



SAMARITAN
COUNSELING CENTER

Healthy Minds. Strong Communities.

Steadfast & Strong... Together



2020 Annual Report to the Community



Walking Together – Steadfast and Strong

By Steven Schedler, Executive Director

“And who is my neighbor?” This question posed to Jesus sparked one of humanity’s most famous parables. As the audience heard the tale of the man left for dead, those that passed by, and the one who stopped to deliver aid, many visceral reactions may have taken place. First, for the one who fell victim of the robbers, perhaps someone quickly thought, “Well...he deserved it!” Yes, the road was perilous. Barren, at times narrow, and descending 18 miles from Jerusalem to Jericho, this stretch of road was known to be fraught with danger. Solo travelers were particularly easy prey. And then a twist. The “hero” of the story, the one that stops and takes lifesaving action, is one who the immediate audience, in a gut reaction, would have feared as given to robbery! A Samaritan, one of “them”, one to avoid, one to look down upon, moved with compassion, took decisive action, and has been spoken of ever since.

As we consider this culture smashing narrative, we ponder our own times, our own place in the world. We may recall times when we looked askance at a loved one that was struggling to cope with life, or the old friend that was bound up in a cycle of compulsive alcohol use. Or perhaps we recalled our attempts at making a difference, of trying to be the good neighbor, and how we felt our efforts were in vain or without sufficient impact.

Dr. Martin Luther King once equated the Jericho road with “life’s highway”. As we walk along this highway we may find ourselves playing the part of all the parable’s actors. At times we walked by; at times, we were beaten; at times we were moved and did our part to help another.

As we walk our life in this sometimes strange and challenging time, what part do we play? Are we the one in need of aid? Are we the one that is just trying to mind our own business? Are we the one that is moved with compassion, even for someone that is different, perhaps someone that does not even respect me as a person?

No matter where we find ourselves on this winding road of life, we can surely say that the unconditional compassion of one person for another is life changing. What can the collective compassion and action of many accomplish? In 2020 the collective response of Samaritan staff members, donors and friends has accomplished much. In the midst of a challenge, not seen in generations, hundreds and hundreds of individuals, families, and businesses received aid. Teens struggling with life were seen and heard. First responders were counseled. Leaders were equipped to face mounting challenges at work. A parent, pulled apart by the competing demands of daily life and pandemic precautions, was offered hope.

Thank you for standing with Samaritan Counseling Center this past year. Thank you for your resolve as we walk together down the unknown road of 2021. Although we cannot say for sure what is around the next bend, we can say that we will walk together, we will do our part to help others, we will get our hands dirty, and we will be moved with compassion and act. Steadfast and strong, together.



A Letter from Our Board Chair

As we embarked on a new decade just one year ago, oh what we had to learn about change, resilience and the importance of togetherness.

In addition to the physical threats of Covid-19, the pandemic had an extraordinary effect on our mental health and well-being. As I reflect on the circumstances of those around me, everyone had a unique experience, yet our bouts with uncertainty were strikingly similar. As it turns out, Samaritan Counseling Center had planted the seeds of resilience, and was successful in helping our community get through this crisis.

Transitioning to working with clients in a remote setting presented challenges ranging from the logistics of how to connect from our homes, to challenges in working with insurance unknowns in this new environment. As we progressed, we learned teletherapy has a lot to offer. We experienced easier access to care and more privacy for clients, while our counselors delivered service more efficiently and now have the ability to see clients in a new way.

We also sowed the seeds of resilience with our donors and supporters. We missed gathering in person with all our Samaritan Counseling Center friends, but we were still able to pull off a hybrid Ethics in Business event and a Gala celebration. Silent Samaritans was entirely virtual, and we found a way to come together and connect. Hats off to everyone that planned and participated in these events. You gave us the opportunity to experience connectedness in a new way.

We are grateful to have our new board members, Jodi Kreider and Jeremy Nesmith as part of our leadership. Welcome to our Board! And a big thank you to departing board member Robyn Dougherty for her many hours of services as Treasurer.

And of course, we had a change in Executive Directors in 2020. We bid Gerald Ressler a fond farewell, and open our arms to Steve Schedler. Steve has a wealth of experience in counseling, as well as great ideas to lead us to new, exciting plateaus. Since our world has changed significantly over the last twelve months, what better time to take a new look at our future.

We emerged Steadfast and Strong! We are ready for our next chapter.



"We experienced easier access to care and more privacy for clients, while our counselors delivered service more efficiently and now have the ability to see clients in a new way."



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Therapists Reflect on Challenging Times

By **Debbi Miller, LPC** and **Ellen Kanagy, LCSW**

Debbi writes:

Shortly before the new year began, I discovered a post on Facebook attributed to Christie Kederian, LMFT, regarding the importance of therapists throughout the previous year. It said:



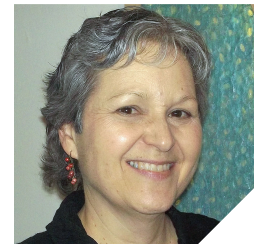
In 2020, therapists counseled people through
a global pandemic
an economic crisis
a politically polarized election
a racial justice movement
chronic uncertainty, anxiety and depression.

With no preparation,
warning
or special training
ALL
while they went through the same experiences themselves.

I shared it with my coworkers at Samaritan as we continued to meet with our clients the first week of January during additionally trying political experiences and grave uncertainties. Many responded in appreciation noting the difficulty they were having while remaining grateful for the opportunity to walk with others no matter their circumstances. I noticed how important it was to encourage and be encouraged.

Ellen writes:

Debbi's sharing prompted within me the questions: *And how did they do that? How do WE therapists at Samaritan Counseling Center do this?* The answer, in part, seems to be finding deep within ourselves our beliefs, values, and dedication to our work, so that we can keep showing up and caring for ourselves and our clients as well as our world at large.



We believed:

- That being present to ALL of life matters.
- That feelings of anger, sadness, fear, confusion have legitimate places (including for the therapist!).
- That we have something to offer others who are hurting, even if at times it may seem to be only companionship. (We are walking this road of life together.)
- That we bring skills, training and experience, alongside compassionate connection and an awareness of the resources of spirituality in many forms.
- That struggle, chaos and pain can lead to fresh beginnings and new life.
- That we can join "together" even while physically distant.

And so we did:

- Continue to be faithful to showing up for clients as agents of healing.
- Continue to be present to our own feelings.
- Offer authentic support and care to our families, colleagues and friends (and receive it from them also when needed).
- Breathe deeply, continually, mindfully.
- Notice what is soothing and sustaining in these difficult times, and embrace it as much as possible.
- Keep our eyes open to beauty and humor, and the way these can lighten challenging days.
- Express gratitude for sunshine after many cloudy days, and for stars that shine brightest in the darkness, keeping hope alive!

We believed, and so we did, and we will continue to carry on with our meaningful, challenging work, supporting and encouraging each other, and offering ourselves to those in need of hope, healing and wholeness.

Just

By Shelby Harding, PhD

Our minds solve problems, it's what they do,
in the world at large and the world of you.
They strive to make sense, to uncover meaning;
to put order in the world and the life that you're leading.
Minds write stories, tell us the end.
What happens next, how the narrative bends.
Who we are because of how we've grown.
No alternative, cast in stone.
Or so it seems,
indelible ink, reinforced seams.

And we welcome it.
We want to believe that people are as predictable as seasons,
that all we need is measurement and reason
to figure it out.
To erase doubt.
We crave certainty.
So, we trust our minds and their prophecies.

But cast in this way, it's hard to see
all of the other ways that our lives might be.
For the promise of a solution,
we give up sight.
We give up choice, give up the right
to be and do, differently.

It's the not knowing that is really hard.
It signals the mind to stand on guard.
To fill in the unknown, to pull us near
to understanding what to fear.
What is right, what is good.
What we can do or should.
What others believe or think of us.
What to avoid, who to trust.
It works so hard, hour after hour,
Calculating, evaluating, searching for power
in certainty and judgment.

But what if it's wrong?

What if how the story goes isn't how the story went?
What if the future isn't heaven or hell sent
but made?
By us, by what we do.
By what we are willing to feel and go through
to find what we value amidst the doubt
to live our lives, not to figure them out.
What if you are not a problem to solve
but a heart and a mind that's allowed to evolve?
To build something new from the material you find
when you are willing to leave the should and would be behind.
To face the unknown,
To face your fear.
To take a deep breath and shift into gear.
To steer from your compass, not the rear view.
And to finally be willing just to be you.



Samaritan Welcomes New Staff



Mary Frey, MS, LPC

Mary is a Licensed Professional Counselor, with a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Millersville University. Mary has worked in the mental health field for 20 years, with experience working with people with depression, anxiety, trauma, bipolar, substance use and co-occurring disorders, personality disorders, relationship issues, grief and bereavement, self-esteem, adjustment problems, loss of purpose/meaning, and connecting or reconnecting with faith. Mary has worked with a broad range of people, and has had the joy of seeing people recover, learning to cope with vulnerabilities and surpass their own expectations for their lives. Mary's approach to therapy depends on the client's needs, but always includes cognitive behavioral therapy, often dialectical behavioral therapy, trauma informed therapy, client-centered therapy, family systems therapy, motivational interviewing and mindfulness practice. The client is unconditionally accepted and valued and Mary is committed to being genuine, providing a safe environment for therapy, and being unfailingly supportive.



Samantha VanBuskirk, MSW

Samantha is a licensed social worker who earned her Master of Social Work from West Chester University. Samantha earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Religious Studies from Susquehanna University. Since then, she has worked in hospice care, school based therapy and inpatient behavioral health. Samantha has worked with individuals experiencing complicated grief, anxiety, depression and eating disorders, amongst other areas. She has experience working with individuals and group environments, providing therapy to adolescents, adults, and family units. Samantha utilizes a strengths-based person-centered approach in efforts to align with individuals. Her goal is to collaborate with clients in efforts to create a safe space to promote insight and personal growth and healing on their journey related to their mental health.

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Reflecting on the Interconnection of Strengths

By Carol Campbell, MS, LPC

The theme of Steadfast and Strong - Together as the theme for this Annual Report brought to my mind a poem called Strong Water, written by Barbara Buckman Strasko.

Strong Water

The river

has crested

and fallen over my hill again. This morning

as debris floats by,

I try to admire the strength of water

more than fear it. I try to imagine

the stars' light traveling here again, to a time

when I no longer have questions about where I have fallen into the current and where I have stayed on shore.

from *The Opposite of Lightning*, 2020,
poems by Barbara Buckman Strasko,
First Poet Laureate of Lancaster County

Steadfast and Strong is a welcomed topic to think about as we enter this new year and in some ways aligns with the theme of hope and resiliency that was discussed in the last issue of *The Samaritan Connection*.

In the year 2020 and at present, our resiliency as a global collective has been put to test and many of us at times have felt like we have fallen into a current of uncertainty and been temporarily swept away. Although the past year and the present state of challenges have affected us in different ways, it is likely that some have found it more difficult to stay strong, afloat or on the shore. Some people have or are presently experiencing one or more of the following symptoms in response to the changes: “fear and worry about

your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on, changes in sleep or eating patterns, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, worsening of chronic mental health problems, worsening of physical health problems and increased use of tobacco or other substances” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, para 1). In an article on the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) website, the present increase in mental health support needs by those affected by the changes in their lives brought on by the pandemic and other social unrest, has been referred to as a “silent epidemic within the pandemic” (2021, para 1).

How can one remain or become strong and steadfast and keep their feet firmly planted on the shore? Especially amidst so much uncertainty when they may be feeling weakened by witnessing or experiencing the floating debris and having difficulty maintaining daily routines and responsibilities? This question may be answered in part by looking at resiliency models that typically refer in some fashion to what are termed protective factors. “Protective factors are defined as characteristics at the individual, family, or community level that are associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes” (National Academies Press, 2009, para 24). Self-regulation, relational and problem-

solving skills and involvement in positive activities are general categories consisting of specific behaviors that may help to strengthen and increase resiliency or steadfastness. (ChildWelfare.Gov, 2015).

In the publication, *Creating a Healthier Life, A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness* (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016), wellness is defined as a circle or interconnectedness of several factors that help to promote overall wellbeing. In this guide, the interconnectedness of these factors is highlighted as most important in identifying areas that require strengthening in order to maintain balance and steadfastness and increase our ability to understand the force of the adversity we may be facing, rather than fear it. Specifically, these eight areas of wellness have been defined as emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational and social (SAMSHA, 2016).

Most of us have experienced an imbalance as a result of one factor's lessening or weakening by strong water in our lives and thus affecting the strength of another factor because they are interconnected. For example, if one has been laid off from work they may experience financial problems, if one is having relationship problems, they may experience emotional discomfort or if one has not been able to attend their place of worship, they may be feeling less connected to their spiritual self and others.

How can one remain Strong and Steadfast, keep their feet firmly planted on the shore and continue to have hope

"How can one remain Strong and Steadfast, keep their feet firmly planted on the shore and continue to have hope for the return of the star's light?"

for the return of the star's light? They may have to reach beyond what feels easy and comfortable when feeling unbalanced by the strong water in their lives. They may benefit from taking steps to refresh or strengthen their protective factors.

SAMSHA (2014) has a free guide for coping with stress along with some basic tips for staying healthy. The link for this guide is at the end of this article. The guide also provides insight into recognizing when one is feeling imbalanced. This is most important in knowing when one may need to utilize and strengthen their protective factors perhaps by: reaching out to a friend or family member, making an appointment with a therapist to talk about what is going on, focusing on healthier eating habits, seeking employment counseling, increasing exercise routines, decreasing use of alcohol or other substances that may be increasing mental health issues, attending a virtual worship service, attending a virtual yoga or mindful meditation class, going for a walk or run



and engaging in a different, new and fun activity.

Remaining hopeful that the star's light will return and taking time to regularly reflect on one's own strength and steadfastness and those moments when one has felt unsteady, may continue to help lessen a fear of the uncertain times and build resiliency and self-confidence in one's ability to stay steadfast and strong.

SAMSHA (2014) GUIDE

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885Outbreaks/sma14-4885>

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Carol Campbell, MS, LPC

Carol is a Licensed Professional Counselor and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Millersville University and a Master of Science Degree in Counseling and Human Relations from Villanova University. Carol has worked in the counseling field for 15 years as a school counselor and as a mental health and drug and alcohol therapist. When she is not engaging with clients, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, bicycling, hiking, cooking, reading, art and music and travel and adventure. Carol works with individuals, couples, families and groups ranging in age from teen-aged youth through adulthood. Her approach is multifaceted, incorporating several modalities including client-centered, strengths-based, mindfulness, motivational interviewing, solution-focused, cognitive behavioral and psychodynamic. Carol enjoys helping people with issues that may be related to depression, anxiety, grief and loss, trauma, abuse, mood disorders, anger management, self-esteem, stress and addiction. She approaches the counseling dynamic as a collaborative journey between herself and her clients.





**ETHICS
IN BUSINESS**
Beyond the Expected

Samaritan Center Highlights Organizations Committed to Ethical Operations Amid the Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic



At Samaritan, we have always believed that a vital part of a healthy community includes cultivating healthy businesses and organizations.

That's why even amid the turmoil of last year, we remained committed to our Ethics In Business event, which is an annual recognition of companies and organizations who demonstrate excellence in integrity, fairness and justice, stewardship, life-enhancing and transparency.

The hybrid in-person and livestream event in July announced RLPS Architects as the 2020 Award Recipient and honored the six Final Nominees: Achenbach's Bakery, HairDirect, Lancaster Works, LINKBANK, Susquehanna Sustainable Enterprises, and Upohar Ethnic Cuisines.

The event at Casa di Fiori at The Inn at Leola Village featured Dr. Gordon Zook, the CEO of Ten Thousand Villages. He spoke of the organization's struggle to make the best, most ethical decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, discussing the difficulties, as well as the importance, of a continued commitment to ethics in uncertain times.

We took his message to heart, recommitting to our program as it enters its 14th year. Thankfully, even in the midst of many difficulties, the community has continued to recognize the efforts of local businesses committed to ethics.

We look forward to revealing our Final Nominees in the upcoming months!

This year's program is currently scheduled for July 22, 2021, with hopes of an in-person event at Lancaster Country Club, as well as a livestreaming option. Jan Bergen, President and CEO of Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health Group, will speak about the ethical opportunities and challenges she has encountered while leading the Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are interested in supporting this year's Ethics in Business program, various sponsorship packages are available. All opportunities can be found at scclanc.org/ethics-in-business, or interested parties can email Director of Development Anita Hanna at ahanna@scclanc.org.

Ethics in Business Site Visitors

- Heidi Bianco
- Robyn Dougherty
- Beth Ebersole
- Roxanne Edwards
- Dan Falvey
- Matt Hanna
- Emily Hertzler
- Paul McBride
- Dan Mellinger
- David Mulrine
- Wes Neumann
- Todd Reinhart
- Jamie Rowley
- Karen Snyder
- Matthew Witkovsky
- Keith Witmer

Ethics in Business Steering Committee

- Barbi Cottingham
- Laura Gallagher
- Emily Hertzler
- Martha Lawrence
- Todd Reinhart
- Karen Sheeche
- Joye Smith

Jan Loeffler Bergen



Jan Loeffler Bergen is the President & Chief Executive Officer of Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health. She lives in Lancaster with her husband. In 2020, she announced plans to retire at the end of this March, after more than 20 years with the health system.

Jan joined Lancaster General Health in January 2000 as Senior Vice President of Ambulatory Care and the Women & Babies Hospital. After serving in a variety of leadership roles within the organization, Jan was promoted in September 2015 to President & Chief Executive Officer of Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health.

Jan's educational background includes: The George School; Lafayette College, B.A.; University of Pennsylvania and Temple University, Master level course work in business and social work at Temple University, Executive Leadership Programs at Harvard Business School and Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania. Jan received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, degree from Lebanon Valley College in May 2018.

The Opportunities of An Unexpected Year

By Jim Weischedel, Director of Consulting



Out of adversity comes opportunity.

These words have never been truer than for Samaritan's Business Consulting in 2020.

While many challenges came to our team and the organizations we served this previous year, we were able to face the adversity. We were able to adjust, pivot, and redirect to address the needs of clients and individuals.

But the transition looked different for every service.

For career coaching, sessions for recently laid-off employees moved seamlessly to online Zoom calls. For our human resource consultants, pivoting included a socially-distanced job interview for a key executive position at a local nonprofit. For our trainers, transitioning meant a few in-person, socially-distanced trainings, with consultants discussing best practices for safety and the delivery of content at our monthly staff meetings.

The rippling changes across the business landscape even meant a webinar with the Lancaster Chamber where our consultants shared how companies could handle some of the common challenges within organizations that have arisen due to COVID-19.

In some ways, these transitions were simpler than expected. After all, our career coaching, executive coaching, retained search and leadership trainings often operate in one-on-one or group-learning environments that can be easily translated to Zoom or, in individual cases, phone calls.

But we saw firsthand the difficulties many of our current and former clients faced when the transitions were not as easy. And even as we continued to work with clients this past year, we found that we, too, missed the dynamics of in-person consultations, conversations and, yes, even handshakes.

For all of us, it has been a year of changes and transition. Yet amid the adversity has come the opportunity to continue finding unique ways to serve the business community. To commit to serving our clients to the best of our ability, whether that be online, by phone, or, someday soon, in-person.

We thank our clients for their patience and flexibility this year. And we look forward to a new year full of opportunity, whatever lies ahead.



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NATURAL
LIGHT
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Clergy and Congregation Care

By David Miron, Clergy & Congregation Care Coordinator



“If I had not been in this group, I would not be a pastor now.”
“I don’t know what I would have done if I didn’t have my clergy group at some of the darkest times.” “This process was so helpful for our congregation.”

These are just some of the things we have heard over the years from people who engaged with others through the Clergy and Congregation Care program. It’s not about the program; the program is only the vehicle by which people engage. It is about being together.

The theme for this newsletter is “Steadfast and Strong—Together”. We have seen how connecting with others helps people be strong and steadfast. During the COVID experience, Clergy and Congregation Care did not get many requests to help congregations—which came as no surprise. The interest we did find in what we can offer was in clergy groups and one to one services—ways for individuals to connect with others.

Four new discussion groups were started since May, two for women clergy, one for deacons and the newest group we helped to set up and which started last month is a discussion group for clergy spouses/partners.

Even in this time of mask wearing and social distancing, we find ways to connect with others. For many it is through little boxes on a computer screen. Others pick up their phones. Seeing and hearing others helps us connect and through our connections we feel encouraged and strengthened.



CLERGY &
CONGREGATION
CARE



“Strong and Steadfast, Courage and Patience”

By Judith A. Kennedy, LPC, NCC

As a therapist/writer, I must hesitate with the word “strong”. The way we perceive “strength” historically and culturally can work both “for us and against us”. That is, to be strong can mean the ability to tolerate and learn from uncomfortable and distressing emotions and sensations that arise as part of our collective human experience. Strength can mean finding a way to remain with distress without running from it or blocking or numbing it, without retaliating and/or withdrawing from others.

But “strength” can also work against us, by interpreting and judging emotional vulnerability and distress as “weakness” even as nightmares might visit, even as panic roils inside us and our inclinations to flee through destructive behavior increases. When we label vulnerability as “weakness,” as opposed to attending to our inner lives as “sources of information,” or as signs of our “common humanity,” we don’t seize the opportunity to grow and expand as individuals, families and communities. Strength might mean to hold the tension of differences in a way to grow our relations, no matter how trying

it is, like Jacob and the angel, in order to retain the things that matter most to us, our family and friends. This kind of strength, these days, requires mindful hesitation and deep listening and authentic being. A “tall order” and a pressing one.

I continue to be in admiration of those nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, police officers, victims of violence and overt racism, pastors when they show up in a counseling session with the strength and courage it takes to be vulnerable and authentic with themselves - when they acknowledge the anger and grief and often trauma that goes on inside of them, but they retain a professionalism and civility when faced with, at times, opposition. I am inspired by their strength in times of “Biblical proportion”. I admire their strength and steadfastness not only in what they are faced with in their daily lives, but in their ability to tolerate the vulnerability and pain to find faith in the transformative process of their life circumstances and narratives.

Seeing the Moon in COVID

By Andrew Bland, Ph.D.



Consider this haiku by the 17th-century Japanese poet Mizuta Masahide:
*Barn's burnt down—
now
I can see the moon.*

Often, it is disruption—even tragedy—that begets the most meaningful growth because it shakes us out of our comfort zones and puts us in touch with our finitude and our values, especially when we have allowed ourselves to become distracted by minutiae. It prompts us to go beyond the known, to become more trusting of and open to our experience, and to better tolerate ambiguity. Indeed, the COVID pandemic has provided numerous opportunities of this order. As described in Fareed Zakaria's *Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World*, it has exposed numerous gaping holes in our social, economic, political, technological, and cultural systems along all sides of ideological spectrums. Accordingly, it has provided an invitation at the collective level to cultivate humility, to assume a more interdependent worldview in a global society, to become more caring and cooperative with nature, and to develop alternatives for a more sustainable future.

Of course, external change is spurred by self-change at the individual level. As difficult as social distancing can be for some, it is important to remember that it is in our ultimate isolation as human beings that we are bound together (*a part of* and *apart from* others, as the existential psychotherapist Jim Bugental aptly described). Indeed, it is tempting to want to return to our pre-COVID routines as quickly as possible. On the other hand, rather than cling to the familiar, what creative potential has this experience held in the way you choose to live your life? What new perspective and possibilities have you developed? How do you see yourself carrying those forward?

Paradoxically, we do not gain strength via exercise and exertion. Rather, the activity itself serves to break down muscle—and we become stronger in the process of reconstruction. Similarly, the dance of Shiva in Hindu tradition represents burning out an obsolete way of being in order for something more effective to take its place. COVID has afforded humanity a pause. What will be your role in heeding the call to embrace healthy tension and awaken to something greater?



Question from the Other Side of Strength

If a wave is strong, can we let it carry us?
If the current carries us farther into sea,
can we trust it will release us
into a calmer tide?

We ask if we can be seen from onshore,
will the boat arrive?
Can we befriend what appears
to be an enemy?

Will a darkness come upon us?
Will the sun no longer rise
and set upon our face?
Will the waves of air embrace us?

We take a sip of water,
the nightingale sings.
He places a warm hand
on our shoulder.

We cannot see his Face
but he is there nonetheless.
A comfort surrounds us.
We cannot see the tears fall

from His own broken Heart.

Judith A. Kennedy

Judith's latest collection of poetry, *To See in the Night*, will be released in the Spring.



The Optical Delusion of Separateness

By Lesley Huff, PsyD

The meditation teacher and clinical psychologist Tara Brach, PhD, invites us to reflect on the question “What feelings would we have to sit with if we didn’t look for someone to blame?” In asking this question, she recognizes that our survival tendencies (of wanting to avoid pain and uncertainty) lead us to quickly (and usually inaccurately) identify the “good guys” and the “bad guys” when something does not go as we hoped or expected. We create a tremendous amount of suffering in this effort to avoid sitting with dis-ease. Although this can “resolve” the uncertainty, the cost is a disconnection within ourselves and with others.

The practice of mindfulness invites us to see our experience more clearly, leaning into acceptance and letting go of judgement. In doing so, we are likely to meet uncomfortable emotions, some of which we may feel ill-equipped to handle. This is where the compassion practice comes in - helping us to create spaciousness and increased tolerance to sit with feelings like anger, sadness, fear, guilt, rejection, among others. Another aspect of compassion that helps to hold us in this experience is that of Common Humanity, or a belief that our experience is one that connects us to other beings. When we feel isolated and ashamed of our feelings, we become consumed with the “small me” rather than resting in the more spacious “we”. In 1950, Albert Einstein wrote in a condolence letter to a friend who was distraught over the death of his young son from polio, “A human being is a part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness...to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind.”

The compassion practice of Loving Kindness is powerful in connecting our individual “part” to the “whole”; supporting us in overcoming the “optical delusion” of separateness. There are many ways to enter into the practice, and many directions in which to take it...but most importantly, we are encouraged to choose what Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn calls “the gentlest path”. The Loving Kindness practice involves repeating invitations of goodwill and compassion that are sent to ourselves and others, recognizing the Common Humanity in our desire to receive and to live into them. Unlike affirmations, which can be haunted by the specter of possible “failure”, the Loving Kindness invitations are more of a tender offering. We can hold them gently and send or receive them without the weight of expectation.

As with most mindfulness and compassion practices, Loving Kindness is best understood experientially. I invite you to place your hand on your heart (to connect into our bodies’ “tend and befriend” system). The practice can either start by offering Loving Kindness to ourselves, or to someone with whom we feel an uncomplicated and loving relationship. For many, offering it to someone else feels more permissible, so let us begin there.

Please bring to mind someone towards whom it is very easy to offer goodwill. It could be someone who is living, has passed, or even a spiritual figure. Slowly send these Loving Kindness invitations (either silently or out loud):

*May you be at peace
May you be healthy
May you be free from suffering
May you live with ease*



Mindfulness and compassion practices are something that we can intentionally choose to bring into our lives to cultivate a sense of connection and community with the world around us.



You may even want to add a Loving Kindness invitation that comes from your own heart to this specific being.

Now imagine yourself receiving these invitations of Loving Kindness from this being. Allow the words in. Allowing them to feel true, if even for this moment.

The power of Loving Kindness is understanding the Common Humanity of all beings having these wishes for themselves. With this in mind, we continue the practice by expanding the circle to include a dear friend and even beings we do not know well.

Please bring to mind a dear friend and begin offering these phrases to them.

Now continue to expand the circle by sending these phrases to someone you do not know well, perhaps a neighbor or someone you saw in a store or in the news.

One of the more challenging aspects of Loving Kindness practice is the opportunity to send these invitations to people towards whom we do not feel goodwill. There is so much wrapped up in the resistance that can arise here. We might ask, “Why should I send Loving Kindness to someone who causes me pain?” We may get blocked by our own struggles with perfectionism and worth, and ask ourselves “don’t only good people deserve Loving Kindness?” If we accept that all of us can create pain in the world when we are overwhelmed by our own suffering, we can entertain the idea that even the most difficult people in our lives are struggling. Our motivation could be the thought that perhaps if they suffered less, they may be less difficult.

If it feels safe to do so, please bring to mind someone with whom you have a difficult relationship and offer these phrases to them. If the gentlest thing for you is to return to sending them to someone already in the circle, please offer that kindness to yourself.

Compassion work reminds us to treat ourselves with the same kindness as we would offer to others. Therefore, we can end the Loving Kindness practice by including ourselves in the circle, and adjusting the phrases to reflect this.

*May we all be at peace
May we all be healthy
May we all be free from suffering
May we all live with ease*

And now letting go of the practice and resting in the ocean of compassion.

Mindfulness and compassion practices are something that we can intentionally choose to bring into our lives to cultivate a sense of connection and community with the world around us. The French monk Matthieu Ricard reminds us that “We do exercise every morning, 20 minutes, to be fit. We don’t sit for 20 minutes to cultivate compassion. If we were to do so, our mind will change, our brain will change.” (On Being, May 27, 2019). So perhaps we do not have 20 minutes. Research shows that shorter times can still have significant impact. Start with 3 minutes, if that is more realistic. Remember, find the gentlest path.

Our world has suffered tremendous trauma over the past year, and we have seen the tenuous fissures within our communities and families start to tear under the pressure. It has been very easy to feel a “part” rather than connected into a larger “whole.” Author Elizabeth Gilbert stated that “The health of the planet is affected by the health of every individual on it. If even one or two souls can be free from discord, this will increase the general health of the whole world, the way a few healthy cells in a body can increase the general health of that body.” I cannot think of a better time to consider the development of a Loving Kindness practice so that we may heal our own “optical delusion”, as well as bring our healing to the larger “whole”.



Lesley Huff, PsyD, is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified Teacher in Mindful Self-Compassion. She leads the *Change Through Compassion* program. To learn more about this offering and to watch videos of Lesley leading practices, including the one described in this article, please visit www.scclanc.org/ctc.



Adaptability and Flexibility – TeenHope Goes With the Flow!

By Kim Moore, TeenHope Director

with contributions from Chris Vandenberg, TeenHope Coordinator



TeenHope, an outreach program of Samaritan Counseling Center, endeavors to make

mental health services more accessible to students and their families. Formally launched in the 2013/2014 school year, TeenHope staff go into schools and give a brief screening to students to identify potential issues of depression, anxiety and/or suicidal thoughts. Starting with only two schools, TeenHope now schedules screenings at 19 schools, many over multiple days. Prior to the 2020/2021 school year, TeenHope screened 11,192 students – of which 18.18% showed symptoms of distress. TeenHope desires to make discussions about mental health as routine as height, weight and vision screenings.

If 2020 taught us anything, it was the definition of adaptability and flexibility. The 2019-2020 screening schedule was sailing along smoothly until COVID 19 hit in March. The last two schools in which we were to screen were cancelled. Over the summer, we began brainstorming ways we could still offer screenings under these strange circumstances. By fall, we had developed a virtual model that we could offer to schools. The downside was that we could screen far fewer students virtually than we could if we were able to be in schools. As schools adapted to COVID conditions, so too did we.

With some staff comfortable going into

schools to do the screenings and some willing to work virtually, we developed a hybrid model. Most screenings now consist of a small group of staff that go in person and 2-3 staff that meet with students through the modern age of technology. We use a confidential telehealth platform and TeenHope purchased three tablets that we can set up for our virtual staff. Our schedule has been interrupted a few times due to high numbers of COVID cases or unexpected school closures. We are grateful to the schools' flexibility helping us complete the screenings. We know that screenings are necessary now more than ever, as the percentage of students struggling has increased to almost 23%.

A snapshot of what we encounter is shared by Chris Vandenberg, the TeenHope Coordinator, from a recent screening: *Eric was feeling more unnerved by the moment. The 12-year old student he was talking with over his computer had already stated she felt suicidal that very morning. Now, when he asked her what she thought might happen when she went home that day, she could not give an answer.*

Eric's child was clearly suffering. In a risky situation like this, Eric immediately got in touch with the TeenHope Coordinator who was in the school to consult—Eric, himself, was at home and talking over a computer. Discussing the situation, each agreed that it was unwise to let the child return home that day without some intervention. But, what would that be? Since the program operates

at the request of the school, the child's guidance counselor was quickly engaged. As it turns out, the school had, that very morning, received information that warranted a Children & Youth report alleging abuse. The Dean of Students and school Principal became involved, and based upon school protocol a plan was formulated.

While Eric's challenging case was being tackled, the TeenHope work continued. On this day, 36% of all students screened were identified as struggling in some way. Wendy met with siblings, separately, whose mother had unexpectedly died only months ago. Each still felt the pain and the home remains unsettled. Peg met with a girl who had witnessed domestic violence in the home and has symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress such as anxiety, being easily startled and distrusting family. A boy who stopped



taking his medication is thinking he may need to start up again. A girl tried to commit suicide a few months ago and had not told her mom; she agreed that she would do this with TeenHope support. Some students may be recommended for outpatient services, some may go to a primary care physician and be honest with their doctors, some students need to have an open conversation with guardians, and some need help from the school they have been unwilling to ask for. Clearly, there is a need for TeenHope!

Heraclitus said, "Change is the only constant in life." Nothing could be truer! I wrote in the fall that we have a new Coordinator. Chris Vandenberg dove head first (or was pushed?!) into the unknown and has done a remarkable job

learning an ever changing job. He has learned quickly and I appreciate his ability to adapt to each school as everyone seems to be a little bit different.

Another change for TeenHope was saying goodbye to Perry Hazeltine, our Coordinator of Research and Development. Perry is one of the founders of TeenHope and has been instrumental in its growth over the past 8 years. Though he is stepping down as the R&D Coordinator, he will be coming on as an independent consultant case manager to help with some future screenings.

We are pleased to announce that we have hired Valerie Minnich as the new Coordinator of Research & Development.

She is currently enrolled in a PhD program at Grand Canyon University in General Psychology with a focus in Human Cognition & Instruction. She currently works as a Substance Abuse Disorder outpatient clinician and will be completing her LPC licensing hours in the spring. She and her family are very active in their church, Derry Presbyterian in Hershey, PA and enjoy time outdoors. She and her husband Shaun have 3 daughters, and 2 dogs.

TeenHope forges ahead and we hope to continue meeting the needs in more schools in Lancaster County. We are almost 100% donor funded. We could not do our work without your continued support...steadfast and strong, together! THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!



Valerie Minnich

My name is Valerie Minnich, and husband's name is Shaun. We have been married for 7 and a half years and have three girls Genevieve (6) Josefina (3) and Evangeline (1) and a boy on the way this summer. I am enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Grand Canyon University in General Psychology with a focus in Human Cognition and Instruction. My potential dissertation topic is a generational study of Millennial (Generation Y) higher education professors and if there is any correlation between their job satisfaction and self-efficacy. My husband is also a student at Grand Canyon and is enrolled in an MBA program with a focus in finance. If all goes well, I will defend my dissertation in May 2022 and my husband and I will be celebrating commencement together in October 2022. I am waiting on board approval for my LPC, and national certification from the NBCC for my NCC. My family is very active in our church, Derry Presbyterian in Hershey, PA, and we enjoy time outdoors. We spend a lot of our time with our 2 dogs and hosting family and friend gatherings when not in a pandemic. I am excited to be a part of the TeenHope program as the new R&D coordinator, and I hope to bring fresh perspective and potential growth to a program that already helps so many families in Lancaster County.



Sobering Statistics Lancaster County

36.6%

of teens felt
depressed or sad most days

16%

of students have had
serious suicidal thoughts

9.4%

of students have
attempted suicide at least once

2019 PAYS Data

**Thank You to
Our 2020 Silent
Samaritan Sponsors**

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Silent Samaritan

Happy 25th Anniversary! Our 25th *Silent Samaritan Celebration and Thanks Giving Luncheon* was held virtually on Thursday, November 12, 2020. We are tremendously thankful for the **more than 300** loyal Silent Samaritans who raised over **\$50,000!** This is fantastic considering how difficult the year 2020 was for many people. We want to thank you for your generous support of the **Silent Samaritan Fund.**

We are also very thankful for our Sponsors! We thank our Community Sponsor NCR Corporation; our Champion Sponsors Fulton Bank and Tiger's Eye; our Supporting Sponsors Atwater Malick, Bertz Hess & Co., LLP, Groff Funeral & Cremation Services, Lancaster Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine LLC, Listrak, Inc. and Matthew 25 Thrift Store; and our Giving Sponsors Moravian Manor and Strasburg Railroad Company. Because of the support of these sponsors, your dollars go further to help women who are seeking counseling.

This year's event was great even though we couldn't be together to celebrate. Our invocation was beautifully shared by harpist **Diane Penchansky** along with memorable photos from past luncheons. Our keynote speaker, **Rita Clarke**, shared her story "You Are Not Alone: The importance of asking for help and placing yourself in a position to help others." She spoke about her experiences of overcoming the stigma to request help and to not feel guilt or condemnation for doing so. We were inspired to understand the importance of asking for help and placing ourselves in a position to help others. We also heard several powerful testimonies and personal stories from Silent Samaritans. In addition, we were honored to have long time Silent Samaritan **Kim Lemon** emcee again this year.

We have included a listing of the 2020 Silent Samaritans in this Annual Report. Your support of the Silent Samaritan Fund makes a very real difference in the lives of many women in our community. For those of you who are Silent Samaritan Endowment donors, 36 donors contributed \$4,321 in 2020, bringing the fund to over \$70,000.

We thank you for your dedication to our mission of Women Helping Women who seek counseling, but are at a time and place in their lives when they cannot afford it. Your gifts are carefully directed to provide counseling, consultation, education and other mental health services for women in our local community.

On behalf of Samaritan's Board of Directors, the Silent Samaritan Planning Committee, Samaritan staff and all the women who are helped through your generosity, **thank you!**



Thank You!

Join The



SAMARITAN CHAMPIONS

As a member of the Samaritan Champions, your generous monthly donation makes it possible for individuals, families and children with limited financial resources to receive the mental health care they need.



"Supporting the Samaritan Counseling Center through a monthly giving donation has made it very convenient and also enabled me to donate in a more significant way than a one-time donation. It is more important than ever to support nonprofits such as the SCC during these difficult times."



Robyn Dougherty
Former Board Member of
Samaritan Counseling Center

Here's how your gift could impact those in need of mental health services:

\$10 a month

Helps women in crises receive the help they need but are otherwise unable to afford.

\$25 a month

Funds 12 screenings for depression, anxiety and suicide risk at local middle and high schools.

\$50 a month

Provides counseling for 12 people who need services but are unable to pay the full fee.

Become a Samaritan Champion

www.scclanc.org/Samaritan-Champions



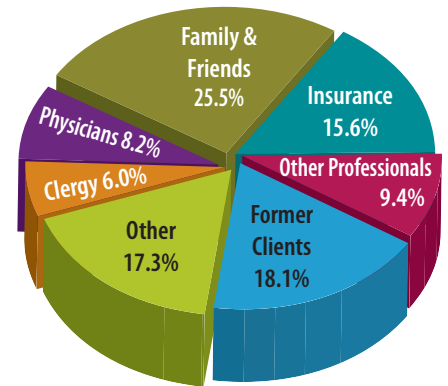
2020 Financial

Income

\$1,649,380

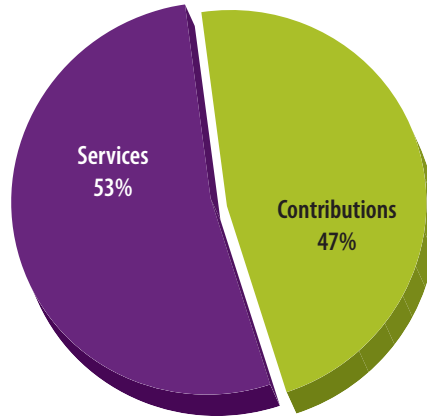
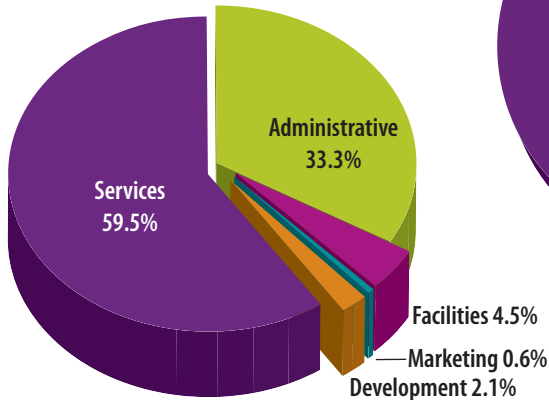
Referral Sources

Sources

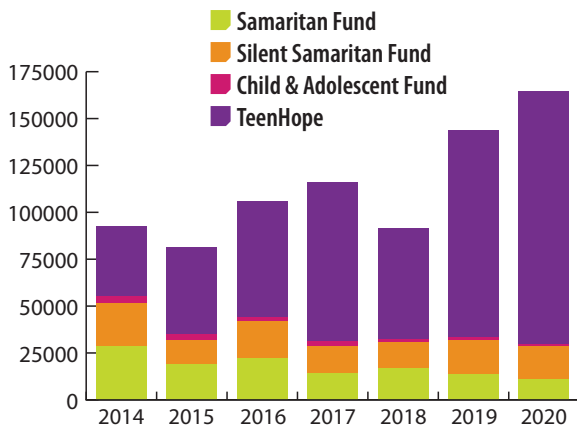


Expenses

\$1,521,083

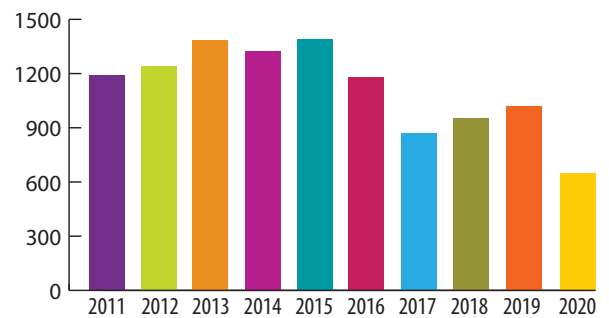


Subsidy Usage

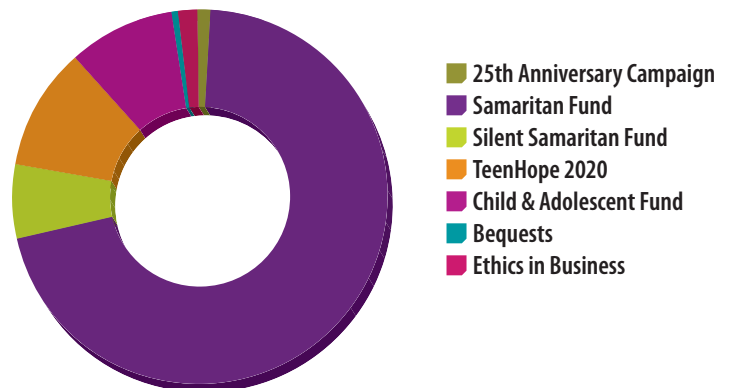


New Client Sessions

Sessions



Development \$777,371



For Samaritan Counseling Center, 2020 was a year filled with the many challenges caused by the COVID-19 virus. Clinical services went from 100% in-house sessions to nearly 100% virtual sessions. All other areas were adversely affected as well and new procedures had to be developed for delivery of services. Samaritan was blessed to receive a Payroll Protection Plan loan (which was forgiven), a Lancaster Recovery Grant, and two HHS Grants, which enabled the center to minimize the negative effects caused by COVID-19. We were also blessed with the continued dedication of our donors, staff and Board. We are hopeful that Samaritan is well positioned to adjust to whatever the new normal becomes in 2021 and that with your continued support, we will continue to weather the storm.



FROM THE DESK OF THE DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

The Development Committee would like to welcome our two new members, Jodi Kreider and Bethany Georgia. The committee currently has 9 members; all individuals who are willing to support the continued financial health and stability of Samaritan as well as growth through fundraising and financial development programs.

To date, we have been working on these goals: fostering existing donor relationships; seeking and fostering new donor relationships; seeking and developing business sponsorships; and coordinating a grant program that specifically aligns with SCC's mission, vision, values and programming.

The committee has worked diligently to acknowledge and thank our many donors, either by thank you notes or phone calls. We have been virtually introducing our new Executive Director, Steve Schedler, to long-time supporters. We have elicited sponsors for the Ethics in Business program and written letters to new Silent Samaritans and lapsed donors. We have revised our annual events due to the Covid-19 crisis. In addition, we have also been seeking out funding for new technology to improve TeenHope and updating the center's current website.

We understand that this year has been a challenge in many ways. We are so grateful to all individuals who contribute their time, talent and monetary donations to Samaritan. Although we are a small committee, we remain "Steadfast and Strong Together".

Cathy Gelatka



Updates That Might Affect Your Financial Planning

Required Minimum Distributions from Your IRA

Over the past 2 years, Congress and the Internal Revenue Service have made several changes as to when and how you take a Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA. In 2020, you were not required to take a Required Minimum Distribution, but Required Minimum Distributions are required again in 2021. In December 2019, Congress adjusted the age at which retirees are required to begin receiving Required Minimum Distributions. If you were born before June 30, 1949, you must take a Required Minimum Distribution at age 70-1/2 years old. If you were born after June 30, 1949, you can wait to take your Required Minimum Distribution until age 72 years old.

- If you direct your financial advisor or IRA manager to send your distribution directly to a 501(3) charitable organization, you may fulfill your philanthropic goals as well as avoid income tax on the distribution.

Charitable Contribution Deduction Expanded

If you typically take a standard deduction on your tax return, you will be interested in this change. You may now deduct \$300 above the standard deduction if you are a single filer and \$600 above the standard deduction if you are a married couple filing jointly. This tax incentive does not apply to distributions from a donor advised fund.

If you typically itemize your deductions, this change may apply to you. The CARES Act lifted the cap on annual contribution deduction limitations from 60% to 100% of your adjusted gross income. Further, any excess contributions can be carried over to the next five years.

Information provided by Elyse M. Kauffman, MBA, Charitable Consultant, Everence. To contact Elyse:



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717-653-6662 Ext. 4494 • 800-653-9723 • Fax: 717-653-6387
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the
following...



The Samaritan Counseling Center and our programs and services are supported by the generous contributions of individuals, businesses, churches, corporations and foundations. Your gift makes it possible for us to subsidize fees for individuals, families and children who have little or no financial resources, as well as provide quality programming on mental health issues to members of our community.

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in my older adult life. I appreciate his gentle guidance
and supportive counseling.*



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In Honor of

Bob & Marcy Lawless
 David & Jill Emmert
Bru & Tripura Medishetty
 Tracy Seiger
Kim Moore
 Michael Wildasin

I've experienced healing and hope renewed. The counseling I have received has helped me to recognize and acknowledge both my blessings and challenges. I feel validated and understood.



Linda Peacock

Donna D. Thomason

Don Stewart

Nathan & Alexis Scott
Flynn Stewart-Severy

TeenHope Program

Diane Jordan
Kimberly Moore

In Memory of

Joseph & Joan Brown

Jim & Sue Goddard

David Murray

Theresa Kreider

Amanda Charlotte Wilson

David & Jane Miron

Silent Samaritan

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Karen Hammel

Amy Hanna



I am grateful for the financial help to cover my counseling expenses. I have been blessed by the Silent Samaritans. I appreciate that these blessings make counseling affordable.

Anita Hanna

Cynthia Hanna

John & Elaine Hanna

Rebecca Hanna

Annabelle Hargreaves

Susan Harkleroad

Victoria Harsh

Catherine A. Hastings

Frances Hayward

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Beverly Leech

Belinda LeFever

Kim Lemon

Lynda Levensgood

Amy Lewis

Elizabeth Lewis



*You are making a difference
by impacting lives of those who
feel lost, alone, misunderstood
and vulnerable. Lives are being
touched and transformed.*

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 Sharon Hoover
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Cathy Doremus
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Marilyn Ebel

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Mary Ellen Kopetz
Karen Rummel
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In Honor of
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Pat Stockwell
Donna D. Thomason

Silent Samaritan Endowment

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Ann Webber

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There were not many opportunities for volunteer involvement this year but we thank them for their years of dedication.

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*My therapist saved my life!
She listened to me and put the
pieces together and discovered a
main cause of my depression.
I am so thankful for her.*

Carol Maurer
 Ellen W. McCabe
 Barbara Miller
 Judy Miller
 Ann Musser
 Linda Neumann
 Linda Peacock
 Linda Rice
 Judi Rineer
 Patricia Rohrer
 Mary Rost
 Judith S. Sandt
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 Millersville Woman's Club
 Rintz Family Foundation
 United Way of Lancaster Co.
 Willis & Elsie Shenk Foundation



We feel that our therapy was enormously helpful. With our therapist's guidance we were able to open the door to communication at home. We feel blessed and fortunate to have had him in our lives.

A student was dealing with suicidal ideation. She never confided in anyone with what she was dealing with, and because of the TeenHope screening she found the courage to be honest and share that she was struggling. Now she no longer has to manage these thoughts on her own.



Partner Churches

Akron Church of the Brethren
 Akron Mennonite Church
 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
 Blossom Hill Mennonite Church
 Church of the Apostles United Church of Christ
 Community Mennonite Church
 East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church
 East Petersburg Mennonite Church

Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren
 Faith Journey Church
 First Baptist Church of Lancaster
 First Presbyterian Church
 Hamilton Park United Church of Christ
 Hempfield Church of the Brethren
 Highland Presbyterian Church
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
 Lampeter Church of the Brethren
 Lancaster Church of the Brethren

Laurel Street Mennonite Church
 Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
 Moravian Center of Lancaster
 Mountville Church of the Brethren
 Pilgrims Mennonite Church
 Richland Church of the Brethren
 Rossmere Mennonite Church
 St. James Episcopal Church
 St. John Neumann Catholic Church

St. John's Episcopal Church, Lancaster
 St. John's Episcopal Church, Marietta
 St. John's Lutheran Church
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church
 St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
 St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church
 St. Thomas Episcopal Church
 Sunnyside Mennonite Church
 Swamp Lutheran Church
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 Trinity United Church of Christ
 Willow Street United Church of Christ
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 Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Landisville
 Zion Evangelical Lutheran, Marietta
 Zion United Church of Christ, New Providence

Supporting Churches

Witmer Heights Mennonite Church
 Forest Hills Mennonite Church
 Community Fellowship Church

Your support made such a positive difference in our community. 2020 presented many unique challenges and we simply could not have continued meeting the needs of so many individuals, families, and organizations without you! More people than ever are experiencing mental health challenges. You helped your friends and neighbors get the mental health care they needed to heal and thrive.

—Steve Schedler, Executive Director





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SAVE THE DATE – MAY 12, 2022

Please join us on Thursday, May 12, 2022 to welcome back the *Sea Glass Gala!* After we take a break in 2021, we'll be returning with all the food, music, raffle & fun you know and love. Thank you for your loyalty and support!



SAMARITAN
COUNSELING CENTER