



Linking Lives

Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center

Director's Update

We have so much to be grateful for this year! The addition of three therapists to our volunteer staff greatly increased our capacity. In addition, thanks to referrals from past and present program participants and our partnerships with the Reentry Association of Western New York (RAWNY) and Rochester Spinal Association (RSA), our social worker, Eileen Hurley, was able to work with almost three times as many people as last year. All told, 204 under- and uninsured folks participated in one or more of our programs. That's 74 more people than last year! And we were also able to refer an additional 92 people to appropriate providers in the community.

In this newsletter, you'll read an inspiring letter of hope from a past participant, and an account of the challenges of gunshot victims with spinal cord injuries. Together they give a picture of our work at the Center and in the community. In both stories, courageous individuals are gaining the support they need to manage challenging circumstances and reach their goals.

Your investment communicates to those who consult us that they matter and that they deserve mental health care and support. It means to the world to us and to those who participate in our programs.

On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you for your past support and invite you to remember us in your giving. We'd love to have you join us for our poetry night fundraiser on Friday, October 6 and our annual RIVERWALK on Sunday, October 22. You'll find more information about both events in this newsletter. If you are not up for walking, you can always give directly to the Center or sponsor someone else. Your investment in Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center multiplies exponentially, impacting those who consult us, their families, and their communities. Thank you so much for all your love and support!

With Gratitude,

Amy Duffee

This year, your support made it possible for **204** people to get the help they needed in individual, couple, family, and group sessions. This represents over 3,158 in-person & telehealth sessions.

Overview of Programs

On-Site Clinical

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

Community Outreach

Clinical social work services to youth, adults, and their families. Includes partnerships with Rochester Spinal Association and Reentry Association of Western NY

The Living Room

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

Support Groups

Occasional offerings of support groups for those 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

Encouragement

by Deb

Deb participated in last year's therapy group for survivors of childhood sexual trauma. She offered this letter to encourage future group members. We were so moved by her words that we asked if we could share it with all of you. With her approval, here it is:

This journey of healing from childhood sexual abuse is not an easy one. There will be days when you are ready to give up and return to your old coping strategies to avoid the pain and memories. Believe that life does get better and easier as long as you do not lose hope. You are going to get through this.

Find a good therapist, a strong support group and remind yourself that even though your abuser took away your innocence, he or she can never take away your spirit to survive.

As traumatized children, we always dreamed that someone would come and save us. We never dreamed that it would, in fact, be ourselves as adults.

Group therapy taught me that I was not alone in this fight for survival. Others have endured similar trauma, had unsupportive families, and trust issues. This helped me to open up and share my story to finally release it after all those years of holding everything inside.

Believe in yourself as you go through the process and remember, there is no definitive time frame for healing. You just need to keep going at your own pace and know that when all is said and done, you're going to be okay.

Deb, 2023



Please join us at Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center's

Annual Riverwalk

October 20, 2024 - 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 (included!)
- Great music, crafts for kids, and fall fun!
- Kids get a free pumpkin!

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

When a Waitlist is Actually a WEIGHT-list*

by Eileen Hurley

Stewart was still waitlisted for an affordable, wheelchair accessible apartment when he died. He was no stranger to waitlists, rather *weightlists**. Rendered paraplegic at age 15 from a gunshot wound, Stewart's social, economic, healthcare, and housing needs were waitlisted. He and his family suffered the consequences of their needs being deferred; they were repeatedly weightlisted, made to bear the weight of unresponsive systems and prevailing public policies.

In my work for and with gun violence survivors** who are paraplegic and quadriplegic due to a spinal cord injury, I attempt to lighten their load by offering resources to address their health, housing, transportation, vocational, educational, social, and economic needs. The single greatest resource gap is in housing. Over the past year, it's proven nearly impossible for me to relieve the weight burdening unhoused and unstably housed people in need of affordable, wheelchair-accessible housing.

Keep in mind that, to varying degrees, spinal cord injury (SCI) results in loss of movement and sensation in a person's limbs and trunk. It also requires the injured person to perform specific bowel, bladder, and skin regimes to maintain their health. In the best of circumstances SCI is catastrophic and community reintegration post-SCI can be very challenging. Imagine trying to achieve this while living on the street, sleeping on a friend's couch, or staying at a family member's house which has 4 steps to enter (and no ramp).

- Quadriplegic 23 year old Cedric has been missing his physical therapy appointments because Medical Transportation Services are not permitted to carry him down the front steps at his father's house.
- Paraplegic 25 year old Anthony's VA housing benefit is going unutilized because he hasn't found a suitable apartment that accommodates his physical and mental health conditions.
- Quadriplegic 15 year old Marquan and his mother are living separately while they wait to find an affordable, wheelchair accessible apartment.
- Quadriplegic 24 year old Davion received notice from one apartment complex that he is number 273 on their waitlist. He has been waiting for more than a year for approval of a housing subsidy.
- Quadriplegic 28 year old Stephan was granted emergency shelter at a motel after several months of sleeping on the streets and on friends' floors. Since Stephan's discharge from the hospital in September of 2022, his circumstances have not allowed him to shower, even within the shelter of the motel.

"What weight are they carrying? And, actually, whose burden is it to bear anyway?"

Gregory Boyle, the founder of Homeboy Industries, a program for formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated people, urges us "to stand in awe at what the poor carry rather than stand in judgement at how they carry it." The sentiment he is expressing strongly resonates with me. However, recently I've been encouraged to 'stand' in solidarity and ask, "What weight are they carrying? And, actually, whose burden is it to bear anyway?" The burdens carried by the weightlisted, unhoused, and unstably housed wheelchair users, and the heavy hearts of the workers charged with securing housing that is not adequately available in Rochester, is not their responsibility to carry alone.

The gunshot victims I've encountered in our partnership with Rochester Spinal Association are incredibly resourceful. Imagine if the community of Rochester was as resourceful! Let's put our weight into getting them off the *weightlists* that are holding them down. In solidarity, let's continue to support them and each other as we invite the broader Rochester community to recognize and fulfill our responsibility to provide adequate housing as a component of the human right to an adequate standard of living.***

*A turn of phrase I learned from Vicki Reynolds, a consultant, supervisor and activist.

**According to the Rochester Police Department's Open Data Portal, there were 351 shootings in Rochester in 2022 and 221 so far this year.

***The 1948 Declaration of Human Rights

Please note: All client names used above are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality



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, LMHC - Director
Eileen Hurley, RN, LCSW - Clinical Social Worker
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

7/1/22 - 6/30/23

Revenue

Contributions	\$57,568
United Way & SEFA	\$15,005
Grants	\$38,136
Memorial Gifts	\$1,119
Gifts/Bequests	\$49,635
Special Events	\$34,080
Professional Fees (in-kind)	\$73,100
Program Service Fees	\$1,950
Total Revenue:	\$270,593

Expenses

Salaries, tax, benefits	\$150,969
Occupancy	\$12,000
Supplies	\$354
Copy, print, postage	\$548
Insurance	\$904
Electronic Record Keeping	\$2,940
Equipment	\$2,939
Psychiatric Consultations	\$1,050
Professional Fees (in-kind)	\$71,900
Client Expenses	\$513
Fundraising Expense	\$300
Phone, Fax, Internet (\$1,200 In-Kind)	\$2,447
Peer Support group Expenses	\$286
Mileage & Parking (Community Outreach)	873
Total Expenses:	\$248,023

Net Profit/(Loss) \$22,570

Thanks to our recent funders

Daisy Marquis Jones \$15,000
Polisseni Foundation \$2,000
Rochester Female Charitable Society \$1,900
Rochester Spinal Association \$13,736
Visions Cares Foundation \$1,500
Willmott Foundation \$4,000

Volunteer Staff & Affiliations

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

Rick Massie, LMHC, Retired
Jerry McElroy, Advocate
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
Suzanne 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

more info at scmentalhealth.org