**2021 Recovery and Resiliency Awards**

**Paul DeMarco**

Paul is a Mental Health Delegate in the Montgomery County Commitment Office. It may seem strange to make a nomination based on recovery and resiliency for someone in a role that involves involuntary commitments, but Paul brings to his job a reverence and respect for human beings and their experiences that translate into fierce protection of individual rights and liberties. Paul oversees the process of reviewing petitions and issuing warrants for evaluation. He is not only extremely knowledgeable, but he is also compassionate and creative. He orients himself to the experience of others and is dedicated to always seeking the least restrictive option, advocating for legal interpretations that respect and support people, and patiently serving as a conduit of information between the mental health system and the community. Phone calls have been received from family members who were frightened and distraught for their loved ones, and who wanted to share that their experiences receiving guidance from Paul helped them feel informed and empowered to take care of themselves and help their loved one in a time of crisis. Paul also helps to educate community hospitals and systems partners, and is unwavering in bringing to his outreach efforts the belief that all human beings have dignity, and that recovery and resiliency are ever present, even in times of crisis.

**Maggie Jaramillo**

Maggie is a Recovery Coach at Creative Health Services who worked in the Family Based Department before joining her current team. Maggie goes above and beyond for her community and for the young adults she currently supports. She has a heart of gold and works nonstop to help anyone at any given time. Additionally, she volunteers at the local “warming center” where you will see her inspirational and hopeful quotes placed all around. She truly lifts the spirits of everyone around her! Maggie is being recognized for her hard work, kindness, and caring heart!

**Ellen Kozlowski**

Ellen has worked for over 15 years as a Mental Health Peer Advocate for Community Advocates of Montgomery County, and throughout those years, has become a trusted support to many in the mental health community. Ellen is reliable, dependable, and a passionate advocate. She also “walks the talk,” as she practices the principles of self-advocacy that she teaches others while continuing to grow professionally and in her own mental health recovery. Despite her lack of familiarity using technology, Ellen was quick to stretch herself beyond her comfort level when the pandemic began to adapt to working at home so she could continue to support others. During this time, she has not only been able to adapt, but has taken on more work than before. She has been indispensable to the people she serves, including several people who moved and/or lost supports during the pandemic, as well as to the team and Hopeworx as a whole. She is always willing to listen, learn, and to try to help anyone and always conducts her advocacy work with the highest ethics. Ellen is both passionate about protecting the rights of people with mental health challenges and advocating to have their voices heard, while simultaneously being a calming presence to everyone around her. A family member who refers to Ellen as her "guardian angel" recently wrote, "She always returns my phone calls and, please believe me when I say this, [that] is a very rare occurrence as I stumble my way through the ‘system’. She is positive, knowledgeable, and very pleasant to talk to. She is a credit to [Hopeworx and the Community Advocates]. I cannot commend her highly enough or thank her sufficiently for everything she has done for us."

**Amalthea Leland**

Amalthea is someone who embodies what it means to be resilient. She has had many obstacles in life, but has used those to create better experiences for others. She has taken her real life experience to now work with the homeless population and truly demonstrates through her behaviors what it means to meet someone where they are at. In a world of inconsistency, Amalthea remains a consistent person and voice of reason in the community. She is relatable and personable, a person who others can trust to be kind, caring, and nonjudgmental. Amalthea uses her testimony to support others and show them that their history does not have to define who they are or what they can become. Many in this community know Amalthea- she is a reliable, consistent, and hardworking individual. She has a relentless drive and goes above and beyond to ensure others are okay! Amalthea also works at the Norristown Hospitality Center supporting folks battling homelessness and poverty. She loves helping people and is extremely inspirational. On the weekends, she takes time to be involved in different service opportunities to continue being a face in the community, and work towards helping people from all facets of life. She is someone who is very caring and committed, and she goes above and beyond to help people in improving their mental health. Whether it’s scheduling someone at Central, being at a NAMI conference or just helping someone get their breathing regulated while waiting for Mobile crisis, Amalthea is a trusted face on the fight of debunking the stigma against mental health. Amalthea was nominated an incredible four times for this award just this year, demonstrating the depth of her hard work, kind heartedness, and dedication.

**Mikaela Martin**

Mikaela is a social worker in the Emergency Department at Lansdale Hospital. Emergency Departments are in a unique position when it comes to supporting folks in Mental Health crisis. It might be fair to say that many Emergency Department’s feel ill-equipped to support folks experiencing a mental health crisis, and often times the individual and their family bear the burden of that reality. Mikaela, however, is a fierce and compassionate advocate for the individuals and families she meets. She is aware of the challenges and gaps in various systems, and despite that (or maybe because of it), she approaches each situation with calm, expertise, and a determination to do right by people. Mikaela has made it a priority to learn as much as she can about the mental health system, is an advocate for diversion, and isn’t afraid to speak truth to power about unmet needs she sees. But while Mikaela thinks critically about systems and macro level needs, she also holds the reality of the people asking for help *right now* in the forefront in her mind. She cares deeply about people, treats those she supports with respect, and carries hope for families and her community.

**Montgomery County Coroner’s Office**

In line with mental health principles, the Coroner’s Office centers human dignity, the resiliency of the human spirit, truth, transparency, and the importance of support in times of crisis. The Coroner’s Office has been a dedicated, and reliable contributor to the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce for many years. They bring data, insights, ideas, and volunteer time at health fairs and outreach events. Without their data the taskforce would be unable to evaluate the impact of initiatives or know where to focus its outreach. Staff from the Coroner’s Office has made it clear, time and time again, that they are determined to both aid in the effort to prevent suicide and demonstrate respect for lives lost. In addition, the Coroner’s Office is a key partner in the county’s Overdose Review Taskforce, Child, and Elder Death Review Teams. Folks have seen firsthand the respect with which Coroner’s Office staff treat the living and those who have passed, both on scene and after an investigation has been completed. In fact, they frequently partner with Mobile Crisis and the Office of Mental Health to ensure family members and others who have been impacted are not alone in the aftermath of a loss. They are patient, kind, and make it very clear that while they may see death routinely in the course of their work, each loss is unique, and matters deeply to those involved. When on scene, coroners staff prioritize support for families and those impacted, and often outreaches to Mobile Crisis and the Office of Mental Health to be sure no one is left alone in the aftermath of a loss. They are “supremely decent human beings”. Many of us have a tendency to naturally feel uncomfortable about death, but the truth is, it’s a very real part of the human experience. The Montgomery County Coroner’s Office provides a service during that experience, for both the living and those who are gone, that exemplifies the ideals of respect, compassion, human dignity, and resiliency.

**Lisa Thomas**

Lisa Thomas works at Devereux Center for Effective Schools (CES). Her connection to Montgomery County Health and Human Services (HHS) began in 2018, when she was searching for resources to support Montgomery County teachers through a grant for universal classroom management training. She was instrumental in establishing a training and coaching in evidence-based programs model utilized by HHS and has been successful in building strong relationships with grant partner school districts. Lisa listens to the needs of each school district, customizes her trainings, and provides ongoing support for school administration and teachers. Indeed, training satisfaction data indicate the majority of training participants are highly satisfied with both the trainers and the content of the trainings. She models excellent trauma informed meeting management and is known to say, "We're here to support you and your team" while meeting with district teams and county staff. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lisa has introduced creative approaches to continue service delivery and partnered with each grant school district to meet their unique needs. These creative approaches have resulted in expanded evidence-based program delivery (reaching more students), enhanced partnership with schools, and user friendly tools for virtual delivery of lesson content which has benefited teachers and HHS contracted Student Assistance Program (SAP) providers. Lisa is passionate about the work and is open to providing as many resources as possible to the community, even when that means writing a grant to increase services to schools. Lisa Thomas continues to seek opportunities to expand the positive success to reach more schools and students in Montgomery County.

**Moira Tumelty**

While the work of a MH professional is never "easy", Moira always shows up to every meeting and interaction with a compassionate, calm, affirming, and present demeanor. As the Director of Montgomery County Mobile Crisis, Moira has led her team through a number of extraordinary situations over this last year of the pandemic that were emotionally trying beyond what might be considered "typical" Crisis Response work. Moira demonstrates resiliency in her leadership and in how she tends to her relationships in the community. Moira is connected to schools, and Moira has been more than willing to involve herself and be "on call" for when a school community is ready to utilize Mobile Crisis as a resource. Moira is responsive and reliable, quickly establishing a sense of reliability for schools in the moment and in the long-term. Moira is also connected to the community. She and her team support children, adults, and families. She is a fierce advocate and so very dedicated to helping others. For these reasons, Moira has been selected to receive a 2021 Montgomery County Recovery and Resiliency Award.

**Jaime Tyson**

Jaime exemplifies life-long care and dedication for her fellow human beings. She became a case manager at Creative Health Services 22 years ago and has since stepped into several leadership positions. As the Children’s Blended Case Management (BCM) Supervisor, she was the catalyst for Sibshop in Eastern PA, based on a model in another area. Many, many families have benefited from her guidance in obtaining family stability. Now, Jaime is the Director of Case Management and the Siemer Family Stability Program. These roles are time-absorbing, but somehow Jaime is able to maintain them along with a healthy, loving family life. She also has a passion to train to do 5k runs and Spartan activities - several each year! In all she has going on, she always has a smile on her face and a hilarious story to share to lighten your day. Jaime is truly a wonder in this field and is being recognized for her kindness, commitment to her work, and dedication.

**The Award for Innovation**

In 2014, the Nancy Wieman Award for Innovation was created. When it was created, a great deal of thought and discussion went into what it really meant to give an award for innovation. It was decided that the creativity, trailblazing, and community altering work that would be honored as “innovating”, by its unique nature, may not be something that would be or should be given out every year. We are very honored to live in a community where great work, no, incredible work, is happening every single day, and those achievements are honored here through the established annual awards, but an award for innovation has to be different, has to be for something new, or daring, or maybe even a little unconventional, and it’s okay if that doesn’t happen every year. That said, it is with great joy and satisfaction, that we find ourselves about to present an award for Innovation, to someone whose work is absolutely trailblazing, and leaves no doubt that it is, indeed, innovating.

**2021 Nancy Wieman Award for Innovation**

(Presented by Nancy Wieman)

The 2021 Nancy Wieman Award for Innovation goes to **Wendy Heines**! Wendy Heines was the Chief Executive Officer of PAHrtners Deaf Services in Glenside and is now transitioning into the Executive Director of Community Relations. She has over 20 years of experience both establishing and operating behavioral healthcare programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In January 2003, Wendy joined the newly formed Deaf Services Center (now known as PAHrtners Deaf Services) as its Director. After several promotions, she assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer in January 2010. Under Wendy’s leadership, the PAHrtners’ staff has grown from 12 to more than 120 employees with over 85 percent of those employees being Deaf or Hard of Hearing. During her tenure, several programs have been added to PAHrtners’ range of services, including: Outpatient, Interpreting, Blended Case Management, Home and Community Living Arrangements for individuals who are Deaf with co-occurring developmental disabilities, Community Inclusion for Autism, and a Residential Treatment Facility for adolescents who are Deaf. Wendy has sat on a state-wide workgroup that is in the process of developing a curriculum for the training of Deaf Certified Peer Specialists. Wendy has also had influence with several County Offices and Managed Care Organizations across the State, for the development of services that linguistically and culturally meet the needs of individuals who are Deaf. In 2013, PAHrtners also began operation of the first Residential program for the Deaf in Allegheny County. Since then, PAHrtners has continued to grow in the Western region, providing Case Management and Peer Support in addition to Residential.

What sets Wendy apart from other CEO’s? Wendy has a progressive hearing loss, which began in childhood, and is now profoundly Deaf. Wendy has been a part of the Deaf community for over 25 years; she embraces Deaf culture and cherishes American Sign Language (ASL). Having a shared life experience with the people she serves and employs has had great contributions to her overall success and the success of PAHrtners. This is in addition to her charismatic personality, compassionate ways, and her ability to always keep a smile on her face despite the everyday challenges faced by the Deaf Community. Wendy is also a team player and does not see herself as above the rest. You will often find her “hanging out” with the members, participating in a team meeting or helping to serve food at a holiday party.

Wendy is most proud of the family called PAHrtners Deaf Services. PAHrtners is a significant part of her life. She has been quoted: “We set out to prove to the world that a team of Deaf professionals can run a behavioral support program.” And “We have been told repeatedly by government regulatory bodies, by managed care organizations reviewing our work, and most importantly by the people we serve and their families, that the quality of our work is exemplary. Our PAHrtners team is dedicated and passionate about the work we do because we ‘get it.’ Deafness is our lives too!”

Wendy graduated from Rutgers University with a Master’s degree in Social Work and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Wendy is a member of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA—a national group of professionals networking together with the goal of providing excellence in service delivery to individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing). Additionally, Wendy is a lifetime member of the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf. She has been a contributing author in two published books on Deaf Behavioral Health and is often sought out for her consultation in this area. Montgomery County and all of Pennsylvania is very fortunate to have Wendy Heines working for those who are Deaf. I urge you to please consider Wendy for this lifetime achievement award in recognition to all her AMAZING accomplishments.

**Dr. Miller Write Up**

(Presented by Judy Miller Bucko)

The Dr. Robert H. Miller Award is intended to recognize an individual who has shown outstanding commitment to the field of mental health care, and whose involvement, service, and contributions to the improvement of the quality of life of persons with mental illness is exceptional. This highest honor is given each year to a person who exemplifies the concepts of recovery, resiliency and wellness.

This year’s recipient has made a tremendous impact on the Montgomery County Mental Health system as a fierce and compassionate advocate. Our 2021 Dr. Miller awardee is someone who exemplifies the values of Dr. Miller through their role as a professional, a colleague, a mentor, and a friend.

When comparing the award criteria with this individuals’ immense contributions to the Mental Health system and the people it supports, it is clear that her work far exceeds the standards. Her work and contributions are widely recognized at many levels of the Mental Health system, including the state, county, and individuals and their families.

This awardee began her career as an inpatient caseworker at MCES in the early 1980’s. From there, she went on to work as a community case manager for Creative Health Services. She was then hired as the first CHIPP coordinator for the Montgomery County Office of Mental Health. After numerous years at the county office, she went on to become the first Regional Mental Health Coordinator for the Southeast Region of PA. Both the CHIPPs and Regional Coordinator positions were new, which allowed her to further develop her exceptional organizational skills and to implement strategic activities to serve individuals in need of Mental Health supports and services. She has been instrumental with helping many individuals move out of Norristown State Hospital and for program development under the CHIPP’s initiative starting in 1993.

She has also been the lead person involved with development of numerous programs and services which provide Mental Health supports to individuals from all 5 southeast counties. She continues to be directly involved with the 8 Regional residential programs she helped develop. Her goal, as always, is to assure the quality of the services being provided and to support the individuals served by those programs.

Some of her other activities include, but are not limited to, the following: she is a Mental Health First Aid trainer and advocate for Adults and Children, is in a leadership role with the Forensic Interagency Task Force (FITF) on the state’s Re-Entry committee, she has ongoing involvement with the statewide County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), she is active with the Norristown State Hospital Human Rights Board and NAMI board, she participates in the Montgomery County Mental Health Forensic Coalition Steering Committee, she coordinates Norristown State Hospital forensic and civil activities for all 5 Southeast counties, she supports the oversight of the Extended Acute Care at Brooke Glen, and much more! In fact, this is just a short list of all that she is currently doing or has been involved with in the past.

One thing to recognize is that however she gets involved, it is almost always in a leadership role, and she always volunteers to do the work that’s needed to accomplish the identified goals. She also is very astute at knowing who to bring together to help get things accomplished. She is person centered, flexible, and a strong advocate for the Mental Health community. She exemplifies the dedication and enduring service which are some of the hallmarks of this award. On a lighthearted note, she can be compared to the Mental Health version of the energizer bunny and the Action News van as she never stops working to improve the lives of individuals with Mental Health challenges and she is seemingly everywhere involved in many, many projects! For these reasons and many more, the 2021 Dr. Miller Award goes to….

**TORY BRIGHT!**