



Discover Wellness Within

ANNUAL REPORT OF ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY FISCAL YEAR 2018

Discover Wellness Within

By Debra Johnson, Executive Director

Discover Wellness Within – behind these three simple words lie the key to good physical and mental health. If you improve your mental health you will improve your physical health, and vice versa. Recognizing and acting on this fact is crucial in achieving recovery. This is why providing integrated healthcare, the blending of behavioral health care and physical health care, to individuals receiving St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) services is our primary focus.

The three individuals who have received SCCCMMH services, recognized in this year's Annual Report, Stephen Page, Phyllicia Rabine and Rebecca Williams, exemplify the motto "Discover Wellness Within." Our Employee of the Year and Team of the Year remind us of another truth, sometimes before a person has enough hope to discover their wellness within, they need someone to hold that hope for them. Our Community Service Award winner Jason Stier and Organization Award winner the Community Foundation of St. Clair County provide so many supports in so many ways to individuals in our community. Finally, Communications Awareness Award winners Karley Hurley and Mallory Michaluk together helped educate countless Blue Water Area residents about mental illness, intellectual / developmental disabilities and substance use disorders.

One of the most significant changes for SCCCMMH in years is our becoming a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). In December 2018, we were awarded a CCBHC project grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 per year for the years 2019 and 2020. This grant will increase our ability to serve individuals in our community with Substance Use Disorders (SUD) who may not have been able to access services in the past, as well as more people who live with Serious Mental Illness, Serious

Emotional Disturbances, and Veterans. We anticipate that as a CCBHC we will see a 25% increase in the number of individuals served, approximately 335 more adults and 116 more youth under 18 years of age. For more information on expanded SUD services, please go to page 3.

Also built into this grant is funding for an additional year to continue our Primary and Behavioral Health Care Integration (PBHCI) Project, a critical component in providing integrated healthcare to individuals receiving SCCCMMH services. PBHCI brings together the treatment team involved in an individual's care so that, from the individual's perspective, the physical health care and behavioral health care services delivered are consistent and coordinated. This results in an individual receiving higher quality, more efficient care that better meets their needs. Since receiving the four-year \$1.6 million PBHCI grant from SAMHSA in August 2015, we have served 931 people through the program.

There are several other exciting changes coming to SCCCMMH. In 2018, we began the process of introducing the Zero Suicide program. This initiative utilizes quality practice measure improvements in behavioral and physical health care organizations to eliminate suicides among people in care. Organizations that have used this approach reported a 60 to 80% reduction in suicide rates among those in care.

The success of our Mobile Crisis Unit, implemented in May 2016, continued this past year. The Mobile Crisis Unit is available to respond to calls for service at the request of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, first responders, schools, medical facilities, or other natural supports like friends and family. Details about this exciting and important innovation can be found on page 5.

Our focus on Trauma Informed Care continues. Studies indicate that 80% or more of people receiving public mental health services have experienced some form of trauma. Trauma Informed Care takes into account knowledge about the neurological, biological, psychological, and social



Debra Johnson,
SCCCMMH Executive Director

effects of trauma and incorporates it into all aspects of mental health services. SCCCMMH staff are now fully trained in Trauma Informed Care with additional training available to help facilitate trauma recovery, specifically among women with histories of exposure to sexual and physical abuse.

We introduced two new classes that provide support for recovery and trauma informed care. Our Music class, which is offered at the Center of Port Huron, provides a way for individuals to address issues in non-verbal ways, particularly issues they have difficulty finding the words for or that may be painful to express through language. Likewise, our new yoga class provides a valuable relaxation tool and anxiety-reduction technique. It teaches participants how to focus on ideas they choose and how to calm their mind and body.

At a time when 49.5% of adolescents will meet the criteria for a mental health disorder at some point and the percentage of emergency room visits related to suicidal thoughts or attempts more than doubled between 2008 and 2015, it has never been more important to proactively address the behavioral health needs of today's youth. For this reason,



**St. Clair County
Community Mental Health**
*Promoting Discovery & Recovery Opportunities
for Healthy Minds & Bodies*

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St. Clair County Community Mental Health supports individuals with mental illnesses, intellectual/developmental disabilities and substance use disorders, focusing on integrated health care and recovery. For information, access to services and 24-hour crisis intervention, call:

1-888-225-4447

Discover Wellness Within

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SCCCMH partnered with Riverview East High School in providing the Prepare U curriculum, an innovative program that educates young people about a series of 15 mental health topics, including how to decrease anxiety and stress, process anger, develop problem solving skills, promote healthy family systems, foster healthier relationships with their peers, and recognize suicidal ideation. For the same reason, in the coming year SCCCMMH will provide staff for a proposed charter recovery high school, which will provide both a high school curriculum and path to a diploma while also providing treatment for substance use disorders and recovery support.

As we look towards the future, we remain concerned about the future of the public mental health system, particularly legislative activities that affect the public mental health system. In June 2017, the Michigan legislature instructed the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to implement four two-year pilot programs designed to “better integrate physical and behavioral health in Michigan.” The four pilot sites

are Muskegon County Community Mental Health and West Michigan Community Mental Health, geographically contiguous organizations that will conduct a joint pilot, Genesee Health System, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, and a separate demonstration model in Kent County. While we are supportive of integrated physical and behavioral health care, we remain concerned because this legislation emerged as part of an on-going effort by some Michigan legislators to turn over control of the \$2.6 billion public mental health system to for-profit insurance companies. We believe this could substantially reduce the amount of money available for services because of higher overhead costs among for-profit insurance companies and their need to produce a profit for shareholders. We believe that careful monitoring during the pilot program and objective review at their conclusion is crucial to ensuring the rights of individuals with mental illness, intellectual / developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders continue to be protected.

We also continue to monitor events at the national

level that could negatively affect the health of individuals receiving SCCCMMH services. In December 2017, Congress repealed the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), meaning individuals no longer have to pay a fine if they forego health insurance. The expectation is that without the mandate a significant number of individuals, particularly younger and healthier individuals, will not maintain health insurance coverage. As a result, it is estimated that in Michigan as many as five hundred thousand of the approximately one million individuals who obtained health insurance through the ACA between 2013 and 2015 will lose their insurance. This will continue to place financial strains on some individuals receiving SCCCMMH services, as well as the behavioral health system throughout Michigan.

Despite individual and systemic challenges, individuals with mental illness, intellectual or developmental disorder, and substance use disorders continued to make enormous progress in their recoveries in 2018. We salute them for their commitment to “Discovering Wellness Within.

You're Not Alone

Phyllicia Rabine

Nearly two years ago Phyllicia Rabine was diagnosed with both bipolar and anxiety disorders. Bipolar disorder is a condition marked by alternating periods of elation and depression. Anxiety disorder is characterized by worry and fear about future events. At the same time she received this concerning news, she was diagnosed with several serious physical ailments, including high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, and asthma.

It would be understandable if, when faced with these simultaneous challenges, Phyllicia responded with despair or was stunned into inaction. In fact, she did neither. Instead, she decided to embrace positive and recovery focused practices, including taking responsibility for herself and her personal environment.

Phyllicia embraced integrated health care, which is the coordinated administration between behavioral and primary health care service providers to improve overall health. Integrated care is based on the understanding that the quality of a person's behavioral health affects their physical health and vice versa. She began by allowing her primary care physician and St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) caregivers to work together to craft a recovery plan that would address both her behavioral and physical health care concerns. Then



she committed herself to following the plan.

She began by going to individual behavioral health therapy to improve her skills at managing symptoms. She also opted to participate in SCCCMMH's InShape program, an individualized,

health promotion program designed to help people to independently address their nutritional and physical activity requirements. Participants have access to group training sessions and workouts with personal trainers, as well as monthly nutrition classes. Phyllicia worked out with SCCCMMH trainers twice a week. She also changed her eating habits, working to cut out junk food and fast food and eating six small meals a day. She also began taking Yoga classes.

Since accepting SCCCMMH services she has lost 55 pounds and since joining the InShape program she has lost 47 pounds. She has successfully lowered her Hemoglobin A1C, which estimates a person's blood sugar levels over a 2 to 3 month span, so she is no longer at a pre-diabetes stage. She has lowered her blood pressure as well.

Phyllicia continues to work part-time and continues to advance her education. She has already earned an Occupational Therapy Certificate and is pursuing her Bachelor of Nursing degree.

Phyllicia's advice to others in recovery is that, “If you have a mental illness you need to remember that other people are struggling too. You're not alone.”

SCCCMH Has What You Need

Rebecca Williams

Rebecca Williams began receiving St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) services almost 2 ½ years ago. Diagnosed with a developmental disability, Rebecca has embraced self-determination and self-advocacy, providing an example to others of how making good choices creates a bright future. Rebecca faces every day with an optimistic attitude and a smile on her face.

Rebecca has chosen to devote her energies towards improving her kitchen skills. She works five days a week at Port Huron High School's kitchen and three days a week in our Galley here at SCCCMMH. She has also worked hard to get her Serve Safe certification, a certification administered by the National Restaurant Association that is required by most restaurants as a basic credential for their staff. In the past she has also participated with the SCCCMMH Players, the agency's theatre group. This is a busy and impressive schedule by any measure.

Despite her commitment to the high school and SCCCMMH Rebecca never appears to be tired, never fails to meet her responsibilities, and never fails to express through word and deed how much she enjoys working and making a contribution to her community.

Her advice to others? “People should come to SCCCMMH if they need to – they have what you need!”



I Found God and in Finding God, Found Myself

Steve Page

Steve Page smiles sheepishly when he confesses that people who haven't seen him for a long time are often taken aback. “I look different. I suppose I feel different.” Today, Steve is relaxed and confident, a man with a welcoming laugh and about whom the words “considerate” and “thoughtful” are frequently used. Steve admits this was not always the case.

Diagnosed with mental illness while still in high school, Steve shares that he turned to alcohol as a means of self-medicating himself. This is not uncommon for individuals diagnosed with mental illness, particularly in the early stages of learning to cope with symptoms. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that as many as one of every four American with serious and persistent mental illness have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. This is likely because alcohol interacts with brain chemistry. In the short term it gives the appearance of reducing stress and anxiety. However, in reality alcohol creates a host of problems and often exacerbates symptoms instead of curing them.

Like others with a co-occurring disorder – having both a mental illness and substance use disorder – Steve has battled his addiction to alcohol his entire life while simultaneously trying to chart a path toward mental health recovery. He has now been alcohol free for a little over two years. Steve credits three things with his success. First, he describes what he learned through dialectical



behavioral therapy at SCCCMMH, which teaches an individual how to identify and change negative thinking patterns, with providing him the tools he needed to create the environment he needed for positive behavioral changes. Second, he credits his total embrace of Alcoholics Anonymous, where he explains he found an excellent sponsor who, “pulls no punches.” Finally, he explains that his firm belief in Jesus Christ was crucial to his success. “A higher power gives you the power to get through this sort of thing,” he says. “I did the footwork, but it was God who gave me the strength.” Steve's favorite quote, which he says perfectly fits his situation is “I found God and in finding God found myself.”

To others, Steve always offers the same advice with a smile, “No matter what, never give up on yourself. You are worth it.”

Expanded Substance Abuse Disorder Services

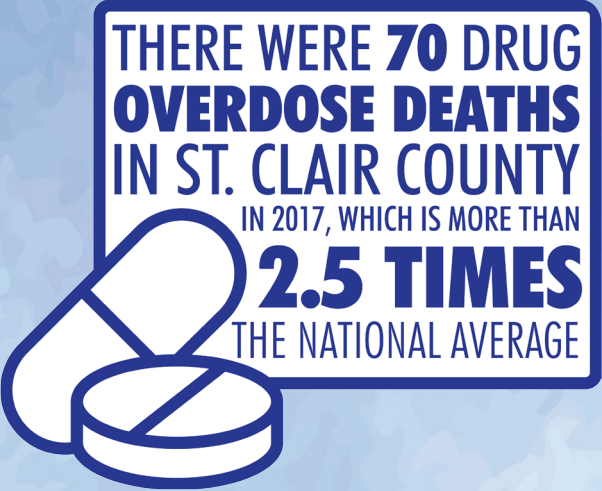
In December 2018, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) expansion grant in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 per year for 2019 and 2020 that will allow expanded services to individuals with a Substance Use Disorder (SUD). The CCBHC became operational May 1, 2019.

This grant is a particularly important development for St. Clair County where the local opioid crisis mirrors the national crisis, in which Americans are more likely to die from accidental opioid overdose than a car accident. In 2017, 68% of overdose deaths nationwide involved opioid or opioid replacements. That same year in St. Clair County, there were 70 deaths, 83% of which involved prescription drugs or heroin and fentanyl, common replacements for prescription opioids. This was more than twice the

national rate.

St. Clair County first experienced a significant increase in drug-related deaths during 2015, when there were 45 drug-related deaths. In 2016, this rose to 74 drug-related deaths. Indeed, that year the New York Times reported that St. Clair County had the highest rate of overdose deaths in Michigan.

One of the most significant changes made possible by this grant is the opportunity for SCCCMMH to provide services for individuals with a SUD who do not have a co-occurring mental illness. This will include medication-assisted treatment in the form of Suboxone and Buprenorphine, both of which block opiate receptors in the brain, thereby helping people to reduce or quit their use of opiates. SCCCMMH will also provide outpatient services for individuals with a SUD. Finally, SCCCMMH is considering becoming an accredited Opioid Treatment Program.



Media Award Winners

Karly Hurley and Mallory Michaluk

Integral to the success of EBW-TV (EBW), Karly Hurley and Mallory Michaluk are the perfect team to provide EBW's universally positive content. An example of the power of the digital revolution, EBW is a live-streaming, on-demand independent online television station that provides genuinely local news for residents of the Blue Water Area. In contrast to traditional broadcast news with its focus on investigative journalism and sensationalized news stories, EBW emphasizes positive events, news, and people in the area. Regular viewers know that it is a "one-stop-shop" for information about progress in the area and for providing a forum for conversations with local officials, business people, and area leaders about important issues facing the community.

Karly began her career at EBW as an intern in 2013, leaving in 2015 as news director to finish her bachelor's degree before returning in May of 2018. As station manager, Karly oversees strategic planning, advertising and client relations, the summer internship program and production of several shows, as well as occasionally report-

ing on local events. Mallory Michaluk, EBW news director, is a Port Huron native. Mallory also writes news stories and manages EBW's social media sites. Together they are responsible for creating as many as thirty news reports a week.

Both Karly and Mallory are excited to be pioneers in an innovative news model. Key to that model is the ability to provide timely, original, and local video content to a region that is rarely covered by the major media outlets in Detroit. They also share the goal of making EBW the number one source of news in the area by creating confidence in their product and a sense of trust between EBW and the community.

Karly and Mallory are critical components in St. Clair County Community Mental Health's (SCCCMH) efforts to educate the community about Mental Illness, Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Disorders, as well as enhancing public understanding of the role and impact of SCCCMMH's services, activities, events and initiatives. In their reporting, they are always knowledgeable and



Karly Hurley



Mallory Michaluk

skillful at communicating information in language that is accessible to the public and recovery focused. This has allowed SCCCMMH to reach tens of thousands of individuals that in the past may not have had the opportunity to learn about us, our services, and that recovery is possible, all of which aids in reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, developmental/intellectual disabilities, and substance

use disorders.

For their consummate professionalism and exceptional attention to ensuring effective communication between SCCCMMH and the residents of St. Clair County, the Board of Directors of SCCCMMH are proud to name Karly Hurley and Mallory Michaluk the 2019 SCCCMMH Media Award Winners.

SCCCMH Employee of the Year

Tony Fioravanti

By his own measure, Tony Fioravanti is living a charmed life with wife Katie and son Giovanni and with a purpose-driven profession at St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) that allows him to help others. However, this was not always the case.

Tony shares that the first half of his life was filled with mental health and substance use disorder challenges that led to intermittent periods of incarceration and homelessness. Then, twenty years ago, he made the decision to accept help and entered treatment. After treatment, Tony moved from Detroit to the Blue Water area.

SCCCMH hired Tony as a part-time Peer Support Specialist in 2010. Peer Support Specialists have recovered from mental health disorders and are trained to work in a formal role to support others in recovery. Within a year, his outstanding performance led to his being hired full-time. In 2015, Tony joined the Individual Placement and Support Program (IPS) as an Employment Specialist. The IPS program helps people with severe mental illness find and keep competitive jobs by helping them identify their

personal strengths, skills, and job interests, while also providing on-the-job coaching and support to ensure ongoing success. During this time, Tony also earned an associate's degree from Baker College and a bachelor's degree in Family Life Studies from Spring Arbor University.

As an Employment Specialist in the IPS program, Tony brings an impressive professionalism and powerful passion for assisting individuals in achieving their goals. He visits employers to learn about their businesses and their short and long-term hiring plans, carefully matching individuals in the IPS program with employer needs. He also works directly with individuals receiving services enrolled in the IPS program, assisting with filling out job applications, scheduling interviews, and providing transportation to interviews.

However, Tony's valuable input does not end once a person has a job. He also continues to provide follow-along support to individuals after they are employed, which assists in job retention and satisfaction. The effectiveness of Tony's efforts are clear: he has helped 74 individuals find and

maintain jobs in the community since 2017, with a job retention rate of 72%. Additionally, he has worked on an ongoing basis with 13 individuals he has assisted in securing employment.

Tony explains that the people he works with want independence and purpose. "People want to be responsible. They want to take care of themselves." His personal recovery journey and entry into the workplace after many years of unemployment help guide his approach. "I remember that people are in different places. Just because people are experiencing difficulties doesn't mean there aren't roads open to them." He remembers how when he was in their position he had strong self-doubt about his skills and what he had to offer an employer. Now, when he sees people being doubtful or critical of their abilities he says, "I have to help them see beyond what life was to what life could be." Tony concludes, "This is where I want to be," then pauses and corrects, "This is where I need to be."

IPS Coordinator Erika Rice says of Tony, "He is a phenomenal person, team member and employment specialist. His dedication, embrace of



the values of SCCCMMH and his commitment to supporting individuals in recovery are of the highest level." SCCCMMH Executive Director Deb Johnson adds, "Tony's dedication and work ethic is an inspiration to everyone who knows him. There is no one more deserving of this honor."

In recognition of his commitment to the highest standards and his dedication to individuals receiving services at SCCCMMH, the SCCCMMH Board of Directors is proud to name Tony Fioravanti the SCCCMMH 2018 Employee of the Year.

Art of Caring Awards

St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) will present the Art of Caring Awards to recipients during the agency's annual award recognition dinner on May 7th at Alexander's Premiere Banquet Facility and Restaurant, in Marysville.

These awards recognize individuals, businesses and community organizations that have made a significant impact on the programs and individuals supported by SCCCMMH during 2018. The following award recipients are true champions of mental health recovery:

Domtar – Christmas can be a very difficult and stressful time for many families who receive services at SCCCMMH. This year, Santa had some help from Domtar, who very generously adopted several of the families we serve; making sure that each had food for Christmas dinner and to assist them through the holidays. Special thanks to Tracie Thomas for coordinating this effort!

Jerry Eschenburg – Jerry is the owner of Etech Plastics. He has worked regularly with our Individual Placement and Supports program to provide competitive community jobs to individuals receiving SCCCMMH services. His encouragement, understanding, and assistance to individuals re-entering the workforce has proved invaluable in furthering their recovery.

Kati Gardner – Katie works in the City of Port Huron Recreation Department. Every year SCCCMMH has a "Giving Tree" in which Christmas wishes from individuals receiving services, both adults and children, are hung as separate ornaments. Individuals can take as many ornaments as they like and fulfill that person's Christmas wish. This past Christmas Katie

took close to 100 ornaments from our Giving Tree! Her kindness and generosity ensured many bright smiles on Christmas morning.

Port Huron Elks Lodge 343 – The winter months can be cold and brutal. Sometimes in an effort to control heating costs, homes are colder than they otherwise would be. The Port Huron Elks Lodge 343 generously donated approximately 100 fleece blankets, helping to ensure that individuals receiving SCCCMMH services and their families remained warm during frigid wintry nights. Special thanks to Sue Hudy for coordinating this effort!

Port Huron Police Department – Thanks to the strong support of Chief Joseph Platzer, officers of the Port Huron Police Department are better prepared for interacting with individuals with mental illness after receiving Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. MHFA is an interactive 8-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders. The Port Huron Police Department also collaborated with SCCCMMH in the Michigan Open Medication Takeback, an important program to safely dispose of unused and old medication.

Diane Slingerland – Diane is the director of the Center of Port Huron. She has been extraordinarily helpful and accommodating to our Music & Minds group by providing a meeting location and following up regularly to assist in any way she can. The Music & Mind group incorporates music appreciation, playing music, and voice to assist participants in recovery.

St. Clair County Sharpshooters 4-H Club – Since 2016, youth from the St. Clair County Sharpshooter 4-H Club have held an annual drive and collected hundreds of socks each year that were given to individuals supported by SCCCMMH. Undergarments like socks are one of the most needed, but least donated items to social services agencies. Because of their generosity, many people had warm, dry footwear this winter.

St. Clair County Sheriff's Department – under the leadership of Sheriff Tim Donnellon, the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department requested a more collaborative relationship with SCCCMMH, with the aim of providing training to assist officers when responding to calls where individuals might be exhibiting symptoms of mental illness. SCCCMMH and Sherriff's Department staff worked together to create an effective curriculum. This involved job shadowing by SCCCMMH staff with the Sheriff's Department and vice versa. Everyone in the Sheriff's Department, from management, administration, dispatch, road patrol and detectives, have enthusiastically embraced the program. This has resulted in profoundly positive results for individuals in crisis.

SCC Sheriff's Deputy Tim O'Donnell and SCC Sheriff's Deputy Marty Stoyan – Deputy O'Donnell and Deputy Stoyan have demonstrated strong commitment to learning, understanding, and addressing mental health stigma among law enforcement. They volunteered and trained to be part of a SCCCMMH organized training team that visit other law enforcement agencies to discuss the best ways to work with individuals who may be experiencing a mental health issue. Consequently, the interaction between law enforcement officers and individuals potentially in crisis has been positively enhanced.

Rights Champion of the Year

Latina Cates

The "Rights Champion" awards program recognizes individuals and organizations for their extraordinary contributions to the Rights Protection System, which protects the rights of individuals with mental illness, intellectual / developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. In recognition of her dedication to ensuring individuals are treated at all times with dignity and respect, the St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) Board of Directors named Latina Cates the 2018 Rights Champion of the Year.

Latina serves as the SCCCMMH liaison to the Port of Hopes, a local recipient-run drop-in center for individuals with mental illness. Many members of the Port of Hopes also receive SCCCMMH services. In her role as SCCCMMH Liaison, and congruent with our philosophy of integrated healthcare, which recognizes that behavioral and physical health care are intertwined and affect one another, Latina worked to receive grants through the Michigan Department of Health and

Human Services for several health and wellness projects. These projects included assisting the members of the Port of Hopes in learning how to prepare healthy dishes on a budget, education about diabetes and hypertension, how to use a glucose meter, how to use a pedometer to track exercise activity, and how to identify emotional eating triggers. Additionally, Latina developed a cookbook for participants to reference in their homes when choosing to cook healthy meals. All of these projects support a healthy lifestyle and the mindset that what we eat relates to how we feel mentally and physically.

Additionally, through the Justice in Mental Health organization, Latina coordinated trainings for Port of Hopes board members in ethics and board responsibilities.

Congratulations, Latina!



Rights Champion Team of the Year

The Residential Services Response Team

The "Rights Champion" awards program recognize individuals and organizations for their extraordinary contributions to the Rights Protection System, which protects the rights of individuals with mental illness, intellectual / developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. In recognition of their commitment to ensuring individuals at residential facilities are treated at all times with dignity and respect, the St. Clair County Community Mental Health Board of Directors named the Residential Services Response Team the 2018 Rights Champion Team of the Year. The Residential

Services Response Team consists of Kathy Baker, Ellen Drowns, Kathleen Gallagher, Karen Recker, Sara Storm, and Katie Volpe.

This team exemplified the power of collaborative effort as they worked together to improve service outcomes at a local residential facility by ensuring that documentation and medical services were provided and improved, and that direct-care staff received the training they needed to provide quality services with dignity and respect.

Congratulations Kathryn, Ellen, Kathleen, Karen, Sara and Katie!



Left to Right: Sara Storm, Karen Recker, Kathleen Gallagher, and Ellen Drowns. Not pictured: Kathryn Baker, Katie Volpe.

Mobile Crisis Unit Provides 24-Hour Crisis Intervention Service

Many individuals with a mental illness are in recovery or on their road to recovery. But for a few others, an acute mental health crisis, one where symptoms become severe and unmanageable, can be one of the most frightening things an individual or family can experience. In these moments of crisis, many people are unsure of where to turn to for help or if help even exists.

In May 2016, St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) introduced a Mobile Crisis Unit to respond to these unpredictable crisis situations. The Mobile Crisis Unit is a team of seven mental health professionals who are available to respond to calls for service at the request of individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, first responders, businesses, schools, medical facilities, or other natural supports like friends and family. The Mobile Crisis Unit offers crisis intervention services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in any location where the crisis may occur. Two or three team members are on duty at all times and generally respond within two hours of request.

Members of the Mobile Crisis Unit are skilled at stabilizing potentially unsafe situations, evaluating the treatment needs of individuals potentially in crisis, and diverting individuals who are not at risk of harming themselves or others from unnecessary hospitalization. However, these team members go beyond determining whether an individual is a danger to themselves or others, which is a legal standard. They employ a much more subtle understanding and perspective, taking into account whether there is a

deterioration of a physical condition or a major setback in an individual's mental illness. Mobile Crisis Unit staff accomplish this by performing a standardized and validated screening to identify alertness, orientation, mood, and thought processes. Based on the assessment, the Mobile Crisis Unit Clinician makes a placement decision with the individual. Placements can include in-patient hospitalization, discharge to home with outpatient referrals, rapid linkage or re-linkage to treatment providers, interim mental health treatment, and even respite housing when available.

Working closely with the Emergency Psychiatric Nurses and Nurse Managers, the Mobile Crisis Unit is contracted to conduct face-to-face, pre-admission screenings at McLaren Port Huron hospital prior to an individual's admission to the psychiatric unit. They are also contracted to provide the same services at Ascension River District Hospital and they provide courtesy screening within regular business hours at Lake Huron Medical Center. This close coordination is important because national statistics show that one in every 8 visits to the Emergency Room is related to a mental illness or Substance Use Disorder issue.



Currently the Mobile Crisis Unit averages three service requests per day and two requests from law enforcement every week. Close communication and cooperation between Mobile Crisis Unit staff and local law enforcement is critical to diverting individuals whenever possible from a law enforcement setting to a treatment setting. Nationally, approximately seven percent of all police contacts in urban settings involve a person believed to have a mental illness and about three of every four young people in Juvenile Justice Systems report mental health problems and one in five has a Serious Emotional Disturbance.

During Fiscal Year 2018, among individuals receiving SCCCMMH services, the Mobile Crisis Unit screened a total of 492 people for Inpatient Hospitalization, an average of 41 people a month, met face-to-face with individuals potentially in crisis 1,079 times, an average of 90 times per month, and had a total of 1,442 telephone contacts, an average of 120 per month. In total, in 2018 the Mobile Crisis Unit responded to 2,521 requests for help by people receiving SCCCMMH services. However, the actual amount of activity was even greater because the Mobile Crisis Unit

responds to many individuals who do not receive SCCCMMH Services.

To assist community members in identifying, understanding, and responding to signs of mental health crisis, SCCCMMH offers free Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. MHFA is an interactive 8-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders and shows people how to assist someone in crisis until they can be linked with professional help. Two tracks are offered. The first focuses on providing mental health first aid to adults. The second is intended for adults who interact with youth, with a focus on normal teen behavior versus possible mental health concerns. The course is designed for a variety of audiences, including health care professionals, employers, business leaders, faith communities, school personnel, law enforcement officials, direct care workers, and the general public. To learn more or sign up for MHFA training please contact us.

The direct line for the St. Clair County Community Mental Health Mobile Crisis Unit is (810) 966-2575. If you have a family member or friend with a mental illness, signs of a crisis situation may include but are not limited to individuals making threats to themselves or others, expressing suicidal thoughts, experiencing rapid mood swings, displaying extreme energy or lack of it, severe agitation, confused thinking or irrational thoughts, and experiencing hallucinations or delusions. Remember, when in doubt, it is best to seek professional assistance.

Community Organization Award Winner

The Community Foundation of St. Clair County

Since its founding as the Port Huron District Foundation 75 years ago, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County (Community Foundation) has served as a role model in how a committed, efficient and effective community organization can have a lasting and positive impact.

A non-profit organization, the Community Foundation provides a vehicle for individuals and organizations that desire to donate financially towards the economic, cultural, and social improvement of the Blue Water area. There are 258 separate endowment funds under the Community Foundation's aegis that utilize its non-profit status, including one for SCCCMMH. This streamlines the philanthropic process by relieving each of the endowment funds' creators from the burden of creating a separate tax exempt, charitable organizations. These endowment funds address myriad concerns, including but not limited to furthering the arts, assisting community organizations and other non-profits, and helping individuals further their education or professional training.

Currently, the Community Foundation has a total of \$73 million in assets, including \$64 million in grant making assets, approximately 70% of which are completely controlled by the individuals or organizations that established the endowments. Randy Maiers, President and CEO of the Community Foundation, explains that the greatest misconception about the organization is that grants are requested through and awarded by the Community Foundation's board of directors. In fact, in 2018, when approximately \$3 million in 600 separate grants were awarded, the Community Foundation's board of directors was responsible for awarding only 8 of those grants. Another common misconception is that grant funds come courtesy of a few wealthy philanthropists. Actually, in 2018 generous donors gave approximately 3,000 individual gifts.

Mr. Maiers explains that the Community Foundation's current mission derives from what it has identified as the Blue Water region's greatest long-term challenge: achieving population stability and growth. Since 2006, St. Clair County has experienced a 7% decline in population. By contrast, Macomb County experienced a 5.5% increase in population during the same period. Even more troubling, the greatest increase in population in St. Clair County was among people ages 45 to 64 while the greatest decrease was among individuals ages 25 to 44. Fewer individuals ages 25 to 44



Randy Maiers, President and CEO

often means fewer children, which can lower enrollment in a school district, thereby creating strains in school funding. More individuals ages 45 and older, without a corresponding increase in the number of younger workers, can create the need for social service changes and increased difficulty funding those services as the tax base erodes.

To address these concerns, the Community Foundation's philosophy is to promote growth and prosperity, thereby ensuring good services, education, facilities and well-paid employment throughout the area. To do so, the Community Foundation is involved in numerous projects designed to foster economic growth, increase human and social capital, and create a strong sense of community.

The Community Foundation makes a direct economic impact on the region through its investment arm, the Community Capital Club. Mr. Maiers explains that investments are traditionally limited to businesses that will spark tourism or attract new people and investment into the area, thereby acting as an economic multiplier. They must also provide a rate of return that ensures endowment assets are not depleted. Examples of the organization's investments include providing low-interest

loans to area businesses such as the Knowlton Ice Museum, Atrium Café, and Casey's Pizza in Port Huron, the Anchor Pointe Bistro in St. Clair, and the Inn on Water Street in Marine City. The Community Foundation also recently made a \$300,000 equity investment in Smart Shelf Inc., in St. Clair. Other area investments include \$250,000 in 2008 toward the Blue Water Area YMCA's capital campaign and \$750,000 in financing for the new St. Clair County Community College student dorms that opened in August 2018 in downtown Port Huron.

Another important effort is to assist so-called "non-traditional students," individuals from a wide spectrum of backgrounds who face unique challenges furthering their education because of their age and particular life situations. This includes not just traditional college scholarships but funding for vocational training, as well as financing mentorships and apprenticeships in skilled trades where positions are currently going unfilled.

The Community Foundation is also committed to adding to the area's sense of community through funding Placemaking projects, which is the process of creating and maintaining community spaces where people can meet and interact. The one-mile long habitat-restored Blue Water River Walk along the St. Clair River in Port Huron is the largest and best-known example. It boasts a pedestrian trail, observation dock, fishing pier and public art. Other examples of Placemaking include but are not limited to the St. Clair Riverview Plaza, little league ball parks in Emmett and St. Clair, skate parks at Optimist Skate Park and Algonac Skate Park, and many of the area's public parks, such as a \$100,000 grant to rebuild the play structure in Greig Park in St. Clair.

For its three quarters of a century of consummate leadership and for its irreplaceable contributions to the Blue Water area, the Board of Directors of SCCCMMH is proud to name the Community Foundation of St. Clair County the 2019 SCCCMMH Organization Award Winner.

If you would like to support the work of the Community Foundation, consider attending their 75th anniversary celebration on Thursday, May 9 from 6 to 8:30pm at the Blue Water Convention Center. Tickets are \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance. For more information about the Community Foundation or to apply for a grant through their EZ Grant Application, go to stclairfoundation.org.

Community Service Award Winner

Jason Stier

Asked to describe why Jason Stier is a great principal, the answer most often given is that before he was the leader and principal of Riverview East High School (Riverview), he was a highly effective and inspirational teacher. Indeed, the words used most often to describe Mr. Stier are “innovative, compassionate and respected.”

A lifelong Blue Water native, Mr. Stier graduated from St. Clair High School before pursuing an art degree, teacher certification, and a master's degree in alternative education. In February 2018, after teaching art at Riverview since 2001, Mr. Stier became its principal.

Riverview's mission is to provide an alternative education opportunity for students at risk of not graduating. Currently with 110 students enrolled and seven teachers, the school provides an excellent teacher to student ratio of one teacher for every sixteen students. Riverview accepts sophomores, juniors and seniors, principally from the Marine City and St. Clair area. In keeping with its innovative approach, students are taught in mixed-grade classrooms on a trimester schedule, allowing them to earn credits faster. The school utilizes other innovations as well; including individualized instruction, hands-on learning, project based learning, and online learning opportunities, in conjunction with classroom instruction.

Mr. Stier explains that the most common misperception about Riverview is that the school is for kids who have done something wrong. In fact, it is simply an alternative venue for students who have not responded to the traditional educational model. Another misperception is that academic standards are lower at Riverview, when in fact students have to meet the same academic requirements and standards as other students in order to graduate.

At Riverview East, Mr. Stier and his staff have created a safe, welcoming and learning- friendly environment for the school's students. He is quick to point out the importance of forming meaningful connections between staff and students at the school, describing the Riverview approach as, “Listening first, then trying to understand, and then providing support. Trust and respect are huge. Our students may not have that when they come here.” When trust and respect are achieved, “we have



Left to Right: Adrienne Luckenbacher, Jason Stier, Debra Johnson

authentic, genuine relationships between students and staff.”

Mr. Stier believes that his experience as an artist proved helpful both as a teacher and now as principal. He explains that art “teaches you how to do things in your own way, how to explore who you are, and then how to express that.” This is a lesson he hopes to pass along to his students whom he praises as “all wanting to help others in a positive way.” Plus, he adds, they are “good at figuring out new ways to approach a subject.” This is immediately apparent in the student-led projects that are a result of Riverview's project based learning approach. One notable example is the “River Rec Teen Zone,” which grew out of the efforts of a student to provide the area a teen center. Leasing space in the historic city hall, the center provides services to youth ages 13 to 19, such as employment and career skills, interest assessments, career counseling, and a mentorship and internship program.

Beyond academics, Mr. Stier and his staff also focus on the social and emotional development of their students. This concern motivated him to bring Prepare U, a 15-week mental health curriculum that helps students develop self-awareness, form health-

ier relationships and cultivate emotional resilience, to Riverview. In partnership with St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH), Prepare U supplemented the existing health curriculums at Riverview. It employs videos, experiential activities, and specially designed lesson plans that allow classroom teachers, not professional counselors, to teach the classes with minimal training. An added benefit of this approach is that it strengthens trust and relationships between staff and students.

The need to embrace innovative programs like Prepare U has never been greater. A recent study in Pediatrics magazine highlights that since 2008, the number of children thinking about or attempting suicide has doubled, primarily among kids between 12 and 17, with increases higher among girls than boys and with a majority of suicide attempts occurring during the school year. There continues to be debate about the cause of this increase but there is no doubt that the increase is occurring or that there are climbing rates of depression, anxiety and loneliness among youth. Indeed, studies indicate that at some point in their adolescence nearly half of all youth will meet the criteria for a mental health disorder, such as anxiety or depression. By proactively addressing this reality, Mr. Stier, has created an environment that will allow Riverview's students greater opportunity to succeed now and in the future. He explains that because of the program, “Students became closer, more tolerant and empathetic.”

About Principal Stier, SCCCMMH Executive Director Debra Johnson says, “From the first time I met him I was impressed with Jason's dedication to his students and staff. By bringing the Prepare U curriculum to Riverview East High School, he has provided invaluable life skills to his students.”

For his community leadership and passionate devotion to positively influencing the lives of his students, the Board of Directors of SCCCMMH is proud to name Jason Stier the 2019 SCCCMMH Community Service Award Winner.

SCCCMMH Team of the Year

The Power of Peer Supports Presentation Team

The 19th century American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson famously said, “The purpose of life is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” This perfectly defines the four members of the 2018 St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) Team of the Year, Megan Coon, Doug Miller, Lisa Tippit, and Michele Walkowski.

Individuals in recovery face many challenges. One of these challenges is accepting the assistance that may prove crucial to their success. Most of us hesitate to share the intimate details of our lives and individuals in recovery are no different. Peer Mentors like Lisa and Recovery Coaches like Megan and Doug are people who have personal lived experience with mental health or substance use disorders, who have successfully recovered, and are trained to work in a formal role in support of others in recovery. As Peers they bring a unique empathy that helps others seeking recovery to open up and accept help. This help includes such things as accompanying individuals to 12-step meetings, primary care appointments, facilitating recovery groups, and teaching targeted life skill goals like driving, grocery shopping on a budget and preparing healthy meals. Sometimes it means providing one-on-one support to someone during difficult moments.

With the expert assistance of Michelle, supervisor of our Assertive Community Treatment program, which provides an intensive and integrated treatment option to individuals receiving SCCCMMH services, Megan, Doug and Lisa independently and collectively have shared their powerful and amazing recovery stories as part of a Peer Supports Presentation Team. All four members of this team have been excellent ambassadors to individuals receiving services, their friends and families, and the com-



Left to Right: Lisa Tippit, Megan Coon, Doug Miller, and Michelle Walkowski

munity at large in any venue where their participation can have a positive effect, from one-on-one discussions between themselves and others or in front of audiences numbering in the hundreds. As a result, they have made a profound impact in the lives of individuals receiving SCCCMMH services, for whom they regularly hold the hope for others until they can hold the hope for themselves. As individuals and as a group, Megan, Doug, Lisa and Michelle's potent and motivating narratives have proven impactful, touching, and effective, promoting the value of SCCCMMH services and that

recovery is possible.

The four members of this team speak as if with one voice. Megan explains, “People may think things will never get better. That's when you have to give them hope by letting them know we were once where they are.” Doug adds that the most important thing they can do is to “teach people how to advocate for themselves,” to which Lisa adds, “You have to meet people where they are.” Michelle concludes with, “It is important that people know there is a way forward, that recovery is possible.”

About the Power of Peer Supports

Presentation Team being named the 2018 SCCCMMH Team of the Year, SCCCMMH Executive Director Debra Johnson remarked, “These individuals embody the recovery spirit and their enthusiasm for helping others on their recovery journey is inspiring.”

In recognition of their passionate dedication to assisting the recovery efforts of individuals served by SCCCMMH, the SCCCMMH Board of Directors is proud to name the Power of Peer Supports Presentation Team the 2018 SCCCMMH Team of the Year.

Second Annual Elementary School Bookmark Contest A Great Success

Several hundred students from area elementary schools participated in the second annual St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) Elementary School Bookmark Contest. Students were asked to create an original bookmark design, 2” wide by 6” long, around the theme of how being kind to others is important.

One winner was selected from each grade level K-5. Winners were judged on originality, creativity, neatness, and printability. Each winner will receive a certificate and \$25 gift card to Barnes & Noble at the SCCCMH annual award recognition dinner on May 7th at Alexander’s Premiere Banquet Facility and Catering, in Marysville. Winning bookmarks were distributed to participating schools.

The winners were:

Kindergarten	Alivia Bosco	Palms Elementary
First Grade	Emma Messer-Surdey	Belle River Elementary
Second Grade	Kaiden Walker	Belle River Elementary
Third Grade	Avery Christina Martin	Palms Elementary
Fourth Grade	Amaya Graebert	Pine River Elementary
Fifth Grade	Analeis Ming	Belle River Elementary

Marine City Middle School Student Wins Writing Contest Grand Prize

Bailey Haslem, an 8th grade student from Marine City Middle School, was selected as the Grand Prize winner in the 12th annual St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) Middle School Writing Contest for her poetry entry “Pathways.” In recognition of her accomplishment, Bailey will receive a congratulatory ribbon and \$250 prize at the SCCCMH annual award recognition dinner on May 7th at Alexander’s Premiere Banquet Facility and Catering, in Marysville.

The annual writing contest is held every year to promote May as National Mental Health Month, provide education, and to chip away at stigma associated with mental health conditions.

All entries are original, individual pieces of writing from a middle school student, grades 6 – 8, residing or attending school in St. Clair County. This year’s entries addressed the theme “Discover Wellness Within.”

All contest winners will receive prizes for their accomplishments. The complete contest results are as follows:

GRAND PRIZE WINNER	Bailey Haslem	Marine City Middle School
FICTION		
1st PLACE	Ella Webb	Marysville Middle School
2nd PLACE	Max Mylan	Central Middle School
3rd PLACE	Kate Nichols	Fort Gratiot Middle School
NONFICTION		
1st PLACE	Davie Molinaro	Central Middle School
2nd PLACE	Josefyne Russell	St. Clair Middle School
3rd PLACE	Alison Nichols	Fort Gratiot Middle School
POETRY		
1st PLACE	Lillian Rutallie	Marysville Middle School
2nd PLACE	Claire Sniesak	Memphis Junior High School
3rd PLACE	Isabelle Trombly	Central Middle School



From Left to Right:
Chris Ming, Debra D’hondt, Bailey Haslem, and Debra Johnson

GRAND PRIZE WINNER
By Bailey Haslem
Marine City Middle School
Deb D'hondt, Teacher

"PATHWAYS"

They call me a failure, a fraud, a clutz.
They say that I'm nothing
But their words, they do something.
It makes the pain too much to bear.

I look to escape
To make a new fate,
Yet they seem to always be there.

There seems to be something
That emerges from the nothing
But my conscience tells me it's wrong.

But it's all I have left
So I took the step
Even though I knew I'd be gone.

I had been warned
And for my family, I mourned
But I was through with hopelessness.

So I took the hand,
The hand of the man,
Who offered a way out of sorrow.

An escape from reality
From the mortality
An escape from the prison I'm held.

It was like a medicine
But just like all medicines
The effects eventually wore off.

But I wanted more
I don't know what for,
But I thought that it would help.

I thought I could stop
I believed I was at the top
But I was never in control.

It had control of my life
But I thought it was right
Even though I knew I was wrong.

I wanted to stop
I wanted the situation to drop
But it was too late.
I had taken the drugs

From a gang of rough thugs,
And now there was no turning back.

So I accepted my fate
But it was too late,
I was already addicted.

But then there was light
And it shined, oh so bright
At that point, I thought I was dead.

My mind was so broken
The light words were unspoken
My Savior emerged from the burst.

They told me that no fate
Was ever too late,
To make a jaw-dropping change.

All the light faded
My emotions cascaded
Over me like a waterfall.

I had been in the darkness
Broken and heartless,
For about three years too long.

But it was time for a change
To turn a new page,
To find what I had lost.

To help others in need,
To help set them free,
From the web of sorrow they wove.

To fix my mistakes,
To make my own fate,
And help others make theirs new

So I took back the wheel
To evade this ordeal
And destroy it once and for all

To let others know
That they're not alone,
And that they'll always have a home,
Here, in my heart

St. Clair High School Student Wins Best in Show in Art Contest

The artwork of Madison Cook, a sophomore at St. Clair High School, was voted “Best in Show” in the 16th annual St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) High School Art Contest.

The annual art contest is held to educate high school students about, and to chip away at stigma associated with, mental health conditions. The winning artwork is used to promote May as National Mental Health Month.

All artwork is the original, individual work of a high school student, grades 9 – 12, residing or attending school in St. Clair County. One hundred twenty-nine artists from six high schools contributed artwork to depict this year’s theme “Discover Wellness Within.”

Madison will received a congratulatory ribbon and \$250 at SCCCMH’s annual award recognition dinner on May 7th at Alexander’s Premiere Banquet Facility and Catering, in Marysville. Her winning artwork will be featured on billboards, on posters distributed to hundreds of agencies and businesses in St. Clair County, and permanently displayed in all SCCCMH locations.

All contest winners will receive prizes for their accomplishments. The complete contest results are as follows:

BEST IN SHOW	Madison Cook	St. Clair High School
1st PLACE	Tyler Bieszczad	Marysville High School
2nd PLACE	Samantha Howell	St. Clair High School
3rd PLACE	Megan Debuf	Port Huron High School
People's Choice	Autumn Krawczyk	Marysville High School
Honorable Mention	Jolene Kruskie	Marysville High School
	Helanea Cokonougher	Landmark Academy
	Brooklynn Wilton	Landmark Academy



Left to Right: Cindy Whisman, Madison Cook,
Debra Johnson & Ronald Miller

2018 St. Clair County Community Mental Health Board of Directors

Officers
Edwin J. Priemer, Chairman
Nancy Thomson, Vice Chairman
Julie Jowett-Lee,
Secretary/Treasurer

General Membership
Lori Ames
J. Stephen Armstrong
Jackie Bligh
Anthony Essian
Mark Paulus
Ed Rieves
Martha Partipilo
Mike Smith
Sue White

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Lisa Clark
Lawrence Doherty
Cheryl LaFrance
Nancy Levitt
Richard Parker
Martha Partipilo
Mark Paulus
Cynthia Raymo
Alice Rieves
Ed Rieves
Amy Sanderson
Nancy Thomson
Antoinette Tucker

2018 Recipient Rights Advisory Committee

Nancy Thomson – Chairperson
Lori Ames
Sue Bolton
Georgina Day
Barbara Deegan
John Duddy
Roselia Mirabelli
Ed Rieves
Adelle Schwan
JoAnn Wilton

2018 St. Clair County Board of Commissioners

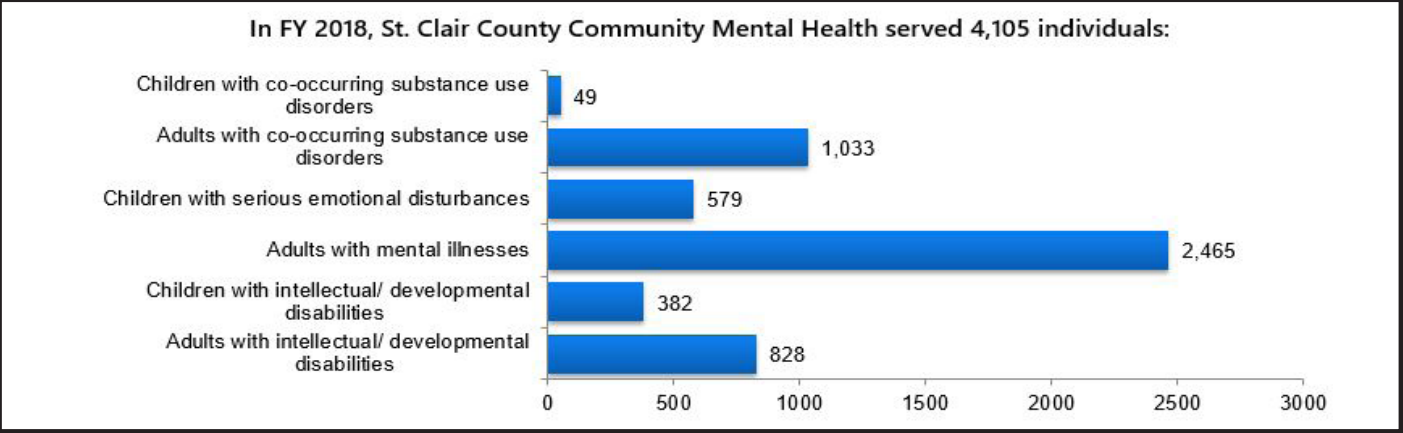
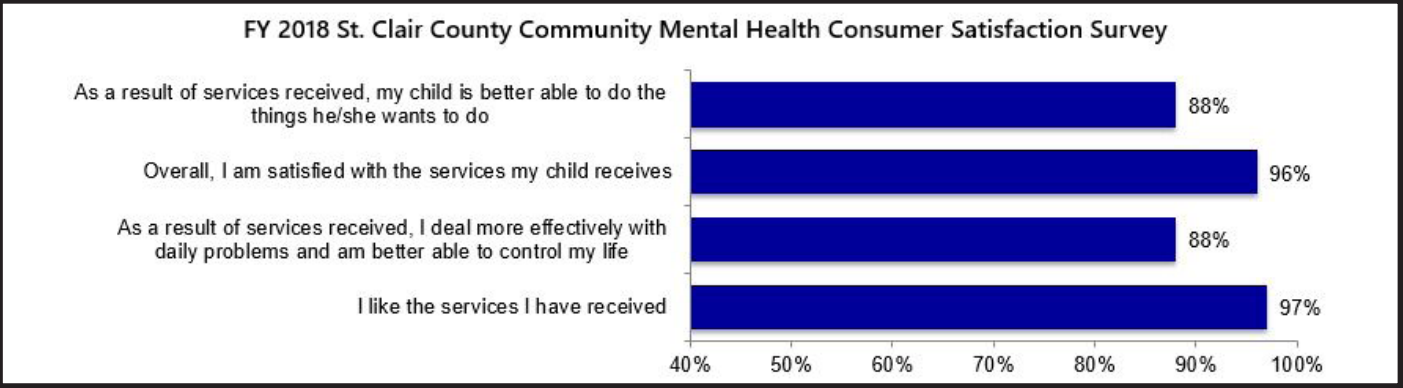
Greg McConnell
Karl Tomion
Howard Heidemann
Duke Dunn
Jeffrey L. Bohm
David Rushing
Bill Gratopp

St. Clair County Community Mental Health Program Operations
Revenue and Expenditures
October 1, 2017 - September 30, 2018

REVENUE	
Medicaid, including MI Child and Autism Benefit	\$ 45,565,772
Healthy Michigan Plan	\$ 3,812,031
General Fund	\$ 1,463,839
Local Funds	\$ 1,143,562
Other	\$ 4,103,216
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 56,088,420

EXPENDITURES	
Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities	\$ 32,009,970
Mental Illness - Adults	\$ 12,824,188
Mental Illness - Children	\$ 5,111,546
Other	\$ 4,961,189
St. Clair Share of Managed Care Administration	\$ 525,153
St. Clair Share of PIHP Delegated Administration	\$ 484,675
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 55,916,721
Net Revenue in Excess of Expenditures	
	\$ 171,699

CMH Local Fund Balance Increase	
General Fund Services Surplus	\$ 54,787
Local Funds Surplus	\$ 38,838
	\$ 93,625
General Fund Services Lapse	\$ 78,074
TOTAL	\$ 171,699



2018 St. Clair County Community Mental Health Management Team	
Debra B. Johnson, MSA	Executive Director
Mohammad Saeed, M.D.	Medical Director
Tracey Pingitore, MM	Associate Director of Administration
Kathleen Gallagher, LMSW	Program Director
Karen A. Farr, CPA	Finance Director
Dann Hayes, BS, A+	Information Technology Director
Michelle Measel-Morris, MA, MA, PhD	Support Services Director

COMMUNITY IMPACT
2018 by the Numbers

