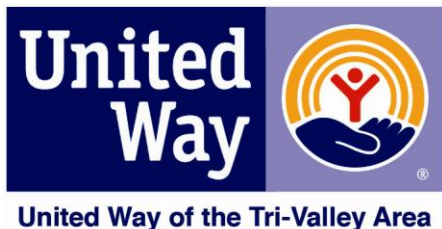


Partner Profiles



Lisa Park Laflin, Executive Director

Editor's Note: This article is part of an ongoing series that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA), its funded Partners, collaborators, and recipients of donor-designated funds. To learn more about how you can give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, or to view the article archive, visit www.uwtva.org. To contact staff, call (207) 778-5048 or e-mail info@uwtva.org.

Music, poetry, dance, artwork, and individual stories of hope and recovery will fill the Franco-American Heritage Center in Lewiston on Saturday, June 26 when UWTVA Community Partner Tri-County Mental Health Services (TCMHS) hosts the 5th Annual Inspired Voices Benefit Concert and Art Exhibit. The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. with a catered Reception and Art Exhibit featuring works by children and adults whose lives have been touched by the agency. At 7:00 p.m. the performance hall comes alive with powerful music, dance, poetry and stories of clients intertwined with top notch music by an ensemble of local and regional artists, volunteers and agency employees.

Tri-County Mental Health Services' Program Director, Catherine Ryder, will continue as Director of the show for the fifth straight year, and L/A Arts Executive Director Andrew Harris will join fellow Brit and TCMHS Executive Director Chris Copeland on stage as Emcee. Having attended this event last year, I can see why it has become a community favorite; it features top notch performances as well as the powerful message of recovery and hope.

Inspired Voices was created in 2005 and was the first major fundraising event for the almost 60 year old agency. It is unique in that it is completely mission related and is so much more than a benefit. It includes the people TCMHS serves and the community in a creative partnership that has a profound effect on everyone involved in it. The consumer participants become empowered and realize lifelong dreams. The performers volunteer hours of time and considerable talent to support the consumers and share in their triumphs. The audience itself feels a part of the healing process with their appreciation and applause. The stigma once associated with mental illness is lessened and the work of the agency and its employees is demystified. The very process of creating the event and the therapeutic effect it has on the consumer participants are vivid representations of the work Tri-County does every day. *Inspired Voices* has had a profound impact on the participants and on the community members who come back every year to share and celebrate the power of hope and inspiration.

This year TCMHS is adding two new features to celebrate the 5th Anniversary of this event. The organization will be filming a full length documentary of the process to show its full impact. This documentary will be used for years into the future to help break down barriers and stigma around mental health issues. There will also be a separate Preview Reception of the consumer art works at a community location in the weeks prior to the event. This will further increase publicity and visibility for the event. Last year we produced a short film to this effect which is viewable at www.tcmhs.org.

The United Way of the Tri-Valley Area supports Tri-County Mental Health Services via funding a program that allows individuals in Greater Franklin County to access mental health services. Without this funding, individuals in need of critical counseling, medication management, or group therapy otherwise may not be able to access these services.