

Lapeer County Community Mental Health's Mission is: "Recovery: hope; choice; health; fulfilling dreams"

CMH: 45 Years of Service To Our Community

New Year brings new changes to CMH

A new year brings many changes to Lapeer County Community Mental Health. In December 2017, the previous Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Robert Sprague retired and has since lost his battle with brain cancer. The search committee of the community mental health board met on April 26, 2018 and selected Lauren Emmons, LMSW as Chief Executive Officer to lead Lapeer County Community Mental Health going forward. Mr. Emmons has been the COO for Lapeer County Community Mental Health for about 9 years. He was clinical director for about 8 years prior to becoming the COO and has been the interim CEO, since early 2017. The board selected Mr. Emmons from two final candidates. He has worked at Lapeer County Community Mental Health for 32 years in various positions. He holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from Michigan State University and lives in the Lapeer area with his wife of 36 years, Toni.

In January, Dr. Christine Cucchi was hired to become the new Medical director to replace Dr. Charles Williams who is retiring at the end of 2018. Dr. Williams has been with CMH since 1987; he celebrated his 90th birthday recently and decided it was time to retire. Dr. Cucchi is a board certified psychiatrist and will provide psychiatric evaluations, staff consultations, medicine reviews, and lead the efforts towards integrated care.

Other changes include the use of telepsychiatry. With the nationwide shortage of psychiatrists, Lapeer CMH has contracted with three psychiatrists to provide video interviews with persons who are in need of a psychiatric consultation and treatment. The new physicians include,

Dr. J. Katherine Mesaros, from California, Dr. Norman Snyder, who will provide child psychiatry, and Dr. Sharmalie Sarvananda. Appointments will be scheduled as usual, patients meet with a nurse and then meet in a regular office with a large screen television and will talk directly with the psychiatrist on the screen. These three physicians will provide psychiatric consultations, and will conduct medication reviews and monitoring, for persons who are eligible for our specialty Medicaid services, and who need to see a psychiatrist for evaluation or medications.

In April, our board of directors voted for a new Chairperson of the Board and chose Catherine Bostick. She replaces outgoing chairperson Lori Curtiss. Lapeer County Commissioners also appointed a new member to join our board in March, Jeremy Howe, our Undersheriff. He replaced David Taylor who stepped down from the Lapeer CMH board.

Although we had to close our offices in North Branch, we plan to expand our services offered at the Imlay City offices, located inside the Great Lakes Bay Health Care Center near the corner of Newark and M-53. Recently we remodeled the area to make space for a room that can accommodate group therapy. In the near future, we hope to begin providing some of our evidence-based group therapies, such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy. We are excited to say that we have added a new full time bilingual (Spanish & English) support staff member and we have had a therapist who is bilingual (Spanish & English) who will continue to provide counseling services in Imlay City. For anyone who speaks another language we offer

a system called Cyracom, where we can use video to call up a translator in almost any language.

This past year has seen many retirements including Dr. Gail Stankee, physician, Maureen Maruzniak, social worker and therapist, Bill Leix, case manager, Jan King, accounting, Carol Stewart, clerical, and Bertha Ney, paraprofessional. Last summer, long time employee and supervisor, Andrea Schroeder retired and we named our training room in her honor.

This is our 45th year of providing mental health services to the community of Lapeer County. We have faced many challenges and have weathered many financial and political changes. However, as our new CEO Lauren Emmons says, "What won't change is the need for agencies with the expertise to care for the most vulnerable citizen's in Michigan. The CMH system has this expertise and if the system embraces the changes toward more integration the system will remain relevant and an important partner in the overall health care system."



The Imlay City offices for CMH services are located inside the Great Lakes Bay area Medical Clinic.



Community Mental Health's building is located on Suncrest Dr., in Lapeer across from Suncrest Medical Care Facility.

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Community Mental Health
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LCCMH offers open Creative Writing class

By Frank Bublitz

Lapeer Co. CMH has a creative arts program that holds classes and conducts art events in Lapeer County. But our programs, including our creative writing program, are limited to people who have open service cases and who have Medicaid insurance. This prevents opening this class to all people with a mental illness who could benefit who live in Lapeer County.

To be able to offer classes to people who are not currently using our services, LCCMH applied for and received a grant from The Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. These funds allow us to hold a one-time, 8-week class open to all people currently with or who have a history of a mental illness. People who have mental health issues such as chronic moderate depression, or acute illnesses such as post-partum depression, are considered eligible for the class. We anticipate 12 people enrolling in the class. The Family Literacy Center of Lapeer will provide instruction on how to write poetry and short stories. The instructor will create classes on topics such as:

- What is a poem?
- Types of poetry and how to write them
- How to write a short comedic or dramatic story

The instructor will be able to create and provide topical instruction on the above and other subjects relative to poet-

ry and prose. Lapeer CMH will assist the students with reminders and support to do any homework, such as editing poetry or creating short story characters that the instructor may assign.

The class and other writers screened by Lapeer CMH will create and produce an illustrated book of poetry and short stories. Lapeer CMH staff will format the book and publish it on line. The Lapeer Family Literacy Center expert teachers will provide the instruction; CMH staff and a class volunteer will assist people to understand the information and create their work.

Lapeer CMH will provide post-class workshop(s) and editing assistance (grammar, spelling, formatting) to ensure it is the highest quality the students may produce. LCCMH staff will then create online documents that can be placed on our web site, in our lobby, and shared in other ways.

Our sessions will begin in August and will end in September. The two hours sessions will include:

- Lecture and viewing of instructional documents and videos
- Writing time Social and snack time
- Reading aloud time to help in the self-editing process

For more information, call Lapeer County Community Mental Health at 810-667-0500 and asking for Frank Bublitz or email me at fbublitz@lapeercmh.org.

Meet the new Director: Lauren Emmons, LMSW

In his recent public interview, Mr. Emmons began by stating he grew up in Lenawee County, and comes from a family of hard working dairy farmers, a community similar to Lapeer County. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Psychology from Spring Arbor University and received his Master's in Social Work from Michigan State University. He has been married to his wife Toni for 36 years and they have three grown children, and one granddaughter.

Mr. Emmons served for 20 years on the Board of Directors of the Lapeer County Community Credit Union and Security Credit Union. He also sits on the Board of Directors of the Family Literacy Center and is currently a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Lapeer. In his spare time, he enjoys woodworking and other home-related DIY projects. He and his wife love to camp in their RV and enjoy just getting away, relaxing and spending time with friends and family.

Professionally, he has much experience on both the clinical and administrative side of providing quality mental health to children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances and to adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses. He developed several programs at CMH and has sat on nearly every committee at CMH and the PIHP, our administrative agency. He says, ". Through these experiences, I have had the opportunity to work with many talented individuals over the years. Through these relationships I have had the opportunity to learn and grow as a professional."

When asked to elaborate on his



Lauren Emmons, LMSW is selected as new CEO of Lapeer County CMH.

vision for the future of Lapeer County Community Mental Health, Mr. Emmons states, "I believe in dreaming big and pursuing those dreams but balancing those driving forces with the lessons learned in the past, the realities of the current situation and the need to be a good steward of the agency resources. I am committed to the growth of the individuals that work here which in turn will result in the growth and wellness of the individuals and families that we serve. My over-arching goal is to build a community of recovery that fosters the hopes, dreams, and desires and promotes the health of the people we serve."

Lapeer County Community Mental Health FY 2017

Total Cost \$19,798,535

FY 2017 Cost by Population

	Persons Served	Cost
Adults with Mental Illness	939	\$6,939,723
Persons with Developmental Disabilities	388	\$11,157,504
Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance	290	\$1,701,308

Total Persons Served/Expenditures 1,654 \$19,798,535

Full Time and Contractual Employees	146
Outpatient Therapy Visits	5,978
Family Therapy Visits	747
Group Therapy Visits	684
Paid Days in Local Hospitals.....	1,188
Units of Case Management.....	32,355
People participating in work training environments.....	349
Persons served with Autism Spectrum Disorder	37



Get Certified!

Mental Health First Aid

Learn: the signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse.

Learn: how to offer help in a crisis or prevent a suicide.

Sign up: for the free 8 hour course online now at:

www.lapeercmh.org

**Lapeer County
Community Mental Health**



Project 22

Just in the United States, an average of 20-22 Veterans dies by suicide each day. Two combat wounded Veterans, Daniel Egbert and Doc King went on a mission to find hope. Traveling from San Francisco to New York, they rode motorcycles to create the documentary movie, "Project 22". They spoke to Veterans about the post-war challenges that lead to thinking about suicide or attempting suicide and the ways they found to heal with alternative forms of therapy such as sailing, pottery, education, service dogs, equine therapy and more. On their journey covering 6,500 miles in 22 days, they interviewed leading researchers, mental health clinicians, and educators who specialize in Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress. They also interviewed the leading expert in Warrior Culture and Combat Stress. Daniel and Doc ask the hard questions and speak honestly about their own struggles with depression and thoughts of suicide. Stopping at nothing to reach tomorrow's twenty-two.

The Veteran's Navigator Nicole Gauthier of Lapeer County Community Mental Health, wanted to bring the documentary to Lapeer County to raise awareness of the high rates of Veteran Suicide and to provide some ideas for helpful and hopeful solutions, available locally. A small resource fair featuring other Veteran's benefit organizations will also take place. Other sponsors

for the event include Ray C's Harley Davidson and the Lapeer County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Nicole is a Marine, working now at Lapeer County Community Mental Health as the Veteran's Navigator. She meets with Veterans of all ages, helping them to find resources for housing, financial, education, counseling, medical, transportation, etc. You can reach her by calling 810-667-0500. Anyone who has served in any capacity and with any kind of discharge is eligible for her navigator services.

You can see "Project 22" documentary locally on June 21, 2018 from 6:00 to 8:00 at the American Legion in Lapeer. Admission is a suggested donation of \$5.00, with free pizza included thanks to a generous donation by Calvelli's catering. Tickets are available at Lapeer Co. Community Mental Health, Ray C's Harley Davidson, and American Legion Post 16. For more information, please contact Nicole Gauthier or Melody Wolfe at 810-667-0500.

Did you know?

The Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services Suicide Prevention Program reported in 2012 that 22 veterans die by suicide each day in our country.



Project 22 is an eye opening documentary shedding light on the epidemic of deaths by suicide among veterans.

Movie Screening & Resources • American Legion Post 16

Thursday, June 21, 2018 • 6:00-9:00PM

Tickets: Suggested donation - \$5.00 Pizza included

Sponsored by: Ray C's Harley Davidson of Lapeer (Tickets here)
Lapeer County Community Mental Health (Tickets here 810-245-6850)

Lapeer County Suicide Prevention Network

The public is welcome to come and experience this film directed by two combat veterans who traveled for 22 days from Los Angeles to Ground Zero to raise awareness and to explore alternative treatments for depression and PTSD. Come learn about resources and local Veteran's service organizations available to veterans and their families.

Toni Blackmer, CPSS

By Melody Munro-Wolfe, LMSW



Toni Blackmer enjoys "touching other people's lives" in her work as a Certified Peer Support Specialist at CMH. Peers are persons who have received services for a serious and persistent mental illness or co-occurring mental illness with a substance use disorder. They are successful in their recovery and want to give back. CMH chooses persons in recovery to attend a week-long Peer Support training in Lansing, and once they pass the required test, they become certified by the State of Michigan as a Certified Peer Support Specialist, or CPSS. Once certified, CMH assigns a peer to work with one of the treatment teams. Toni works with our trauma grant running our TREM (Trauma Recovery Empowerment model) therapy groups at CMH and the Lapeer County Jail. Toni reports that another peer, Julie "touched me and I knew I wanted to be a peer just like her. She told me that one day I could do it."

Before becoming a peer, Toni who is 35 years old, had worked as a Certified Nurse's Aide, taking care of the elderly and persons with intellectual disabilities. Toni's mental health problems were diagnosed early, at age 13, she had a serious depression and by age 14 her diagnosis was changed to bi-polar depression. She reports, "I was in and out of psychiatric hospitals." Eventually, she was referred to Dialectical Behavior Therapy or DBT treatment at Lapeer CMH and something "finally clicked". Toni learned how to handle her emotions, and how to talk about emotions. She graduated from the year-long DBT program and participated in a graduate group that met less frequently but helped to keep the skills she learned active. Lapeer County CMH applied for a grant to train employees in a method to treat persons who have experienced trauma, Toni applied for that training too. The model is a group model called TREM (Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model) and is a successful intervention to facilitate trauma recovery among persons with histories of exposure to physical and sexual abuse. Group participants learn new ways to cope with their previous trauma by learning new skills. They also receive education and begin to talk about their traumas, over the approximately 25 sessions of the group.

TREM addresses both short-term and long-term consequences of violent victimization, including mental health symptoms, especially posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance abuse. Lapeer County CMH offers specific groups for women, men, jail inmates, and LGBT participants. The program has worked to lessen the severity of problems related to substance use, psychological problems and by reducing trauma symptoms. Toni helps to lead the TREM groups at the CMH building and at the Lapeer County Jail. Toni believes in the program so well, she collaborated with two other professionals, Erin Cavanaugh and Lori Byer, to author a new Trauma Book for the LGBTQ population. The book will have 18 modules for teaching persons who are LGBTQ how to deal with trauma. The book is being published within a few months.

Toni has been with CMH for two years, during which she gained the respect and appreciation of her co-workers. Jessica Pollock, Toni's supervisor nominated her for the honor of employee of the month in December 2017. Toni states she applied to become a Peer Support Specialist, "to touch other's lives, let my experiences help them, and to show them that there is hope!" She also believes that it helps others to see that peers are "making it" and to realize "so can they."

Scott enjoys fast pace of restaurant work

Scott enjoys the hustle bustle of a busy restaurant kitchen. He has been a prep cook, fry cook, and a pizza line cook, at a variety of local restaurants including Greg's and The Lake Inn. Scott has a serious mental illness combined with a history of substance use problems. Presently he is in recovery, is stable, living alone in an apartment with great support from his family, and works part time at Pueblo Viejo where he is a prep cook.

Scott found this transitional job with the help of Harmony Hall Clubhouse and, their job-training program called TEP or Transitional Employment Program. The Clubhouse holds the job and matches members with a desire to work with employers with positions to fill. The employer hires the clubhouse member to work part time and receives a guarantee that they will always have coverage. When the employee cannot report for work, the Clubhouse placement managers will cover the shift themselves. It is a win-win situation for employer and employee. Employees stay on one job for approximately 6 to 9 months, working 15-20 hours per week, then can transition to another job with another employer, or seek independent employment with support of the Clubhouse.

Scott has been at Pueblo Viejo for seven months in a job rotation. He states soon, his placement will end and he hopes to find a job in the community on his own. He states that Harmony Hall helped him to get started with this position by taking him on a tour of the kitchen, and by providing help with rides to work. He says, "The job keeps me busy, focused, I like it, I like the rushes and being busy in the restaurant."

Clubhouse International accredits Harmony Hall and the Clubhouse model is included in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs & Practices. Scott states that

to get better he needed to make a "lifestyle change and Harmony Hall Clubhouse helped me to learn how to change and to cope. I am learning to live a healthy and productive life." He also acknowledges that medication helps in his recovery and seeing a therapist helps him "to keep his priorities straight." Scott discusses his participation as a member of the Harmony Hall Clubhouse, "it is a good place to meet people and you work to help the place function, you get out of it what you put into it." He is grateful for the staff there because someone is "always willing to jump in and help when issues come up."

The owner at Pueblo Viejo is Vicente Sanson who reports this is the third employee he has hired from The Harmony Hall TEP program. He is pleased that these employees are all willing to do what they can and they meet his expectations when they work hard. "Scott is always willing to try, he is always on time, and I have had no problems with Scott," Vicente says. Scott's duties as a prep cook include making the guacamole, Pico de Gallo, rotating stock, and other prep work.

The benefits to Vicente as a local business owner are many. He mentions that if an employee cannot make it in to work, a member of the Harmony Hall staff covers the shift. The employees have been dependable and retention is good. Vicente feels good about giving back to the community by participating in this employment program and is proud of the fact that several years ago, his restaurant won a Governor's Award for supporting persons with disabilities by employing them.

If you have part-time positions to fill, contact Brian Schmitt director at Harmony Hall Clubhouse at 810-667-0251 or email him at bschmitt@lapeercmh.org.



Scott works hard at prepping food for the popular Taco Tuesdays at Pueblo Viejo

General Squier Park

One mile South of Dryden Village on South Mill Rd.

Opening Day on June 16, 2018 to Labor Day

Park Amenities:

- Forest Hall and Pavilions for rent
- Nature trails
- Children's play equipment
- Horseshoes and sand volleyball
- The Concession
- Fishing on Mill Pond
- Mill Race Water Park open 11am-6pm daily, weather permitting and when lifeguard is available

Torzewski County Park

Located five miles West of Lapeer on Pero Lake Rd.

Park Amenities:

- Amphitheater and Pavilions for rent
- Pontoon boat available for hourly or daily rental
- Nature trails
- Children's play equipment
- Horseshoes and sand volleyball
- Torzewski's Water Slide open 11am-6pm daily, weather permitting and when lifeguard is available

Both Parks open 8AM to 8PM for public use

Ticket prices are - Adults & Children over 46 inches tall: \$6.00 • Under 46 inches tall: \$5.00 • 10 visit pass: \$42.50
Adults not using slide: \$2.00 • Parking and General admission without water park admission is free

For more info; maps, reservations, & prices to rent at both parks, please call (810) 245-4794