

IN THE LOOP

The official newsletter of the Family Satisfaction Team (FST) at HopeWorx Inc.



WELCOME!

We are the Family Satisfaction Team (FST). We hope you enjoy our second issue of *In the Loop*. In this issue we introduce a new column written by a parent in the community, update readers on projects slated for this year, highlight the CommunityWorx team at HopeWorx, share resources for Black History Month, and feature a new recipe perfect for Valentine's Day. If you would like to be featured in our next issue, please email us at familysatisfactionteam@hopeworxinc.org and we would love to feature you.



Family Satisfaction Team
HopeWorx Inc.

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WHO WE ARE

What is a Family Satisfaction Team?

The Family Satisfaction Team (FST) is a state-mandated survey team that is responsible for gathering feedback from families regarding their experiences using behavioral health services that are provided by the county through PA HealthChoices in Montgomery County. We want to make sure your voice is heard by the county and providers so that services reflect families' needs in the county. Montgomery County's FST is housed within HopeWorx Inc. HopeWorx Inc. also houses the adult survey team, Community Satisfaction Team (CST).

UPCOMING PROJECTS

What surveys will our team be conducting this year?



SERVICES

Partial Hospitalization Program

Inpatient Psych Hospitalization

Family Based Services

Multisystemic Therapy

FEB — JUN

APR — SEP

SEP *(tentative start)*

DEC *(tentative start)*

All data shared with FST by families is de-identified to protect families. All surveys are conducted via telephone, online, and in-person (where permitted). All of our survey respondents receive a \$10 Amazon e-gift card via email or mail. Eligibility criteria varies. If you are interested in responding to a survey or if you have suggestions for survey questions, please contact familysatisfactionteam@hopeworxinc.org

The DMV line for Special Need Services

Written by Dawn M. Sites

"I'm a mother, student, advocate, and ballerina. I've finally found my voice."



Why does it feel like you're waiting at the DMV when trying to get services for your special needs child? I'm impatiently awaiting services for my oldest to be provided. We did all the necessary evaluations, written orders, everything that is required by the insurance; just to be informed that I have to be placed on a waitlist with no timeframe information. It should not take what seems forever to get services. Trying to get through to agencies to get any sort of update is almost impossible.

In the past we went without a BSC. There were multiple reasons given, including "we don't have anyone in your area", "they are not Autistic certified"— per the insurance requirements, and my favorite, "we just can't staff your child". No further explanation. This has gone on for a few years now. I felt like I was a bother to even request an update. "Oh, I'm sorry my son is supposed to get services and you are assigned to us". It's so aggravating. All I want is help for my child so he has the skills and capabilities to be as functional as he can be.

So, our journey continues. Numerous medication changes, hospitalizations, residential treatment facilities and multiple therapists later, he was placed in the hospital again Spring of 2021. He had to spend 6 months away from home and away from his family and siblings. The doctor had to slowly transition him off of medications. At the time of discharge, it was again recommended to receive at home and in school ABA services. All the evaluations and necessary paperwork were submitted to the insurance for approval. Great, wonderful, now what? Five months home and no services are provided. Everything is on a waitlist. While my son is starting to take a mental health dump, we are scrambling to fill out paperwork to just be placed on waitlist after waitlist. It's like a merry go round ride we can't get off of.

My question is this...If the government, insurance companies, provider agencies and other professionals know there are waitlists for services to help children, shouldn't there be an interim service to fill the gap? Something, anything to help my child. Having him or any other child with these intense needs wait this long is detrimental not only for the child but for the whole family. There is a dire need for special needs professionals. The fear and anxiety of not knowing when a service can be put in place is overwhelming. And I know there are many other parents and families just like us. The one support I can count on is from my Family Peer Support. I'm researching on Amazon for books so I can get an insight into what goes on in my son's head and how to help him. It shouldn't be this way.



At times I feel like I have one foot in the door to a mental health facility. There are days where I just want to stay in bed and do nothing, and I have done just that. Struggling with my own depression and being a full-time caregiver to a special needs child feels insurmountable at times. Now that my son has been home for 5 months without professional support, he is displaying behaviors he had before he was admitted to the hospital. We don't have options or choices, we just exist, waiting for the phone to ring. Should we call and see if there is a bed available or wait it out? My son should not have to go back into hospitalization because there aren't services to assist him at home. It's a cruel cycle in a broken system. It stinks not knowing how to handle something especially when we don't have a way to get him the help what we know he desperately needs. I feel stuck and I hate it. It's a horrible feeling not being able to make everything better, for all my kids.

It's difficult not to be mad when you're told that your child is placed on a waitlist. Every industry is having shortages and it is affecting everyone one way or another. I don't have the answers or the energy to know where to start. Being a mother to a child that is special needs is hard. It is not an easy task and I'm exhausted. The last thing parents want to be told is that there is another waitlist. Like the confusing DMV experience, it is frustrating and annoying and there must be a better way. Our children deserve it.

FAQ: COMMUNITYWORX

FST sat down with CommunityWorx team members, Ameika, Bryan, Beth, and Will to learn more about the program

CommunityWorx Mission

The Mission of CommunityWorx is to create an environment that welcomes all individuals who are directing their own life goals, growth, recovery, and wellness. We create opportunities for people to socialize and express themselves through learning new skills, different art forms and to pursue wellness. Our mission is to employ a “no wrong door” policy, self-advocacy, organic support, and to educate and share external community resources beneficial to individual needs (HopeWorx 2022).



What is CommunityWorx?

CommunityWorx is, in its simplest and purist form a peer-led intentional micro-community.

- "It's a place where you would not be judged. It's a judgement free zone" - Will
- "I think it's a safe place to go. We're all equal, there's not wrong person or good person. Everyone joins together"- Bryan

What happened to HopeMarket? The shift to CommunityWorx

HopeMarket was established in 2010 in order to create an engaging, supportive, and nurturing environment for the HopeWorx staff and community at large.

- "Poverty was one of the biggest concerns about those who utilize mental and behavioral health services. How [do we] help without involving money?" - Ameika

A bartering system of goods and services was established and utilized. As time went on, the program grew and evolved and so did their name.

- "It reflects the shift and evolution of the program. It started out as a bartering space and has evolved into a sort of community. So when we started looking at rebranding we started making it standard across the organization. It was a good flow from a point of rebranding. When you hear market you think about money, now it's a community oriented name" - Ameika

Our purpose is to share the idea of a diverse, safe, and nonjudgmental environment where the members embrace, respect, and empower the free flow of individual choices for personal development and decisions.

One place that serves different constituencies, with understanding that everyone brings something to the table, and everyone is their own advocate (HopeWorx 2022).

"The community has the full expression and cooperation of the communityworx staff" - Will

How to get involved/ volunteer

CommunityWorx is peer and community led on a volunteer basis. One becomes a CommunityWorx member by volunteering their time and strengths. If you have a valid driver's license you can help with pick ups and deliveries. You can help organize community events and activities, it is dependent on each individuals strengths and abilities.

- "Part of the volunteering could be coming to CommunityWorx and having a conversation with the peers. That is giving back to the community" - Ameika

What's in store for the future of CommunityWorx?

- "I think building more partnerships within the outside community and social media presence to get the word out" - Beth
- "More community partnership, expansion in the community. Reaching more people who are falling through the gaps" - Ameika

We value our guiding principles of treating each person with dignity, respect, and kindness always, organic peer support and modeling the concept of self-care (HopeWorx 2022).

What is the Furniture Program? How to donate/receive items

A key aspect of CommunityWorx is their Furniture Program. CommunityWorx accepts donations of furniture and appliances, from new or lightly used refrigerators, washers, to tables, and much more.

- "We established partnerships with several realtors, professionals with furniture donations" - Beth.

The donated furniture is given to community members in exchange for volunteer work or as an exchange, i.e. A working TV for a couch. Or 3 hours of volunteering for small items or 6 hours for larger items. There is no monetary exchange for items

- "Spending your time, not your dollars" (HopeWorx 2022).
- "What we get is a bunch of donations and we clean it up, categorize, and people in the community get to pick out what they want" - Bryan

CommunityWorx Events/Activities

CommunityWorx hosts a variety of community events, activities, and outreach such as:

- Karaoke
- Camping trips
- Game days
- Art projects (Sewing, painting, art shows)
- Movie watching parties
- Community Clean-ups

Connect with
CommunityWorx

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm,
Saturday 10am-4pm

Office: 610-813-1140 x 122

Email: communityworx@hopeworxinc.org

Research with Parent/Caregiver of Youth Who Experienced Suicide Crisis

Parents/Caregivers, we want to hear your stories!

Adolescents who have a suicide crisis (i.e. suicidal thoughts and feelings, preparation for suicide, suicide attempts) need mental health treatment but getting them needed care is often a long and/or difficult process.

Parents/caregivers are the facilitators of care and understand the healthcare system in ways providers do not. Researchers at Villanova University want to hear your experiences—positive and negative—getting help for your adolescent around a suicide crisis. Your stories will help us better support families and adolescents through difficult times.

We are interested in hearing a wide variety of perspectives and stories, so are especially looking to speak to Black, Asian and Latino parents, as well as fathers, single parents, grandparents, and parents of youth who experience disordered eating.

Participants will receive a \$25-dollar gift card for completion of this study.



VILLANOVA
UNIVERSITY

M. LOUISE FITZPATRICK COLLEGE of NURSING

Location and Activities

- Online interviews (~45 minutes) via videoconferencing software
- \$25 gift card sent to you via email or mail

Are you eligible?

- You are the parent or caregiver of an adolescent (12-18 years old) who had a suicide crisis in the past three years
- Because of the suicide crisis, you tried to get your adolescent evaluated or treated by a healthcare professional
 - Including but not limited to emergency/crisis evaluation, outpatient therapy, psychiatrists, inpatient psychiatric treatment.
- Willing to talk about your experiences

If interested in participating, please email/call study staff or follow the link below:

Guy Weissinger, PhD, RN

Guy.Weissinger@villanova.edu

(610) 519-6611

<https://bit.ly/37ERzUD>

11 Teen Valentine's Day Crafts

[CLICK HERE](#)



Lava Cakes



This amazingly easy, decadent, one-bowl dessert is perfect for Valentine's Day or any day you're craving some chocolately goodness!

Ingredients

- 6 oz good quality, semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F
2. Spray 4 6-oz ramekins with cooking spray and set aside.
3. In a medium sized heat-proof bowl, melt chocolate and butter in a microwave in 30 second increments, stirring after each until melted and smooth.
4. Sift flour, confectioners' sugar, and salt into the chocolate mixture.
5. Add in eggs and egg yolks. Gently whisk everything together.
6. Spoon chocolate batter evenly into each prepared ramekins.
7. Place ramekins onto a baking sheet and bake for 12-14 minutes or until the sides appear solid and firm, centers will still be soft and concave. (Keep a close eye and do not over-bake!)
8. Allow to cool just until cool enough to handle. Place plate on top and flip ramekin over. Serve immediately with your choice of toppings and scoop of ice cream. Enjoy!



Black History Month

click the links for...

[BHM Activities
in MontCo](#)

[Montgomery
County's
Black History
Month
VIRTUAL EVENTS](#)

[BHM Activities
in Philly](#)

[Black
History
Trivia](#)



[NTTAC's
BHM
RESOURCES
for Children's
Mental Health](#)



[Books to
support
conversations
about racism &
diversity](#)

Parent/Caregiver Virtual Support Group

Sponsored by FamilyWorx Family Peer and Advocacy Program

Parents and caregivers, you are not alone! Please join us for a virtual family support group where you can connect with other parents who share similar experiences, learn about resources, receive non-judgmental support, and share stories of hope and strength

All support groups are co-facilitated by Family Peer Support Partners

WHEN:

2nd and 4th Thursday of every month

(excluding holidays)

7:00 pm-8:00 pm

WHERE:

Join us via Zoom from the comfort of your home

* A one-time pre-registration is required for sessions. A Zoom link will be provided in the confirmation email

For more information, please contact:

Lori Warren
Senior Family Peer Support Partner
lwarren@hopeworxinc.org
484-672-1610



Registration is required:

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Montgomery County Mental Health Awards Nomination

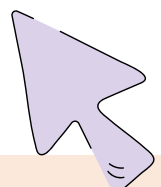


The Montgomery County Mental Health Awards are intended to **recognize individuals, children, families, programs, organizations, and community members that exemplify work in our mental health community as well as the Recovery and/or Resiliency Principles.** Awards recognize effort and accomplishment of significant quality that extends beyond the typical expectations of job description, typical role or position. Award recipients have either demonstrated exceptional personal accomplishment and resiliency, set positive examples for others, or shown outstanding dedication in their support of recovery for persons in pursuit of mental wellness. All are welcome to nominate in all award categories, or pick and choose whichever award they would like to nominate someone in.

Award recipients will be announced at the annual CSP Conference/Mental Health Awards Reception on May 24th at Martha's Community Garden in Audubon, PA. **To submit a nomination, there will be an electronic form that can be completed or a Word document that can be filled out and sent to the award subcommittee.**

Nomination Form

(click on the link as of March 1st)



Please note: the nomination form will open on March 1, 2022

Program Contacts

HOPEWORX TEAMS

Family Satisfaction Team (FST)

-family & youth survey team

FamilyWorx

-family peer support & advocacy team

AdvocacyWorx

-adult peer support & advocacy team

Community Satisfaction Team (CST)

-adult survey team

CommunityWorx

-micro community open 3 days a week

Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q)

-developmental disabilities survey team

Click on the link
to learn more

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



[Montgomery County Children's Behavioral Health Guide](#)



[Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#)



[Mobile Crisis provided by Access Services](#)

1-855-634-HOPE(4673)



[Teen Talk Line provided by Access Services](#)

**call 866-825-5856, text 215-703-8411 or email
teentalkline@accessservices.org**