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We want to particularly thank the Park City Community Church, which has designated CONNECT as a community partner and has supported us both financially and with volunteers.
OVERVIEW

In last year’s report, we characterized 2017 as a breakthrough year for CONNECT and for Summit County in addressing mental illness and substance abuse. 2018 didn’t give CONNECT a chance to catch its breath—we feel that CONNECT has yet to hit its stride. Thanks to generous grants from the Katz Amsterdam Charitable Trust and the Marriott Daughters Foundation, CONNECT is poised to take our game to the next level in 2019.

STRATEGIC PLAN

CONNECT’s Mission is to create a well-informed and stigma-free community with access to mental health services for all residents of Summit County. CONNECT recently adopted a Strategic Plan to guide how we pursue our mission over the next three years. Our strategic goals are discussed below.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

In the three years that CONNECT has been presenting free community educational programs on mental health, total attendance has been 6,000 people at our seventy-some programs. Our programs have both provided valuable information about important aspects of mental illness and also promoted frank, open public discussion of mental illness that helps break down isolation and stigma.

CONNECT began 2018 with a program for parents and students on the stresses of social media that was presented in Park City, Kamas and Coalville in partnership with the Park City Library. In April 2018, Kate Fagan, ESPN commentator, spoke to Park City High School students in the morning and adults in the evening about the tragic suicide of Madison Halloran, a talented college athlete who seemingly had it all. The keynote speakers for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, Admiral James Winnefeld (ret.) and his wife Mary, brought about the fight against opioids to Park City through the story of their son, who died from a drug overdose just as he seemed to be winning his fight against depression and addiction. Other MHAM events included:

- a panel of Park City High School students presenting “Ask Me Anything Night”;
- a program on “Concussion/TBI: Impacts on Mental Health,” featuring freestyle ski champion Alex Schlopy and moderate by KPCW commentator and Park City City Council member Lynn Ware Peeck;
- community discussions on “How We’re Doing on Mental Health and Substance Abuse” moderated by the Park City Community Foundation’s Ollie Wilder with Roger Armstrong, Kim Carson, and Nann Ware from the County and City Councils; Rich Bullough, and Aaron Newman from the County Health Department; Mary Christa Smith from Communities That Care; Roy Parker from the Summit Recovery Foundation; and Ed Rutan and Shauna Wiest from CONNECT;
- and a showing of the Oscar winning short documentary film “Heaven Is A Traffic Jam on the 405,” followed by a panel discussion on depression

In 2019, MHAM will continue to be a primary focus of our educational offerings, but in response to suggestions from the community, we will shift the number of programs in May to present more programs during the rest of the year.

CONNECT will continue to present educational programming that provides general information and will also now focus on programs that feature providing specific tools to help people support a family member or friend suffering from mental illness.

An example is the L.E.A.P. program that CONNECT presented in partnership with the University of Utah’s Psychiatry Department in November 2018. L.E.A.P. (“Listen–Empathize–Agree–Partner”) is an evidence-based communication technique for building relationships more effectively with people suffering from mental illness.

CONNECT is also currently working on a “Tool Kit” program that would cover such diverse topics as working with law enforcement; eligibility for Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security disability based on mental illness; guardianship; financial planning for supporting people suffering from mental illness; and a primer on medications.

NAVIGATING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

CONNECT’s online Mental Health Resource Directory Database is a unique resource for people in Summit County trying to find local mental health service providers. CONNECT recently completed upgrades to the Directory, which utilizes the Networks of Care platform, to make it searchable and more user friendly. The upgrades were made possible by grants from Summit County, the Park City Community Foundation and the Promontory Foundation. In order to keep the content up to date, CONNECT seeks out new providers and stays in touch with current providers for updates on their services.

Often people will have questions about mental health services that cannot be answered by a computer database. In order to complement the information available in the online Directory, CONNECT is developing a “information line” to assist people in navigating the complexities of the mental health system. Development of the navigation service protocol has been funded by grants from the Park City Community Foundation and the Crandall Family Fund.

Supporting a person suffering from mental illness can be stressful for family members and friends. Sometimes it helps to be able to talk with other people dealing with similar challenges and share experience. CONNECT provides the opportunity to discuss these experiences in a confidential, non-clinical environment through its Family Peer Support Group, which meets once a month in the evening. CONNECT has also just added a daytime program and a new support group for parents of school age children. Because support groups cannot get too large and remain effective, CONNECT will start additional groups as the need arises.

CHAMPIONING NEW SERVICES

As reported last year, CONNECT, working with the Summit County Health Department, the Summit County Mental Wellness Alliance, the Park City Community Foundation and the Christian Center, is deeply involved in laying the groundwork for a Summit County “Clubhouse” – an evidence-based program for helping people struggling with mental health challenges develop the social and workplace skills necessary to lead an independent and meaningful life. The Summit County “clubhouse” is scheduled to open by June in 2019 at the Christian Center.

The “Clubhouse” project is an example of CONNECT’s belief that as a grassroots organization of people with lived experience in a wide range of mental health areas we are well-situated to identify important gaps in mental health services and then work to develop a solution. During 2019, CONNECT plans to identify new gaps to be filled.

ADVOCATING FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Because CONNECT was the first organization to actively speak out on mental health issues and has been effective in doing so, CONNECT has come to be recognized by many in the community as “the People’s Voice on Mental Health.” CONNECT can speak out as a grass roots organization without conflicts of interest because CONNECT is not a mental health service provider in the traditional clinical sense.

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CONNECT Summit County  ·  7120 Canyon Drive, Park City, UT 84098  ·  connectsummitcounty.org  ·  facebook.com/ConnectSummitCounty  ·  instagram/ConnectSummitCounty

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