
Annual Report & Fall Newsletter - October 2022



Linking Lives

Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center

Director's Update

We have so much to be grateful for this year! After slogging through the worst of the pandemic, and several false starts at creating a “new normal,” we have found momentum. We continue to provide psychotherapy, peer support meetings and yoga classes, and last winter, we ran a successful women’s support group. This fall, we are offering a therapy group for survivors of childhood sexual trauma, and a self-discovery group for those seeking greater wholeness.

This spring we added a peer support specialist, David, to our volunteer pool. David’s compassionate accompaniment has been a tremendous gift to those who need a bit more support with managing symptoms or working toward goals.

We also transitioned from paper to electronic records, thanks to funding from Excellus and ESL Charitable Foundation. This has greatly reduced administrative work for staff and volunteers. One of the most exciting changes this summer was the return of Eileen Hurley to our paid staff. Eileen, who ran our Urban Youth Outreach (UYO) from 2006-2020, plans to focus again on youth and families affected by poverty and violence, including gun violence survivors. She will also continue to offer psychosocial support to several of the youth – now adults – with whom she worked years ago. We are excited to be able to offer this vital support to some of our community’s most vulnerable people.

In these tough times, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse are rampant and the needs are greater than the available resources. We are so grateful to all of you who partner with us so that we can offer quality care to as many people as possible. Please join us for our annual RIVERWALK fundraiser on Sunday, October 23. You can register online at any time and start inviting friends and family to sponsor you. You can also sponsor yourself or someone else. Details are on page 3 of this newsletter and on our website. If you wish to give directly to the Center via check or our website, we appreciate that, too. Know that every dollar you invest contributes to hope and healing for someone who needs it.

With Gratitude,

Amy Dughee

Overview of Programs

On-Site Clinical

Individual, couples, family and group therapeutic psychosocial support of uninsured and underinsured youth and adults

Urban Youth Outreach

Direct psychosocial support to youth and their families

The Living Room

Weekly peer-led support meeting for those struggling with daily living issues

Women's Group

Confidential bi-weekly group for women who have experienced violence such as sexual abuse, harassment, or assault

Yoga

Weekly yoga classes to promote overall wellness

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

Raising Mental Health Awareness

by Bridget Dougherty-Herman

Have you ever noticed that when someone has a physical injury, everyone rushes to their aid? The person is comforted, cared for, reassured, and, if needed, sent to a professional for more care. The hope is that we do the same for those experiencing mental health issues and that by raising awareness, we feel more equipped to do so. As both the Prevention Education Manager for Delphi Rise and a certified Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainer, raising awareness is something I value highly.

In May, the Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center (SCMHC) offered a community education event called Mental Health Awareness in Everyday Living. I was humbled and grateful to be asked to give this presentation. At the event, we talked about normalizing emotions by recognizing that we all experience them, and that how we respond to them makes all the difference. We discussed how we respond to our emotions physiologically and what we can do to de-escalate rising emotions, whether we are experiencing the strong emotions ourselves or we encounter another person who is. We also discussed when our emotions negatively impact our ability to live, love and learn in healthy ways for an extended period of time, it is important to seek support. SCMHC is one place we can get that help.

"At the event, we talked about normalizing emotions by recognizing that we all experience them, and how we respond to them makes all the difference"

It was such a pleasure to have people who came from a variety of backgrounds at this presentation. There were parents and grandparents who came because they are trying to understand and help their children and grandchildren, as well as others who said they just want to be part of creating a healthier community.

One of the highlights of the night was our small- and large-group sharing. Given that our event came just weeks after the mass shooting in Buffalo, and the day after the Uvalde shooting, it was healing to come together with like-minded people to learn about ways we can help prevent that kind of violence by responding to both our emotions and others' with empathy and compassion. Thank you to all those who serve by striving to be part of the solution! Thank you, SCMHC, for having me!



Please join us at Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center's

Annual Riverwalk

October 23, 2022 - 11am

121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, NY

Walk a beautiful 5K with us and help raise funds to benefit the Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center and our clients

- Register to walk at runsignup.com/riverwalkscmhc
- Invite family & friends to sponsor you
- After the walk, join us for lunch
- Great music, crafts for kids, and fall fun!
- Kids get a free pumpkin to paint!

For pledge form and more details, visit: scmentalhealth.org

When You Pay Attention, life Guides You

by Amy Durkee

The first time Penny came to our Mental Health Center several years ago, it was because her doctor recommended it. “I’ve always struggled,” she explains, “I go through spurts when life becomes unmanageable for me.” She says that the therapist we matched her with “lined things up for me. He’s very kind and gentle, and he’s able to read me. He gave me things to read, things to try, and I did it, and it worked!”

Penny worked with her therapist for about 10 months during her first episode of care several years ago. Recently, she called us again, saying, “I know myself. When I get like this, it’s just going to get worse, and I don’t want to lose my job.” We were able to link her with the same therapist and get her back into care within a couple weeks which, as it turned out, was even more crucial than she’d originally thought. “It was amazing,” she says, “because my brain had been telling me to reach out to you for a while, and then that Friday I called and left a message. The very next day I found out my dad died.” She doesn’t think this timing was just luck. “When you pay attention,” she pronounces, “life guides you.”

Penny says she was a great kid until age 12, when she “started making horrible choices - all sorts of risky behaviors that eventually led me to prison.” Looking back, she believes that the abuse she endured for years at the hands of her father had probably peaked that year. “My mom finally divorced him when I was 13. I don’t remember much from that time. The brain protects you like that.”

Now Penny knows that all those so-called bad behaviors weren’t the result of her moral failure, but were a desperate attempt to cope and survive. Children who are abused are at higher risk for a host of health problems, including heart disease, intimate partner violence, alcoholism and alcohol abuse, illicit drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempts.

"You don't have to just survive. You can live."

Penny says that after prison she was in and out of rehab for addiction multiple times. Then one day – she doesn’t know what the trigger was – she said to herself, “I don’t want to live like this anymore. I don’t want to not know where I’m going to sleep, to never have money. So I got myself a full-time job and I finished college.”

When asked what motivates her now, Penny says that she carries the moral injury of not being able to save her sisters from the abuse she experienced. That pain contributed to her decision, as an adult, to “be different – to be a solid person for others.” This motivation led Penny into human services work, which she loves. “There’s no greater gift in life,” she beams, “than being able to support people to be the best they can be, when nobody else cared to help them.”

Penny is well aware that her drive to help others can cause her problems. “Sometimes,” she notes, “I can help too much.” She says that can lead to her being so focused on being there for others that she isn’t taking good care of herself. Further, she can think it’s her job to save others, which means that if they fail, she has failed them. She reminds herself that, “Everybody has a right to fail, you know? I have to remember that it’s not about me.”

She smiles and says that her therapist tells her she’s good at being her own therapist. And really, that’s one of the main goals of therapy: helping people to develop the insight, tools, and support they need so they can thrive. Speaking about what she has learned in therapy, Penny explains, “As simple as these concepts seem, they are really hard to do. But if you work on it, it works. Like, actually letting go is hard. But the more you work on it, the easier it gets.”

When asked what she wants people who are struggling to know, she says, “Get help. Get support. Don’t be embarrassed. Just do it. You don’t have to do this alone. You don’t have to just survive. You can live.”

This year, your support made it possible for **137 people** to get the help they needed in individual, couple, family, and group sessions. This represents over **1,956 in-person & telehealth sessions**.



Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center

121 N. Fitzhugh Street
Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: 585-325-1186
Fax: 585-325-1191

Hours of Operation
Monday 9 am - 3 pm
Tuesday - Thursday 9 am - 5 pm

Center Staff
Amy Durkee, MHC-LP - Director
Eileen Hurley, RN, LCSW - Urban Youth Outreach
Mark Potter - 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!***

Financial Summary

7/1/21 - 6/30/22

Revenue

Contributions	\$81,679
United Way & SEFA	\$16,975
Grants	\$21,500
Memorial Gifts	\$1,454
Special Events	\$24,300
Professional Fees (\$71,880 In-Kind)	\$0

Total Revenue: **\$145,908**

Expenses

Salaries, tax, benefits	\$87,597
Occupancy (in-Kind)	\$0
Supplies	\$496
Copy, print, postage	\$418
Insurance	\$620
Electronic Record Keeping	\$280
Equipment	\$1,986
Psychiatric Consultations	\$1,275
Professional Fees (\$71,880 In-Kind)	\$0
Client Expenses	\$1,630
Fundraising Expense	\$322
Phone, Fax, Internet (\$2,000 In-Kind)	\$195

Total Expenses: **\$94,819**

Net Profit/(Loss) **\$51,089**

Thanks to our recent funders

Canandaigua National Bank \$1,000
ESL Charitable \$3,000
Polisseni Foundation \$2,000
Fred & Floy Willmott Foundation \$4,000
Wyman-Potter Foundation \$10,000
Rochester Female Charitable Society \$1,500

Volunteer Staff & Affiliations

Lynn Acquafondata, LMHC, Private Practice
Jodi Aman, LCSW-R, Private Practice
Lieve Bain, LCSW-R, Retired
Michele Caponi, LMHC, Retired
Lisa Cerra, RIT, Consultant
Anne Cliby, Yoga Instructor
Kathleen Conti, LCSW, Retired
John Connors, MD, Private Practice
Peggy Derivan, LMHC, Private Practice
Brenda Devine, LCSW, Retired
Colleen Farley, Marketing Committee
Jere Fletcher, Esq., Advocate
Jessica George, St. John Fisher College Intern
David Hall, Peer Support Specialist
Steve Hoffman, The Living Room
Sandra Hope, LMHC, Private Practice
Mary Kearney, LCSW, Retired
Michael Kelly, Esq., Advocate
Patrick Lane, Esq., Advocate
David Markham, LCSW, Private Practice

Rick Massie, LMHC, Retired
Ese Moynihan-Ejaife, LMHC, Private Practice
Jennifer Bateman, MHC-LP
Liz Powers, The Living Room
Karen Reimringer, Office Admin Support
Paula Sauers, The Living Room
Suzane Spencer, LCSW
Gary Warner, Ph.D
Keith Wilson, LMHC, Private Practice

Advisory Board Members

Kate Auberger, LCSW-R
Rev. Celie Katovich, Spiritus Christi Church
Kate Kennedy, Monroe BOCES One
Kim Hess, MBA, The Monroe Plan
Paul Mastrodonato, MPA, Nonprofit Works

Volunteer with us!

Nurse Practitioners & Psychiatrists:

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

Therapists:

Hours negotiable,
as little as 1 hour per week