

Spring Newsletter
May 2020



SPIRITUS CHRISTI
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Linking Lives

Adapting in Hard Times

Like so many of you, we started this year filled with hope and excitement—a new year of challenges and opportunities! 2020 marks the date of our 20th anniversary, and we have been looking forward to celebrating that with all of you. But 2020 hasn't been shaping up as any of us had planned. In fact, this is one of the most challenging times in human history.

At first, our little 20th Anniversary seemed quite insignificant. But then we realized these years have offered many meaningful lessons that can help us navigate the current crisis and difficult days to come.

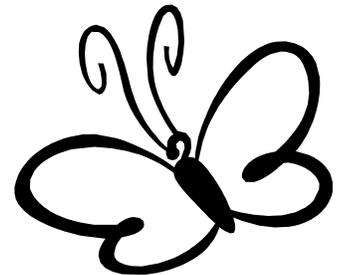
Over the past 20 years, we have adjusted in the midst of economic downturns, changes in health care policy, Rochester's epidemic of youth violence, recent changes in the adjudication of minors, and several cultural shifts that have impacted those who consult us. Being small and free of bureaucratic encumbrances continues to be a blessing, because it means we can adapt quickly.

In the case of the current pandemic, we were able to move to telehealth within a week of the governor's

shelter-in-place order. Right now, all our clients are able to meet regularly by phone or video conferencing with their therapists. You have all been so amazing!! All our clinicians have stuck by their clients in the midst of their own challenges, and our board and other committees continue to meet regularly as well. When those who consult us have needed food or other basics, we've been able to help them with donated gift cards and other resources. Still others have sent donations to keep the Center going.

So, THANK YOU for all your support, both for us and for those we serve. We feel your love, and are sending more right back to you!!

*Wishing you health and peace,
Maureen & Amy*



OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS*

On-site Clinical: Individual, couples, family, and group therapeutic consultations and psychosocial support for uninsured and underinsured youth and adults

The Living Room: Weekly peer support for those struggling with daily living issues

Women's Support Group: Confidential bi-weekly group for women who have experienced sexual abuse, harassment, assault, or other domestic violence.

Yoga: Weekly yoga class to promote overall wellness

***On-site programs are suspended at the present time due to the pandemic. Counseling and case management continue weekly via telehealth.**

To receive this bi-annual newsletter by email, please send your address to adurkee@spirituschristi.org.

In these unsettling and uncertain times, mental health care is more important than ever before. For our clients who live alone, connecting with their therapists gives them a break from the isolation and a way to process what is happening. The pandemic itself and the resulting disruptions have triggered many issues for people, like feeling lonely, out of control, and wondering if they matter. Conversely, staying home has given some clients a much-needed break from social anxiety and/or work stress. And one of our clients is grateful for the chance to get counseling with her boyfriend. Since they are both at home now, they have time to meet via telehealth.

For some, the loss of security has stirred up fear and anxiety. Those who are interested have been learning to use a technique called EFT Tapping to address anxiety and panic, and one client has found tapping helpful for her respiratory symptoms.

One of our volunteers is helping a client who is grieving the death of a dear nephew— a difficult loss at any time, but especially painful when he can't grieve in person with other loved ones.

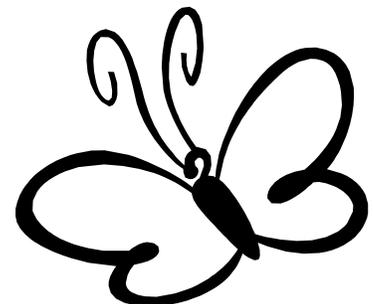
While our peer support groups are not able to meet right now, members are still offering each other support in other ways. Connecting can be tricky for some of the members of our Women's Support Group, because they still live with their abusers. But these ladies are creative and resourceful; they are finding ways to offer encouragement while still keeping each other safe. Members of the Living Room peer support meeting

have functioned like family to each other for a long time, and they continue to be there for each other through phone calls, texts, and Facebook.

As one of our volunteers says, the situation is offering “opportunities to work on long-standing burdens.” What a great way to look at it!

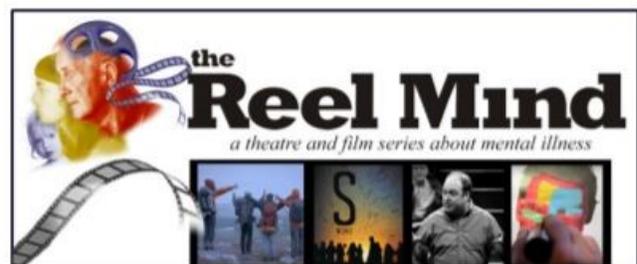
All this goodness is happening via phone, email, and video conferencing, while back at the Center, we are looking ahead to what reopening might look like. So much is still uncertain, but Spiritus Christi Church has a great team working on a plan and we will take our direction from them and Rochester's mental health care community. We are eager to get back to seeing people face-to-face, and to start addressing the increased needs for mental health care in our area resulting from the pandemic.

Routine, and having something to look forward to, is making a huge difference for those who consult us. Those things are important for all of us, of course, so consider this your encouragement to make sure you're getting what *you* need too right now. If we can help, please reach out. We have to take good care of ourselves, and each other!



Our heartfelt thoughts go out to all our friends in the mental health community during this challenging and unprecedented time.

Special thanks to the healthcare workers, and to all those working on the “front lines.” Your compassion and dedication continues to be a source of inspiration, hope, and healing.



For more information and updates on when we will be able to resume our series, please visit:

www.reelmindfilmfest.org

Over the decades, I have been asked myriad questions: How did you get such beautiful teeth? Was Michelangelo's David modeled after you? Even though you are 67 and mostly bald, how can your hairdo put Hollywood's top actors to shame? And the most common one: How can you have no vanity and no ego?

Recently, I was asked a new question: *Would you write an article for our spring newsletter? It could be why you volunteer at the Center or anything else you want to talk about.*

I will start with the first question. There are three reasons I volunteer. The first is a selfish one. I am given the honor to work with people who have the courage and strength to change something in their life that they want to change. (All of us have our issues, but it takes action.) I am honored to work with people who have given me their trust. It is such a high to work with my clients every single session.

Second, I am given the opportunity to use a skill set that is of help to others (maybe not 100% of the time, but a decent amount— in my subjective opinion). That has not always the case (see previous jobs), and I am so grateful for it now.

Third, I get to work in an energizing and positive environment with the most wonderful people including receptionists, secretaries, custodians and others, including Maureen Marlow and Amy Durkee, the Center's Director and Administrative Rock Star, respectively.

Now, a few thoughts about COVID-19:

First, do NOT read every article, watch every news briefing, analyze every scientific study, or engage in hours of texting or speaking with others about COVID-19. Seriously, pick a reasonable number of minutes that you will spend each day or week to stay up to speed with the pandemic. And do no more.

Second, use this opportunity to HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON! Reflect on what is most important to you. It can be as simple as thinking



about those items, or as deep as writing what you hope people will say about you at your funeral.

Third, learn something new if you are sheltered in place. Again, it can be simple like learning three new bird songs, or something extremely challenging, or anything in between. (I started simply, but actually ended up learning four new languages, how to restore Renaissance paintings, and discovering a new branch of calculus. Seriously, I did devote some time to dabble with the piano after a 50-year absence and it's been a blast).

Fourth, and most important, do something for YOU! Take a long bath; spend 12 extra seconds looking at the clouds; rejoice in seeing the first mosquito of the season— or maybe the first lilacs; watch a movie made before 1970.

Here's one more. Get quiet and feel what is going on with you. Is it fear, anger, sadness related to the pandemic? Is your inner critic on his/her soapbox? Here is a strategy I love from Tara Brach's book, *Radical Compassion*. It goes by the acronym, RAIN:

- R- Recognize what is happening. ("Oh, there's that voice/that feeling again")
- A- Allow it to happen. (Feel it with NO judgment)
- I- Investigate. ("What is going inside of me? Where is this coming from?")
- N- Nurture you. Use positive self-talk, breathe, etc.

And one last one: Laugh. If it is difficult to do, then fake it. Try different laughs-- a cackling chuckle, a loud in and out wheeze, or a good old long snort.

Take good care and remember that you are enough,

Rick Massie

Rick Massie, LMHC, is a great counselor who doesn't take himself too seriously. He has been volunteering at the Center for 4 years.

SPIRITUS CHRISTI
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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HOURS OF OPERATION
Tuesday - Thursday
9 am - 5 pm

CENTER STAFF

Maureen Marlow, RN, CASAC — Director
Amy Durkee — Associate Administrator



MORE WAYS TO GIVE:



**United Way
Donor Designation
Program #2403**



SEFA #66-00124

Ask your campaign manager
for either pledge form, or
contact us directly for one.

*Your support makes
all the difference!*

VOLUNTEER

To Make a Difference!

Nurse Practitioners & Psychiatrists:

Prescribe and manage medications
for participants, 2-4 hrs per month

Therapists: Hours negotiable

Yoga Instructor: Hours negotiable

Thanks to Recent Funders

CANANDAIGUA NATIONAL BANK

\$1,500

DAISY MARQUIS JONES FOUNDATION

\$10,000

LGBT GIVING CIRCLE

\$1,000

**ROCHESTER FEMALE CHARITABLE
SOCIETY**

\$2,400

WYMAN-POTTER FOUNDATION

\$4,000

*and to all of you who give so
generously in many ways!*

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& AFFILIATIONS**

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St. John Fisher College
Steve Hoffman, The Living Room

**SPECIAL THANKS TO
OUR MEDIA PARTNER:**



"You'll Like
What You Hear"

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OUR WISH LIST

- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Forever postage stamps**
- **Bus passes**
- **Amazon gift cards**
- **Wegmans or Tops gift cards**
- **Sunoco or Hess gas cards**

