

Spring Newsletter  
May 2019



SPIRITUS CHRISTI  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Linking Lives

## Tending to Mental Health

Recently, one of our long-term clients (we'll call him "Larry") called for help. He has bipolar disorder and, over the weekend, he noticed some early warning signs of mania. He proceeded to list the steps he was taking to care for himself (like taking a break from TV and internet, and getting out to walk), and he asked for help getting his meds adjusted and an appointment with his therapist. Why share this story? Because "Larry" represents one of the types of people who consult us: those who have a diagnosis that they will have for the rest of their lives. Success for someone like Larry is about doing the work to care for himself every day. It's about learning the skills, connecting to resources, and staying on top of things every day in order to manage a life-long condition.

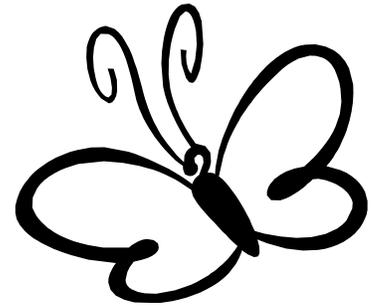
It takes time and support to develop those skills and resources, and continuity of and rapid access to care is crucial. Your investment allows us to provide that for people like Larry who need support for the long haul.

There are lots of folks who come to us for more short-term help as

well, of course: help navigating grief, trauma, job loss, addiction, or family conflict, for example. Many times these people are vulnerable to falling through the cracks. And yet, when they are able to get the support they need, they leave our care not just with the present problem solved, but with skills and resources for the next hurdle they may face.

Thank you for making both short-term and long-term support possible for those who are struggling and have few options. You are making hope and healing possible!

With deep gratitude,  
Maureen, Amy & Eileen



### OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

**On-site Clinical:** Individual, couples, family, and group therapeutic consultations and psychosocial support for uninsured and underinsured youth and adults

**Urban Youth Outreach:** Individual, family, and group therapeutic consultations, and psychosocial support for minority youth affected by violence

**The Living Room:** Weekly peer support for those struggling with daily living issues

**Women's Support Group:** Confidential bi-weekly group for women who have experienced sexual abuse, harassment, assault, or other domestic violence.

**Yoga:** Weekly yoga class to promote overall wellness

To receive this bi-annual newsletter by email, please send your address to [adurkee@spirituschristi.org](mailto:adurkee@spirituschristi.org).

Last year, Steph's birthday started out great. "I was so happy and carefree that morning," she recalls, and the day continued to be filled with celebration. She finished her special day over dinner with friends, and then agreed to drive a friend who had drunk too much back to his place. What happened next will be etched in her memory forever: that trusted friend attacked and raped her.

At first, she was in shock. Then she got angry. "I felt like I was losing my mind," she explains. "The pain was so overwhelming. When your own body is used against you like that, it's excruciating. I just wanted to escape the pain."

As the weeks went by, Steph was plagued by panic attacks and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress. "I knew I couldn't go on much longer, so I got on my knees and asked God to help me." Around the same time, the *Me Too* movement also broke open. She says that seeing so many women speaking out gave her the courage to tell her family what had happened to her. Even her family members, who love her dearly, asked painful questions: *Why didn't you call the police? What were you wearing? Were you drinking?* Even when well-intentioned, questions like these communicate to the victim that they are at least partially to blame for what was done to them. Questions like these contribute to keeping victims silent and alone.

"Sexual violence is hard to talk about for everyone," she notes, "people judge, they get awkward. There needs to be a lot more education around this. We all know someone who's been affected but we don't talk about it." And while she respects the decisions of others who have been victimized to stay silent, she is committed to speaking out.

Since the rape, Steph has worked hard to heal, through counseling, prayer, and other means. She says the attack "smashed me into a million pieces, and this past year has been about picking those pieces up." On her journey, she started to realize just how many women are affected by sexual assault and harassment and how isolated they often are. She became convinced that women need to know they aren't alone and that they deserve to feel supported. Last October, Steph

shared her concern with us and asked us to consider starting a support group. Our director Maureen agreed to see if she could find a therapist willing to lead it. A few weeks later, at our annual Riverwalk fundraiser, we had a new walker join us: Licensed Mental Health Counselor Lynn Acquafondata. As she and Maureen were walking together, Lynn asked Maureen if she could volunteer her services to run a group. We couldn't believe the timing!

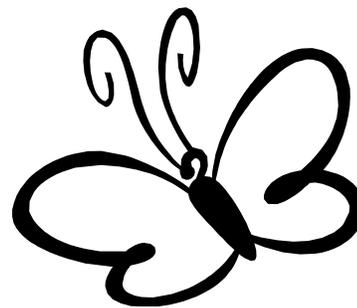
Lynn started offering this confidential group in February, and a second group is starting on May 16. Lynn says the experience gives women a safe,

supportive space to learn about the effects of sexual trauma and the importance of self-care. Women build coping skills, and both give and receive support. Steph says the group is a place where women don't have to prove anything. They can be heard and validated and know they're not alone. And, especially for women who are feeling powerless, the group provides an opportunity to experience

their power in helping others. "We help each other," she smiles. "We learn from each other."

When asked what she wants most for other victims to know, she says, "The biggest thing is this: dealing with what happened to you is painful and hard, but there is so much freedom in doing it. Even just simply saying it out loud to yourself can help. You deserve it!"

*The group is a place where women don't have to prove anything. They can be heard and validated and know they're not alone.*



*The women's support group is a bi-weekly, confidential group for women who have experienced sexual abuse, harassment, assault, or other domestic violence. The next twelve-week session begins Thursday, May 16.*

# THANK YOU, DR. GLORIA!

This December, our head psychiatrist Dr. Gloria Baciewicz retired from her volunteer position with us. For 18 years, Dr. Gloria set aside every other Thursday afternoon to address our clients' psychotropic medication needs. She brought her clinical skill, vast knowledge, and deep compassion to each session and was always available to provide us with general guidance regarding best practices. Here are comments from just a couple of her patients:

*"I would like to thank Dr. Gloria for being one of the people who has helped me with my recovery. When the voices told me "this is not going to work; she's out to get me," Dr. Gloria made me feel comfortable enough to be honest with her. She has turned out to be one of the best psychiatrists I've ever had. Thank you, Dr. Gloria!"*

*"I really appreciate Dr. Gloria's kind and steady presence. She and the rest of the staff gave me a great gift in helping me maintain my mental health for 16 years."*

Since the mental health center has no prescribers at this time, we help those who consult us to connect with clinicians so that anyone who needs it gets connected to appropriate care. And, as always we collaborate with clients' doctors as needed. But this is not ideal. We really need a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner to join our volunteer staff (either offering consultations at our location or theirs). **Will you help us spread the word?** And, if you have someone you'd like to recommend that we contact, please call or email us!



## "Tapping" for Stress & Anxiety

A workshop sponsored by Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center



### Got stress? Feeling anxious?

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), also known as *Tapping*, can help! EFT is an effective and research-based way to manage anxiety in both adults and children and it's easy to learn.

EFT researcher and practitioner, Amy Gaesser, PhD, NCC, will share recent developments in EFT research, demonstrate how to use EFT, and discuss how EFT can be helpful for you and any children in your life.

Wed. May 8, 2019

6:30—8:00 pm

The Shaw Room

Spiritus Christi Church

121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester

Register by May 6

585.325.1180, ext. 114 or

adurkee@spirituschristi.org

### Presented by Dr. Amy Gaesser

Dr. Gaesser is currently Assistant Professor of Counselor Education at SUNY Brockport. She is a certified New York State School Counselor and a Nationally Certified Counselor with 20+ years of experience in mental health and academia, specializing in counseling interventions to assist with a variety of concerns, especially stress and anxiety. Her present research includes addressing the social and emotional well-being of students in school settings: the impact of anxiety on social, emotional, and cognitive functioning; and interventions to reduce anxiety in children and adolescents, including efficacy of therapies incorporating acupoint stimulation, such as Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT).



OUR 11th EXCEPTIONAL SEASON!  
Addressing the social stigma of mental illness, providing a message of hope that recovery is possible



WESTERN NY PREMIERE!

### MAY 14: EVELYN

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

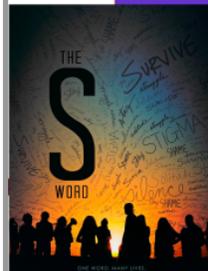
In this new film critics hail as "deeply moving" and "life-affirming," Oscar winner Orlando von Einsiedel turns the camera on himself & his family, as they embark on a journey of remembrance and closure over a decade-old suicide.  
*Film participant Gwennie von Einsiedel in person*



### MAY 21: THE SWORD

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

In this powerful film, suicide survivors share stories of unguarded courage, insight and humor, revealing a national community rising to transform personal struggles into action. **SPECIAL FOCUS: Mental health in communities of color.**  
*Film participant & survivor Kelechi Ubozoh in person*



### JUNE 4: EVERY BRILLIANT THING

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

Striking a delicate balance between loss and cathartic laughter, this adaptation of the hit off-Broadway show focuses on a young boy's attempt to cure his mother's Depression by creating a list of the best things in the world.

NY Times Pick! Starring Drama Desk nominee and British comedian Jonny Donahoe



Come join us for our Closing Night Celebration with art, music & films!

### JUNE 18: DESIGN-ABILITY

6 pm: Illumination ART EXHIBIT by MHA's Creative Wellness

7 pm: FILMS

Hart Theater | JCC | 1200 Edgewood Avenue

The value of difference in a work environment is explored in this creatively inspiring documentary about a successful ad agency in Spain that hires artists with Down's Syndrome and Autism. *Preceded by a short film by our friends at OC87 Recovery Diaries.*



For tickets and more information: [www.reelmindfilmfest.org](http://www.reelmindfilmfest.org)

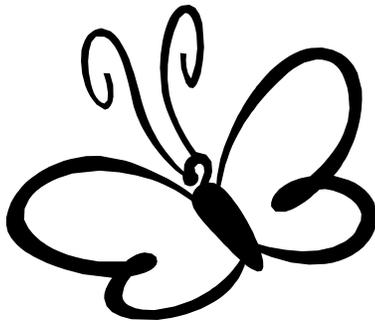
SPIRITUS CHRISTI  
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

121 N. Fitzhugh St.  
Rochester, NY 14614  
**Phone: 585-325-1180**  
Fax: 585-325-1191

**HOURS OF OPERATION**  
**Tuesday - Thursday**  
**9 am - 5 pm**

**CENTER STAFF**

Maureen Marlow, RN, CASAC — Director  
Eileen Hurley, RN, LCSW — Urban Youth  
Outreach Program Director  
Amy Durkee — Associate Administrator



**MORE WAYS TO GIVE:**



**United Way**  
**Donor Designation**  
**Program #2403**



**SEFA #66-00124**

Ask your campaign manager  
for either pledge form, or  
contact us directly for one.

*Your support makes  
all the difference!*

**VOLUNTEER**

**To Make a Difference!**

Nurse Practitioners & Psychiatrists:  
Prescribe and manage medications  
for participants, 2-4 hrs per month

Therapists: Hours negotiable

**Thanks to Recent Funders**

CANANDAIGUA NATIONAL BANK  
\$1,000  
DAISY MARQUIS JONES FOUNDATION  
\$10,000  
ROCHESTER FEMALE CHARITABLE  
SOCIETY  
\$1,500  
WILSON FOUNDATION  
\$6,000  
WOMEN'S CLUB OF PITTSFORD  
\$720

*and to all of you who give so  
generously and many ways!*

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS  
& AFFILIATIONS**

Kate Auberger, LCSW-R, Rochester Rgnl Health  
Brianna Dean, MPA, Urban League of Rochester  
Shani Fagan, PA, Trillium Health  
Phyllis Hanton, Consumer  
Kim Hess, MBA, The Monroe Plan for Medical Care  
Paul Mastrodonato, MPA, Nonprofit Works  
Tiffany Mikel, MSW, Center for Youth

**VOLUNTEER STAFF & AFFILIATIONS**

Jodi Aman, LCSW-R, Private Practice  
Lynn Acquafondata, LMHC, Private Practice  
Lieve Bain, LCSW-R, The Children's School of  
Rochester & Private Practice  
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Jere Fletcher, Esq, Advocate  
BJ Gray, LCSW-R, Retired  
Carneisha Henry, mental health counseling intern,  
St. John Fisher College

**SPECIAL THANKS TO  
OUR MEDIA PARTNER:**



"You'll Like  
What You Hear"

Steve Hoffman, The Living Room  
Sandra Hope, LMHC, Private Practice  
Mary Kearney, LCSW, Retired  
Tobi Keefe, LCSW, Retired  
Michael Kelly, Esq., Advocate  
Patrick Lane, Esq., Advocate  
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Liz Powers, The Living Room  
Jeanne Ryan, Advocate  
Paula Sauers, The Living Room  
Asha Sukha, RYT, yoga instructor  
Keith Wilson, LMHC, Private Practice



**From a letter to one  
of our volunteers:**

***Thank you for connecting  
[our son] to Spiritus  
Christi Mental Health  
Center. It was actually  
the best care he received  
to date in the mental  
health area. We  
appreciate what they did  
to help him.***

