



# Linking Lives

*Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center*

## *Director's Update*

Dear Friends,

I don't know about you, but it seems like change is the name of the game these days. Change is ever-present, but the pace of change seems to have accelerated exponentially since January. Many of the changes and possible changes impact those who consult us in dramatic ways. Cuts to Head Start, Medicaid, Medicare, affordable housing, threats to immigration status, rising costs of basic necessities . . . these all hit the population we serve very hard, and are likely to increase the need for our services. It feels very heavy right now, and I get overwhelmed at times. What helps most is when I take a few breaths and ask myself, "What is mine to do?" This question has become a sort of mantra for me in recent months. What is mine to do? It brings me back to where my values and my power meet so that I can focus and take meaningful action.

Speaking of changes, I have exciting news regarding Mark Potter, our Associate Administrator: Mark will graduate this month with a Master's in Social Work from SUNY Brockport! He has worked very hard the last few years, juggling responsibilities at school, work, and home, and we celebrate his accomplishment. Mark will leave his position here on May 7 to take a job in medical social work, which is a great fit for him and a huge gift to the people he will serve. I know I speak not just for myself, but for our volunteers and those who consult us, when I say that we are grateful to Mark for all the ways he has contributed to making Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center a safe and welcoming place, and for making our annual Riverwalk fundraiser an even better experience. We are now in the midst of the search process for a new person to fill the role. In the interim, we will have some amazing volunteers pitching in.

This comes with gratitude to all of you – for the myriad ways you contribute to making Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center an amazing place for people to get the support they need to heal and grow.

Wishing you Peace,

*Amy Dwyer*

## *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

### **Groups**

Various educational and support groups throughout the year

### **Yoga**

Weekly yoga classes to promote overall wellness

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

# A Path to Self-leadership

by Amy Durkee

When Jacob came to the mental health center eight years ago, he wanted help managing his anger and dealing with problems in his marriage. “I was in a dark, ugly period. I didn’t like myself and I was very mean and unhappy with so many things.” Jacob consulted one of our mental health counseling interns and found the relationship helpful and supportive. Since interns only stay with us for about a year at a time, Jacob saw a few different counselors over the years. “Everyone I’ve worked with here has been great,” he exudes. “While they were different, they were all good at doing the thing that’s most important: To listen and guide, but not to advise. When people start trying to tell me what I should do, it never goes well for me.”

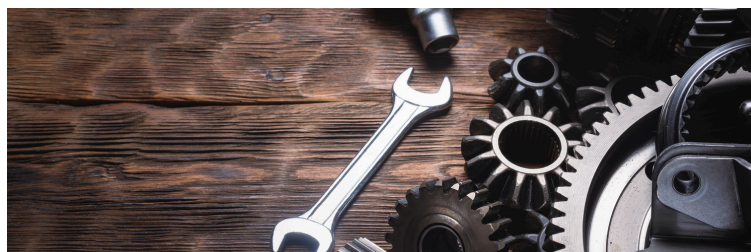
In 2023 Jacob decided to continue working with Jennifer Bateman, MHC-LP, who was staying on as a volunteer at the Center after finishing her internship. The approach she and Jacob were using is called IFS-informed therapy. IFS stands for Internal Family Systems. From an IFS perspective, everyone has multiple parts to themselves that exist inside of us, and they can run the show of our lives - driving our thoughts and behaviors - without us being aware that it’s happening.

For example, maybe you’ve had a time when a part of you felt one way and another part felt a different way. Maybe a part of you wanted to forgive someone and another part wanted to hang on to the anger. Or maybe you felt a desire to make a change and yet felt like another part of you was holding you back. In an IFS-informed counseling session we get to be curious about these parts of us and to find new ways to relate to them so that we are better able to act in alignment with our values.

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“The work I did with other counselors has all helped,” says Jacob, “but the work I’ve been doing most recently has been remarkable. It’s more effective, more rewarding. It allows me to be aware of different parts of me that need attention and to switch my focus to them more smoothly.” He goes on to say that the work he is doing in counseling now “is building a framework for myself that’s a lot more nuanced and that allows for more flexibility for the immediate needs of the day. It’s more holistic and gives me more tools in my toolbox.”

This is important for Jacob, who says he tends to distrust external sources. “I’m the leader of my system. I get to build it. This work helps me identify a path inside me that’s based on my emotional landscape. If I seem to be stuck or something comes up that’s really important to me, my counselor asks me ‘how does that relate to other parts of you?’ or she’ll ask if there are other parts that have something to say.”



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## A Path to Self-leadership

Jacob says that when he first started at the Center, he was in a very dark state. “Now, I’m not only comfortable with my own self-worth but also I have a vibrant internal life that I can tap into and vocalize it when needed. I am much better off. It’s also huge for my daughter. She went through really hard times when she was little because of all the conflict in our house. But, because of the work I’ve done here, I’ve been able to show her that she can console her own inner child.”

Jacob concludes by exclaiming, “I’m not just not mad all the time. I’m actually focusing on being happy!”

It’s important to note that IFS therapy is just one great modality among many. Research indicates that it’s the relationship between the counselor and client, and how comfortable the client is with the type of therapy they’re experiencing that matters most. Further, what works at one point for a person might not be a good fit at another time in their counseling journey. If you are seeing a therapist, it’s okay to be open about what’s working and what isn’t. If you do so, both you and your therapist will benefit.



## Save the Date

Please join us at Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center's

## Annual Riverwalk

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

**October 19, 2025 - 11am**

- Invite family & friends to sponsor you
- After the walk, join us for lunch
- Great music, crafts for kids, and fall fun!

**To stay up to date, visit: [scmentalhealth.org](https://scmentalhealth.org)**

*“Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center has given me so much over the years. So much of the positive growth and change I’ve accomplished over the years could never have happened without your services. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!”*

*Recent notes  
from program  
participants*

*“I just wanted to thank all of you, for all you have done for me. While still a work in progress, I feel I’m in a position now to be more than just a survivor - I feel like I’m getting my life back. I appreciate all that you do for mental health issues. People no longer need to be ashamed and can get the help they need. Thanks for all you do!”*

## 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  
Mark Potter, MSW - 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!***

## Thanks to our recent funders

Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation \$15,000  
Fred & Floy Willmott Foundation \$6,000  
Polleseni Foundation \$2,000  
Rochester Female Charitable Society \$3,000  
Wyman-Potter Foundation \$10,500

*Thank to all of you who have chosen to  
donate and support us in various ways.  
Through private donations, fundraiser  
support, memorial gifts, and more,  
YOU help make our work possible.  
We cannot thank you enough!*

## Volunteer Staff & Affiliations

Ted Aman, LMHC, Delphi Rise, Retired  
Lynn Acquafondata, LMHC, Private Practice  
Patricia Bennett, Ph.D., Retired  
Lieve Bain, LCSW, Retired  
Jennifer Bateman, MHC-LP  
J. Michelle Bull, UB Counseling Intern  
Michele Caponi, LMHC, Retired  
Anne Cliby, Yoga Instructor  
Peggy Derivan, LMHC, Private Practice  
Brenda Devine, LCSW, Retired  
Irene Dombeck, SJFU Counseling Intern  
Sue Elliot, LCSW, Private Practice  
Jere Fletcher, Esq., Advocate  
Jessica George, LMHC, CVTC  
David Hall, Peer Support Specialist  
Steve Hoffman, The Living Room  
Sandra Hope, LMHC, Private Practice  
Eileen Hurley, LCSW  
Mary Kearney, LCSW, Retired

Rick Massie, LMHC, Retired  
Ese Moynihan-Ejaife, LMHC, Private Practice  
Liz Powers, The Living Room  
Paula Sauers, The Living Room  
Suzanne Spencer, LCSW, Retired  
Gary Warner, Ph.D, Retired  
Keith Wilson, LMHC, Private Practice

## Advisory Board Members

Kate Auberger, LCSW, Retired  
Rev. Celie Katovich, Spiritus Christi Church  
Kate Kennedy, Monroe BOCES One  
Kim Hess, MBA, Monroe Plan  
Luz Flores Lee, MS, PMP, LLS-MBB, Consultant  
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 2 hours per week

## Our Wish List

All-day bus passes  
Grocery gift cards  
(Tops, Aldi, Price-Rite)  
“Forever” postage stamps