



## Mental Health Association of Columbia-Greene Counties, Inc.

*The Mission of the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties is to provide education and advocacy, and to create opportunities that enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.*

713 Union Street - Hudson, NY 12534

30 W. Bridge Street - Catskill, NY 12414

MHACGC News

affiliated with Mental Health America

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Mental Health Association of New York State, Inc. and United Way of Columbia-Greene Counties



## Open House and Celebration of Mental Health Month

Please join us in celebrating Mental Health Month at our community Open House on

**Thursday, May 14, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM.** Enjoy refreshments and entertainment at the Mental Health Association's main office at 713 Union Street in Hudson. This year's guests will include our elected state officials and, beginning at 4:45, the Rip Van Winkle Center Performers will present a play they have been rehearsing under the guidance of Walking the Dog Theatre. The performance is made possible, in part, with public funds from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered through the Twin Counties Cultural Fund in Columbia County by the Columbia County Council on the Arts. Oasis Cafe, an affirmative business, will provide a tasty array of treats, both sweet and savory. Please call Christina at 828-4619, ext.302 by May 7 to RSVP.

There has been exciting activity within the mental health field as it transforms itself, driven by greater understanding of the capabilities of those we serve. We've gone from custodial care where safety was the goal to treatment with a focus on symptom reduction, to a new focus on resiliency and recovery. Gone are the days when maintenance was the ultimate objective. Now it simply provides the foundation for the

journey of recovery and for living a meaningful and productive life despite illness. We know that many mental illnesses are long lasting and episodic. We recognize that each individual and their family are in a different stage of recovery and need realistic hope for the future. This is why our focus is to assist people in identifying and nurturing their strengths and managing their symptoms. We understand that a strength-based approach is more effective than focusing solely on deficits and it is this awareness that informs staff as they assist consumers in taking responsibility for their own health through wellness recovery and self-management plans. People with mental illness can have fulfilling, meaningful lives when they learn to cope with or overcome their symptoms and can be fully integrated members of the community through successful work experience, maintaining personal relationships and finding secure housing. This can be accomplished only with the full support of the community in overcoming the stigma attached to those with mental health diagnoses. The Mental Health Association would like to thank all the local employers, landlords, and neighbors who have given people a chance to fulfill their dreams. The Association looks forward to doing its part by providing recovery-oriented services, as well as community education and advocacy. We annually serve approximately 400 youth and 600 adults. To learn more about our work and the activities we provide, visit our web site at [www.mhacg.org](http://www.mhacg.org) or call 828-4619 ext.302.

### Upcoming Events

- **May 16th, 2009: Walking the Dog Theatre's Second Annual Dog Parade** and Bestminster Show on May 16 will kick off at our 713 Union Street site, as it did last year when 125 dogs participated. Association volunteers will once again organize the registration. We are happy to be a part of this wonderful community event.
- **October 17th, 2009: Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Pumpkin Walk** at Olana Historic Site will take place on Saturday, October 17th. Mark your calendar, save the date and watch for additional information in the coming months. More than 500 people attended last year's walk. We would like to thank all the businesses and farmers that supported this event last year with special thanks to our major sponsors, Marshall & Sterling Insurance, First Niagara Bank, Rowlands + Barranca, and the Register Star/Daily Mail.





## Poetry by Peers

The world I live in has not been named.  
Ordinary names for tree and sky and frog do not capture it.

I can make up words.

I say I feel like the color of green-brown-black tree stumps,  
Or tell you your tenderness touches me like new-green yellow moss. But, if you've never seen the color of tree stumps or felt the yellow of moss how will you know what I am talking about?  
And, when I say my feelings are like these things, how will you understand me if you think feelings are like Wheaties boxes lined up next to Cheerios? If, you've seen one Cheerio, you've pretty much seen them all.

But, moss is always different.  
Yellow-green, yes, but sometimes growing on the north side of a hollow tree, or trailing along the forest floor, smoothing a way toward the sun.

And, if I would try to tell you, how could I tell you?  
White cabbage moths flutter by brown-eyed Susans.  
Bees land lightly on daisy petals, tipping them toward the ground.  
When I am still, the garden is alive.  
The breeze, the bees, the cabbage moths move it.  
Blue and yellow blossoms open at daybreak and close again at evening.

If, I were willing to tell you,  
which garden would I describe?  
The one at dawn, midday, at dusk?  
The one before the rain, lying in the hot sun?  
The one glistening with dewdrops or falling rain?  
The one that stands under the sprinkler hose, bouncing playfully at the pelting of the drops?  
Which one would I describe were I to tell you the truth about the garden?

And were I to find the words,  
would you believe me?

**Nancy R.**

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Every person in the New Leaf  
has the ambition and belief,  
in faith, charity and hope.  
And because of this, we can cope.  
We have honest feelings,  
in all our dealings.  
We take an active role,  
in all we cherish and console.  
We go on picnics and play.  
We have parties and dance away.  
We come from different places,  
and respect each other's spaces.  
We pet the dogs Blaise and Brooke,  
And like any good book, our stories are diverse and true.  
And we love all of you.

**Helen B.**



## Mental Health Association Services

### Clinical and Rehabilitation

The Clinical Rehabilitation Division serves hundreds of adults each year through a wide variety of programs in Columbia and Greene counties as well as via case management and peer advocacy in the field. The program at Columbia-Greene Community College supports continuing education and Employment Works! provides placement and support for individuals who seek meaningful work. Programs champion expressive arts and evidence based practices that support wellness and recovery and innovative grants have allowed creative program enhancements such as yoga and theatre. The Division values wellness, positive self expression, healthy communication and goal setting, healing and recovery practices and respect for all learning styles.

### Residential

The Residential Division manages seven programs in Columbia and Greene Counties. Programs include 3 transitional treatment community residences, 2 situational emergency crisis beds, 25 transitional treatment apartments, 62 independent supported living apartments, a 9 bed HUD-funded permanent supportive housing program serving those who are homeless and have a mental illness, and a MICA enhancement program serving those with mental illness and substance abuse issues. All residential programs focus on rehabilitative and recovery oriented services which promote independence and involvement in the community.

### Children and Families

The Children and Families Division provides case management programs in both Columbia & Greene Counties, school-based case management in the Ichabod Crane and Taconic Hills Central School Districts and mobile assessment in Columbia County. Respite, Skill-Building and a Summer Outdoor Adventure Program are available for youth with social, emotional and behavioral issues. In collaboration with the Hudson City School District and the City of Hudson, the division offers the Advantage After-School Program for kindergarten through eighth grade students in the Hudson City School District and through Foundation for Youth Health funding, it coordinates the Intergenerational Program in the Catskill Central School District at the Pines of Catskill. Staff in the division facilitate two parent support groups, Common Sense Parenting™ training, and Family Development Credential classes. All programs provided by the division are strength-based, asset-driven and family-focused.

### Compeer Volunteers Needed!

Compeer services have a dramatic impact on improving the lives of people who receive mental health services. Compeer programs serve as a compliment to therapy and support people in becoming more socially connected to their community. We are currently recruiting and training new volunteers. To learn more, contact Mary Moores at 828-4619 ext.339.

