



MHA

Appoints New CEO

Pam Gionfriddo, MPAff has joined the Mental Health Association, Inc (MHA) of Palm Beach County as Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Gionfriddo has helped many nonprofits as an independent policy analyst and evaluation consultant. She also was as a policy analyst for the Mental Health Association of Texas, where she advocated with the state legislature to pass laws that would benefit people with mental illness.

Jeremy Johnson, CAE is MHA's **new Chief Operating Officer**. Jeremy W. Johnson, CAE has joined the Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County, Inc. as Chief Operating Officer.



Mr. Johnson brings more than 15 years experience in providing strategic planning, advocacy, financial management and oversight to healthcare providers and human service organizations throughout South Florida.

Public Policy, Advocacy, and Education

MHA works with community partners — including mental health consumers, providers and other key stakeholders — to advocate for all people living with mental illness through:

- 🔔 **Countywide mental health system capacity building** that will lead to more coordinated care delivery systems among all providers of mental health services,
- 🔔 **Increasing understanding** about mental health issues among all residents of the county to reduce the stigma of mental illness,
- 🔔 **Providing the best and most current information about mental health issues including special topics** such as caregivers, veterans and their families, older adults, children and families, populations who are reentering society, specific ethnic/racial groups, and
- 🔔 **Improving mental health wellness** support for all in the community.

Who we are: Established in 1949, the Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County, Inc (MHA) is dedicated to improving the lives of people who are touched by mental illness. MHA works to reduce the stigma of mental illness and improve understanding about issues related to mental health and well-being. Through advocacy, education, research, and outreach, MHA seeks to improve access to mental health services for all who need them.

What we do: The Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County is devoted to working with its community partners to advocate for optimal mental health and wellness. MHA influences public policy, conducts research, advocates for, and educates the community about a variety of topics including **increasing understanding, increasing access, increasing assistance and support to special populations, including mental health issues in reforms and policies, and improving mental health wellness.**

Volunteers needed: If you are a mental health professional or just a compassionate citizen, we have many opportunities for you to help. Please visit our web site or call for more information.



For more information about MHA, or to become a member, please visit our website

www.mhapbc.org or call 561-832-3755.

Mental Health Association Programs 2009-2010

It's Okay to Get Help Campaign *Coming soon!*

MHA is leading a community collaborative effort to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health treatment and increase access to care. This groundbreaking new collaboration for our community is focused on prevention of a problem before it reaches a critical stage. This campaign seeks to lower the stigma of getting mental health care using public education on television and in other public settings. This prevention and education campaign reduces illness progression and reduces devastating consequences for families, employers, and the community.



Listen to Children uses trained volunteers in the elementary and middle school setting to provide confidential one-on-one listening sessions with children identified by their teachers as needing extra help due to family problems such as divorce or death, isolation, low self-esteem, or other behavioral clues. This program helped **267 children in 38 schools** during the 2008-09 school year using **54 volunteers**. Almost all of the volunteers (93%) said **Listen to Children** made a difference in the children's lives.

MPower for Teens is designed to educate teenagers on mental health issues relevant to them, initiate interest in potential careers in the mental health profession, de-stigmatize mental health care, and support the community through service projects promoting mental wellness. This new program is being pilot-tested in one high school in Palm Beach County during the 2009-2010 school year. Young people will learn, through a series of videos produced by local mental health providers, about a variety of disorders including eating disorders, stress and anxiety, major mental illnesses, and much more.



Peer Place is a drop-in center that provides a safe and comfortable place for consumers of mental health services to learn essential wellness and recovery skills. In a comfortable and friendly environment, the **Peer Place** offers pre-employment assistance, supported employment in Peer Place, peer mentoring, a computer lab, wellness planning, and support. **Project Cheer** provides gift baskets created by Peer Place program participants to people in need during the holidays.

MHA's **Older Adults Initiative** involves a collaboration with several community partners including the Area Agency on Aging to assess the mental health needs of seniors and provide the necessary supports and resources helping older adults remain independent and connected to the community. Resources are available to educate the community about the needs of older adults and recommendations for improving the community using the assets of our older population.



The Mental Health Association operates three **Beacon Community Centers** in the Palm Beach County School District. Each center's activities are designed to meet the community's unique needs to develop strong neighborhood relationships, opportunities, and support systems. Activities of these community hubs include teen programs, community awareness initiatives, evening education programs for adults and children, and after school and summer care. In 2009, the **Beacon Community Center** initiative is serving more than **580 children and teens** and reaches more than



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