



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rockville Non-Profit is one of The Washingtonian's 50 Great Places to Work

Rockville, MD - Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) is honored to be among the *Washingtonian* magazine's "50 Great Places to Work" in the Washington, DC area. While over 200 companies were considered, the 50 winning workplaces were chosen on the basis of such measures as generous pay and benefits, challenging and interesting work, great work-life balance, opportunities to learn and grow, financial stability, commitment to charity and community, and the recognition and respect given employees. While making final decisions, the *Washingtonian* relied heavily on employee survey scores. Winning workplaces included a mix of company sizes and industries. MHA is a community-based, non-profit organization with a staff of 96 employees whose work provides services through 11 programs serving Montgomery County in addition to education and advocacy efforts throughout the Washington, DC region.

MHA consistently strives to provide much-needed services in the community while also focusing on work-life balance and promoting employee satisfaction. As a nonprofit organization, MHA is particularly adept at implementing creative, low-cost initiatives to create a great place to work for its employees. Included among these strategies are ribbon awards that are presented to employees during staff meetings based on nominations from colleagues, flexible work schedules, tele-working arrangements for eligible employees, recognition of milestone workplace anniversaries, a visit after summer staff meetings from an ice-cream truck from which staff members can select one treat paid for by MHA, employee assistant program (EAP) services for all staff members and members of their households, a staff retreat based on building relationships among co-workers, and low-cost raffle prizes at the end of each staff meeting.

Even some of the more extravagant work-life programs were creatively implemented at lower costs to MHA, like its annual raffle for a trip to the Bahamas for one staff member and

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his/her guests. MHA received a donation of several years at a timeshare property and opted to make it a staff recognition opportunity. The timeshare expense is limited to the yearly maintenance fee which is relatively inexpensive. MHA also generously includes in the prize some funds for air travel for the staff member.

“It seems natural that an organization with a mission such as ours – to promote mental wellness and support those living with mental illness through education, advocacy and direct service programs – would make it a priority to be a great place to work,” said Sharon E. Friedman, LCSW-C, Executive Director of the organization. “The leadership of MHA, including our Board of Directors, like to think we take it one step further by making it one of our top priorities. We recognize that our staff members are our most valuable resource. We know that their work to provide services to some of the most vulnerable people in our community and to promote mental wellness throughout the community can be incredibly difficult. Not only is our work-life programming a part of embodying our mission, but it helps keeps our retention rate high and makes good business sense. It is absolutely an honor to be recognized by the *Washingtonian* for our efforts”.

MHA has won several other awards that highlight the organization’s achievements and its work-life commitment, including most recently the Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval from the Alliance for Work Place Excellence (each year for the last several years) and a ranking as #31 among the Gazette of Politics and Business’ 2nd Annual 53 Exceptional Business Awards. MHA also received an honorable mention by the *Washingtonian* magazine in November 2003 and full honors in November 2001 in its “Great Places to Work” listings. During her tenure as Executive Director, Friedman has been recognized with the Community Leader Award from Jewish Women International, The Bank of America Neighborhood Excellence Local Hero Award, the WETA Hometown Hero Award, and the Athena Award for Professional Excellence, Service to Community, Assisting Women Reach Full Leadership Potential.

Those interested in finding out more about the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County and the services it provides can visit www.mhamc.org.

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Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) promotes mental wellness and supports those with mental illness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs. A private, nonprofit, United Way (#8151) agency, MHA has served Montgomery County residents for over 50 years. The organization currently manages 11 direct service programs for children, teens, families, senior adults, as well as individuals with long-term mental illness. Approximately 1,000 volunteers implement programs under the direction of MHA’s professional staff.