

# MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF PUTNAM COUNTY

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## PUPPET POWER GOING STRONG

With Fall in the air, a change of seasons signals changes in our lives as well. We'd like to share some of the changes here at MHAoPC with you in this newsletter, and get you excited for the work we do. Don't worry... Our great signature programs, like Puppet Power, are still going strong. We even got a surprise visit from US Senator John Crane when we were presenting to Roachdale Elementary School October 28th:



The conversations started by these presentations are priceless, and it was so opportune that the play Senator Crane saw was "Laws and Making Good Choices". The whole experience exemplifies how MHA is reaching our community, and bringing the mental health to the foreground in these conversations.

**-Karen Martoglio, Executive Director**



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### THE STORY OF THE BELL

During the early days of mental health treatment, asylums often restrained people who had mental illnesses with iron chains and shackles around their ankles and wrists. With better understanding and treatments, this cruel practice eventually stopped.

In the early 1950s, Mental Health America issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. On April 13, 1956, at the McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore, Md., Mental Health America melted down these inhumane bindings and recast them into a sign of hope: the Mental Health Bell.

# DODGEBALL!

Our 2019 Don't Dodge The Issues Dodgeball Tournament was a huge success and we're looking forward to our third annual one April 2020! Twelve teams of six players competed in double elimination tournament play. With information booths by both of our behavioral health companies, the local Putnam County Recovery Coalition, and MHAoPC, the event delivered not only fun but information on myriad mental health facts, conditions, and services.



## CRISIS KNOWS NO BOUNDS

### Megan Rentfro

*'Let's rally up together and create a new mentality...'* -Shane Bunting

Being a part of the Crisis Text Line has been a true blessing. Having the opportunity to help others is so very rewarding. I remember the first time I had lunch with Karen Martoglio, the director of MHA of Putnam County, her passion and compassion for those in need really hit home for me. I myself was a troubled teen with what seemed like no one to turn to at times, so this resource is something that I respect and feel so glad to be a part of and have since the day I started my training to become a Crisis Counselor.

I guess I should fill you the reader in on my background. I was a worker in a group home for mentally disabled adults. That experience is something I draw from on a daily basis, the patience and dedication that job took was no joke. Being able to make a daily impact on those that had been so often overlooked was very fulfilling. My life decided that I needed a new atmosphere to work in as far as my career, the decision to accept a position at the Putnam County Museum has by far been my favorite career move I have made to date. I felt I still needed to make an impact on my community, so I became a member of my town's Park Advisory Board and found that helping children in my community was a great experience. After meeting Karen I knew what my next volunteer position would be, I had no idea how rewarding the Crisis Text Line could be for me.

I began my training as a Crisis Counselor in July of 2017. The training took a total of 8 weeks. The training taught me how to be empathetic without really giving advice; the CTL believes that helping the texter help themselves is key to success to get the texter from a hot stressful moment to a cool calm moment. It also taught me to be confident in my responses and questions when it came to interacting with texters. I was taught to self-care in my down time to make sure I didn't carry the heaviness of some conversations and didn't allow them to get me down.



**I have experienced almost every walk of life in my conversations; mental health crisis does not discriminate.**



My first shift was one of the tensest moments I have experienced during this whole process. I had just finished training and was hopeful my conversations would be easy ones. My first texter was a suicidal teenager. It was my luck I would have to jump into this head first with one of the most challenging type of texter. Every texter is a challenge to deal with in their own way, but I enjoy the challenge to help someone feel better about themselves. However, suicide abuse and self-harm I have found to be some of the most challenging. These texters find it hard to see positive things in their lives, and helping them recognize that they have a reason to live has been the most satisfying of all outcomes I have experienced. It was hard with that first conversation not to turn to my instincts as a mother. I had to separate myself and lean on my training, and I made it through it. Since that first time on the CTL I have had over 350 more conversations and over 300 hours. I can honestly say that I believe I have helped the majority of those people at least feel better in the moment or even at times gave them tools to see some positivity in their lives.

In my time on the CTL, I have had so many diverse texters. I have had conversations with professionals finding themselves cracking under the pressure of a career, children trying to juggle grades and sports with controlling parents, mothers dealing with homelessness, friends concerned with the safety of a their peers, all the way to adolescent girls trying to deal with sexual assault. I have experienced almost every walk of life in my conversations; mental health crisis does not discriminate. I have been made aware how lucky I am to have a support system that is so gentle and compassionate. I find myself being more appreciative of those I love and that build me up.

I also deal with mental health as a parent and woman. This experience has taught me how, in ways, to handle some of my own stressors. The chance to create safety plan with texters feeling as if they may harm themselves has been very eye opening about my own problem solving skills. I am proud of who I have grown into as a partner, mother, friend, family member and woman over the years. Having the chance to help those that are where I was at one time makes the lessons I have learned in my life that much more worth it in the end. Every day is a chance to brighten someone's day. If you or someone you know may be in crisis, [text 741741](tel:741741) to be connected with a trained Crisis Counselor. If you are considering the commitment of being a Crisis Counselor yourself, I encourage you to fill out the application at [www.CrisisTextLine.org](http://www.CrisisTextLine.org). Maybe you are the next Crisis Counselor rock star!

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

We are excited to announce that MHAoPC is working to offer Mental Health First Aid! We hope that through training and education, we will have a two-fold impact: Educating our community to recognize mental health challenges, plus help instill mental health as an educational pursuit. One of the three top barriers to mental health services in Putnam County is a lack of mental health care workers, as identified by focus groups in 2017.

### WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. This 8-hour training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

**64.1%**

of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment.

**1 in 5**

teens & young adults lives with a mental health condition



**MHAoPC Business After Hours:** We had a great turnout at Wasser where we were able to chat with the folks who came and help spread information about mental health issues and how our business community can help and be helped.

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

### Dr. Christina Wagner, President



We are so fortunate to have Christina Wagner as our current President. She works tirelessly on making sure our board and directions for MHAoPC stay focused. Christina is a licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at DePauw University. Her clinical and research areas of specialization include stress and health and psycho-oncology. She has authored multiple publications related to coping with cancer among patients and their partners. She is also known around DePauw for being mom to twin daughters.

## CONTACT US!

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