaborate with **Fellowship Living Facilities, Inc.** to provide fatherhood and anger management classes to their residents while they are receiving substance treatment. We have engaged a Peer Facilitator from Fellowship to assist with class registration and teaching. He was in our inaugural class and embraced the concepts taught and showed interest in getting more involved. The participants have responded well to his input. This is our second year receiving funding from **The Bachelor Foundation** to make this happen.
- **Child Net** continues to add to our service array. This year, we added an additional staff member to work with Child Net referred Kinship families. This service supports Kinship relatives who have guardianship of children because parents lost custody or could not care for them.
- Our **CSC Funded Kinship Cares Program** staff continue to provide families needed supplies, food and household items. We have regularly scheduled caregiver support groups, as well as in-person events for Kinship families in the program. Some of the favorites included a group trip to the Circus, Chuck E. Cheese, a water park, petting farm and pumpkin decorating, and drive-in movies. We also had a Drive-by Holiday party where we gave away toys lovingly collected by **The Silver Liners**, gift cards for family dinner and masks for the family. Families have a private Facebook group for added support and information sharing. Emails go out several times a week to keep families informed regarding resources in the community. We continue to utilize **Listener's** from the Children's Department for our Kinship kids. We are planning a "Summer Toy and Household item giveaway" for Kinship families this summer. Also being planned in September 2021 is a Kinship Caregiver Celebration in appreciation for Kinship caregivers across Broward County. MHA partners with all of the Kinship service providers in our county for this event. It includes Weekly Zoom Café's on pertinent topics, food giveaways and Caregiver Recognition Awards.
- We are happy to announce that we have been funded by the **Broward County Children's Services** to bring back the Family Voices Program to Broward families that need support while raising children with special needs. We are excited to have the opportunity to support this population.

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 diffrent (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
- Community Solutions
- Broward Coalition on Aging
- Alliance for Aging Advisory Council
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless Program Committee

- Well Path/South Florida State Hospital Governing Board
- BBHC Board of Directors
- Suicide Prevention Task Force
- House of Hope Board of Directors
- State Hospital Discharge Committee
- STARR Coalition (Little Rock, AK)-research support for peers

NATIONALLY & BEYOND: Mental Health America and World Federation for Mental Health provide resources and resource opportunities that expand our vision. MHA of Southeast Florida is an affiliate of Mental Health America National in Washington DC and recently was a presenter at the national conference in Washington DC on the importance of a national voice in promoting the support of research in the area of mental health. A long term relationship with NIMH has ended this year due to NIMH re-evaluating their support of distribution of educational materials. NIMH has ended that program so MHA no longer is a regional provider for NIMH.

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. Services were delivered almost entirely virtually. However some services as the situation dictated were conducted in person. We have recently reopened services to in person delivery with some modifications.

Unfortunately due to the Corona Virus we had to cancel a number of fundraising events however we did conduct a virtual fund-raising event for our annual EPIC recognition program. The award winners from last year were honored this year, remotely with an audience and sponsors resulting in a reasonably successful event in which close to \$10,000 was raised.

The board has been actively involved in providing support directly to staff in developing the EPIC event and now more recently the Listen to Children and I'm Thumbody programs. The newest development has been the adoption of an Evidence Based Practice for the Listen to Children Program to make that program eligible for funding.

MHA updated its website through the dedication of MHA staff and they have helped MHA produce a cleaner and more usable website that is a powerfully positive representation of MHA. While this was going on, we moved the FISP Website under the MHA Website while updating their website.

NEW INITIATIVES

Our contracts with BBHC for peer support and drop in center were renewed. MHA was awarded two new contracts from Broward County, one is for a renewed Family Voices program and the other for the ongoing Consumer Support Program. Earlier in the year the 9 Muses Art Center was awarded a grant to reach out to the LGBTQ community which was highly successful but then was interrupted by the pandemic resulting

in a vastly different experience than what we anticipated. However the program was highly regarded and very successful.

The addition of FISP as mentioned previously has brought in funding from two more funders. United Way of Broward and BBHC both have contracts with FISP that have come to MHA. The development of a new website for FISP will hopefully result in a high level of recognition for the program as it provides significant resources to the community.

The 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.

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 second annual report in the pandemic era has proven to be particularly challenging due to the 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. Our programs adapted and staff made sure that they were trained and helped provide support to the people we serve with tremendous care.

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.

The addition of FISP to our team has been a challenging yet welcome partner to the services we provide. Our plan is to expand the services FISP offers and reach more people as our mission to reduce deaths by suicide continue to expand. We will continue to work with the community to achieve this mission. The Board of FISP has been actively engaged in the process to ensure the transition to MHA was as smooth a transition as possible. They continue to be actively engaged as we want to ensure the recognition and brand value of the FISP name, not only in name but in delivery of services and support.

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 65th 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

Thumbbody 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!