

# FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Peggy Spagnola

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## Kristen Bell

Compiled by Mary Dumas

[www.socialworkdegreeguide.com](http://www.socialworkdegreeguide.com)



Whether you identify Kristen Bell by her voice, her commercials or her role as Veronica Mars, one thing you probably do not identify her by is her serious battle with depression. In an interview on YouTube's Off-Camera Show, Bell revealed that she has long taken medication for her depression and anxiety. But you will not detect any shame in her confession. Bell's mother and grandmother both experienced the same serotonin imbalance, so the actress learned early on that there is no shame in seeking help and taking medication. In Bell's wise words, "You would never deny a diabetic his Insulin, but for some reason when someone needs a serotonin inhibitor, they're immediately 'crazy' or something."

## Hudson House MHA's Psychosocial Club

*By Peggy Spagnola and Shakia Henderson*

Hudson House is a rehabilitative psychosocial club that is operated through Mental Health Association in Orange County Inc.

Hudson House is centrally located at 245 Broadway in the City of Newburgh, making it possible for residents who live locally to access the program, via Hudson House transportation, bus, or walking.

Hudson House focuses on socialization, recreation, education, and employment to individuals with mental illness. This is under the direction of Shakia Henderson who oversees the program and ensuring all goes smoothly while making program participants feel comfortable and welcome. Services include educational groups such as nutrition, wellness, budgeting, mental health recovery/wellness and vocational.

In addition, Hudson House strives to integrate the members into the community through travel activities and employment for individuals with mental illness. Some of the travel activities include Radio City Music Hall, Walmart, Bowling, Chinese Buffet, Newburgh Armory Garden and Apple Picking. This is an excellent opportunity for adults with a psychiatric disability. The dedicated staff, pictured on the next page, all work very hard in all aspects of the program. Not only do they serve excellent meals, but coordinate programs in and out of Hudson House. Some of MHA's events or meetings are held there i.e. staff meetings, presentations, speakers, parties, etc. At one of the events, a member of the Newburgh Police department, Lt Richard Carrion came to speak, along with VET2Vet Coordinator, Larry Neumann. There is sometimes music and dancing where talented dancers and musicians can get up and 'show off their moves'.

Interns from Mt. Saint Mary's College and SUNY Orange complete internships during the Fall and Spring semester. Nursing students from SUNY Orange complete their psych rounds during the Spring and Fall semesters. In summary, those who are local to the program and can participate in the activities are getting the advantages and high quality services offered at MHA.



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# The Supportive Housing Division

by John Arzuaga

The Supportive Housing division at Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc. (MHA) assists Orange County residents suffering from Severe and Persistent Mental Illness to locate stable, affordable housing within their natural communities. The department's efforts toward these goals also include ongoing support with rental assistance, monthly home inspections, resource linkages and access to MHA's 24-hour Helpline.

The housing division of MHA is generally divided into two initiatives:

- 1) **The Supportive Housing Program (SHP)**, which consists of 6 individual programs aimed at assisting individuals; forensic populations; hospital discharges; enhanced services for dually-diagnosed individuals; participants in-transition from Community Residences, and general beds for individuals who meet criteria, as outlined by the Single Point of Access (SPOA) at the Orange County Department of Mental Health.
- 2) **The Invisible Children's Project (ICP)** consists of two individual programs aimed at assisting the families of parents with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness. ICP is our nationally recognized program, which pioneered Family Case Management in Orange County and has since been replicated in 10 other states! ICP also assists with housing, location and stability; Family Unification/Reunification; Family Support Groups; Recreational Activities; In-Home Clinical Consultation; Respite Services, and Resource Linkage for Socialization, Educational, Medical and Vocational needs.

The Supportive Housing Program offices are located at 245 Broadway in Newburgh, NY and serve the entire geographic area of Orange County. The Programs are supported by four Case Managers and myself, John Arzuaga, ICP/Housing Manager.

While securing stable housing for Orange County residents has become increasingly challenging, our programs have enjoyed the achievement of having successfully served a multitude of individuals and families in-need, over the past decades. In fact, we continue to strive toward improving the housing climate in Orange County for our program participants, by engaging in formal efforts to reduce stigma and improve relations between participants and community stakeholders.

The entire MHA Family shares a system of values and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence and contributions of all diverse groups. Our department seeks to help those individuals secure a place to call home, where they can plan their dreams from.



Pictured: Theresa Brandon, John Arzuaga, Kaitlin Higgins, Brittney McGinnis and Jessica Sanchez

# Websites and Apps to be Aware of: A Cheat Sheet For Parents

mentalhealthamerica.com

*The internet and world of smart phone apps are wild and wonderful places that allow us to learn and share at never-before-seen speeds. The problem is, not everything being shared is appropriate for everyone who has access to view it. Teaching your kids and teens to be responsible about how they behave online is half of the battle. Here are some sites and apps you should be aware of:*

- 1. Ask.fm** - Ask.fm is an online social networking platform that allows users to anonymously ask other users questions. The Q&A forum is unmoderated and has led to many instances of cyberbullying, and a series of bullying-related suicides.
- 2. Snapchat** - Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to take pictures or videos and send them to a list of followers. Followers can only view the videos and photos for a set amount of time before they are supposedly “destroyed”. This app has been popular for “sexting”, as the sent image cannot be saved onto the recipient’s phone. However, it is unclear whether or not the image is actually destroyed permanently from Snapchat’s server, and users are able to take screenshots of the image or video, as well as replay it. This app has been associated with numerous sexting cases that have led to bullying. However, Snapchat has recently become more teen-friendly, with the addition of texting and use entertaining filters to share.
- 3. Kik** - Kik is a mobile messaging app that allows users to anonymously chat with other users. The app offers free and unlimited texting through a wifi network, so parents are unlikely to know about it. The app has been used in multiple cases of attempted kidnapping, murder and sexual assault.
- 4. Information Hiding Apps** - There are multiple information and photo hiding apps available for web-enabled devices, including smart phones, tablets, and computers. These apps may mimic harmless tools, such as calculators or note-taking functionalities, but their intention is to hide selected information (i.e. pictures, texts, and other compromising items). Some apps include: Vaulty, Hide It Pro, and Calculator%, among others.
- 5. Qooh.me** - Qooh.me is another social media site that allows users to ask other users anonymous questions. Individuals do not have to login to ask questions, so anyone can ask a user anything. There is also no online moderator and adult profiles are mixed in with those of teens and children.
- 6. Tumblr** - While tumblr can be a place for kids and teens to connect with one another and share their “fandoms” (post about the shows or movies they like), tumblr also allows explicit content like porn, pro-anorexia (pro-ana) posts, pro self-injury posts, and other content that might be unsuitable for kids or teens.
- 7. Reddit** - Reddit.com is a large forum where individuals can anonymously post content. The content is grouped together in different threads, on which other users can comment. Reddit can be great for information and obscure interests, but it is unfiltered and home to offensive and graphic content. Users can also direct message other users and bully others. However, recently Reddit has taken steps to ban certain communities that promote graphic content.
- 8. 4chan** - 4chan.com is similar to Reddit, in that it is a large user-run forum, but it is known for being even more subversive and offensive. Many topics on 4chan are inappropriate for kids and teens.
- 9. Pro-Ana websites** - “Pro-ana” websites or forums are websites devoted to promoting anorexia and sometimes bulimia. These websites typically have “tips” for how to starve yourself and prevent hunger. The forums also allow individuals to post anonymous comments and compare the progression of their weight loss. These websites can hinder recovery from an eating disorder or trigger disordered eating.

**Advocacy:** *The act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending;  
The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal -- Merriam Webster*

This word is all too familiar to our families. It is one of the things that occupy much of our time when we have a loved one with mental illness or disability, and we have become the experts, so let us all continue our work in as many ways as we can.

## **Top Ten Parental Rights in Special Education**

*Denise Goldberg, Special Education Advisor Blog*

[www.specialeducationadvisor.com](http://www.specialeducationadvisor.com)

1. Parents have the right to request that their child be assessed for Special Education without delay.
2. Parents have the right to list all of their concerns in the Individualized Education Program.
3. Parents have a right to request a new IEP meeting to be held within 30 days of a written request when an IEP is already in place.
4. Parents have the right to participate in the IEP meeting and have their opinions heard and noted.
5. Parents have the right to bring any person to an IEP meeting with knowledge of the child or the child's disability including advocates and attorneys.
6. Parents have the right to review and receive copies of their child's educational records.
7. Parents have the right to consent, refuse to consent or revoke consent for special education for their child.
8. Parents have the right to receive Prior Written Notice when a school district proposes a change in a child's placement or refuses a parent's request.
9. Parents have the right to ask for an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense when they disagree with the school district's assessments.
10. Parents have the right to file complaints, including state complaints and due process complaints, and disagree with parts or all of the IEP.

## **MHA To Offer Workshops to Families and Caregivers of Veterans**

*By Peggy Spagnola*

These workshops will include dealing with PTSD, selfcare, speakers of interest, and will be taught by a Family Support member and a Veteran of the Marines. This very successful program was given last year and is being repeated by request. The start date will be in January 2018 with more information will follow.

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# **Telepsychiatry: New Access to Psychiatric Care**

*Compiled by Peggy Spagnola  
from American Psychiatric Association  
Healing Magazine Vol 21, No 1*

Telepsychiatry is the application of telemedicine to the specialty field of psychiatry. The term typically describes the delivery of psychiatric assessment and care through videoconferencing. It is the process of providing health care from a distance through technology, a subset of telemedicine, and involves providing a range of services including psychiatric evaluations, therapy (individual therapy, group therapy, and family therapy), patient education and medication management.

In psychiatry, using video conferencing, is a validated and effective practice of medicine that increases access to care. The American Psychiatric Association supports the use of telemedicine as a legitimate component of a mental health delivery system to the extent that its use is in the best interest of the patient and is in compliance with the APA policies on medical ethics and confidentiality.

Telepsychiatry can involve direct interaction between a psychiatrist and the patient. It also encompasses psychiatrists supporting primary care providers with mental health care consultation and expertise. Mental health care can be delivered in a live, interactive communication. It can also involve recording medical information (images, videos, etc.) and sending this to a distant site for later review.

With these advances in providing care, people who would not have physical access to doctors and clinicians will have a better chance. Also, the Geriatric population that is even less able to access services, can be in touch with their provider from their home, or nursing care facility. The downside of telepsychiatry is dependent on the use of technology. Like any other system, may experience glitches, delays or any other thing that could go wrong; however it is HIPAA compliant unless it is running over a mobile phone network but these types of connections are not utilized at this time. With the current shortage of psychiatrists, people can hope for help sooner. “Studies have shown that better patient outcomes result from the involvement of specialty physicians at the onset of emergency care”

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## **Therapy Animals: Helping Improve Lives of People with Mental Illness**

*Compiled from American Psychiatric Association Magazine*

**Who doesn't love to pet a dog or a cat, or even chat with a parakeet or parrot?  
Why do we use therapy animals?**

Dogs and cats can help people with mental health challenges. For example, Therapy Dogs can assist people with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and children with autism. Brian Abrams, one of MHA's Vet2Vet coordinators, and his partner Arrow, his dog-in-training, will be making a positive impact on our Veterans, helping with PTSD and many other diagnoses. During his training, he is learning how to relate to people in a positive and comforting manner,

Research shows that positive interactions with animals increase endorphins, oxytocin, prolactin and dopamine or the “feel good” hormones. Visits from therapy animal teams can normalize stays away from home for hospital (*continued on page 6*)



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## MEETINGS

### November 2017

November 8	7:00-9:0 PM	Family Ties Support Group	MHA
November 13	7:00-8:30 PM	NAMI-Orange Annual Meeting	DMH
November 16	7:00-9:00 PM	Family & Friends Together for - Families of Adults with Mental Illness	MHA

### December 2017

December 11	7:00-9:0 PM	NAMI-Orange Ann. Holiday Party	TBD
December 13	7:00-8:30 PM	Family Ties Support Group	MHA
December 21	7:00-9:00 PM	Family & Friends Together for - Families of Adults with Mental Illness	MHA

All meetings are held at Mental Health Association unless otherwise indicated. Please call to confirm the day and time of the meetings. Dates and times may change due to weather, holidays, etc. For information call Peggy at 845-342-2400 Ext. 1238 or Mary at Ext. 1246.

### Vet2Vet Support Groups Meet Weekly

Monday	6:00 PM	Thrall Library, 11-19 Depot Street, Middletown Board Room – 1st Floor
Tuesday	2:30 PM	Hudson House, 245 Broadway, Newburgh
Thursday	6:00PM	Cornerstone Residence, 111 Broadway, Newburgh

**Please call Larry at 342-2400 Ext. 1237 for further information.**

*(Therapy Animals: Helping Improve Lives of People with Mental Illness Continued...)*

patients, improve motivation to participate in treatment protocols and lessen worry. Therapy animals such as dogs and cats are reliable, controllable and predictable. They enjoy visiting hospitals, nursing homes, classrooms, libraries and other facilities.

Service animals, different from therapy animals, live with their owners who have a disability and can help with physical and/or mental disabilities, such as visual impairment, seizures, autism, epilepsy, panic disorders, or anxiety disorders. They do not go out into the community and make visits with other people in need.

Certification: some of the dog therapy certification organizations are American Kennel Club, Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs and Pet Partners.