PBCP Celebrates 30-Year Milestone Anniversary

The Pro Bono Counseling Project (PBCP) is celebrating 30 years of linking families, individuals, couples, and children with licensed mental health professionals in Maryland.

PBCP was founded in 1991 to ensure that Marylanders with limited resources requesting mental health care are provided access to volunteer licensed mental health professionals and other necessary supportive services. Since then, PBCP has helped match thousands of individuals and families throughout Maryland with the most appropriate counselors, based on their specific needs, and helped them obtain the mental health care they could not otherwise afford.

PBCP’s vision is the availability of quality mental health care for all those in need. The organization serves anyone in Maryland who is facing difficulties paying for counseling – including individuals of all ages, as well as families, and families through connections to volunteer licensed mental health therapists for free counseling to address mental health concerns, including stress, anxiety, sadness, grief, life transitions, relationship issues, or any other issue that can be addressed through talk therapy. PBCP has a network of over 800 volunteer licensed mental health counselors, covering a range of specialties, located all throughout Maryland. Counseling services are offered in person, where available, and via video conferencing and telephone.

“Pro Bono Counseling has helped thousands of Maryland residents connect with the mental health care resources they need at no cost,” stated PBCP Board President Gilbert Bliss. “I am honored to be both a board member and volunteer for an organization that provides such a vital service.”

To commemorate this milestone anniversary, PBCP will hold a year-long celebration, with special recognitions each month to highlight its history and partnerships.

“PBCP has thrived for over 30 years thanks to partnerships with volunteers, donors, foundations, community organizations, and community members,” stated PBCP Executive Director Amy Greensfelder. “We plan to feature and honor their contributions to our organization throughout its history.”

PBCP will also hold several fundraisers throughout the year to further strengthen and support the organization. On June 1, we will kick off the “30 Days of Giving” campaign, with the goal to raise $30,000.

PBCP Appoints Two New Members to Board of Directors

The Pro Bono Counseling Project (PBCP) announces the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors: Amory Cockrell and Shane Tanzymore.

Amory Cockrell, CPRM, is the Senior Investment Risk, Legal, Compliance, Marketing and Operations. As a former performer and events producer, he is passionate about the arts and has worked to raise money and awareness at Center Stage, the Creative Alliance and other regional venues. Building a profitable arts collective gave him the opportunity to nurture arts integration programs that partnered with local schools and non-profits to develop and facilitate programs for disadvantaged youth of all ages.

PBCP’s Board members also elected new officers for its current fiscal year, and its board is now led by Board President Gilbert A. Bliss, LCSW-C, First Vice President Mark Smolzar; Second Vice President Eboni Barksdale-Smith, CRCPHA; Treasurer Dan Morrison, CFPA; and Secretary Alex Eberlein. Peter A. Kahn, MD, is past president and Melinda Hiken, APRN/PMH-BC is now board member emeritus.

Events Held in Recognition of AAPI Heritage Month

In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage month, Pro Bono Counseling offered events to support members of those communities who have been impacted by the pandemic and anti-Asian violence.

On May 13, PBCP hosted a CHAI Program Virtual Forum, a free online community conversation about the difficulty being separated from loved ones in India and Nepal during the pandemic crisis. PBCP volunteer Prem Bharati Devkoti, LCPC, CHC, facilitated the group discussion, providing ways to cope with the stress of being separated from loved ones. One participant shared, “When you’re isolated, the fear becomes your worst partner.”

On May 19, PBCP offered a continuing education workshop entitled, “On Yellow Peril in the COVID-19 Era: Recovering Neglected Histories and Fostering Solidarity.” Presenter Natalie Hung, PhD, led this seminar about the history and dynamics of AAPI racialization in light of the recent surge of anti-Asian violence and ways to stand in solidarity with AAPI communities.

“This workshop enabled me to examine my own experience and beliefs about race and how they were formed,” said one attendee. “I learned how to help my clients with identity and other race related issues develop awareness and acceptance.”

PBCP is committed to continuing to offer timely, relevant, and useful continuing education workshops and events. Check out what events are taking place next month.

Upcoming PBCP Workshops

Tuesday, June 8
Caring for Caregivers: Addressing the Evolving Needs of Caregivers - 2 CEs
Eve Escalante, MSW, LCSW, will provide mental health providers with guidance on how to approach caregivers in their practice. This workshop is sponsored by a generous grant from the Marion I. and Henry J. Knott Foundation.

Monday, June 14
Gaming and Gamers 101: Introduction to Utilizing Video Games for Therapeutic Outcomes - 1.5 CEs
Kelli Dunlap, MA, PsyD, will present a brief, theory-based overview of the intersection of gameplay and mental health interventions with a major focus on integration of video games and culture into clinical practice.

Click here for more information or to register for these workshops.