



# Ogle County Mental Health Board

AGENCY REPORTS FOR FIRST QUARTER 2021



Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling (RSAC) has continued to provide essential services to sexual assault and abuse survivors and their significant others in Ogle, Boone, and Winnebago counties throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. RSAC expanded services to include video and phone counseling in addition to traditional in-person counseling to ensure clients had options. Our Prevention Education team also began offering Erin's Law presentations via streaming for schools that needed that option.

Collaborations with social service agencies also continued in spite of COVID. RSAC staff has maintained roles in the Ogle County Cares Coalition, Youth WORKS board, and has attended meetings with the Ogle County Network Service Providers. Information gathered at these collaborative meetings helps RSAC staff refer survivors to

much needed resources. We have also maintained relationships with local area schools to ensure that youth are receiving the support needed. RSAC is tremendously grateful for these relationships and their understanding of survivors needs.



We are so happy to announce that our Ogle County therapist, Michelle Pauley, will be having a baby boy mid-April! We wish her and her family well! RSAC staff will continue to provide counseling in Ogle County via in person, phone or telehealth for new and existing clients while Michelle is on maternity leave.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)! Please follow us on our Facebook page and share our daily posts. We also want to invite everyone to our online raffle fundraiser, Make



Every Day Count, where you can win up to \$800 in cash! Please visit our website at [RockfordSexualAssaultCounseling.org](http://RockfordSexualAssaultCounseling.org) to participate in our fundraiser as well as learn more about our services and find resources. As a part of SAAM, RSAC is also excited to announce our consent project funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health! As a part of this project, when RSAC Prevention Educators are presenting at area middle and high schools, they will hold drawings for t-shirts with messaging on what consent is and isn't. It's such an important message for our youth to understand!



Family Support Services has remained busy throughout the pandemic. We began offering trainings and sibling workshops in a virtual format. On January 19, we co-hosted a panel consisting of Regional Office of Education #47, Equip for Equality, NICIL, Florissa, and UIC Ogle Extension. The agencies talked about the services they can provide for families. We are waiting for more survey results to come in as to what parents/

professionals would like to see as future topics for trainings.

We have held two sibling workshops during this quarter. A sibling workshop is time for the brothers/sisters who have a sibling with a disability find friendship and have a safe place to talk about their experiences. We talk about the different emotions they may be feeling and teach them skills to help resolve those feelings and give tips on how to talk with their parents. Arts/crafts are a big part of the workshop. All the children who were registered received a "care package" in

the mail with books to help with their emotions and the supplies needed for the crafts.



We will be co-hosting two virtual trainings in April. The first one is "Trauma-Informed Practice: Creating a Safe Haven Classroom" and a mom's retreat: "Soul Collage: Nurturing Yourself in this Challenging Time."



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### **Easterseals-Family Support Services**

**Contact: Patti Mook/Kathleen Kurtz 815.965.5069**

### **Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling:**

**Contact: Erica Engler 815.636.9811**

### **Sinnissippi Centers:**

**Contact: Patrick Phelan 815.284.6611**

Once again this quarter, our major focus has been continuing to provide services via technology to keep our clients and employees safe. Most appointments continue to be through tele-health with limited in-person appointments as needed. Although, by the end of March, we were seeing more clients in-person than in the previous quarter as we continue to watch the data.

We have had success getting staff and our residential clients vaccinated thanks in large part to the Ogle County Health Department.

Over the past several months, Sinnissippi Centers' school-based staff have provided more on-site services to students in their school settings in many of our Ogle County locations. There has also been an increase in requests for school-based services since January. Sinnissippi staff are hoping to provide some small in-person groups to youth this summer if health guidelines permit.

Several of our leadership staff settled into their new roles during this quarter including Chief Operating Officer, Stacie Kemp; Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Annie Fridh; Director of Outpatient Services, Jennifer Thomason; and Director of Specialty Services, Tammy Stewart. We also have a new supervisor identified for the Ogle County Community Support Team (CST), Katie Mitchell, who has now begun her transition into that role.

### **HOPE of Ogle County:**

**Contact: Ruth Carter 815.562.4323**

HOPE of Ogle County is hosting its 7th Annual CincoK in virtual format, May 1-9, 2021. CincoK participants will receive soft t-shirts this year with the statement, Love = Kindness. Walk or run anytime during this week. CincoK teams can be created, as well as donor teams. Registration can be made through the [www.hopedv.org](http://www.hopedv.org) website, Race Entry or through the HOPE of Ogle County Facebook page. All proceeds go towards providing life changing services to survivors of domestic abuse.

Services to adults, teens and children continue to be provided in Polo, Oregon and Rochelle. Virtual support and counseling is also available.

### **Village of Progress:**

**Contact: Brion Brooks 815.732.2126**

The Village just received its second round of vaccines. More than anything else over the past year, the vaccines signal, for us, the beginning of the end of the pandemic.

The Village will still practice social distancing, sanitizing common areas, and mandatory mask wearing. On the outside, nothing changes, but internally, these vaccines change everything.

No longer will we go home each day wondering if the next morning will bring news of someone at the Village contracting the deadly disease. More broadly, there will be less concern that a positive test inside the Village would cause an agency-wide shut down. These huge burdens are suddenly lifted for us.

We are happy to report that, at present, we're able to provide in-person services to about 70% of our people. We are hopeful that in the next few months we'll increase that number even further.

It's often said that you don't know what you're capable of until you are tested. If that's the case, we are proud of how we navigated these treacherous waters and how we've come out of it.... So far!

### **Serenity Hospice & Home:**

**Contact: Lynn Knodle 815.732.2499**

Serenity Hospice is very proud of our Community Clinical Manager, Debra Johnson, who recently received the first Community Hero Award presented by the Oregon Chamber of Commerce and Exelon. She was recognized for stepping forward and being the first to treat our COVID patients.

Most of Serenity staff have now received their second vaccine and in-person attendance at our support groups is slowly growing. We are excited about our new group for young widows which started meeting in February. Also our kids' programming has been given the green light to schedule some summer events including a special day out at Pegasus Special Riders. We are also looking forward to hosting our annual Jonathon Knodle Golf Play Day on June 19<sup>th</sup> in person!

### **LSSI:**

**Contact: Jeremy Hooker 815.284.7796**

As Spring nears, LSSI staff are very busy with program related activities. Both Youth WORKS (violence prevention) and Project LEAD (substance use prevention) are focusing their efforts on community-based projects. Youth WORKS is planning for National Youth Violence Prevention Week (April 12-16th) and Project LEAD is working on Communication Campaigns to address the use of alcohol and marijuana among youth. Project LEAD staff are also looking forward to participation in the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) mid-year conference for continued learning and education. Lastly, the Prevention programs are planning for Prevention Week (May 9-15th), including Take Back Day, which focuses on the safe disposal of prescription medications.

Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS), which serves at-risk, run away, and lockout youth on an emergency basis, also continues to serve youth. The program is responding to crisis calls, but staff have been advised to put every effort into resolving the issue without physical contact whenever possible. When an in-person response is needed, a plan for safety, including personal protective equipment and social distancing, is established. CCBYS also continues to provide counseling services to adolescents and their families through confidential platforms such as "Zoom." If needed, approval can also be sought after to conduct an in-person session for those youth who do not respond well to virtual sessions. These services continue to be offered to promote healthy relationships and placement stability within the home environment.

As LSSI continues to monitor current guidelines for safety, many staff are moving forward with getting the vaccine for covid-19 while continuing to provide the best services possible to residents of Ogle County.