

The Ally

A Families As Allies Newsletter

Fall 2016

STORY OF THE DOOR



Our Youth M.O.V.E Chapter painted this door several years ago, and it became our focal piece of artwork as well as our inspiration. Every day it reminds us to open the door to each new opportunity that awaits us. Those opportunities bring us great joy, especially when we greet them hand-in-hand with families throughout the state.

UPCOMING

ADHD and Related Concerns Conference

October 20-21, 2016
Temple Baptist Church
Student Center
Hattiesburg, MS

WYF Advocacy Jumpstart Project

Resource Fair
October 20, 2016
10am - 2pm

3RD ANNUAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATION AND FUNDRAISER



Because of your generous support, Families as Allies has touched the lives of many children and families over the past year. Please help us honor this good work and ensure it continues by joining us Monday, October 24th from 5:30 to 8:00 at Bravo! Italian Restaurant for our 3rd Annual Community Partnership Celebration.

As part of our celebration, we will honor the following community members who, through their tireless efforts and commitment to children in Mississippi, have demonstrated our four core values: **Valuing Every Child and Family, Excellence, Partnership and Accountability.**

Helen Reddy Johnson Memorial Award for Valuing Every Child and Family

Mississippi Public Broadcasting Series Growing Pains, produced by Kathryn Rodenmeyer and Rick deShazo MD - Mental illness has been a health condition since ancient times, affecting all ages and cultures. Modern day understanding for diagnosing and treating mental illness gives hope for those who have it, but for children, a disjointed and uncoordinated system of care, stigma and lack of parental awareness prevent them from connecting to the care they need. Dr. Rick deShazo and co-host Melissa Faith Payne in this 5-episode series examined how the medical

Milton Olive Community
Center
Lexington, MS

FAA Board Meeting

October 20, 2016
6pm

840 East River Place
Suite 500
Jackson, MS

The public is invited and
Public Comments are
encouraged

email questions or
comments to
info@faams.org
or
fax to 601-355-0919

Department Of Mental Health Board Meeting

October 20th, 2016

9:30 AM

North Mississippi
Regional Center
Oxford, MS

OUR NEW WEBSITE HAS LAUNCHED!!



[CHECK IT OUT](#)

FROM OUR FAMILIES

"I have told my family's story many times. I won't go into details here, but I do have some things I feel are important to be said. In all the recent news

and other communities approach mental illness for children. Mental health care providers, advocates and parents shared how Mississippi treats its children, and explored the consequences of not treating mental health well. Families as Allies is honoring [MPB](#) for realizing this for the public health crisis it is, reaching out to families throughout the State, and including parents in all phases of the production.

Rusty Turner Memorial Award for Excellence

Wanjiku Njoroge, M.D. - Dr. Njoroge, is medical director of the [Young Child Clinic](#), a psychiatrist in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and an Assistant Professor at the Perleman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Her areas of expertise include cultural research, media research, early child development and ethnically diverse children. Families as Allies is honoring Dr. Njoroge for the outstanding clinical training she provided for our BuDS early childhood initiative, but even more for Dr. Njoroge's cultural responsiveness, for humbly and joyfully becoming a part of our community, and for consistently and positively partnering with families.

Partnership Award

Nita Rudy, Parents for Public Schools National Office - A diverse group of advocacy organizations and committed parents worked collaboratively this past year to ensure that the proposed restraint and seclusion policy offered by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) addressed the concerns of those groups. This policy was needed as Mississippi was one of only five states in the country without a policy in place and children were sometimes being held in closets and makeshift boxed-in enclosures, teachers were not getting the proper training and local policies were not representing the needs of all children. Throughout multiple public comments submissions, public hearings and written revisions, Ms. Rudy was a steadfast presence - making sure everyone was included, proposed policies were well drafted and comprehensive, and meetings with MDE were open and collaborative in tone.

Accountability Awards - We are honoring two Mississippi State Representatives who have modeled accountability by using social media to transparently share their votes and policy information, who have partnered with colleagues in their own party and across the aisle to improve state systems, and who have been courageous in their stances.

Representative Joel Bomgar- Representative Joel

that has brought a tremendous amount of awareness into the workings and failings of our state's mental health system, so many are leaving out the most important factor.... Reality for the families. The staff and partners of Ms Families as Allies are working hard to keep our reality as parents in the forefront. I don't think there has ever been a more diligent or focused voice for our families as this group of caring and involved individuals."

QUICK LINKS

HELP US REACH 750
LIKES!!



SHOP WITH US!

Kroger

AmazonSmile



ASK US ABOUT

Bomgar is extremely transparent, publishing all of his votes and the explanations for them on his blog and is also available by cell, email and Facebook to answer questions about his votes and explain the legislative process. He has worked on criminal justice reform and been widely recognized for working with colleagues across the aisle to bring about meaningful change that allows more people to remain in the community. In addition to being a State Representative, he is the founder of the Bomgar Corporation, a worldwide technology company headquartered here in Madison County. Joel recently established the [Out of Last Place Alliance](#) to identify real solutions to lift Mississippi out of last place. Families as Allies is grateful for Representative Bomgar's commitment to help Mississippians, including those with mental illness, be able to work and prosper. We also want to publicly thank him for taking the time to learn about approaches and ideas to make this more possible and for increasing our awareness of how a stronger economy supports opportunities for all people.

Representative Jay Hughes - Representative Jay Hughes consistently shares information about legislative action and his votes on his Facebook page and also allows others to share wide ranging opinions on his page as well. These public discourses have led to increased awareness and diverse and deeper conversations about mental health, even among people with differing viewpoints. Representative Hughes is a passionate champion of public education and sponsored and organized a public education summit this summer, working across the aisle to do so. Families as Allies is particularly appreciative that Representative Hughes included parents of children with disabilities as participants and speakers at the Summit. He is kind, responsive and available by email, phone and Facebook when families have challenging situations, including after hours.

[PURCHASE TICKETS or SPONSOR](#)

URGENT STAKEHOLDER LETTER



Legislative budget working groups are examining spending for the state's largest agencies including the departments of Transportation, Health, Mental Health, Human Services, Corrections, Public Safety, Education, the Division of Medicaid, Institution of Higher Learning, community colleges, boards and commissions, state facilities, and information technology consolidation. Ideas and information can be shared with the budget working groups at msbudgetgroups@ls.ms.gov.

The following letter was sent to the Legislative Budget Working Group committee members who are looking at the budgets of the Department of Mental Health, Department of Health, and Department of Human Services. It was signed on to by 19 organizations.

Dear Members of the Legislative Mental Health Tax and Budget Review Committee:

We, the undersigned stakeholders, appreciate the concern you have shown by your close examination of the state's mental health budget. But we fear that you and the legislature are ignoring a much more fundamental and dire issue, and what is actually the real problem: Our State's mental health system is antiquated and costly, both in dollars but even more in human lives.

Because our system overly relies on expensive institutional care in state hospitals and other long term care facilities, Mississippi has not developed to scale the types of services in the community that we know will most help people. As a result, many people are torn away from their families and communities. That is unfair to them and violates their basic civil rights. It

also deprives us of benefiting from their presence and their contributions. And perhaps most importantly in your examination of the mental health budget, this over reliance on institutional care is why Mississippi is being sued by the Justice Department. In fact, the DOJ has actively promoted community-based services as a means of preventing the needless isolated institutionalization of people with mental illness.

With early and effective intervention, almost all adults and children with mental illnesses can and want to be part of their families, meaningfully contribute to their communities, and work and/or go to school, outside of institutions. It is alarming to us that your budget discussions have started with the assumption that mental health care is best delivered through institutions. That assumption is not true. It is also harmful. You as legislators are in a unique position to transform our mental health system and bring it into the 21st century.

These are some steps that we strongly urge you to take:

- * Meet directly with your constituents with mental illness and their families and ask them about their experiences with the mental health system and what would help them live productive lives. We encourage you to hold public hearings throughout the state.
- * Visit the Community Mental Health Centers and mental health nonprofits in your district and find out what support they need to deliver these kinds of services. Find out how effectively the money you appropriated is being spent and what support mental health centers need to maximize the impact of the funds.
- * Reach out to your counterparts in other states that have transitioned to an effective community-based system to learn how they did it. New Hampshire, Delaware and Georgia are recent examples.
- * Partner with the consumer and family organizations that represent people with mental illness. They can and are willing to provide you data, help you gather feedback and assist with technical research.
- * Talk to people who currently provide

direct patient care in institutions and ask them how their skills and talents could be used to help people meaningfully learn to live in the community.

* Ask Attorney General Hood to provide you with the Technical Assistance Collaborative's reports that outline a blueprint for system reform based on expert recommendations.

We urge the legislature as a whole to develop a pathway that ensures consideration of community based treatment and ensure that the pathway has the support of other systems that touch the lives of people with mental illness as well as law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, defense counsel, and the substance abuse and mental health systems.

While we know that all of you have compassion in your hearts, we ask that you also have courage and bold vision in your actions. **Do what it takes to lead our state and reform our mental health system.** Mississippi citizens affected by mental illness deserve no less.

We stand united and ready to assist you in any way we can.

**Jennifer Riley-Collins, Executive Director
ACLU of Mississippi**

**Oleta Fitzgerald, Executive Director
Children's Defense Fund's Southern Regional
Office**

**Scott Crawford, PhD
Retired Clinical Psychologist,
Disability Rights Advocate**

**Ann Maclaine, Executive Director
Disability Rights Mississippi**

**Joy Hogge, Executive Director
Families as Allies**

**Lynn McNair, Former Director
Mental Health Association of the Capital Area**

**Tiffany Graves, Executive Director
Mississippi Access to Justice Commission**

**Beth Orlansky, Advocacy Director
Mississippi Center for Justice**

**Pam Dollar, Executive Director
Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with
Disabilities**

**Rims Barber, Executive Director
Mississippi Human Services Coalition**

**Angela Ladner, Executive Director
Mississippi Psychiatric Association**

**Derrick Johnson, President
Mississippi State Conference NAACP**

**Cassandra Overton-Welchlin,
Executive Director
Mississippi Women's Economic Security
Initiative**

**Carol Burnett, Executive Director
Moore Community House**

**Tameka Tobias, Executive Director
National Alliance of Mental Illness,
Mississippi**

**Teri Brister, Ph.D., L.P.C., Director,
National Alliance on Mental Illness,
National Office**

**Ellen Reddy, Executive Director
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc**

**Mandy Rogers, Executive Director
Parents United Together**

**Jody Owens, Executive Director
Southern Poverty Law Center Mississippi**

**A NOTE FROM OUR
BOARD PRESIDENT**



I am honored to be named President of the Board of Directors for Families As Allies, the only family-run organization for parents and caregivers of children with mental health challenges in Mississippi. I look forward to enhanced advocacy efforts for children in our state, so they have the opportunity to reach their potential and to be successful. We will continue to make sure that families are partners in all aspects of their children's care. We will improve community relationships and establish new partnerships to best serve the needs of our families and their children. Lastly, we will grow our Board of Directors to reflect multi-level support across disciplines for the families we serve.

Like the [Facebook](#) page, visit the [new website!](#)

FAMILIES AS ALLIES HOSTS PARENT MEETINGS AROUND THE STATE



TOWN HALL MEETING & PARENT WORKSHOP

Know Your Rights!

Families as Allies will support, help and assist you to:

Know your child's rights as an American with disabilities.

Know your child's rights in the Mental Health System.

Know your child's rights at school.

Learn how to become an effective advocate for your child.

Has your child been diagnosed with?

ADHD, Anxiety Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression, Development Disorder, Mood Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Psychotic Disorder, etc.

Does your child have an IEP?

Do you have trouble getting the information and help you need?

August 13, 2016 1:00 PM-4:00 PM
Community Complex (Auditorium)
516 E. Canal Street, Yazoo City, MS 39194



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
HENRY MOORE
FAMILIES AS ALLIES
802 E. Canal Street, Suite 100, Yazoo City, MS 39194
601.335.4915 Toll Free: 800.633.9671
henry@familiesasallies.org www.familiesasallies.org

The only statewide organization run by and for parents and caregivers of children with mental health challenges



Henry Moore, Family Partner and Youth Team Coordinator,

has been traveling the state hosting informative town hall style parent forums. We're excited that this year's grant funding from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health enables us to gather and analyze feedback from families and work in closer partnership with community providers to help our system be more family-driven.

As facilitator, Henry has had the opportunity to discuss with attendees how to organize a parent support group and how to become an effective advocate for their child in the mental health and school systems.

Thus far, there's been a total of 4 meetings held around the state, including stops in Yazoo, Tupelo, Prentiss, and Meridian. Approximately 45 parents and caregivers have attended these sessions. Each of the forums followed a What's Working? What's Not Working? and What's Needed? needs analysis where attendees got the opportunity to have their voices heard on areas of mental health and education.

Below is some of the feedback we received from families:

What's Working?

- some teachers with good hearts
- day treatment
- ROTC
- meeting with doctor

What's Not Working?

- child keeps getting sent home for behavior
- only time I'm asked about IEP is to sign it
- school and mental health center don't communicate

What's Needed?

- find out why children are behaving the way they are
- make sure parents are included when therapist or case manager changes
- better detection of those needing services

John Gallagher, who attended the Yazoo town hall, commented that he "learned so much today listening to others giving their thoughts and needs and figuring out what the best needs of our children are! And what could give all children a better education that have disabilities."

Plans are underway to offer more sessions in the near future.



On August 11, 2016, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a claim against the state of Mississippi alleging that it "violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA) by failing to provide adults with mental illness with necessary integrated, community-based mental health services."

The community integration mandate of the ADA and the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* require states to make services available to people with disabilities - including people with mental illness - in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Follow the links below to learn more.

[Press release from the Justice Department](#)

Articles about DOJ suit

[Associated Press: The Big Story](#)

mpbonline.org

[Jackson Free Press](#)

Contact for the Justice Department 1-844-664-0224

Contact for the Dept. of Mental Health 1-877-210-8513

TRAINING DIRECTOR, NIKKI FLIPPINS PRESENTS AT DMH TRAUMA CONFERENCE



In September, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

hosted its 3rd conference focused on trauma-informed care. The conference "brings together survivors, family members, and mental health service providers with a goal of building additional skills and knowledge in order to respond to the various aspects of child, adolescent, and adult trauma".

Our own Nikki Flippins had the pleasure of speaking to the crowd on day 2 of the conference. Her presentation focused on personal stories of trauma experienced by our children and/or family, and included the effect it creates for the parents and caregivers and/or siblings of children who are exhibiting the results of past trauma. She also discussed the secondary trauma parents sometimes experience, as well as the techniques and methods utilized to endure the times of tribulation.

You can check out her interview with [MPB](#) for more insight into the effects on parents of children dealing with trauma.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!!



Families - We want to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to tell us what's happened when you have tried to find help for your child. Your answers are anonymous and let us know the most important things to work on in the state. After you finish the anonymous survey, you will be given the chance to join Families as Allies. Membership is free and allows us to stay in touch with you about ways to network with other parents and work together to make things better for our children.

You can start the anonymous survey [here](#).