



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Updates and information from the Atlantic County Office

*Alcohol Awareness Month, Stress Awareness Month,
National Counseling Awareness Month, Volunteer Appreciation*

Spotlight on a Special Volunteer How leading a group for those with eating disorders led to an unexpected career in fashion design

BY BETH WADE

Her years of working on internal struggles have led Kris Auble to a new and unexpected ambition that, ironically, focuses on the outside in a way she didn't see coming.

Kris found her way to our door after her therapist suggested she look for a group. Rising Minds, a young adult group, turned out to be the right fit back in 2020. It would be the first place she'd share about her eating disorder. She was 25 at the time.

In addition to a supportive peer community, she found encouragement from the facilitator and group's originator, Bernadette Trendler, who created an environment where Kris eventually suggested the development of two more groups.

"At the time I didn't envision myself starting the groups, but Bernadette believed in me," recalls Kris. "She encouraged me to start them myself."

With training from Bern, that's just what she did. One of the groups she established was Disordered Eating and Eating Disorder Support Group (formerly known as "Balance and Body Image).

"To hear people share...to have their own revelations was pretty powerful, very cool," she said. "People realized their shame and emotions they could let go of."

For Kris, that internal work and process of "healing" enabled her to pursue a degree in clothing design, which is a change from her last occupation, flight attendant. Kris doesn't believe she'd be going to school for fashion had she not learned to accept how her body looks. There have been times, Kris remembers, that she'd not been comfortable sharing photos of herself on any social media.

Now that she has started her two-year schooling program, new time constraints mean she had to let go of volunteering and facilitating groups. She looks back and marvels at a special legacy she leaves behind at MHA Atlantic and United By Wellness. That includes a second group that empowers and supports women in the workplace.

Called Life in Waves, the female Ocean City lifeguards she knew inspired it. At the time, that (continued on page 2)



Kris Auble is pictured at a C.R.O.P.S. Garden in Pleasantville. Her meetings were offered at a community center there.

Inside this issue

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION!

**"AND THE AWARD GOES TO..."
Find out who was honored!**

"DIALING BACK STRESS"

WELLNESS BULLETIN BOARD

ABOUT ALCOHOL SCREENING



particular beach patrol had been exposed in the local daily newspaper amidst accusations of sexual harassment.

“I knew them [the female lifeguards] because I was working as a lifeguard in Margate at the time,” she said. “I knew it was traumatic for them and I wanted to help.

Over time, the Life in Waves group would be attended by women in the restaurant industry, construction, medical profession, and transportation. The women came together in an authentic way to support one another, said Kris, and that’s what she’ll always remember about the group.

Neither her contributions nor the power of the relationship with our agency can be measured, but Kris feels the weight, fully, in her heart.

“MHA changed my life in the best way,” she said.

In addition to finding an avenue to wellness that also boosted her confidence, Kris took online WRAP training while she was at home recuperating from a surgical procedure. Kris said her time with the agency – more than 4 years -- has reshaped her and taught her skills that will remain with her always.

“MHA has been a big part of my life,” she said. “This experience gave me a sense of self and encouragement. I learned I’m capable of doing things that I didn’t think were possible.”

Kris is currently enrolled in the Made Institute in Philadelphia. On behalf of the leadership, staff, and peers at MHA Atlantic and United By Wellness, we thank her for her years of volunteer service and the people she helped along the way.

Eating Disorders and Disordered Eating meets through the MHANJ Online Wellness Center, United By Wellness. Meetings are the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 5 pm.

Use this QR code or [click here](#) to receive a link for the meetings.



April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

With gratitude to those who dedicate their time and talents to MHA Atlantic programming

To be a volunteer, it takes...

Generosity, a willingness to give your time to others

Understanding, because their lives might be very different from your own

Empathy, an ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and feel what they must feel

Compassion, to truly care about making someone else's life better

Patience, because the process doesn't always go as smoothly as it might

Dedication, to stick with the project and see it through

Author unknown



Pictured above are Krista Opoku-Ware, Zana Radavci and Carol M. Our other volunteers are: Ryan G., Greg C., Max E., Gabrielle C., Brittany A., Katherine L., Donnell G., Britnay N., and Gianna R.

WELLNESS BULLETIN BOARD



ACUA's Annual Earth Day Festival
Sunday, April 28 10am - 4pm
ACUA's Environmental Park
6700 Delilah Rd. in EHT
A fun day for all ages!



Model Train Show
Sat., April 20 10 am to 4 pm
Sun., April 21 10 am to 3 pm
at 4-H
Egg Harbor City
Free event

AT THE LIBRARY

Spring Gardening with Rutgers Master Gardener
Eclipse Day at Mays Landing Branch
Apple Workshop
Creative Writing Workshop
Meditation
Yoga
Chess Club
Mah Jongg
Crochet, Sewing, and Knitting
Book Club
Adult Board Game Night
Senior craft & activities

*Each library branch offers special events,
classes, and activities.
View the full calendar*

[Click here to view](#)

ART GALLERIES

Kramer Hall
Current exhibit with various artists focused on ecology
Stockton's Hammonton Campus
30 Front Street, Hammonton
609-626-3840

Noyes Art Garage of Stockton University
Several current exhibits: Art of the Quilt: Fiber and Clay;
contemporary folk art exhibit; and Complex Planet
Contemporary Art
2200 Fairmount Ave., AC
609-626-3805

Stockton Art Gallery
"Indigenous Approaches/Sustainable Futures"
Galloway Campus - L Wing
Use parking lot 5, 6, 7
609-652-4214

Performing Arts at Stockton

Fran Lebowitz Friday, April 12 @ 7:30 pm

Mutts Gone Nuts! Sat., April 13 @ 2 pm

Emerging Choreographers Showcase
April 18-21 @ 7:30 pm

Combined Choir Concert
Monday, April 29 @ 6 pm

Call 609-652-900 for ticket information



A Win for Quinn!

AC Chamber honored one of our team's leaders

BY BETH WADE

Public Relations Specialist



When a member of our small office staff gets a big award, it's a really huge deal. That's what happened Thursday, March 28 when Carolyn Quinn was amongst the honorees at an event that recognized young leaders under the age of 40 who are shaping the future of our region.

(Cue the applause.)

Wow! Quite a recognition, right? Carolyn and other local standouts were celebrated at the Greater Atlantic City Chamber Business Excellence Awards at the Carriage House, Galloway.

Among the reasons our Director of Community Engagement and Wellness Programs was in the spotlight is her work and dedication to Crisis Intervention Training, CIT, which aims to improve the response by law enforcement and mental health professionals to individuals experiencing crisis. The goal is to divert individuals away from the justice system and toward the resources, programs, and medical treatment.

Since CIT was offered in Atlantic County in 2017, more than 200 professionals have been trained. Through her position on the CIT

training team, she's built important relationships in the county with officers throughout the county.

"She's proven to them that if they need help with resources for someone, she is available day or night to assist," said Vicki Phillips, Executive Director. "Together they are improving the outcomes for residents and visitors who are experiencing a crisis.

In addition to CIT, Carolyn was recognized for her efforts to establish a Hoarding Disorder Initiative in Atlantic County, which provides an in-home support program to individuals affected by over-collecting behaviors. During Hurricane Sandy she worked as a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor, canvassing in storm-affected neighborhoods where workers saw some people's struggles firsthand.

From that experience, she was part of the team that consulted with national experts and assisted with bringing evidence-based support services to Atlantic County where, at the time, none existed. In addition to in-home supports, workshops and groups are provided to people seeking support to change their habits and declutter.

Carolyn also was honored for her mentorship of dozens of interns studying psychology and social work who come to MHA Atlantic for the experience. She designed a program that gives students the opportunity to work one-on-one, facilitate support groups, lead a psychoeducational seminar, provide socialization to residents in group homes as well as opportunities to learn marketing and advocacy skills.

"Carolyn absolutely embodies courage, compassion, and dedication in all areas of her work, touching countless lives across Atlantic County," said Seth Edwards, Coordinator of United by Wellness.

Carolyn joined the Atlantic staff 11 years ago.

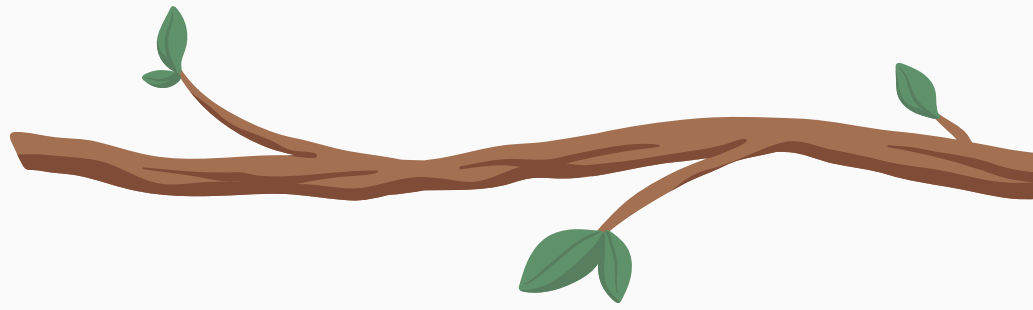
Congratulations, Carolyn, from the staff and leadership at MHA Atlantic!

Pictured at right: Carolyn is joined by other MHA Atlantic staff and leadership including: Yvonne Tran, Ashleigh Zappala, Emily McCall, and Gail Christian.



NEWS

briefs



Family Forum set for April

An event that will provide family members with an opportunity to express their concerns, unmet needs, suggestions, and successes in the mental health system of care is being organized by the Intensive Family Support Services Program.

“This event will give family members an opportunity to help identify systemic issues and provide solutions from a system user perspective,” said Gail Christian, Intensive Family Supports Coordinator.

Family members will talk to MHANJ CEO Carolyn Beauchamp who will relay the needs to state level officials.

Called a “family forum,” the event is scheduled for 3:30 pm on Thursday, April 18 at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Linwood. Following the forum, a light dinner will be served.

Family members who are interested in participating in the forum are asked to register by April 15, 2024. [Click here for more information, or to register.](#)

Stigma Free Atlantic to honor efforts at upcoming event

Licensed social worker, master’s student and founder of The Positive Pursuit, Jared Lombardi will be among those honored at the Thursday, May 29 Stigma Free event at Stockton University.

Stigma Free Atlantic chose Jared for his dedication and work to reverse current trends in completed suicides and drug overdoses while reducing the stigma associated with getting help for one’s mental health and substance misuse. The strategic initiatives he implements connect community members with life-saving resources and instill hope in vulnerable populations.

In addition to Jared, other honorees include Tony’s Baltimore Grill, Gas Up Barber Shop and Shave, Caesars Hotel



Jared Lombardi will be among the honorees

and Casino, and Adelaide’s Place.

The Stigma Free Atlantic event is scheduled for Thursday, May 29 at 8:30 am at the Stockton University Campus Center, Galloway. All community members interested in attending are welcome. A donation of \$15 is suggested. [Click here to register](#)

Training With Law Enforcement

As part of our ongoing partnership with local law enforcement, a Crisis Intervention Training was held in March at Stockton University. More than two dozen participants working in fields related to law enforcement or mental health graduated. The training aims to divert community members from the criminal justice system to the mental health system, share resources, and increase awareness.

In the March class, participants joined from a variety of backgrounds including the Atlantic City Police Department, Absecon Police Department, Galloway Police Department, Hammonton Police Department, Pleasantville Police Department, Hope Exists, Jewish Family Service, AtlantiCare Behavioral Health PACT team, Atlantic County Sherriff’s Office, Atlantic County Prosecutor’s Office, Atlantic County Probations, New Jersey State Police- Casino Gaming Bureau.



The March CIT class along with trainers.

Online Alcohol Screening and Resources

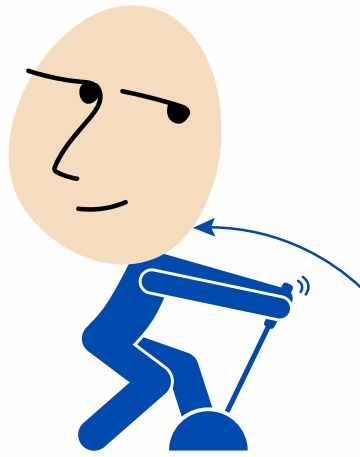
Mental Health America provides a free, confidential online screening for addiction related to alcohol or drugs. The screening consists of a series of primarily yes/no questions.

Screening can be taken for yourself or someone you know. At the conclusion, information on next steps, resources, a text for support line, and a catalogue of helpful articles is provided (such as How can I identify triggers, How do I tell someone I have a problem with alcohol, How to be around around drinking people while sober, and more).

The screening is available year round, not just during April which is Alcohol Awareness Month.

[Click here for the screening.](#)

Dialing back stress



If stress were a noise, it might sound like a jackhammer, microphone feedback, or the steady, annoying drip of a leaky faucet. Still, for others, it's silent.

Those who don't hear it may be at a disadvantage because stress will scream at you--eventually. Might be through loss of sleep, sore muscles, elevated blood pressure, or some other physical malady, but it will manage to get your attention.

For those "listening" to stress at any volume, and since April is Stress Awareness Month, the facilitator of Stress Less 101, Brittany Arnold, shared some tips and observations on the topic. Brittany is currently an intern with us. She's a part-time student, full-time worker and mother of four (so, yes, she knows something about stress).



Stress Less 101 meets online on Sundays at 11 am through United By Wellness. Newcomers are always welcome. If you'd like to receive a link for the group, use this QR code to register.

What is stress, anyway?

A hormonal response from the body!
The brain sends signals to the nervous system and kidneys. Yes, kidneys!
Kidneys release stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol)



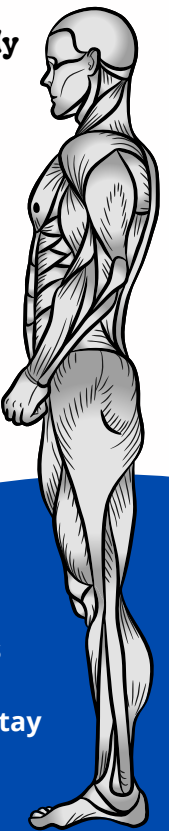
Tips from
Brittany

WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

- Journaling
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Practicing gratitude
- Challenge negative thoughts
- Time management
- Setting healthy boundaries
- Self-care
- Radical acceptance (letting go of the need to control, judge, and wish things were different than they are)
- Extra rest
- Engage in an activity you enjoy
- Connect with others
- Schedule downtime

And now...a message from your 7 body systems – digestive, nervous, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, endocrine, respiratory, and reproductive...

Find ways to reduce your stress. It's hard on all of us!!!



This online stress screen provides insight into how well you're managing stress, info on how to stay healthy, and tips for resiliency. [Click here](#)

Administrative Professionals Day



We think Karen Williams deserves a month, not just a day!

Karen is the friendly voice on other end of the phone when you call our office for help, information, resources, and all the reasons in between. She's also a record keeper, minutes taker, overseer of the agency's car fleet, a data collector, and the one who orders office supplies.

She is known for being a genuinely caring and thoughtful co-worker who helps create an atmosphere of a true "work family." She is mostly likely to bake brownies for the breakroom and offer a kind word or smile.

(Karen loves purple, so that's why this block is purple in her honor.)

We appreciate you, Karen! She'll be getting spoiled on April 24. Check out those photos on Facebook in a few weeks...

GUESS

Who

BABY

Picture

GAME



Which Atlantic staff is this?

Make your guess using this QR code or the following link. [Click here](#)



Baby March is Bianca, Peer Support Specialist



LIKE SHARE & FOLLOW



Click on any of the above



Alcohol Awareness Month

DID YOU KNOW?

The MHANJ online wellness center offers groups for people in recovery?

WINGS
Wellness In Nurtured Grief Support
SUNDAYS
6PM-7PM

ARE YOU IN RECOVERY OR A LOVED ONE TO SOMEONE IN RECOVERY...
HAVE YOU LOST SOMEONE YOU LOVE TO AN OVERDOSE?
ARE YOU GRIEVING BECAUSE A RELATIONSHIP OR FRIENDSHIPS ENDED
BECAUSE OF ADDICTION?
ARE YOU GRIEVING THE DREAMS YOU ONCE HAD OR THE FUTURE YOU
WANTED BUT ADDICTION TOOK THAT FROM YOU?
MUCH LIKE RECOVERY, GRIEVING IS A HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL JOURNEY.
THIS GROUP IS HERE TO PROVIDE COMFORT, UNDERSTANDING, & SUPPORT
TO ONE ANOTHER, WHATEVER THE CAUSE OF YOUR GRIEF MIGHT BE.
THERE ARE HEALTHY WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE PAIN & GAIN WINGS.

Sign Up For UBW For Meeting ID & Info!







WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG 609-652-3800

Call/email for Zoom meeting information or join the virtual wellness center at no cost by scanning the QR code!

RELATIONSHIPS AND RECOVERY

Join us to discuss & learn about the importance of any and all relationships & recovery. This includes relationships with family, friends, pets, partners and yourself.

Every Tuesday @ 8 PM

WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG



MARA SUPPORT GROUP




OPEN-SHARE

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR ANYONE THINKING ABOUT MARA OR CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN MARA AS A PATHWAY TO RECOVERY.

EVERY THURSDAY @ 3PM

Call/email for Zoom meeting information or join the virtual wellness center at no cost by scanning the QR code above!

"RECOVERY IS SIMPLY TO RECOVER FROM AN UNSAFE LIFESTYLE!"

WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG 609-652-3800

Recovery Dharma is a peer-led movement and a community that is unified by the potential in each of us to recover and find freedom from the suffering of addiction.



RECOVERY DHARMA

This is the true empowerment and freedom of recovery—recognizing that happiness and suffering are entirely up to us, based on how we choose to respond to our experiences.



"YOU CANNOT HEAL IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT WHERE YOU GOT SICK."

Join the virtual wellness center at no cost by scanning the QR code below!

Every Wednesday @ 11 AM





Funding for programming is made possible by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) State Opioid Response Grants Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) No. 93.788.

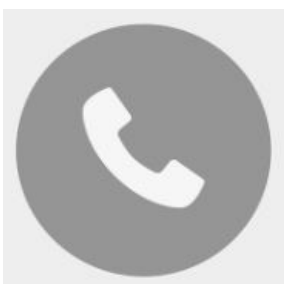
**Acute Care Family
Program serves
families in crisis
7 days per week
Available 8 am to 8 pm
609 517-8614**

Support and assistance for families with a loved one in crisis and in need of linkage to treatment and other services.

Our team engages families who are often navigating the mental health system for the first time.

Staff educate families about mental illness and offer resources and referrals that can help their loved one

*Help is a phone
call away*



**April is National
Counseling Awareness
Month!**

**MHA Atlantic thanks all
who work in counseling and
behavioral health
professions.**



**For referrals, call
MentalHealthCares
866-202-HELP (4357) or email
help@njmentalhealthcares.org**

Planned Giving

How You Benefit from Planned Giving

Planned gifts are charitable contributions that are part of your financial or estate plans. Including a gift to the Mental Health Association -Atlantic County in your will or trust allows you to create a legacy which provides families like you with the education, support, empathy and options to provide the best care for your family. It only takes 20 minutes or less.

YOU LEAVE A LEGACY

Making a bequest in your will is a powerful way to leave a lasting impact. Another way to leave a large gift is through establishing your legacy by making a bequest, showing your support for years to come.

YOU GET A TAX BREAK

Did you know that bequests can reduce federal estate taxes for heirs? And these deductions are not limited to cash — they can include assets like real estate, IRAs, and stock as well!

YOU DECIDE HOW YOUR GIFT IS USED

When you leave a bequest in your will to Mental Health Association in Atlantic County, you can allocate a program where you would like to make an impact.



2024 CIT-ATLANTIC CLASSES

REGISTER NOW TO GET A SEAT

MHA Atlantic is a proud community partner working to ensure CIT training is offered to all law enforcement and mental health workers with the goal of providing a safer and more effective response to people with mental illnesses who are in crisis.

APRIL 15-19

Hard Rock-AC

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CITApril24>

NOV. 18-22

AC Special Services School

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CITNov24>

To register, click on the links above. Registration is required.
For more information email: CITAtlantic@MHANJ.org