



Mental Health Association

OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

PETS' LOVE IS THERAPEUTIC

“He’s everything to me. He knows when I don’t feel well. He can sense it. He’ll just reach out and touch me,” said Susan when asked about her cat Katula. For many of MHA’s clients, the last time they were able to have a pet was as they were growing up or before they were diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Pets mean normalcy, comfort, warmth and home for many of our supportive housing residents, and exercise from walking, feeding and grooming a pet helps keep minds healthy. Caring for a pet also provides a predictable routine.

This is why pets are a big part of our life at MHA, for both clients and staff.

Laurie and Viola

Laurie resides at the Belmont Apartments. “She comforts me. She helps me when I’m



Laurie and Viola

depressed. She gives me lots of love. I’m lucky to have her.”

Susan and Katula

Susan also resides at the Belmont Apartments. “I’ve had him for six and a half years, since I moved in.

He was two weeks old when I found him (Katula) in a

shopping bag outside the Belmont Apartments. I fed him out of a bottle for six weeks. He now weighs 13 pounds and is perfectly healthy. He has his own pillow on the bed. He’ll be at the foot of the bed and come up and meow, purr, and cuddle

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A HOME OF THEIR OWN FORMER SHELTER RESIDENTS SECURE PERMANENT HOUSING



Julie and Cynthia

Before the shelter I slept in my car. I spent most of the day looking for shelter. Now it’s all different.” Cynthia recently moved from the Spring Street Shelter to the MHA’s Belmont Apartments.

“It’s wonderful living here. I love

the quiet and the privacy.”

“Now I’m getting settled in. I take part in MHA-sponsored groups, like the Mindfulness Group. It’s important to be part of this community and part of the larger scheme of things.”

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LETTER FROM MELISSA PLATTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This is the season in which we all begin to take measure of the year that is coming to a close. It is much easier when there have been so many wonderful reasons for giving thanks. I can truly say that the celebration marking the opening of Cedar Street Apartments in May was a highlight for all of us this year. We marvel at the spirit of cooperation and collaboration demonstrated by all who committed time and resources to make this a reality.

We are also deeply grateful to those of you who have contributed to our Wellness Fund which keeps innovative health and related programming available to our residents. We continue to sell tiles honoring those who have contributed and the important people in their lives.

In the spirit of appreciation I would also like to celebrate our staff who have weathered many storms and have continued to commit their energies to helping our clients in whatever ways they can. We have also been very fortunate to recruit new staff who have brought energy and enthusiasm to their work. Altogether I can say that we at MHA are extremely proud of the people who work here and of the job they do. Please view story to the right for new names and faces of those who have joined us this year.

And finally, we hope that the close of 2012 brings each of you good memories and time to spend with family and friends, and that 2013 brings peace and happiness. ☺

IN MEMORIAM

Billy Wallace, Patty Kuns, and Ingrid Nillson

We regret the recent loss of Billy Wallace, our dear friend who passed away this summer. Billy was an active member in our Belmont community.

Patty Kuns was one of the original tenants in our Hurlingame House and, as such, was part of the larger Spring Street family for more than 20 years.

Ingrid Nillson lived at the St. Matthew Hotel in San Mateo for 30 years. She was a frequent member of the tea time group and was active with any and all social opportunities at the site.

NEW STAFF



Myriam Beltran supports the residents at Belmont Apartments, St. Matthew Hotel, and others living in the community. Myriam earned her MSW from University of Michigan.



Jeremiah Johnson also serves residents at Belmont Apartments and others living in the community. Jeremiah earned his MA in Clinical Psychology at the Wright Institute.



Natalie Coreas-Bernal works with our Spring Street Shelter and Transitional Housing residents to find permanent housing. Natalie earned her Bachelors in Social Work at San Francisco State and has been volunteering with our Friendship Center.



Monica Steptoe serves dually diagnosed clients in our 14-Slots program. She has worked with similar clientele at BOSS and Community Option, both in Berkeley. ☺

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Jessie Jones-Bell

What would you like people to know about you? I am an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco in the School of Nursing and Health Professions. I teach Community Mental Health

and I am the Program Director for the New RN Transition to Practice Program in Outpatient Care. I also work part time as a hospice nurse.

What attracted you to MHA? I know that to help promote the wellness of our community we need to provide care to the whole person. One of the major areas to promote wellness is promoting mental health wellness and recovery. To do this we need to recognize that mental health maintenance is a lifelong endeavor. To begin to heal, individuals need support, coaching, education, and basic needs met within a safe environment so they can work on their own personally health and ongoing healing.

What do you find most rewarding about your work with MHA? That we can make a difference in a vulnerable population that needs support and ongoing coaching. By working with MHA I am contributing to **the health of the community I live in.**

What are your hopes for MHA in the next five years? To expand their support services to reach out to more individuals. Also to promote education to our community to increase the understanding about behavioral health in our own neighborhoods.



Elizabeth McManus

What would you like people to know? MHA is an amazing organization and one that I am proud to be a member.

What attracted you to MHA? The vision and dedication of the organization has made San Mateo County a fully functioning collaborative and supportive community.

What do you find most rewarding about your work with MHA? The core value of the organization and the dedicated professional commitment to working for a just, humane, and healthy society where all people live with respect, dignity, choice, and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and prejudice makes the community we live a home. ☺

PETS THERAPEUTIC, FROM PAGE 1

with me, especially when I'm depressed."



Susan and Katula

watching her because she is so happy. It's a normalizing process to step outside of yourself and connect with a fuzzy little warm animal."

Michael and Mark

Michael is the Property Manager at Belmont Apartments. "Mark is a Terrier Mix I got through Pets in Need. The residents really enjoy having him. They hold



Michael and Mark



Raisin and Georgia

Georgia and Raisin

Georgia is the Spring Street Property Site Manager. Georgia has had Raisin for six years. "Raisin is so good with residents. She is happy and energetic. Folks tell me they feel better just

and pet him. They take him for walks. Some tenants would like to have a pet but can't take care of it themselves. With Mark they vicariously get to have a pet...he's a loaner pet that everyone gets to enjoy." ☺

LIVED EXPERIENCE SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTS CAREERS IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

The Lived Experience Scholarship (LES) Program is in its second year. LES is a scholarship fund set up to help individuals pursuing a career in behavioral healthcare. LES is program of the San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) that MHA administers. The fund has been available to BHRS consumers and their family members, people who have unique life experiences that will benefit them in their career choice. The fund has already disbursed 37 scholarships for individuals attending two- and four-year programs. The money has been used for tuition, student fees, computers, books, and transportation. This is an investment in the future to ensure that the case managers, social workers, therapists and doctors of tomorrow have not only the best education but relevant life experience for this important work. ☺

A HOME OF THEIR OWN, FROM PAGE 1

With a new home, Cynthia is now making plans for the next stage in her life. "I was a CPA. I'm working to regain my license. I hope to work part time."

Julie also moved into the Belmont Apartments after staying at the Spring Street Shelter. "I got used to everything that was going on at Spring Street. The first week or two I experienced loneliness when I moved from the shelter to the apartment."

Now Julie has fully embraced life at the Belmont Apartments. "At Belmont I go to movie night and help out with the Beautification Committee. I love it here. I'm really happy with my home."

While some people move into MHA's supportive housing programs, some residents receive Shelter Plus Care vouchers. MHA helps them to find apartments and provides ongoing

case management to help them stabilize in their new homes and then recreate healthy and full lives.



CJ

A few miles north in Burlingame, Cathy (CJ) enjoys the view of the hills from her third floor walk-up. "I love it. I have some control back in my life. I know I'll be here. I'm so thankful and appreciative. Everybody at the shelter was so great."

CJ takes a short walk to catch the bus to her job at a portrait studio. "I schedule and greet. I find out

what the families want." For CJ the whole experience of being homeless was eye-opening and made her more politically aware. "There are people who care but not always enough government funding for the agencies. Now I study the voter pamphlets." CJ is exploring the Peer Counseling certificate program at College of San Mateo. "I want to give back. I feel really blessed."

Dale lives in a pleasant one-bedroom apartment in San Mateo. "Being in a stable, comfortable environment gives me less to worry about. I'm a homebody, a quiet person. Now that I'm living independently, eating healthy, exercise, and meditation are all part of my life. Being able to cook for myself alleviates a lot of anxiety."

Dale also started working for MHA at the Cedar Street Apartments.

"The job has been huge. It makes a big difference to have some



Dale

income. Cedar St. is a good fit. I'm good one on one. I'm emotionally in tune with the residents. I've also done personal training at Cedar. I feel a sense of participation in the community. Work's an important part of a person's life. People at Cedar feel open to sharing with me. They relate to someone who's been through the same things as them." ☺



Mental Health Association
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MHA'S MISSION

The Mental Health Association of San Mateo County (MHA), a nonprofit organization, enriches quality of life, restores dignity, and reduces homelessness, particularly for those affected by mental illness and HIV/AIDS. MHA strengthens hope by providing shelter, support and opportunities for socialization.

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Melissa Platte

MHA'S 38TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY — FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 11 AM-1:30 PM

You can be Santa's helper for our 38th Annual Friendship Center Holiday Party by making a contribution to Operation Reindeer. Your donation helps pay for over 300 gifts, a traditional holiday meal with all the trimmings, table decorations, music and dancing to DJ extraordinaire John Harris. The party is open to any adult in our community who lives with mental illness. For many this party is the only holiday celebration they will have.

Send donations to:
MHA Operation Reindeer
2686 Spring Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

The Board, staff, volunteers, and clients of MHA thank you for your support and we wish you the best for the 2012 Holiday Season. ☺





Mental Health Association

OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

MHA PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Friendship Centers offer social and recreational opportunities for adults with mental illness. Eight Friendship Center meetings a week take place at six sites. New participants are welcome to drop in.

Spring Street Shelter provides temporary shelter, by referral only, for homeless adults with mental illness. The Shelter offers meals, donated clothing, laundry room access, skills groups, and support services.

The **Transitional Housing Program** helps Spring Street Shelter residents move from homelessness into long-term, stable and permanent housing. Residents work with a case manager to achieve their goals and plan for the future.

The **Housing & Client Assistance Program** provides short-term assistance to low-income, HIV-positive residents to help them acquire and maintain permanent housing. The program also helps pay move-in costs, provides other housing-related items, and connects people with community resources.

The **Shelter Plus Care Program** provides subsidized housing and support services to help adults with mental illness live successfully in the community.

The **CHRIS Program** offers Living Skills Assessments and training for Spring Street Shelter residents, Transitional Housing and community clients by referral only. The program provides recommendations for housing options that match client skills, interests, abilities, and needs.

The **Community Friend Program** offers a companion/support network for isolated individuals so they can participate in community activities.



The Mental Health Association of San Mateo County (MHA), a nonprofit organization, enriches quality of life, restores dignity, and reduces homelessness, particularly for those affected by mental illness and HIV/AIDS. MHA strengthens hope by providing shelter, support and opportunities for socialization.

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MHA PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The **SAYAT Program** (Support & Advocacy for Young Adults in Transition) helps stabilize homeless young adults and facilitate their transition into permanent, stable housing.

The **St. Matthew Hotel Support Services Program** provides on-site support for the 56 low-income residents of the St. Matthew Residential Hotel in downtown San Mateo.

The **“14 Slots” Supportive Housing Program** supports chronically homeless, dually or triply diagnosed individuals in permanent supportive housing throughout San Mateo County.

Belmont Apartments offer stable, affordable, supportive housing for 24 homeless adults with mental illness and/or who are dually or triply diagnosed.



The **Wellness Program** supported by Sequoia Healthcare District and Mills-Peninsula Health Services, encourages healthy lifestyle choices at the Belmont Apartments and St. Matthew Hotel.

In partnership with Edgewood Center for Children and Families, the **Housing Support Program** provides housing and support services throughout the community for seriously mentally ill, transition-age youth who are enrolled in the MHSA Full Service Partnership.

The **Cedar Street Apartments**, located at 104 Cedar Street in Redwood City, opened in June 2012. The Cedar Street Apartments offer fourteen studio apartments to adults living with mental illness. On-site supportive services focus on educational and vocational opportunities and activities.

