

# FACT SHEET *United Way/CFC #8151*



**T**he Mental Health Association (MHA) promotes mental health and wellness and supports those with mental illness by sponsoring and implementing advocacy, education and community service programs. A private, nonprofit, United Way (#8151) agency, the MHA has served Montgomery County residents for almost 50 years. The MHA currently manages 10 major direct service programs for children, teens, families, senior adults and individuals with long-term mental illness. Over 1,000 volunteers implement programs under the direction of the MHA professional staff. To help further the philosophy that mental health is as important as physical health, the MHA offers affordable, valuable and timely seminars on a variety of topics to many segments of the community.

The MHA is an affiliate of the National Mental Health Association (NMHA) and the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAM).

The MHA coordinates the local NMHA Campaign for America's Mental Health – Montgomery County Coalition.

Visit our website at [www.mhamc.org](http://www.mhamc.org)  
\*\* Denotes volunteer opportunities

## Education & Advocacy

Education & Advocacy are the primary missions of the Mental Health Association. The MHA's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers initiate and serve on numerous committees, task forces and coalitions to help assure better mental health services for Montgomery County residents. To further this mission, the MHA offers mental health literature, mental wellness screenings, newsletters, legislative briefings, advocacy alerts and affordable, timely continuing education seminars. In addition, to these various community education and advocacy endeavors, the MHA also offers the Kids on the Block educational puppet troupe performances and Identifying Red Flags in Adolescent Mental Health as a part of its school-linked educational programming.\*\*

## Direct Services & Programs

**ADULT HOMELESS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** offers mental health services onsite at county shelters and resource centers through the Homeless Outreach Services component of the program. Major activities include outreach, engagement, needs assessment, linking homeless clients with mental illness or co-occurring disorders of mental illness and substance abuse to evaluation and appropriate treatment. Clients are helped to maximize their ability to obtain financial benefits and other

entitlements. The Shelter Plus Care component offers case management and ongoing assistance to formerly homeless adults who are living independently, in order to help them achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. Bilingual services are available.

**BRIDGES TO PALS** offers support to children and adolescents in foster care, as well as other "at-risk" children, through a one-on-one relationship with a caring, responsible mentor. The primary goal of Bridges to Pals is to raise the self-esteem of Little Pals.\*\*

**FAMILIES FOREMOST CENTER** provides free, comprehensive services for expectant parents and parents with young children (under the age of four). Services include: home visiting, parent education, adult education (ABE/GED/ESOL), developmental infant and toddler program, parent-child activities, employment readiness, computer skills training, health education, life skills training, Reading is Fundamental, family literacy, learning parties, peer support, and case management. The Center also offers the Mothers Offering Maternal Support (MOMS) Mentoring Program, which provides mentoring services, prenatal workshops, doula services, support groups and educational sessions to pregnant and parenting young women between the ages of 12 – 24. \*\*

## FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM

offers friendship and support to home-bound elderly individuals who are isolated and lonely due to physical or emotional concerns. Each client is matched with a trained volunteer who has similar interests. Volunteers visit weekly for a minimum of one year. Friendly Visitor provides access to resources and advocates for a healthy and safe environment so that clients may remain in the community as long as possible. Each friendship is very unique, and both clients' and volunteers' lives are enriched by the relationship. \*\*

**KENSINGTON WHEATON YOUTH SERVICES (KWYS)** serves youth and families in the Einstein, Kennedy and Wheaton Montgomery County Public School cluster communities. KWYS offers short-term counseling and community- and school-based workshops to those experiencing difficulties in their daily lives and seeks to prevent more serious personal, family or community problems. KWYS, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools and other nonprofit organizations, provides Linkages to Learning services at school sites to "at-risk" children and families to improve performance in school, at home and in the community. Call (301) 933-2818 for more information. \*\*

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY HOTLINE

provides confidential and anonymous support by trained counselors through a 24-hour telephone active listening, crisis intervention and referral service.

- Montgomery County Hotline (301) 738-CALL (2255)
- Youth Crisis Hotline (301) 738-9697
- National Hopeline Network 1-(800) SUICIDE (784-2433)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-(800) 273-TALK (8255).

The Hotline also administers THERAPIST-LINE, which provides a system of referrals to county residents who have limited or no financial resources for mental health outpatient therapy. Individuals are linked with competent mental health professionals who accept a sliding scale fee. Call (301) 738-7176 for referrals.\*\*

**PETS ON WHEELS** offers friendship and the unconditional love of animals to frail, isolated elderly individuals who live in

nursing homes, group homes, hospices and other facilities. Dogs and cats range in age from 6 months to 14 years, and in breed from purebred to mixed. A majority of the visiting animals are from shelters or rescue groups – proving that someone's throwaway pet is another person's treasure, with a lot of love to give. Pets are screened for appropriateness and volunteers receive training prior to placement in facilities.\*\*

## REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM

provides financial supervision for Montgomery County adults who receive a government benefit that they are unable to manage because of a physical or mental disability. Program clients are matched with trained volunteers who manage the monthly benefit for the clients. The Representative Payee Program is an AARP Foundation Money Management Program. The AARP Foundation is AARP's Affiliated Charity.\*\*

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

transports Springfield Hospital Center patients to and from Montgomery County to prepare to return home and for medical appointments, job searches, visiting and participation in private agency programs.

**VOICES VS VIOLENCE** works to ensure safe lives for children by bringing together diverse segments of the community to foster attitudes and behaviors that prevent and reduce violence in our workplaces, communities, schools and families. In addition to violence prevention workshops for families and after-school violence prevention programs for youth, the program offers presentations to parents, community members and professionals on bullying and gang prevention, stress management and anger management.\*\*

\*\* Denotes volunteer opportunities

## Community Partnerships

*Many of our programs and special services are collaborative with Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, other Montgomery County agencies, several Maryland state agencies and various private organizations.*

**MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE** efforts are provided by the MHA in collaboration with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, its Crisis Center, and Montgomery County Public Schools. As a partner in this endeavor, the MHA maintains a database of mental health professional volunteers who are trained in preparation for and are available to respond to community crises. In addition, the MHA maintains stock of crisis-related psycho-educational materials available to the public.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL CENTER**, Locate Child Care service provides parents with child care counseling and referrals to assist them in finding child care, preschools, nursery schools, after-school programs and camps. Call (301) 279-1773 or visit [www.mdchildcare.org](http://www.mdchildcare.org) for more information. The Training Department offers workshops for child care providers and a Resource Library for parents, providers and community members. Call (301) 279-1260 for more information.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY THRIFT SHOP** is managed in cooperation with four other Montgomery County nonprofit agencies. A percentage of the proceeds supports the MHA. The shop is located at 7125 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, (301) 654-0063. \*\*

**SHARP SUSPENSION PROGRAMS** provides mentoring and tutoring services to middle and high school students who have been suspended from school and who are in need of guidance and support. Call (301) 424-0656, x170 for more information. \*\*

## Special Services

**MHA CONSULTING SERVICE** offers community organizations the opportunity to avail themselves of almost 50 years of expertise as a leading mental health resource. Service areas include, for example, workforce mental wellness programming, events partnership and coordination, nonprofit management assistance and school-linked mental health education.

**OPERATION SANTA CLAUS** is a project administered completely by volunteers. Volunteers assemble holiday packs of donated items for patients with mental illness at Springfield State Hospital and Montgomery General Hospital who would not otherwise receive gifts. Individuals, businesses and community organizations donate new personal care items and make financial contributions year-round for this project.\*\*

**PLACES FOR PEOPLE, LLC**, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Mental Health Association, administers housing for homeless individuals who have serious mental illness or mental health problems. On-going case management services are provided for all clients. Call (301) 424-0656 x106 or x310 for more information.

**WIDOWED PERSONS SERVICE** offers support to newly widowed men and women as they adjust to their new status and rebuild their lives. Support comes through outreach volunteers and a monthly newsletter. Call (301) 949-7398 for more information.