

The Guidance Center of Westchester

TIMES

Fall 2019

PROS on the move

The dedicated team of counselors in our Personalized Recovery-Oriented Services (PROS) find creative and fun ways to help participants not only build skills within the safety of TGCW, but also practice those skills in a community setting.

"This helps reduce anxiety so that participants can better enjoy the whole experience."

"This is all part of our enhanced community integration initiative," explains PROS Director Alicia Lore-Grachan, LCSW. "We look for ways to match classes with community experiences. Our counselors are here to lend support and encouragement, and PROS participants can branch out and practice their skills in a new environment." Through these real-

world experiences, participants can gain confidence and be better able to engage in social activities on their own, an integral step to recovery.

So far this year PROS participants have enjoyed two outings to The Westchester Broadway Theatre, including lunch, where they saw live productions of "On Your Feet" and "Mambo Italiano;" a trip Olive Garden followed by a movie; and a stress-reduction class at Yoga Haven in Tuckahoe.



Our Year End Annual Appeal is coming up! Please participate and be as generous as you can!

The Guidance Center of Westchester

256 Washington Street • Mount Vernon, NY 10553 • 914-613-0700 • TheGuidanceCenter.org

PROS on the move (cont.)

"Before an outing, we talk about what to expect: how many people will be there...how we're going to get there...is it going to be loud... will the room be bright or dark... things like that," Ms. Lore-Grachan continues. "This helps reduce anxiety so that participants can better enjoy the whole experience."

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Throughout the event, the participants and staff support and encourage each other. After the event, the group gets together to provide strength-focused feedback, share successes, and discuss challenges.

PROS is a comprehensive rehabilitative program for people with serious mental illness.

You can support PROS participants in their recovery by making a donation to help cover the costs of a trip.



SHARING MY STORY

by B. Pollock

This has been my experience with depression anxiety and PTSD. My journey is ongoing. In sharing my experience, I hope to shed light on the 'struggle' and to encourage others to get the help that they deserve.

'At work' was my happy place. No matter what I was being faced with, going to work solved it. All of that changed in the winter of 2017 when I fell at work. Unbeknown to me, that fall was about to unravel my whole life as I knew it.

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After months of physical therapy, surgery and more physical therapy, things were still not progressing as my physician had hoped it would. So, with each passing day, powered by my inability to work, the bills piling up and the fact that I wasn't able to do the simplest things (like braiding my daughter's hair or making her breakfast), I found myself spiraling into a very deep, dark place. I didn't want to get out of bed. I didn't want to take a shower. I stopped speaking with friends and family members. I could not sleep at night because I had recurring nightmares of falling. I cried for no apparent reason. Some days I didn't feel like eating and other days I ate everything in sight. There were days when I convinced myself that my family would be better off without me.

One morning, my 10-year-old daughter entered my

room unexpectedly, and her response to seeing me bawling my eyes out while watching the weather was the turning point for me. She stared at me and after a long pause she said, "Mom, you know you're suffering from some deep emotional problems." I will never forget that day! And after a year of suffering in silence, I decided to go to my primary care physician.

Although my doctor told me what he thought it was and gave me the number to the Mount Vernon branch of The Guidance Center of Westchester, it took me about a month to make the appointment. You see, I wasn't quite sure how to handle what he said. What would I tell my family? What would they think of me? No one else in my family ever had a problem like this before.

I am very happy that I finally decided to follow through with what the doctor ordered. I started therapy in the fall of 2018 and have made great strides thanks to my counselor, Ms. Kysmth and my psychiatrist, Dr. Hayden. Some days are harder than others, but now I know who to call. I can finally see that proverbial light at the end of tunnel.

If you can relate to any part of my story, please reach out to The Guidance Center. They're helping me put my life back together, and they can do the same for you.

Need help? Contact our in-take department at 914-613-0700 (x7104)

New board officers & directors

The Guidance Center of Westchester is delighted to announce **Mitzi Ambrose-Washington** as the newly elected board chair. Joining Ms. Ambrose-Washington on the executive committee are **Chris Avery** and **Samuel J. Beran, MD** as vice chairs, and **Steve F. Groth** as secretary. **Frank Hariton** remains treasurer and **Gene Rostov** assumes the role of immediate past chair. In addition **Elissa Bard** and **Benjamin Malerba** have joined the board as directors.

"Helping individuals overcome barriers is near and dear to my heart," says Ms. Ambrose-Washington. *"I'm thrilled to be the new board chair of this dynamic agency where everyone is committed to helping others discover new ways to learn, work, and thrive."*



Ms. Ambrose-Washington joined TGCW's board in 2015 and has held several key positions including board secretary and co-chair of the Gala committee. She also participated as a member of the advisory board for TGCW's Center for College & Careers program. She is the first African-American to chair the agency's board. Professionally, Ms. Ambrose-Washington is an award-winning, performance-driven

sales professional with a history of successfully promoting billion dollar brands in the media and pharmaceutical industries. She is a graduate of Howard University.



Ms. Bard has 20 years of experience working in the field of community development finance and affordable housing. She has a master's degree in Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and an undergraduate degree in International Relations from Tufts University.



Mr. Malerba is a partner in the Health Services and Privacy, Data & Cyber Law Practices Groups at Rivkin Radler Attorneys at Law. Mr. Malerba earned his J.D. from Hofstra University School of Law, his M.B.A. from Frank G. Zarb School of Business at Hofstra University, and his undergraduate degree from State University of New York at Stony Brook.

From the CEO



"You have no idea where the darkest times of your life might end, so you have to just keep going." — **Ellen DeGeneres** on her own depression.

Mental health. It's in the news more

and more as celebrities and professional athletes – you know, the people who we think "have it all" – are speaking candidly about their personal battles. From depression to anxiety to bipolar disorder, the message is clear that fame and money do not inoculate a person from mental illness. Celebrities are making an impact in reducing the stigma of mental health, yet a lot of people still think, "Sure. Ellen has millions of dollars! Of course she can get mental health treatment. What about someone like me?"

That's where The Guidance Center of Westchester (TGCW) comes in. Every year we provide mental health treatment to close to 3,000 people. Our program participants range in age, with the youngest being under five years old, and in the type of help they need. Some people require weekly or monthly counseling sessions, while others take part in our daily program.

While no one who receives help at TGCW is a "celebrity," I can assure you that they are seen as VIPs, receiving high quality care from a passionate and dedicated team of professionals which includes clinicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and nurse practitioners. We provide individual, group, and family therapies. We even offer programs that are community-based, which means that if someone can't get to one of our clinics, we can provide services at a comfortable, convenient location, including their home.

If you know someone who is living with a mental health issue, please ask them to reach out for help. At TGCW, we are available to help people learn, work, and thrive.

Chief Executive Officer



The Guidance Center of Westchester

256 Washington Street
Mount Vernon, NY 10553

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Here, there, and everywhere: community-based services

The best mental health treatment is one that a person actually receives. For many people, just getting to treatment is more than half the battle. This is why TGCW offers several community-based options for those individuals for whom traditional facility-based treatment options have not worked. With these programs, a participant can meet with a counselor at home or any location in the community.

Children and Family Treatment and Support Services: Available to Medicaid participants under 21 years old. TGCW can provide therapy and rehabilitation services. Call 914-613-0700 x7128 or email CFTSS@TheGuidanceCenter.org

Home and Community-Based Services: Available to Medicaid HARP members. TGCW can provide



a variety of services for mental health and substance use recovery. Call 914-613-0700 x7051 or email HCBS@TheGuidanceCenter.org

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): Available to Medicaid-enrolled adults (18+) who have serious and persistent mental illness and a history of hospitalization. Call 914-613-0700 x7064 or email ACT@TheGuidanceCenter.org.