Message from Maria

Maria Coutant Skinner,
LCSW, CEO

Dear friends;

June has been a study in the sharp contrasts our country is experiencing. While we are celebrating the extraordinary progress in civil rights our country has made with Juneteenth now a national holiday and the joy filled celebrations associated with Pride month, we are also witnessing the dismantling of hard-fought protections for

Celebrating Pride Month

Leading with Respect, Love, & Understanding

It has never been more important to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community than it is right now. June is designated as Pride month, a time to celebrate the differences that make our community so rich and the strides we have made as a society towards acceptance, understanding, and freedom for all. However, as with many foundational civil rights for traditionally marginalized people, we have a distance to go.

The Debate Over LGBTQ+ Rights Continues

In March, Florida passed a controversial law dubbed the ‘Don't Say Gay’ bill. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said during a press conference that teaching kindergarten-aged kids “they can be whatever they want to be” was “inappropriate”. The law goes into effect on July 1st this year.

Transgender participation in sporting events has been a controversial topic as well. Various states, such as Alabama and Florida, have passed laws that bar transgender students from competing in sports categories that don’t align with the gender assigned to them at birth. Fédération Internationale de Natation, the governing body for aquatic sports, voted to bar transgender women from competing in women’s events, unless they began treatment to suppress testosterone before the age of 12.

In Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, police detained 31 men near a Pride in the Park event on Saturday, all of them members of a white nationalist group called Patriot Front. Most had traveled to Idaho from other
women and the LGBTQ+ population, if what Justice Thomas suggested comes to fruition.

I imagine that many of you are feeling afraid, angry and sad in this moment. After last month’s tragedy in Uvalde, I wrote about the urge to move through painful emotions and get to a positive, action filled conclusion. I worked to resist that urge and stay with those heart wrenching feelings because it’s what the moment required, in fact, it’s what my humanity demanded. We are still reeling from that tragedy and are now adding the complex emotions related to the events of June to try and process. These are stressors that impact personal freedom, safety and agency over one’s body as well as trauma; both current and historical. It can all feel like too much on our hearts and spirits. It may also feel like a set of topics that states, authorities said, and the group was outfitted with riot shields, shin guards and at least one smoke grenade.

The recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade have some concerned that the ruling could be the precedent to overturn same-sex marriage and other rights. Justice Alito and Justice Thomas have made conflicting statements regarding their intention, however liberal justices in their dissent wrote "no one should be confident that this majority is done with its work."

Being loud and staying proud is crucial for members of the community and their allies; we must speak up and let our voices be heard. If we don’t, the consequences can be deadly.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T

In 2021, 42% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth. This shocking statistic comes from a 2021 survey conducted by The Trevor Project, which surveyed nearly 35,000 LGBTQ+ youth ages 13–24 across the United States. This same survey found that lower suicide rates were reported when LGBTQ+ youth had their sexual orientation and gender identity affirmed and their pronouns respected.

It’s simple, respecting, accepting, and providing a safe space for everyone to be their true selves improves mental health and the ability to live a happy, productive life. But we cannot simply say “I support the LGBTQ+ community” and think our work is done. Remember it is not their job to educate every person on the injustices they face. It is up to all of us to start a conversation and do some research, especially about topics we don’t understand.

Below is some guidance on how to do so respectfully:

1. Start a conversation with an open mind and open heart. Often, we are afraid of offending someone and that stops us from speaking up and asking questions. Be up front and honest with the person you are talking to. Let them know you might not know much about the topic, but that you are willing to listen and learn.
are too fraught to
discuss. I understand
the temptation to just
distract, numb and
remain
neutral. However, may I
submit to you that doing
so will not serve you, or
the moment.

We cannot remain
neutral in times of trial.
Nobel Peace Prize
recipient and Holocaust
survivor Elie Wiesel
said:

“We must always take
sides. Neutrality helps
the oppressor, never
the victim. Silence
encourages the
tormentor, never the
tormented. Sometimes
we must interfere”

Wiesel taught us that
‘action is the only
remedy to
indifference; the most
insidious danger of
all.’

A critical part of our
organization’s mission is
advocacy for those we
serve, especially our
friends and neighbors
who belong to
traditionally
marginalized
groups. Courageous

2. Embrace the whole person and understand who they are at
the core of their being. Try to practice active listening. Check
out this video for a simple way to be an LGBTQ+ ally.
3. Speak up. If you hear someone make an insensitive or
discriminatory comment, say something. Silence can be
deafening.
4. If you make a mistake genuinely apologize right away and
correct yourself. Remember it’s progress not perfection after
all.

Finding the Root Cause is Key

Fear and stigma keep many people from living an authentic
life. Struggling for self-acceptance and understanding from friends
and family, many individuals self-medicate with substances to manage
mental health symptoms. Symptoms that arise from the inability to be
their true self.

At McCall and Help, Inc. we work with all of our clients to identify the
root cause of any substance use disorder. Once the substance is
gone, we try to understand if mental health symptoms come from
undiagnosed anxiety, depression, or other triggers. It is a beautiful
transformation when we see a client heal and be able to come out of
their shell to become their true self.

If you or someone you love is struggling with their gender or sexual
identity, we have trained and experienced counselors who can
help. Give us a call today!

McCall Center for Behavioral Health

(860)496-2100

CNV Help, Inc.

(203)756-8984

Find more resources here:

- SAGE: Advocacy and services for LGBTQ Elders
- The Trevor Project
- CT LGBTQ Resources
- Black & LGBTQ: Approaching Intersectional Conversations
- How to Support Bisexual Youth
action on behalf of one another activates our ability to effectively process complex feelings. We witness what that looks like and the immense positive impact every day. It is the opposite of neutrality and indifference; it is solidarity, and it is so very powerful. Each of us are capable of courage, hope and action, indeed we are wired for it. I know you might be scared, but know that there is healing there, my friends. So, on the eve of our nation’s annual celebration of independence, I exhort you to take action for a better, more just tomorrow.

With love and gratitude,

Maria

Celebrating Juneteenth

Did you know that Juneteenth is the first new federal holiday approved since Martin

Northwest Corner Gives July 1st - 29th

Mark your calendars. On July 1st through July 29th you can give BIG (or little)—everything counts! Donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to our campaign goal thanks to Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation NCCF!!

This year we hope to raise $20,000 for Adolescent Intensive Outpatient (IOP) Services at our organization. It will allow us to provide treatment to families and teens (ages 13-18) with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders. Despite the growing need for services, families are struggling to find treatment for their child. IOP treatment services for adolescents are desperately under resourced. Follow this link to help us reach our goal of $20,000!!

To learn more, click the image to watch this video!

You Are Invited!!

Come out and enjoy the music with great friends, knowing your purchase will help provide access to lifesaving treatment for all of those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. We thank you for your support!!

When: Friday, September 16th, 2022
Where: Warner Theatre in Torrington
Luther King Jr. Day in 1983? Combining the month of June and nineteenth, Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1965, when Union Army Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and told slaves of their emancipation. (Even though the slaves had been freed two years prior in Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, it was not acknowledged.)

The African American community has been celebrating the holiday, also known as Emancipation Day since 1865. It has often been left out of history books, but the Black Lives Matter movement changed that and on June 17th, 2021 President Joseph Biden made Juneteenth National Independence Day a US federal holiday.

This year, the Juneteenth federal holiday was observed on Monday, June 20, 2022, and was the first time staff at McCall and

**What/Who:** National recording artist Lucinda Rowe and accompanying band will perform “The Music is You, The Music of John Denver”

The event begins at 7 pm with a VIP reception in the Studio Lobby followed by the concert at 8 pm. VIP and regular admission tickets are available. The VIP ticket will include admission along with appetizers, soda, coffee, and water.

To purchase tickets, visit [www.warnertheatre.org](http://www.warnertheatre.org) or call the Box Office at 860-489-7180.
Help, Inc. honored this historic day.

To learn more about Juneteenth click [here](#)! 

---

**Did you miss our WZBG Interview?**

Click on this [link](#) to hear this month’s interview on WZBG 97.3! This month Dale Jones interviewed Katrin Moskowitz DNP, PMHNP, Psychiatric/Family Nurse Practitioner. Katrin speaks about how the medical profession has learned to make the LGBTQ+ community feel seen and heard and how she tries to be an ally! Visit our press room to listen!

Tune in on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:20 to hear us in real-time.

---

**Stop & Shop Community Bag Program**

Every month at every Stop & Shop location a different local non-profit is selected to benefit from the sale of the reusable Community Bag. We were selected as the July beneficiary by local store leadership at the store located at 931 Torringford Street, Torrington CT.

If you are out shopping at this location in July, don’t forget to purchase a reusable bag! We will receive a $1 donation for every $2.50 reusable Community Bag purchased. Not only are you helping to give back to the local community, but you are also helping to reduce single-use plastics.
Our Contact Information
McCall Center for Behavioral Health
58 High Street
Torrington, CT 06790
860-496-2100
https://mccallcenterct.org/

In loving MEMORY OF

D'ARCY LOVETERE
10.31.1941 - 06.01.2022
MCCALL BOARD PRESIDENT

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to our long-time board member and most recent board president, D'Arcy Lovetere, who passed away on June 1st. She was 81 years old. Born in Winsted, D'Arcy graduated from Housatonic High School and earned a master’s degree from Central Connecticut State University. D’Arcy worked for the State Judicial Marshall’s Office, ranking lieutenant. Her fierce, independently strong spirit helped her achieve success as an investigator in the Public Defender’s Office.

She was an employee at McCall in the 1990’s in the Warner House Program, where she put her experience in the Marshall’s office to use with the male residents completing their Department of Corrections sentences. As an employee and later as a board member, she was a stalwart supporter of McCall, and believed wholeheartedly in our mission. D’Arcy was influential in guiding the board through the long merger process, always willing to address any issue with the knowledge and sense of humor that she brought to all of her work.

D’Arcy’s legacy is one of strength in the face of adversity, courage in the face of uncertainty, and above all, love where it is needed most. All of us who knew and worked with her will miss her and send our deepest condolences to her husband John, her daughters Lisa and Gregg, her son Michael, as well as her 11 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.