



January 4, 2017

CONNECT Report on Our First Year

It was just about a year ago that five parents of children who live with a brain disease, one of whom had lost his life to suicide, and one concerned citizen began meeting to discuss mental health issues with Father Charles Robinson of St. Luke's Episcopal Church as mentor. They shared a common frustration with the lack of mental health services in Summit County and the difficulty in finding information about existing services. They came together and founded CONNECT with the mission to de-stigmatize mental illness, increase awareness of existing behavioral health services and build public support for increased spending on behavioral health in Summit County.

Nineteen local community organizations and individuals from around the country helped us get started, providing services to partner with us to pursue our educational mission. Since CONNECT incorporated as a not-for-profit in April 2016, nearly one hundred individuals and organizations have contributed nearly \$30,000 to CONNECT.

We are extremely grateful to all of you for your generous support. We are sending you this report to show you what your support has already made possible and the impact it will continue to have in advancing the cause of mental health in Summit County.

Mental Health Awareness Month (May 2016)

What started as a modest campaign to build awareness of mental health issues and to attack the stigma by observing the national Mental Health Awareness Month locally in Summit County quickly developed into a robust program of twenty plus events with total attendance of nearly one thousand people.

The Summit County County Council, the Park City City Council and the Park City, North Summit and South Summit School Boards adopted resolutions proposed by CONNECT recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Dr. Jon-Kar Zubieta, Chair and Professor of the University of Utah Department of Psychiatry and Psychiatrist-in-Chief of University Neuropsychiatric Institute(UNI), gave our keynote address on "Brain Science, Brain Health: Reframing Mental Illness." Three other faculty members delivered talks for mental health professionals the same day.

This being Park City, we couldn't resist the temptation to have our own "Brain Storm Film Festival" in partnership with the Park City Film Series, showing five films on mental health. Writer/Director Paul Dalio flew to Park City for a talk about his own struggles with bipolar disorder after a screening of his film "Touched with Fire," starring Kathy Holmes. A panel of local experts discussed the film "On the Edge" and the continuing lack of mental health services locally and throughout Utah after the KUED documentary was shown in Park City and Kamas.

Internationally recognized author and mental health advocate Liza Long ("The Price of Silence: A Mom's Perspective on Mental Illness") and her son Eric came from Idaho to speak with students, parents, teachers and administrators in Park City and Kamas about improvements in mental health services in the schools that would help all students get a better

education. Liza also spoke in conjunction with a showing of the film "No Letting Go," introducing us to the screen's writer/producer to make the screening possible.

Other programs addressed suicide prevention, the interplay between brain disease and substance abuse ("dual diagnosis"), the effect of high altitude on brain health, mindfulness, and mental health services for first responders. We also held a Spanish language program--"La salud emocional lo es todo."

We could not have done this without the generous logistical support and expertise of our community partners, as well as financial support from Provo Canyon Behavioral Hospital, Valley Behavioral Health and the University of Utah Psychiatry Department.

The Mental Health Needs Assessment Survey

In addition to its educational purposes, Mental Health Awareness month gave CONNECT the platform to promote citizen participation in the mental health needs assessment survey conducted by the County Health Department with the support of Valley Behavioral Health. (Two of CONNECT's founders served on the nine-member community-based steering committee that developed and oversaw the survey and prepared the report of its findings.) The Health Department gives CONNECT significant credit for helping to reach a desirable level of participation in the survey.

Other Educational Programming

Mental Health Awareness Month was just the beginning of our ongoing commitment to community education about all aspects of brain health. In October, we presented in partnership with the Utah Parent Center and the Park City School District "Which program is right for my child? IEP [Individualized Education Plan] or Section 504?" We followed that with "Taking the Bite Out of the Holidays: Strategies for Overcoming Stress, Grief, and Loneliness to Maintain Peace of Mind" in December. On January 4, 2017, we partnered with the University of Utah Department of Psychiatry to present "The Road to A Brain Healthy Life: What's Normal, What's Not." We give special thanks to Park City Rotary for a generous grant that supports our continuing programming.

CONNECT Website and the Directory of Summit County Mental Health Resources

We began our social media presence with a Facebook Page—[facebook.com/ConnectSummitCounty](https://www.facebook.com/ConnectSummitCounty) -- during Mental Health Awareness Month. At our retreat in June, we set as a top priority filling the information gap about mental health services currently available to Summit County residents. In September, drawing on the time, talents, creativity and expertise of Board Members Jim Whitney of Whitney Advertising and Shauna Wiest, we launched our website – <http://connectsummitcounty.org/>. It features the first-ever Directory of Summit County Mental Health Resources and also provides a wide range of information about recent developments in the field of brain health around the country. It is a continuing effort to collect information and we encourage all service providers to contribute their information (Again, our thanks to Park City Rotary for its grant supporting the website).

The Park City School District has supported our efforts to publicize the website by providing a link to the Directory in a letter to parents.

Information Tables

Starting with "Opportunities Night" in the South Summit School District last March, CONNECT volunteers staffed information tables at a wide range of events, including the Park Silly Market, the Park City School District screening of "Chasing the Dragon," the local Alzheimer's Walk, and two Deer Valley employee fairs, as well as the events during Mental Health Awareness Month. Depending on the event, we offered between ten and twenty different brochures (including Spanish language brochures) on a wide range of mental health topics. Thanks to NAMI Utah, Provo Canyon Behavioral Hospital, Jewish Family Services, and UNI for providing us with our initial stock of brochures. Staffing the tables, while providing valuable information to people in need, also gives CONNECT a face in the community and an opportunity to build our email and volunteer lists.

Parents' Round Table

In order to focus on the mental health challenges facing local school children and to give parents of children with mental health issues a forum for sharing the problems they face in the schools and possible solutions, CONNECT created a Parents' Round Table last summer. At the first meeting, the parents agreed that they needed more information about Individualized Education Plans and Section 504 Plans. That led to the "Which program is right for my child? IEP or 504?" program in October.

Media Coverage

Mental health is an issue whose time has come in Summit County and our local media--the *Park Record* and KPCW--deserve a lot of credit for keeping the stories before the public, building awareness and understanding of the issues and how they affect their audiences. In its year end edition, *The Park Record* listed the 'Spotlight Placed On Mental health System' as one of the community's top five news stories in 2016 and highlighted CONNECT and Mental Health Awareness Month. CONNECT has regularly provided people for media interviews -- both CONNECT members and CONNECT events speakers -- to facilitate the quality reporting that KPCW and the *Park Record* have done.

How Did CONNECT Do It All?

We're proud of what CONNECT has been able to accomplish in its first year. We believe that that success was based on five key elements.

First, as the saying goes "Timing is everything." Just when CONNECT's founders' frustrations with the local mental health system were coming to a boil, county leaders in government, and in the non-profit and private sectors were recognizing that the problems of an underserved population must be better met. There is a bold and unprecedented community-wide willingness to look at these difficult issues and work together to find solutions.

Second, the founders and the people who have joined CONNECT are committed, passionate people, driven by their personal and professional experiences. Because we have "been there, had to deal with that" we are willing to work to insure that our loved ones and others no longer have to struggle to get the treatment they need and deserve as contributing members of this community.

Third, the people who have joined CONNECT have a wide range of professional expertise- in education, law and government affairs, business, communications, graphic design, counseling, social media, research, etc. Other people have provided CONNECT with professional services on a "pro bono" or reduced fee basis, enabling us to proceed in an effective, professional manner without incurring the substantial expense that otherwise would have been required.

Fourth, CONNECT has benefited from partnerships with other community organizations willing to share their expertise and resources. We have been so impressed by the cooperative spirit among the individuals and organizations that shape life in this county we all love.

Fifth, the generous financial support by friends that got CONNECT started has broadened to public support through the Live PC, Give PC campaign in November and through the contributions of organizations such as the Park City Rotary and the Sunrise Rotary.

What's Ahead in 2017

Plans are already in the works for a diverse and exciting calendar of events for **Mental Health Awareness Month in May, 2017** and educational programs will continue on a regular basis throughout the year.

In partnership with the County Health Department, CONNECT is starting a **Round Table group for mental health professionals in Summit County**. The Round Table will enable mental health professionals to have a voice in developing the implementation plan and provide a forum where they can discuss issues affecting their daily work and the needs of their clients.

CONNECT as an organization, and some of its members as individuals, will actively participate in the Summit County community working groups that will **prepare a proposed implementation plan based on the mental health needs assessment survey**. By participating in the development of the implementation plan during 2017, CONNECT is well positioned and prepared to take a leadership role in shaping the future of mental health services in Summit County. We move forward with optimism based on our initial successes, but are realistic about the challenges that must be faced. In this period of growth and change, CONNECT will remain flexible in defining its role, but our efforts will certainly focus on obtaining additional mental health service providers and establishing a coordinated and comprehensive mental health delivery and referral system that will more adequately service mental health needs in Summit County.

In closing, we want to thank you again for your generous support during CONNECT's first year! In 2017, we welcome your continued interest, ideas and help as we continue our mission-- de-stigmatizing mental illness, increasing awareness of existing behavioral health services and building public support for increased spending on behavioral health in Summit County.

We wish you the best for 2017!

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Members of the Board of Directors