

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF EVANSVILLE STATE HOSPITAL



Mental Health Awareness Month is May

By Gene Schadler, L.C.S.W., Superintendent

May is National Mental Health Month where we celebrate 70 years of raising awareness related to reducing stigma, understanding mental health and treatment. Stigma is when someone, or you yourself, views the person/self in a negative way because of a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as judgment from someone else or a feeling that is internal, something that confuses feeling bad with being bad. Although we know mental health conditions are brain based disorders that effect physical health and quality of life. We are all connected with someone or our very selves struggle with mental health conditions. Going through life struggling with shame, isolation, blame, secrecy to hide our condition keeps us from getting the help and support that we need. With some disorders like Schizophrenia we often discuss the concept of “agnosia”, which means the person does not have the awareness of the illness. This lack of insight is part of what keeps them from getting the treatment that they need but on the other hand it prevents them from experiencing the negative aspects of having a mental illness, e.g. shame. As we see the number of mental health diagnoses, addictions and suicides increase there is never a more important time to look at how we handle our own mental health and how we support others struggling with mental health problems.

Part of our culture at Evansville State Hospital is the use of Compassionate Communication. This is a goal that helps us reduce stigma as we actively work to empathically listen to one another without judgment. Although we cannot meet every need of everyone all of the time, by intently listening and educating why we cannot meet a need lets the other person know that we hear them. This requires awareness of our communication and practice. Although the concepts of listening without judgment, making observations of what you see/hear, reflecting the other person’s feelings, listening for the need being expressed and making a request so it is heard sounds simple in theory; however, it is difficult to use on a regular basis. We are all on this learning curve that requires mindfulness to the concepts and practice.

Managing our mental health is something that is important for all of us. We do not have to wait until we face a crisis to use these skills since they build health both physically and emotionally. Recommendations from clinical wisdom and research to manage our mental health include:

- Express your thoughts and feelings whether to others, in a journal or artistic media. Remember that there is more space out in the world than inside our bodies.
- Be mindful of thoughts that create more negativity in life to have more balance with my thought processes.
- Keep active with yardwork, gardening, or exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet to give ourselves the right mix of nutrients to stay healthy.
- The use of play which helps us to lose ourselves and lighten our mood. Play can occur individually or in community with others. (Continued on Page 2)

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Congratulations to the East Side Lions Club & Fr. Ted Tempel on their Volunteer of the Year Service Awards!



Through The Decades

For this year's spring event, patients were transported back in time to games and music from the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's. On the morning of April 5th, units were busy with activities from generations past - patients learning steps to popular group dances such as the Electric Slide and YMCA, guessing the



Tonya Smith, Kelly Kissel, Donna Mesker and Shane Hickrod mimic Kiss at the talent show.

contents of mystery boxes, pulling oversized blocks in a life-sized Jenga game, swaying their hips to keep the rotation of hula hoops, posing for glamour shots, and focusing on hand and eye coordination while playing with jacks, yo-yo's, and vintage paddle balls. Trivia in the afternoon kept things lively at the talent show that featured well-known entertainers Kiss, The Judds, and Elton John. A good time was had by all!



The oversized Jenga game promoted teamwork.

(Continued from Page 1) Mental Health Month provides the opportunity to reflect on how we manage stigma and balance with our own lives. Are we surviving life or thriving? Keep in mind that the use of skills to manage mental health is good health for all of us and helps us to thrive in life to be the best version of ourselves. Likewise, taking care of ourselves as we use the skills for good mental health enables Evansville State Hospital staff to provide the best for patient care.

Losers Drop 121 Pounds!

17 staff signed up for the Biggest Loser Challenge that ran through March 29 for six weeks. 12 individuals lost a total of 121 pounds. Winners were Patty Torrence, Nursing Service who had a weight loss percentage of 13% and Andy Hartmann, Peer Specialist with a weight loss percentage of 8%. These employees received gift baskets from the E Shape Fitness Committee.



Andy found success with a keto diet and intermittent fasting. He's down a total of 75 pounds since the beginning of December. He is just now starting to include exercise in his regimen, walking or jogging for a mile at a time. He wants to break his consumption of diet sodas and still treats himself to a buffet on occasion. He's taking it one step at a time. Patty found reducing her calorie intake was key in dropping the weight, eating lots of healthy low calorie vegetables. She's now motivated to continue with her personal weight loss goals. Congratulations Patty & Andy!

2019 Graduates

Linda Beane, Fiscal Management: Daughter Lindsey Waters is graduating from USI with a bachelor's degree in Business Management along with a certificate in Human Resources.

Renee Gibbs, Nursing Service: Son Kameron Sanders is graduating from the 8th grade at Lincoln and will be attending Bosse High School.

Jessica Golba, Quality Management: Son Jacob is graduating from Memorial High School.

Linda Hogan, Security: Son Jeremy Hogan will receive his Welding associates degree from Ivy Tech Community College on May 10th. He received an associates degree in HVAC in 2017.



Carol Irick, Nursing Service: Son Quincy graduated from Mt. Vernon Senior High School. He has volunteered with his choir friends over the holidays at ESH.

Meagen Madison, Nursing Service: Daughters Makayla Madison will graduate from Hebron Elementary, 5th Grade on May 22, and Justine Rossiter from Plaza Park International Prep Academy, 8th grade on May 22.

Dale & Penny Rhoads, Nursing Service: Granddaughter Kadessa Rhoads will graduate from Central High School on May 20th and plans to study cosmetology or funeral directing.

Tonya Smith, Rehab Therapy: Son Reagan M. Smith will be graduating from North High School and attending USI in the fall.



Memorial Tree

Employees, family and friends celebrated the life of Keith Lamb with a tree planting ceremony on April 4. A pink dogwood tree was planted next to the memorial bench near the North employee parking area. It has been one year since the passing of Keith and many took this opportunity to reunite and share memories.



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COMMUNITY CONNECTION is published every other month for friends of Evansville State Hospital. News items are welcome and should be submitted to the Community Services Office.

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Hospital Needs

- Flow magazine subscription
- Amazon gift cards
- Shoe Carnival gift cards

Volunteers Needed

Friend to Friend Volunteers - male sponsors to befriend our patients and visit with them once a month.

New Employees

*Mikka Cawthorne, Nursing Service
Scott McCrary, Nursing Service
Jessica Sapp, Nursing Service
Melissa Woodcock, Fiscal Management*



Saving Lives - 10 pints of blood were donated at the April Blood Drive!

Staff pose for a group picture in support of cancer survivors at ESH.



Goodbye Employees

*Troy Dickerson, Physical Plant
Karla Ewing, Nursing Service
Melinda Johnson, Nursing Service
Kathy Southers, Secretary
David Wirtz, Information Technology*