



May 2016

HEADLINES

May Is Mental Health Month



In a complicated world where anxiety and depression are commonplace, mental health awareness is more important than ever. May is Mental Health Month, a perfect time

to focus on mental health concerns, people living with mental illness, and strategies to manage stress before it leads to more serious symptoms.

Approximately one in five adults in the United States experiences mental illness in a given year, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. In the past year, nearly seven percent had a major depressive episode, 18 percent experienced an anxiety disorder, and half of the 20.2 million Americans who experienced a substance use disorder also suffered from anxiety, depression or another co-occurring issue.

In the same way that we look to exercise, good nutrition and proper sleep habits to ensure our physical health, tactics such as mindfulness – personal, present-moment, non-judgmental awareness – can contribute to good mental

health. According to Monarch therapist Jude Johnson (pictured right), research has shown that mindfulness can influence our appraisal of stress and grow new brain cells in the hippocampus, which is the area of the brain responsible for memory and information processing.

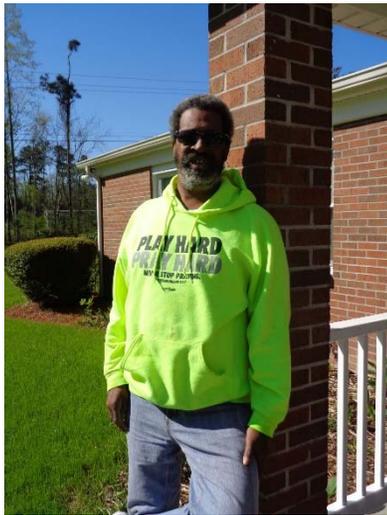
Mindfulness and meditation promote relaxation and a sense of well-being by helping regulate emotions and stabilizing the mind. They can be used by anyone, and can be effective in relieving stress, anxiety, depression and general feelings of negativity, said Johnson, who specializes in mindfulness-meditation and has completed extensive training in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

“We experience our emotions inside our bodies, and mindfulness gives us a space to become aware of our emotions, without judgment,” Johnson explained. “Observing our emotions with friendly, non-judgmental attention allows us to let go of the perception that our feelings are bad, even when they are unpleasant. Instead, we learn to be with the things we tend to avoid the most by realizing that our emotions are only temporary.”

There are many ways in which to meditate, some as simple as assuming a comfortable position and focusing on one’s breathing, Johnson said. It’s a “formal stopping” to be present in the moment.

“Generally, people are on automatic pilot most of the time, thinking about what will happen in the future and running some dialogue in their

head about what’s going on in their life,” he noted. “Stopping to be mindful might seem counterintuitive to people stressed about not having enough time, but research shows that the majority of those who practice mindfulness show improvement in mood and their ability to manage anxiety.”



William Lassiter (pictured below right), who lives at a Monarch home in New Bern, uses meditation as part of his “wellness toolbox” of techniques that help him manage the challenges of

daily life.

As part of his community integration, Lassiter attends Wellness City of New Bern, where staff members who are also in recovery provide classes for individuals living with mental illness, substance use and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Classes cover topics such as computer use, gardening, music, art, cooking, and Lassiter’s favorites, meditation and dancing.

“I have had stressful and nervous days and, over time, I have learned that when I take a few minutes out of my busy day I am able to use meditation to calm myself down and get into a better mindset,” Lassiter said.

Meditation is not something someone strives to be “good at,” Johnson said. “It is a practice that allows you to be more aware of the present moment. Having a greater awareness can be a catalyst for making real and lasting change.”

Want to know more?

Johnson recommends the following resources to learn more about mindfulness and meditation:

www.ccmindful.org (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction classes in the Charlotte area)

www.headspace.com (Meditation app)

www.akeenmind.com (Free guided meditations under Podcast)

www.tarabrach.com (Free talks on mindfulness and free guided meditations)

"Wherever You Go, There You Are" by Jon Kabat-Zinn

"10% Happier" by Dan Harris

"Radical Acceptance" by Tara Brach

HIGHLIGHTS

Raising Awareness About Mental Health Helps People Get Treatment, Reduces Stigma



Many people suffer from mental health conditions silently and without support, but each May, organizations, like Monarch, and individuals across the United States work to change that as the nation observes Mental Health Awareness Month. Local awareness events, mental health screenings and other efforts help educate communities and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

National organizations such as Mental Health America and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) launch awareness campaigns, and local agencies, advocates and individuals take part in events to highlight mental health concerns. This year, Monarch staff, people we support, family and friends have participated by donating to and walking in the NAMI Walks North Carolina event, and Monarch has provided free mental health assessments, a community screening of the documentary “Healing Voices,” and more.

Mental Health America is focusing on the theme, “Life With a Mental Illness,” for 2016, calling on individuals to share what life with a mental illness feels like for them. Their words, pictures and videos are being tagged in social media posts (#mentalillnessfeelslike). Responses from those who live with mental illness bring their own words to the forefront rather than relying on clinical descriptions of the disorders.

This month, NAMI continues its mission to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equal care for those living with mental illness. Visitors to its website, www.nami.org, can sign the “stigma-free pledge” and learn about other ways to help spread awareness.

According to NAMI, one in five Americans will be affected by a mental health condition in their lifetime, and many more are impacted through friends and family. While mental health education should be year-round, observing May as Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a reminder of the importance of knowing the risk factors and symptoms, as well as the array of integrated treatment services available, so that people can be empowered to receive the help they need, when they need it.

“In general, people who seek early treatment for general medical conditions are successful in

reducing the duration and severity of symptoms related to any illness. Early awareness, detection and treatment yields the best outcomes for the person. Mental health is no exception,” said Monarch’s Medical Director Dr. Robert McHale, M.D., M.S, a Board Certified Psychiatrist.

CenterPoint Human Services Breaks Ground on New Behavioral Health Complex in Winston-Salem



CenterPoint Human Services, the Managed Care Organization (MCO) based in Forsyth County, recently broke ground on the Highland Avenue Crisis and Recovery Center, a 43,000-square-foot building under construction on N. Highland Avenue in Winston-Salem. Officials representing the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse (MH/DD/SA), Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, community and partner organizations, mental health advocacy groups, Forsyth County government and Monarch were among the dozens who attended the April 5 ceremony.

“We are ecstatic to be partners of this magnificent and much needed facility,” said Dr. Peggy Terhune, Monarch’s president and chief executive officer, who attended the event. “It is

important to continue to work on these kinds of important solutions to help people get the treatment and support they need. This is one of several similar initiatives that Monarch will either lead or be involved in statewide.”

The goal of the new, 24-hour crisis center is to divert people experiencing mental health and substance use disorders from jails and local emergency departments and provide them with the treatment they need. Monarch will operate the center’s Facility Based Crisis program and the Behavioral Health Urgent Care.

The Highland Avenue Crisis and Recovery Center, which is being built where Monarch’s Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS) once stood for nearly four decades, will include round-the-clock urgent care and evaluation, a 16-bed facility for up to seven days, a primary-care clinic jointly operated by Baptist Hospital and Novant Health, and a wellness center. The crisis center will be operated by CenterPoint Human Services, the regional mental health authority, on property leased by Forsyth County.

“This is an outpatient facility allowing folks to stay up to 23 hours,” said Dr. Chad Stephens, the medical director at CenterPoint. “They can be triaged if they run out of medication. Once they’re stabilized and back on their medication, if they have safety issues, for instance if someone comes in suicidal and needs to be transported to a hospital under an involuntary order, they can do that. I’m really excited about that. It can be more of a recovery setting.”

The Highland Avenue Center is expected to open January 2016.

Providing Mental Health Services When People Need Them Most

As Monarch positions itself as an industry leader in mental health care, the organization is pursuing status as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in an effort to further provide services to people when they need it most.

As federal legislation is implemented to improve access to comprehensive mental health and substance abuse treatment for all Americans, Monarch has been chosen to continue in the process for consideration as a North Carolina CCBHC site.

In March of 2014, Congress passed the Protecting Access to Medicare Act, which included a demonstration program based on the Excellence in Mental Health Act. North Carolina is one of 24 states awarded a planning grant to develop and submit a CCBHC plan consistent with federal requirements. This October, eight of those states will be chosen to carry out their projects.

After completing initial requirements, Monarch was notified recently that its Albemarle location has been selected for consideration as the state’s rural CCBHC site, said Monarch’s Vice President of Performance Management Kara Froberg.

The goal of the federal legislation is to achieve a more seamless transition for patients across the full spectrum of services, which has been part of Monarch’s commitment since the agency began providing behavioral health services, Froberg said.

“Becoming a CCBHC would help us provide a comprehensive array of services, improve access to care for people who need it, and strengthen Monarch’s position as an advanced

provider and a relevant leader in the industry,” Froberg said.

Overall, the Excellence in Mental Health Act will increase Americans’ access to community mental health and substance use treatment while improving Medicaid reimbursement for these services. When fully implemented, the Excellence Act will infuse more than \$1 billion into the behavioral health system, making it the biggest federal investment in mental health and addiction services in generations.

“As we work across Monarch to develop a CCBHC model consistent with the federal requirements, we continue the same mission we have always had,” Froberg said. “We want to pave the way in offering ease of access and excellence in service to the people who need us.

REGIONAL NEWS

Early Detection for Mental Illness Is Key: Monarch Hosts a Series of Mental Health Screenings

Early detection is not just critical for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. It also applies to mental illness. To encourage open conversation about mental illness and identify early symptoms, Monarch is conducting a series of free mental health screenings across Stanly County this year.

The screenings are supported by a \$4,400 grant from the United Way of Stanly County. They are quick and confidential, designed as a non-threatening way for people to learn more about depression, anxiety or other symptoms they may be experiencing.

“Each person screened is given a list of all mental health resources in Stanly County that may be able to assist should the person be interested in following up,” said Laurie Weaver,

Monarch Senior Director of Philanthropy, who wrote the grant and is part of the team coordinating the events. “These are not designed to be referral screenings for Monarch, but as an opportunity to open the often-difficult conversation about mental illness for those who may have concerns.”



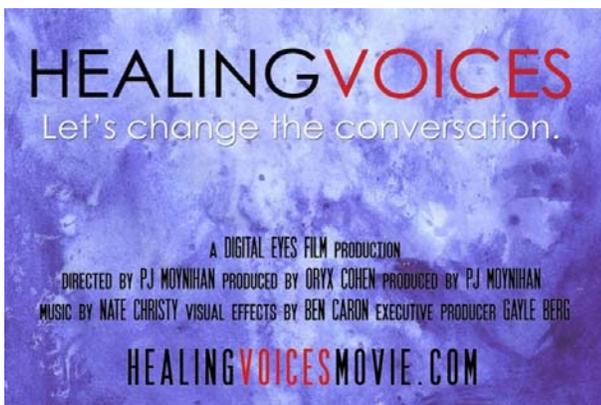
Events have already been held at Stanly Community College and the Stanly Agri-Civic Center, and others are being planned.

The screenings allow individuals experiencing symptoms such as mood or behavior changes to complete a brief, anonymous test that is evaluated privately in a one-on-one conversation with a trained therapist who can ask appropriate questions and discuss local resources specific to any mental health issues at hand.

Each event features a variety of printed educational materials on alcohol use, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, bipolar disorders, health relationships, mindfulness and more. These materials are available to anyone, whether or not a screening is completed.

“The earlier any medical condition is found and accurately diagnosed, the earlier treatment can begin and the better eventual outcomes may be,” Weaver said. “Quality of life for those who live with mental illness can be improved dramatically with a proper diagnosis and treatment.”

Monarch Hosts Screening Of "Healing Voices" Documentary in Wake County



In celebration of May as Mental Health Month, a screening of the film “Healing Voices” was held May 3 at Monarch’s Navaho Drive clinic in Raleigh. The event was free to the public as a way to further educate the community about the realities of mental illness and its treatment in today’s society.

“Healing Voices” is a feature-length documentary which explores the experiences commonly labeled as “psychosis” or “mental illness” through the real-life stories of individuals working to overcome extreme mental states and integrate these experiences into their lives in meaningful ways.

The film follows three subjects – Oryx, Jen and Dan – over a period of nearly five years and features interviews with many notable personalities, including Robert Whitaker, Dr. Bruce Levine, Will Hall and Dr. Marius

Romme, on the history of psychiatry and the rise of the “medical model” of mental health treatment. The documentary challenges audiences to rethink our cultural understanding of “mental illness” by bringing a message of recovery and charting the course for effective alternative treatments that enable people to live productive and meaningful lives.

Monarch Director of Peer Services Brandon Tankersley led the effort to bring “Healing Voices” to Navajo Drive and the community. He is a board member of the North Carolina Consumer Advocacy, Networking, and Support Organization (NC CANSO), which is an official sponsor of the film. “It is the goal of NC CANSO to allow as many people as possible to view this documentary,” he said.

Laurie Coker, founder of NC CANSO, led a discussion with the audience following the screening of “Healing Voices.” Coker, a retired psychiatric nurse, is a well-known mental health advocate whose son committed suicide as a result of mental health issues.

The movie helps us to look more holistically at what a person experiences when he or she is having an extreme mental state, Coker said.

“Perhaps our society and those we typically recognize as experts have looked too narrowly at something very complex and dynamic that happens often within some of the brightest and most insightful and sensitive people around us,” Coker said. “This film inspires us to think more deeply and to consider how our society can truly support people whose minds may be responding in ways that may be more comprehensible if we de-mystify what we now call mental illness just a little bit.”

Learn more about “Healing Voices” at <http://healingvoicesmovie.com/>.

Monarch Recognized by Cardinal Innovations Healthcare During Employment First Event



Harrison Young (pictured right), a person Monarch supports, and Angela Furr, executive assistant-West, represented Monarch at “Employment First, See the Potential, Raise Your Expectations,” an event to observe

Developmental Disabilities Month. Hosted March 31 by Cardinal Innovations Healthcare in Kannapolis, the event recognized organizations that employ individuals with developmental disabilities.

Young was honored for his hard work, employment and independence, and Monarch was recognized for its commitment to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Young went from living at Monarch’s Second Street home in Albemarle to landing his own apartment and working as a janitor at Monarch’s Greenwood Street center.



Employers, service providers and people supported all attended the event, designed to honor the contributions made every day in the workplace by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and to continue to develop ideas to promote their success and

improve their quality of life. Speakers, panel discussions and question-and-answer sessions were on the agenda to help inspire innovation in helping those with I/DD reach their potential.

“It was truly a diverse group, all offering up ideas, thoughts and obtainable goals regarding Employment First,” Furr said. “The bottom line is to elevate people and help them achieve a productive, inclusive and engaged quality of life, not to just ‘take care’ of them.”

PEOPLE WHO CARE

Carolina Chamber Musicians Perform for People Supported at Health Drive



Imagine having a performance hall all to yourself, the musicians playing just for you.

That was the case for individuals supported from Monarch’s Health Drive day program in New Bern, as some 40 people, including staff, enjoyed a performance of the Carolina Chamber Festival on Feb 17. The event took place at the intimate, 200-seat Cullen Performance Hall near Tryon Palace.

Amadi and Debby Azikiwe, a husband-and-wife violinist and pianist based in Harlem, entertained the crowd with a 40-minute classical

musical concert, then answered all sorts of questions afterward.

“Everyone enjoyed the performance immensely,” said English Albertson, director of program operations in the eastern region.

For many of the people supported, it was their first exposure to classical music. But when asked if they’d like to return to Cullen Hall in September to hear another concert, the answer was a resounding yes, Albertson said.

The Carolina Chamber Festival hosts chamber musicians from around the country, and they spent a week in residence in New Bern. The festival board had money available for outreach, thus the free concert for the Health Drive group.

“The hall is a lovely venue with incredible acoustics,” Albertson said. “It’s a somewhat intimate space, and it’s part of the Tryon Palace site.”

MONARCH SPOTLIGHT

Olga Jackson



During Mental Health Month, we want to salute one of the many, many incredible staff members who work diligently to ensure that people who seek Monarch’s mental health services get the attention and the care they need. As one of

Monarch’s Directors of Nursing (DON), Olga Jackson regularly monitors the implementation of policies and procedures as they relate to

nursing care in Monarch’s western region – and Deborah Groves, serves as DON for the east.

They ensure that all practices are based on sound medical policy and evidenced-based nursing practices. Those are just a few of the many duties Jackson, who has worked at Monarch for two years, manages. We learn a little about her and why observing and improving nursing care protocols are important to staff and the people we support.

What does a typical workday look like for you?

A typical work day is always changing, different nursing issues always come up that need attention. Typically though, working on writing, implementing and monitoring policies are priority.

What is the most important aspect of your role and why?

I would say it has to be making sure Monarch is practicing nursing in a safe manner with high quality care for the people we support.

What has been your most rewarding, or proudest moment, while working here?

Being acknowledged by some staff as truly helping them in bettering their roles which in turn helps the people we support.

What do you enjoy when you aren’t working?

When not working, I am spending time with family, which is always best, especially for special dinners

What movie or song best describes you?

“I hope you dance,” by Lee Ann Womack

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

May is Mental Health Month. Let’s help break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illness. We believe mental health is

important to address all year, but highlighting this topic during May helps to raise awareness of the 1 in 5 Americans who will be affected by a mental health condition in their lifetime. Let's start talking more about mental health so people can get the treatment they need.

May 13 – Day of Dreams volunteers will work on a project at Monarch's Brighter Vision day program in Mount Gilead.
Details: Andy.Basinger@MonarchNC.org or (704) 986-1515.

May 14 – Forget-Me-Not Gift Shop officially opens in Reynolda Village, 2201 Reynolda Rd., Suite 111 – D, Winston-Salem, 27106. Please stop in and shop for unique and affordable gifts, baskets and decorative wreaths. Hours of operation: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

May 21 – Taste and Treasures: Hosted by Friends of Club Horizon. An evening of food, drinks and a silent auction to benefit Club Horizon's clubhouse activities. The event will be held 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. at Marbles Kids Museum, 201 E. Hargett St., Raleigh.

[Click here for more details.](#)