



# Advocate

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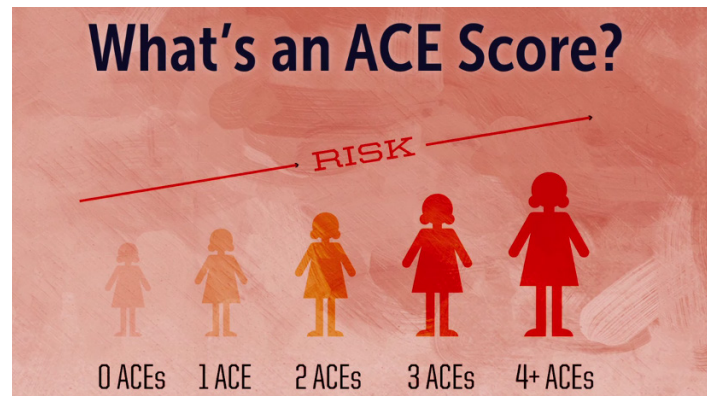
## ACEs: Understanding the Link Between Traumatic Childhood Experiences and Adult Health

by Brandi Allen

“But how did you turn out so stable?” Some variation of that question is often what I hear after I’ve told someone about my own childhood—a childhood that had its fair share of what we are now calling “ACEs” or Adverse Childhood Experience(s). ACEs broadly fall into the categories of abuse, neglect and household dysfunction. Anyone can take the brief ACE quiz online to get a score reflecting, for example, how much domestic violence was witnessed as a child, if there was sexual or physical abuse, or if a parent was ever incarcerated. The score then indicates a person’s risk for physical or mental illness and other detrimental outcomes as adults.

So what’s all the excitement about? We all know that unfortunately some kids grow up with hard lives, right? The robust and quickly growing ACEs research is teaching us that ACEs are far more common across all races and socio-economic statuses than we may have imagined, and that they are exceptional predictors of chronic illness in adulthood. In childhood, 28% of us have experienced physical abuse, 27% substance abuse, 20% sexual abuse, and 13% of us have witnessed domestic violence. We can reliably look to a person’s ACE score to predict liver disease, lung cancer, diabetes, COPD, depression, suicide attempts and many other physical and mental challenges. Heart disease is better predicted by one’s ACE score than even the presence of high blood pressure and other traditional indicators. A healthcare provider working with the knowledge of their patient’s ACE score is empowered in a radical new way to support their patient back to health.

In partnership with the Gateway Film Center and Directions for Youth and Families (DFYF), we hosted a public screening of the documentary *Resilience* to raise awareness of ACEs research and its public health impact. For our post-movie panel, we brought in two experts on ACEs-informed treatment approaches: Dr. Bobbie Beale from Case Western University and Carol Taylor from Franklin County Family and Children First Council. Alongside them, DFYF’s CEO, Duane Casares, spoke about the hope that comes even from simply recognizing the impact of childhood trauma in adulthood. We know that these experiences—which are often completely out of a child’s control—can change



the structure and function of their brains. Fortunately, the trauma-informed care built out of ACEs research is helping providers to more accurately conceptualize, diagnose and treat families in distress.

Not once in the *Resilience* documentary was there an implied sense of doom for those of us who have high ACE scores. We all have the capacity to build resilience. Research has proven, for example, that the presence of even one relationship with a stable, caring adult can create the necessary buffer between a child and the detrimental long-term effects of toxic stress. That is certainly a factor for my own relative health as an adult.

MHAFC asks you—can you be the buffer for a child in Central Ohio? Or, can you help be a mouthpiece for ACEs awareness and lead someone to better health that way? Find out your own ACE score and learn more at [www.cestudy.org](http://www.cestudy.org) and [www.cestoohigh.com](http://www.cestoohigh.com).

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You can overcome life’s hurdles. We can help. Visit [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org).

# To Your Mental Health

by Kenton Beachy



## 2016: A Look Back

When I started last year, I compared MHAFC to a passenger train picking up speed, adding more cars and more passengers to deliver to their destinations. Our passengers include our various funders, mental

health consumers, a very competent staff, and quality trustees on our leadership board. It's most appropriate to come back to that analogy when thinking of what's taken place at MHAFC over the last year.

Through some very detailed strategic planning in the fall of 2015, we actually mapped out our train route for 2016 and 2017 and made plans for outfitting each car on the train in the best way possible. Curious yet? Let me tell you what our cars have been up to.

We lost a most beloved staff member, Neal Edgar, to retirement after 15 years as our **Ombudsman**. Neal also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Social Workers. We welcomed to the position seasoned social work veteran LeeAnn Mattes, former Director of our Pro Bono Counseling Program. We also welcomed Tracy Moebius as our new part-time Ombudsman serving COVA Southeast, and thanks to a generous grant from The Columbus Foundation commissioned a custom online Ombudsman database and bought new computer equipment.

LeeAnn's move to Ombudsman resulted in welcoming Sheronda Palmore as our new **Pro Bono Counseling Program Director**. Sheronda has brought energy, a host of newly recruited volunteer therapists, and a sharp increase in both requests for service and successful linkages of clients and counselors—in not just Franklin County, but also in our program expansion to Delaware and Fairfield Counties. And thanks to funding from the Fairfield County ADAMH Board, we opened an office in downtown Lancaster with prime signage on Main Street.

Thanks to the efforts of Tonya Fulwider and Maureen Provenzale, **POEM** trained the largest class of mentors in the history of the program dating back to 2008 and developed a new comprehensive training binder. POEM has far exceeded service

projections this year and added four new providers who are making referrals via POEM's direct fax referral program. Our educational programming menu added a Work-Life Balance workshop and continued strong De-escalation and Mental Health First Aid trainings. We hosted a sold out Community Program with about 250 in attendance and put on a very successful Children's Mental Health Conference about social media.

In 2016 **Get Connected** experienced a total facelift. Megan Daugherty spearheaded the shift from what used to be a 10-week program to 6 weeks, and created content now presented in an easy-to-use, professionally printed workbook. We reached eight new locations in Central Ohio, including groups at Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare and Franklin County Corrections Center on Jackson Pike. Now more than ever, this program is reaching individuals who really need it. To keep up with this growth, Megan has trained Brandi Allen to join her as a second facilitator.

**"We're very proud of how in 2016 we've been able to transform how people think about mental illness, make it easier to get help, and give people the support they need to get better and stay better!"**

Brandi also moved into managing our **Support Groups**. She created information packets for new group attendees and has been meeting face-to-face with all of our group facilitators. This all adds up to building a proactive "engagement loop" for our attendees and alleviating some of the isolation and thanklessness the nature of support groups has for our dear volunteer facilitators.

Our **Development and Marketing Program** experienced some phenomenal growth this year through Maggie Hallett's efforts. She and Tonya pulled off a coup by bringing in Momastery's nationally known author, blogger, and inspirational speaker, Glennon Doyle Melton, to headline at our sold out Give Mom the Mic fundraiser benefitting POEM. Proceeds of over \$41,000 exceeded projections by nearly 65%! And Derek Davis, a brave young man willing to talk publicly about his challenges with anxiety and depression, graced us

*See Kenton on page 3.*

# Community Matters

*Kenton cont'd*

with a crowd-funded bicycle and kayak trek from Columbus to Cincinnati that raised \$5,500, received coverage in *The Columbus Dispatch*, and raised awareness to such an extent that calls for help to our agency spiked.

Administratively, we kept up with all this activity through the efforts of George Henry and Maureen Traverse. They created a new budgeting system by cost center, negotiated a reduction in our workers compensation costs, developed an electronic timesheet system, helped convert an outdated database program to a professional CRM called NEON, and moved our payroll to a new company providing direct deposit.

We also created a brand new Workplace Wellbeing program designed to help organizations of any size assess employee psychological wellbeing and then address workplace issues such as turnover, morale, productivity, and absenteeism by identifying their actual causes and how to make improvements. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services funded this assessment for eight of its licensed providers in Ohio, and we anticipate turning this social enterprise into a line of business that corporate Columbus and other Ohio businesses will value.

As you can see, we've better equipped and added to the cars on the MHAFC train through a lot of hard work by some very diligent and competent staff, board members, and volunteers. We're very proud of how in 2016 we've been able to transform how people think about mental illness, make it easier to get help, and give people the support they need to get better and stay better!

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### Holiday shop on Amazon and support MHAFC!

Through the Amazon Smile program, 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to the charity of your choice. Sign-up is simple:

- Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and sign into your existing Amazon account.
- Search and select Mental Health America of Franklin County to make it your charity of choice.
- The purchasing process and products are exactly the same on AmazonSmile as they are on Amazon.

Donating has never been as quick and easy! Please share with your friends and family and help MHAFC continue to provide all of our much-needed services.

# TVBH

**TWIN VALLEY  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE**

## Holiday Magic Gift Drive to Benefit Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare

MHAFC is pleased to once again collect holiday gifts for as many as 400 patients at Twin Valley. Items may be dropped off at our offices during normal business hours (Monday - Friday, 8:30 - 5:00) now through Friday, December 9. You may also make a donation for Twin Valley staff to purchase items on your behalf. Simply include the memo *Holiday Magic* on your check or contribution form. Checks should be made payable to "Volunteer Service Council." For a full wish list, please visit our website: [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org).

### Board Spotlight

**Kelly Reo** is Vice President of Marketing and Enterprise Information at Navigator Management Partners, a management and technology consulting firm in Columbus. Kelly joined Navigator in 2004, and transitioned from client facing roles



when Navigator asked her to develop and lead internal operations at a time of significant company growth. Kelly's community involvement has spanned education, healthcare and human services, providing leadership to boards and representing non-profit organizations at community events. Kelly also generously shares her creative talents to develop events that provide opportunities to promote awareness and raise funds to support initiatives that spark her passion. MHAFC has ignited Kelly's passion to help break down the stigma associated with mental illness and to help ensure that those with mental illness have access to the services they need. Kelly lives in Grandview with her husband Eric and their two children, Savina and Luca.



# MHAFC News



Mental Health America of Franklin County's eighth annual signature event, *Laughing Away the Blues*, raised close to \$75,000!

Guests at the sold out event enjoyed a cocktail reception with extremely lively live and silent auctions and a paddle raise. We were proud to have Derek Davis tell his moving story about his struggles with depression and anxiety and how MHAFC's services changed his life.

We are so grateful to our extraordinary comedian, David Granirer of Stand Up for Mental Health. And for our amazing auctioneer, Chris Davis of Auction Ohio. Most importantly, we are overwhelmed with appreciation for everyone who came and supported us that evening. It's events like these that allow us to continue to pursue our life-changing mission.



## Our Generous Sponsors

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## Special thanks to our Laughing Away The Blues auction donors!

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Westerville Therapeutic Massage  
Wolf's Ridge Brewing  
YMCA of Central Ohio  
Yoga on High

## Holiday Health and Giving Guide

Make this season bright with MHAFC!

When making your holiday list, please consider including MHAFC in your plans. With numerous avenues to give, your support is not only tax deductible—it also helps us to continue our life-saving mission to promote mental health and improve the lives of those affected by mental health issues through advocacy, education and support services.

**Membership:** Consider a gift of \$60 in 2016 for our 60th anniversary. It will make a meaningful and immediate difference! You can also make a Tribute Gift in honor, or in memory, of someone special in your life. Visit our website or call our Development Office: 614-221-1441, ext. 105 to learn more or donate.

**Volunteer:** MHAFC's award-winning Pro Bono Counseling Program relies entirely on mental health professionals to meet the needs of uninsured and under-insured residents of Franklin County. Or join our behind-the-scenes team and help us with a variety of projects—from marketing and fundraising to administration and outreach. Your gifts of talent and time will be appreciated.

**Holiday Magic:** We are delighted to once again collect holiday gifts for the patients at Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare. Visit our website, [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org), for the full wish list.

**Planned Giving:** By including MHAFC in your estate planning, you can ensure your legacy gift will have a direct and meaningful impact in our community.

**Get Social:** Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and stay tuned to LinkedIn for the latest news and announcements. Help us #StopTheCrazyTalk by sharing our anti-stigma message.

# Thank You!

## To Our Recent Members & Donors (July 1 - October 31)

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Andy and Diane Dunn  
Leigh Householder

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John K. Lear

### *In Honor of MJ R*

Janice Rond

### *In honor of Mike Wilkinson*

Linda Wilkinson

### *In Memory of Adam Clevenger*

Anonymous

***MHAFc would like to thank The Columbus Foundation for its generous \$9,198 grant in support of our Ombudman Program to develop a new, online, customized database and update our computer technology.***

*We make every attempt to accurately acknowledge our donors. To report an error or omission, please contact Maggie Hallett: 614-221-1441 x105 or mhallett@mhafc.org.*



# Programs

## MHAFC Educates on Social Media and Mental Health

Our annual Children's Conference took a different angle this year and focused on how social media impacts the mental health of adolescents. We brought in Dr. Ali Mattu, a clinical psychologist at Columbia University who hosts the popular youtube channel, THE PSYCH SHOW and advocates for the brain and behavior sciences through the American Psychological Association. We also had local psychologist, Dr. Jon Ackerman, Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research at Nationwide Children's Hospital, talk to us about social media as a suicide contagion. A great crowd of over 150 mental health professionals learned about the specific social media channels and how clients both use and are impacted by them.

We also had an overwhelming interest in our community screening of *Resilience*, a documentary about Adverse Childhood Events, as discussed in our lead story. Because of the expressed interest, we sold out the 250-seat theater at The Gateway Film Center. The screenings were followed by panel discussions featuring local ACEs experts Dr. Bobbi Beale from Case Western University, who specializes in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology; Duane Casares, CEO of Directions for Youth & Families; and Carol Taylor of the Franklin County Family and Children First Council.



Dr. Jon Ackerman and Dr. Ali Mattu pose together after sharing their expertise on social media and adolescent mental health.



A big thank you to our screening panelists: Dr. Bobbi Beale, Duane Casares, Carol Taylor and moderator, Kenton Beachy.

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