WE ARE THE VILLAGE!

On May 4th, members of the Parent Advocacy Council carpooled to the state Capitol in recognition of Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day, wearing GREEN TEE SHIRTS. We were introduced in the House by Rep. Winnie Brinks, and in the Senate. Adam Erber, from Senator Hildebrand’s office, distributed paper dolls, decorated by Kent County’s “Community Family Partnership,” and information—Early intervention prevents far worse problems. Less than 20% of youth with mental health disorders get the help they need. 50% don’t graduate from high school, —the highest rate of any disability.

We heard Lt. Governor Brian Calley and the Director of MDHHS, Nick Lyon, speak in the Capitol Rotunda, at the Association for Children’s Mental Health’s Awareness Day event, moderated by Terri Henrizi, ACMH’s Education Coordinator. A young adult and parent shared their inspiring stories of courage and resilience. ACMH handed out green light sabers with green ribbons and cards explaining that in the 1800s, green was the color used to brand people as “insane,” but now signifies new growth and hope. The card said that just as Luke Skywalker, in Star Wars, used a green light saber to discover the Force within him, —may we, too, be a positive force for families across Michigan!

“May the 4th Be With You!”
On May 4th, Lt. Gov. Calley also came to Grand Rapids to present a **$1.2 million dollar grant to fund a mental health crisis stabilization center**, to reduce rates of incarceration and emergency room visits, —slated to open at 790 Fuller, in October, 2018!

May 10th, Parent Advocacy Council members boarded a bus to Lansing, wearing **BLUE TEE SHIRTS**, to join with 3000 others on the front lawn of the Capitol, —at the “Walk a Mile in My Shoes Rally,” to increase mental health awareness. People from the Recovery Academy, in Grand Rapids, wore yellow tee shirts. Lee Borders-Michelson, —pictured with her therapy dog, LaLa,— spoke about the importance of inclusion.

May 19th, Gail Lanphear, (co-founder of ACMH), Emmanuel Tendero, (retired child psychiatrist), and Linda Brauer, (Chapter Coordinator of CHADD and member of the Parent Advocacy Council), met with **Senator Peter MacGregor**. We said that the proposed budget that would transfer all Medicaid funds to capitated, managed care health plans, would be at the expense of those who need help most, and dismantle the public safety net. “**Kaiser Permanente was unable to provide prepaid, integrated health care in North Carolina, Texas, Ohio, and the Northeast, after losing too much money,**” (Baker’s Hospital Review, Emily Rappleye, April 10, 2015).

May 20th, On behalf of his CHADD fans and many others, Richard TenHoor, and his team, participated in **“Stomp Out the Stigma!”** in Grand Rapids!

May 30th, WOODTV reported that 23 local children may have to wait weeks before a bed becomes available at any mental health facility in Michigan.

The process of trying to get mental health treatment shouldn’t create additional stress! (Stigma isn’t the only problem!) We must continue to work together, —to BE THE VILLAGE! Let us know how we can help!

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