Helping Young People Heal

A frequently asked question here at Hopewell is, “What is the average age of the people you serve?”

It’s always hard to say because as long as someone is 18, they are eligible for admission. Ages have ranged all the way up to the mid-70s.

Lately, however, the average age of our residents has trended down.

Currently, we have a number of residents who are young (in their 20s), smart and active. Many were in college when they first experienced problems. At Hopewell, they are finding acceptance, community, meaningful work and the confidence that they can learn to include their mental illness in a “normal” life.

A recent New York Times article (January 27, 2011) entitled, “Record Level of Stress Found in College Freshman” supports what we are seeing at Hopewell. A study surveying more than 200,000 college freshmen, reports that their emotional health has declined to the lowest level in 25 years.

Campus counselors are seeing “students who are depressed, under stress and are using psychiatric medication, prescribed even before they came to college.”

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Looking Ahead

HOPEWELL’S GOALS FOR 2011 and beyond focus on providing expanded living opportunities and offering greater therapeutic options for adults experiencing serious mental illness. These initiatives include opening our new Hopewell Farm and Craft Market (see p. 6), expanding our Club Hope daily activities program participation and increasing our residential census to full capacity.

Additionally in 2011, Hopewell will be converting to an electronic health records system, making physical improvements to our horse barn and equine therapy areas, and improving and mapping our extensive network of hiking trails.

Plans to establish an off-campus community-based housing program and on-campus respite services are well underway and will allow for a “step-down” level of care for many of our residents who are ready to transition to a more independent living arrangement. Our Research Committee will continue to guide our clinical outcomes initiatives and we are furthering our outreach efforts to veterans, young adults and financially in need individuals.

As we implement our strategic plan initiatives in 2011, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead. We know that it all contributes to improving the lives of individuals experiencing serious mental illness.

By Rick Karges, Executive Director

DONATE ONLINE
Your support helps nourish the spirits and heal the minds of Hopewell residents. To make your donation, please visit www.hopewell.cc, write the Development office at 139 Bell Street, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022 or call 440.247.0912.

Thank you!
The Sweet Anticipation of Spring

MAPLE SUGAR SEASON BEGINS AT HOPEWELL

While many of us might feel like we are still in the dormancy of winter, the trees know that spring is on the way and have started producing sap.

This is a time of great anticipation at the farm. Not only is it a sure sign of spring, but the residents and staff enjoy the sweet rewards of maple sugaring.

With a team of horses and six to eight residents, farm manager, Norman Wengerd, and his crew put in over 1,100 taps and start collecting the sap. They collect from red maples and sugar maples almost daily during the five week sugar season. Wood is collected all year round in preparation for boiling 17,200 gallons of sap into 200 gallons of maple syrup.

Hopewell’s traditionally made maple syrup makes our pancakes the envy of many. This year, you can enjoy our maple syrup too! It is available for purchase at our newly opened Farm & Craft Market (see page six).
Hopewell’s Horses are Therapeutic

One of the more unique therapeutic experiences Hopewell has to offer is its equine program.

During weekly equine sessions, residents typically work on a variety of personal growth issues like assertiveness, coping skills, facing fears, and overcoming obstacles. Following an activity, residents discuss their feelings and talk with staff about what they learned.

The advantage of working with horses is that they react honestly to each situation giving residents a fresh perspective.

The program is based on the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) model. EAGALA has two main components: psychotherapy, which incorporates horses for emotional growth, and learning, which focuses on educational goals.

According to Colleen Welder, program service director and the founder of Hopewell’s equine program, “Residents often say they are afraid of horses but we soon see their confidence grow as they learn more about them and from them.”

We are hoping to locate funding this year for barn renovations which will allow us to expand our therapeutic horse herd and create a safer space in which to conduct therapy sessions.

As mental health needs in Ohio increase, state funding is being decreased. This will result in a crisis vs. prevention situation — costs will rise for state psychiatric hospitals, emergency rooms and prisons.

- In a recent statewide poll, 2 out of every 3 Ohioans were impacted by a friend or family member with an addiction and/or mental illness.
- Based on the most recent statistics, suicides in Ohio are at a 10 year high.

Please do what you can to let your government representatives know that mental health is important to you and to the future of our state.

Statistics provided by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.
At Hopewell, these young people arrive looking for answers to many questions about their mental illness. Our educational and holistic approach addresses their concerns. We help them understand how the right medication can change their lives and they have the time they need to become stable on medication and experience the positive results.

We are especially well-suited to treat young people because, in good or bad weather, there is a lot to do to keep our farm thriving.

“Hopewell meets many of these young residents’ needs,” explains Christine Cowan-Gascoigne, Hopewell’s marketing manager. “It’s an active place and because our focus is on community and relationship building, there are many opportunities for making friends and socializing.”

The power of living, working, crying, laughing and learning with peers and staff — our community — is transformative. We believe it gives these young people the tools and hope they need to create a life of meaning after Hopewell.
Hopewell provides an opportunity for adults with serious mental illness to experience a self-reliant and satisfying life through participation in a vibrant residential therapeutic farm community.

**Hopewell Farm & Craft Market Opens!**

The Hopewell Farm & Craft Market opens Thursday, March 10th, just in time for Geauga County’s March Maple Madness Tour on March 12th.

The Farm & Craft Market offers a selection of Hopewell produced maple syrup and crafts and is operated by residents and staff. During the growing season a large variety of Hopewell eggs, fruits and vegetables will also be available. Store hours are Thursday through Saturday, 10am – 2pm.

Many thanks to the Fred A. Lennon Charitable Trust, KeyBank Foundation and John P. Murphy Foundation for their support in creating the Farm & Craft Market.

We can’t wait to see you!