You need only turn on the nightly news to be reminded of the mental health crisis facing today’s young people. According to Daniel Dickstein, MD, FAAP, chief of McLean’s Nancy and Richard Simches Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, providing access to care in an efficient, affordable and equitable way is one of the most pressing issues in child and adolescent mental health. “There are simply not enough clinicians available to work with young people at a time when children and adolescents need mental health support the most,” he said.

That’s why McLean recently launched three new doctoral internship tracks in child and adolescent clinical psychology within its well established and highly competitive psychology internship program. The program offers a final year of training prior to obtaining a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and offers six general adult tracks and one track for adults with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Although the current program offers rotations in a child and adolescent unit, the 2023-2024 training year will be the first time interns can focus their entire training experience on this demographic. The three tracks — the Anxiety/Mood Disorders Track; General Psychopathology Track; and the Emotion Dysregulation and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Track — provide a full year exclusively within child and adolescent clinical programs, primarily for clinical training, but also research.

According to Matthew Schrock, PhD, co-director of Psychology Training, education and training have always been a “pillar of McLean’s mission. And now, more than ever, it’s vitally important to get these new clinicians out into the workplace to alleviate the stress on our mental health system.”

Co-Director Courtney Beard, PhD, agrees. “Our field needs more child-focused clinicians who have been trained at top hospitals. With McLean’s incredible programming and long-standing commitment to training, it makes sense that we should be preparing the next generation of clinicians to work with young people,” she said.

The new tracks will provide more focused and immersive training than prior clinical rotations have offered. “So many of McLean’s child and adolescent clinical programs are nationally recognized for

"So many of McLean's child and adolescent clinical programs are nationally recognized for offering gold-standard care, which means our interns will get the most up-to-date clinical training in the world.”

Fairlee C. Fabrett, PhD
Coordinator, Child and Adolescent Track and Director, Post-Baccalaureate Child and Adolescent Clinical Fellowship

Continued on page 4
DEAR FRIENDS

Welcome to the spring 2023 edition of Horizons. I’m sure you will notice our new look, which reflects our deepening integration with Mass General Brigham, our parent healthcare system. As its largest provider of behavioral and mental health services, McLean holds a special place within Mass General Brigham. And with the power of a fully integrated healthcare system behind us, McLean is leading the way in delivering coordinated, patient-centered mental healthcare.

In the spirit of moving forward, this edition highlights new initiatives both on the philanthropy front as well as in training opportunities for young psychologists. You’ll read about three new child and adolescent intern positions – each one focusing on a different area within our Simches Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We will welcome our first class this summer.

We’ve previously shared news about our community fundraising platform – Donor Drive – and with nearly a year under our belt, we’re pleased to write about two families who used the platform with great success. We hope their experiences might inspire others to try it out.

Finally, we offer stories about several enthusiastic and committed McLean supporters. One who has worked with us for more than a decade to ensure her gifts have maximum impact. The others are young adults new to philanthropy who have turned their gratitude for life-changing treatment into a passion for supporting McLean.

Happy spring and thank you!

Lori Etringer
Senior Vice President and
Chief Development Officer

Community Fundraising Takes Hold at McLean

As two grateful families recently discovered, you don’t need to be a professional fundraiser to raise money for McLean. With support from the hospital’s online DonorDrive platform, the Smith and Merhige families turned their passion for helping those with mental illness into dollars supporting McLean’s mission. In positive and meaningful ways, these two families, and many more, are embracing the idea of community fundraising and creating impact in the process.

Organic fundraising keeps a memory alive

For George Smith and his family, raising money for McLean was a way to honor his brother Andrew, who died in 2011 after struggling for years with schizophrenia. In 2016, the Smiths provided initial funding for McLean’s WellSpace program, which offers support and education to young adults who have experienced episodes of psychosis. “One of the things we realized about Andrew was how desperately lonely he was during his illness. WellSpace fosters a sense of community in a welcoming and organic way,” George said.

The Smiths have continued to support WellSpace since its founding, both with individual donations and by raising money among friends and family. The occasional group walks and email fundraising campaigns they fostered “have brought people who cared about Andrew together around a common cause,” said George. “Raising money for WellSpace has been a way for our family to keep Andrew’s memory alive.”

With the rollout last year of McLean’s DonorDrive platform, the Smiths found that raising money for the hospital was “much easier than doing it on our own,” George said. So easy, in fact, that the family was able to raise more than $15,000 for WellSpace in a few months. The new platform simplifies the entire fundraising process – from helping fundraisers create a personal campaign page to tracking those who have donated. “DonorDrive is a great thing for McLean,” George said. “It was easy to set up, easy to use, and easy for those who donated.”

“Organic, personal fundraising is a wonderful way to ensure that those who loved Andrew are honoring and remembering him.”

George Smith

George and Katie Smith
The Smiths plan to continue using the platform to raise money for WellSpace. “Organic, personal fundraising is a wonderful way to ensure that those who loved Andrew are honoring and remembering him,” George said. “We’ve created a social network around talking about Andrew and the challenges he faced while also raising money for an important cause.”

A party with impact

The Merhige family also latched on to the new platform post-pandemic when they decided it was time to take stock of and celebrate their good fortune after more than two years of navigating challenging times. Members of the Merhige family have had their struggles with anxiety, and these became heightened during the pandemic; one of their children participated in a McLean program — which had an “immediate impact” on him. “He embraced the program and did very well,” said John Merhige.

Throughout their children’s challenges, John and his wife Mary-Michael were acutely aware that they were among the fortunate ones. “As much as our family was struggling, we knew we were blessed to be able to get our kids the help they needed. Too many families don’t have that ability,” said Mary-Michael.

By the fall of 2022, the Merhiges’ “boat of crisis had steadied. It was still rocking, but we were starting to feel human again,” Mary-Michael said. “We were ready to celebrate our lives together, while also recognizing that we’d been through a major ordeal.” After much discussion — and with their three teenagers’ enthusiastic buy-in — the family decided to host a “120-Year Celebration” to commemorate John and Mary-Michael’s 50th birthdays and their 20th wedding anniversary (50-50-20). “We knew we wanted to have a party, so we decided ‘let’s have a party with impact,’” John said. In lieu of gifts, the Merhiges asked partygoers to donate to McLean.

One of the first families to use McLean’s DonorDrive platform, the Merhiges had great success with it. They raised more than $13,000 for the hospital, targeted specifically at assisting those families without the resources to obtain help. Equally important, they raised awareness about mental health. “When you look at our donor page, so many people wrote heartfelt messages, thanking us for being so open,” said Mary- Michael. “For us, our personal fundraising effort was about acknowledging the challenges and loneliness families face when dealing with mental health challenges.”

On a beautiful fall night in September, John and Mary-Michael, along with many friends and family, danced to a three-piece Irish band, took a collective deep breath, and celebrated for the first time in many months. As Mary-Michael said in her hopeful and upbeat toast, “We want to thank you for your support — and not just for us, but, looking outward, for those kids whose families may not have the resources to help them.”

Whether you want to throw a party, run a marathon, honor the struggles of a loved one, commemorate a life, raise awareness or simply support McLean in a meaningful way, the DonorDrive platform allows you to organize your community-based fundraising with ease, all while advancing McLean’s mission to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

If you have questions about sponsoring a DonorDrive campaign, please visit https://mclean.donordrive.com/ or email Ben at bogilvy@mgb.org.
Meet McLean’s First Class of Child and Adolescent Interns

Rebecca Wolenski will be joining McLean in the Anxiety and Mood Disorders Track. Wolenski is currently a doctoral student in the clinical science program at Florida International University and is interested in metacognitive and media-influenced factors that may contribute to depression and anxiety in youth.

Michael O’Brien is a doctoral student at Boston College studying counseling psychology. He currently works part-time with the Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital in Worcester, MA. O’Brien will be McLean’s first intern in McLean SouthEast’s adolescent inpatient, residential and partial hospital units.

Genesis Vergara will be joining McLean from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. where she is a doctoral student in clinical psychology and works in the school’s Suicide Prevention Lab. Vergara will be filling the Child/Adolescent Emotion Dysregulation and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy intern position. Her work primarily will be with McLean’s 3East DBT continuum.

If you would like to support professional training opportunities like this one, please contact Jen Meyers at jmeyers4@mgb.org.
When long-time supporter Ann O’Keefe talks about McLean, she uses words like “scale,” “impact” and “sustainability.” Ann is both eloquent and elegant in her approach to philanthropy and has honed her efforts into a process that both speaks to her own passions and provides maximum impact for McLean.

Ann comes from a philanthropic family; her parents started a foundation and since their deaths, Ann has been a careful steward of her family’s legacy. She refers to her parents as clever, informed and involved donors — she might as well be describing herself.

Approaching each year as a new challenge, Ann has supported McLean for more than a decade with intelligence and enthusiasm; always searching for something that feels like the perfect storm of joy, innovation and impact. She rolls up her sleeves and gets to work meeting with clinicians and researchers, asking probing questions, reading up on new initiatives, and listening to presentations. “I’ve been all over McLean with my unflagging partner Lori Etringer [McLean’s chief development officer],” said Ann. “I learn so much every year and Lori makes the process fun while we work together to answer my annual question ‘What are we doing this year?’”

“I’m always looking for that great idea — one that needs a kick-start to get it off the ground so that it’s eligible for other funding or can become sustainable and won’t depend on my support for the long term,” explained Ann.

Ann’s own interests and background intersect perfectly with McLean’s mission. After attaining both a BA and an MA in psychology, she wanted to become a researcher, but “I was unable to accept a spot in a PhD program because I was suffering from alcoholism at the time,” she said. Now, with 34 years of sobriety under her belt, she has raised two children and had a successful career. She feels that her partnership with McLean allows her to continue the education she was unable to complete years ago.

There is an impressive list of programs at McLean that have benefited from Ann’s informed philanthropy. Two of those stand out for her. A decade ago, she met Dost Öngür, MD, PhD, chief of McLean’s Division of Psychotic Disorders. Öngür wanted to launch an outpatient program specializing in early recognition and treatment for young adults ages 18 to 30 who had recently experienced a first psychotic episode. Öngür believed deeply that intervention is critical during the time immediately following the onset of psychosis. Ann partnered with her brother in providing the initial resources to pilot the program over its first two years. Today, the OnTrack program is an enormously successful service that helps patients find meaning and control in their lives at a critical time in their recovery.

Ann was thrilled that Öngür’s OnTrack idea expanded into another program: STAR (Support, Treatment and Resilience). STAR is run by double-board certified psychiatrist Esra Guvenek-Cokol, MD, and delivers outpatient care to teens and young adults ages 14-25 who are at risk of developing a psychotic illness.

McLean’s unique Spirituality and Mental Health Program (SMHP) is another one of Ann’s favorites. After reading a McLean newsletter article in 2015 about the burgeoning program led by David Rosmarin, PhD, ABPP, Ann was excited to learn more. Rosmarin’s research showed that clinicians were often wary of discussing spirituality with their patients, but that many patients had a desire to incorporate their spiritual beliefs into their treatment. It was an ‘aha’ moment for Ann who promptly reached out to discuss how she could help.

“The SMHP cuts across every diagnostic category. I’m not sure that any other intervention is so broadly applicable in this way. Spirituality means something different to everyone and is a vital part of recovery for so many,” explained Ann. “I started talking about spiritual tools with my kids when they were 3 or 4 years old. They not only understood what I was saying, they still use those tools as college students to manage their own stress.”

To date, Ann’s philanthropy has topped a million dollars in support for McLean. Her focus now is on the critical need for good, accessible and ongoing mental health treatment for children and adolescents. She understands that this demographic has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and, this year, focused much of her giving to support the hospital’s priorities within the Nancy and Richard Simches Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

“A day doesn’t go by without being bombarded with the huge need for mental healthcare for our youth,” said Ann. “I’m delighted that McLean is tackling this now by increasing beds dedicated for younger patients, putting resources toward training child and adolescent-focused clinicians, creating better environments for care and proactively laying the groundwork to do more for this important demographic.”

With her penchant for seeding early-stage initiatives, Ann jumped at the chance to support a new cohort of child- and adolescent psychology trainees (see “Tackling the Mental Health Crisis Among Young People — One Intern at a Time” on pp.1 & 4). She appreciates that McLean is so multi-faceted and dynamic and follows along, eager to ask once again: “What are we doing this year?”

“A day doesn’t go by without being bombarded with the huge need for mental healthcare for our youth.”

Ann O’Keefe

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

What Are We Doing This Year?

— One Intern at a Time” on pp.1 & 4). She appreciates that McLean is so multi-faceted and dynamic and follows along, eager to ask once again: “What are we doing this year?”

“A day doesn’t go by without being bombarded with the huge need for mental healthcare for our youth.”

Ann O’Keefe
A Rollercoaster of a Journey: Anna Rittenburg’s Personal Experience Fuels Her Ride for Mental Health

Anna Rittenburg has always been a lively, active person, but shortly into the COVID lockdown in the spring of 2020, her normally high energy level became increasingly grandiose and manic. “I got really wrapped up in existential concepts and the idea of information spread through social media. I stopped sleeping and was soon extremely paranoid and suspicious of everyone around me,” Anna explained. Deeply concerned about their daughter’s behavior, Anna’s parents drove her to the emergency room, where she was transferred to a local hospital. A few days later, she was admitted to McLean’s Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder Inpatient Program (AB2), a short-term unit designed for people in crisis or those experiencing severe or risky symptoms.

At the time, Anna didn’t recognize the severity of her illness or her disconnect with reality, but she now knows that her time at McLean likely saved her life. During Anna’s inpatient stay at AB2, her care team stabilized her with medication, and worked closely with her and her family to help get her safely through her psychosis to the other side. After four weeks, Anna was discharged with a bipolar 1 diagnosis. The expert, compassionate care Anna received at McLean “was unparalleled. Heather, my nurse practitioner, and Emma, my social worker, didn’t flinch at my behavior and knew how to help me at my level. They treated me with such respect and kindness,” she said.

For a long time, Anna did not want to believe she had bipolar disorder, nor did she want medication; she didn’t want her life to change. But working with her team at AB2 — and over many months after her discharge — Anna came to accept her diagnosis and learn to make the necessary adjustments. Now, when asked whether she’d change things if she could, she replies, “For me? No, I really wouldn’t. I am still me, what you see and what you don’t, and I have learned so much. While it is still somewhat unpredictable, I feel like I know how to manage this.”

Anna now understands that her mental illness is largely “chemical” and that both medication and therapy must work together to fuel her recovery and keep her stable. “McLean gave me that understanding,” she said. “They helped me recognize that both are important in managing my disorder.”

Now, nearly three years after that first trip to the emergency room, Anna is doing well — a “miracle” she attributes to her care team at McLean and the unwavering support of her family and friends. Anna works at a large tech consulting company and enjoys writing, running and morning rides on her Peloton. In her free time, she also directs her high energy and passion into active pursuits that give back, including running a wellness and community program at her company and training for her second Ride for Mental Health to raise money for McLean.

Anna learned about the ride through a McLean newsletter, and, in June 2022, she and her mother participated in their first Ride for Mental Health. Anna raised more than $12,000 and was one of The Ride’s top fundraisers. She hopes to top that number this year. She said The Ride has inspired her to channel her energy and own experience with mental illness into “something positive” to help others going through similar hard times. “The Ride is an amazing event, with everyone working together and rallying around each other to support such an important cause,” Anna said.

“I have been on a rollercoaster of a mental health journey for so long. With ‘The Ride,’ I am finally on the side of supporting others.”

Anna Rittenburg
What Is “The Ride”?  

Started in 2017 by New York attorney and avid cyclist Mac Dorris in memory of his son Eric, the 2023 Ride for Mental Health takes place in New Paltz, NY, on June 24 & 25 and includes 14-, 25-, 50-, and 100-mile cycling routes, suitable for all skill levels. Since its founding, the Ride has raised more than $1 million for McLean. “Mac and his team have created a wonderful event that not only raises much-needed funds for mental health, but also brings together a community dedicated to eliminating the stigma of mental illness through education and open conversation,” said Scott L. Rauch, MD, McLean’s president and psychiatrist in chief.

Join Team McLean as a cyclist, volunteer or supporter.

- Learn more about the 2023 Ride at https://www.rideformentalhealth.org/
- Register to ride at https://www.bikereg.com/the-ride-for-mental-health
- Sign up to Volunteer at https://www.rideformentalhealth.org/volunteer
- Support the cyclists on Team McLean at https://www.pledgereg.com/4476/Team/21142

For more information about joining or supporting Team McLean, please contact Sally at sspiers1@mgb.org.
Supporting the Future of Mental Healthcare

Chris Arce found McLean almost by accident. He’d had his own struggles with mental illness during high school and college and was misdiagnosed more than once. After nearly three and a half years of taking anti-depressants that did not help, Chris finally received a bipolar disorder diagnosis, found the treatment he needed, and today says he feels the best he’s ever felt.

During his journey, however, he had some upsetting encounters. Before he discovered McLean, he recalled overhearing a clinician at a local counseling center saying she wouldn’t be willing to treat a patient with borderline personality disorder because they were too difficult. Chris was both shocked and unsettled by what he felt was an unhelpful and fundamentally stigmatizing attitude. This experience prompted him to learn more about mental healthcare as a field, which led him to McLean.

“I was immediately drawn to what I found,” said Chris. “McLean just felt different — more empathetic and compassionate.” He decided to direct his philanthropy to McLean and eventually accepted an invitation to attend a weekly Grand Rounds presentation.

“The lecturers were brilliant, but accessible. They humanized mental illness and were completely person-focused, you could just tell that they cared deeply,” said Chris. “Their attitudes were in such stark contrast to my own past experiences that I was awestruck and knew that I wanted to support McLean for the rest of my life.”

Chris is now a leadership annual giving donor and member of the Mary Belknap Society. He also plans to share his story through McLean’s Deconstructing Stigma project.

“McLean gives me hope for the future of mental health care,” he explained. “I’m excited to support McLean so that young people who are struggling like I did will get more accurate diagnoses and better treatment.”

For more information about leadership annual giving, please contact Ben at bogilvy@mgb.org