

Spring Newsletter  
April 2017



SPIRITUS CHRISTI  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Linking Lives

## The Power of Compassion

We just have to tell you this amazing story of how you are making a difference. "Trisha" came to us last autumn with debilitating anxiety. She'd been sexually assaulted many years ago, and the perpetrator had recently been released from prison. Trisha couldn't sleep, was having flashbacks and panic attacks, and often couldn't even leave the house.

Her primary care doctor had prescribed medication, but Trisha was not getting relief, so he referred her to us.

Trisha's anxiety was so powerful that she regularly cancelled her appointments. When possible, Maureen or her therapist have offered support over the phone. Every time she called to say she couldn't get out the door, she'd plead, "Please don't give up on me!"

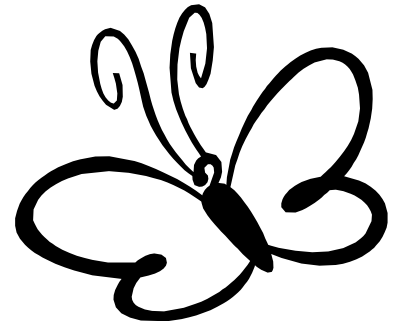
Your support allows us to hold a spot for a person like Trisha, and to offer her support in nontraditional ways, like phone appointments. Because of you, we have a lot more freedom than a big agency does to tailor treatment to the needs of each

individual person. Trisha made it here today. She called on friends and family to help her get out the door and all the way to our Center. And when she walked in, we all cheered! Trisha was beaming! "Baby steps," she whispered.

It's a small achievement, in one sense, but it's momentous in another. Trisha is taking the biggest steps she can manage toward healing, and you are providing the support she needs to do that.

***Your compassion is transforming lives! Thank you!!***

With deep gratitude,  
Maureen, Amy & Eileen



### OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

**On-Site Clinical:** Psychiatric and therapeutic consultations for uninsured and underinsured youth and adults

**Urban Youth Outreach:** Individual, family, and group therapeutic consultations, and psychosocial support for minority youth affected by violence

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

**Wesley's Mothers:** An anonymous weekly peer support group for mothers of incarcerated children

**To receive this bi-annual newsletter by email, please send your address to [adurkee@spirituschristi.org](mailto:adurkee@spirituschristi.org).**

# Getting a Fair Shake

by Amy Durkee

On February 7th of this year, 20-year-old Ronnie O. received his high school diploma. Just two and a half years ago, this seemed like an impossible dream.

When Ronnie was 17 years old, there was a fire in his dad's apartment. Someone started a rumor that Ronnie was to blame and, before Ronnie knew what was happening, he was put in the back of a car and questioned by two men associated with the fire department. He was young, scared, and they were firing questions at him. After about 20 minutes, he just wanted to be let go, so he said what he thought he needed to say to get out of the car.

Sadly, that "confession"—with no corroborating evidence-- was used to charge Ronnie with arson and land him in jail. Ronnie's family could only afford a third of the \$2,500 cost of bail, leaving Ronnie behind bars until his case could be resolved.

Pre-trial detention is enormously disruptive to a person's life. Those who are unable to post bail risk losing their jobs, housing, custody of their kids, and, for teens in particular, there's the great risk of traumatization.

Soon after his incarceration in the Minor's Unit of the county jail, Ronnie enrolled in our Urban Youth Outreach program. During a session with our program social worker, Eileen Hurley, Ronnie shared about his situation. As a result of collaboration between Eileen, Ronnie, his family, his public defender, and an anonymous donor, Ronnie's bail was posted and he was released.

"I don't know what would have happened if he'd had to sit there," says Ronnie's dad, Dwayne O. "If he had been in there for any length of time, knowing he was innocent, who knows what would have happened, how that would have affected his attitude. But he got out. She gave him some kind of hope there."

Ronnie's public defender says that Ronnie's ability to make bail and fight his case from the outside "absolutely made a difference" in the outcome. Studies show that people who don't make bail are much more likely to be convicted and to

receive harsher sentences than those who post bail. And they are more likely to accept plea bargains, even if they haven't done anything wrong, simply because they want to get out of jail.

Mr. O. is adamant about the importance of the Urban Youth Outreach in getting Ronnie where he is today, but listen to him for five minutes and you can't help but pick up on the other heroes in his story. It took two years to get Ronnie acquitted of the charge against him – two years of court appearances and other meetings. Ronnie's dad stuck by him through it all, making sure he got to his appearances and other appointments. And he kept encouraging him to get his diploma.

"You know one of the things that means a lot to me in all this?" says Mr. O. "That kid walked across the same stage to get his diploma that his father walked across." And, of course, there's Ronnie himself. Ronnie could have given up at any point, but he didn't. He got knocked down, but he got back on his feet and completed his degree. No one could do that for him. With support from his family and his community, Ronnie was able to fight his case and earn a high school diploma. Congrats, Ronnie!



A 2012 Justice Policy Institute report estimates that African Americans are detained in jail at a rate nearly five times higher than whites and three times higher than Hispanic people. In the cited data,

- African Americans were less likely to be released on their own recognizance than white people.
- African Americans ages 18 through 29 received significantly higher bail amounts than any other ethnic or racial group.

**Read the report at:**

[http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/bailfail\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/bailfail_executive_summary.pdf)

# Seeing the Whole Person

I first found out about Spiritus Christi Mental Health in 2004. I had read a newspaper article that had Eileen Hurley's picture on the front of it. At that time she was the director of the Health Center. In November of 2004 I had my first meeting with Eileen. As I left the building that day I remember her smile and the happiness in her eyes that told me that she was enthusiastic about her chosen path of helping people. I became her client and I was also given a psychiatrist that prescribed my medications.

In tears I had expressed to Eileen my past experiences with the mental health system. I had already lost many therapists due to insurance issues, lack of finances, and therapists retiring, changing agencies, or moving to a different state. She understood my history of loss.

The special gift that Eileen has given me is her willingness to maintain a connection with me through the years even during the times when I've needed to access support from different organizations. What I love about Eileen is that she treats me with respect and sees me as a whole person instead of seeing me as a diagnosis. During these 12 years she has always had faith in me and my ability to heal myself. She celebrates my accomplishments. Currently I am working on a solo art show, to take place on July 7, 2017, at Creative Wellness Opportunities. Thank you, Eileen, for everything.

With appreciation,  
P.D.



**the Reel Mind**  
*a theatre and film series about mental illness*

**UNBROKEN GLASS**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 9**  
Cinema Theater, 7 pm  
A boy's journey to discover his mother's secret past. **Filmmaker in person!**





**SWIM TEAM**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 23**  
Cinema Theater, 7 pm  
Three boys with Autism race against the odds in their quest to become champions. **Filmmaker in person!**

**ALMOST SUNRISE**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 6**  
Cinema Theater, 7 pm  
Two vets walk cross country to raise awareness and find healing





**BRUSHES WITH LIFE:**  
**Art, Artists & Mental Illness**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 20**  
JCC, 1200 Edgewood  
**ART EXHIBIT: 6 pm FILM: 7 pm**

**\$28series \$8/tix reelmindfilmfest.org 555.444.3664**

## *Thriving* in the Second Half of Life

In February, around 50 women and men over age 50 attended a panel discussion we hosted to hear from experts addressing issues such as healthcare, prescriptions, family care-giving, housing, and spirituality. We learned a ton! Attendees said they felt supported and encouraged and had more clarity and understanding for the road ahead. One participant noted, "I came away with some clarity and encouragement for my next steps."



Panelists Laurie Donohue, MD; Debra Fromm-Faria, LCSW; Connie Craig, LCSW; and Reverend Mary Ramerman



**SPIRITUS CHRISTI  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

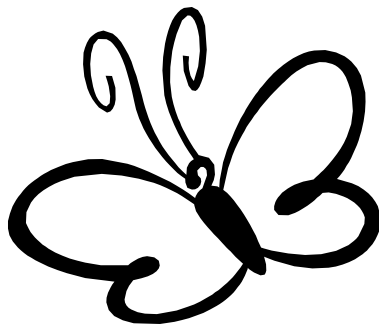
121 N. Fitzhugh St.  
Rochester, NY 14614  
**Phone: 585-325-1180**  
Fax: 585-325-1191

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Monday - Thursday  
9 am - 5 pm

**CENTER STAFF**

Maureen Marlow, RN, CASAC — Director  
Eileen Hurley, RN, LCSW — Urban Youth  
Outreach Coordinator  
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

**Thanks to Recent  
Funders**

DAISY MARQUIS JONES FOUNDATION  
\$10,000  
LGBT GIVING CIRCLE  
\$2,000  
ROCHESTER FEMALE CHARITABLE  
SOCIETY  
\$1,500  
FRED & FLOY WILLMOTT FOUNDATION  
\$4,000  
WILSON FOUNDATION  
\$4,000

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS  
& AFFILIATIONS**

Kate Auberger, LCSW-R, Rochester Rgnl Health  
Fr. Jim Callan, Assoc. Pastor, Spiritus Christi Church  
Laurie Donohue, MD, Jordan Health Services  
Kim Hess, The Monroe Plan for Medical Care  
Mary Lou Lunt, Consumer  
Paul Mastrodonato, Nonprofit Works  
Tiffany Mikel, MSW, Center for Youth

**VOLUNTEER STAFF & AFFILIATIONS**

Jodi Aman, LCSW-R, Private Practice  
Gloria Baciewicz, MD, University of Rochester  
Lieve Bain, LCSW-R, The Children's School of  
Rochester & Private Practice  
Randi Barrell, LMHC, CASAC, NCC Private Practice  
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Association of Genesee County  
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Liz DiMartino, RN, MS, Retired  
William Dwyer, LMSW, Retired  
Jere Fletcher, Esq, Advocate  
BJ Gray, LCSW-R, Retired  
Steve Hoffman, The Living Room  
Robert Holloway, MD, University of Rochester

**SPECIAL THANKS TO  
OUR MEDIA PARTNER:**



"You'll Like  
What You Hear"

Sandra Hope, LMHC, Private Practice  
Mary Kearney, LCSW, Retired  
Michael Kelly, Esq., Advocate  
Rita Kiernan, LCSW, Retired  
Patrick Lane, Esq., Advocate  
David Markham, LCSW, Private Practice  
Rick Massie, LMHC, MBA, Retired  
Ese Moynihan-Ejaife, LMHC, Private Practice  
Liz Powers, The Living Room  
Wayne Ross, LMHC Intern, St. John Fisher College  
Jeanne Ryan, Wesley's Mothers  
Paula Sauers, The Living Room  
Keith Wilson, LMHC, Private Practice

**From Current  
Participants:**

*Coming here has helped me  
cope not only with the loss of  
my baby but a number of  
other issues I have had along  
the way as well.*

*I am very grateful for the  
assistance I have received.  
Without this program I would  
not have access to the mental  
health services that I have  
needed to deal with my  
chronic anxiety disorder and  
depression.*

*I came here not truly wanting  
help at first and being  
extremely skeptical of the  
help I'd receive, but I am  
happy to say I was wrong.  
Everyone has been amazing.  
Thank you all for the help.*