

## **Mental Health Focus Issue: The Impact of Foreclosures on Mental Health**



### **Upcoming Events**

"Workplace Mental Health:  
A Bottom-Line Issue"  
August 7, 2008 at  
Skyland Trail-6:00 p.m.  
Ron Bachman & Karen Foster,  
PhD are the speakers.

Project Healthy Moms Talks  
(see p. 7 for more info):  
June 18 – Summit Ridge  
June 26 – Northeast Georgia  
Medical Center in Gainesville  
July 10 – Memorial University  
Medical Center in Savannah  
September 11 – Georgia Perinatal  
Association Annual Conference  
August 1-Houston Medical Center  
in Warner-Robins

"FundaMENTAL Health"  
regarding mental health in the  
workplace coming Fall 2008

For more information on any  
event, visit our website:  
[www.mhageorgia.org](http://www.mhageorgia.org) or call us at  
(404) 527-7175.

Although the downturn in the economy has hit hard everywhere, the housing market has been especially damaged as more and more people are defaulting on their mortgages. Homeowners are suffering under increasing stress as they worry about making their mortgage payments and keeping out from under foreclosure. According to *USA Today*, sixty-one percent of Americans on the West Coast and fifty-five percent on the East Coast indicated that housing costs, such as mortgage payments, serve as significant sources of stress. The build-up of financial stress has led to greater visibility of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, migraines, suicide, and addictive behaviors like alcoholism and gambling. While more people are suffering from mental health problems, they have less money to pay for the counseling and/or medication necessary to counteract them.

Just as homeowners have been suffering under the strain of foreclosures, developers and others associated with housing construction have been feeling the strain of the housing crisis. During the recession, people have not been looking to move into new homes, which means that developers have not been able to bring in money on their various investments around Atlanta. The *Atlanta Business Chronicle* brought light to this very issue in a front page article discussing the suicide of residential developer David Moss. This tragedy increased awareness on the importance of mental health, and, according to the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, developers' and builders' professional associations have been paying more attention to the mental health needs of their members.

## **Heroes in the Fight**

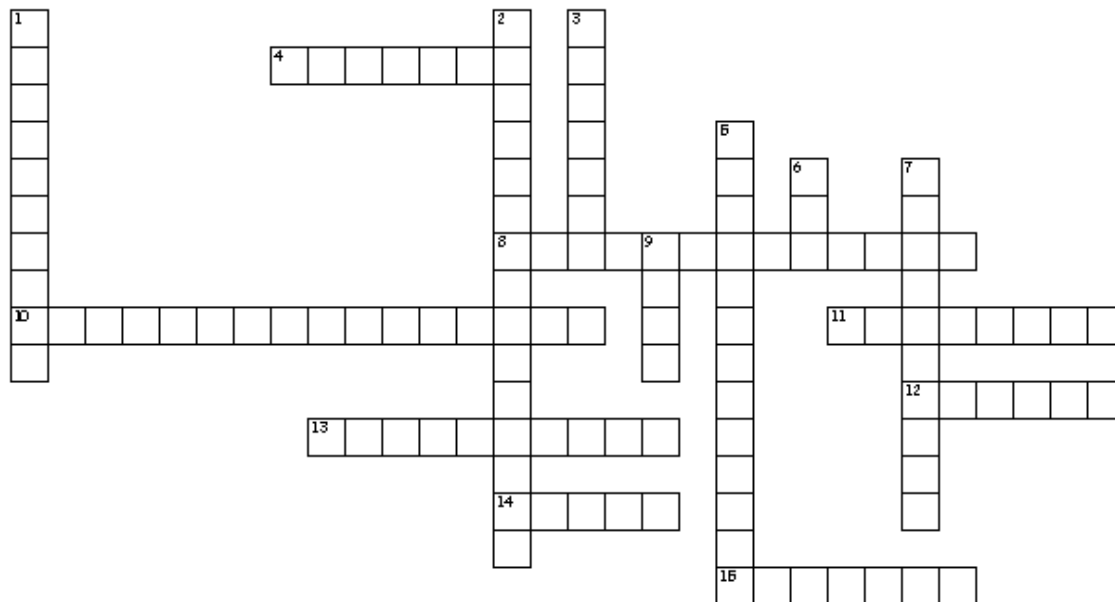


The fight against mental illness is waged in countless ways by countless heroes. From the mother fighting to reclaim her son, to the social worker looking for clients lost to the streets, to the policeman who knows when someone needs medical help, not prison time - these are the souls who make a difference. By making one life better. One family stronger. One burden lighter.

### **Do you know a hero??**

Help us recognize their commitment to the fight against severe mental illness by going to the website below to nominate them for the Heroes in the Fight Award. To learn more about what it means to be a hero, the countless ways these heroes make a difference every day in the lives of those they touch, or the Heroes in the Fight Award, log onto [www.heroesinthefight.org](http://www.heroesinthefight.org) today.

Look Inside for . . . Our Crossword



## Depression

### Across

- 4. president who had depression
- 8. "talk therapy"
- 10. most common mental illnesses
- 11. daily activity that relieves stress
- 12. generally brought on when feeling "out of control"
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_ depression results in 10 to 20 percent of women after having a child
- 14. women are more than \_\_\_\_\_ as likely as men to experience clinical depression
- 15. to take your own life

### Down

- 1. woman's version of superman caused by stress and pressure
- 2. medication taken to relieve depression by helping balance brain chemicals
- 3. Type of lifestyle in which stress is reduced by taking better care of one's body and mind
- 5. a disease that causes mild to severe disturbance in thinking, perception, and behavior
- 6. workplace stress causes \_\_\_\_\_ million people to miss work each day
- 7. deep feelings of sadness that interfere with daily life
- 9. what a doctor or mental health professional can provide

For solution, go to  
[www.mhageorgia.org](http://www.mhageorgia.org)

# Who's Who at MHA of Georgia

## Welcome New Board Members!



Charles Willis is a Statewide Peer Wellness Initiative Director with the GA Mental Health Consumer Network, an organization that promotes recovery through advocacy, education, employment empowerment, peer support and self help. He is an enthusiastic individual with over 20 years of successful, results-oriented experience in the helping professions of education and facilitation. In addition, Mr. Willis is a Senior Research Interviewer with Emory University Grace Crum Rollins School of Public Health. He has completed the Georgia Certified Peer Specialist Training, which is a project of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and The Department of Human Resources Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases.



Nancy Dietz is a campaign director at Coxe Curry & Associates, with over thirty-five years of experience in the not-for-profit sector. Since joining the firm in 2004, her clients include: Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, DeKalb Rape Crisis Center, Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity, International Community School, Leadership Georgia, and Trees Atlanta. Dietz earned a B.A. in American Studies from Smith College and attended Syracuse University in the graduate department of anthropology. Having recently completed two terms on the Board of Cool Girls, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to the empowerment of girls living in low-income Atlanta area communities, she now serves as a member of the organization's Advisory Council. She is also a member of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta's Community Impact Council.



Dr. Schoborg is an Associate Clinical Professor of Surgery in Urology and currently practices with the Atlanta Urological Group in Atlanta. He is on the Board of Directors for Family Initiative Resources and previously served as Chairman of a golf tournament for St. Francis School. Dr. Schoborg is also on the Board of Directors for the Emory University School of Medicine Alumni Association as well as Atlanta Medical Center, where he serves as Chief of Urology. Dr. Schoborg has numerous publications, presentations, and awards that he has won.

## Board Member Spotlight!



Congratulations to Cynthia Wainscott on her recent appointment to SAMHSA's National Advisory Council. This panel consists of twelve experts who advise the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services and SAMHSA's administrator on a range of public issues related to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

**Thank You**  
**from the Executive Director**  
**Sarah Schwartz, MSW, MBA, MHA**



Dear Friends,

It's a tough time for everyone right now. All sectors have felt the effects of the credit crunch, housing market problems, gas and food prices increasing to record levels, etc. MHA of Georgia, along with many other organizations, has certainly felt the pressures of a distressed economy. However, it's precisely times like these when the work we do is even more needed in and vital to the community.

In this issue of the newsletter, we discuss the mental health strains that have come with the record number of foreclosures our state has seen, along with the increased difficulty Georgians are having with simply filling up their gas tanks and putting food on the table. Funds are scarce these days, which makes a non-profit organization's work more challenging. However, we here at MHA of Georgia are working hard to continue providing mental health outreach, education, and advocacy to our state – especially during this uncertain time. We are only able to do our work because of supporters like you. Therefore, it is with great gratitude that I thank all of you for being a part of the MHA of Georgia family.

Despite the challenges we've faced, we have been very active in continuing our long history of **mental health advocacy in the state and at the national level**. In addition, our **Kids on the Block** program has continued to thrive. In 2007,

over 12,000 children saw mental health-related performances starring this multi-cultural puppet troupe. We have also continued to be the leading source of general mental health information in Georgia through initiatives in which the well-being of the total person is promoted in such a way that physical and mental wellness are one in the same. These initiatives provide mental health materials to individuals and organizations from a library of books, videos, and brochures. Often, as a **National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) outreach partner for the state of Georgia and a National Mental Health America campaign partner**, this material is disseminated to social service providers, consumers, family members, advocates, and other interested individuals. In addition, MHA of Georgia participates in health fairs and public education opportunities to distribute information, **including a key partnership with Skyland Trail**.

We have also started several new programs, including:

**Project Healthy Moms:**

**Perinatal Mood Disorders** – A lecture series whose purpose is to increase awareness, identification, treatment, and support of perinatal disorders throughout Georgia while also reducing the stigma associated with them.

**Military Youth Outreach:** Using our Kids on the Block puppet troupe, the mental health of the children of active duty military and veterans is promoted. Emphasis is placed on families' physical and mental wellness, and work is done to reduce the stigma associated with seeking and receiving mental health services.

**Men & Depression:** A statewide awareness campaign to increase knowledge, reduce stigma, and promote screening and treatment for male depression.

We are proud of the above programs, as they target vulnerable populations who tend to be underserved.

To expand our efforts at opening access to education and treatment for mental illnesses, we are currently working on a project in partnership with the Georgia Free Clinic Network and the Georgia Partnership for Telehealth. Together, we will be bringing **tele-psychiatry** to rural areas which otherwise would have no access to psychiatric services. **We are excited about this pioneering effort!** This is the first time tele-psychiatry will be implemented in a free clinic setting.

We are also thrilled to be working with **Tom Johnson, retired CEO of CNN**, and **National Mental Health America** on "FundaMENTAL Health," a presentation about workplace mental health that targets CEOs. This presentation will be shown around the country, and will be in Atlanta in Fall 2008. As a complement to this workplace initiative, we are also starting Phase II of the **Atlanta Business Leaders Initiative (ABLI)** in July. ABLI assists Atlanta-based employers in raising awareness about the business impact of mental illness and reducing stigma associated with obtaining treatment for mental illness.

Also, in collaboration with National Mental Health America, we will be providing content to **Weather.com** regarding mental health and the weather.

As you can see, we are doing a lot to further knowledge about mental health, reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, and promote consumers living happy, fulfilling lives in recovery. Please join us in our endeavors by supporting MHA of Georgia. We need your help to continue all of this important work.

Thank you for your generous support,

*Sarah Schwartz*

## Books of the Month!



### Children's Choice

Our recommendation for read-aloud books for kids is The Feel Good Book by Todd Parr (Little Brown, 2004). Parr's use of fluorescent, primary, and secondary colors in simple but expressive form translate perfectly for the 2-5 year-old age group. This fun read teaches children that expressing their feelings is a positive action.

An informative book for parents is The Bipolar Child by Demetri Papadopoulos, MD. (Broadway, 2007). This book is an outstanding reference guide for parents and caregivers of children who exhibit symptoms of early onset Bipolar Disorder. The book outlines the following: early symptoms, how to seek treatment and insurance coverage, participating in support groups, journaling a child's behavior and progress, and how family members can cope.

### Adult's Choice

In his book, Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness, a Chorus of Hope, Robert Cohen tells the stories of five individuals who suffer from various chronic illnesses. Cohen humanizes the people who are suffering from these diseases by talking about their daily lives rather than focusing only on the specifics of the disease. In one story, Cohen shares the tale of Georgia's own Larry Fricks, and his journey to overcome the stigma associated with his mental illness. Fricks expresses his early fear about how it felt to suffer through his disease without seeking help, and he also talks about how his disease motivated him to find his purpose as a person with mental illness. This book is inspirational because it reveals the inner strength that can be found in people, and shows us that life is what we make it.

## ***Tee Off for Mental Health 2008 A Success!***

***Thanks to everyone who supported our fundraising golf tournament on June 13, 2008! It was a beautiful day at Chateau Elan, and fun was had by all! Lt. Governor Casey Cagle was in attendance, as were many other legislators, providers, and supporters of mental health in Georgia. We look forward to next year's tournament.***

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***Join MHA of Georgia's Advocacy Network***

**Send your email address to [ellyn@mhageorgia.org](mailto:ellyn@mhageorgia.org)  
and your voice will join with others to take our messages forward.**



## What's Happening at our Georgia Affiliates

**Mental Health America of Greater Augusta** held its annual Mental Health Coalition Dinner on May 15th. Judges and legislators attended, and it was a great success. In addition, Executive Director of MHA of Augusta, Phyllis Holiday, received the first Mental Health Advocate of the Year award at the dinner. This organization is a coalition of advocacy groups, mental health providers, and training programs (e.g., Medical College of Georgia, Augusta State University). The organization focuses on the benefits of treatment and the concept that recovery is possible. Congratulations to Phyllis on her outstanding work!

MHA of Greater Augusta will host its Bert Yancey Mental Health Golf Tournament on October 13<sup>th</sup> in Augusta, Georgia.

**Mental Health America of Northeast Georgia** kicked off Mental Health Month in May with participation in the Human Rights Festival in downtown Athens. The Festival, itself celebrating thirty years, was an ideal venue for sharing information. Throughout the month, mental health professionals from Advantage Behavioral Health Services assisted MHANEGA by conducting presentations in the ten-county area which MHANEGA serves.

Some of these presentations included:

"Depression in Teens", "Dealing with Grief", "Depression in Seniors", and "Mental Health and Aging."

During the week of May 19 – 23, the Athens-Clarke County Public Library was the site for an information/membership recruitment display. Members of the Peer-to-Peer group hosted the display at Advantage's North Avenue location in Athens. Eddie Whitlock, Executive Director, thanked these consumers with a cook-out held on May 29.

A highlight of the month-long mental health awareness campaign was the Kids on the Block puppet show at the Athens-Clarke County Public Library on May 14. Our own Lorie Summers, from MHA of Georgia, attracted more than 70 audience members for a performance centered around reducing the stigma of mental illness. She did a repeat performance on May 28 for the children who take part in the programs offered at Advantage's Dougherty Street location.

Area radio stations aired public service announcements throughout the month, informing the public of the Mental Health month events. Eddie Whitlock was the guest on "The Dottie Coffman Show" on WIMO in Bethlehem.

Whitlock reported that, "We touched many people with our activities during the month. We anticipate that May will serve as a springboard for further educational and advocacy efforts in our ten-county area."

## Newton County Mental Health Association (NCMHA)

(NCMHA) hosted an adult event during May in recognition of Mental Health month. This event was a client-driven Art Show and Reception at the local library on Tuesday, May 6th. There were over 40 pieces of art prepared by adults enrolled with mental health services. The art work remained in the library throughout the month of May for all to observe and appreciate.

In addition, NCMHA co-hosted a Youth Summit and sponsored all the food on Thursday, May 8th. This summit included a collaboration with other child-serving agencies to bring David Mahan (international speaker on youth issues) to Newton County. The event was held at a local church and over 200 people attended. The topic was on teen sexuality and emotional and physical risks. The health department also participated with the presentation.



**Eddie Whitlock (L), Exec. Dir. Of MHANEGA, at a cook-out with consumers during Mental Health Month in May.**

## Project Healthy Moms

Mental Health America (MHA) of Georgia is now offering a free one-hour "lunch & learn" called **"Project Healthy Moms: What You Need To Know About Perinatal Mood Disorders."** These events are aimed at educating practitioners and the general public throughout Georgia about prevention of and treatment for such illnesses as ante partum depression, postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety/OCD and postpartum psychosis. More than 800,000 women each year in the U.S. suffer from these devastating illnesses, which, if not properly treated, can have a long-term negative impact on the health of both mothers and their children and families.

The series will be presented by Katherine Stone, Georgia resident, former postpartum OCD sufferer and author of [Postpartum Progress](#), the most widely-read blog in the United States on postpartum mood disorders. (Postpartum Progress was named one of the top ten depression sites on the web in 2007). Stone also serves on the board of directors of [Postpartum Support International](#), the world's largest non-profit organization supporting women with these illnesses. This special hour of learning is made possible by a grant from Pfizer.

Attendees will learn:

- \* One size does NOT fit all: Why postpartum depression is just part of a spectrum of mood disorders women may experience & what to look for
- \* The wide variety of risk factors for perinatal mood disorders
- \* Results of the latest research on these illnesses and their impact on mothers and children
- \* Various treatment options -- therapy, medication, alternative treatments
- \* What you should know about cultural differences when it comes to postpartum mood disorders
- \* Tools and resources available for health-care providers

If interested in scheduling a lunch & learn, please contact Katherine Stone by email at [stonecallis@msn.com](mailto:stonecallis@msn.com) or by phone at 678-764-2141.

## Kids on the Block visits Fort Benning!

On May 27, Kids on the Block Director Lorie Summers, along with long-time volunteer Dafina Braithwaite, performed the "Feelings Are Important" puppet show at Fort Benning as part of the Wyeth Veterans Grant. The first performance was at the Patch Day School, and was attended by 43 children, aged infant through 4 years, and their parents. Even though this audience was young, they were taught how important it is to talk about expressing feelings safely. Also important was the presence of the parents in this situation, since they have worked with the children about coping with their feelings and dealing with separation from a parent.

The second performance was at Tot Town, and was attended by 24 children and their parents. Because the audience featured some older children, the puppets asked, "Sometimes do you feel sad or miss your Dad when he's away?" Several of the children responded "yes," followed by discussions with the puppets on what to do when you feel sad. One parent remarked that this question was handled perfectly, because it brought up relevant emotional situations while not dwelling too long on the topic.

We plan to return to Fort Benning in the fall so that MHA of Georgia can engage the community in more events.



Featured here is Shaun James, a puppet in "Feelings Are Important."

### ***How can you help MHA of Georgia?***

The work of MHA of Georgia is dependent upon individual and organizational support of its mission and vision. Your donation will help us have the financial resources needed to succeed.

Please fill out the following information to become a member:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in being added to our mailing list? Yes No

Are you interested in volunteering at MHA of Georgia? Yes No

Please circle your donation amount.

(\$500) (\$250) (\$150) (\$100) (\$75) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check and this form to:

**Mental Health America of Georgia**  
**100 Edgewood Avenue**  
**Suite 502**  
**Atlanta, Georgia 30303**  
*Credit Cards-Please call 678-904-1973*

*Or you can donate at our secure website—[www.mhageorgia.org](http://www.mhageorgia.org)*

*MHA of Georgia is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 organization tax ID number: 58-0611310*