CSP Logo designed by Chris Ford

Community Support Journal

Volume 15, Issue 10 October 2022

Montgomery County
Community Support Program Committee

Montco Votes! Learn, Register and Pledge to Vote

By: Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor
And Bill England, Here For Us Coalition

The Montgomery County CSP Committee held a "Pledge to Vote" event on October 6, 2022 at the HopeWorx offices featuring Bill England from the Here For Us Advocacy Coalition.

Hopeworx was pleased to welcome England to discuss voter registration and the November 8th election. This is a part of the MontCo Votes Campaign which focuses on educating people about the upcoming election and providing support in registering to vote.

L to R - Julie Whitmore, Bill England and Akilah Williams

There will also be a robust voter mobilization for the November 8th election.

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Peer Palooza at French Creek State Park A new adventure...what could go wrong?

By: Ameika Malcolm, CommunityWorx

New site, new challenges, new adventures - 24 people and one visitor… what could go wrong??

From getting lost to the drama of the Porta potties, dog rescue mission to running out of chocolate… this trip was a test of our resiliency and definition of organic peer support at its finest.

Day 1 - the temperature was 47 degrees and felt like 30. Needless to say, supplies for warmth were not enough as people doubled up on extra layers. Some people forgot supplies. Some supplies went missing. "Hot tempers". We Just had to make it through the night… and thank the fire

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gods 🔥 . Oh oh….and there was a mystery dog that showed up on our site. After some investigation… One person tried to keep him and until we could find the owner or a ranger…but that was short lived… the dog destroyed the tent and bolted off into the dark. We found out the next day that the owner lived nearby and he was safely home.

Day 2 – With some rest, food, camp meeting, and warmer weather…it was a beautiful day. We went hiking, got on the lake with boats and Kayak, playing games, and good conversation. The world was right for a while, when here comes the park ranger returning a member of the pack…double checked is anyone else missing?? Head count checks out, thank the ranger and Dinner bell rings – food yah!!

Around the fire shooting the "words", s'mores, laughter, star gazing, chit chatting with neighbors - the Boy Scouts – the best way to end the day.

Day 3 - Breakfast and the break down and pack up Apocalypse…together we got it done…somehow everything worked itself out with one goal in mind…to get home and shower!! At least I think that's the goal!

I quickly realized that at least five people were going back to being homeless. Two of the five people came to HopeWorx Friday morning for the first time and heard about the trip…we were able to take them along.

We got pack up surprisingly earlier than I thought. This gave us enough time to gather by the Porta potty to say goodbye to them stinky suckers. Many campers expressed the bushes may have been a better deal. And we hope in the future there is an upgrade for the French Creek campsite.

We will not be going back to this site, but we now have a new camping story to tell. We are looking at Evansburg Park and returning to Green Lane.

Now we are back to reality laughing about the experience…Thanks to everyone who helped to make this trip possible. The Montgomery County Community Support Program for their continued support and for granting us $300 for supplies. Creating Increased Connections for supplying us with games, group chats and cooking gears. Martha's Choice Marketplace for food supplies and canopies. Thanks to the peer programs that organized for peers to come camping. Thanks to all the new campers who stuck it out.

And on behalf of all the campers… a big THANKS to the kitchen crew and the head chef.

Thanks to the drivers for getting us there safe and back. As well as the people who came back to HopeWorx to help unload the van.

Continued on next page

Jason and Karleen thank you for saving me from self-destruction. Guess what… yes, I am a robot!

Here is some feedback about the trip…

Ginnae -
I had a great time on the camping trip at French Creek. The experience of the cook with all the food was fantastic. Ameika supervised all of us to make sure we were all ok. Went on the boat, made smores and camped in the tent. I had a peaceful experience!

Luis -
My camping trip was a very good experience. I had a good time with the HopeWorx crew. I will always remember this experience and will keep it in my heart. I got a chance to experience the outdoors. This trip was very wonderful, and I hope we get to go out camping again in the future.

Ameika Malcolm leading the way!

FOR MORE GREAT PHOTOS OF PEER PALOOZA AT FRENCH CREEK, GO TO THE NEXT TWO PAGES!

Campers enjoy the fall at French Creek State Park

Campers enjoyed a three-day weekend at French Creek State Park September 23-25. The event was sponsored by HopeWorx, CIC and CSP. A $300 grant was awarded to Hope-Worx for food and supplies.

Everything a camper needs...

Even...
Phone
Service

Continued from page one—Pledge to Vote

Making pledges to vote

The discussion at Hopeworx included which offices are up for election, who the candidates are for each office, and voting as an important part of civic engagement. During the discussion questions were asked and answered about voter registration and the election. Time was spent talking about the MontCo Votes Pledge to Vote. All persons who take the pledge are entered into a raffle for a $100 visa card. Anyone may enter by using this link https://pahealth.salsalabs.org/montcovotespledge/index.html.

All who participated in the discussion were offered assistance in registering to vote if they were not and completed the Pledge to Vote. There were many good things said about the importance of voting.

The deadline to register to vote is October 24th. People can vote by mail, using an absentee ballot, or register to vote in person on election day. This is the website to register, check your registration and make any updates, and request an absentee or mail-in ballot: www.vote.pa.gov. Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th and the polls are open from 7 to 8 p.m.

See more about voting on the next three pages.

Here for Us MontCo

Here for Us MontCo

PHAN Pennsylvania Health Access Network

Pennsylvania Election Information & Key Dates for 2022

Voting is both a right and a responsibility. This right is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution under the 26th Amendment.

"The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

Who is eligible to vote in Pennsylvania on November 8th?

To register to vote in Pennsylvania, you must:

- Be a **citizen of the United States** for at least one month before the election.
- Be a **resident of Pennsylvania and the election district** in which you plan to vote for at least 30 days before the election.
- Be at least **18 years of age** on or before the day of the election.

Important Dates To Know for the 2022 Election

October 24, 2022: Last Day to Register to Vote

November 1, 2022: Last Day to Apply for Mail-In or Civilian Absentee Ballot

November 8, 2022: Election Day! Polls are open from 7am to 8pm.

November 8, 2022: Mail-in and absentee ballots must be received

Important Information about Mail-In and Absentee Voting

**ALL registered voters in Pennsylvania can vote by mail in 2022. **

Deadline to return your mail-in or civilian absentee ballot:

- **By mail:** must be **received by mail** by 8pm on November 8, 2022. *Postmarks are not enough.*
- **In-person:** must be **returned** to your county board of elections office or other designated location or drop box by 8pm on November 8, 2022.

Need help registering or have questions?
Call or text PHAN at: (877) 570-3642

YOUR VOICE
YOUR POWER
YOUR VOTE

Take the MontCoVotes pledge today!

Use the QR Code to Take the Pledge:

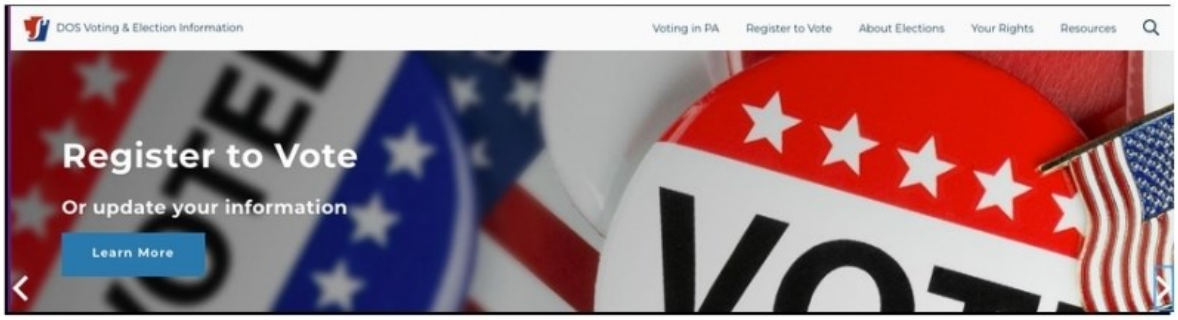
Here for Us MontCo

PHAN Pennsylvania Health Access Network

Here for Us MontCo

PHAN Pennsylvania Health Access Network

How to Use Pennsylvania's Voting & Election Website



Go to **www.vote.pa.gov** to access Pennsylvania's official voting and elections website, where you can get ready to vote on November 8th. Here's what you can do on the website:

- **Register to vote.** Complete the online registration form to vote on Election Day.
- **Check your registration status** to make sure you're ready to vote.
- **Update your registration** if you have moved, would like to change your party affiliation, or have changed your name.
- **Request a mail-in or absentee ballot.** Complete the online request form to vote by mail for any reason. All PA voters are eligible to vote by mail in the November 8th election.
- **Check the status of your requested mail-in or absentee ballot.** If you have submitted an application for a mail-in or absentee ballot, you can learn where this is in the process.

Montgomery County Voter Services also maintains a website with additional information about voting, the General Election, identifying where you vote, and more. Visit: **www.montcopa.org/voterservices**

No matter how you decide to vote on November 8th, please make sure to VOTE!

Over $5 million available to support housing services

From Emma Hertz, Strategy Director for the Montgomery County Recovery Office

Montgomery County is pleased to share that $5,080,650 in new funding is available to support housing services. This funding is made available through the HOME- American Rescue Plan program, and is available in addition to the $161.4 million already allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act- Pandemic Recovery Fund. You're receiving this email because you submitted a project to the American Rescue Plan Act program.

In order to determine how to spend these funds, Montgomery County is inviting residents, nonprofits, developers, businesses, municipal leaders, and others to share their priorities for this funding via a virtual town hall and/or through an online survey.

1. Share your input during our virtual Housing Funding Town Hall on Tuesday, October 11 from 6-7pm (click here to register), and/or
2. Complete this survey with your input by October 16, 2022: Housing Funding Survey (En Espanol)

The County will be using this feedback, as well as current data on housing needs, to determine the priority project types and populations to serve through this funding. The County will then share a draft of the funding plan to the community for feedback by the end of October. The draft funding plan will include the broad categories for funding and the targeted populations- this plan *will not* include specific projects to be funded. The community-reviewed plan will be sent to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for final approval.

Following HUD approval, the County will allow partners to apply for project funding, based on the priorities already established by the community. Information on how to apply for project funding will be distributed in late fall. If you believe your project is eligible (see below) and you'd like your project to be considered for funding, please email RecoveryOffice@montcopa.org.

About HOME-ARP

The American Rescue Plan Act made available $5,080,650 to Montgomery County specifically dedicated for housing/ homeless projects, called HOME-ARP, in addition to other American Rescue Plan Act funds. The funding is allowed to be used for the following project types:

- Emergency shelter
- Rental assistance for individuals and families
- Construction of new affordable housing
- Housing-related services to support individuals and families

Each community must prioritize which populations it will serve with HOME-ARP funds, of the eligible populations that can be served. The eligible populations are:

- Households already experiencing homelessness (e.g. sleeping in a shelter or outside)
- Households at risk of homelessness (e.g., facing eviction)
- Households experiencing homelessness because they are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Any other specific population (e.g., youth, families with children, seniors, LGBTQIA+ population) at risk of homelessness

Once a community has established priority project types and populations for funding, and the draft funding plan is approved by HUD, individual projects can be funded to support these goals.

Questions about this funding opportunity can be directed to RecoveryOffice@montcopa.org or you can visit https://www.montcopa.org/3821/Recovery-Office for updated information.

The Personal Navigator Program of VNA-Community Services, Inc

SE Regional CSP

November 7th, 2022
during the main meeting
3:00-5:00
on zoom

PRESENTING: Carol Szollose

Learn about connecting to public benefits:

- Helping connect individuals and families to benefits that improve health
- Increase food security
- Economic stability through program eligibility determination
- Find out about application Assistance and utilization support.
- Get assistance with screening find out about connection to public benefits; including public health care programs such as Medicaid, Pennie, Medicare and CHIP.

Please contact Julie Whitmore for more information:
jwhitmore@hopeworxinc.org

The Personal Navigator Program of VNA-Community Services, Inc. Address: 1109 DeKalb St, Norristown, PA 19401 **Phone:** (610) 272-3373

The Personal Navigator Program of VNA-Community Services, Inc. is a benefits access program committed to helping connect individuals and families to benefits that improve health, increase food security and economic stability through program eligibility determination, application assistance and utilization support. The VNA Navigators screen and assist in connection to public benefits; including public health care programs such as Medicaid, Pennie, Medicare and CHIP.

NAMI Montgomery County introduces NAMI Smarts for Advocacy—Workshop in November

NAMI Montgomery County is creating an interest list for NAMI Smarts for Advocacy classes in November. The date and times will be announced later. If you are interested, please click here to register.

Join NAMI Montgomery County for a free, advocacy training program that helps people living with mental illness, friends and family transform their passion and lived experience into skillful grassroots advocacy.

When:
Dates and times are subject to change.
November - Date/Time TBD

NAMI Smarts for Advocacy is designed as a series of three 1-2 hour workshops or modules or as a single full-day training that develop the following skills:

- **Telling a compelling story that is inspiring and makes an "ask" in 90 seconds**
- **Writing an effective email, making an elevator speech and making an impactful phone call**
- **Orchestrating a successful meeting with an elected official**

The unique step-by-step, skill-building design of NAMI Smarts is effective with a wide range of participants, including those who are new to advocacy as well as individuals with years of experience.

Participants routinely share that they've never been able to condense their story or made a clear "ask," but with NAMI Smarts, they are now able to.

Lobbyists who represent NAMI State Organizations or mental health coalitions also love this program—they see participants come out confident and able to share their story in a way that moves policymakers.

For More Information
Contact our office at 215.361.7784

To learn more about NAMI Montgomery County PA, please visit our website at www.namimontcopa.org.

NAMI Montgomery County PA

On October 26th, join us for our *spooky* Wellness Wednesday! We encourage you to come in costume for an afternoon of connection and fun!

12 - 3 pm at
NAMI MontCo Office
100 W. Main St, Ste 204
Lansdale, PA 19446
Questions: Call 215-361-7784

The Basics of Personal Finance: What Everyone Needs to Know

Join 1847 Financial virtually on 10/26 @ 7 pm for a workshop on financial planning. Register on EventBrite.

NAMI National Alliance on Mental Illness | Montgomery County PA

1847Financial®

NAMI Montgomery County PA
National Alliance on Mental Illness
NEW VIRTUAL
NAMI CONNECTION
LGBTQ+ GROUP
OFFERING
EVERY 4TH FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
STARTING SEPT 23
6:30 PM
VIA ZOOM
Registration required:
https://namimontcopa.org/support-group-registration/

Save the date for an evening to celebrate the remarkable efforts and advancements in the area of treatment and recovery for mental illness. Invitation and more details to follow soon! Sponsorship and advertising opportunities available.

We are thrilled to announce the 2022 Benefit for the Brain Awardees!

Scientific Research Awardee
Ruben C. Gur, Ph.D.

Impact Awardee
Hopeworx, Inc.

Dr. Larry A. Real Awardee
Ashley Un, MD

For more information, visit our website. Click here.

CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS

VIRTUAL MUTUAL AID GROUPS

Men's Identity & Experiences Circle of Hope Group

Join us for an open conversation in which we share our experiences of challenge and triumph. A space to empower ourselves and each other to fulfill our personal purposes in life

Wednesday's 10:30AM - 12:00PM

Zoom Link:
https://rhd.zoom.us/j/85192424587

Women's Identity & Experiences Circle of Hope Group

This group was created for women as a safe environment to voice & openly share our life stories as women & to empower ourselves to find greater meaning & purpose in life.

Wednesday's 10:00AM-11:30AM

Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86798393823

Circle of Hope (Hybrid)

Circle of Hope is peer-to-peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

Thursday's 10:30AM-12:00PM

Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86798393823

In Person Option
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600,
Norristown, PA 19401

CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS

VIRTUAL MUTUAL AID GROUPS

Young Peoples' Hearing Voices Group

The Young People's Hearing Voices Group is a safe space for teens and young adults who have the experience of hearing, seeing, or sensing things not perceived by others. It is a place to talk and find personal meaning in our experiences.

Tuesday
6:00PM-7:30PM

Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84853101167

Taking Back Our Power

Taking Back Our Power hearing voices groups are open to anyone with the experience of hearing voices, or other sensory phenomena not shared by others. We offer a non-clinical, non-judgmental environment and open discussion away from traditional psychiatric treatment.

Monday's 3:00PM- 4:30PM
Tuesday's 3:00PM-4:30PM
Wednesday's 3:00PM-4:30PM

Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85399542179

Live Another Day

Live another day groups are non-judgmental confidential spaces where people can share some of their darkest thoughts without being assumed to have an illness or being assessed for involuntary interventions. Support to openly explore these thoughts and the feelings and experiences underneath them is often the key to moving toward something different.

Tuesdays 12:00PM-1:30PM
Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86161479674

Questions Contact:
Shelia Hall-Prioleau 215-906-0453
Shelia.HallPrioleau@RHD.org
https://www.ciconnections.org

Subcommittee Reports from September 2022

Advocacy Subcommittee:

Voting is November 8th. Please vote. October 24th is last day you can register to vote. Talked about the housing crisis. Also talked about transportation. We looked at the Call for Change survey. In the newsletter there is a legal aid assistance flyer with information from Episcopal Legal Aid.

Community Outreach Subcommittee:

Approved one grant for a gas card. Having our chair and having a representative from CSP as a liaison. Do some resource events, etc,

Conference Subcommittee:

The next conference will be the 10th anniversary of our CSP conference. Looking at may 23rd and different events. Contacting Whitpain for using old Mermaid Lake place? Or maybe Variety club? Maybe Ameika and partner can do some food. Reach out to providers about activities we will have.

CSP MEETING CALENDER 2022-23

Meetings are held every third Thursday, monthly @ Norristown Public Library from 12: 00-2:30pm

The next meeting will be:

October	20
November	17
December	15
January	19

Meetings are currently held via Zoom.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2022/2023 Tri-Chairs

Provider Member: Abby Grasso
Person in Recovery: Danny Kuchler
Family Member: Kathy Laws

2022/2022 Sub-Committee Chairs

Community Outreach: Dion Despaigne
Advocacy: Akilah Williams, Julie Whitmore
Conference: Erin Hewitt, Stacey Volz

2022/2023 Treasurer

Dion Despaigne, CST Specialist

County Liaison - Tracey Riper-Thomas

Fiduciary - HopeWorx, Inc.

1210 Stanbridge Street,
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
610-270-3685

CSP Principles

* Consumer Centered/ Consumer Empowered
* Culturally competent
* Able to Meet Special Needs
* Community Based with Natural Supports
* Flexible
* Coordinated
* Accountable
* Strength Based

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Central Behavioral Health, AdvocacyWorx, Community Satisfaction Team of Montgomery County, Magellan Health Services, Montgomery Co. Department of Behavioral Health, Montgomery County Emergency Services (MCES), NAMI Montgomery County, Norristown Vet Center, Resources for Human Development, Salisbury Behavioral Health

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3rd Thursday of each month

Norristown Public Library Community Room

1001 Powell St.

Currently via Zoom

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

Join our Mailing list!
We have an email list as well as a regular mailing, to join:

Send an e-mail to:
pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org
Or send your contact info to this mailing address:

CSP Mission Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large. The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

CSP Subcommittees:

* **Advocacy Subcommittee—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County. The newsletter editor can be contacted at: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.**

* **Community Outreach Subcommittee—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.**

* **Conference Subcommittee – The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.**

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.