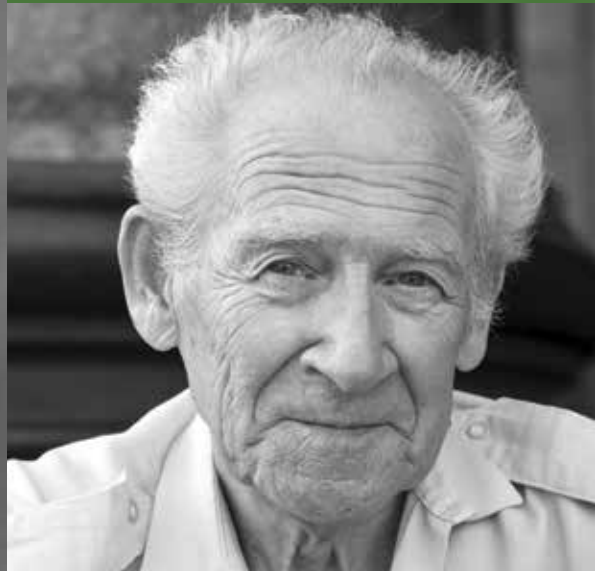




# 2015 Annual Report



home, health,  
purpose, and  
community



Dear Friends,

This past year was an exciting time for our Agency. Among our achievements was changing our name to Mental Health Connecticut (MHC) from Mental Health Association of Connecticut to more accurately depict our leadership position in promoting mental health and wellness for all Connecticut residents. Our dedication to this mission is evident through our focus on mental health education, advocacy and direct service, which promote the four pillars of recovery: home, health, purpose, and community.

Our Board of Directors and management team collaborated in a “strategic learning” endeavor, the product of which is a visionary roadmap for the organization to follow in making sure MHC continues to be effective in meeting the evolving mental health needs of our state.

As our financial performance demonstrates, MHC continues to strengthen and grow despite these challenging economic times for nonprofits. To remain vital and sustainable, MHC continuously seeks efficiencies and supports staff with the skills they need to be effective. We recently restructured the organization, improved accountability and management, and committed additional resources to evaluation and staff training for Fiscal Year 2016. We are proud of the hardworking and talented staff without whom we would not be able to accomplish all the great things that we do and care for the people who need us.

MHC also made significant improvements to its residential services to further promote the recovery of clients. Special emphasis was given to best practices for trauma-informed environments of care. As funds continue to become available, ongoing improvements will be made to support hope, respect, and wellness.

As we continue to serve the residents of Connecticut through education, advocacy, and service, we hope you will support our efforts. Your financial contributions strengthen MHC’s ability to achieve its mission and fulfill its commitment to positively impact the mental health of all Connecticut residents. We are honored to serve Connecticut and hope you will continue to support us in our efforts to realize hope and recovery (<http://www.mhconn.org/donate/supporting-hope/>).

Sincerely,



**Donald A. Neel**  
Board Chair



**Luis B. Pérez, LCSW**  
President & CEO



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# Mental Health Connecticut Highlights



- MHC prepared to change its name from Mental Health Association of Connecticut to Mental Health Connecticut on July 1.
- With the assistance of an external consultant, MHC's senior leadership and Board of Directors created a long-term strategic plan to guide the future of the Agency.
- MHC's Supported Employment Program, Choices — West Hartford, was recognized by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for being among eight programs that surpassed the minimal employment rate goal by 10%.
- MHC secured funds from The Hartford and Ensworth Charitable Foundation to launch Deaf Rec, a social club for people who are deaf. Deaf Rec will complement MHC's services and supports for the Deaf community and engage people who are deaf in recreational community activities.
- MHC hosted two Art of Well Being educational forums. The first raised awareness around mental health and the military with featured speaker Wes Moore who is a youth advocate, Army combat veteran, social entrepreneur, and host of Beyond Belief on the Oprah Winfrey Network. The second featured Mental Health America President & CEO and author of *Losing Tim: How our Health & Education Systems Failed my Son with Schizophrenia* Paul Gionfriddo. Paul discussed the importance of prevention and early intervention in the promotion of mental wellness in our communities.





# Mental Health Connecticut Highlights

- MHC opened Hayden Hill, which is designed to meet the intensive and unique needs of people with mental health conditions who need a supportive environment in order to live successfully in the community as compared to in an institution.
- Through support from The Hartford, MHC collaborated with the Boys and Girls Club of Hartford to bring Kids on the Block, an educational program for youth featuring puppets that address concerns associated with bullying, using illegal substances, peer pressure, and mental wellness, to students at West Middle Community School.
- In collaboration with other advocacy organizations, MHC worked diligently this past legislative session to increase access to services and supports that positively impact the four pillars of recovery: home, health, community, and purpose.
- As an advocacy organization, MHC provided input to Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) and his staff related to the recently introduced Mental Health Reform Act of 2015 (S. 1945).
- MHC was awarded funding from the Governor's Nonprofit Grant Program through the Office of Policy and Management to implement an electronic health record, which will allow for better tracking of outcomes and evaluative data.



# Success Stories

## Danbury Residential Services

Anne\* has been engaged in MHC's Danbury Residential Services since December 2013. At the time, she required intensive skill-building and support to learn the skills necessary for independent, community living. Anne struggled to adhere to her treatment plan, maintain her apartment, manage her symptoms, and utilize community resources to thrive independently. While she was employed upon entering the program, Anne required significant supervision to arrive to work on time and maintain focus.

In less than two years, Anne has completed tasks and mastered skills enabling her to live independently. She has learned how to identify and reduce stressors in her life resulting in her being

healthier and happier without the assistance of staff. In addition, she has become independent in using public transportation, including taking the bus, calling a taxi, and walking. Anne has also learned the skills to actively participate in her treatment plan with minimal prompting from staff.

Anne has also demonstrated an increased internal motivation to better her life. With a desire to become healthier and lose weight, Anne takes Zumba classes and walks resulting in her losing more than 20 pounds. As Anne's dependence on program staff decreases, her ability to complete tasks independently and to thrive in the community is becoming more evident. Staff is proud of Anne and her accomplishments and is confident she will continue on her recovery journey successfully.







**John is self-confident, has a positive outlook on life, and is doing amazingly well.**

## Gatekeeper

Alma\* is a 72-year-old, divorced woman living with her adult daughter Lucy\* in a small apartment. Alma has mild-to-moderate dementia as well as arthritis and diabetes, all of which require her to have some assistance with her daily living activities, such as bathing, dressing, and medication administration. Lucy has been doing her best to assist Alma, however, her mother's needs are becoming increasingly difficult to manage and are beginning to interfere with her full-time job. Alma and her family want her to be able to continue living in the community but are unaware of the various programs available to assist them. Lucy's friend, who had experience with MHC's Gatekeeper program for older adults, recommended she contact Gatekeeper to learn more.

As a result of Lucy contacting Gatekeeper, a home visit was arranged with the program's Community Educator. After assessing the situation and

determining the various needs, the Community Educator connected Lucy and Alma to appropriate community services, including Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, which began providing daily homecare services as well as regular visits from a visiting nurse at no cost. Now, Alma is receiving quality home-based care, and Lucy's stress and worry has been alleviated.

## Robinson House

John\* is 39 years old, Deaf, and struggles with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of being shot while growing up in Jamaica. Upon arriving in the United States several years ago, he lived with relatives who never gave him any responsibilities nor prepared him for independent living. He wanted a job and an apartment but his case manager recognized that he did not have the life skills necessary to work or live independently. As a result, he was referred to MHC's Robinson House where his shyness, discomfort with developing relationships, and lack of confidence were obvious.

*\*All names have been changed to protect client confidentiality.*

# Success Stories

Through the residential and vocational services provided by Robinson House, John has become more confident, made meaningful relationships, held a job for more than a year, and learned the life skills necessary to move into an apartment in the community. With MHC's community-based residential supports, which are culturally and linguistically competent, John has been living in the community for nearly a year now. He is self-confident, has a positive outlook on life, and is doing amazingly well.



at her home. Her mom recently said, "This house is so special. It is truly her home. My daughter does not have to live in a hospital and has such a supportive environment."

## Independence Center

Sylvia\* has been attending the Independence Center for two years. During this time, she has been empowered in many ways. She has created and displayed art at MHC's "Art of Well Being," submitted artwork for Keep the Promise Coalition's holiday card art competition in which her winter scene was selected as the artwork for holiday cards, teaches jewelry-making classes at the Independence Center,

**"This house is so special. My daughter does not have to live in a hospital and has such a supportive environment."**

## Hayden Hill

MHC's Hayden Hill was developed to meet the intensive needs of people with mental health conditions who need a supportive environment in order to live successfully in the community as compared to in an institution. Hayden Hill was perfect for Trish\* who had been cycling in and out of psychiatric hospitals for many years. Recently at a family meeting, Trish explained that before Hayden Hill, she had never felt so much love. Hayden Hill has enabled Trish to leave the hospital, live in the community, gain natural supports, be close to her family, and lead a productive, happy life. She attends a local club house and has friends

and assists peers with their art projects. She is currently working on a poster for MHC's Trauma and Gender (TAG) initiative. In addition, Sylvia has been featured in the Independence Center's monthly newsletter for her poetry. She also enjoys and benefits from the Culinary and Mending Arts skill tracks as well as other educational classes.

Sylvia has received assistance with managing her anxieties and communicating in healthy ways. The skills she has learned and contributions she has made at the Independence Center support her recovery and success in the community.

*\*All names have been changed to protect client confidentiality.*

# Outcomes

| MHC Results                 | Satisfied % | Goal % | State Avg. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------|------------|
| Participation in Treatment  | 94%         | 80%    | 92%        |
| Quality and Appropriateness | 93%         | 80%    | 93%        |
| Overall                     | 93%         | 80%    | 91%        |
| General Satisfaction        | 92%         | 80%    | 92%        |
| Respect                     | 92%         | 80%    | 91%        |
| Access                      | 91%         | 80%    | 88%        |
| Outcome                     | 86%         | 80%    | 83%        |
| Recovery                    | 84%         | 80%    | 79%        |

# Financials

| Operating expenses                           | 2015       |      | 2014       |      |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|
| Administration                               | 1,098,652  | 9%   | 1,146,675  | 10%  |
| Program Services                             | 11,482,613 | 90%  | 10,656,063 | 90%  |
| Fundraising <sup>1</sup>                     | 131,198    | 1%   |            |      |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | 12,712,463 | 100% | 11,802,738 | 100% |
| <b>Revenue</b>                               |            |      |            |      |
| Private Grants & Contributions               | 119,134    | 1%   | 126,649    | 1%   |
| Client Fees                                  | 751,021    | 6%   | 699,876    | 6%   |
| Net Assets Released from Housing Asst. Funds | 602,881    | 5%   | 508,872    | 4%   |
| Government Grants                            | 11,351,199 | 88%  | 10,559,006 | 89%  |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | 12,824,235 | 100% | 11,894,403 | 100% |

<sup>1</sup>FY 14 Fundraising included in Administration

# Number of People Served

Residential Services

**449**

Employment Services

**139**

Deaf Services

**25**

Gatekeeper

**56**

Lifelong Learning

Supported Education

**37**

Psychosocial

Rehabilitation Club

**366**

Young Adult Services

**12**

WISE

**52**

Information  
and Referral Line

**1,587**

Kids on the Block

**480**

Total People Served

**3,203**



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# About Us

In the early 1900s, Connecticut resident Clifford W. Beers was experiencing symptoms of what today may be diagnosed as Bipolar Disorder. During three years of hospitalizations, he was subjected to ineffective treatments and cruel conditions in Connecticut's mental health institutions. Upon achieving recovery, Beers vowed to reform the mental health system.

He began his efforts by writing *A Mind That Found Itself* chronicling the harsh and unscientific treatments he had endured and his journey back to health. In conjunction with the first publication of his book in 1908, Beers launched the Connecticut Society for Mental Hygiene from his home in New Haven, CT. The organization is now Mental Health Connecticut (MHC) and is based in West Hartford.

As advancements in the mental health system have been attained, it has become evident that recovery from mental health conditions is possible. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), there are four pillars that promote recovery for people with mental health conditions: home, health, purpose, and community.

Today, MHC is a statewide, nonprofit organization that envisions a future where people with mental health conditions are treated fairly and are able to access services and supports that promote recovery and wellness. To this end, MHC is committed to providing and expanding access to services and supports that adhere to the four pillars of recovery.



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