



HOW MHA MADE LEMONADE OUT OF LEMONS

New Programs and Services Offered During the Pandemic



Mental Health Matters

A bi-weekly 30-minute virtual series featuring topics such as:

- Coping with grief during Covid-19
- Balancing remote work and school
- Helping alleviate anxiety in children



Workplace Webinars

These webinars have reached 330 to date:

- Remote work wellness strategies
- Dealing with stress and anxiety during the pandemic
- Knowing when to get help



Yoga Therapy Series

We introduced a low-cost Yoga series in partnership with Yoga Therapist Cindy Capwell, focused on the healing benefits of breath and meditation



Pro-Bono Counseling

Through CARES Act Funds, we are offering free counseling for 50 youth and adults who have been impacted by COVID-19



Working Group on Racialized Trauma

Designed to create a safe space for dialogue around systemic racism and the impacts on mental health

Ways to Give and Build Community Resiliency

Monthly

When you setup a convenient monthly donation to MHA, it provides stable funds to continue one-on-one support and empowerment. Check the Monthly box on the enclosed envelope or choose Monthly by Donation Frequency on the website Donation page.

Circle of Hope Young Professionals Society

If you're under 40, consider joining MHA's Circle of Hope (COH) Society, a group of young professionals who support MHA's work with a gift of \$50, \$150, \$250 or more per year. COH members will plan quarterly events in 2021, starting with Saturday, January 30 for hiking/ice skating at the U.S. White Water Center. Check the Circle of Hope box on the enclosed envelope or check the "I Wish to Join Circle of Hope Society" on the website Donation page.

1933 Society Membership

MHA's 1933 Society is our multi-year giving society, named in honor of the year we were founded in Charlotte. Join with a sustaining unrestricted investment of \$1,000 or more for five or more years, or \$83.33 per month. Check the 1933 Society box on the enclosed envelope or check the "I Wish to Join 1933 Society" on the website Donation page.

Every Gift Matters

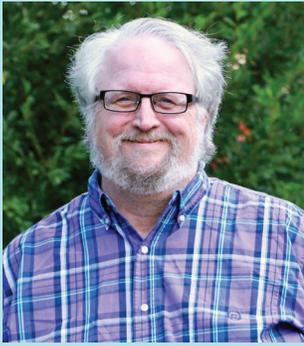
Your donation of any size makes an impact on the number of community members we can provide help and offer hope to in 2021. Thanks for investing in mental wellness, utilizing the enclosed envelope or the secure Donation page on the website.

More Ways To Help

- **Does your employer have a Matching Gifts program?** Don't forget to complete steps to have your gift potentially doubled.
- **Did you know MHA has an Endowment Fund with Foundation For The Carolinas?** Contact us at 704-365.3454 ext. 223 to learn about planned giving options.
- **Looking for a meaningful, rewarding volunteer opportunity?** MHA's Compeer program matches compassionate volunteers with adults in mental health recovery. Learn more on our website or call 704-365-3454 ext. 217.



www.mhacentralcarolinas.org



Jim Love's Story: In His Own Words

"The stigma attached to mental illness was always a roadblock to me. I was a man with a good life—I thought my issues were simply flaws in my character."

In May 2016, I reached a crisis point and attempted suicide. My defense mechanisms had allowed me to keep the depth of my struggles hidden but the reality came crashing down in one fateful night. After many years of misdiagnoses, I was diagnosed with Bipolar 2, which led to major changes in my treatment regime. The improvements were dramatic. While I still struggle, the battles are not as fierce, and I have gradually been reclaiming my life.

Jim Gets Introduced to MHA

In December 2019, I was invited to my first MHA event. When I attended the 2020 MHA Legislative Breakfast at Charlotte Motor Speedway, I heard MHA Storyteller Jim Dukes share his journey and it was exactly what I needed to hear at exactly the right time. When he spoke of "getting off the couch," a place that I had spent nearly four years, I knew it was time for me to make that commitment to myself.

My wife Lori and I attended our first MHA Coffee & Conversation and we heard from MHA Storyteller Glenn Proctor. Once again, the words of someone who had struggled with mental health challenges let me know that not only was I not alone, but also, that I had something to offer. **I could use my voice.**



Thanks to MHA I was able to receive free training in both QPR Suicide Prevention and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). While hesitant, I decided to become an MHA Storyteller to help others as Jim and Glenn's words had helped me. I soon learned how true that was.

MHA arranged for me to share my story on a WSOC-TV special on mental health, and the impact was nearly overwhelming. After the segment aired and was shared on social media, I immediately learned the power of sharing. I heard from friends from 30 years ago, co-workers I had lost touch with, and from total strangers as well. They all wanted to share their support and, more importantly, they wanted to share their stories. Two minutes of airtime made possible by MHA, was breaking down barriers, breaking down the stigma in ways that I could not have imagined.

As a result of those conversations:

- two people entered substance abuse rehabilitation
- two entered hospitalization
- three entered intensive outpatient programs
- five more have begun treatment

Lives were changed and at least two lives were saved all because MHA had provided me a voice. More importantly, MHA had provided me with training to provide the proper type of assistance. Without the MHFA and QPR training I received, I know the outcomes would not be as positive for my friends or for me.

How I Made Lemonade Out of Lemons

My involvement in MHA is a case study in unintended consequences. The friendships I have built with other MHA Storytellers, have provided the sense of community that's been invaluable to me during this time of physical distancing.

Here I am, a person that struggles to leave their home, and a new world opened to me. My friendship with fellow MHA Storyteller Nemo Sum is an example. Nemo and I met during a Zoom Social for MHA Storytellers. Nemo's encouragement and advice has led to me to perform Spoken Word poetry at the Charlotte Art League. Oh, Executive Director of



the Charlotte Art League, Jim Dukes, is also the MHA Storyteller whose words were so inspiring to me months earlier.

Here I am, living with social anxiety panic disorder—sharing my words on a microphone.

Miracles do happen.

Because of MHA, my world is bigger, my support network has increased, my sense of self and my value has been renewed. I'm beginning to find something that my mental illness had robbed me of for so long—my words and my voice.