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SUPPORT SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Clothing available in small through 3XL



Long Sleeve White Tee \$21



Short Sleeve Black Tee \$17



Cap \$18

Lightweight brushed cotton twill. Fabric strap with two-piece hook and loop closure.



Planter \$11

Pot size 3.5" x 3.5" x 3.5". Includes a packet of Forget Me Not seeds.



Purple Tie-dye Tee \$19



Crewneck Sweatshirt \$27



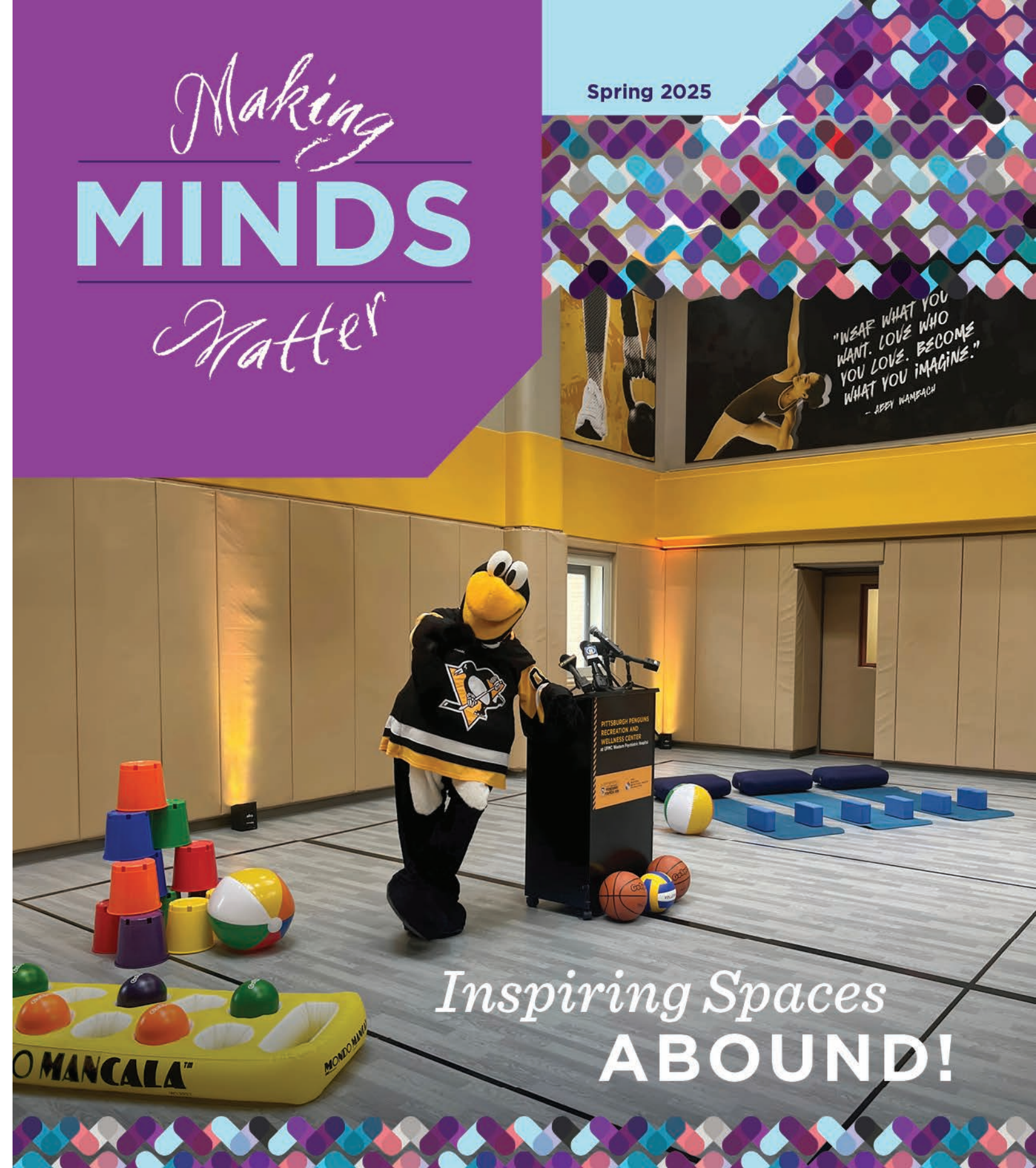
These items are available for purchase through July 15.

To purchase, visit upmcsuicideprevention2025.sppone.corpmmerchandise.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 2025



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Dear FRIENDS,



Welcome to our 2025 Making Minds Matter magazine. Since the magazine's inception five years ago, I continue to find clarity in the words of Fred Rogers by way of framing the collective efforts captured here; his ability to articulate a common purpose resonates once again.

“I don't think anyone can grow unless he's loved exactly as he is now, appreciated for what he is rather than what he will be.”
- Fred Rogers

Across the UPMC Western Behavioral Health network, we strive to maintain an environment of dignity and compassion for the individuals in our care. Meeting each person wherever they are creates a safe mental space which inspires recovery and growth.

When we have the privilege to deliver our services in partnership with individuals and organizations who voluntarily contribute their time or their personal financial resources, to our cause, the honor of our work becomes elevated. The inspiration of our donors, and their faith and belief in the value of our work, is profound for me and for every member of our Western team.

We are fortunate to have been gifted with the means to transform several of our patient care spaces in inpatient, outpatient, and community settings over the past year. We have also been the beneficiaries of meaningful and selfless efforts of individuals who have been impacted by mental

illness, and who have chosen to engage with us, as a means of contributing to something larger than themselves. For all of these gifts, we are immensely grateful.

The benevolence extended to the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation in 2024 is improving and inspiring the patient experience right now. Thank you for your role in this, whatever form that may take. I hope you share in our pride, our purpose, and our profound appreciation of the moment.

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

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH US!

Our website

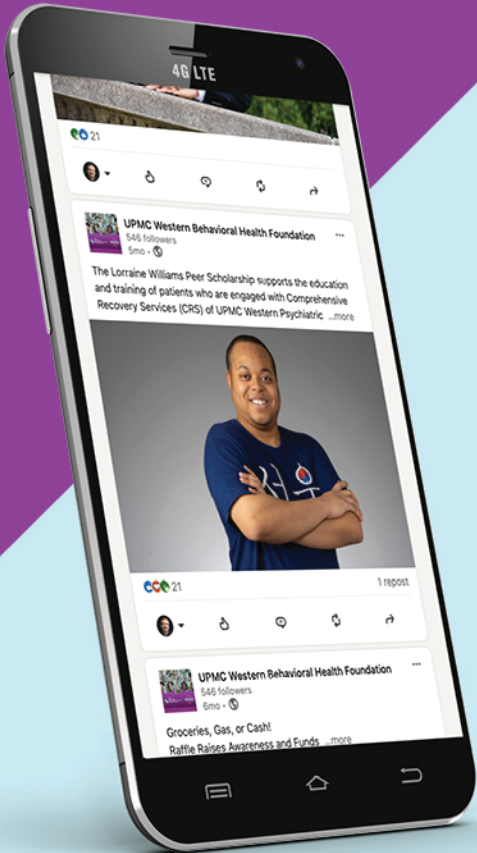
The UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation website is the hub for all opportunities to participate in and support our efforts to increase awareness of mental health initiatives, reduce the stigma associated with mental health, solicit donors to improve the patient experience, educate the public and providers, and help advance public policy.



Take a look!



CHECK OUT OUR DIGITAL PLATFORMS



LinkedIn

Enjoy and share news of our events, programs, outreach, and education as well as stories of successful treatment and lives lived with purpose. This is a great opportunity to reach new audiences in a timely manner. Connect and engage with us!



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 gift helps 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.



A \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor has transformed an entire unit at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital into a warm and welcoming space for adult patients recovering from psychiatric trauma.

The 14-bed unit, previously known as the Adult Trauma Recovery Unit (ATRIUM), has been renamed the Zoe Atrium at the request of the donor. "Zoe" means "life" in Greek. The new identity is fitting for a space now infused with fresh color and art, in addition to a significant refresh and replacement of furnishings, lighting, and flooring.

"Coming into a psychiatric hospital can be a really intimidating step for a lot of people," says James Tew, MD, vice president, Medical Affairs, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. "Trying to find ways to soften that experience and make it less overwhelming for people is important to us. Anything we can do to make people feel more comfortable and more welcome is critical."

More than 570 adult patients are admitted annually to the Zoe Atrium, ranging in age from 18 to 65+ years. Patients stay an average of seven to 10 days during an admission. Staff care for individuals diagnosed with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and occasionally mild psychosis. Domestic trauma is not uncommon in this patient population; consequently, the unit tends to serve more females.

Continued on next page

THE ZOE ATRIUM *Comes to Life*





Marianne Cornetti, chair, UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation, and international opera singer, observed, "I hope that what patients feel when they come into this space is that they are safe, that they do belong, and that they do matter in our world. This is the purpose of all our efforts, and we are extremely grateful to the benefactor who has made this possible."

Patients admitted to this unit tend to go "inward" with their distress rather than "outward." The patient mix allows for access to comforting and diverting materials such as books, art supplies, games, and puzzles. A new inventory of these items has been secured as part of the refresh.

Additionally, the nurse charting room and conference room has been appointed with new built-in cabinets and updated flooring. The improved environment is valued by a team that's dedicated to promoting healing in the population they serve.



"I hope that what patients feel when they come into this space is that they are safe, that they do belong, and that they do matter in our world."

- Marianne Cornetti

The Zoe Atrium staff provides trauma-informed care with a strong educational component, designed to build skills for managing intense emotions and negotiating social relationships. Treatment includes robust and consistent group therapy programming facilitated by these expert behavioral health professionals.

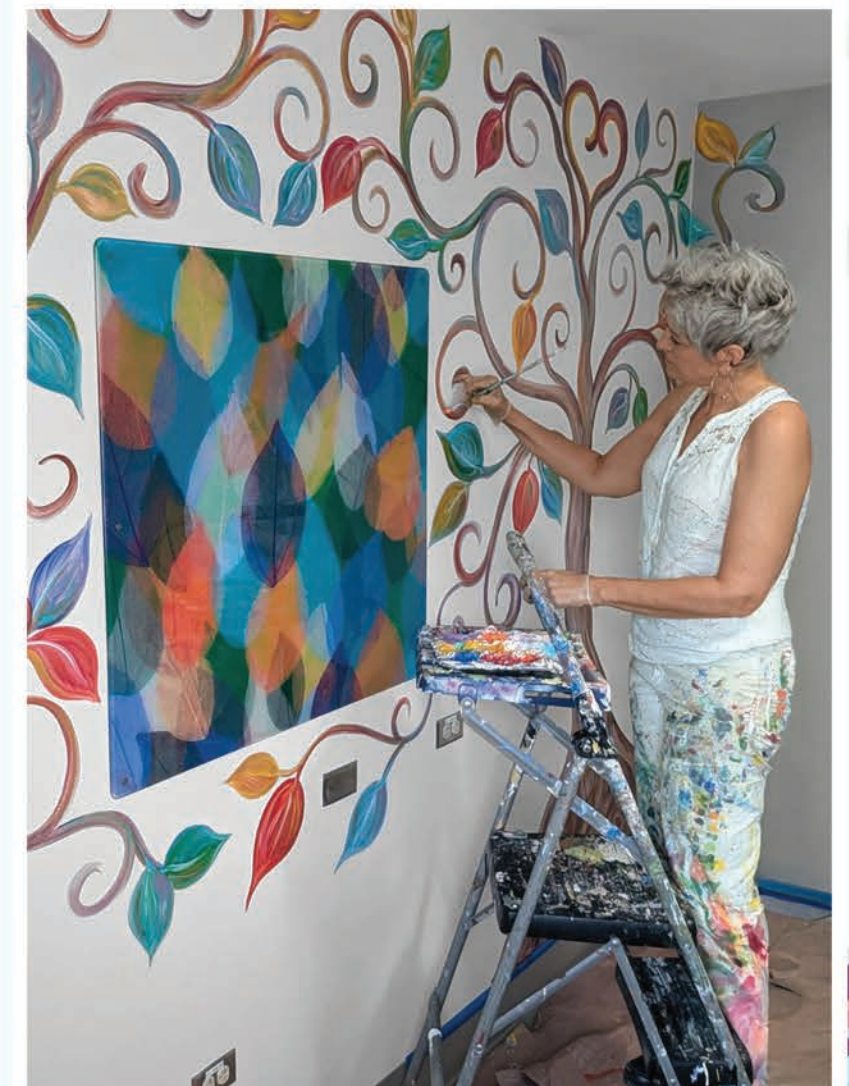
The staff contributed important input throughout the renovation process. This included collaboration with artist Maria DeSimone Prascak who hand-painted unique murals in each patient room. They shared simple, affirming sentiments which Maria incorporated into her designs.

Maria also created a signature art piece, representative of the Pittsburgh skyline, at the entrance to the unit. It conveys the message of hope and welcome which inspired these renovations. "This is the most impactful art piece I've done in the 42 years I've been an artist," Maria said.

The day that patients returned to the unit following the completion of renovations proved memorable for everyone and the realization of a benefactor's dream. "The patients were very excited to see the newly renovated unit, books, and games," said Heather Sickmund, unit director for the Zoe Atrium. "I wish you could have seen their faces. This makes such a difference in improving someone's stay while they are here in the hospital."

"This is the most impactful art piece I've done in the 42 years I've been an artist."

- Maria DeSimone Prascak



A Great Day for UPMC Western



Every Pittsburgh Penguins fan is familiar with the timeless words of the great coach, “Badger” Bob Johnson, which inspire the team to this day: “It’s a great day for hockey.” Thanks to the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, December 2, 2024, was a great day for UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.

The Pittsburgh Penguins Recreation and Wellness Center, the newly renovated gymnasium space for patients and staff on the eighth floor at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, was unveiled on an emotional and uplifting day in December of last year.

Supported by a generous grant from the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, the new gymnasium houses an updated weight room and exercise area, including equipment and space for volleyball, yoga, badminton, basketball, a restored sound system, interactive games, and more.

“Physical and recreational outlets are really important to the patients in the hospital who are recovering from an episode of mental health,” James Tew, MD, vice president, Medical Affairs, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, explained. “Often when people are in crisis, there is a tendency to withdraw; spaces like this remind people it’s important to come out of our shell, to interact with others, and to get some physical activity. Staying active is a critical part of each patient’s recovery.”

From a design perspective, what began with Pittsburgh Penguins signature colors and art evolved to incorporate inspiring images and quotes that reflect a variety of experiences and physical endeavors, all to support healing and overall well-being.

“These interventions, guided by our recreational therapists, instill confidence that patients can participate in social activities which promote an overall healthy lifestyle. What happens here contributes to a patient’s potential for success outside the hospital,” said Ken Nash, MD, chief of clinical services, UPMC Western Behavioral Health.

The development of the renovated recreation and wellness center began about a year ago, with the initial idea being simply to overhaul the space. Thanks to the benevolence of the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, led by executive director Yvonne J. Maher who was a driving force of the renovation, an even more ambitious vision was brought to life.

“There’s ample evidence emphasizing that physical exercise not only improves the condition of the body, but also reduces the risk of anxiety, depression, and stress, that it improves our sleep, our moods, and increases self-esteem,” said Yvonne. “We hope that the patients and staff here are motivated to utilize this renovated space. We hope that they are inspired by the quotes on the walls, and that when they spend time here, they feel encouraged and motivated by the Penguins’ investment in them.”

“The Pittsburgh Penguins have lent their considerable visibility and influence to addressing the mental health needs of individuals across our region, including those pursuing recovery here,” said Deborah Brodine, president, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital and UPMC Western Behavioral Health. “We know this new space will be enjoyed for years to come.”



MAKING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COOL



It's not every day an igloo is delivered to school. It might sound just as strange to say that an igloo represents a safe space to express emotions and work through conflict. But as students at West Mifflin Middle School can attest, both these things are true.

That's the magic of the COOL Zone, an innovative, ongoing collaboration between Matilda Theiss Early Childhood Behavioral Health and Trauma Treatment Center, part of UPMC Western, and the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation. COOL stands for "Children Overcoming Obstacles and Limits."

This newly dedicated space at West Mifflin Middle School is the ninth COOL Zone installed as a therapeutic space in a local school or other child-oriented setting with the support of the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation since 2015. COOL Zones enable children to work on coping skills, problem-solving, handling conflict, navigating social situations, and other valuable skills.

The West Mifflin Middle School COOL Zone is tailored for their fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students and includes a Pittsburgh Penguins art installation. Designed to help prevent behavioral outbursts, kids can come to the igloo to support a peer, talk through a situation, and hang out and relax.

Jay Carter, a therapeutic specialist at West Mifflin Middle School, sees the benefits to the students firsthand. He explains, "The COOL Zone becomes whatever the kids need it to be. They know they have an open invitation to this calm environment." The COOL Zone also helps with conflict resolution by providing a setting for controlled play by which children can work through disagreements with Jay's guidance.



Victoria Blosser, MS, program manager, School-Based Behavioral Health Services, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, oversees the COOL Zone program. She notes that West Mifflin Middle School has done an excellent job in prioritizing behavioral health and in collaborating to create the best possible environment for their students.

Even parents of students express that they wish something like this was available when they were in school. "Thanks to the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, the COOL Zone fosters soft skills that kids can miss," says Victoria. "We see adults who struggle with coping skills, resilience, and problem-solving, and that can trickle down to their children. We are working with students to better skills that will hopefully carry forward to the next generation."

Mental Health and Student-Athletes: Red Flags, Roles, Responses



Thursday, April 3, 2025

Registration/Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.
Program: 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Lunch (optional): 12:15 p.m.

PPG Paints Arena, FNB Club

1001 5th Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15219



Our Purpose

Coaches, athletic trainers, and teachers are frontline witnesses to mental health challenges experienced by student-athletes. The symposium is an opportunity to educate, share resources, and foster relationships to address the scope of the need. First offered in 2024, this event met with an overwhelming response. It returns in 2025, featuring new presentations and increased capacity.

Who Should Attend?

The Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, UPMC Sports Medicine, and the Citrone Thirty-Three Foundation present this second annual symposium at no cost for middle school, high school, and college level coaches as well as athletic trainers of all sports, athletic directors, administrators, school counselors, and teachers. Learn how to support your student-athletes' mental health and offer resources to keep them on a successful track.

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





TAMMY MARSICO, KRISTA LION,
DEBORAH BRODINE, NOELLE CONOVER,
ANNE FULLenkAMP, ABIGAIL
SCHLESINGER, MD

A PLACE OF *Possibilities*

The third Matt's Maker Space in a UPMC Western Behavioral Health setting has come to life at the Outpatient Services location at Children's Pine Center in Wexford.

Matt's Maker Space honors Noelle and David Conover's 12-year-old son, Matt, who was lost to cancer. Matt is remembered for his infectious smile, big heart, and love of tinkering. This is the 46th maker space opened since 2016 when the Conovers first sought to thank their community for the kindnesses extended to them when Matt was ill by establishing these spaces in local elementary and middle schools.

"Our community surrounded us and cared for us as a family, and we are forever grateful," said Noelle Conover, co-founder and executive director of Matt's Maker Space. "However, would the community have surrounded us in that way if Matt had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, depression, or autism? I don't think we are there yet. That's why it's so important for us to come into the mental health environment."

The vibrant space, which opened in September 2024, includes paints, glitter glue, beads, yarn, fabrics, craft papers, a Cricut®, Legos®, and a 3D printer. The possibilities to create and engage are endless.

"We are profoundly thankful to the Conover family for their ongoing commitment to behavioral health. We appreciate how important the STEAM philosophy is in terms of therapeutic benefit to our patients across the age spectrum.

"We are profoundly thankful to the Conover family for their ongoing commitment to behavioral health."

- Deborah Brodine

Innovation, creativity ... these are the things that make us human," said Deborah Brodine, president, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital and UPMC Western Behavioral Health.

The Pine Center space would not be possible without the support of the Mylan Charitable Foundation, the partnership of UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation in this endeavor, and the expert design of Anne Fullenkamp from the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh.



Ward Family Foundation *Eases Hardship*

Funding from the Michael E. Ward Family Foundation continues to support renovations for the Blair and Juniata Houses of UPMC Western Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies. This allows for improvements to the lodging environment for residents who are navigating mental health challenges and face uncertain housing.

The first phase of renovations, completed in 2023, provided for painting, furnishings, and carpeting at the Blair House in Altoona, a storied property in the community dating back to the early 1900s when it was known as the Grand Hotel.

Residents at Blair House are homeless or at imminent risk for homelessness, have a mental health diagnosis, and have little-to-no income. The house serves as a safe haven while individuals work toward reintegration into the general community with the support of staff.

In 2024, also at Blair House, a multistep project to repair the existing ramp and deck to meet accessibility requirements got underway with funding from the foundation and will be seen through to completion in 2025. Additionally, gutters and downspouts were replaced, trees were removed, and emergent roof leaks were addressed with the application of a new metal edge and watertight seal.

Any one of these repairs would have created financial hardship for these properties, notes Katie Clauss, program director, UPMC Western Behavioral Health of the Alleghenies. The Ward Family Foundation is making it possible to address both immediate and emergent needs that will have a long-term benefit.

"The Michael E. Ward family is proud to participate in the current improvements of the Blair and Juniata Houses," says Mike. "We recognize the importance of improving the lives of the less fortunate in our neighborhoods."



"We look forward to the completion of these projects for the benefit of those in need within our community."

- Mike Ward

Crewnecks, Crocs, and a Mission to March Fourth

A family is honoring the life of their son and brother, Tanner, by gifting crewneck sweatshirts and Crocs™ for patients pursuing treatment in behavioral health settings. UPMC Western Psychiatric received the very first gift in September as a way for the family to imbue the first anniversary of Tanner's death with purpose.



TANNER (CENTER) WITH HIS PARENTS, ED AND JACKI

Tanner's mother, Jacki, described him as sweet, kind, and smart, with a variety of interests ranging from music to cars to clothing and even coin collecting. Regarded by those who knew and loved him as an old soul, Tanner also possessed a savvy business sense; he was a successful purveyor of coins, Legos®, and clothing on eBay and was accepted into the business school at the University of Pittsburgh.

He was very generous and sought to ease the suffering of those with whom he crossed paths, whether it be a homeless person in need of a good meal encountered along a bike trail or a fellow UPMC Western Psychiatric inpatient who lacked slide-on shoes. He enlisted help and gave of his own possessions so that these needs did not go unmet.

It was in this spirit that his family, which includes Jacki, her husband, Ed, their daughter, Morgan, and Tanner's girlfriend, Vayda, launched their "March Fourth" foundation, so named to align with Tanner's birthday and to impart a hopeful mantra for individuals navigating mental health challenges. The family learned along the course



of Tanner's care at UPMC Western Psychiatric that often individuals arrive to the hospital in crisis without much in the way of clothing and that safety restrictions prohibit things like shoelaces and drawstrings.

"We thought Crocs™ and crewneck sweatshirts would be a place to start, something to help patients feel that someone cares about them and that they are not alone. We want to make them feel comfortable," said Jacki.

Designed with a tender care that incorporates Tanner's love of the outdoors, the apparel features their foundation logo, and the crewneck sweatshirt sleeve bears the phone number for the National Suicide Prevention hotline. The family hopes to provide an ongoing supply of these items for UPMC Western Psychiatric patients on select units.

"Our message is 'one step at a time.' This has been a difficult process, but each time I thought about giving up, I encountered someone who helped me push forward," explained Jacki. "We have received incredible support from our entire family, friends, and our community. We are so humbled by this, and it could not be more appreciated."





THE THIRD ANNUAL BUNNY RUN

Just prior to noon that March day in 2024, excitement was running high among gathered staff and volunteers. The welcome banner was unfurled, and bunny ears were in place.

The Steel City Vulcan Riders arrived in thunderous fashion to UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital with two vans in tow because the number of donated bunnies exceeded the bikers' storage space. Leading the UPMC Western Psychiatric volunteers was the honorary chair and official greeter, 10-year-old Sal Romesburg who was helped by UPMC Western Psychiatric in 2023. Sal graciously accepted the invitation to participate.

"The Bunny Run is important to Sal," Sal's mother, Kelley Romesburg, said. "We are thrilled to be part of this. You all are part of our family."

Lew "Papa Bear" Thomas, president, Steel City Vulcan Riders, cares deeply about the anti-bullying movement and mental health awareness. "It is our honor and pleasure to be at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital to present these bunnies to you all," Lew said. "Every year our donations grow bigger and bigger. We had ten bikers show up with bags full of bunnies who were unable to ride but wanted to make sure the kids got their bunnies."

The Steel City Vulcan Riders were not the only donors. Cumberland Woods Village, part of UPMC Senior Communities, donated more than 110 bunnies for the Bunny Run. Christine Cassese, resident manager, said, "We were delighted to participate in this worthwhile cause. The residents responded with overwhelming support."

The 2025 Bunny Run is scheduled for Saturday, April 19. Interested in supporting UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation events? Contact MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu.



Sent With Love



February 14 is a day to celebrate love in all forms, and a group of local high school students wanted to ensure their intentions were known by sending Valentine's Day cards to patients at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.

The organization, "Collective Voices," connects Winchester Thurston and Franklin Regional high school students with community service opportunities in Pittsburgh. In February 2024, this organization focused their efforts on supporting and uplifting members of the community who struggle with mental illness.

Thus, the idea to send Valentines to UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital inpatients was born. Uplifting, positive messages like 'you are loved,' 'staying positive doesn't mean you have to be happy all the time,' and 'there are better days ahead' were handwritten and accompanied by sweet, whimsical doodles. More than 200 cards were delivered to UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital patients.



ANIKA JADIA,
AARON MALCOLM,
MICAYLA REYNOLDS,
DYLAN SCHOUPPE

"Mental health is often overlooked, so we wanted to bring awareness and positive change to our community. Everyone became immersed in the project. I could see that passion when people realized the potential impact of what we were doing."

- Anika Jadia





CONCERT AND ART AUCTION CONTINUES TO INSPIRE

The “Marianne Cornetti and Friends Benefit Concert and Art Auction” returns to the Carnegie Music Hall for a fourth year on **Sunday, June 8, 2025** at 3 p.m. The event brings professional performers and artists together with peers from UPMC Western Behavioral Health in an impactful and uplifting display of talent and resilience.



2025 Featured Guest Performer

Joe Serafini

“Seb” from Disney+ hit,
“High School Musical: The Musical”

Tickets for our Broadway-themed concert and art auction are on sale now! To purchase tickets, visit <https://2025MMM.givesmart.com>, call 412-246-6614, scan the QR code, or text 2025MMM to 76278.



Punctuated by the classic Broadway song stylings of dynamic featured guest performer Jay Armstrong Johnson, our 2024 event married art and music in an unforgettable manner. Patrons enjoyed a full program of solo, duet, and ensemble vocal and instrumental performances in the concert hall, as well as a robust auction of 45 artworks arrayed in the grand foyer of the Carnegie.

In both the concert and the art auction, peers from UPMC Western Behavioral Health had the opportunity to showcase their talents alongside professional performers and artists. Opportunities like these are fundamental to the mission of the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation.

“We rehearse with the UPMC Western peers for several months leading up to the concert. The preparation is as meaningful as the performances,” said Marianne Cornetti, internationally renowned mezzo soprano and UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation board chair. “We want to ensure the peers are having a great experience and that they are treated as professionals. We love to see them claim their place on that stage.”

With the addition of the art auction for the first time last year, Marianne found a kindred spirit in Pittsburgh-based artist, Maria DeSimone Prascak who chaired the art auction. Marianne recalled, “Maria is so full of life. We clicked immediately.”

Continued on next page



2024 FEATURED GUEST PERFORMER
JAY ARMSTRONG JOHNSON



One of the highlights from the 2024 event occurred when Marianne and Maria took to the stage simultaneously. While Marianne delivered an exquisite rendition of “Memory” from “Cats,” Maria composed a live painting alongside her, completing the finishing details of the piece just as Marianne reached the song’s conclusion. The crowd of 427 guests erupted in applause and ovation.

2025 event attendees will be treated to a similar experience this year, as Marianne and Maria will share the stage in a new collaboration, the subject of which will remain a surprise to ticket

holders. And, as with last year, the completed piece will be included in the art auction, which is open to everyone.

Currently, Maria and her husband and fellow artist, Johnno Prascak, are reaching out to the local artistic community to secure pieces for the auction that reflect a wide swath of styles and expression. Maria is equally excited to exhibit peer artworks alongside the professional pieces. “I can’t wait to see what the peers share this year. I hope they never forget their sense of pride,” says Maria.



Maria believes passionately in nurturing the artist in us all; this is woven through so many of her enterprises across our region. “Mental health challenges do not preclude participation in artistic pursuits. In my family, we never say the word ‘can’t,’” she says. “I have seen that neurodiversity is a fuel to grow, change, and evolve creatively.”



CAMPAIGN PARTNERS AND SPECIAL DONORS

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

CARABELLA

Electra P. and James R. Agras
Nanci Case and Michael Augustine
Robert Blumling
Janette and David Bobrzynski
Deborah and Don Brodine
Marianne Cornetti
Joseph Curtin
Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Robert Blumling
Janette and David Bobrzynski
Deborah and Don Brodine
Marianne Cornetti
Joseph Curtin
Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Janette and David Bobrzynski
Deborah and Don Brodine
Marianne Cornetti
Joseph Curtin
Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

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Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Marianne Cornetti
Joseph Curtin
Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Joseph Curtin
Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Cynthia L. DiMauro
Nicole Fedeli
Anthony Fonseca

Nicole Fedeli
Anthony For

Anthony Fonseca

Noreen Fredrick
Jessica Gannon
Barb Grossman
Mimi Seydel and Guy Hunt
Aloysius Joseph
Elizabeth Klasnick
Susan and Scott Lammie
Kerry Bron and Robert Levin
Stephanie Lippian
Kathy Logan

Jessica Gannon

Barb Grossman

Mimi Seydel and Guy Hunt

Aloysius Joseph

Elizabeth Klasnick

Susan and Scott Lammie

Kerry Bron and Robert Levin

Stephanie Lippian
Kathleen

Kathy Logan

John Morgan
Kenneth Nash
Lana and Fred Neumeyer
Debra and Jim Panei
Darlene and John Pastin
Maria DeSimone Prascak
and Johno Prascak
Jason Rosenstock
Susan and Peter Tanzer
Mary Tesch

Kenneth Nash

Lana and Fred Neumeyer

Debra and Jim Panei

Darlene and John Pastin

Maria DeSimone Prascak

and John Prascak

Jason Rosenstock
Susan and Peter T.

Mary Tapan

Mary Tesch

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BIRTHDAY GIFT

"Hello! My name is Morgan Tinlin, and I am a senior at Moon Area High School. For my November birthday, I would like to set up a drive for UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, and I would like to focus on collecting items for the teen and child units. Many patients come into the hospital with nothing, so anything you are willing to donate

you are amazing!
thank you for all that you do.
your work is very appreciated.
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♥Morgan T.

will make an
impact and put
a smile on
someone's face!"

So read the opening paragraph of the flier that Morgan put together and distributed throughout her community ahead of her 18th birthday last fall. This was the second year that Morgan organized a drive for hospital inpatients. She was inspired to do so by the care a family member received at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital.

Morgan attached a slogan to the drive, "Breaking the Stigma," to call attention to the barrier that inhibits support for individuals with mental health conditions. "It could happen to any of us. People don't like to think about that, so they distance themselves," said Morgan. "But there is help, and there are people who are thinking about you."



LORI, MORGAN, AND BRIAN TINLIN

Year two of the drive was so successful that donations filled an SUV and a truck to the brim with items like gently used and new clothing, shoes, art supplies, hygiene products, blankets, and card games. Morgan and her parents, Lori and Brian, braved cold winds and Oakland construction to deliver the donated goods early in December; they were met by half a dozen direct care and security staff who were eager to greet them and ease offloading of the donations.

"The hospital is a very welcoming place," said Morgan. "It makes me happy to know that these are the people helping my loved ones."

In addition to the donations for patients, Morgan enlisted the help of "Club Hope," a group for grieving middle school students in her community for which Morgan volunteers, to make hundreds of handmade notes. The notes expressed gratitude to staff and encouragement to patients in simple, heartfelt messages.

Angel Fazio, program manager, ACABS, UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, says Morgan's drive stocked a cupboard for inpatients in need and in some cases will supplement what is provided to homeless patients upon discharge. "We are all uplifted by what Morgan has chosen to do. It's not how most people celebrate their birthday. What a great example of selflessness."

A Beautiful Day IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Mon Yough provides residential care for 44 adults diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities in 12 homes in and around the Mon Valley in western Pennsylvania. Residents are encouraged to live life to the full extent of their interests and abilities.

A newly refurbished patio, funded by a generous donation from a resident's family, has made for a wonderful gathering and activity space for three housemates and their guests at the St. Clair home in North Huntingdon.

Richie is one of those residents. He has called the St. Clair location home for more than 20 years. Described by both his family and the Mon Yough staff as exceptionally kind, friendly, and caring, Richie has a love of the outdoors and of the natural world.

Because Richie sometimes uses a wheelchair, his ability to navigate the outdoor space at St. Clair had been limited by the lack of an actual full-size patio. The same was true for one of his housemates. So, Richie's family stepped in to change that.

"We chose to fund these enhancements because we want to improve the living environment for Richie and Bob and Stephen and give them some room to move around," said Dan O'Connor, Richie's nephew.

Mandy Fullem, program supervisor and specialist for the Mon Yough residential homes in North Huntingdon, says the housemates are excited to enjoy meals and activities outside. She notes, "This is a very nice community. The neighbors wave and chat, and one neighbor brings over treats. This great space will enhance our connection to the neighborhood."

Where previously there was only a strip of concrete, there is now a beautiful, full-size patio with a table and chairs and an umbrella for shade.



RICHIE (SEATED, LEFT) AND FAMILY

PUTTING THEIR
Best Feet Forward

A local community group collected 150 pairs of shoes and 50 pairs of socks for patients at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. The “Acts of Kindness” committee at Traditions of America in Canonsburg, Pa. held a three-month shoe drive, greatly expanding what is available to meet emergency patient needs of this kind.



LOUISA MATTHEWS, JILL WHITECAP, SHERYL WOODALL, AND RUTH VOLK

Historically, the staff at Western has maintained a limited inventory for this purpose. Maria Myers, program manager, Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES), explains, “It’s not unusual for people in crisis to arrive without shoes. In some cases, an individual may be homeless. Lack of shoes can be a primary stressor, especially when the weather turns, and it can even be the reason why a person presents to us in the PES. Just by meeting a basic need, we can improve their quality of life.”

Maria notes that the generous donation relieves a stressor for staff, too. Sheryl Woodall, a member of the “Acts of Kindness” committee, can relate to that sentiment; she practiced nursing for 45 years in a variety of environments.

Sheryl’s fellow committee members, bullpen volunteers, and the entire housing community have succeeded in many impactful efforts including veterans’ breakfast, activities for seniors, and outreach to elementary schools. The shoe drive was the committee’s first initiative related to behavioral health, and the response was positively overwhelming.

“There are people everywhere who face mental health challenges, and the general population is still not as accepting of people who are different in this respect,” said Sheryl. “We are happy to be a part of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital in this way. We recognize that people need support if they can’t solve a challenging situation themselves. Approaching it as a group effort is fundamental; our community really embraces this idea.”



SAVE THE DATE
Thursday, October 16, 2025
The Westin Pittsburgh

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

Co-hosted by the UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation, “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.

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 16-year history, this event had contributed more than \$2.4 million towards philanthropic care.

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



2024 Caregiver Champions, David and Noelle Conover with Deborah Brodine and Angela Perri



Ken Nash, MD, and 2024 Community Champion, The Branch, represented by Nancy Gale



2024 Grand Champion, Roy Chengappa, MD, with his wife, Dara, and daughters, Leela and Lara

Decking the Halls

Holidays FROM THE



There is no such thing as a typical day at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. Just ask David Trotta, EdD, program director of clinical services, Child and Adolescent Unit. On a Friday afternoon in mid-December, David was checking in with staff, participating in team meetings, and attending to his programming duties. Then he took the elevator to the second floor.

When David came upon the “Holidays from the Heart” gift presentation, he saw the hallways lined with hundreds of large, stuffed gift bags. Knowing that each bag was meant for a patient spending the holidays at the hospital or at one of several UPMC Western Behavioral Health residential facilities across the region, he described his own reaction as “awestruck.”

Co-chaired by Marianne Cornetti, internationally-renowned opera singer and chair of UPMC Western Behavioral Health Foundation Board, and Will Aikins, peer specialist, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, the 2024 “Holidays from the Heart” gift campaign inspired awe among many. It produced 439 gift bags for both inpatient and residential facilities across western and central Pennsylvania. To David’s view, “These gifts are more than just items; they carry the warmth of community support and remind our patients that they are not alone during this challenging season.”

Noreen Fredrick, DNP, vice president, Ambulatory and Community Behavioral Health Services, UPMC Western Behavioral Health, has oversight of the residential facilities, so the expansion in reach of gifts to those settings is close to her heart. Said Noreen, “Receiving a thoughtful gift lifts everyone’s spirits and sends the message that people care about them.”



DAVID TROTTA, DANIELLE RUFFING,
LEANNA GOLDMAN

The “Holidays from the Heart” gift campaign continues to grow from the generosity of donors and sponsors. Trinity United Methodist Church, a caring, tight-knit congregation, has been a faithful supporter of these efforts.

Pastor Jeff Vanderhoff, who has been with the church since 2016, sees value in investing in the community. Each month, the church focuses on an outreach, mission, or nonprofit to support. For the past three years, the congregation has designated the “Holidays from the Heart” campaign as the recipient of its benevolence.

Pastor Jeff expressed his deep admiration for Marianne Cornetti, who visited with the congregation to discuss the impact of “Holidays from the Heart” and serenade those in attendance. “Marianne has the voice of an angel and a heart of gold,” said Pastor Jeff. “Our members love to support, and we are glad to partner with others to make a difference and shine a light into the darkness.”



The 2025 “Holidays from the Heart” Gift Campaign is underway!

To donate, volunteer, or become a sponsor:

- Call 412-246-6614
- Email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu
- Visit UPMC.com/MakingMindsMatter



Mark your calendars for the next gift presentation on **Friday, December 12 at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital**

CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

UPMC COMMUNITY CARE



Groceries, Gas, or Cash!

Raffle Raises Awareness and Funds

The **Groceries, Gas, or Cash!** raffle continues to generate support for the Making Minds Matter Fund. Since 2020, net proceeds from the raffle have exceeded \$340,000. Of more than 2,670 total tickets sold over five years, 313 have been awarded as Heroes tickets to frontline staff, meaning sponsor funding has made it possible for staff to be entered into the raffle at no cost.

The 2024 raffle winner, Shannon Valenti, is the director of Research Administration for the Clinical Translational Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. Shannon chose to support this campaign "because behavioral health support is critical to us all. We never know when we may need access to these services." Shannon continued, "This fundraiser is also a means to get the word out about these important resources."



SHANNON VALENTI

"Giant Eagle Pharmacy proudly supports our customers' physical and mental health goals," says Michael Chappell, senior vice president, Giant Eagle Pharmacy. "Likewise, we support this campaign to improve mental health and wellness across our communities."

The 2025 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 Friday, January 23, 2026.

To reserve your 2025 ticket, email MakingMindsMatter@upmc.edu, visit UPMC.com/MakingMindsMatter, or call the ticket line at 412-246-6614.



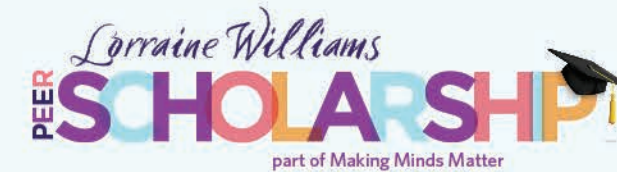
CAMPAIGN PARTNERS



UPMC HEALTH PLAN



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ARE ROLE MODELS



The **Lorraine Williams Peer Scholarship** honors a cherished Comprehensive Recovery Services (CRS) staff person at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital. Awarded annually, this scholarship supports CRS patients who are going to school or pursuing vocational training.

Scholarship winners serve as role models for others pursuing recovery, just as Lorraine was during her lifetime. Four scholarships in three categories (**Advocate, Lifetime Achievement, Scholar**) were awarded in 2024.



Advocate Scholarship winner, **Everlena Isaiah**, is a mother, a widower, an advocate, a Carlow graduate, and so much more. "We all have challenges, and we must keep pushing forward," Everlena expresses. "My future is to continue advocating for myself and others. Some people don't have the right people in their lives to advocate for them. It's a blessing that I can be a resource."

Being nominated by her peers is profoundly meaningful to Everlena. She says, "It speaks volumes. When you advocate for others, you never know who you are going to impact or who notices. Now I know people are witnessing this."



Lifetime Achievement Scholarship winner, **Cheryl Germany**, is a kind-hearted, inspiring woman who cares for her mental health by helping others.

"If I can do it, you can too. You are capable of doing a lot more than you give yourself credit for," says Cheryl. "My mental health has shown me how to be empathetic and sympathize with others." She has been a community health worker for 9 years and in social services for 24 years as well as an active member of her church. Helping others has been at the forefront of her personal mission.

With a degree from CCAC, a bachelor's degree from Chatham, and currently earning her master's degree in social work with a concentration in community organizing from the University of Pittsburgh, Cheryl has a love for learning and a passion for helping others. Says Cheryl, "I am most grateful to be recognized by those who nominated me."

Scholar Scholarship winner, Christopher G., is a recent college graduate with a bright future ahead of him. With the goal of a career in business, the scholarship money will help give Christopher a jumpstart to his future.

Christopher enjoys playing video games and spending time with family during his free time.

"Winning a peer-nominated scholarship means the world to me. I will remember this for the rest of my life," Christopher expressed.

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

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