



# MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA SAYS LIVE YOUR LIFE WELL!

During these difficult times, Mental Health America wants you to know that there are tools that can buffer the effects of stress and help them cope better with the many challenges they face. This May, in honor of Mental Health Month, Mental Health America of Wisconsin’s national office is launching the *Live Your Life Well* campaign to provide people with 10 specific research-based tools that can combat stress and promote health and well-being.



From relaxation techniques to journaling exercises to simple ways to get better sleep and improve eating habits, the materials offer a wide range of resources to build resiliency and well-being. The newly developed *Live Your Life Well* web site includes information on seeking the help of a mental health professional, fact sheet swith information to help your family cope during these tough economic times, in addition to fact sheets on stress, depression and staying well when you have a mental health condition. You can also take the “How Stressed Are You?” quiz.

For information, visit our web site at [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org). We will have a direct link to the *Live Your Life Well* web site. If you’re interested brochures or fact sheets directly related to this program, please contact us at [info@mhawiscosin.org](mailto:info@mhawiscosin.org), or (414) 276-3122.

For additional brochures and fact sheets on stress, depression, personality disorders, PTSD, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders and more, visit the publications section of our web site.

### The 10 Tools to Living Your Life Well

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Connect with others         | 2. Stay positive                         |
| 3. Get physically active       | 4. Help others                           |
| 5. Get enough sleep            | 6. Create joy and satisfaction           |
| 7. Eat well                    | 8. Take care of your spirit              |
| 9. Deal better with hard times | 10. Get professional help if you need it |

## ONLINE FORUM GIVES FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



Mental Health America of Wisconsin’s national office recently launched realLIVES, a unique online community where mental health consumers can share their experiences of living with a mental health condition through original writing, artwork and poetry. This one-of-a-kind web site is a bold step toward acclimating mental health conditions into Americans’ daily lives by breaking the silence that shrouds mental illness in America.

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## ONLINE FORUM

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realLIVES gives a voice to the 60 million Americans living with mental illness by creating an environment where both daily struggles and personal triumphs can be shared freely and anonymously.

The nearly 200 stories published on realLIVES chronicle each step on the journey to recovery. The works come from diverse groups of consumers who want to help people understand what it's like to live with a mental health condition and, in many cases, offer hope to those who struggle in silence.

For more information and a link to the realLIVES online forum, visit [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org).

## MHA IS GOING GREEN! THE BELL IS NOW AVAILABLE VIA EMAIL

This issue of *The Bell* marks a milestone: its our first edition that's officially available in an online version that will be emailed to those members who signed up for the e-newsletter rather than the paper version. We were very pleased with the response we received from people after offering this option in our Spring edition.

If you would like to receive *The Bell* via email, you can subscribe by visiting the homepage of our web site at [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org).

*The Bell* will still be mailed in print format for members who prefer that option.

## Public Policy

# IT'S TIME TO RETURN 17-YEAR-OLDS TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mental Health America's Position Statement 51 on Children with Emotional Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System sums it up pretty well: a correctional facility is a very bad place to put a child with an emotional disorder. Unfortunately, since mental health concerns may increase impulsive and aggressive behaviors, and because access to community-based mental health services are inadequate in much of Wisconsin, many youth with emotional disturbances do end up in the criminal justice system. A sample of 17 year olds on probation taken between 2002 and 2006 found that 65% had mental health issues. Yet for more than a decade, 17-year-olds in Wisconsin have been treated as adults in the criminal justice system and are therefore unable to benefit from the rehabilitative programs offered to teens in the juvenile system.

Mental Health America believes that placing children with emotional disorders in correctional facilities imposes special

obligations on society. Therefore we think that it is unacceptable to continue the current policy of placing 17 y/o into the adult system. For that reason MHA-Wisconsin supports the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families' initiative to return 17 year olds to the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court. You can, too, by signing on to a statement of support at: [http://wccf.org/justice\\_statementofagreement.php](http://wccf.org/justice_statementofagreement.php)

Two other things you can do:

1. You can get more information on this issue at: [www.wccf.org/justice\\_pub.php](http://www.wccf.org/justice_pub.php)
2. You can contact your legislators and tell them that we need to improve access to mental health services for youth in Wisconsin. You can read about the problems with Wisconsin's mental health system in a paper prepared by the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health: [http://www.mhawisconsin.org/Content/current\\_bills.asp](http://www.mhawisconsin.org/Content/current_bills.asp)

## MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA CELEBRATES CENTURY OF ACHIEVEMENT



Mental Health America's national office will mark a century of achievement at the **2009 Centennial Conference and Gala—Celebrating the Legacy, Forging the Future**— in Washington, DC, **June 10-13**. The conference will bring together advocates, educators, researchers, health professionals, and business and community leaders. Mental Health America of Wisconsin is an affiliate of the national office and has been serving the community for nearly 80 years.

Over the past century, MHA has transformed our nation's approach to mental health by working to create a just, humane and healthy society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and prejudice.

Mental Health America of Wisconsin will be represented by Steve Simon, President & CEO; David Franczyk, Board Chair; Judy McGregor, Board Chair-Elect; Kristina Finnel, MHA's Director of Programs; and Shel Gross, MHA's Director of Public Policy.

To view MHA's proud and rich history, visit [www.mentalhealthamerica.com](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.com).

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUPS

A support group is a safe place where people gather to share their feelings and concerns with one another. Typically, mental health professionals and peer facilitators who volunteer their services lead these groups.

Mental Health America has more than 100 different mental health related support groups listed on its web site: [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org). There are support groups ranging from Depression and Anxiety to Grief and Post-Traumatic Stress.

MHA also offers a support group for people who have suffered the loss of a loved one to suicide called *Survivors Helping Survivors*.

For a complete listing of support groups, visit our web site at [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org).

# MHA'S WEB SITE – 2008 BY THE NUMBERS

Mental Health America of Wisconsin's (MHA) web site has experienced an incredible amount of growth over the last couple of years, particularly in 2008 as we started adding online, searchable directories for mental health information and resources, as well as more statewide resources. Following is a list of MHA's 2008 web site statistics, which includes the areas of our web site most visited by our users:

- Total Visits: 357,000
- Monthly Average: 30,000
- Statewide Resources by County: 46,000 (4,000/month)
- Mental Health and Wellness Resource Directory: 29,000 (2,400/month)

- Support Groups Directory: 25,000 (2,100/month)
  - Mental Health Care Provider Directory: 21,000 (1,800/month)
  - Information by Topic: 19,000 (1,600/month)
  - Online Mental Health Screening: 6,900 (600/month)
  - Send to a Friend: 4,000 (300/month).
- Note: This is when a user forwards information from our web site to someone else.

# MHA STAFF VOLUNTEERS

Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) would like to welcome several new staff members and report several internal staff changes.

**Kristina Finnel**, formerly Manager for MHA's Strong Families Healthy Homes program, has accepted the position of MHA's Director of Programs. In her new position, Kristina will oversee all MHA programs and initiatives including Community and Business Outreach; Strong Families Healthy Homes; Information and Assistance; Suicide Prevention; and more.

Kristina graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work and a Master of Arts Degree in Social Work. She is also licensed as an Advanced Practice Social Worker (APSW).

**Martina Gollin-Graves**, formerly a Family Advocate for MHA's Invisible Children's Program, has accepted the position of MHA's Community Outreach Coordinator. In her new position, Martina will develop and provide local and statewide mental health education presentations; trainings and workshops; and develop and coordinate community mental health programs, training and outreach to targeted populations.

Martina graduated with an M.A. in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which included clinical training and administrative social work training.

**Shelia Thomson** has joined MHA as an Administrative Assistant. In her new position, Shelia will coordinate office maintenance, building and technology; assist with agency clerical needs; and assist with event planning and coordination.

Shelia joins MHA from Clifton Gunderson LLP where she has served as a Growth Team Assistant since 2006.

**Beth Lappin and Kellie Simons** have joined MHA as a Family Advocates in the Invisible Children's Program. Family Advocate responsibilities include home and community visits with clients; family group activities; collaboration with client providers; and facilitation of classes targeted to parenting, wellness and recovery.

Beth graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with an M.A. in Social Work.

Kellie graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work.

**Letisha Rena Pitts** has joined MHA as an Intern in the Invisible Children's Program. In her position, Letisha will maintain client charts, assist with curriculum development; assist parents and children in empowerment plans; and help parents and children understand their mental health issues.

Letisha graduated from Carthage College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work. She also has a degree in Biomedical Sciences (BS) and Criminal Law (BA) from Marquette University.

Visit MHA's web site at [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org)

# WHAT ENTERCOM LISTENERS TOLD US

MHA and the Charles E. Kubly Foundation recently completed our year long social marketing effort with Entercom Communications three Milwaukee Radio Stations – WXSS FM, WMYX FM and WSSP AM. This multi-media effort included on-air radio messages, web-based educational materials and even the distribution of music download cards designed to take young people through an educational landing page. Our goal was to educate people that mental illnesses are real common and treatable and to reduce the stigma that prevents people from talking about mental health problems. Through radio station microsites we were able to provide access to local resources.

In order to learn about the impact of this campaign Entercom conducted a listener

survey. The results suggest that we were very successful in accomplishing our goals. Of the 3200 people who completed an online survey, 28% had seen or heard the educational campaign. While this is not a random sample, if the sample does reflect the broader listening population it means that more than 140,000 people in southeast Wisconsin were impacted by the campaign messages. Of those who heard the campaign 5.7% of people reported actually seeking help for themselves. Among our primary target audience of youth and young adults who listen to WXSS-FM, 8.2% reported seeking help.

Even more encouraging is that almost 15% of those who heard the campaign reported talking to a friend or family member about a mental health concern

they thought that the other person might be experiencing. Given that much of our campaign was devoted to helping people identify when someone close to them might be having a problem and breaking down the resistance to talking about it, this suggests that the campaign messages were quite effective.

Finally, 56% of respondents said they would be more likely to talk openly about a mental health problem they thought they might be having. And a startling 83% said they thought the campaign would help people feel less embarrassed or ashamed about needing help. These results suggest that our community is open to hearing and responding to messages about seeking help for mental health problems.

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT MHA PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT [WWW.MHAWISCONSIN.ORG](http://WWW.MHAWISCONSIN.ORG)

## *The Bell*

*The Bell* is a quarterly publication that provides resources and information related to mental health issues. *The Bell* furthers our mission to promote mental health, prevent mental disorders, and achieve victory over mental illness through advocacy, education, information and support.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Contact Danielle Lennie at Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) at (414) 276-3122.

**Phone** (414) 276-3122  
**Fax** (414) 276-3124  
**Address** 734 North 4th Street, Ste. 200  
Milwaukee, WI 53203-2121

For more information on mental health issues, visit our web site at [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org)



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