

We're hiring!!

Saint Boniface Preschool has a full-time teacher assistant position open!

We are looking for a fun and energetic person to join our team. Duties will include but are not limited to: supervising children ages 2 to 10 years old, assisting classroom teachers with everyday tasks, and helping in our before/aftercare program.

This position will primarily be but is not limited to our Pre-K rooms.

Hours of operation are 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, we are flexible and willing to work with applicants to create the desire schedule.

Resumes can be emailed to preschool@stbonifaceparisherie.org or dropped off at the school office.



GREENE TWP. LIONS
DRIVE THRU PANCAKE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2022, 8:00A.M. TIL NOON

\$10 per breakfast (CASH ONLY)

Greene Twp. Municipal Building

TO BENEFIT CHRIS CIFELLI

The Greene Twp. Lions Club will be serving a Pancake Breakfast to benefit Chris Cifelli. Chris has some serious health concerns and has been an AVID lion for MANY years. Chris headed up ALL our previous pancake breakfasts, fish fry's, spaghetti dinners or anything that had to do with the kitchen! We will be serving pancakes, sausage and potatoes. PLEASE NOTE: this will be DRIVE THRU ONLY due to ongoing Covid concerns. Please come and enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast and help support our dear friend Chris Cifelli.

MANY MANY THANKS,
GREEN TWP. LIONS CLUB

Mental Health and Family Dynamics

Mental health can have a significant impact on family and its dynamic and, when one member suffers from a mental illness, the entire family can feel the effects. There are many different things that can play into the shift of a family dynamic such as stigmas within, frustration and stress from either or both sides, and the formation of closer relationships due to this struggle.

Obviously, such constant stress and concern can create serious family problems. Family life can be unsettled and unpredictable. It becomes very difficult, often impossible, to plan for family outings or vacations or to have even the simplest gathering at home. The needs of the ill member becomes paramount. At the same time, there remain the needs of other family members and the usual problems of everyday life. For siblings this can be very painful. It appears that their needs, their time to have the focus on them, are put off or ignored. In some cases the parents disagree on what should be done or find that caring for the ill person leaves them too exhausted to give much attention to their partner. This very draining experience can create an atmosphere of confusion and resentment, which can result in irreparable damage to the family.

While families often become worn out and discouraged dealing with a loved one who has a mental illness, it is very important that they understand the realization of exhaustion and burnout. Often families have gone down many dead-end streets in an attempt to find assistance, they may be hesitant to try another approach for fear of another failure. They may begin to feel unable to cope with living with an ill person who must be constantly cared for. (In reality, a child who might be old enough to baby-sit in the real world, is not mentally or emotionally capable of staying and caring for him/herself). Hopefully they can develop a plan to allow each family member to take responsibility for different tasks and/or to trade off times for these. But often, they feel trapped and exhausted by the stress of the daily struggle, especially if there is only one family member. Extended family, friends, and even our church family can alleviate the situation by offering to assist with some of the care responsibilities. This may mean taking the person out for a drive, getting to an appointment, bringing in a meal, offering to spend time with the person to relieve the family, etc.

Families may feel completely out of control. They may be at their wit's end, believing that it is impossible to predict what will happen from day to day. This may happen because the ill person has had no limits set on his/her behavior. The person may rule the family as a tyrant who is demanding, threatening, and refusing all efforts to help him/her after unacceptable behavior. This is especially likely to happen when the ill person is unable, because of their illness, to understand the effect of his/her destructive behavior. Families may say they can no longer stand the abusive behavior, the threats, the living in constant fear, and the constant talk of suicide. It is imperative that the family is referred to a mental health medical professional,

along with a social worker, and a support group (refer to NAMI locally for many beneficial groups).

Families need to be reminded that in the light of all the pain they see around them, they are bound to feel helpless at times. They should be able to admit this without **shame**. They should know that in caring and in being there, they are doing something that is vital for their loved one.

One of the greatest difficulties for families in accepting any life altering illness of a loved one is dealing with a changed future and expectations. There is grief that is particularly acute for families where a loved one has a mental illness. This illness impairs the person's ability to function and participate in the normal activities of daily life, and that impairment can be ongoing. Families struggle with accepting the realities of an illness that is treatable, but not curable. This grief was especially difficult in our family watching our loved one lose his friends, one by one, as their lives have less and less in common.

A significant amount of the time, there is one or more family member who lacks understanding of mental illness and the impact it can have on a person. Due to this, family dynamic can change as individuals become more distant as an individual is denying the reality of said mental illness. Mental health can sometimes cause breaks in relationships that once were strong. With the stigma placed on mental health, there is disconnect between family members as these preconceived notions of mental health might influence a person's attitude toward it.

With the lack of understanding about mental illness, there can be an increase in frustration towards one another from either side. No one can truly understand what someone else is feeling this can cause an outsider to be frustrated that they are not being let in or the individual to be frustrated that they are not getting enough or getting too much help. Sometimes mental illnesses can be very difficult to go through from both an insider and outsider perspective and it can cause tension between family members.

While there are risks of a negative impact on the family dynamics due to mental illness, there are also positives that come with it as well. Having family members who have had similar experiences or are understanding towards mental health can bring people closer together and can create stronger relationships as this is a more personal conversation to have. Having a mental illness does not always mean the relationships in one's life will be damaged or even ruined. Connecting with parents, siblings, cousins, guardians, etc. on something so personal can create stronger bonds, increase a sense of safety, and encourage more important conversations that might not have been brought up before.

Mental health, in general, can be an uncomfortable thing to address and there are going to be those who do not understand nor want to. However, this does not mean that you are alone or you are going to ruin relationships. When bringing up mental health with those you are comfortable with, you are going to find out it's much more common than you think! As mentioned in week one's paper, everyone has mental health!

Remember, people with mental health afflictions are all our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is all of our responsibilities to "understand, care for, and love them". Without all of our help, many of these individuals will not thrive or even survive in life. Too many will end up labeled as "bad people, drunks, and druggies" and will end up in prison systems instead of the mental health systems they belong in to get the necessary help they deserve.

If you see a child, a teen, or even an adult that is behaving in an unusual manner, PLEASE do not jump to negative conclusions. Give them the benefit of the doubt and use kind words and actions with them. Be just as sympathetic with their mental illness as you would with someone with cancer or other physical conditions. **They crave love, understanding, and acceptance just as your own family does.** Talk to your children about "bullying" towards "different" children. Explain that not everyone always acts the same but we should be nice and attempt to be friends anyway. Learning to recognize and to help our brothers and sisters with mental challenges, will not only enrich our own personal lives, but keep us connected in our journey with Christ as we were all meant to do.

Enclosed is a flyer for Coffee Connections: NAMI's Family Support Group

Next week's topic will be on "Adult Challenges".

"People at Coffee Connections are able to share experiences, a nonjudgment environment, and everybody is understanding and able to learn and talk with each other."

- Sharon Wyskiel, program specialist



Coffee Connections

NAMI's Family Support Group

Love coffee? Join NAMI of Erie County each Thursday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm for a caffeinated series of family support group sessions.

This group offers a chance to connect with other individuals who have loved ones experiencing mental illness and share your experiences in an intimate and confidential setting.

Sessions are held at the NAMI office located at 1611 Peach Street, Suite 218 or virtually via Zoom.

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 8251 8153

Passcode: 709473

**For more information, call us at 814.456.1773
or go to NAMIERIE.org**

