



Where People and Possibilities Come Together

Fall, 2017

Lamoille County Mental Health Services

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50th Annual Meeting a Success!

There was standing room only at LCMHS 2017 Annual Meeting on October 18. Outgoing board member Ted Lambert emceed the event, keeping the crowd laughing and the mood light throughout the evening.

CEO Savi Van Sluytman recounted how services have evolved in the five decades since LCMHS opened its doors. "Much of our work happens right in the communities where our consumers live," Savi said, "in their homes, in their schools, in their child care programs, in their jobs. We know that the best path to health and wellness is the one that ensures a full, meaningful life." She touched on just a few of the many current services that are housed within the Agency: the community food shelf, supported employment and fighting homelessness. We help those in our community "every step where they need a guiding hand, and when they are ready to take the next step alone, we step back—but not away."

Recent Redwood Program graduate James Salvas spoke with behavioral interventionist Amanda Gabaree about his experience with the program. "I learned how to be a better student," James said, and "how to be nicer to people."

"That's always helpful," Amanda quipped. It was clear that James and Amanda have a strong trusting relationship.

"I learned how to walk away before reacting to a situation or problem," James continued, and "how to take responsibility for my actions if I did something wrong." James talked about how he wants to be a good role model for younger students, which drove him to succeed in the program.

Faith Salvas, James' mother thanked the Redwood Program for their positive impact on her family. She encouraged other families to ask for help if they are struggling. "Reach out to these people, because they are so valuable and they know so much," Faith said, "I cannot thank them enough for everything they have done for us."

(Annual Meeting, continued on p. 2)



Thanksgiving Dinner • Tuesday, Nov. 21

LCMHS staff are excitedly planning the annual community Thanksgiving dinner, which will be held at 72 Harrel Street in Morrisville on Tuesday, November 21 from 11:30-1:30.

Members of the community can also call ahead to reserve a meal to take home. Call (802) 888-5026 by Monday, November 20.

...Annual Meeting, continued from p. 1.

After James, Faith and Amanda told their story, the consumer music group entertained the room with rousing songs that had the audience tapping their toes and singing along.

Janice Leonard spoke about her struggles as the adoptive mother of her step-granddaughter, who is now 8. "The day I came here was one of the worst days of my life." A few months before she walked through the door at LCMHS she had been in a car accident and was suffering from a concussion. Layered on top of that was a child in her care who has trauma-induced Reactive Attachment Disorder. She was usually the person on the other side of the desk. "Imagine going from being the helper to actually sitting in an office with Kiah." She felt completely alone. She told Access & Enhanced Family Services Program Manager Kiah Palumbo, "I can't do this anymore. I can't do this alone. Please help me... It was really one of the lowest days of my life." Kiah and her team surged to action, wrapping Janice, her daughter and family with support. She remembered one particular day after her daughter had been working with the staff in Children, Youth and Family Services: "It was so nice to see her come home so happy. She just doesn't smile a lot."

In closing, Janice said, "I thank you so much for having these services. They grew in all these tentacles... it was wonderful."

Sherry Jones from Developmental Services talked about the Supported Employment Program, highlighting LCMHS client Kathy Dority's work with the Stowe Reporter. Sherry also noted that Vermont is a leader in Supported Employment. Of the 50 people currently enrolled in the supported employment program, 44 of them are employed. In Fiscal Year 2017 the total wages of those enrolled in this program were \$202,000. This equates to a state savings in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits of \$81,623.

Zero Suicide Planning Committee members Bryanne Castle and Monique Reil discussed the importance of talking about suicide and pulling it out of the shadows.

Board member Nancy Durand presented the Shirley Hayden Award. "Each year we recognize one outstanding employee who goes above and beyond their job description to serve their community with the same spirit and commitment as Shirley Hayden." This year our four incredible Award finalists were Rita Hammond, Alissa Harvey, Katy Kuchta and Sherry Marcelino.

Over the last few years Sherry has become the go-to person on housing at LCMHS. She collaborates with landlords, local, state and federal partners to find housing for those in need. Over and over Sherry has found a way to find housing when there have been barriers to success. She has helped secure an incredible number of vouchers, grants, and perhaps more importantly, has been able to negotiate agreements between landlords and consumers that prevent loss of housing, as well as creating new housing options.

In a particularly light interlude, Ted Lambert gave some advice for cooking kale, which, by the sounds of it, is not his favorite vegetable. "When you cook the kale, be sure to use lots of coconut oil. It makes it easier to slide it from the pan into the garbage." Members of the Wellness Committee stifled guffaws of laughter as they tried to look stern. Shortly after, a notice was sent to staff reminding them of the nutritional value of the dark, leafy green: that it is chock full of calcium, vitamin K and potassium.

In closing, board member Karen Carlson encouraged those in attendance to think about something that they could do to help a neighbor in need. It can be something tangible, like shoveling the snow from the walkway of an elderly neighbor, or bringing a meal to a family in need. It can be making a donation to a program at Lamoille County Mental Health that is making a change that you respect. It can be raising your voice—write a letter or record a video of your story of how Lamoille County Mental Health has changed your life and send it to our Congressional Delegation, asking them to advocate against the cuts to Medicaid that they are discussing right now in Washington DC. "Whatever you decide is the way that you can make that change, commit—here and now—to take that step when you leave today."



NAMI Mindwalk

On Sunday, September 24 in Burlington's City Hall Park 16 employees from LCMHS and their families (pictured left) joined Vermonters from across the state to walk, culminating in more than 50 thousand people in more than 80 communities across the nation in walking together to raise awareness of mental illness. Our Agency alone raised over \$500 toward this effort.

We were so fortunate to be able to take advantage of a gorgeous September day walking with friends and colleagues. Feeling strong in our bodies brings peace of mind; it is an internal partnership that begins with a single step.

Thank you to Team LCMHS, and captain Sara Pastina for showing their support for the most vulnerable people in our community!

Our 2018 Capital Campaign is Underway

Please donate generously!

You have the ability to dedicate your donation to a particular program that resonates with you or to focus your generous donation toward capital improvements that will support our community long into the future. Please note the program for which your gift is intended and send your tax deductible donation to:

Lamoille County Mental Health Services
72 Harrel Street
Morrisville, VT 05661

Capital Campaign Goal: \$1.5 million

When we reach our goal, we will:

- ⇒ Build an Imagination Center for children with autism, behavioral and learning disabilities, and elders with dementia;
- ⇒ Build four independent living “tiny houses” for people with developmental disabilities next to the Oasis House;
- ⇒ Provide matching funds to create transitional housing in community centers where it does not currently exist.

Ch-ch-ch-changes!

New Director of Human Resources

Bill Frattini has joined Lamoille County Mental Health as the Director of Human Resources. A fourth-generation Vermonter, Bill was born and raised in Barre and graduated from Spaulding High, Norwich University and Vermont Law School. Prior to moving to Maine in 1987, he was Director of Alumni Relations at Norwich and Assistant Commercial Real Estate Portfolio Manager at National Life of Vermont. Bill spent 10 years in real estate finance and managed assets/loan workouts in Maine before transitioning to human resource management and environmental health and safety administration.

Bill and his wife, Barb are the parents of two adult children, Karla and Joe, and the grandparents of Matteo, Noelle & Henry.

Bill is delighted to return to his home state of Vermont. Just ask him!



New Director of Communications & External Affairs

Rebecca Copans has joined LCMHS as the Director of Communications and External Affairs. Rebecca has worked extensively in government affairs, community and public relations and communications. She believes that as a society, our greatest potential lies with our children. With this basic tenant firmly in mind, Rebecca worked most recently with Let's Grow Kids and the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, and now with Lamoille County Mental Health to secure a stronger foundation for all Vermont families.



A graduate of the University of Vermont and Dartmouth College, Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and a Master of Arts degree in globalization. Her thesis concentration was the history and societal use of language and its effect on early cognitive development. She lives in Montpelier with her husband, Jon and three children, Shelby, Lucy and Hazen.

Changes for the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be losing two long-serving members at the end of October, in accordance with LCMHS bylaws. David Vinick (left) and Ted Lambert (right) are both coming to the end of a second, nine-year term.

Zach Williams will assume the position of President of the Board.



Legislator Visits

Over the past few months, legislators representing our service area have come in to talk with staff about the services we provide, the challenges that we face and the success stories our consumers and their families have. Thank you to Representatives Bernie Juskiewicz, Gary Nolan, Daniel Noyes, Heidi Scheuermann, Chip Troiano and David Yacovone for talking with us.



Rep. David Yacovone speaks with Will Baker from Developmental Services at the 2017 Annual Meeting in October.

Wellness Challenges

The Wellness Committee issued staff a dental flossing challenge recently: Floss every day for two weeks and be entered to win an electric toothbrush. Excitement was high as 20 winners were drawn at the Annual Meeting on Oct. 18.

The latest wellness challenge is that staff eat more fruits and veggies every day. At the end of the challenge, all employees who have eaten two fruits and three veggies every day for two weeks will be entered into a raffle to win a winter Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share at Pete's Greens Good Eats. Eat those fruits and vegetables!



Picture courtesy of www.smittenkitchen.com

The Wellness Committee would welcome new members! Join the committee to collaborate on ways to encourage health and wellness among staff.

Wondering about some new and delicious ways to prepare veggies? Check out the indomitable website Smitten Kitchen (www.smittenkitchen.com) for some mouth-watering ideas.

Zero Suicide Update

Our LCMHS Zero Suicide project has had a busy year! We have just completed our annual reassessment, or “Organizational Self-Study,” to check on the progress we have made in suicide prevention care. We also just finished the annual “Workforce Survey” to measure staff perception of competence & confidence in dealing with suicide prevention. In addition, we are working on several policies & procedures for suicide prevention care, and are in the 2nd round of Collaborative Assessment & Management of Suicidality (CAMS) training for various LCMHS staff who work directly in providing suicide care. Our goal is to eventually train all staff at LCMHS to be able to offer some initial support and direction to find help for those at risk of suicide.

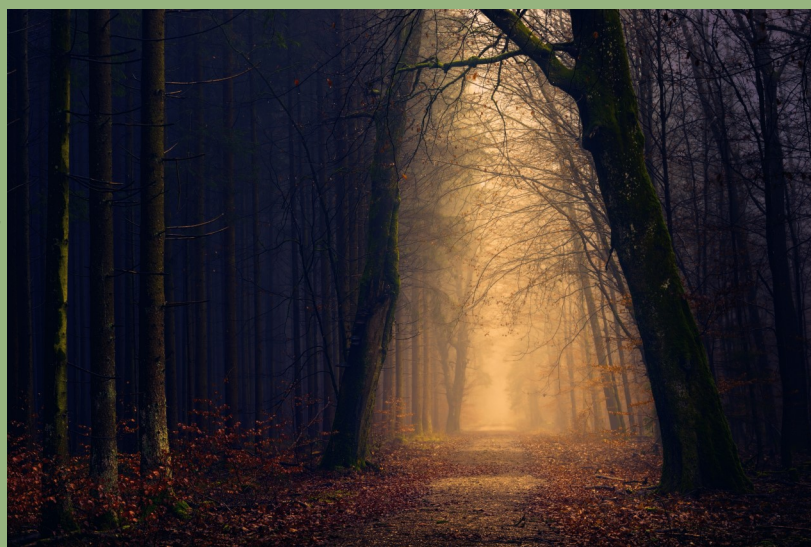
In September, we participated in National Suicide Prevention Week by forwarding press releases to the community from the Center for Health and Learning about suicide statistics in Vermont, the impact on families and the Zero Suicide efforts statewide. We distributed purple and turquoise ribbons in support of suicide prevention, which included the hotline number.

In October, we presented an update at our annual meeting and gave out more ribbons, encouraging people to share them with others and spread the word about Zero Suicide.

Our next step is to create a list of community partners we will approach about the Zero Suicide project. We will network at various meetings in order to share information. We hope to generate interest in joining us in our efforts to identify and treat people at risk in our community. We are also exploring related programs that can be used in conjunction with Zero Suicide, such as U-Matter, for suicide prevention trainings in schools.

If anyone has questions or ideas, please approach a member committee; we would love to hear from you!

Zero Suicide committee: Bryanne Castle, Jane Paine, Jessica Strong, Julie Sullivan, Kiah Palumbo, Michael Hartman, Mimi Bernier, Monique Reil, Rebecca Brooklyn, Renata Blanchard, Robin Erickson, Will Baker. They can be reached at 802-888-5026.



LCMHS Blood Drive November 14 10:00 AM—3:00 PM

Schedule a time to give online:
www.redcrossblood.org

Every 2 seconds in the United States,
someone needs blood. Please give!



Staff Development Day

Each year the entire LCMHS staff comes together for a day of training and team building in July. Dr. Maria Mercedes Avila, Director of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Program joined us as a guest speaker from the University of Vermont to present a workshop on Cultural and Linguistic Competence.

After a morning of diving deep into professional development, everyone returned to the Agency for a BBQ lunch and fun. CEO Savi Van Sluytman manned the grill, turning out her famous BBQ chicken. There was an afternoon of fun team building activities with a volleyball tournament and games like bingo, “Minute to Win It” challenges, a pie bake off contest, a “guess the baby picture” contest and prizes throughout the afternoon. It is a day we always look forward to as a way to learn new approaches to serving our community, to reconnect with old colleagues and get to know our new recruits.



Direct Service Professionals Day at the State House

Developmental Disability Service Agencies and Green Mountain self-advocates came together on September 14 to honor Direct Support professionals for their commitment to promoting community inclusion and a high-quality life for people with developmental disabilities.



Did you know that LCMHS hosts a food shelf?

The food shelf is open to the community from 8:00 to 1:00 Monday-Thursday, and Friday from 8:00 to 12:30. We gladly accept donations at our front desk of any factory or store-sealed goods. We are unable to accept anything that is expired or homemade. For information, contact Eric Kelley at eric.kelley@lamoille.org.

**We are accepting donations of
frozen turkeys for the holidays!**

Thank you for your generous donations.