

Erasing the Stigma of Mental Illness

Written by Toni Daylor



Candice Crawford, president and CEO of the Mental Health Association of Central Florida, announces the

O ftentimes, at the mention of mental illness, people imagin

Mental illness crosses all socioeconomic, gender and professional lines; no longer is it considered a cha

According to the Mental Health Association of Central Florida, one in four people seek mental health tre

Recently, high-profile celebrities, including Catherine Zeta-Jones and Demi Lovato, have come forward

During a recent interview, Zeta-Jones was quoted as saying, "There is no need to suffer silently, and the

To spread that message, MHACF launched It's Okay to Get Help, an awareness campaign designed to

A number of community leaders, including Southwest resident Dick Batchelor, Orlando Police Chief and

MHACF is a nonprofit organization that relies upon private donations and funding from governmental en

"During the 1990s, [MHACF] received an influx of funds and support, largely because of the efforts of a g

Erasing the Stigma of Mental Illness

Written by Toni Daylor

This year, as a way to honor those who have made an impact in the mental health arena, both locally and nationally, the Legacy of Champions Luncheon will be held at the Sheraton Orlando Downtown. The inaugural event will take place June 17 from 11:30a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Orlando Downtown. An unexpected twist of fate launched the Legacy of Champions to a higher level of prominence, when former U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy, son of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, served 16 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he was a vocal advocate for mental health.

His advocacy to improve American lives did not end when he left Congress. Kennedy, who has been treated for depression and addiction, will speak at the luncheon. When Crawford discovered that Kennedy was scheduled to speak in Florida, she invited him to make a luncheon appearance. “It was so exciting when I found out that he had agreed to add us to his schedule,” she said. “I was speaking with Batchelor, who is co-chairing the luncheon with Crotty, has great expectations for the event.



Former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy II, who has been treated for depression and addiction, will speak at the luncheon.

“I believe this will be a catalyst for bigger things to come,” Batchelor said. “Social service providers are in existence for more than 60 years, MHACF has been instrumental in promoting mental health, providing support and resources. MHACF also recruits and trains volunteers to become guardian advocates. After completing a four-hour training program, they are able to provide support and resources. As of Jan. 1, MHACF lost funding from the Florida Department of Children and Families because of budget cuts. In the fall of 2010, collaboration between Florida Hospital and MHACF resulted in the opening of the Our

Erasing the Stigma of Mental Illness

Written by Toni Daylor

[More Erasing the Stigma of Mental Illness](#)