

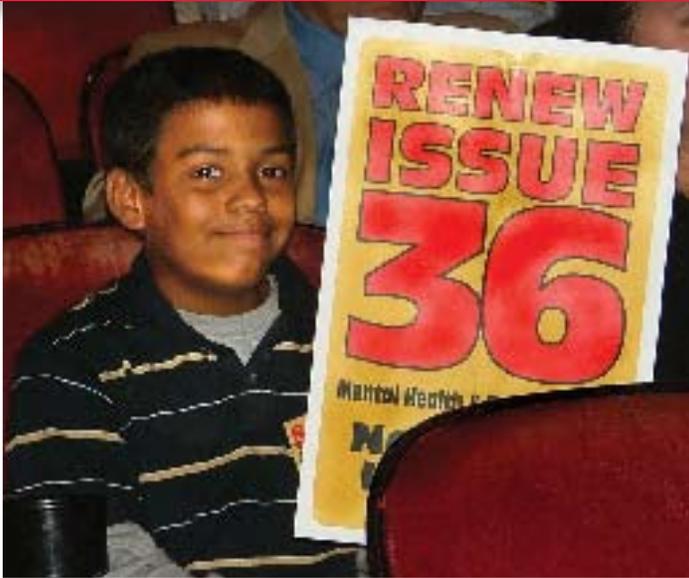
# Mental Health & Recovery Board

OF PORTAGE COUNTY **NEWSLETTER**

Fall 2008

A publication to increase awareness of mental health and substance abuse services in our community

*A Network of Care for All Generations!*



A young supporter of Renewal Issue 36 came out for the levy kick-off rally at the Kent Stage.

## Not a tax increase! Renewal Issue 36 supports mental health and recovery services

Renewal of Issue 36 on the November ballot will maintain mental health and recovery services for Portage County residents and does not increase taxes.

Issue 36 helps to fund services that keep families strong and people productive during difficult times, such as Ohio's current economic situation. Issue 36 also helps to provide needed mental health care for youth and adults who are victims of abuse.

The renewal levy funds 24-hour services that keep Portage communities safe by preventing suicides and training safety forces to handle residents in crises. The county system handled 36,742 calls and contacts for crises, suicide intervention and information last year, a 225% increase since 1988.

Issue 36 funds make sure that Portage County takes care of veterans and enlisted men and women and their families by providing critical substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

"We thank Portage County voters for their past support of the half-mill levy. Without it, the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County could not have helped a steadily growing number of community members seeking care during

## RENEW 36 0.5-mill levy NOT a Tax Increase

the past decade," said **William Nome**, Issue 36 campaign chairman.

Services have increased 150 percent for children and teens and 39 percent for adults since 1998 when the levy was last renewed. Issue 36 also supports education to prevent substance abuse among youth and to prevent suicides, especially among young people and older adults in Portage County.

Mental Health & Recovery Board uses funds from Issue 36 and other sources to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment to Portage residents through a network of community agencies, including Coleman Professional Services, Townhall II, Children's Advantage, Family and Community Services and its Safer Futures program, Compass Recovery and The Bair Foundation.

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## Building BRIDGES to a better life: teachers work on own recovery while helping their peers

**Leesha Nush** and **John Cain**, who both have mental illness, are not hiding from the world anymore, thanks to local services and strength they have gained from a peer education program in Portage County.

The two were BRIDGES students, which stands for "Building Recovery through Individual Dreams and Goals through Education and Support." Now they are BRIDGES teachers reaching out to others who want to work on recovery.

Sponsored by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, BRIDGES classes are scheduled several times per year. The program is free.

"From the first class, I gained hope and understanding. I learned I can have dreams and goals, and I could meet these at some point in my life. I learned I am not alone," said Nush, who is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and attended Kent State University.

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Nush was diagnosed in 1999 with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and anxiety. She saw her world fall apart and believed it would lead to her death.

Cain explained that the class is open to any person in the county with a mental illness diagnosis from stress to depression to serious mental illness. He believes the class can change a person's life. Cain, a mechanic, has bi-polar disease. He understands now why he has so much anger followed by bouts of depression.

"Having a network of peers who have been through the class has helped me in many ways because I now have people I can talk to. They are in the same place or have been there. That support system helps me see when a crisis is building, so I can get help more quickly with less serious consequences," he said.

Both Nush and Cain were helped by local services through the Mental Health & Recovery Board. BRIDGES provides participants with detailed information about the brain, mental illness, treatments and medications. Class members work on listening skills and advocacy to help them talk with doctors, counselors and other health professionals. Class members learn how to build effective support networks.

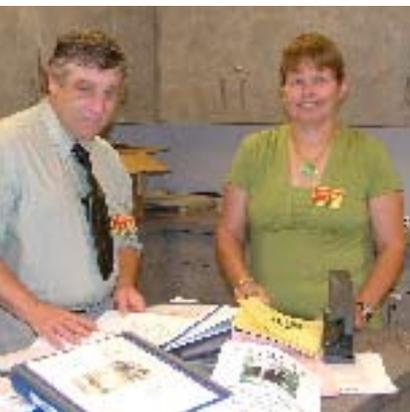
"I am able to talk to my treatment team with confidence, and I don't feel inferior. I have gained self-control and self-confidence. I am happy again," Nush said. She is now working and speaking in public as an advocate about mental illness issues.

"BRIDGES gives you the confidence in yourself to find out what works for you to feel better and how you can give back to society in a positive way," she reflected.

Cain was inspired to teach BRIDGES by the accomplishments of a peer who became a teacher to help others on the road to recovery.

"Having taken the class, I handle stigma issues better. The more you work on building a support system the healthier you will be. These are key things I want to help others learn," Cain said.

To sign up for the class, call the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County at 330-673-1756, ext. 201.



**John Cain of Kent, left, and Leesha Nush of Ravenna prepare notebooks for the participants of a new BRIDGES class.**



**Tom and Richelle Simpson of The Kent Stage welcomed the Issue 36 volunteers with a sign on the theater's marquee, a venerable downtown landmark.**



**Alberta Caetta of Ravenna, Townhall II Executive Director Sue Whitehurst and Portage County Commissioner Chris Smeiles show off their Issue 36 signs.**



**Tim Schaffner of Diamond, president of Children's Advantage, came to thank the community for supporting the 0.5-mill levy for the past 30 years. He talked about all the agency's young consumers and their families who have benefited from services made possible by Issue 36.**



**Kent attorney William Nome served as emcee of the rally, frequently reminding the crowd that Issue 36 is not a tax increase and to look for it at the end of the Nov. 4 ballot.**

First passed in 1978, Issue 36 costs the owner of a \$100,000 house \$4.25 per year. It generates \$581,000 annually for mental health and substance abuse treatment services each year in Portage County.

A kick-off rally for Issue 36 was held at The Kent Stage in downtown Kent. Supporters who spoke included Portage County Commissioner **Chris Smeiles**; **Sean Buchanan** from **Congressman Tim Ryan's** office; Atwater resident **Karen Cox** who has an adult son with a mental illness; and **Leesha Nush** of Ravenna, who is in recovery from mental illness. **State Rep. Kathleen Chandler** sent a letter urging renewal of the levy. Nush and Cox had the crowd chanting and waving signs.

Agency board presidents who talked about how the levy benefits children, teens, families and adults were **Ann Otto** of Coleman Professional Services, **Tim Schaffner** of Children's Advantage and **Janet Rusanowsky** of Family & Community Services. Townhall II Executive Director **Sue Whitehurst** explained that support for Issue 36 saves taxpayers money when consumers get their lives back on track.

For more information, call the Mental Health & Recovery Board at 330-673-1756 or go to [www.networkofcare.info](http://www.networkofcare.info).



The Crisis Intervention Team Education Collaboration graduated its first class in August. Class members were: first row, from left, principal **Denice Gore**, Kent City Schools; bus aide **Nancy Flowers**, Ravenna City Schools; school psychologist **Elizabeth Hawanczak**, Waterloo Local School District and Portage County Educational Service Center; teacher **Pam Harr**, Kent; teacher **LeeAnn Hritz**, Waterloo; teacher **Kate Kusnyer**, Kent; school counselor **Emily Congrove**, Kent; job training coordinator **Aurora Stewart**, Kent; school nurse **Vicki Nichols**, Kent; guidance counselor **Clifford**

**Schmidt**, Waterloo; second row, teacher **Fred Patterson**, Kent; bus aide **Beverly Sovine**, Ravenna; bus driver **Linda Mack**, Ravenna; bus aide **Marie Sorkin**, Ravenna; guidance counselor **Allyson Westover**; librarian **Katherine Kasper**, Waterloo; teacher **Kimberly Steel**, Waterloo; teacher **Susan Grable**, Kent; teacher **Kristin Stambaugh**, Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center; teacher **Debra Horner**, Juvenile Detention Center; and **Carrie Suvada**, a creator of the collaboration program and a teacher in the Waterloo district.



**Carrie Suvada**

## CIT Education Collaboration holds first school crisis intervention training

The Crisis Intervention Team of Portage County graduated its first class of educators and school staff in a new program christened the CIT Education Collaboration.

Organized by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, the inaugural class included school staff from Kent, Ravenna and Waterloo districts and the Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center. Roosevelt High School provided classroom space for the weeklong workshop, which gave participants grounding in the basic education of mental illness and how to work with persons in crisis.

"Based on positive evaluations, we will be looking ahead to conduct another class next year. There is a need among school staff for this type of training because we face these issues every day," said **Carrie Suvada**, a Waterloo Special Education teacher who helped develop the program.

School staff members from bus drivers and teachers to maintenance and cafeteria staff encounter students and parents where there can be the potential for a crisis situation, Suvada explained.

"It is obvious that a lot of hard work went into this training. I have gained knowledge and training that will be so valuable to me as I work with my students," said **Emily Congrove**, a school counselor at Davey Elementary in Kent.

Sessions included information about mental illness, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, substance abuse, autism, domestic violence, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, teen and child crisis situations and suicide prevention, as well as an overview of local services; de-escalation scenario practice; ethical concerns and legal issues. The course also included a session on a bus to give Ravenna transportation staff experience in using de-escalation techniques.

"I didn't know exactly what to expect," said Ravenna bus aide **Nancy Flowers**. "But as each subject was explained, I began

to understand that each child on the bus is very different and not just a child bent on being bad. Their actions have a reason. This has been very helpful to me."

CIT, sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is an education program for law enforcement. Suvada was inspired to push for a CIT for schools after her husband, an officer with Streetsboro City Police, took the class through the MHRB.

Suvada worked with the Board's Director of Special Projects **Dennis Missimi**, Roosevelt High School Principal **Roger Sidoti** and Kent Police Department Juvenile Counselor **Jeff Langstaff** to devise the curriculum and organize the program. MHRB Associate Director **Dr. Joel Mowrey**, a psychologist, also contributed.

Organizations involved in the program included Kent City Schools; Waterloo Local School District; police departments from Streetsboro, Kent and Kent State University; Department of Jobs and Family Services; Portage County Prosecutor's Office; the County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; and the KSU School of Theatre. Presentations were also made by staff from the agencies in the Mental Health & Recovery Board's network of services.

**The next CIT Education Collaboration class will be Summer 2009. For information about future classes, call 330-673-1756, ext. 206.**

## Carrie Suvada honored for work on school crisis intervention

**Carrie Suvada**, center, a Special Education teacher for the Waterloo Local School District, was recognized by the MHRB for her leadership in developing the Crisis Intervention Team Education Collaboration. Board Executive Director **Hal Farrier**, left, and Chairman **Ron Heineking** of Kent congratulated Suvada for her efforts. The education program trained its first class this summer. (See related story on this page.)



# 2008 Annual Dinner

## Board honors community members who advocate, support mental health and recovery community

Friends of the Mental Health & Recovery Board gathered for the Board's annual dinner at the American Legion in Kent.

The Board presented the first Portage County CIT Officer of the Year Award to **Andy Suvada** of the Streetsboro Police Department. Brimfield resident **Rick Reichard** and **Leesha Nush** of Ravenna talked about their journeys to recovery and received supportive applause from the audience.



Greg Musci and Debby Missimi from Family & Community Services.



Dr. Walter Watson, Judge Barbara Watson, center, and Gail Pytel of United Way enjoy the evening in each other's company.



Mental Health & Recovery Board member Terrie Tarchinski Nielsen, center, Portage County Sheriff Duane Kaley to her left and PARTA Marketing Director Frank Hairston.



Portage County Auditor Janet Esposito and her husband Tony.



MHRB Chairman Ron Heineking, left, talked with board member Karen Cox, Coleman CEO Nelson Burns, center, Karen's husband Phil Cox and Jim Mauro, the speaker and executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in Ohio.



MHRB Director of Finance David Brokaw talked with county sheriff candidate Dave Doak and his wife Linda.

Portage County Commissioner Chris Smeiles and Commissioner Maureen Frederick were honored for commissioners' role providing support to establish the CIT program in the county.



Streetsboro Police Officer Andy Suvada, back to camera, received his award from MHRB Director of Special Projects Dennis Missimi. To the left is Aurora Police Chief Seth Riewaldt, chairman of the Portage County Police Chiefs' Association with Streetsboro Police Chief Richard Taiclet and MHRB Chairman Ron Heineking looking on. CIT is a specialized training program in which law enforcement officers are educated about mental illness and learn skills to de-escalate crisis.

Ohio's CIT Officer of the Year Andy Suvada accepted his award for the local honor, which was bestowed by the Portage County Police Chiefs' Association and the MHRB. Suvada, who lives in Palmyra Township, has been a member of the Streetsboro Police Department since 1994. He went through the weeklong intensive course in Spring 2007. Andy has led the way for CIT in Streetsboro. He uses the techniques he learned in training with unruly juveniles, domestic violence incidents, traffic stops and with those who are threatening suicide. The CIT program in Portage County is sponsored by the MHRB.



MHRB member Hilary Kane, standing, with Ravenna Detective and Mrs. Greg Francis and Capt. Michele Lee, right, of the Kent Police Department.



## New board member from Aurora is experienced in student mental health



**Dr. Carol Redmond**

School psychologist **Dr. Carol Redmond** of Aurora is the newest member of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. She was appointed to a four-year term by the Ohio Department of Mental Health to fill a seat for a mental health professional.

"My 35 years of work experience and formal academic training in the fields of education and psychology have sensitized me to the sometimes extraordinary needs of ordinary families. I now have the time to put these skills to work for the benefit of my community," Redmond said of her decision to join the board.

An Aurora resident for 34 years, Redmond retired from the Warrensville Heights City Schools after 29 years. She and her husband, James, also a school psychologist, continue in their work through their business, Redmond School Psychology Services, located in Aurora.

She believes her knowledge of school psychological services will help the board ensure efficient delivery of comprehensive mental health and recovery services in the county.

Redmond received her doctorate in school psychology from Kent State University. She completed her master's work at John Carroll University and earned her undergraduate degree at Ohio Wesleyan University. She is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Aurora. She is on the board of the League of Women Voters of Northern Portage County. Redmond was past president of the Cleveland Association of School Psychologists and a former board member of the Ohio Association of School Psychologists.

Her husband is retired from Aurora City Schools where he worked as a high school teacher, school psychologist and elementary guidance counselor.

## Rootstown resident leaves board with eight years of service

The MHRB honored Rootstown resident **Kristine McCully**, R.N., left, for eight years of volunteer service. McCully served as vice chairman for the past two years. Chairman **Ron Heineking** of Kent, center, presented McCully with a certificate of appreciation. Kent attorney **William Nome**, right, is succeeding her as vice chairman. McCully was a leader on the board as chairman of the Program Planning Committee, which studies programming issues and recommends action to the board. She also led the search for a new director in 2006 and has served on two levy campaigns. She is a nurse at Akron Childrens Hospital.



Visit our website at [www.mental-health-recovery.org](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org)  
and [www.portage.oh.networkofcare.org](http://www.portage.oh.networkofcare.org)



Issue 36 Campaign Chairman William Nome visited the Portage County government booth at the Randolph Fair. He talked with Portage County Health Department staff Judi Rettig, center, and Kathy Egan. The Health Department has a levy on the November ballot also, Issue 31.



State Rep. Kathleen Chandler stopped by the MHRB display at the Portage County government booth to say hello to William Nome.

## Board Members

Ronald Heineking of Kent, **Chairman**  
William Nome, Esq., of Kent, **Vice Chairman**  
Leona Brown of Brimfield Township  
Jennifer Colgrove of Ravenna  
Karen Cox of Atwater Township  
Barbara Evans, M. Ed., of Rootstown Township  
Virginia Golden of Streetsboro  
Hilary Kane of Mantua Township  
Audrey Kessler of Kent  
Jeff Langstaff, LICDC, of Kent  
Terri McGuckin of Kent  
Clifford Perera, M.D., of Akron  
Carol Redmond, Ph.D., Aurora  
Theresa Tarchinski Nielsen, Esq., of Mantua Township  
Daniel Todd of Streetsboro  
Stanley Wearden, Ph.D., Kent  
Beth Wildman, Ph.D., Kent  
William Wisniewski of Ravenna

## What is the MHRB?

The Mental Health & Recovery Board supports healthy communities by investing in services to help residents of all ages who need treatment for mental health or substance abuse dependence problems and to provide prevention education, especially for youths at risk for substance abuse. The Board's funds also support 24-hour emergency services to help residents in crisis and to provide assistance when communities experience crisis incidents. A county government agency, the Board funds services through a network of community-based agencies. Services help thousands of children, teens, families, adults and seniors each year. The network includes: Coleman Professional Services, Townhall II, Children's Advantage, Family and Community Services and its Safer Futures program, The Bair Foundation and Compass Recovery.