For Patricia Brousseau, a senior at RHAM High School in Hebron, mental illness can seem like a fog that settles over someone's mind, darkening their spirit in ways that those around them cannot see.

"Always, always, the fog returns...Then one day, you find a lantern," Brousseau wrote in an essay called "Fog" that won first place in the Art category for the Institute of Living's 13th annual BrainDance Awards, which are given out every year to high school students who submit various works on mental health issues.

Brousseau, whose award came with a $500 prize, recited her essay at the annual BrainDance award ceremony April 21 at the IOL, which drew students, teachers, parents and other well-wishers from across the state.

Other first-place winners were Emma Grimaldi from Coventry High School, who won in the Academic category for her report "Gender Dysphoria: A Revolutionary Transformation" examining the impact of discrimination on those who identify as transgender. Also
Addiction is a poorly understood, complicated and deadly disease that impacts all corners of society and requires a full community response to save lives, a panel of experts and people in recovery said at a community forum in Meriden on Tuesday.

“I’ve looked at the numbers, and there is not a single community in this state that has not been impacted by this disease,” said Patricia Rehmer, president of the Behavioral Health Network, and one of the panelists at the forum called “From Alcohol to Opioids: Uniting Communities to Prevent Tragedies.”

Rushford was one of several community agencies to sponsor the event, which drew a large crowd of almost 100 people to the Four Points Hotel by Sheraton. Other panelists included J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director at Rushford; David Lowell, chief operating officer at Hunter’s Ambulance; Hector Cardona, Jr., a Meriden police sergeant; and Brian Wilkinson, a Meriden police officer assigned to the Statewide Narcotics Task Force.

The panel also included two people in recovery: Dennis, a Meriden resident who now volunteers for the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition Education & Advocacy subcommittee; and Michael, a Meriden resident who is a chapter lead in Connecticut for Young People in Recovery, a national grassroots organization.

Dr. Allen spoke on the biology of addiction and how substances such as alcohol and heroin subvert the body’s natural methods for releasing dopamine into the brain. For those suffering from addiction, the brain is no longer naturally motivated to release dopamine but instead becomes dependent on the foreign substance, he said.

“This is a chronic disease,” he said.

Dennis, who is married with two children, spoke about how his dependence on opioids nearly led to the ruin of his family until he had a transformation soon after experimenting with heroin for the first time. He checked himself into Rushford for detox and then followed up with intensive outpatient treatment, devoting himself to the 12-Step program and Narcotics Anonymous.

“It was the best thing I ever did,” he said. “Those meetings let me open up and let my guard down.”

Members of the audience asked the panelists numerous questions, several of which were directed at Rehmer, who was commissioner of the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services before joining Hartford HealthCare in 2015. Responding to questions, Rehmer said she supported special high schools for young people in recovery, which have proven successful in other states; and expressed guarded optimism about the growing willingness of insurance companies to cover costs to treat addiction.

She also said there were encouraging signs that help is being offered to populations which have traditionally been ignored, such as prisoners who previously were forced to go through withdrawal on their own. Now, she said, there are efforts to offer prisoners methadone and other medications to help with the recovery process. Dr. Allen pointed out that prisoners who have been out of jail for 30 days or less are statistically more likely to die of overdose than any other population.

People in Recovery, a national grassroots organization.

Meriden forum: Amy Dimaro, Rushford director for adult and adolescent programming, served as moderator at Tuesday’s forum in Meriden, “From Alcohol to Opioids: Uniting Communities to Prevent Tragedies.”

Meriden forum looks at all sides of addiction

‘Always, always, the fog returns...then one day you find a lantern’

continued from page 1

In the Art category, second place went to Stanislav Yarmoussik of Fairfield College Preparatory School for his artwork “How Do You See Me” while third place was shared by Riley Trowbridge of Bristol Eastern High School for her essay, “Anorexia: Silently Crying Out” and Joseph Hopkins of Fairfield College Preparatory School for his essay “Eyes.”

In the Academic category, second place went to Alexandra Smith of Norwich Regional Technical High School for her report “Clinical Depression,” while third place was shared by Cheyenne Johnson of Norwich Tech for her report, “Listen to Autism,” and Shelline Jeanty of Norwich Tech for her report, “Stigmas Associated with Bipolar Disorder.”

In the Mixed Media category, second place went to Catie Allison of New Fairfield High School for her work, “Generalized Anxiety Disorder,” while third place went to Morgan Martin of Bristol Eastern High School for her work, “Stigma of Anxiety.”
A panel of addiction experts including Karen Butterworth-Erban, RN, Hartford HealthCare East Region director of emergency services, appeared on a live telecast on the ongoing crisis in opioid and heroin addiction on CPTV television April 21. It will be rebroadcast several times over the next month.

The hour-long discussion, called “Communities in Crisis,” was moderated by Diane Smith and featured questions, observations and first-hand accounts from members of the audience. Smith directed questions to Butterworth-Erban and other panelists to get their insight on the issue.

In addition to Butterworth-Erban, panelists included Louis Fusaro, Jr., the chief of police in Groton; Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, the commissioner of the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); Maribeth Farley, ambassador for Shatterproof; and Matt Eacott, certified recovery advisor and Vice President of Aware Recovery Care.

As director of emergency services for Backus and Windham hospitals, Butterworth-Erban spoke on increasing efforts in the medical community to connect those who are struggling with addiction issues to effective care. She said patients who come into the emergency room at Backus and Windham after experiencing an overdose are now able to receive immediate follow-up through a partnership with DMHAS outreach specialists. As soon as a patient stabilizes, she said, outreach workers are there to let them know services are available and to remind them how close they came to death.

“They’re there to tell them, ‘This is what happened to you, do you want to have a conversation?’ ” she said, adding that workers also routinely follow up over the next several days. “Not all of them are ready to seek treatment right away, but the idea is to give them some-thing to think about, to let them know there is help.”

Butterworth-Erban also spoke on the need to understand addiction as a complex disease that requires individualized care instead of a one-size-fits-all course of treatment. “There’s not one answer for every patient,” she said.

Her comments were echoed by many of those in attendance including Eacott, who is in recovery for opioid addiction and now works to help others going through the same thing. He said he first experimented with opioids by ordering them online as a teenager and went on to use heroin in college.

“After a while you get to the point where if you don’t have it you feel sick,” he said, explaining how the disease consumes people.

The discussion also examined the effectiveness of law enforcement in addressing the crisis, which has led to a sharp increase in addiction-related overdose fatalities in Connecticut and the rest of the country. In Groton, which had seen several deaths in recent weeks, police are working with treatment centers to help connect abusers to care instead of arresting them, Fusaro said. He said police are focusing enforcement efforts on drug distributors rather than the people who are dependent on them.

To watch a repeat performance of the show anytime online, go to http://cptv.org/heroincrisis

Join the BHN team for the NAMI Walk for Awareness

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI, will hold its annual NAMI Walk to promote awareness of behavioral health issues in Connecticut on Saturday, May 21, at Bushnell Park in Hartford. The Behavioral Health Network is a sponsor for the event, and all staff are invited to take part in the walk as a member of the BHN Team. The walk takes place throughout the park right next to the State Capitol building.

Co-captains for the BHN Team are Patty Graham, Leslie D’Amato and Darcy Lauretti. If you are interested in taking part, please send either one of them an email at patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org; leslie.damato@hhchealth.org; or darcy.lauretti@hhchealth.org. You can also register as a member of the team at www.namict.org. The first 100 people to sign up for the team will receive a free t-shirt.
Making a difference

This is one of those stories that I can’t help but share. This is a letter from a client who we never gave up on. I would like to recognize Emily Stagg/Christian Klein as well as the rest of our treatment team. We have made a difference. The client, with the help of Judie Nodwell, RN, came up with the idea to make a book on the unit to pass around to new admits with success stories (names omitted) — a project that is impactful for clients/staff.

— Amanda Watkins, Child/Adolescent Unit Manager

“My name is Andrew* and I’m writing/typing this at Natchaug. I came back here because of bipolar, depression, stress, which led to suicidal thoughts. I’m in my fifth inpatient hospital, but I’ve been all over.

When I arrived at Natchaug, I was angry and yelled at staff, my doctor, therapist, etc... My doctor and therapist were just trying to help me. A little while after my arrival, I was put on two new meds. A few days ago I found out that I was most likely diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and that I was on the right meds for that illness. I wasn’t angry, but I was surprised and kind of shocked. I apologized to my doctor and my therapist. I also thanked them for everything.

I learned that if you want help, you must seek and go after it. My advice — stay strong, tell the truth and don’t lie to get discharged. And finally, have HOPE. Hope will get you a long way, but you must want it and seek it.”

*Name changed to protect client privacy
Letter edited for length and client privacy

Find treasure every week on the Intranet

The HHC Connect Intranet is a treasure trove of information about everything you need to maintain your work/life balance at Hartford HealthCare.

To have some fun and help you find your way around the site, we’ve planned a little treasure hunt.

Every two weeks or so, look for a new clue in BHNews. To find the buried treasure, log into HHC Connect (intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org from work or your mobile device) and use the clue to find the treasure chest icon (shown here) buried on a page deep within the Intranet. Once you find it, click on the treasure chest to reveal the secret question. The answer to the question will be located on the page or a subpage in the section of where the treasure chest was found. Submit the correct answer and be entered to win a prize.

Congratulations to our latest Treasure Hunt winner. Frank Stasz from the SSO, IS Electronic Health Record Department won an HHC prize pack.

To unlock this week’s buried treasure search the Employee Benefits section of HHC Connect. Good luck and happy hunting!
Sheffield receives prestigious arts education award

Anne B. Sheffield, director of the Grace Webb School at the Institute of Living, has been given the Connecticut Special Needs Art Educator Award for 2016 by the Connecticut Art Education Association for her work in getting students involved in the art community and showcasing their work at prominent exhibits.

Sheffield, who will receive her award at a ceremony May 1, was recognized for the numerous field trips and exhibits in which she has involved students at Grace Webb School, which provides educational services to students with mental health issues from kindergarten to 12th grade.

In recent years, Sheffield has led field trips to museums across the state including the Wadsworth Atheneum, Mattatuck Museum, Florence Griswold Museum and the New Britain Museum of Art. She also showcases student artworks in the Hartford HealthCare annual calendar as well as exhibits such as Youth Art Celebration, Art Slam at the Legislative Office Building and NAMI. She also leads teacher workshops on full spectrum art lessons, collaborative art and at the Rauschenberg Foundation at the Lab School for Learning Disabilities in Washington D.C.

Sheffield also is involved with the Arts for Learning program through the Kennedy Center Arts Integration Conference, and has trained at the Guggenheim Museum Creativity Symposium.

New program offered for adolescents with psychosis

The Child & Adolescent Day Treatment Program at the Institute of Living has introduced a new program, “Connecting Adolescents with Psychosis” (CAP), which provides early intervention services for children 13-18 years old with psychotic spectrum disorders.

This specialty includes group psychotherapy to foster connections and promote socio-emotional growth; community trips to engage youth in rehabilitation activities; and cognitive remediation aimed at improving executive functioning and processing speed.

CAP offers a low-stimulation, therapeutic treatment setting for adolescents, as well as psycho-education and support services for families. It also offers collaboration with schools and community providers to help meet the needs of young people dealing with psychosis. The average length of treatment is about three months but varies depending on the individual needs of the child.

For more information, please call 860-696-0036.

Reminder: All Clinical Staff

Issues of Suicide Support Group

- Last Tuesday of Every Month
- Date: Last Tuesday of Every Month
- Time: noon – 1 p.m.
- Place: Family Resource Center
  Massachusetts Cottage
  Group Room - 1st Floor

Offering the opportunity for discussion with clinical staff who have experienced issues related to suicide in their work.

Facilitator: Nancy E. Hubbard, LCSW

Light lunch will be provided
RSVP required to 860.545.7665
Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. For additional information, please contact the FRC at 860-545-7665 or 860-545-1888. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** May 3, June 7 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860-545-7665.

- **Survivors Of Suicide Support Group.** May 4, June 1 (First Wednesday of the month), 7 – 8:15 p.m. For those who have lost someone close to them by suicide. Please call the RSVP numbers with questions or concerns. 860-545-7716 or 860-545-7665.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of those who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Learn to care for yourself while you are caring for others.

- **Youth Psychosis Family Support Group.** May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. For parents with youth up to age 18 who have psychotic symptoms such as: hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, disorganized thoughts and behavior or are diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other related disorders. Join us to receive support, guidance and education on how to cope with and help your young person.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** May 10, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will discuss the impact that symptoms of schizophrenia have on everyday activities, and provide tips on what you can do to make things better at home.

- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** May 12, June 9 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

- **Yoga.** May 24, June 21, 5 - 6 p.m. in the Commons Building, Hartford Room. Open to adult staff and family members. Mats are provided or bring your own! The class begins with breathing exercises and gentle stretches, followed by a series of poses and ends with relaxation and meditation. Instructor: Valerie Raggio, LCSW, Yoga Fit, Level 1 Certified. To RSVP or inquire, call the FRC at 860-545-7716 or email patri ciac.graham@hhchealth.org

School study looks at academic pressures

In an effort to help children dealing with school-related stress, the Institute of Living’s Anxiety Disorders Center has developed a new questionnaire called the Screener for Academic Distress (SAD), which asks questions about the pressure to do well in school and anxiety about going to school.

The center is inviting students ages 13-18 in grades 7-12 and their parents to participate in the research study to help them understand how well this questionnaire works. You do not have to have problems with school or anxiety to participate in this study. To participate, parents and students can go to the website: www.instituteofliving.org/SADstudy.

After completing this study, you will have the chance to enter into a raffle for a $25 gift card to Amazon.com.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- **An Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services.** May 24, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities.

- **Bipolar: An Introduction To The Disorder.** June 14, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family members and friends of individuals who have bipolar or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help family members and friends better cope with the illness.
Recognizing Occupational Therapy Month

In honor of Occupational Therapy Month in April, Natchaug’s Creative Rehab Services team put together an informational display in the lobby at the main hospital to educate staff and visitors about the benefits of occupational therapy in mental health treatment.

Grow Our School plant sale May 20

Joshua Center Northeast CDT School students are hosting a “Grow Our School” Plant Sale on Friday, May 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Joshua Center Northeast at 934 North Main St. in Danielson.

A variety of hanging baskets, bedding plants and vegetables, all grown on-site by the students, will be for sale. Only cash will be accepted, and all proceeds will benefit the Youthworks Vocational Program and future greenhouse projects for the students.

Inpatient School blood drive May 9

The Inpatient School is hosting a blood drive at the main hospital in Mansfield on Monday, May 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. To schedule your appointment, email shawn.cyr@hhchealth.org.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday, except for the weeks of Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s.

Story ideas or submissions may be sent to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org. Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, May 10, at noon.
Rushford welcomes new clinical manager

Tara Scrivano, LCSW, has joined Rushford as clinical manager for the Durham campus (Stonegate and Rushford Academy) and the adolescent ambulatory program at the Meriden location on Paddock Avenue. Tara has 11 years experience in the behavioral health field working with children and families. In her new role, she will work closely with Rushford leadership to make sure that programs for adolescents have the proper resources and support so that young people get the care they need.

Rushford held an Open House for employees, the public and the local business community at its new adult outpatient treatment center in Cheshire on April 22. In all, more than 30 people dropped by the new suite of offices, exam and counseling rooms located at 680 S. Main St., including people from other addiction outreach agencies in the area as well as insurance and clinical providers.

Those who stopped by were treated to healthy appetizers and treats while Cheshire staff were on hand to answer questions and lead tours of the location. Among those who attended were James O’Dea, PhD, MBA, vice president of operations for the Behavioral Health Network as well as staff at the MidState Mediquick office, which is also part of Hartford HealthCare and is located in the same building.

The staff at Cheshire who were on hand for the Open House included, from left, Hollie Sabetta, Amy Dimarco, Meagen Diana and Robyn Carrion.

Join the Hartford HealthCare Weight-No-More Weight Loss Challenge
April 1–July 29

Lose Weight and Win!

Compete solo or as a team. Individuals and teams that achieve 5% weight loss will be entered in a prize raffle. And everybody wins with a healthier body, just in time for summer fun.

- $250 Cabela’s gift cards
- $250 LLBean gift cards
- $250 Dick’s gift cards
- $250 Whole Foods gift cards
- Fitbits
- Yoga mats
- Infinity Hall tickets
- Healthtrax membership

Registration required.
Find your online registration form and more on the “Weight loss benefits” page of HHC Connect.

*Prizes donated by our Connect to Healthier partners Aetna, Weight Watchers, Healthtrax and Infinity Hall.

We all scream for ice cream

Patricia Rehmer, president of the Behavioral Health Network, and Steven Zuckerman, vice president of operations at Rushford, proudly served ice cream to employees at Rushford’s location in Meriden Tuesday to thank staff for their hard work. Several dozen people showed up Tuesday while another event is scheduled in Middletown today.
Raffle baskets needed for Rushford Golf Classic

Planning and fundraising is underway for the annual Rushford Golf Classic on Thursday, May 26, at Lyman Orchards Golf Club, including plans for raffling off staff-created gift baskets.

The BHN Philanthropy Department is hoping Rushford departments will be inspired again this year to create baskets for the raffle to help raise money for child and adolescent programs. Suggested basket ideas include: gift card, animal lover’s basket, relaxation basket, coffee/tea basket, movie lover’s basket, sports basket, reader’s basket, home/garden basket, gourmet food basket, beverage basket, chocolate lover’s basket. The staff group whose basket receives the highest number of tickets submitted will win a pizza party.

Also, staff are asked to encourage friends or associates to take part in the event as a way to support Rushford. If you have a golf buddy, have him or her sign up!

Please contact Kate McNulty (katherine.mcnulty@hhchealth.org) or Sherry Smardon (sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org) to sign up. Baskets are due by May 19 and thank you for supporting Rushford!

The Treasure Trove is a free classified ad section for the benefit of Behavioral Health Network employees, retirees, medical staff and volunteers.

We welcome your submissions, which you can submit by emailing matt.burgard@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.

The deadline for submissions to be included in each Friday’s BHNews is Tuesday at noon. BHNews will include community events for not-for-profit organizations that are open to the public and free of charge. We do not accept ads for real estate, firearms or personal ads.