



# Advocate

Kenton Beachy, Executive Director

Maureen Traverse, Editor

## MHAFC To Host Franklin Co. Suicide Prevention Coalition

by Maureen Traverse

While answering the phone at a crisis line, Kenton Beachy sometimes found himself talking with someone who was contemplating suicide. On one such call, he remembers telling the person on the other end, “I care about what happens to you,” and being met with confusion. The caller could not understand why someone else cared, and yet to Beachy it was so clear. “What do you say?” he asks, recalling the experience. “I care because you’re another human in distress.” For Beachy, that encounter is evidence of the intensity of suffering that can lead to suicide. As Beachy puts it, “Seemingly intolerable pain is a reason that people believe ending their lives is the best and, in some cases, only way to be relieved of that pain.”

When someone reaches such a crisis point, the hope is they will ask for help or a loved one will intervene, but sadly we know that does not always happen. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death nationally, the second among fourteen to thirty-year-olds. In Ohio, we lose someone to suicide on average every five hours. In 2017, 187 Franklin County residents lost their lives to suicide. Still, most suicides are preventable with a coordinated community response, which is why over the last two years Beachy has worked with other local agencies to energize the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition. This year, the Coalition chose MHAFC as its host and fiscal agent, and the ADAMH (Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health) Board of Franklin County awarded funding to hire a full-time director who will be based at the MHAFC office. The Coalition seeks to consolidate the community’s response in order to build awareness, develop effective prevention and timely intervention strategies, augment grief and postvention support, and better understand and address gaps in the county’s response to suicide.

Working alongside MHAFC on the Coalition at this point are six other local mental health care agencies and providers: the ADAMH Board of Franklin County, Columbus Public Health, Franklin County LOSS, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, North Central Mental Health Services, and Netcare Access. That roster is growing, and Beachy expects the Coalition will expand to twenty-five or more members in the coming years.

### Suicide Death Rates

	Number of Deaths by Suicide	Rate per 100,000 Population	State Rank
Ohio	1,650	13.89	33
Nationally	44,193	13.26	



On average, one person dies by suicide every five hours in the state.



Based on most recent 2015 data from CDC

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Dr. John Ackerman is the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and serves on the Coalition with Beachy. While statistics suggest we are at a challenging moment, he remains optimistic. “It is critical that we take advantage of the shared resources here in Franklin County,” Ackerman says. “There are already so many strong partnerships, and there is a lot of innovative (See “Suicide Prevention” on page 6.)

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# To Your Mental Health

by Kenton Beachy



## Growth & Expansion

Ohio's own Thomas Edison once said, "We often miss opportunity because it's dressed in overalls and looks like work." At MHAFC we embrace the hard work it takes to seize opportunities to serve ever

more people in need of mental health services. And we've been finding those opportunities multiplying as we embrace the work of making ideas become practice. In particular, our ADAMH partners in Franklin, Fairfield, and Delaware-Morrow Counties have offered tremendous opportunities to expand our reach.

We're thrilled to be the host agency of the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition through Franklin County ADAMH funding. This Coalition is the fruit of a two-year planning process involving Nationwide Children's Hospital, North Central Mental Health Services, Netcare Access, Franklin County LOSS, Columbus Public Health, and Franklin County ADAMH. Our goal is to coalesce the suicide prevention work of many different Franklin County providers to reduce both the attempted and completed suicide rates in the county by 20% over the next five years. The Coalition will act as the primary and overall coordinating influence for suicide prevention efforts. Look for increased public awareness of suicide prevention resources in Franklin County and social media activity around suicide prevention. Did you

know that Franklin County ranks 59th out of Ohio's 88 counties in the rate of suicide? Most suicides are preventable with a coordinated community response that prioritizes awareness, effective prevention and timely intervention strategies, grief and postvention support, and a process to understand and address gaps in the county's response to suicide.

Through Fairfield County ADAMH funding, we're also adding a half-time Navigator to our Lancaster office who will help connect people in need of behavioral health services and their family members with the help they're looking for. We'll track unmet needs so that we can help bring together the key entities involved to look at how to best fill in those gaps. Through the cooperation and added funding of Delaware-Morrow ADAMH, we've expanded this position to full-time to also grow our Pro Bono Counseling Program in Delaware County and provide a Clients Rights Advocate for the Delaware-Morrow area on behalf of the ADAMH Board.

And as opportunity begets opportunity, we're in the midst of planning with Franklin County ADAMH to coordinate Mental Health First Aid for Youth in Franklin County's suburban school districts. We'd like to see adults who work with school age youth become better equipped to identify mental health concerns and find the help those youth need.

Edison also said, "There is no substitute for hard work." We firmly believe that and are committed to the effort involved in recognizing opportunity and putting its practical ideas to work.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**11 27 18**  
**TUES**



**FALL CONFERENCE**  
**The Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau**  
**4-H Center**

# Community Matters

## Thank You to MH Advocates

by Maureen Traverse

For some, the summer months bring a chance to slow down and relax, but mental health advocates in Columbus geared up this summer, raising awareness and donations by walking and running for mental health! Even the heat didn't keep our staff, volunteers and advocates away—we're so grateful to all who showed their support at A Mile for Mental Health Walk, OCD Walk, and Five Fifty Fifty Run/Walk for Mental Health.

## Board Spotlight

**Erik Slangerup** has worked as a creative director in the health and wellness space for nearly twenty years, generating ideas that foster better conversations between doctor and patient. He is also an award-winning children's book author, and recently co-created StorySnacker, a storytelling app for the iPhone designed to create more opportunities for busy parents to share "snack-size" stories with their children.



With close ties to the local creative community, Erik is an active guest lecturer through the Greater Columbus Arts Council, podcast guest, and a regular performer for Writers' Block Poetry. He has also taught at CCAD.

Erik joined the board in 2017 after attending a fundraising event (where he fell in love with and successfully bid on a giant, hand-crafted donut pillow) and made a connection with the cause. Erik has family members who have struggled with addiction and other mental health issues and hopes to make a difference for others. He now serves as the chair of the board's development committee.

Erik is the father of five and lives in Dublin with his wife, Kristen, and their two young girls, Nina and Evie.



Shaniqua Brock and Brandi Allen, Community Engagement Manager, at Shaniqua's first ever A Mile for Mental Health Walk, on May 28, which she organized to share her own experience of anxiety and depression and to get more people talking about mental health and addiction.



GOALS support group facilitator, Dr. Beth McCreary, and Team Central Ohio GOALS for OCD at the annual OCD Walk in Antrim Park on June 3.



Dr. Adel Korkor addressing the nearly eighty people who registered for the Five Fifty Fifty Run/Walk for Mental Health at Homestead Park in Hilliard on June 17. The race was one of 50 Dr. Korkor ran in 50 days in all 50 states to raise mental health awareness.

## MHAFC Wins Innovation Award at Mental Health America National Conference

by Maureen Traverse

MHAFC was honored to accept the “Innovation in Programming Award” from Mental Health America at the National Conference in June. The award recognized the exciting development of Occumetrics, which helps businesses and organizations of all sizes assess their overall health through the lens of employee wellbeing. Executive Director and founder of Occumetrics, Kenton Beachy, and Director of Development and Workplace Health, Maggie Hallett, delivered a ninety-minute breakout session on how other Mental Health America affiliates might license Occumetrics to use in their communities. The theme of this year’s conference, “Fit for the Future,” explored how individuals can keep themselves healthy in the twenty-first century and specifically how data and personal narratives are increasingly connecting exercise and nutrition to overall mental health. This holistic approach to mental health was an appropriate platform for Occumetrics, a program that recognizes the impact of a person’s work environment on their wellbeing.

Since its inception, Occumetrics has helped twenty-five behavioral health agencies and reached nearly five thousand employees statewide. Organizations that have utilized the process report reduced turnover and a better understanding of how to promote staff retention. One Occumetrics participant, a year after incorporating recommendations, reported a 12% reduction in staff turnover equaling 33 retained employees and saving approximately \$266k in employee replacement costs.



Kenton Beachy accepts the “Innovation in Programming Award” for Occumetrics from MHA National Board President, Reginald Williams.



Kenton Beachy, Executive Director; Maggie Hallett, Director of Development and Workplace Health; and Tonya Fulwider, Program Director at Mental Health America’s National Conference



## Help Those in Need Find Their Way

### Become a Pro Bono Counseling Volunteer

All volunteers get 50% off Children’s Mental Health conference registration.

To sign up contact Sheronda Palmore at (614) 884-7227.

# Give Mom the Mic

by Maureen Traverse

Another hilarious and heart-warming Give Mom the Mic raised close to \$40,000 to benefit Perinatal Outreach and Encouragement for Moms (POEM). This year's show featured local comedians Sara Given and Sara Greer in an audience-interactive performance that had everyone laughing out loud. Many thanks for the generosity of our sponsors, volunteers and more than two hundred attendees who, year after year, make this such a memorable and successful event. We'll see you next year!



## THANK YOU to our generous event sponsors:

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## Suicide Prevention (cont. from cover)

work happening here aimed at reducing suicides and helping those who have been affected by a loss.” He sees an enormous opportunity for organizations to work in consult to share information, avoid duplication of services, and effect change. Ultimately, the Coalition seeks to decrease the Franklin County completed and attempted suicide rates by 20% over the next five years—meaning dozens of lives will not be lost to this terrible, but preventable illness.

Hannah Thompson, the Coordinator of the Suicide Prevention Program at North Central Mental Health Services, has been active with the Coalition for nearly two years and recognizes the power of these organizations coming together. Her program offers support groups for survivors of suicide, a twenty-four hour suicide prevention hotline, and a speakers bureau that sends experts into the community to educate and

raise awareness. The shared resources of the Coalition will allow her to enhance the capacity of the speakers bureau, meaning more outreach and more people in the community aware of the risk factors for suicide and resources for prevention.

That public awareness is key. While suicide rates are decreased by the sustained efforts of community organizations like the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition, individuals at risk benefit from the compassion and support of others. Prior to becoming the Program Coordinator, Thompson logged eleven hundred hours over six years as a volunteer with North Central’s suicide prevention hotline. When someone you know expresses thoughts of suicide, Thompson notes the best first response is to listen, acknowledge you don’t have all the answers, but convey a sense of hope. “As long as they are alive,” she says, “there is the opportunity for things to get better.” (See “Suicide Prevention” on page 7.)

# Programs

## Finding Hope Amid the Addiction Epidemic Event a Success

by Maureen Traverse

On May 23, MHAFC and Columbus Springs Hospital presented a screening of two films: *Heroin(e)*, which examines the flood of heroin that threatens the Huntington, WV community with a cycle of generational addiction, lawlessness, and poverty, and *The Voices Project*, a collection of stories from people in recovery, family members and community members rising up to tell their stories in the Dayton, Ohio community. Following the films, a panel discussion featured Amy O’Grady, JD, the Chief of Addiction Policy for Columbus City Attorney, Zach Klein; Christy Daron, Market Director of Clinical Services at Columbus Springs Hospital; Lieutenant Dennis Jeffrey, Law Enforcement Coordinator for the Franklin County Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.); and Dustin Mets, JD, President and Chief Executive Officer at CompDrug. More than a hundred attendees came away with a better understanding of the scope of the opioid epidemic and prevention strategies and resources at work in Franklin County. Participants included both mental health professionals and community advocates, who appreciated the range of perspectives provided by panelists and emphasis on the need for a community-wide response.



Panelists Amy O’Grady, Lieutenant Dennis Jeffrey, Dustin Mets, and Christy Daron with moderator, Kenton Beachy, at the May 23 event.

## Suicide Prevention (cont. from pg. 6)

Ackerman echoes this sentiment and recommends an open and compassionate conversation. “You want to do a lot more listening than talking, at first,” he says, “without judging and without rushing to find an answer.” However, he also stresses not to delay seeking professional support when someone’s life may be in danger. “Depression can be successfully treated. There are a lot of resources, especially in Franklin County.” He recommends being proactive and persistent, but also “walking alongside” that person.

For Beachy, too, empathy is key. “It’s important to recognize they’re often in that place because they’re in pain,” he says. “Working with them to find ways to endure that pain, whether through coping mechanisms, friendships, or faith, while seeking professional help, all send that most important message—I care about what happens to you.” Thompson agrees that conveying concern is a valuable suicide prevention tool. While the Coalition is working at the systemic level, Thompson believes it impacts individuals, too. “On the hotline, we strive to convey that care. The Coalition builds on it, really demonstrates how much we care as a community.”

## Volunteer Spotlight

by Brandi Allen

**Jenny Schoning** has been navigating the mental healthcare system on behalf of two of her sons for many years now. As they moved through the highs and lows of mental illness, Jenny was always acutely aware of how many people did not have the same opportunities as her sons—how many struggled to handle mental illness without the support of resilient, accepting, financially stable loved ones. That humble awareness is what drove her to volunteer with MHAFC. She’s volunteered in a variety of ways, but one of her favorite contributions is to the Psychiatric Crisis and Emergency System Task Force. Her goal is to not only provide insight from her family’s experience; she’s also there to learn as much as she can from whoever is in the room each time. Jenny’s humility, generosity and gratitude is an inspiration to us, and we thank her for working alongside the mission so compassionately.





2323 West Fifth Avenue, Suite 160  
Columbus, OH 43204  
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