



Our mission is to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide and to increase awareness that suicide is a national public health problem for individuals across a lifespan.

2022 DENNIS MARION IMPACT AWARD WINNER: SARA STENGER

On Monday, May 23, 2022, the Dennis Marion Impact Award was presented to **Sara Stenger**, Administrator of Westmoreland County Behavioral Health/Developmental Services. Established in 2017, the award recognizes local and state government employees whose initiatives, processes, and projects have led to significant improvements in Pennsylvania's behavioral health service delivery system.



Sara was nominated by Heather McLean, Chair of the Ray of Hope Task Force. In her nomination letter, Heather wrote, "If I could give Sara a tag line it would be, WE NEED TO DO MORE because that's what she always says to me." Sara's many accomplishments include awarding the Ray of Hope with a full-time Outreach Coordinator and increasing the Community Advocate's position to a full-time position, which recognized "the importance of advocating for individuals struggling with mental health issues and giving them the best opportunity for support and maintaining their recovery."



We are very proud of Sara and the work she is doing for Westmoreland County families! Congratulations on this prestigious award!

Dr. Dale Adair, Medical Director for the Office of Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), presents the 2022 Dennis Marion Impact Award to Sara Stenger.

WHAT WE DO

- Offer presentations on suicide awareness and prevention, including QPR Gatekeeper Training (Question, Persuade, Refer)
- Hold the Ray of Hope Annual Walk
- Host a biennial conference and educational seminars
- Support the L.O.S.S. Support Group (Loved Ones Stolen by Suicide)
- Hold quarterly Task Force meetings

CONTENTS

- 01 DENNIS MARION IMPACT AWARD
- 02 - 2022 SPRING SPECTACULAR COMMUNITY FESTIVAL & PHOTOS
- 10
- 11 TASK FORCE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
- 12 OUTREACH & TRAINING EVENTS
- 13 YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING
- 14 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 15 MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES
- 16 MEMBERSHIP LIST & COMMEMORATIVE BRICK



2022 SPRING SPECTACULAR COMMUNITY FESTIVAL



On Saturday, April 2, 2022, the Ray of Hope Task Force partnered with the Westmoreland County Behavioral Health/Developmental Services Office and many other Human Service Organizations to host our first ever Spring Spectacular Community Festival!

At this "egg" citing event, we had over 3,000 people come out and enjoy an egg hunt, Andy the Ambulance, food trucks, balloon twisters, face painters, and over 60 human service agency vendor tables filled with goodies and information. **Jeff Biddle** from Perfection DJ's Pittsburgh did a wonderful job announcing events and playing tunes while **Kelli and Patrick Hooker** braved the heat and took turns in the bunny suit to offer a fun photo opportunity with families!

Food truck vendors making delicious food and treats included McFeely's Artic Ice, McFeely's Ice Cream, Galaxy Donuts, Frontier Dogs, Little Nicky's, and Mama Licious. Over 200 Golden Ticket prizes were awarded to the lucky folks who found the special eggs. Some of the prizes included awesome toys, bicycles, and stuffed animals.

Volunteer Fire Departments brought vehicles for participants to climb in and participants also got to sound the very loud siren! Thank you to Kecksburg VFD, Mutual VFD, Pleasant Unity VFD, and Trauger VFD. Also bringing a vehicle were the 82nd Airborne 508 Parachute Infantry Regiment living historians who showed off their 1943 Ford Jeep. We couldn't have pulled off this spectacular event without the help of our many sponsors.



Our Rose sponsors included: Achieving True Self, Banyan Counseling Center, Beacon Health Options, Highmark Wholecare, Paula Teacher & Associates, Private Industry Council DADS MATTER, Ray of Hope, RIHS-Regional Integrated Human Services, STAT Inc., Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports, Westmoreland County BH/DS, Westmoreland County Crisis Hotline, Westmoreland Transit Authority, White Deer Run Treatment Network, and the Western Region Community Support Program.



Our Tulip sponsors included: Axiom Family Counseling, Clarion Psychiatric Center, Mental Health America of Southwestern PA, PA Connecting Communities, Peerstar, PFLAG Greensburg, Seton Hill Child Services, STEP UP Westmoreland, and Westmoreland LGBTQ Interfaith Network.



Our Daffodil sponsors included: Caregivers of Southwestern PA, Divine Interactions, Engage Kidz, Forge Health, SPHS Monessen COE, SPHS Outpatient Services, Unity in the Community, Wesley Family Services, Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission, and Westmoreland Food Bank.

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TASK FORCE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



LISA GOLDBERG

RAY OF HOPE COORDINATOR FOR MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

Farewell to Kelli Hooker

Kelli Hooker, the previous full-time Ray of Hope Coordinator, recently accepted a position with the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau to further her career. We want to thank Kelli for all the work she did on behalf of the Ray of Hope and wish her good luck in her new adventure.

Welcome Lisa Goldberg as the new full-time Ray of Hope Coordinator!

The Ray of Hope is pleased to introduce you to Lisa Goldberg, the new Ray of Hope Coordinator! Like Kelli before her, Lisa will support and implement the goals of the Ray of Hope Task Force by coordinating meetings, volunteers, training opportunities, outreach activities, and events. Lisa will also be marketing and promoting Ray of Hope events.

Let's hear about Lisa in her own words!

Hello! I'm Lisa Goldberg, the new Ray of Hope Coordinator. I can't tell you how excited I am to be here! I can't wait to get started and I'm looking forward to meeting all of you. Here is a little about me. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. After graduating from Incarnate Word Academy, I moved to Houston. I have also lived on Galveston Island, in Chicago, and have now lived in Blairsville for the better part of 30 years. I have 3 sons and a German Shepherd named Isabella who is the center of our world!

I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing as an adult from IUP. After graduating, I worked in advertising for Greensburg's local radio station, WHJB, until a friend called one day with the opportunity of a lifetime. I was hired and trained to be an international flight attendant for a charter company who had contracts with the Department of Defense. We moved the U.S. Troops in and out of deployment and moved their families around the world. I had the time of my life traveling around the world, learning about different cultures, eating local cuisine, site seeing, and experiencing places most people will never see. After being mostly overseas for several years, I missed my sons and made a plan to come home. I was lucky enough to be hired by Southwest Airlines and was based out of Baltimore. After an unfortunate accident in turbulence landing in Jacksonville and then the subsequent COVID pandemic, my Flight Attendant career came to an end.

I bought a house in Blairsville last year and I am so happy to be making a home, sleeping in my own bed every night, and spending time with my boys, my girlfriends, and of course Isabella! Most recently, I came from Senior LIFE Greensburg where I was an Outreach Coordinator/Enrollment Specialist. I was out in the community all over Westmoreland County educating people about the program, serving as Resident Service Coordinator for both Latrobe and Jeannette Manors, and responsible for working with the Area Agency on Aging and the Westmoreland County Assistance Office to enroll the elderly into the program.

Since I've started here at Ray of Hope, everyone has been so welcoming, kind, and eager to help me get started. On June 7, 2022, I was certified to become a QPR Trainer and was able to sit in on Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training. I am overjoyed to be here!

Please feel free to reach out to me anytime, and I can't wait to meet you! You can contact me at egoldberg@mhaswpa.org, 724-834-6351 x122 (office), or 724-875-2415 (cell).

RAY OF HOPE SPRING 2022 OUTREACH & TRAINING EVENTS

New QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructors now ready to deliver QPR Training!

On June 7, 2022, **Govan Martin**, Master Trainer from the QPR Institute and Chair / Executive Director of Suicide Prevention Alliance, conducted QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructor training to fourteen enthusiastic participants!



Govan Martin is pictured with the new QPR Gatekeeper Instructors!

During this intensive 8-hour training, participants learned how to conduct QPR Gatekeeper Training, practiced role playing different scenarios, and learned strategies to support learners who may be new to suicide awareness and prevention.

Along with Heather McLean, Ray of Hope Task Force Chair, our new group of fourteen instructors would be happy to come to any agency or group and conduct this **FREE** 1.5-2 hour training. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in crisis and can save lives. QPR is the most widely taught Gatekeeper training in the world.

The key components of QPR Gatekeeper Training include how to question, persuade, and refer someone who may be suicidal; how to get help for yourself or learn more about preventing suicide; the common causes of suicidal behavior; the warning signs of suicide; and how to get help for someone in crisis.

To schedule a **FREE** QPR Gatekeeper Training, contact Lisa Goldberg at egoldberg@mhaswpa.org or 724-834-6351 x122.

We supported the following community events between March and June 2022:

03/19/22: Happy Healthy Hempfield
03/23/22: WCCC Resource Fair
04/13/22: Presentation to the Professional Business Women's Association
04/21/22: Rep. Davanzo's Senior Expo
04/29/22: Presentation to the Monessen High School
05/05/22: CSAY Night Out - Mount Pleasant
05/12/22: WeDAC Veteran's Conference

05/14/22: Presentation to the Daughters of the American Revolution
05/21/22: CSAY - PAWS for Prevention
05/23/22 - 05/27/22: Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training
06/06/22 - 06/10/22: Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training

UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING (\$170 VALUE)



Provided by the PCCD Grant, the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit (WIU) is offering 8-hour **Youth Mental Health First Aid** certification training at **NO COST** to participants 18 years and older. Training sessions include a participant manual and lunch.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a comprehensive training specifically designed to equip educators, family members, and caregivers with the skills and knowledge to identify, understand, and respond to the signs or risk factors of mental health concerns in youth. Just as CPR helps you assist an individual having a heart attack, Youth Mental Health First Aid helps you assist someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis.

All training sessions are held from 8 AM - 4 PM at the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit, 102 Equity Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601.

- September 15, 2022
- October 13, 2022
- November 17, 2022
- January 12, 2023
- February 16, 2023
- March 16, 2023
- April 13, 2023
- May 18, 2023
- July 13, 2023

To register for a session:

Go to

<https://www.wiu7.org/apps/events/>

and search for

Youth Mental Health First Aid.



UPCOMING EVENTS

July 17, 2022, Noon - 3 PM

For more information about Family Funday Sundae, contact:

Julie Cawoski, 724-217-8304
julie.cawoski@wfspa.org

June 25, 2022, 6 PM - 9 PM

For more information about the PRIDE PROM, go to:

<https://thewestmoreland.org/event/pride-prom/>



wesley family services
ParentWISE
Family Funday Sundae

Sunday, JULY 17th Noon-3PM
LYNCH FIELD, GREENSBURG

Join us for this **FREE** event with **FUN** activities, a raffle, and each child will receive a coupon for a **FREE** ice cream sundae from the Lynch Field Dairy Queen

Please bring a children's book to donate!

For more information, contact Julie Cawoski
 724-217-8304 • julie.cawoski@wfspa.org

SPONSORED BY
 CASA, Charley Brothers Shop, 'N Save, City of Greensburg Recreation Department, Dollar Bank, Excelsa, Lynn Dairy, Queens Inc., Sam's Club Greensburg, Seton Hill Child Services, WCSI, & Westmoreland Community Action



Sept. 10, 2022, 9 AM - 1 PM
 To register for the 16th Annual Ray of Hope Walk, go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/16th-annual-ray-of-hope-suicide-awareness-walk-tickets-332904786177>



16th Annual Ray of Hope Walk
 "Wings of Hope, Love Lives on"
 Saturday, September 10th, 2022
Survivor's Event 9:15 AM
Walk Ceremony begins 10:45 AM
 Twin Lakes Park
 219 Twin Lakes Road Latrobe, Pa 15650

Eventbrite Registration Link
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/16th-annual-ray-of-hope-suicide-awareness-walk-tickets-332904786177>



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

CRISIS RESOURCES

Westmoreland County Crisis Hotline	1-800-836-6010
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-8255
Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ)	1-866-488-7386
Trevor Project Text Line (LGBTQ)	Text START to 678678
Veteran's Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 Press 1
Veteran's Crisis Line Chat/Text	Text 838255



LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Mental Health America of Southwestern PA (MHA-SWPA) *Virtual Support Groups*

Contact Heather McLean at 724-433-1359 or hmclean@mhaswpa.org for more info.

- **Aging Up Support Group (transitional ages 18-26):** Meets 2nd Monday, 4-5 pm
- **LGBTQIA+ Support Group:** Meets 2nd Tuesday, 6-7 pm
- **Mental Health Support Group:** Meets 2nd Tuesday, 1-2 pm
- **The "Anyone" Support Group (for anyone wanting to talk):** Meets 1st Wed., 6-7 pm

In-Person Support Groups

PLEASE NOTE: Please call first to see if the group is meeting in person or has been cancelled.

- **MHA-SWPA Caring Ones Support Group:** For those supporting a loved one with a mental health illness. Meets 2nd Monday, 6-7:30 pm, Contact Heather McLean: 724-433-1359
- **MHA-SWPA Hope & Healing Support Group:** For those recovering from a past suicide attempt. Meets 1st & 3rd Monday, 6-7:30 pm, Contact Heather McLean: 724-433-1359
- **MHA-SWPA L.O.S.S. (Loved Ones Stolen by Suicide):** Informal open support group for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. Meets 1st Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 pm, Contact Beth Crofutt: 724-834-6351
- **Mon Valley Hospital LOSS Support Group:** For anyone touched by suicide. Meets 2nd & 4th Monday, 1-2:30 pm, 1163 Country Club Rd., Monongahela, PA 15063, Contact Sam Lonich: 724-678-3601, splonich@gmail.com
- **NAMI Family Support Meetings:** Meets 2nd Tuesday, 7-8:30 pm, West Hempfield Presbyterian Church, 8 W. Hempfield Dr., Irwin, PA 15642, Contact Harriett Hetrick: 724-596-5071

Resource Center

Come, Talk Inc.: Resource center for anyone affected by suicide. 321 Main Street, Irwin, PA 15642, Contact Amanda Morrison: Call/Text: 724-978-1330, come.talk15642@gmail.com

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP LIST

STEERING COMMITTEE

Heather McLean - Chair
 Laurie Barnett Levine - Vice Chair
 Beth Crofutt - Treasurer
 Nina D'Antonio - Secretary
 Lisa Goldberg - Task Force Coordinator
 Sherry Anderson - Walk Chair
 Carla Colello
 Jessica Carns
 John Herrmann
 Samantha Kindelberger
 Gayle Pamerleau
 Sue Soltis
 Bobby Tanyer
 Clare Vaill

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Ronel Baccus	Linda Parker
Brandi Brukner	Bree Piper
Shanea Clancy	Jackie Rider
Rachel Cunningham	Maria Rock
Kevin Daly	Michelle Seaman
Beth Deni	Katie Sheridan
Cassie Ellson	Patrick Showman
Ariel James	Sara Stenger
Bill Kemerer	Barb Tomko
Sam Lonich	Stephanie Turin
Julie Lovis	Lee Wagner
Rita McWilliams	Michele Wentzel
Joni Michalski	Richard Yaksic
Monica Minyon	Susan Yaksic
Amanda Morrison	

CONTACT US

409 Coulter Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601
 Phone: 724-834-6351
 Website: www.rayofhopewestmoreland.org
 Membership Questions: ndantonio@wsci.org
 Newsletter Suggestions: ssoltis@wiu7.org

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK AT TWIN LAKES PARK



The Ray of Hope has donated to the Westmoreland County Parks Commemorative Brick Program. Our brick will be placed at the site of our annual walk to commemorate all those we have lost to suicide. Here is the text that will be engraved on the brick.

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 THOSE WE HAVE LOST
 RAY OF HOPE
 WESTMORELAND COUNTY
 SUICIDE AWARENESS &
 PREVENTION TASK FORCE**

To learn more about the Westmoreland County Parks Commemorative Brick Program, [click here](#).



Kelli Hooker, Bobby Tanyer, and John Herrmann staffed the Ray of Hope table at the Happy Healthy Hempfield event on March 19, 2022.