



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL PROVIDERS GATHER IN AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH MONTH DELIVERING A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Harriman, NY – May 15, 2007: Vicki O'Brien, LCSW, MPS, and Diana Noger, LCSW, both representing Occupations, Inc., are just two of the 150 health care professionals and family members who attended the third annual children's mental health training on Tuesday, May 8 at the Orange-Ulster BOCES campus in Harriman. "These trainings are essential not only for mental health professionals, but for anyone in the community to be aware of the signs and symptoms of at-risk children and become familiar with the steps it takes to help children and their families," commented Noger.

In a collaborative effort, and for the third consecutive year, Occupations, Inc., the Orange County Department of Mental Health, and Orange-Ulster BOCES continue to provide these specialized trainings to the Hudson Valley's social workers, educators, direct care professionals, and community members. Topics included Family Support: The power of Partnerships; Parenting Together While Living Apart: Working with Parents in High Conflict Divorce; Substance Abuse and Mental Illness: Assessment and Treatment Techniques; and Eating Disorders: Strategies for Intervention.

This year's speakers included Mary Dumas, family support coordinator for Children's Services at the Mental Health Association of Orange County; Barbara Callahan, parent advisor for the Hudson River Region of the State Office of Mental Health and Families Together in NYS; Louise Schwarz, NETWORK manager at Family Empowerment, Inc.; and the following health care professionals from New York Presbyterian Hospital/Westchester Division -- Marilyn Kotcher, MSW, LCSW, director of the Children of Divorce Program Division and former chief coordinator of the Hospital's child and adolescent outpatient evaluation service; Catherine Bookless, MSW, LCSW, program coordinator of Addiction Recover Service; and Gladys Frankel, PhD, senior psychologist with the Eating disorder Program.

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Organizers Robyn Sellet, Director of Clinical and Child Welfare Services for Occupations, Inc., Angela Turk, Director of Children's Services for Orange County Department of Mental Health, Susan Murray-Tetz, Team Leader of Mental Health in Special Education for Orange-Ulster BOCES, and Jackie Metakes, Mental Health Assessment Team Director for the Orange County Department of Mental Health, are grateful to Willa Brody, public relations for New York Presbyterian Hospital, for all of her support and efforts made to continue to educate and bring awareness to all members of the children's mental health community through specialized trainings. The event organizers look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with New York Presbyterian Hospital, Westchester Division to provide training and educational opportunities to the Hudson Valley communities.

"There is a continued need for awareness of mental health treatment and recovery for children and youth in all communities and a message of hope to be shared. Together, and with the help of continued trainings, mental health education and awareness, we can all make a difference in the lives of our friends, families and neighbors. Help and information are available, and we encourage families to seek the help of a local mental health provider for early intervention, treatment or in a crisis situation," commented Sellet.

Participants continued their support this year by wearing green ribbons as a symbolism of hope to better the lives of children with serious emotional disorders and their families. The color green also signifies new life, new growth and new beginnings.

This training was made possible through support from the following event co-sponsors: Occupations, Inc., Orange County Department of Mental Health, Orange-Ulster BOCES, Orange County Youth Bureau, Mental Health Association, Inc., of Orange County, Family Empowerment Council and New York Presbyterian Hospital, Westchester Division.

For helpful information on mental health services contact Occupations, Inc.'s Service Access Center and Mobile Mental Health at 1-888-750-2266, 24-hours a day, 7 days week, the Orange County Department of Mental Health at (845) 291-2600, Mental Health Association's 24-hour HELPLINE at 1-800-832-1200 (or 845-294-9355 outside of Orange County) or any local mental health provider in your area.



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(From left to right) Angela Turk, Director of Children Services for Orange County Department of Mental Health; Jackie Metakes, Mental Health Assessment Team Director for the Orange County Department of Mental Health; Willa Brody, Public Relations for NY Presbyterian Hospital; Robyn Sellet, Director of Clinical Services for Occupations, Inc.; and Susan Murray-Tetz, Team Leader of Mental Health in Special Education for Orange-Ulster BOCES, organized a local conference on children's mental health. May is recognized as Mental Health Month.

