

The Creative Forum

MAY 2019

*A Monthly Publication of Creative Wellness Opportunities
A Peer Run Service of the Mental Health Association*

?? HE/HIM or SHE/HER or ??

On April 18th, 2019 we were joined by fellow neighboring peers from the Out Alliance for a candid and informal discussion about what it means to be living in today's society as someone who is transgender and how as members of a predominantly cisgender society, we can be more accepting as allies for our fellow brothers and sisters. While the struggle has only recently been brought out publicly, the fight for equality, understanding, and recognition has been real for too many people longer than most of us are aware of and perhaps willing to admit.

Peers took their seats as Lori Cramer, Out Alliance's Education Coordinator, and Brayden Dobles, an openly transgender man, started the circle by introducing themselves along with the pronouns that they wanted to be identified by. It was easy to notice that almost everyone was taken off guard by this form of introduction. Lori quickly explained that it probably seemed strange but an act as simple as self-identifying can be one of the most effective ways to stop any kind of mis-gendering or awkwardness if used frequently enough to become second nature. The pressure is then no longer solely put on any one person to identify but is shared by everyone. It seems "normal" in our society to take for granted what and how we identify ourselves. Assumptions usually are made that both gender and birth sex are unquestioned and simply based on how someone presents themselves in public. Assumption is often one of the easiest and quickest ways to mis-gender/identify someone and the reason that getting the information out about being an ally and informing the public on inclusion is so important.

Conversation quickly moved from introductions by the members in the circle to Brayden sharing his personal coming out journey as a transgender man. It was truly inspirational and eye opening to hear from him first-hand the difficulties that he had dealing with his self-identity when the body that he was born with didn't match what his minds' eye was seeing. Brayden shared that while he did experience many hardships, he had supports to help him through the toughest of his times and mentioned many are less fortunate.

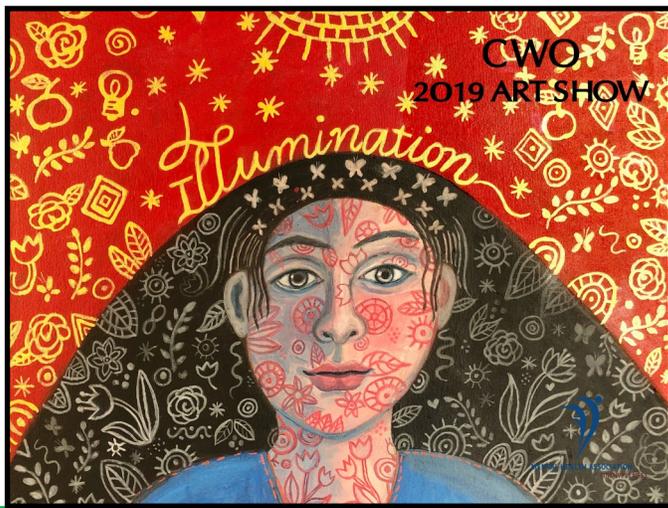
The confusion and turmoil some children experience is only compounded when he/she looks to an adult figure in his/her life for answers or help. Adults, themselves may not understand how it may feel to be in that child's position. Add on societal pressures, and human growth as the child's own body changes, and one can perhaps start to understand how a child's questioning of self-worth, true identity, and even why any of it may even matter can become part of their journey. For some, that journey ends with the decision to take the matter of life or death into their own hands. As of a study done back in 2015, 42% of transgender children attempt to end their own lives. This number has speculated to have grown in light of the current state of awareness in today's society. While this is an alarming number, it is not meant to shock but rather to continue to inform us that we can make such a difference and change in so many lives just by simply living a more inclusively understanding and open life.

The circle engaged by sharing questions and moments or thoughts of their own, including discussion of what can be done in our own community at Creative Wellness Opportunities to create a more inclusive environment. Peers decided to make an addition to the orientation process and workshop guidelines for inclusion of identifiable pronouns. Another idea shared was to provide creative tags for everyone to wear so all could self-identify themselves with pronouns that they would like to be identified with while in the community space. Some general concerns were brought to the table as well and provided for Creative Wellness Opportunities to consider and discuss.

On the whole, the one-hour event was profound and informative. Many questions were answered. Lori also provided additional options regarding continued and more directed Safe Space training from Out Alliance and left printed information to share and educate others. The resources are available to anyone interested so feel free to pick up a copy and help to break stigma and bias surrounding transgender issues.

**The next Community Circle is May 16th from Noon - 1PM
Joined by Willow Domestic Violence Center discussion on Healthy Relationships.**

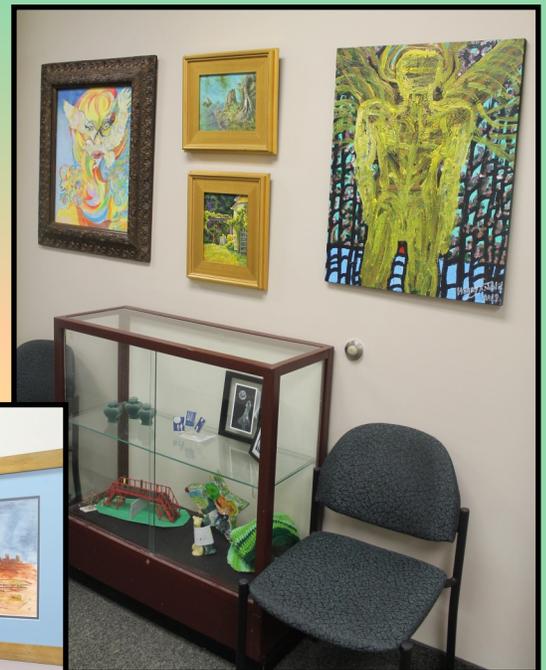
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2019 CWO ANNUAL SHOW

Come Join Us Friday
May 3rd, 5:30PM - 8PM
320 N. Goodman Street, Suite 201

Peer Artists Showcasing 100 Pieces!



2D & 3D Mediums of all types!

OUR 11th EXCEPTIONAL SEASON!

Addressing the social stigma of mental illness, providing a message of hope that recovery is possible



the Reel Mind

a theatre and film series about mental illness

MAY 14: EVELYN

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

In this new film critics hail as “deeply moving” and “life-affirming,” Oscar winner Orlando von Einsiedel turns the camera on himself & his family, as they embark on a journey of remembrance and closure over a decade-old suicide.

Film participant Gwennie von Einsiedel in person

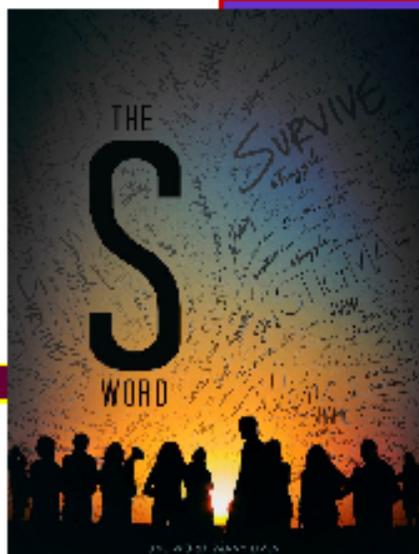


MAY 21: THE SWORD

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

In this powerful film, suicide survivors share stories of unguarded courage, insight and humor, revealing a national community rising to transform personal struggles into action. **SPECIAL FOCUS: Mental health in communities of color.**

Film participant & survivor Kelechi Ubozoh in person



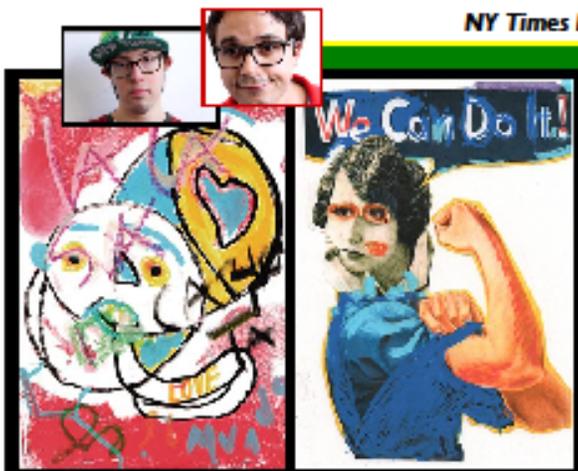
JUNE 4: EVERY BRILLIANT THING

7 pm | Cinema Theater | 957 S. Clinton Avenue

Striking a delicate balance between loss and cathartic laughter, this adaptation of the hit off-Broadway show focuses on a young boy's attempt to cure his mother's Depression by creating a list of the best things in the world.



NY Times Pick! Starring Drama Desk nominee and British comedian Jonny Donahoe



Come join us for our Closing Night Celebration with art, music & films!

JUNE 18: DESIGN-ABILITY

6 pm: Illumination ART EXHIBIT by MHA's Creative Wellness

7 pm: FILMS

Hart Theater | JCC | 1200 Edgewood Avenue

The value of difference in a work environment is explored in this creatively inspiring documentary about a successful ad agency in Spain that hires artists with Down's Syndrome and Autism. **Preceded by a short film by our friends at OC87 Recovery Diaries.**

For tickets and more information: www.reelmindfilmfest.org

**Mental Health Association's
PEER COMMUNITY
OUTREACH**

**Find Your True Self
Building Your Self-Esteem**

A safe, caring, non-judgmental group to facilitate finding and building ones' own voice both inside and out.

Out Alliance

585-352-1077

100 College Ave #100

Rochester, NY 14607

Meeting every 1st & 3rd

Mondays @ 6 - 7PM



CWO Celebrates...

Print Day

In May

Saturday, May 4th

11:00am - 1:30pm

Print Day in May, the first Saturday in May, celebrates the art and community of printmakers. It's a day to get together in studios across the world to make prints. Join CWO from 11:00am to 1:30pm to learn about printmaking, watch a demonstration and create your own print during this annual international celebration!

We will be exploring Eco prints, a process where you create an image onto a common recyclable material then print the image onto paper. We will be exploring a plate base of cardboard and cereal boxes. During this event, share your photos and print and connect to the printmaking community on any social media platform by using the tags @printdayinmay or #printdayinmay.

For more info visit <https://printdayinmay.com/>.

**Mental Health Association's
Drop-In Center
539 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 454-3530**

Need to talk to someone but your therapist's office is closed?

It's not an emergency room situation yet, but if you don't find someone to talk to it could be?

The Drop-In Center may be just what you need!

**The Center is open seven (7) days a week
5:00PM - 9:00PM**

**No referral or appointment necessary.
SIMPLY DROP-IN!**

#5 South Avenue Bus will bring you right to our door at the corner of South Avenue and Hamilton Street Support is provided by individuals who have overcome mental health concerns and now offer support to others as they find their own path to mental wellness.



**MAY
ARTISTS' CIRCLE**

**"THE RETURN OF
AMAZEBALLS"**

Bring an art piece of your choice for constructive feedback of any theme **OR** to share for this months suggested (open for interpretation) art circle theme.

**Share @ CWO @ 3:00
Thursday, May 23rd**

** Finished pieces but framing not required*