# Mt. **HOPE** family center

Building strong families through scientific research

Winter/Spring 2013

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At this time of year, we think about new beginnings and making a fresh start. You may have written a list of resolutions for improving your life or surroundings. I am pleased to share that we got an early start on new projects, both around the building

and in our clinical and research departments. Here is a review of what is happening around MHFC.

## New Resource/Conference Room

When a nearby school closed, they donated many of their library books to Mt. Hope Family Center. Thanks to the creativity and generosity of **Leslie Brown Style/Design**, we now have a central location to house them all. Our new resource and conference room offers an inviting area for therapists to use books with their clients or show parents how to read to their children. When they are done, children can then select a book to take home.



## **New Projects**

We also have two new projects, Promoting Emotional Adjustment in Children Exposed to violence (PEACE) and the Study Of Late Adolescent Resilience (SOLAR). While continuing the work done on our Promoting Positive Pathways grant, PEACE offers us an opportunity to work with military families for the first time. PEACE renews Mt. Hope Family Center's membership in the prestigious National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). SOLAR will follow up on children who attended Summer Camp years ago and give us a chance to reconnect and learn about their development into adulthood. You can read more about these projects on the next page.

#### New Sensory Garden

Finally, this spring, we look forward to a ribbon-cutting ceremony on our new garden donated by **Broccolo Landscaping**. During the summer, they planted a number of perennials in our outdoor play space, including several butterfly bushes to attract more than just children and it should be in full bloom in a few months. Be sure to look for photos on our Facebook page and in the next newsletter.

#### My Sincere Thank You

On behalf of all our staff and families, I want to thank those of you who chose to renew or make new end-of-year gifts to Mt. Hope Family Center, and we send our best wishes to you all for a wonderful new year—filled with peace, health, and happiness.

Shere L. Tolk

Sheree L. Toth, PhD Executive Director

## **Two New Projects Begin**



## PEACE—Promoting Emotional Adjustment in Children Exposed to Violence

Children exposed to trauma, including intimate partner violence (IPV), can struggle throughout life with mental health, medical, and academic difficulties. Designing effective treatments that build resilience for these children is essential to their healthy development. PEACE will provide and evaluate three innovative evidence-based trauma treatments, **Child-Parent Psychotherapy** (CPP), **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** (TF-CBT), and **Alternatives for Families—A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** (AF-CBT). NCTSN members will use the project's findings to develop educational materials and national protocols for using CPP and other evidencebased trauma treatments throughout the nation.

Building on the success of the Promoting Positive Pathways grant, PEACE continues working with families in the child welfare system and expands to include military families who often experience high rates of stress due to deployment and loss. This four-year project includes 360 young children and their families (90 each year), who will be referred to us by community partners, the Monroe County Department of Human Services, and military resources. Through PEACE, individuals will gain an understanding of the impact of trauma on themselves and their family system, in addition to learning ways to alleviate traumatic stress symptoms.

## SOLAR—Study of Late Adolescent Resilience

We know from research and clinical observation, that child maltreatment is an early risk factor for substance abuse in adolescence and adulthood. It also frequently has a negative impact on a child's biological and psychological development. However, little is known about how these early developmental impairments predict adverse outcomes as teens enter adulthood. SOLAR seeks to answer these important questions.

During 2004–2008, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded a study at our Summer Camp which investigated the relationship between the chronic stress associated with maltreatment and risk factors for later substance use and mental health problems in children 10– 12 years old. The findings from that research were substantial enough for NIDA to fund SOLAR, a

follow-up study with 700 of those participants, who are now 18–20 years old. SOLAR hopes to determine how early identified vulnerabilities contribute to substance abuse and mental health problems later in development.

Over the next four years, the young adults will participate in comprehensive, multilevel assessments similar to the ones conducted in the original study. These will include evaluations of substance use and mental health, socioemotional well-being, personality, and relationships, along with various tasks assessing memory, inhibitory abilities, attention, and intelligence. Researchers will collect saliva samples to assess genetic and stress hormone functions and interview the participant's mother and a close friend to obtain their perspectives on the participant's functioning. This research will help identify youths at higher risk for later substance abuse so we can provide early intervention and direct them onto positive developmental paths.



## LEARNING COLLABORATIVES BRING NEW EVIDENCE-BASED MODELS TO MHFC

During 2012, Mt. Hope Family Center clinical staff participated in a national learning collaborative for Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT), a model developed by David Kolko, PhD, at the University of Pittsburgh. AF-CBT addresses conflict, hostility, and tension in families and then helps families communicate more effectively and relate to each other without anger and aggression. Staff members, Alisa Hathaway, EdD, Robin Sturm, EdD, Kendra Marinucci, Rebecca Degro-Carbonel, Lachonda Potter, and Meredith Pease participated in trainings and monthly phone consultations with Kolko, carried

## Spotlight



The Monroe County ACCESS/ Office of Mental Health recognized Clinical Director **Jody Todd Manly, PhD,** (seen here with **Cindy Lewis**, Director of Child and Family Services for the Monroe County Department of Human Services) with a "**Got** 

**Dreams" Award** for her trauma-informed care and efforts in bringing attention to how trauma shapes an individual's behavior. The award recognizes those who influence how services are delivered and improve the experience of youth and families in our community.



The Greater Rochester Awards honored Robin Sturm with the Career Achievement Award for "exhibiting innovation, leadership, and creativity to help deliver positive, measurable results." Robin began as a research assistant at Summer

Camp during graduate school and now coordinates our community collaborative for teen parents, Building Healthy Children.

We hosted the third annual **Building Healthy Children Graduation** and congratulated 30 young parents on completing the program. We presented parents with a certificate of completion while everyone enjoyed food and activities. Keynote speaker **Ana Angulo**, a 19-yeara caseload of training cases, and attended three learning sessions across the country on its practical application.

In January, therapist practicing or supervising AF CBT or **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** (TF CBT) began a two-year project with the models developers, Kolko and **Anthony Mannarino**, **PhD**, cofounder of the Center for Traumatic Stress at Allegheny Medical Center in Pittsburgh. Members from across the country will participate in bimonthly calls and several onsite trainings and discussions about using these models, specifically with children in foster care placement. They hope to develop an adaptation training manual.



old graduate, says BHC offered her support that she did not always find with her family. Along with parenting skills, she learned to become a better advocate for herself and her child. "I didn't know how to speak up for myself or my daughter. This brought

me out. I'm not afraid to say, 'This is what I want for us.'" See all the photos on our Facebook page.

Jody Manly traveled to the University of Leipzig, Germany, to present her lecture, "The Effects of Maltreatment on Children's Development" and conduct smaller group trainings on the Maltreatment Classification System for research scientists from Leipzig and Munich. She developed the System with Doug Barnett, PhD, of the Child and Family Study Group at Wayne State University and Dante Cicchetti, PhD, of the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota.



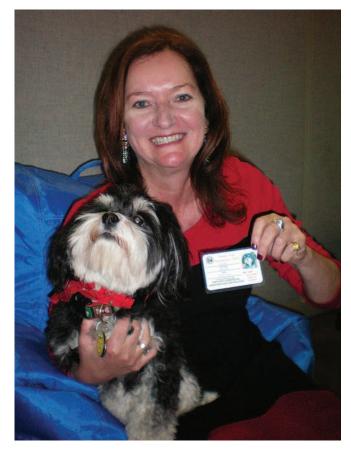
## Steeler-Mt. Hope Family Center's Official Therapy Dog

Just ask some of the children at Mt. Hope Family Center if a dog is "man's best friend" and they would probably tell you that, at least one dog, Steeler, is theirs.

Since World War II, dogs of all breeds have served as therapy dogs to those who are hurting emotionally and physically. During wartime, Charles Mayo, MD, of the Mayo Clinic, recognized the healing powers of dogs when an injured young corporal's fellow soldiers brought his dog, Smoky, to visit him in the hospital. The doctor noticed the positive affect Smoky also had on other patients and allowed her to follow him on rounds. Over the years, health care professionals have chronicled the therapeutic effect of animal companionship on relieving stress, lowering blood pressure, and raising spirits, and more recently, helping children overcome speech and emotional disorders.

During the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and the recent tragedy in Connecticut, therapy dogs were brought in to help begin the healing. In fact, the Sandy Hook Elementary School principal had trained her standard poodle as a therapy dog to help children in her school with emotional issues. At Mt. Hope, therapists can call on Executive Director Sheree Toth's dog, Steeler, who received his therapy dog certification this year.

Born on Super Bowl Sunday in 2010, Steeler is a Havanese, a breed known for being smart, sociable, responsive, and excellent with children. He recently helped a young boy open up about some very traumatic experiences, and the promise of time with Steeler motivates another to make the difficult transition from



daycare to therapy each week. He also provides some comfort and stability for a boy who had lost everything, including his pets, when he was placed in foster care. For more information about therapy dogs and certification, go to the Therapy Dogs International website: www.tdi.org.

## FORMER MHFC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AWARDED INTERNATIONAL PRIZE



In December, **Sheree Toth** and **Fred Rogosch** traveled to Zurich, Switzerland, to join former Executive Director **Dante Cicchetti** as he received the **Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize** for exceptional achievements in research and practice in the field of child and youth development. It rewards scientific work of high social relevance to the personality development of children and young people. "This is like receiving the Nobel Prize in our field," explained Toth. "We are so thrilled for Dante. He truly deserves this honor." To read more about this prize and see the video about Cicchetti's work, go to the foundation's website: http:// jacobsfoundation.org/laureat/research-prize-2012/.

## Mt. Hope Alumni Corner



During her days at Mt. Hope Family Center, **Natalie Cort, PhD,** was a graduate student in our clinical psychology department and worked on her doctoral dissertation. She is now a clinical psychologist and senior instructor of psychiatry in the

Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center. We asked her to share a memory of her days here, and what impact her experience at Mt. Hope had on her personally or professionally.

I remember two freckled-faced, identical twin brothers with ginger-colored hair and mischievous eyes. When they arrived at Mt. Hope Family Center, their young lives had already been filled with numerous distressing upheavals and neglect. Elisa Flores (aka E-Flo) and I were assigned to be their therapists and they quickly made it clear they had no intentions of providing us with many challengefree moments.

We had to rapidly strengthen our clinical muscles to provide them with the support and guidance they needed and deserved. We had to be quick on our feet because they were eager for opportunities to dash off down long empty hallways. We had to be clever because they were sly and, on more than one occasion, tried to switch places. They stretched our creativity as we developed activities that would retain their interest and attention. We learned to delicately balance nurturing with discipline because their experiences had taught them that aggression was their best defense against a scary and unpredictable world. Our patience matured in the face of their fierce energies and incredible determination; admirable characteristics I hope serve them well. Years later, I smile and my heart warms as I think of them. I hope they are resilient teenagers surrounded by love. I hope that their memories of Elisa and me soothe them in times of distress. Mostly, I hope they remember how much we cared.

Mt. Hope Family Center has played an important role in my personal and professional life. I am particularly grateful for the enduring affection I receive from my Mt. Hope Family Center family. Over the years, their excellent training in Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) and trauma-informed care has been incredibly beneficial to me. I have been a study therapist in two NIH-funded IPT for depression treatment trials. I have also served as the principal investigator of a grant-funded pilot study of group IPT for depressed women with histories of intimate partner violence. Finally, I currently provide IPT supervision on a pilot study with depressed adolescents and IPT training/consultation for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Thank you, Mt. Hope Family Center!

Attention all Alumni, Students, and Staff!

In 2014, we celebrate the center's 35th anniversary and we want to have some reunion events to catch up, network, share stories, and refresh old friendships. We will be posting that information on Facebook and via email. Either "Like" our page or send your current email address to sarah.g.smith@rochester.edu to stay in the loop.

## Did You Know that Email Could Help Our Children?

Every dollar we save on printing and postage means we have more resources to directly help our families. To receive future mailings in your inbox instead of mailbox, just send the name as it appears on the mailing label and your email address to sarah.g.smith@rochester.edu.

## Coming Up—Blue Ribbon Days

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

and our annual **Blue Jean Days** has grown way beyond the original idea of wearing denim to work in exchange for a donation. So, during **Blue Ribbon Days,** you will have many ways to



support us and prevent the national tragedy of child abuse.

Early event sponsors are **Apple Transportation**, **Donnelly's Pub**, the **Kappa Delta** and **Sigma Delta Tau** sororities, and the **Sigma Phi Epsilon** fraternity at the University of Rochester.

For more information, watch our Facebook page.

## THANK YOU! A School Project for Hope



In the spring, **Cathy Bambury** introduced her 6th grade students at **Twelve Corners Middle School** in Brighton to a wonderful new assignment, which combined analytical skills with community service. They researched local organizations that help the community and selected one that the students could support through donations. Each student told the class about the organization of their choosing, and then the students and teachers voted. Mt. Hope Family Center won!

The students and their families generously donated both new and gently used books, games, art supplies, and playground equipment to the center. The items were put to good use in the prize closet for Summer Camp and PATHS Afterschool Program and as a much-needed addition to our newly renovated resource room. Some of the books are used with children during their visit, while others have been given to families to encourage them to read together at home. Thanks again, Ms. Bambury and your students, for supporting Mt. Hope Family Center!

Time Warner Communications employees, Rich, Tom, Dave, and Christian delivered 13 Thanksgiving baskets



to MHFC staff members Cecelia Goings, Lachonda Potter, Rebecca Degro-Carbonel, and Diane Freeman. We appreciate Pam Zucco, WNY Operations Manager, and Denise White coordinating this generous gift.

## High School Seniors Give Back!

Five seniors at Webster Schroeder High School, **Brandi Bauer, Marco DeBole, Tyler DeWeese, Lindsay Curre,** and **Kayla DiPinto,** organized a Thanksgiving food drive for Mt. Hope Family Center. With guidance from their teacher, Elizabeth Possee, they collected food and over \$1,200 in donations from friends, family, and the staff, enough to fill 20 baskets with turkey and all the trimmings. Thank you to Principal **Joseph Pustulka** for supporting this project and **Leo's Bakery** for donating pies.



Others who thought of us during the holidays. Richard and Nikki Albright Audrey Stetter and Allstate Insurance in Pittsford Cory and Beth Arnold Diane Beisheim and the University of Rochester Office of Direct Marketing & Donor Participation Peggy Carbonel Lisette Castro Melanie Chelenza Johnnice Coley Carolyn Donovan Susie Fischel Frank and Tracy Lippa Meghan Lynch Sigma Delta Tau Sorority Toy Drive Yard Detail Landscape and Nursery

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#### Memories from Summer Camp 2012

Thank you to **Brandon Vick,** University of Rochester photographer, for taking these terrific photos. Games, hugs, collecting saliva samples to measure cortisol levels, interviews, and talking with counselors are all in a day at camp. To see all the camp photos, go to our Facebook page under Photos.



We were pleased to have Rochester City Councilwoman Lovely Warren (center) visit us at Summer Camp (with Research Director Fred Rogosch, PhD, and Camp Director Tasia Verno).

## www.mthopefamilycenter.org



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