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Support Suicide Prevention Awareness

Clothing available in small through 3XL



Baseball long sleeve shirt \$27



Black short sleeve shirt \$19



Earrings \$16
(nickel free)
0.3" W x 0.5" H



Tote \$12
13" W x 11" H x 6" D



Teal short sleeve shirt \$19



Black crewneck sweatshirt \$29



These items are available for purchase through July 2.

To purchase, visit upmc-suicideawareness2026.corpmerchandise.com or just scan the QR code. Click on "Order Now."

Questions? Call Making Minds Matter at 412-246-6614 or email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.

Making MINDS Matter

Spring 2026



Setting a Course for ADVENTURE WITH TAG™



Follow UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation on LinkedIn.

UPMC.com/MakingMindsMatter



UPMC
WESTERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
FOUNDATION

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Mr. Rogers never fails to guide me. He reminds us that “real strength has to do with helping others.” I am fortunate to be privy to countless examples of this among our staff, our patients, our families, and our benefactors daily.

Part of my role is to pursue increased access to UPMC Western’s wide swath of inpatient, outpatient, crisis, and residential services and to prioritize quality and safety across our behavioral health network. The work of our foundation is vital in this regard, as it elevates our profile, inspires advocacy, and provides a channel by which to secure resources in support of enriching the patient experience. This, too, is a measure of strength.

I am equally grateful for all you have done to strengthen our community thus far and excited for what lies ahead. The foundation has a robust calendar of opportunities this year, and I hope our paths will cross.

Deborah S. Brodine, MBA, MHA
President, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital
President, UPMC Western Behavioral Health



Beginning with a single generous donation in memory of a beloved spouse in 2019, the Making Minds Matter Fund was established in 2020 to support enhanced patient experiences and staff education. Subsequent growth in activity and donors made it possible to launch the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation in 2023. A variety of fundraising events, merchandise sales, campaigns, third-party initiatives, grants, educational symposiums, gifts-in-kind, and general donations have brought us to 2026.

This summer, we will announce our very first grant cycle, which means the foundation will begin accepting grant submissions from UPMC Western Behavioral Health staff. Funds will be awarded for projects which support our mission to enrich the experiences of those under our care.

Thank you to every donor who has helped us reach this pivotal point. Getting to know many of you along the way is a pleasure and an honor. Together, we are creating a legacy for UPMC Western Behavioral Health that will continue for many years to come.

Nanci L. Case, MS
President, UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation

KEEP CURRENT WITH THE UPMC WESTERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Join us on LinkedIn

Our audience is growing!

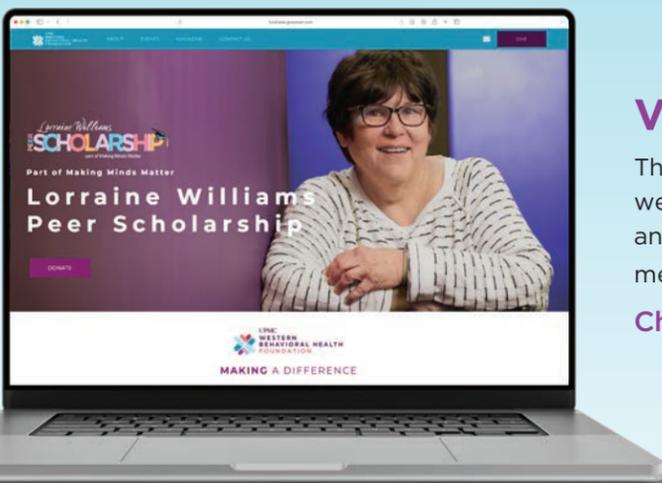
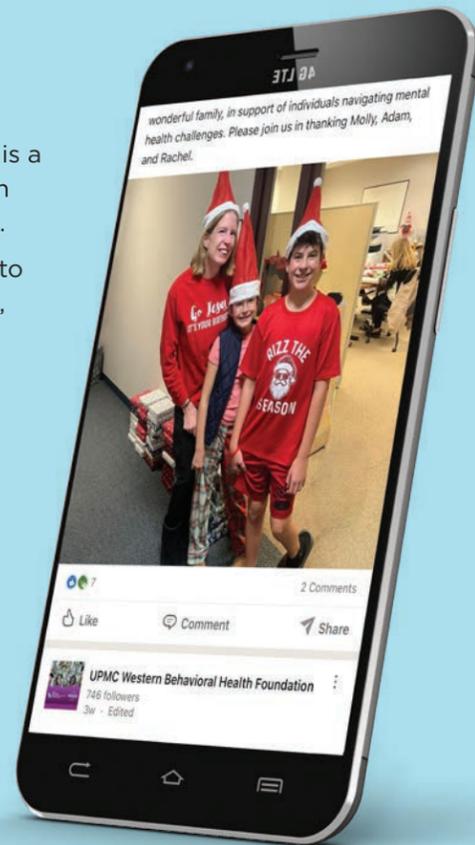
- In 2025, our page generated more than 70,000 impressions. This is a key gauge of visibility and measures the number of times Western Behavioral Health Foundation content appears in someone's feed.
- On average, we share six posts per month. This platform allows us to communicate information about our events, programs, outreach, education, and patient stories in the timeliest manner.
- 175 LinkedIn friends have shared our posts to their own network, spreading awareness about efforts related to mental health. Amplifying this content could positively impact someone you didn't know was struggling with their own well-being.

There are many ways to interact with our LinkedIn page: follow, like, comment, repost, and tag the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation.

Let's keep the momentum going!



LinkedIn®



Visit our website

The UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation website hosts opportunities to participate in and support the foundation's efforts regarding mental health.

Check it out!



ENDLESS WAYS TO GIVE

Transform Lives Today and Tomorrow

Whether you're a former patient, a family member, a friend, or a community partner, your generosity can make a profound impact. Your gifts help us stay vigilant and innovative, ready to tackle urgent needs and seize promising opportunities. Here are some exciting ways you can contribute:

BEQUESTS: LEAVE A LEGACY

Imagine leaving a legacy that continues to make a difference long after you're gone. By including UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation in your will or living trust, you can ensure your values live on. You can also name us as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy, creating a future filled with hope and healing.

"FUN" RAISE: TURN PASSION INTO ACTION

Got time and enthusiasm but not the funds? Organize a fun event at work, school, or in your community. Whether it's a bake sale, a charity run, or a creative workshop, your event can gather donations and spread joy. Share your journey on social media, rally your network, and watch your efforts turn into a substantial donation.

GIFT-IN-KIND: GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE

Non-cash donations are a fantastic way to contribute. From products to services, your tangible items can be just as valuable as cash. Plus, they're tax-deductible based on their fair-market value. It's a win-win!

GIFTS OF RETIREMENT PLANS: SECURE THE FUTURE

Designate UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation as a beneficiary of your retirement account. Whether it's an IRA, 401(k), or 403(b), your gift can provide significant support while offering you potential tax benefits.

LIFE INCOME GIFT: INCOME FOR YOU, SUPPORT FOR US

Consider a life income gift, such as a charitable gift annuity or a charitable remainder unitrust. These options provide you and your loved ones with income for life or a set number of years, along with a current income tax deduction. It's a thoughtful way to support our mission while securing your financial future.

MATCHING GIFTS: DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Many companies and foundations match charitable gifts made by employees, their spouses, board members, and retirees. Check if your employer offers this benefit and potentially double your donation, amplifying your impact.

OUTRIGHT GIFTS: SIMPLE AND POWERFUL

A cash gift is the most straightforward way to give and a beautiful way to honor or remember loved ones. We accept payments via cash, check, or credit card, making it easy for you to contribute.

STOCKS, BONDS, AND MUTUAL FUNDS: SMART GIVING

Donating appreciated securities can provide significant support while helping you avoid or reduce capital gains taxes. Notify us of your plan to donate, and we'll guide you through the process.

UNITED WAY GIFTS: COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As a United Way agency, UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation benefits from your contributions. Use contributor code 18208819 to direct your United Way donation to us, supporting mental health services in our community.

Join us in making a difference today. Your support can transform lives and create a brighter future for our community. Donate now and be a part of something truly impactful!

For information on volunteering, giving, or donations, email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu, call 412-246-6614, or scan the QR code.





MINDHACKS SUPPORTS WELLNESS IN SCHOOL

A grant from the Citrone 33 Foundation has more than doubled the reach of the MindHacks program from two schools to five schools in western Pennsylvania for the 2025-26 academic year.

Using dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) principles to build mindful practices in middle school students, MindHacks is a curriculum created in partnership with UPMC Western Behavioral Health, the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, the Citrone 33 Foundation, and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. The goal is to develop skills and a healthy mindset in students to enhance interpersonal relationships and connectedness, develop positive coping strategies, and improve overall wellness.

The evidenced-based curriculum, developed by UPMC Western Behavioral Health, is used by teachers and school counselors in five different middle schools: Dutch Ridge (Beaver School District), Highlands Middle (Highlands School District), Founders' Hall (McKeesport School District), Dickson Preparatory STEAM Academy (Woodland Hills School District), and Shadyside Academy. All necessary supplies are provided at no cost.

Victoria Blosser, MS, is a program manager for School-Based Behavioral Health at UPMC Western Behavioral Health. She explains that the curriculum has six different units, with two skills per unit, for a total of 12 skill sessions.

"It is a very simple curriculum with no timeline and no right or wrong way to carry it out," says Victoria. "What I hear most from educators is that they really like that it is engaging and easy to implement."

Victoria notes the positive effect MindHacks has on the school climate, but there are potential longer term benefits, too. Developing students' social and emotional readiness is intended to have a bearing on future goals like career readiness.

“*I'm proud to partner with Western Behavioral Health and the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation in this way. MindHacks weaves DBT skills into something engaging and familiar, making mental health support more accessible for students.***”**

— **Cindy Citrone, Founder and CEO, Citrone 33 Foundation**

Mental Health and Student-Athletes: Managing the Invisible Injury

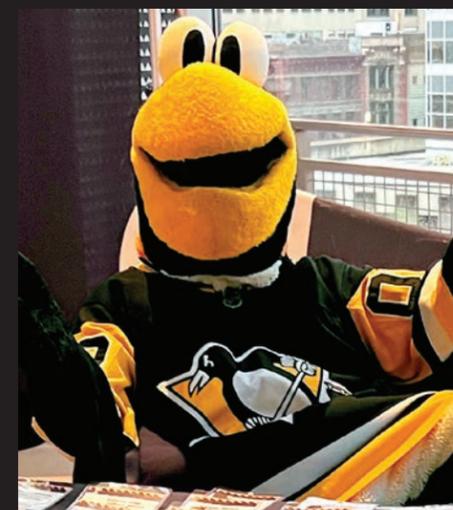


Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Registration/Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.
Program: 8 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.

**PPG Paints Arena,
ULTRA Club**

1001 5th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219



Who Should Attend?

Coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, administrators, school counselors, social workers, and teachers for middle school, high school, and college level student-athletes will gain valuable insight into working with and supporting the mental health needs of student-athletes.

Topics for this program include:

- The Role of Anxiety With Concussion Outcomes: What Are We Learning?
- Managing Student-Athletes During and After Concussions and Head Trauma
- An Athlete's Perspective on Mental Health Maintenance
- Building Mental Toughness: Motivating Your Student-Athletes for Peak Performance

This symposium is offered at no cost.

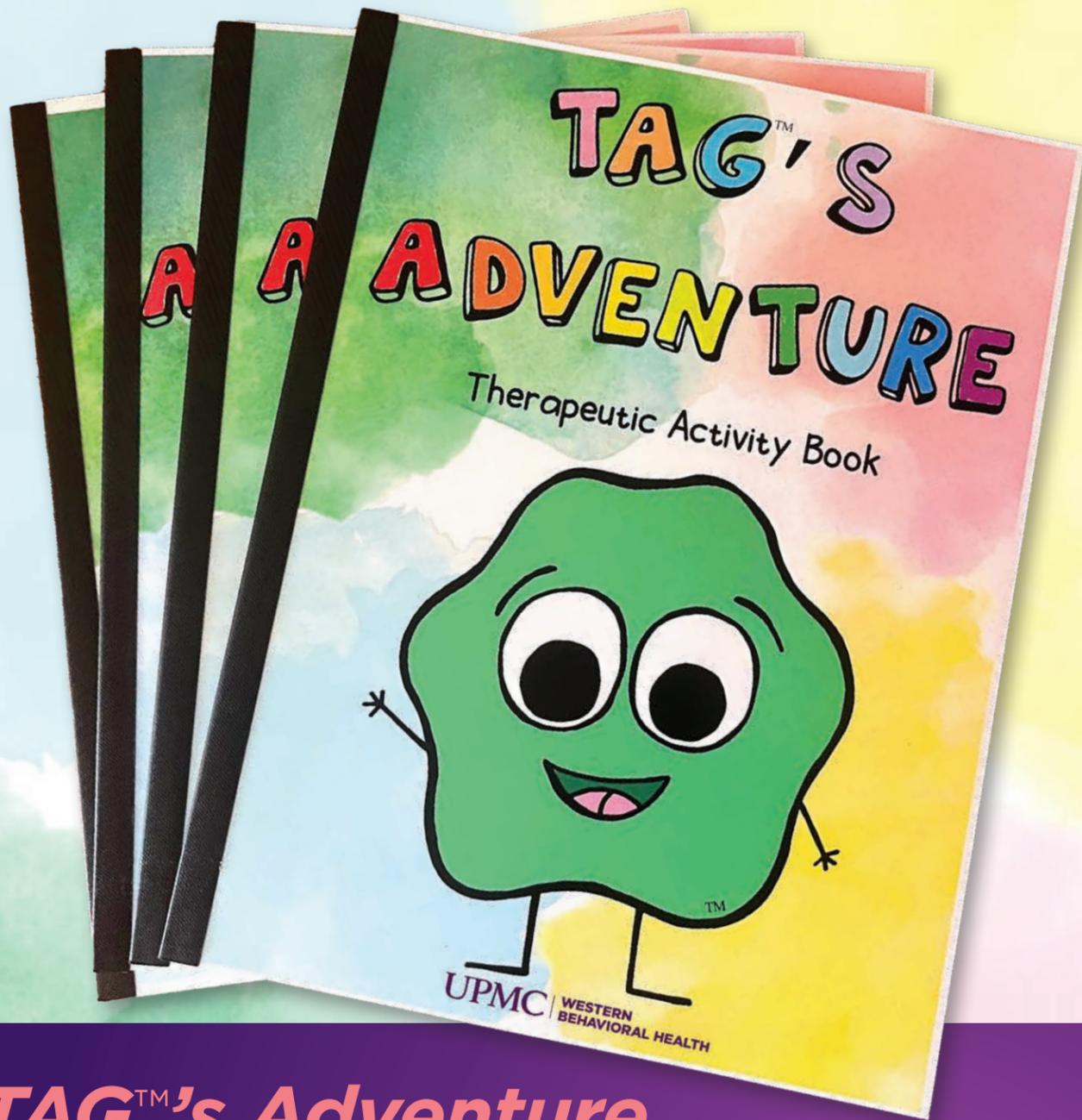
Continuing education credits are available for:

- Counselor (NBCC) — 3.0 credits
- Certified Athletic Trainer (CEUs) — 3.5 credits
- PA Educator (Act 48) — 3.0 hours
- Psychologist (APA) — 3.0 credits
- Social Work (LPC, LCSW, LSW, LMFT) — 3.0 credits



REGISTER TODAY

To learn more, email Nanci Case at MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.



TAG™'s Adventure Helps Children Engage in Behavioral Health Treatment

This new resource is a therapeutic activity book created by staff at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital to provide additional support for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disabilities.

The impetus for this project is to augment the general group therapy curriculum for inpatients on the Child and Adolescent Unit (CAI) at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital (WPH). The CAI unit has a capacity of 22 patients and offers acute psychiatric services for patients from all backgrounds, family systems, cultures, and diagnoses. About 800 patients ranging in age from 3 to 18 years are admitted annually. They require support in managing a variety of diagnoses such as conduct disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity, autism, post-traumatic stress, and major depression.

Of the 800 annual admissions to the CAI unit, about 145 have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These patients have a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects how they communicate, interact with others, learn, and behave.



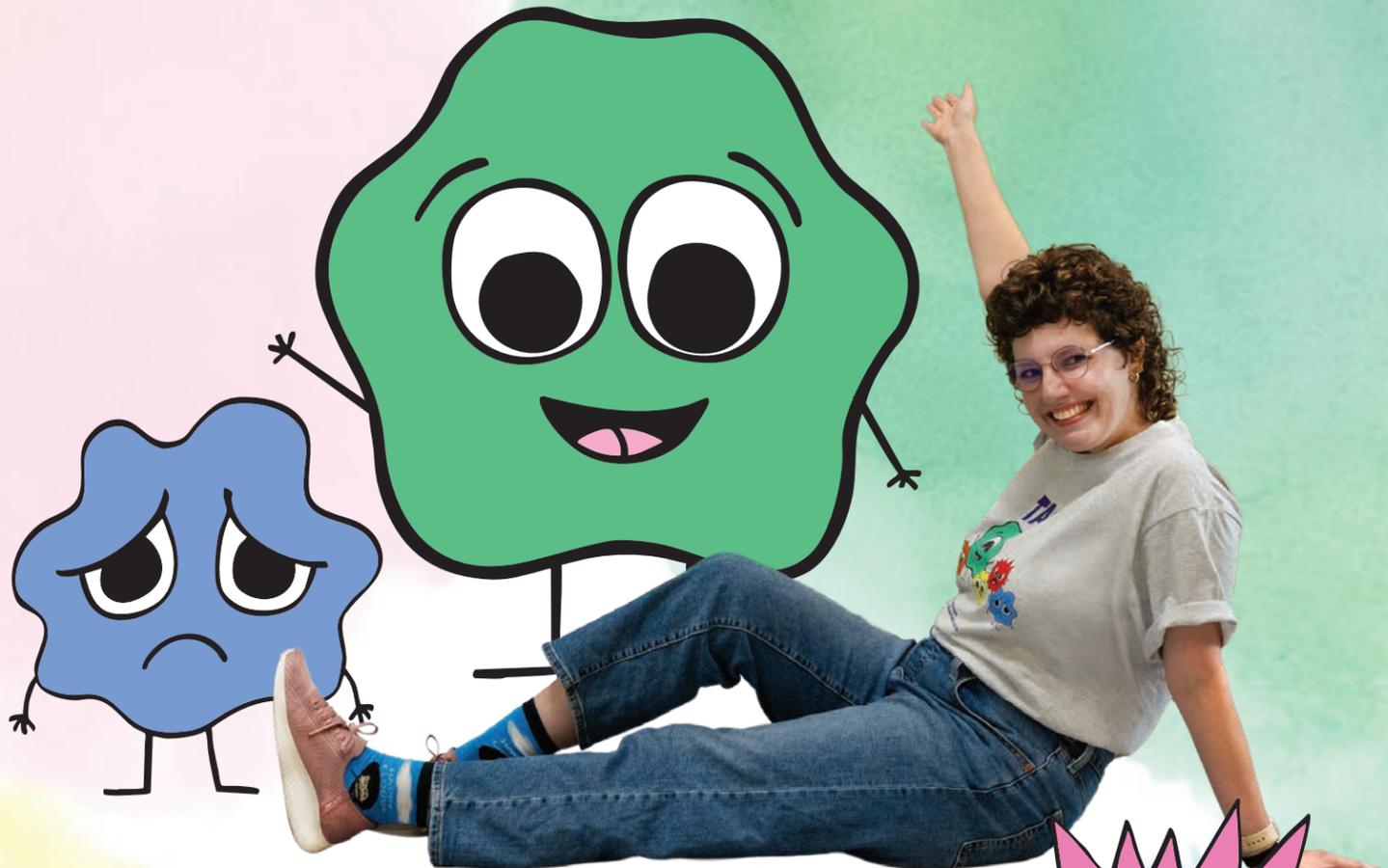
ABOVE: CHRISTINA COCHRAN WAS PRESENTED WITH A PIECE OF ORIGINAL TAG™ ARTWORK AS THANKS FOR THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF #1 COCHRAN AND THE COCHRAN FAMILY FOUNDATION IN LAUNCHING THIS RESOURCE.



ELIZABETH BOSCA

Communication can be difficult for individuals with autism who all have different expressive and/or receptive language skills. About half of these patients are considered to have nonverbal expressive communication, which consists of many forms of body language such as facial expressions, gestures, physical touch, eye contact, and posture/proximity. These patients may have difficulty with group therapy and require one-on-one interaction with the staff.

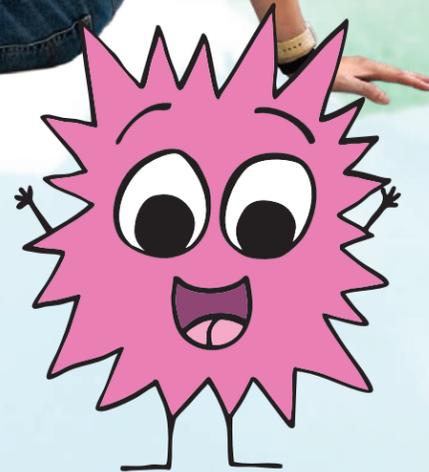
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JENNA SCHMIEDEL

“TAG™ was inspired by scribbles and squiggles kids often make when they embark on their creative journey.”

— Jenna Schmiedel



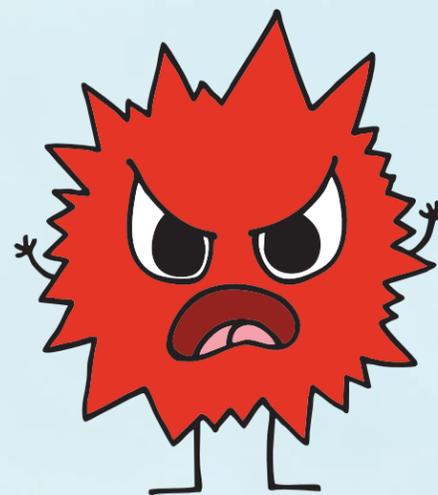
Recognizing the need for additional materials for this special group of patients, a work group among CAI staff, including Breanna Bender, MHA; Elizabeth Bosca, BS; Anna Louise Courtney, BA; Elizabeth Gruver, MEd; Rachel Huff, MM; Micayla Reynolds,

MEd; and David Trotta, EdD, and the Creative Expressive Art Therapies (CEAT) department at WPH, was the collaborative force behind the creation of TAG™’s *Adventure Therapeutic Activity Book*. The artwork and graphics were designed by Jenna Schmiedel,

MA, ATR-BC, art therapist, UPMC Western. TAG™ (*Therapeutic Activity Guide*), the main green character, was inspired by a child’s first attempt at drawing. Jenna wanted to ensure that every child would be able to draw their own TAG™.

The result of this initiative is a vibrant, inviting, 129-page workbook full of adventure based on art, music, and play principles. The activities allow the patients to build confidence through directives and repetition. The book inspires patients to have fun by creating, learning, exploring, experimenting, and playing. The activities consist of simple prompts and are designed with a clear purpose.

The staff is receiving positive feedback already. “When my son was hospitalized, he often felt overwhelmed in large groups and struggled to stay engaged in treatment. TAG™’s *Adventure* was a turning point for him,” one parent shared. “It gave him something fun, calming, and purposeful to do on his own terms. He especially loved the messy play section; he said it helped him feel less anxious. As a parent, it was so reassuring to know he had a safe and structured way to express himself during such a difficult time.”

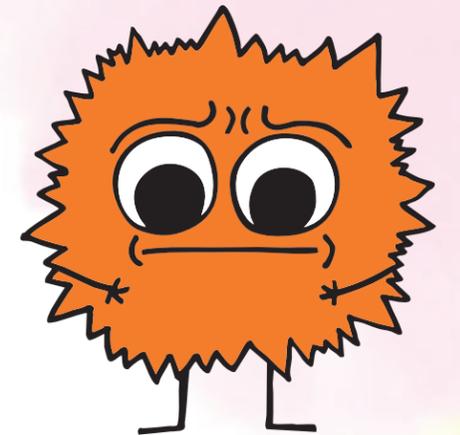


“By encouraging the connection between emotions and art, we are gifting everyone with a new vocabulary to express themselves.”

— Jenna Schmiedel

The staff works individually with each patient to progress throughout the workbook. Upon discharge, TAG™’s *Adventure* activity book will go home with the patient to continue building on the skills presented. After discharge, family engagement becomes a significant part of the reinforcement and continued growth of those skills. Most activities have at-home adaptations for parents and caregivers.

In addition to the inpatient setting, TAG™’s *Adventure* is being distributed in several outpatient child and adolescent settings across the UPMC Western Behavioral Health network. UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation gratefully



acknowledges that the launch of TAG™’s *Adventure* was made possible by generous financial support from #1 Cochran and the Cochran Family Foundation.

A second printing was made possible by a gift from the Benjamin Banks Jr. Memorial Foundation in November 2025 in conjunction with the UPMC Children’s Hospital Foundation.

For those interested, TAG™’s *Adventure* is available for purchase across UPMC and to outside organizations as well. To learn more about this exciting project, email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.

Supported by the Cochran Family Foundation 

DRIVE OUT THE STIGMA

EVERY SWING COUNTS



**SUPPORTING MENTAL
HEALTH THROUGH GOLF**
Monday, May 18, 2026
Longue Vue Club and Golf Course
400 Longue Vue Drive, Verona, PA 15147

Join us for an unforgettable day of golf at the prestigious Longue Vue Club!

Perched high above the Allegheny River, Longue Vue Club offers a timeless golfing experience on one of western Pennsylvania's most celebrated courses.

Tee off in support of enhancing patient experiences across the UPMC Western Behavioral Health network while enjoying a premier golfing experience among friends and colleagues.

Together, we can make every swing count toward a brighter future.

10 to 11:30 a.m.	Registration and Lunch
11:45 to 11:55 a.m.	Pre-Start Announcements
Noon	Shotgun Start
4:30 p.m.	Awards and Dinner

Golf amenities include access to the locker room, green fees, golf cart, driving range, and practice green, along with breakfast, snacks, on-course beverages, prizes, and dinner.

For questions, contact Debra Panei
Email: paneid@upmc.edu
Phone: 412-864-3524



Scan the QR code to visit the online registration page.

Ward Family Foundation IMPROVES NEEDED HOUSING

Funding from the Michael E. Ward Family Foundation is supporting ongoing renovations for the Blair and Juniata Houses of UPMC Western Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies. This allows for improvements to living environments for individuals navigating mental health diagnoses and housing insecurity who need a safe haven.

The Ward family entered this multi-year undertaking to have a lasting impact on the community by addressing an essential need for housing. Their gift elevates what is possible by incorporating considerations like resident comfort, protection, and dignity into every decision and phase of renovation.

"We all know that housing is a huge aspect of the social determinants of health," says Shannon Tronzo, director, Clinical Services, UPMC Western Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies. "But environment is an important aspect of recovery, too; it fosters hope. In the absence of funding, our houses had grown worn with time. We don't want these spaces to feel like a shelter. Now they feel more like entering someone's home."

In 2025, the third year of this funding pledge, Ward Family Foundation dollars were applied to renovations at the Juniata House.

The Juniata House is an independent living setting. Though residents have a mental health diagnosis, they work or have some type of



"We're amazed by the improvements, and we know the residents now have safer, more comfortable living and relaxing areas."

— Mike Ward

ABOVE: MIKE WARD AT THE JUNIATA HOUSE WHERE RENOVATIONS INCLUDED NEW FLOORING THROUGHOUT AND NEW FURNITURE IN THE LIVING SPACE.

income. They pay rent and buy their own food. No treatment is involved, but support is available as needed through the housing manager, and residents can stay indefinitely.

Shannon explains that the Ward family's investment has brought to light the acute need for this type of housing and for the related upkeep and renovation. Accordingly, Blair County, in which both the Blair and Juniata Houses are located, provided additional funding for what should prove to be a mix of services and property improvements in support of this population.



NORA, JONAH, NATHAN, AND SARA CAMPAYNO

The Journey of a PLUSH BUNNY

Since 2021, each spring on the day before Easter, hundreds of plush bunnies make their way to UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.



This migration happens through generous donations and collections held by the community and staff at UPMC and is known as the Bunny Run. The 2025 Bunny Run was supported by multiple stuffed bunny collections and drives and saw the largest turnout of volunteers in support of the event.

Five years ago, the Steel City Vulcan Riders, a local motorcycle group with a commitment to anti-bullying, introduced Western to the concept of a Bunny Run, and they have collected stuffed animal bunnies and delivered them annually via this event. Led by Lew 'Papa Bear' Thomas, president, this generous group wants patients to know that people are thinking of them. Likewise, for the past two years, residents at Cumberland Woods Village, part of UPMC Senior Communities, have held a collection, resulting in large bags filled to near-bursting with plush bunnies.



New in 2025, two hospital teams from within UPMC held collections and volunteered their time at the event. This included the Transportation Department at UPMC Presbyterian, led by Carolina Clark, administrative coordinator, who said, "We were happy to help collect for inpatient children at the hospital." Additionally, Comprehensive Recovery Services (CRS) at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital donated 'peep' themed bunnies. Olivia Beatty, scheduling specialist, who organized the CRS collection, said, "We were ecstatic to hold this collection and help our patients. Mental health awareness is a passion for all of us."

Several more dedicated collections in 2025 meant there were plenty of bunnies for patients of all ages. From the store shelf to the arms of Western Psychiatric patients, the journey of hundreds of stuffed animal bunnies is so much more than gifting a plush toy; each bunny is a symbol of hope, concern, and compassion for patients and families facing mental health challenges.

The 2026 Bunny Run is Saturday, April 4, 2026, at 11:30 a.m.

NEW THIS YEAR!

With a \$20 donation, you can provide a patient with a stuffed bunny! Scan the QR code to donate online or call 412-246-6614.

Interested in attending the Bunny Run? Email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.



Bring your family, friends, or co-workers, as this event is open to the public. Kids are welcome!

BUNNY BONANZA

One of the largest collections of bunnies received in 2025 was from Jennifer Christy, a former patient. She used her social media platform to discuss mental health via a video that was viewed thousands of times. Jennifer shared her story, emphasized the importance of mental health, and asked for stuffed bunny donations for the Bunny Run.

"I was inspired to give back to the hospital that has helped me, and having something comforting at the hospital like a stuffed animal can make such a difference," said Jennifer.

Twenty-five hundred Facebook views later, more than 100 stuffed animal bunnies were collected and donated.

Clearly, Jennifer's story and message resonated, inspiring people in the community to act in support of affected hospital patients.

"This large response meant so much to me," Jennifer shared. "The community came together in such an impactful way. Everyone knows someone touched by mental health. The more we talk and share stories of lived experience, the more we can give courage and strength to others."

Jennifer's honesty and advocacy are powerful assets in a challenge so many face.



JENNIFER CHRISTY



Making Dreams Come True

Presented by the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation, the “Marianne Cornetti and Friends” Benefit Concert and Art Auction will be held on June 14, 2026, at 3 p.m. at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. This event is a chance to support enhanced patient experiences across UPMC Western Behavioral Health while enjoying an afternoon of Broadway tunes and eclectic art.



2026 Featured Guest Performer
Tamar Greene
 George Washington in
Hamilton: An American Musical

Tickets for our Broadway-themed concert and art auction are on sale now! To purchase tickets, visit 2026MMM.givesmart.com, call 412-246-6614, scan the QR code, or text 2026MMM to 76278.



The concert portion of the program features dynamic live performances from internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti, along with featured guest performer Tamar Greene — actor, singer, and pianist — who is the longest running George Washington in the Broadway company of *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

Additionally, Tamar recently starred as Coalhouse Walker Jr. in *Ragtime* at Stages St. Louis, a performance that earned him the award for Outstanding Performer in a Musical. In collaboration with the Lincoln Center Theater and The Metropolitan Opera, Tamar held the lead role of The Father in Jeanine Tesori’s opera *Blue*. He performs with symphonies across the country, appears internationally, and has released his first single, “Soaring.”

Also joining on stage at Marianne’s invitation will be a coterie of exceptional professional local performers who share a commitment to the cause of mental health. And last year’s special secret ingredient, Pittsburgh theater legend Lenora Nemetz, returns this year as choreographer, to the delight of all involved.

Year in, year out, the most impactful aspect of both the concert and the art auction comes from participating UPMC Western Behavioral Health peers who use music and the visual arts to sustain their well-being. They are supported in this by staff from UPMC Western’s Creative and Expressive Arts Therapy (CEAT) team.

Continued on next page





“Courage Creates Change” is an original work by David Trotta, EdD, program manager, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, to be included in the 2026 art auction. It reflects the idea that inner strength often lies beneath the surface.

“Our collaborators from the CEAT team at Western create a safe space for self-expression,” says Marianne. “Every day, they uplift individuals with mental health challenges and convey that they matter to our world. For some who perform and exhibit at this event, it is a dream come true. I cannot think of a better use of their combined talents.”

Chaired once again by prolific Pittsburgh-based artist Maria DeSimone Prascak, the art auction will feature pieces by well-known visual artists as well as UPMC Western staff and peers. Maria herself will debut a new piece expressly for the auction. And if prior years are any indication, she will do so with great flair.



MARIA DESIMONE PRASCAK, MARK TRAWKA, MARIANNE CORNETTI

2026 marks the fifth “Marianne Cornetti and Friends” event. With each year, the audience and the impact has grown. “Together, we are reducing the stigma of mental health diagnoses by showcasing our wonderful peers and staff at UPMC Western. This is fundamental to the purpose of the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation,” says Deborah Brodine, president, UPMC Western Behavioral Health and UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.

She continues, “We are creating a community of support and a culture of giving to benefit people with mental illness. Knowing that the larger community is supportive gives us the confidence to advance visibility to our clinical care and its outcomes. Ultimately, this enhances how our care at Western is perceived and elevates the profile of the exceptional work in which our staff is engaged.”



ART AUCTION

Campaign Sponsors and Special Donors

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

UPMC | COMMUNITY CARE
Behavioral Health Organization

WPXI

iHeart
RADIO

C A R A B E L L A

Gordon
FOOD SERVICE

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CANDIES

Massaro
CONSTRUCTION GROUP

Electra P. and James R. Agras
Nanci Case and
Michael Augustine
Harriet Baird
Robert Blumling
Janette and David Bobrzynski
Deborah and Don Brodine
Marianne Cornetti
Joseph Curtin

Nicole Fedeli
Audrey Fletcher
Noreen Fredrick
Rohan Ganguli
Jessica Gannon
Barb Grossman
Mildred Seydel
and Guy Hunt
Sheryl Kunning

Susan and Scott Lammie
Kerry Bron
and Robert Levin
Stephanie Lippian
LaDawn Meyers
John Morgan
Ken and Sheena Nash
Debra and Jim Panei

Maria DeSimone Prascak
and John Prascak
Drs. Loren and Ellen Roth
Susan and Peter Tanzer
Mary Tesch
Jack Tomayko
Brenda Walsh
Christine Ward

STEP IN TO



SECOND CHANCES CORNER

Clothing is much more than a basic need; it can convey care, dignity, and even personality. It can be a source of comfort, especially during a hospital stay when so much is unfamiliar.



PATIENT EXPERIENCE COUNCIL AT UPMC WESTERN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

It's a need that UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital staff sought to address by donating clothing for patients who do not have safety-appropriate clothing and oftentimes do not have the social resources to secure it from caregivers outside the hospital. Jessica Witzleb, milieu therapist II, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, spearheaded the establishment of "Second Chances Corner," a dedicated space where staff can select clothing for patients who lack this necessity.

Jessica co-chairs a committee of Western colleagues from the Patient Experience Council, including Aloysius Joseph, clinical program director, Micayla Reynolds, CEAT therapist I, Erin Bever, project analyst, Kayley Renz, clinical program development specialist, and Danielle Ruffing, senior clinician, who pulled together to formalize this initiative and to lay out the design and organization of the space.

Once launched, the committee reached out to the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation to help meet the scale of the need. And things really took off from there.

"Before we had outside individuals and organizations donating, it was our generous hospital staff who stocked the closet," said Jessica. "Thanks to WPXI-TV for such broad exposure, now it's the whole community donating to the patients we serve. The response has been incredible."

Clothes and shoes for patients of all ages, from children to older adults, have arrived almost weekly since word went out in August 2025. Staff report that patients are less likely to feel stigmatized and more likely to engage with others in the course of treatment when they can wear "regular" attire.

"Now we can outfit our unhoused patients and give them a few options," said Jessica. "We can also provide patients who are here long-term, like our older adult population, a few sets of clothes to wear. It is so important for individuals to have something to wear other than a hospital gown. Donating clothes is a simple act of kindness that has a big impact on our patients."

Managing the sheer volume of donations has required additional people power. The foundation stepped in to support this aspect of the effort as well, gathering volunteers to sort and hang clothing so that it could be delivered to the hospital and incorporated easily into the existing inventory.

"It was nice to see all the new clothes and other items donated by local businesses. The patients in Western Psych deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and if providing clothing helps them, then it is all worthwhile," volunteer Catherine Massimiani said.

Catherine volunteered to help sort clothing because of personal experience at Western. She explained, "My husband spent most of the summer of 2022 in Western Psychiatric Hospital. While visiting him, I saw firsthand the need for clothes for both men and women. Unfortunately, he is no longer with us, so volunteering for "Second Chances Corner" is my way of honoring him."

Three local businesses went above and beyond for individuals under our care in support of "Second Chances Corner:" Carabella, Heinz Healey's Gentlemen's Apparel, and Red Oak Branded Solutions.

Continued on next page



JULIA BAIRD, CAROLYN PEEKS, CATHERINE MASSIMIANI, LADAWN MYERS, DOROTHY CELLER



DEBRA POLENS, DEB RUBIN, SUSAN COSTA, MICHELLE WEINBRENNER, CAROL KINKELA, KIM DINNIN

CARABELLA

Carol Kinkela, owner of Carabella clothing boutique in Oakmont, has been a long-time supporter of mental health and the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation and is a member of the foundation board. With “Second Chances Corner,” clothing and mental health intersect, and Carol took up the opportunity immediately.

Carabella held a month-long sweater drive benefiting both Western patients and those who donated. For every gently loved sweater donated, customers received \$25 off a \$100 purchase or more. Thanks to Carol’s compassion and creativity, there are now many cozy and colorful sweaters on hand for patients.

“Carabella is meant to be an uplifting and empowering place to shop, and through the support of the community, we can give back to those struggling with mental health,” Carol expressed.

HEINZ HEALEY'S GENTLEMEN'S APPAREL

This gentlemen’s apparel store has been a fixture in downtown Pittsburgh’s retail landscape for more than 15 years. Eileen Schaldenbrand, proprietor, donated hundreds of brand-new casual men’s wear items from Heinz Healey’s elegant Market Square shop, all of which arrived to “Second Chances Corner” in October 2025.

Eileen expressed gratitude for being part of a community that has access to a facility like Western, and she was equally grateful to be in a position to support this initiative.

Said Eileen, “I hope that those in need feel seen and heard. I hope they know that somebody cares about them. I hope it makes a difference in their experience and in their recovery.”



EILEEN, JOE, JEFF, ENES



JENNIFER STEMERICK, BETH VUKMAN, SARA GASTON, MELISSA ANDERSON

RED OAK BRANDED SOLUTIONS

This company from Indiana, Pennsylvania creates and supplies promotional products and services. Beth Vukman, sales account manager, is a strong believer in giving back to the mental health community. Her recommendation to donate new, surplus clothing to “Second Chances Corner” was met with enthusiasm by her co-workers.

For Beth, helping the mental health community is very personal. She said, “Clothes are so important, especially when you are staying in the hospital. To think our clothes can make a difference for someone who is struggling is huge. Being able to help with one piece of someone’s mental health journey means the world to us.”

Employee Engagement Strengthens Western Community

The UPMC Western Behavioral Health Employee Engagement and Wellness Council (EEWC) was created by employees for employees at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital as a way to foster connection, wellness, and activity. As a secondary gain, several of the council's initiatives have benefited the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation.

The council focuses on nourishing employees by hosting monthly food trucks and securing local "sweet treats" like Nothing Bundt Cakes and Spectrum Fudge. Through these events, the EEWC engages with the local community while supporting the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation; a portion of the proceeds from these sales is donated to the foundation.

Additionally, in both 2025 and 2026, the council brought Riverstone Books to the hospital for a book fair, which simulated a bookstore experience and allowed staff to browse selections and connect with colleagues. Staff were able to purchase books for themselves as well as for patient units, and a portion of the proceeds came to the foundation.



JEFF MAGILL, HANNAH GOULDING, SABRINA GEORGE, ALI POPIVCHAK, DONNELL BLACKWELL

"Events like the book fair bring staff together who might not otherwise interact," explains Ali Popivchak, C-IAYT, E-RYT, yoga therapist, UPMC Western, who participates in the EEWC. "They can meet to discuss books or simply engage with someone new. With every food truck or cake sale, our goal is to strengthen our community of colleagues. Support for the foundation is a wonderful byproduct of these efforts and reflects our common purpose."

IN STUDENT HANDS

Entering the campus of Elizabeth Forward High School (EF), earth movers and cranes tell you big things are happening. A fire that gutted the school's auditorium a few years ago jumpstarted a construction project that is transforming the facility. But that is not the only transformation taking place at EF.



THE iSH COMPANY AT ELIZABETH FORWARD HIGH SCHOOL

Meeting challenges is an engine for change at Elizabeth Forward, and the students enrolled in iSH, a student-run business, are drivers. Last spring, the iSH Company, which stands for "in student hands," donated 280 crewneck sweatshirts as well as \$1,000 towards the purchase of additional clothing items for patients in need at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.

The purpose of iSH is to provide real-world business opportunities where students produce tangible goods for sale with a philanthropic benefit. Students participate in one of three aspects — production, business, or social media — all mentored by their instructor, Mrs. Smith.

Explains McKenna Bittner, junior, "We develop designs, we make everything, we promote everything, and we manage the financial piece, all for a good cause. A small portion of profits from our sales goes to sustaining our business, and the rest goes directly back into our community as donations."

Students were inspired to support Western patients following a visit from EF alumna, Jacki Faircloth, whose son, Tanner, attended EF and had been a patient at Western Psychiatric Hospital. The Faircloths' foundation, March Fourth, provides hundreds of clothing items annually to patients.

Hands-on experience, team building, and community engagement are foundational to iSH. But Mrs. Smith notes another important gain: empathy. "Empathy has increased greatly with the success of this group," she says. "We used to come up with designs first and then look to apply them. Now we identify causes, and the designs follow."

Students expressed gratitude for being able to do something meaningful and constructive in support of those affected by mental health challenges.

"I'm happy that this opportunity came to us," says Haylee Abels, junior. "I know how this struggle feels as a family member. This is a way of raising awareness, letting people know they are seen, and contributing to the solution."

BANDANAS are the CAT'S PAJAMAS

A new campaign was created to celebrate the role that pets play in our lives and our well-being.

Matching T-shirts for humans and bandanas for pets were sold to benefit the Making Minds Matter Fund at UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation.

Luna and KitCat, pictured here, love their bandanas.

KitCat released this statement through her human: "I am proud to support the often-overlooked cause of mental health and contribute to the welfare of my humans."

Watch for new pet-themed merchandise from UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation this fall!



LUNA



KITCAT

A Message of Hope IN A MOMENT OF DARKNESS

For the past four years, suicide prevention awareness has been an aspect of efforts at the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation. Each year, an encouraging new message and art debut in an array of merchandise available for purchase. Since 2022, this campaign has sold more than 9,000 items.



Wearing a message of hope fuels awareness and extends the conversation about suicide as a public health crisis into the community.

A chance encounter in a Florida grocery store proved the power of this gesture.

Jan Rehak, operations analyst, UPMC Health Plan, was in the checkout line at a grocery store in Florida in 2025 when she shared an unexpected and profound moment with the young cashier assisting her. The cashier took note of Jan's T-shirt: the 2022 version of UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation's suicide prevention awareness T-shirt, which reads "#youmatter." It is paired with an image of a semicolon within the outline of a butterfly, both of which are international symbols related to mental health and suicide prevention.

"I needed to see that today," the cashier said. The transaction paused, and the cashier told Jan, "I shouldn't be here right now. I was in the

hospital last month. I've been struggling for the last two days and looking for a sign that I am meant to be here for some reason. That was the sign that I needed."

Jan's experience echoes that of other UPMC staff who have shared that the suicide prevention shirts can be a conversation starter for people who have been touched by suicide but are reluctant to discuss it or may lack the opportunity to do so.

"The awareness really needs to be out there, and I am glad that is happening," Jan expressed. "We lost a nephew to suicide last year, and there is so much unanswered for my family, still. It's something you need to work through. Talking with this young woman at the grocery store helped her, and it helped me, too."

The 2026 campaign is underway, featuring the message "Stronger than the Storm." View new merchandise on the back cover.

Wrapped with Care



The most recently completed “Holidays from the Heart” campaign flourished in its sixth year, thanks to many helping hands from start to finish. The 2025 effort was the largest to date and provided more than 450 holiday gift bags to all inpatients at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital and individuals at multiple UPMC residential facilities across the Western Behavioral Health network. This is a credit to the generosity of sponsors, donors, and a growing corps of volunteers.



GIFT WRAPPING VOLUNTEERS



UPMC CORPORATE LEGAL

In fact, more than 30 volunteers gathered to prepare gift bags on an early November morning. The age-appropriate gifts — including shirts, stuffed animals, activity books, coloring books, puzzles, socks, donated Sarris chocolate bars, and blankets — were wrapped and packed into individual gift bags and organized by units and facilities for delivery to patients and residents throughout December. While the task was a major undertaking, the energy and enthusiasm of the group made for a joyful occasion.

“Time flies when you’re volunteering,” said Carolyn Peeks, vendor relations liaison, Revenue Cycle, UPMC, who was enjoying her second volunteer experience with the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation. “In the end, you’ve accomplished something that will truly help others.”

“*It is always important to remember and honor the patients and residents who rely on our services.*”

— Kim Manning

Helping others is also a priority for the UPMC Corporate Legal team. Melissa Sherrange, lead immigration paralegal, Physician and HR Services, currently chairs the Corporate Legal service committee. Formally established in 2025, the committee generates support for various community outreach events annually. Melissa and her colleagues raised more than \$1,800 for the gift campaign through their holiday donation drive.

In addition to the monetary donation, staff prepared handwritten cards for individuals pursuing treatment across UPMC Western Behavioral Health. These kind acts align with the vision of Kim Manning, senior associate counsel, Physician Services Group, who proposed supporting “Holidays from the Heart” to the service committee.

Continued on next page

Kim made a compelling case for support. She shared that years ago a family member was an inpatient at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital and had a day pass to join Kim's family Christmas celebration. When Kim went inside to pick up her family member, she saw an elevator filled with children in their pajamas with an adult shepherding them. Kim was startled; this was beyond her understanding at the time and became an image that stayed with her through the years.

Today, as the parent of an adult neurodivergent son who resides at home, Kim reflected, "I would want to know if he was not able to live with us and had to be in a hospital or residential facility that he would have the attention and love he deserves, especially during the holiday season."

She continued, "It is one thing to do the legal work to help our UPMC facilities run smoothly, but it is always important to remember and honor the patients and residents who rely on our services."

The desire to brighten the holidays across Western Behavioral Health was taken up by businesses throughout the community as well. Larrimor's, the iconic downtown Pittsburgh clothier, dedicated an entire window display to featuring a new element of the 2025 campaign: a soft, checkered blanket embroidered with the Making Minds Matter logo. For every \$25 donation, a blanket was included in a gift bag. This visibility helped make it possible to provide a blanket to every gift bag recipient.

Meanwhile, as part of their annual holiday celebration, the Giving Committee at #1 Cochran presented the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation with a check for \$8,240. This remarkable gift reflects the generosity of participating Cochran employees as well as the Cochran family themselves, who matched employee donations dollar for dollar.

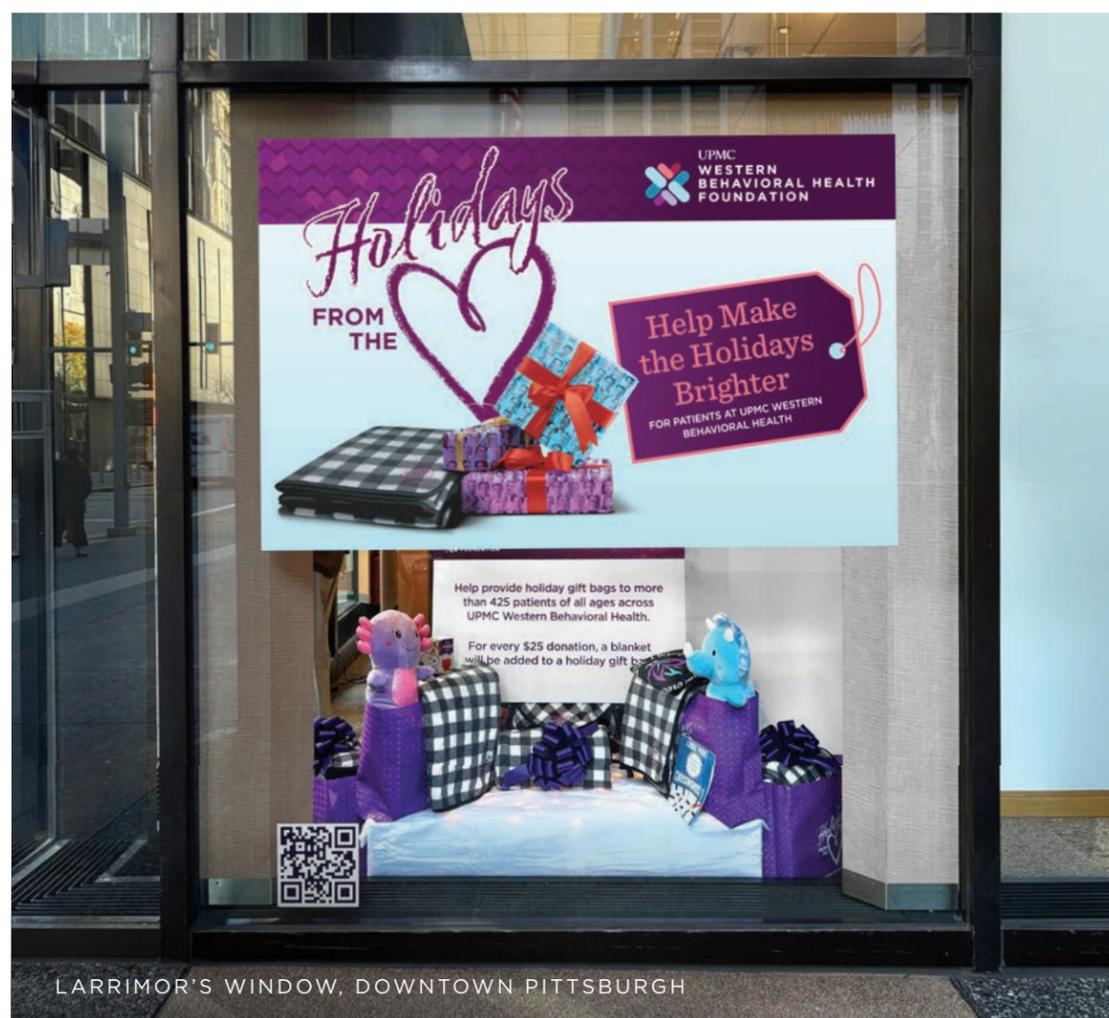
No December would be complete without Santa and Mrs. Claus (Kevin Glavin and Marianne Cornetti, chair of the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation and co-chair of the "Holidays from the Heart" campaign) who also happen to be internationally renowned opera stars. For the first time, Santa and Mrs. Claus were able to visit seven units at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, engaging with patients and staff directly and sharing some songs of the season. They also had the chance to visit with the Creative and Expressive Arts Therapy (CEAT) team at Western to celebrate a mutual passion for the arts and its role in mental health resilience and recovery.



DAVID TROTТА, ELIZA COCHRAN, NANCI CASE, HUGH COCHRAN



MARIANNE CORNETTI AND KEVIN GLAVIN



LARRIMOR'S WINDOW, DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH

2026 "HOLIDAYS FROM THE HEART"

To donate, volunteer, or become a sponsor:

- Call 412-246-6614.
- Email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.
- Scan the QR code.



Campaign Partners



SUMMER O' FUN

For the past two summers, benefit concerts held at The Legacy Theatre on the UPMC Passavant campus have been part of the “Celebrating Champions” Dinner and Auction.

In July 2024, the iconic, Pittsburgh-based band, Johnny Angel & the Halos, took to the stage one last time for two sold-out shows. This was followed in the summer of 2025 by a concert series featuring three outstanding bands — The Skyliners, William Dell & Wee Jams, and The Pittsburgh Doo-Wop Big Band — who performed for enthusiastic, capacity crowds. On each occasion, the excitement was palpable and matched by a strong sense of community engagement.

A highlight of the 2025 summer series was Johnny Angel's guest appearance with Wee Jams in July, marking his celebratory return to the stage after being sidelined for nearly a year. True to form, Johnny treated fans to a memorable, moving, and exuberant performance.

Johnny expresses a real affection for the venue and the audience at The Legacy Theatre that contributes to the joy of the experience for everyone involved. “I love the intimacy of the space and that I can see everyone in the audience,” he shares. “The sense of warmth and welcome makes you feel like you are home.”

Tickets for 2026 benefit concerts are on sale now. “This friendly venue really lends itself to raising awareness and support for residents and patients in need. I'm honored to be a part of it,” says Johnny, who will return to The Legacy in the summer of 2026, performing two shows with Wee Jams on Aug. 8. Additionally, The Skyliners will perform on June 27.



18th
Annual

Celebrating CHAMPIONS

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, October 14, 2026
The Westin Pittsburgh

5:30 p.m. Reception
7 p.m. Award Program and Dinner

Co-hosted by the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation and UPMC Senior Services, “Celebrating Champions” recognizes esteemed individuals and organizations who have distinguished themselves in the service of others and improved the quality of life in our region.

To sponsor or reserve a table or tickets, contact paneid@upmc.edu.

Proceeds from the event benefit the Making Minds Matter Fund at UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation and the UPMC Senior Communities Benevolent Care Fund. In its 17-year history, this event has contributed more than \$3.1 million towards philanthropic care.

2026 Grand Champions
Jason Chang, MD
Associate Chief of Emergency Services
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

Joe Suyama, MD
Chief of Emergency Services
UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital

2026 Community Champion
NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania

2026 Caregiver Champion
Peoples Oakland



FROM 2025 “CELEBRATING CHAMPIONS”
JENNIFER TOMAZIC, RASONIA NICHOLE, TRACY CONTI, MD, RUTH FOX, DEBORAH BRODINE

Raffle Is a Win for the Cause

As the office coordinator for the Bariatric Surgery and Weight Management Center at UPMC Hamot in Erie, Lauren Fosco fields countless communications in a day with kindness and professionalism, even when a patient may be feeling unsettled. After 13 years with UPMC, she is confident in her contribution to patient care. However, a phone call on a Tuesday afternoon in late December caught her completely off guard.

That's when Lauren learned she was the winner of the 2025 Groceries, Gas, or Cash! raffle, benefiting the Making Minds Matter Fund at UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation. This was the third year Lauren had purchased a ticket, and like winners before her, it was the cause that compelled her to participate, not the prize.

Lauren describes mental health as the foundation of all our efforts, as important as physical health. "I know the weight of the struggle personally, with my family and within the community. The right tools and education are essential to help us thrive," says Lauren. "This wonderful campaign is about funding the support that everyone deserves."



LAUREN FOSCO



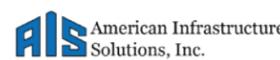
"We are proud to support this campaign and to play a part in positively impacting health and wellness across our neighborhoods."

— Michael Chappell, senior vice president, Giant Eagle Pharmacy

The 2026 Groceries, Gas, or Cash! raffle launches in June. Raffle participants will be entered in a drawing to win \$17,000 in Giant Eagle groceries or \$14,000 cash (before taxes). Only 700 tickets will be sold at \$100 each, and the winner will be chosen on Tuesday, December 29.

For more information about the campaign, email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu, or call the Making Minds Matter Ticket Line at 412-246-6614.

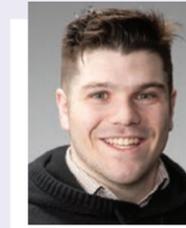
Campaign Partners and Sponsors



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



The Lorraine Williams Peer Scholarship honors a cherished Comprehensive Recovery Services (CRS) staff member at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. Awarded annually, this scholarship recognizes CRS patients who serve as role models for others pursuing recovery. Scholarships are awarded in three categories: Advocate, Lifetime Achievement, and Scholar. Three of our 2025 recipients are featured here.



ANGELO BARBERIO
Advocate Winner

Angelo's passion for advocacy and mental health is a lifelong pursuit. He expressed, "Recovery is a never-ending journey; it's about sticking to the course and knowing your goals. I have so many people who have helped me along my journey."

He is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh. This scholarship will support Angelo's education and his ultimate goal to give back to his community. "I advocate for social justice, equal opportunity, and mental health. In the future, I'd like to speak with politicians and representatives to establish support systems for those facing mental health challenges without one," said Angelo.



LISA CARROLL
Scholar Winner

With a passion for singing, Lisa Carroll is a member of the choir at McKeesport Presbyterian Church and the Praise team at the Pittsburgh Dream Center.

She is currently pursuing a virtual degree in vocal performance at the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California. Of note, Lisa has performed twice at our annual "Marianne Cornetti and Friends" concert, sharing the stage with professional performers and fellow peers.

"It was very rewarding and helpful to my career goals to win this scholarship," Lisa said. She is excited for her future in music. Her goal is to become a music minister or a music therapist.



JUDY CHOTINER
Lifetime Achievement Winner

Judy recently retired from her role as a peer specialist at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, where she served for more than 30 years. A trailblazer, Judy was a "peer specialist" before the title or role even formally existed within the hospital.

During her career, one of Judy's proudest accomplishments was teaching cooking classes to patients. Judy noted, "I went to college for psychology and nutrition, and I'm so glad I got to use both to help others." Today, Judy occasionally runs into people she once helped, a reminder of her lasting impact which continues to bring her great joy.

To support the Lorraine Williams Peer Scholarship, or for more information, call 412-246-6614, email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu, or visit UPMC.com/MakingMindsMatter.

