



Linking Lives

Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center

Overview of Programs

On-site Clinical

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

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

Director's Update

For us, it's all about access. We can't help everyone who calls us with a mental health need, but we can often help them connect to someone who can. Getting quality, timely care has been much more challenging this past year due to the pandemic because the systems of care are strained, but we are up for the challenge! This year we provided therapeutic consultations and psychosocial support - in person and via telehealth - at no cost to 120 youth and adults. And we helped an additional 110 people to connect to care in the community.

Our Living Room peer support program was closed for over six months due to the pandemic, but it is now open to those who can show proof of vaccination. For many who attend, it is one of their only opportunities to be with other people in person.

Another way we increase access is simply by keeping our door open to those who leave our care. Past program participants know they can always call for support if they need it. For example, a former client who now has insurance, called this summer when he was in crisis and his current counselor (at a community mental health center) was unavailable for a full month. *"I need help. I'm afraid of hurting myself and my counselor won't be available for two more weeks."* Our director was able to spend an hour with him, helping him to sort through his distress, remember his coping strategies, and develop a plan for safety and self-care until his next appointment with his therapist. A service like this would be challenging for many agencies to provide because you can't charge people for them. But because of your support, we don't have to worry about that. We can set that aside and get right to the business of helping people. We don't take that for granted. There are so many good places for you to share your resources; thank you for prioritizing this outreach and the people who consult us.

To support this work, we hope you'll join us for our annual RIVERWALK on Sunday, October 24 (pg. 3). We are excited to be with all of you and celebrate in person this year (following COVID protocols to keep everyone safe). Those who prefer can walk virtually instead. If you're unable to participate, please consider sponsoring someone else, or you can give directly to the Center (by check or at scmentalhealth.org/donate).

You play a big part in all the healing that happens here. We so appreciate your support!

With Gratitude,

Amy and Mark

Investing in Transformation

by Amy Durkee

Every day, your investment helps people struggling with the effects of mental illness, trauma, grief, and/or difficult life circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, and relationship stress. This includes people like “James” (not his real name). James is in his 30s and reported dealing with depression and anxiety since he was a kid. Pandemic-related underemployment and being stuck in a small apartment for months on end only exacerbated these symptoms. He put off getting help until his suicidal thoughts and inability to get out of bed became too disturbing to ignore. In his first session, James was nervous; he said he’d never had counseling before and wasn’t sure what to expect. His counselor was able to put him at ease by addressing his concerns and explaining the process. As he shared about his upbringing, it became clear that James had experienced significant childhood trauma related to poverty, abuse, and neglect. Like many people, James was only vaguely aware that what had happened to him qualified as traumatic. When we grow up in such adverse conditions, minimizing what is happening to us serves as a protection against even greater trauma. We tell ourselves it’s not that bad, or that others have it much worse, because subconsciously, we know it’s not emotionally safe to admit it.

“Counseling can help us to gain a more affirming perspective of ourselves, accept what is outside our control, and discover where we have power to make changes”

As often happens, James had assumed that a lot of the way he feels and acts is because there is something wrong with him, rather than seeing his thoughts and behaviors as a result of what happened to him. He talked about his quick temper, feeling on edge most of the time, and what he saw as a problematic need for order and predictability. All these characteristics, however, are common in those who’ve grown up in environments, like his.

This minimization of what happened to us, and the internalization of problems, can be further reinforced when we live in a society that devalues our experience and blames us for systemic problems because of the color of our skin, our gender, socioeconomic status, or differences in our ability. Counseling can help us gain a more affirming perspective of ourselves, accept what is outside our control, and discover where we have power to make changes.

“I didn’t want to get counseling,” James confessed after a few sessions, “because I didn’t want to find out there was one more thing wrong with me. But now I know I can do something about my problems!” James was relieved to learn there were good reasons for his quick temper and feeling on edge. He has been learning how to calm himself when he is upset, and how to be more aware of his thoughts and feelings so that he can make conscious choices about how he wants to act in difficult situations. Since starting counseling, he reports a decrease in his anxiety and more energy for working toward his goals.

Thank you for believing in us, in James, and for the resources you devote to those who often receive very little support from the world.

Please join us at Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center's

Annual Riverwalk

October 24, 2021 - 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!
- To follow safety guidelines, masks are mandatory

Sponsored by

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FOR MEDICAL CARE

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



The Illusion of Separation

by Sandra A. Hope, LMHC

The phrase “six degrees of separation” was coined in 1967 to show that everyone in the modern world was connected to each other through a chain of acquaintances with no more than five links. A recent study by French mobile carrier O2 found that strangers are more connected to each other than ever, and the average person is now separated by just three degrees within a shared "interest" or social group instead of six.

For much of my life, loneliness has been a frequent companion. Over the years, I have tried to avoid it by connecting with as many people as I can. This works well until I am not with someone and I'm alone. In the quietness, loneliness reminds me it is still there. After many years trying to avoid loneliness, I have come to realize that this companion is a part of me that wants and needs my attention - to connect with me first and then to connect with others. Sometimes I am able to give this part of myself my attention, and other times it's not that easy. I first have to recognize my avoidance and then have the courage and willpower to overcome my resistance to connecting with this part of me. My inability to connect with myself impacts my ability to connect with others.



"I felt my heart softening and opening, creating space in me for him..."



Christian mystic Lady Julian of Norwich used the Old English term “oneing” to describe what happens between God and the soul. Lady Julian said, *“The love of God creates in us such a oneing that when it is truly seen, no person can separate themselves from another person.”* Several years ago I was challenged by this quote. I was at the eye doctor waiting to get my glasses adjusted when I overheard a conversation that a customer was having with the person helping him. He said, with attitude and a slightly raised voice, *“Why does this have to take so long and why can't you get my insurance information on your computer?”* I heard a part of me say in my head, *“That man is being so annoying, what is his problem?”*

After sitting in that place of judgement, I then heard another part of me say, “Sandy, you are connected to him. He is in you and you are in him. He must have some pain that is driving his behavior.” This was such a poignant moment as I felt my heart softening and opening, creating space in me for him. This was what Julian was talking about: the "oneing" of love. By loving and connecting with ourselves, I am in you, and you are in me, and God is within us. If we dare to believe this, the way we view ourselves and each other will drastically change: instead of three degrees of separation, there will be none.

This year your support made it possible for **120 people** to get the help they needed in individual, couple, family, and group sessions.

This represents over **1,586 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 - 4 pm
Tuesday - Thursday 9 am - 5 pm

Center Staff

Amy Durkee - Director
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

7/1/20 - 6/30/21

Revenue

Contributions	\$57,263
United Way & SEFA	\$11,812
Grants	\$27,500
Memorial Gifts	\$3,465
Special Events	\$23,551
Professional Fees (\$99,250 in-kind)	\$0
Occupancy (\$11,200 in-kind)	\$0

Total Revenue: \$123,591

Expenses

Salaries, tax, benefits	\$72,994
Occupancy (\$11,200 in-kind)	\$197
Supplies	\$412
Copy, print, postage	\$203
Insurance	\$222
Professional Fees (\$99,250 in-kind)	\$0
Client Expenses	\$1,090
Books & Periodicals	\$155

Total Expenses: \$75,273

Net Profit/(Loss) \$48,318

Thanks to our recent funders

- Canandaigua National Bank \$1,000
- Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation \$15,000
- Excellus BCBS Community Fund \$5,000
- Polisseni Foundation \$2,000
- Fred & Floy Willmott Foundation \$4,000
- Women's Club of Pittsford \$500

Volunteer Staff & Affiliations

- Lynn Acquafondata, LMHC, Private Practice
- Jodi Aman, LCSW-R, Private Practice
- Lieve Bain, LCSW-R, Retired
- Adam Cake, LCSW-R, Strong Memorial Hospital
- 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, LMSW, Retired
- Liz DiMartino, RN, MS, Retired
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- Liz Powers, The Living Room
- Paula Sauers, The Living Room
- Suzane Spencer, LCSW
- Keith Wilson, LMHC, Private Practice

Advisory Board Members

- Kate Auberger, LCSW-R, Rochester Regional Health
- Kate Kennedy, Monroe BOCES One
- Kim Hess, MBA, The Monroe Plan for Medical Care
- Paul Mastrodonato, MPA, Nonprofit Works

Volunteer with us!

Nurse Practitioners & Psychiatrists:

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

Therapists:

Hours negotiable, as little as
one hour per week