

~~MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA~~ presents

D K M H B 0 8



The Donald Keyes Mental Health Benefit, held January 25 through February 2, was a resounding success in the effort to raise awareness of mental health in the community. The Benefit also succeeded in bringing in the finances necessary for Mental Health America of Northeast Georgia to continue its work of educating about and advocating for those with mental illness or developmental disabilities.

[Forty Watt Club](#) was the site of the premiere event of the Benefit. The Friday night performance by Athens' own [Five Eight](#) highlighted a show that featured [Hope For agoldensummer](#) and Lake City. The evening netted more than \$600 for MHANEGA.

The official kick-off for the Benefit came on Sunday afternoon at Cups Coffee on Barnett Shoals Road. Carol Coussons de Reyes, Director of Consumer Relations and Recovery Section for the [Georgia Department of Human Resources](#) Mental Health Division, was keynote speaker. Carol is also statewide coordinator of the "What A Difference A Friend Makes" project. Alternative country performer [Caroline Monroe](#) performed during the reception. She is currently working on her second CD release, due out later this year.

Two movies were shown for the week: "Away From Her" and "Rocket Science." Both were shown at the [Georgia Museum of Art](#). Donations totaling over \$100 were collected from the audiences. "Away From Her" drew an enthusiastic crowd as the movie's star Julie Christie had won a Golden Globe and had been nominated for an Oscar for her role in the film.

The week culminated with the organization's 18th Annual Art Auction. With artwork designed by Michael Lachowski of [Candy](#), signs promoting the event appeared in area businesses during the week prior to the Benefit. The [Athens Art Group](#) allowed donations to be brought to any of their four frame stores in the community. More than 75 pieces were donated for the Auction.

Jared Bailey served as auctioneer for the event. He used his sense of humor to solicit bids for the art as well as to remind attendees of the important purpose of the event. The Auction concluded with the sale of a 1992 BMW motorcycle, donated by Valerie Aldridge, wife of the late Donald Keyes. The bike had belonged to Donald, who had been auctioneer for the event for many years. After an intense bidding war, the bike sold for \$3,600!

The Benefit yielded more than just the funds that were raised. New memberships were recruited for the important work that lies ahead for Mental Health America of Northeast Georgia. Those who did not get an opportunity to join during the Benefit should visit the website or complete the membership form included in this newsletter.

- Eddie Whitlock, Executive Director

ANOSOGNOSIA:

Anosognosia, unawareness of illness, is the most important reason individuals with severe psychiatric disorders do not take medication for their illness. Multiple studies have demonstrated that the presence of anosognosia increases the incidence of violent behavior, both because it is associated with medication nonadherence and because it appears to directly increase violent behavior.

Anosognosia is a major contributor to aggressive and violent behavior among individuals with severe psychiatric disorders. Because anosognosia is the major cause of medication nonadherence, the association can be assessed either by studying violent behavior and nonadherence or by studying violent behavior and measures of insight.

Many studies have been published linking aggressive and violent behavior to medication nonadherence. In the United States (Massachusetts), 133 outpatients with schizophrenia were assessed for violent behavior over six months. During that period, "13 percent of the study group were characteristically violent," and this was associated with medication nonadherence. "Seventy-one percent of the violent patients had problems with medication compliance, compared with only 17 percent of those without hostile behaviors." ¹

In the United States (multisite study), 1,906 individuals with schizophrenia and related disorders were prospectively followed and assessed for three years. Medication nonadherence was significantly associated with being violent, arrested, and victimized (all significant at a level of $p < 0.001$). ²

In the United States (five sites), 1,011 outpatients with severe psychiatric disorders were assessed for medication adherence and physically assaultive behavior over six months. Those who became physically assaultive were significantly more likely to have treatment nonadherence ($p < 0.001$), to be sicker, to be a substance abuser, and to have a personality disorder. ³

In the United States (North Carolina), 331 "severely mentally ill" individuals who had been involuntarily admitted to a psychiatric disorder were assessed for their history of assaultive and violent behavior. The findings indicated "that substance abuse problems, medication noncompliance, and low insight into illness operate together to increase violence risk." ⁴

1 Bartels SJ, Drake RE, Wallach MA, et al. Characteristic hostility in schizophrenic patients. *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 17:163-171, 1991.

2 Ascher-Svanum H, Faries DE, Zhu B, et al. Medication adherence and long-term functional outcomes in the treatment of schizophrenia in usual care. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 67:453-460, 2006.

3 Elbogen EB, Van Dorn RA, Swanson JW, et al. Treatment engagement and violence risk in mental disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 189:354-360, 2006.

4 Swartz MS, Swanson JW, Hiday VA, et al. Violence and severe mental illness: the effects of substance abuse and nonadherence to medication. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 155:226-231, 1998.

5 Arango C, Calcedo Barba A, González-Salvador T, et al. Violence in inpatients with schizophrenia: a prospective study. *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 25:493-503, 1999.

6 Strand S, Belfrage H, Fransson G, et al. Clinical and risk management factors in risk prediction of mentally disordered offenders—more important than historical data?

A cause of violent behavior in individuals with severe psychiatric disorders.

In Spain, 63 individuals with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder were assessed for violent behavior during their brief hospitalizations. The strongest predictors of violent behavior were insight into symptoms (especially delusions), being sicker, and past history of violence.⁵

In Sweden, 40 "mentally disordered" individuals with a history of "violent criminality" were discharged from two forensic hospitals and followed for between 3 and 12 years. Twenty-two of them committed additional violent crimes, and 18 did not. Among the strongest predictors of those who committed additional violent crimes were lack of insight and "noncompliance with remediation attempts."⁶

In England, 503 patients in two forensic psychiatric hospitals were assessed for aggressive and violent behavior. Lack of insight strongly correlated with higher levels of such behavior.⁷

In the United States (Ohio), 115 individuals with schizophrenia who had committed violent acts for which legal charges were incurred were compared to 111 individuals with schizophrenia who had no history of violent acts. The violent individuals had "marked deficits in insight" and were much more symptomatic. Compared to the nonviolent individuals, those who had been violent scored significantly lower ($p < 0.001$) on awareness of mental disorder, awareness of achieved effect of medications, and awareness of social consequences of mental disorders.⁸

In England, 44 male inpatients in a forensic psychiatric hospital were assessed for violent behavior. It was found that "a previous diagnosis of mental illness, lack of insight, and active signs of mental illness were the most predictive of inpatient violence."⁹

In Ireland, 157 individuals with first-episode psychosis were assessed for violent behavior. The strongest predictors of violent behavior in the week following admission was poor insight (odds ratio 2.97) and a past history of violence (odds ratio 3.82).¹⁰

In the United States (New York), 60 male patients with psychosis who had been charged with a violent crime were assessed. Severity of community violence was strongly associated with poor insight, medication nonadherence, and substance abuse.¹¹

Provided by the Treatment Advocacy Center, from a Briefing Paper: Anosognosia and Violence (4/2007)
www.TreatmentAdvocacyCenter.org

7 Woods P, Reed V, Collins M. The relationship between risk and insight in a high-security forensic setting. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* 10:510-517, 2003.

8 Buckley PF, Hrouda DR, Friedman L, et al. Insight and its relationship to violent behavior in patients with schizophrenia. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 161:1712-1714, 2004.

9 Grevatt M, Thomas-Peter B, Hughes G. Violence, mental disorder and risk assessment: can structured clinical assessments predict the short-term risk of inpatient violence? *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology* 15:278-292, 2004.

10 Foley SR, Kelly BD, Clarke M, et al. Incidence and clinical correlates of aggression and violence at presentation in patients with first episode psychosis. *Schizophrenia Research* 72:161-168, 2005.

11 Alia-Klein N, O'Rourke TM, Goldstein RZ et al. Insight into illness and adherence to psychotropic medications are separately associated with violence severity in a forensic sample. *Aggressive Behavior* 33:86-96, 2007.

Want to join?

To become a member of Mental Health America of Northeast Georgia, complete the form below and mail with your dues to: **MHANEGA, PO Box 6384, Athens GA 30604**

Name: _____

Address: _____

email: _____

_____ **\$15.00 Student**

_____ **\$250.00 Corporate**

_____ **\$20.00 Individual**

_____ **\$500.00 Lifetime Individual**

_____ **\$30.00 Family**

_____ **\$ _____ Contribution**

_____ **\$100.00 Associate**

**If not us, then who? If not now, then when?
Thank you for your support!**



Mental Health America
of Northeast Georgia

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MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA
(formerly The Mental Health Association of Northeast Georgia)

"Cast from the shackles which bound them, the bell shall ring out hope
for the mentally ill and victory over mental illness."

Mental Health America of Northeast Georgia's Newsletter is published quarterly. All members receive complimentary subscriptions.

www.fightthestigma.com