



PRO BONO COUNSELING

Your Mental Health Connection

THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2023

Pro Bono Counseling Hosts Gratitude Gathering to Honor Its Volunteers

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) held a Gratitude Gathering on June 8, to celebrate its volunteers for the impact they make each year to ensure all Marylanders have access to the mental health care they need. During the event, PBC also acknowledged its generous supporters and community partners and honored Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller with the Dr. Radha Pathak Humanitarian Award for her work prioritizing mental health care.

"PBC is able to help thousands of Marylanders connect with the mental health care resources they need thanks to the dedication of our licensed mental health volunteers, as well as the support of our generous donors and constituents," stated PBC Executive Director Amy Greensfelder, LCSW. "And we were thrilled to bestow the Pathak Award to Lieutenant Governor Miller for the work she is doing to destigmatize mental health."

Amy kicked off the event with welcoming and introductory remarks, and provided an overview of the history of the organization and the essential role the volunteers have fulfilled since 1991. Rianna Matthews-Brown, chief of staff for Comptroller Brooke Liernan, was on hand to present an official citation to PBC for its work providing mental health resources to



MD Lt. Governor
Aruna Miller

Marylanders. Since joining forces with Counselors Helping South Asians and Indians (CHAI) in 2017, and establishing CHAI as an initiative, PBC continues the tradition of presenting the CHAI Pathak Humanitarian Award to an individual who is a leader and contributor to mental health care. Dr.

Radha Pathak's son, Dr. Sujay Pathak, spoke about the legacy of his mother and shared the importance of the award with attendees before presenting it to Lieutenant Governor Miller.

"I am honored and humbled to accept the Dr. Radha Pathak Humanitarian award from Pro Bono Counseling," said Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller. "Mental health challenges aren't a moral failure – and they aren't something anyone should have to suffer through alone. Our communities are stronger because of groups like PBC that work to bring mental health into the sunlight and ensure anyone can access quality, comprehensive, and culturally-competent care."

PBC's Outreach Coordinator Yolonda Nelson-Swain honored volunteers by highlighting their milestone achievements and collective impact. Several volunteers in attendance have been donating their time for more than 30 years. Since PBC was established in 1991, 2,927 licensed mental health volunteers have donated 198,198 total counseling hours to 39,582 families and individuals throughout the state of Maryland.

Amy introduced PBC's next board chair nominee, Eboni Barksdale-Smith, who sent a video message detailing the organization's strategic priorities for the upcoming year. Outgoing chair Gil Bliss, LCSW-C, was presented with an appreciation gift for his dedication and commitment to the organization's mission.

The event also served as a fundraiser for PBC, raising over \$25,000 for the organization. PBC would like to thank the event sponsors: *Lead Sponsor* CareFirst BlueCross Blue Shield; *Counseling Champions* Kaiser Permanente, NAMI Maryland, and Whiting-Turner; *Pro Bono Partners* Swaran Dhawan, Goldin Group, Jacob William Advisory, Keswick, Southway Builders, Transamerica, and University of Maryland School of Social Work; *Community Advocates* Acutedge, Inc., CHANA, Team ABA, and Venable



PBC Gratitude Gathering Attendees

LLC; and *Gratitude Gathering Supporters* Noah Chang, Alex Ebstein, Equal Access Language Services LLC, FutureCare Health and Management Corp., Peter Kahn, MD, M&T Bank, Peak Partners, Priya Sekar, MD, and Via Mental Health & Wellness.

Making Time for Counseling

Pro Bono Counseling's priority is to provide the mental health support that suits you best. Counseling will only be beneficial if the right match is made, and that includes scheduling considerations.

A woman in her 40's recently contacted Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) for grief support following the death of a family member. She indicated that she worked two jobs and didn't have a lot of free time to dedicate to counseling. PBC was able to match her with a therapist who worked with her availability.

"My counselor has been very accommodating of my schedule," she shared. "It's taught me so many things about myself. I am unable to pay for therapy on my own, so having the opportunity to see a counselor when I was depressed has been life changing."

Annual Memorial Gift

Thank you to Jani Bedrick, who recently gave to Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) in memory of her sister, Miffi Bedrick, a mental health counselor.

Miffi passed away in 2016, and was originally from Massachusetts, before moving to Montgomery County, Maryland. She worked as an elementary school counselor in Prince George's County and also had a private practice.

"Miffi was committed to her work and was so loved by the children she helped," stated Jani. "She was a beautiful person, a strong advocate for peace, and was very generous and giving."

In addition to counseling, Miffi was a professional actor who loved animals.

Jani donates to PBC every year in Miffi's memory, designating the gift to ensure children have access to mental health care.



Miffi Bedrick

PBC Resource Corner: The Pride Center of Maryland

June is designated as LGBTQ+ Pride Month, to commemorate the civil rights progress achieved for the LGBTQ+ community but also to raise awareness of the work that still needs to be done to achieve equal justice.

Since 1977, The Pride Center of Maryland, previously known as The Gay and Lesbian Community Center (GLCCB), has been committed to providing resources and support for members of the LGBTQ+ community. The Pride Center's mission is to be a catalyst for uniting and empowering sex-

ual and gender minorities in Maryland, and to advocate for a better quality of life for the entire community. They offer volunteer programs that include, education and professional development, community outreach, research, and focus groups, and much more that is open to community residents, companies, collegiate and professional organizations, schools and other institutions. The Pride Center is located at 2418 St. Paul Street in Baltimore. For more info, visit PrideCenterMD.org, email info@pridecentermd.org, or call 443.873.0369.



PRO BONO COUNSELING'S Gratitude Gathering



PRO BONO COUNSELING'S

Gratitude Gathering



PRO BONO COUNSELING'S

Gratitude Gathering

THANK YOU SPONSORS

LEAD
SPONSOR

CareFirst.



Counseling
CHAMPIONS



KAISER
PERMANENTE®



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Maryland

Pro Bono
PARTNERS

Swaran Dhawan



Goldin Group
Certified Public Accountants



SOUTHWAY
BUILT WITH INTEGRITY

Jacob & William
Advisory



TRANSAMERICA®



KESWICK



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Community
ADVOCATES

Acutedge, Inc.
CHANA
Team ABA
Venable, LLC

Gratitude Gathering
SUPPORTERS

- Noah Chang
- Alex Ebstein
- Equal Access Language Services LLC
- FutureCare Health and Management Corp.
- Peter Kahn, MD
- M&T Bank
- Peak Partners
- Priya Sekar, MD
- Via Mental Health & Wellness