



MHA's H. Keith Brunnemer, Jr. 2015 Award Winners for Community Impact

Each year, the MHA awards the annual H. Keith Brunnemer, Jr. award to individuals or groups we believe have made the most significant contribution(s) to mental health during the past year, as elected by our Board of Directors.

The 2015 Brunnemer Award Winners are Betsy and Bill Blue.

Betsy and Bill Blue (*pictured right*) are not idle people and they definitely do not sit back and wait! After experiencing first-hand the frustration of trying to find quality local resources to address the mental health needs of a loved one in crisis, the Blues immediately jumped into action. It was during this time that the Blues quickly learned of an acute gap in the continuum of mental health care in the Mecklenburg region to include a shortage of professionals, a shortage of in-patient crisis beds, long wait periods for assessments and services, etc. These gaps were not only disappointing, but to Betsy and Bill they were unacceptable, especially in a city the size of Charlotte and with the wealth of Charlotte. The Blues began conducting research to demonstrate local service voids as well as to identify top service needs. One of their key findings showed there was not a nonprofit residential mental health center within 100 miles of Charlotte despite the fact there are 230,000 adults dealing with serious mental illness within the same radius. Next, the Blues cultivated every local connection and resource they had, reaching out to friends, families, colleagues, health and human service agencies, nonprofits, foundations, hospitals, etc. Betsy and Bill examined and/or visited many treatment models across the country. They found a successful nonprofit treatment facility they felt would help others in the Charlotte region address the mental health needs of families and friends finding themselves in crisis situations similar to what they experienced. Amazingly and in a very short amount of time, the



Blues identified a proven model, brought the concept back to Charlotte, created the [HopeWay Foundation](#), found the right mix of partners and major funders, identified and obtained suitable real estate, and ultimately made magic happen. In less than two years, Betsy and Bill raised \$25.4 million dollars to make their dream a reality! Opening later in 2016 in South Charlotte, HopeWay's vision is to be a best practice, patient-centered mental health care center, offering a residential and day treatment continuum of care for adults as well as education and community support. As their website shares, [HopeWay](#) is expected to treat 500 patients per year. According to studies, for every patient there are 8 other people who are deeply concerned about the patient's health, which will result in 4,000 local lives meaningfully impacted in a given year. Additional studies show that 90% of all people who receive best practice care demonstrate a reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life. HopeWay will truly have a significant community impact on the Charlotte region in terms of improved mental wellness.