

# THE SPECTRUM

Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Chicago

## We Need YOUR Help!

Are you a student? Researcher? Writer? Have some thoughts you want to share about your experience? Submit an article for our upcoming Spectrum! Send your writing to: [Margaux@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:Margaux@dbsa-gc.org) with the subject "Spectrum" and we'll review your article and contact you for our next issue!

### Behind the Board

**Margie Mitchell, DBSA-GC Secretary**



#### Facts about Margie:

- I am a lifelong Chicago White Sox fan
- I enjoy traveling with family
- I love to read

*How did you hear about DBSA?*

- I heard about DBSA from a friend who invited me to go to a meeting and see if it would be a good fit.

(next page)

PLEASE JOIN THE DBSA-GC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT OUR ANNUAL

## DBSA-GC HOLIDAY PARTY

12.14.2020 | 6PM-7PM CT  
Zoom Meeting ID: 899-7461-6147

Bingo, prizes, holiday trivia, most festive dressed contest, and more!

RSVP TO [MARGAUX@DBSA-GC.ORG](mailto:MARGAUX@DBSA-GC.ORG) BY 12/11 & JOIN THE ZOOM AT 6PM CT DRESSED IN YOUR MOST FESTIVE HOLIDAY OUTFIT!

## A Message from the Board

Happy holidays from the DBSA Greater Chicago Board! What a year it has been. We are grateful to highlight our accomplishments this year together, in the midst of a challenging and uncertain year. We are grateful for our members who keep us going and our partners who have helped us do incredible things in the virtual world to bring us socially connected as a community. We are closing out the year with a virtual holiday party (12/14) with bingo, trivia, and prizes! Please join us and come dressed in your most festive holiday attire to win a prize! We will also have more in store for next year, offering a one on one buddy program and we are aiming for more peer groups, so check out the details below. This newsletter also includes navigating winter blues, giving Tuesday (12/1) and closing with gratitude.

*What got you interested in volunteering for DBSA-GC?*

- I became interested in volunteering for DBSA because I really appreciated all the help and support that I had received over the years. I wanted to give back, learn more about the organization, and become more involved with the community.

*What do you like most about DBSA-GC?*

- I like the sense of community and how supportive and generous people are and the fact that I feel understood.

*What are your goals for 2021?*

- My goals for 2021 are to read more, spend more time outside, and stay connected with friends and family no matter what the world may look like next year.

## Meet our Newly Elected Board Member, LaNae Edwards!

Since we recently elected a new board member, we want to tell you all about our great addition!

*Fun Facts about LaNae:*

- I'm an adoptee and have a total of 25 (YES, 2-5) siblings! 17 biological, 3 adoptive and 5 foster.

- I'm an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran and served honorably for 2.5 years in the WA Army National Guard as a 92A Automated Logistics Supply Specialist. During my service, I was stationed at Fort Lewis, WA and assigned to rear detachment for the 792nd CM Co.



- I LOVE to travel, and have visited 44 out of 50 states and 9 other countries, including: Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, Honduras, Canada, Iceland, Jamaica and the Bahamas

*How did you hear about DBSA?*

I was introduced to Douglas Hurst, Carla DeFloria and Kathy Bernstein from DBSA National via partnership on a Women Veterans of Color Peer Support initiative project with Illinois Joining Forces, the public-private military non-profit where I currently serve as the Business Operations Analyst. I went through Peer Support Specialist training in January of this year, and began facilitating a monthly Women Veterans of Color Support Group and weekly Veteran Support Group, shortly after. I was later connected to DBSA-GC President, Bridget Maul, by Michael Pollock and Carla DeFloria through the DBSA National Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

*What got you interested in volunteering for DBSA?*

My interest in volunteering stems from my own background and lived experiences. I'm very passionate about not only sharing my own story and path to wellness, but also connecting individuals to the plethora of resources that DBSA has to offer.

*What do you like most about DBSA?*

What I like most about DBSA is the authenticity and connectedness of its leadership. I have met some amazing individuals that have not only added to my network of support but have become family.

*What are your goals for 2021?*

My goals for 2021 and beyond are to focus on supporting the efforts of the recently formed partnership between DBSA-GC and the Chicago Urban League to raise awareness amongst individuals in the African-American/Black community about DBSA peer support services on the city’s South Side; in conjunction with CUL’s COVID-19 Community Health Center. I would also like to assist with developing programming and resource materials that are more culturally competent and highlight community resources which focus on the unique mental health needs and challenges of the Black community.

## 2020 Key Highlights and Close Out

*Margaux Shain, DBSA-GC Vice President*

Despite social distancing from the pandemic, our DBSA Greater Chicago chapter quickly identified ways to break down isolation and bring members together through Zoom peer groups, while taking creative liberty to offer virtual sessions to help improve our mental wellbeing. Below is a snapshot of all the activities we rolled out in 2020. We are so proud that many members have and continue to take advantage of these free offerings. The Board would not have been able to do this without our wonderful facilitators, as well as session experts. Thank you all!

### DBSA Greater Chicago Key Activities During COVID



STARTING APRIL 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – CURRENT = 32 weeks of virtual engagement with our members and DBSA HQ

Virtual Connection



- Weekly Zoom Events for our members– Music Therapy, Meditation, Cooking Class, Mindfulness, Q/A with Chief Medical Director/Psychiatrist, CBT, Brian Training
- Connecting with DBSA - Weekly chats with DBSA HQ’s and regional chapters to share best practices and troubleshoot issues (Zoom, peer support facilitator fatigue)

Support Groups



- Transitioned all peer support groups to a virtual setting, leveraging current facilitators
- Per survey feedback, set up two additional peer support groups, one for the elderly community and a weekend group
- Provide additional assistance to members who are struggling with isolation or other concerns

Newsletter



- Weekly newsletter includes Zoom session details, mental health news, positive news in the community and local events. A large focus is on diversity and inclusion.
- A mid-year survey was included to solicit feedback on programming and messaging, which was enhanced
- Continued quarterly Spectrum communication

## Recap of the World Mental Health Day Virtual Event – 10/10/20

*Margaux Shain, Vice President DBSA-GC*

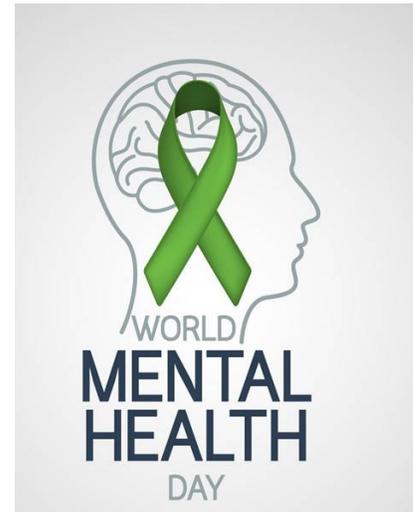
This year in October we held our annual fundraiser, honoring World Mental Health Day. We were so excited that many of you joined, having around 60 people. The 3 hour virtual session composed of mindfulness, meditation, music therapy, education on drug therapy and a Q/A with our Chief Medical Advisor. We raised about \$500, which 100% of the donations will be reinvested in our community to advance mental health efforts. If you haven't checked out our World Mental Health Day video and resources check them out here: [link](#)

Just a couple of nice notes we received about the event, thank you! This made our day.

*"I was so pleased that I joined your chapter today for your World Mental Health Day program! You included so many aspects that I was really engaged for the whole effort!"*

*"I wanted to say thank you for moderating such a fantastic program in Saturday for World Mental Health Day. This was my first exposure to the organization and I am amazed by all the efforts of the board, volunteers, program and presenters. I am so impressed and took so much from all the speakers. I am also eager to participate in some of the upcoming regularly scheduled virtual events."*

*"The chapter is very impressive and I think the team should be very proud of themselves and their efforts."*



## Giving Tuesday – A Global Generosity Movement: Tuesday, December 1, 2020

Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Over the past seven years, it has grown into a global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

- Support DBSA-GC on Amazon Smile – a portion of your purchases will be donated to DBSA: [link](#)
- Other ways to donate to DBSA-GC: <https://www.dbsa-gc.org/donate>, with many different levels of giving: one time donations, memorial gifts, payroll deductions, sponsorships, affiliated events, planned giving



# 2021 Activities to Stay Connected

## New! 2021 Buddy Project for DBSA – Greater Chicago

**Key Objective:** To supplement the peer support groups with an opportunity to connect people one on one with similar interests and experiences to serve as a check in buddy, to support each other and reduce feelings of loneliness or isolation. The DBSA Greater Chicago Board hopes this project creates a stronger community of support among its members during evolving times.

**Who:** Open to anyone in the DBSA-Greater Chicago community (note – we could consider opening it to nation-wide chapters?)

**How:** Sign up in this quick survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRVDP6H>

- Please sign up by filling out the quick survey. Please complete by 12/23/2020
- The DBSA Board will finalize matches and announce pairs in December
- An orientation will occur in January, led by the DBSA Board to discuss expectations, such as quarterly check in's and best practices for being a good buddy
- DBSA Board will reach out for quarterly check in's with matches to ensure they are being supported through; use surveys and meetings if necessary
- Buddies will decide for themselves on the cadence for their check in and by which means (text, call, video, mix). For example: Check in every Monday of the month with a phone call



### When:

- Survey and matching – November to December 2020
- Orientation – early January 2021
- Kick off will start in January 2021 – December 2021

**Point of Contact:** Margaux Shain, [Margaux@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:Margaux@dbsa-gc.org)

## Peer Facilitator Training and Potentially New Peer Groups in Q1 2021

If you are interested in getting training for a peer group facilitator, please reach out to [Margaux@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:Margaux@dbsa-gc.org). We have several interested individuals that will be going through the training to offer new peer support groups in Q1 2021 so stay tuned!

# Hot Topics This Season

## Safely Celebrate the Holidays During COVID-19:

Helping your family cope and guidance on Family gatherings: [Click here for the article](#)

### Tips for safely enjoying the holidays this year:

- Wear a mask (even around visiting family) — and make sure to wear it properly; it must cover your nose, mouth and chin to be effective.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing and before you eat.
- **[Get tested](#)** if you have symptoms and/or have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and quarantine as needed; close contact is defined as being within six feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period.

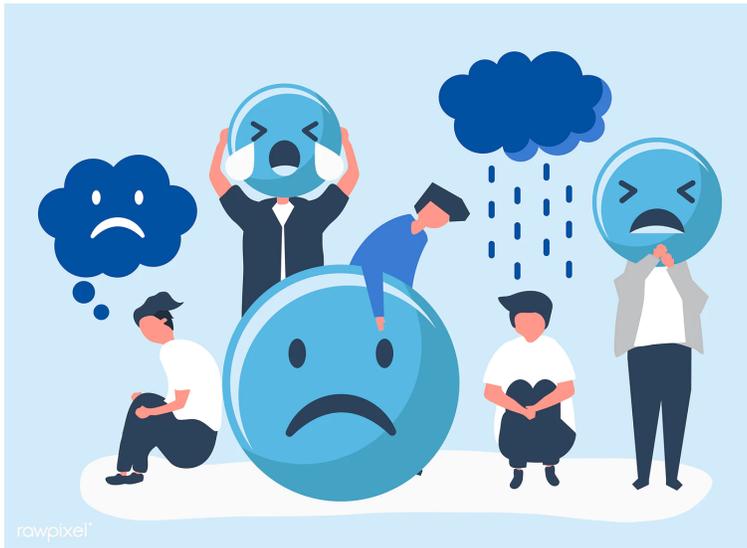


- Travel only if necessary. If you do travel, take precautions to protect yourself and others. If you need to travel by air, it can be done safely, says Lin. “When everyone is following masking rules and distancing, the risk is low. Airplanes use filtered air and have air circulation patterns that reduce the risk of infection.” But watch for risk if you can’t social distance on or off the plane. He recommends checking the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) for what to consider before traveling.
- Thinking of taking the kids to see Santa? You can avoid the crowds and the lines by arranging a personal phone call instead and/or mailing a letter to Santa.



- Try a new volunteer effort you can do from home, such as making comfort blankets. Involve your children, parents, siblings or neighbors to create a sense of togetherness while also making a greater impact.
- Love watching football with your family or friends? Host a virtual watch party. It’s as simple as putting the phone on speaker while you and a friend or two watch in your own homes or you connect with a few others via a video call.
- Order a make-at-home meal from your favorite restaurant.
- Find a holiday tradition you still can do this year, even if it’s as simple as watching a holiday movie or making a gingerbread house.
- Learn to prepare a new recipe or watch and discuss a film or book via a webinar — on your own or with relatives or friends joining in at the same time. From museums and community organizations

to restaurants and gourmet shops, non-profits and businesses are organizing any number of virtual tours, events, discussion groups and tasting parties.



## Managing Winter Blues

Short days and blustery cold temps can make everyone yearn for spring. But winter is far worse for people with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). [Read more from Rush University here:](#)

### *Seasonal Affective Disorder fast facts*

- Women and young adults ages 18 to 30 are more likely to suffer with SAD than men and older adults, respectively.

- On average, about 6 percent Americans (most commonly in Northern climates) experience SAD, while about 14 percent of Americans experience the winter blues.
- Rates of SAD vary depending on where you live. About 9% of Americans who live near the Canadian border experience SAD symptoms, compared to just 1.5% of people in Florida.

*Here are four ways to get a leg up on the winter blues and SAD:*

1. Recognize the signs
2. Don't ignore your symptoms
3. Find a treatment that works for you
4. Embrace a healthy lifestyle

## Family Involvement in Mental Health Journey

*DBSA-GC Member submission*

A loved one recently went through back-to-back acute stays at an inpatient institution for a mental illness. I hope to share my experience as a family member who also happens to be a medical student to describe what went well in this encounter. A successful family meeting was able to transform our family attitude from being frustrated, confused, and feeling hopeless to reassured and supported, with a better understanding of what we could do to help. In the family meeting, we were so impressed with how the care team took charge of the conversation. [The social worker] crafted what she said and would go on to neither deny nor give into the reality constructed by our family member's psychosis. She maneuvered the conversation to uncover the depth of the delusions as well as how they made our loved one feel. At the

same time, she aligned herself with our loved one so as to build trust.

As the care team debriefed with us after the family meeting, the social worker shared [that] the focus [of acute inpatient hospitalizations] is to stabilize the patient so they are no longer a harm to self or others [and] does not necessitate that they leave the inpatient setting without any symptoms. The goal is for the patient to be functional while possibly retaining a temporary or permanent new baseline.

Another lesson she highlighted is every family gets to decide how much of a role they play in their loved one's mental health journey – [which] could include buying time until [their loved ones] finally break through the delusions while continuing to see a psychiatrist and a therapist in the outpatient setting. An example of this was having rules like limiting phone and computer to [oversee] behaviors better. It was very important for our family to have all family members present and [have] the care team coalesce around common goals and shared decisions. All of us were excited about the suggestion made about asking family friends or hiring help to assist with giving medications, providing companionship and ensuring proper nutrition. We now recognize the amazing people who do this tough job and care for our family members at their most vulnerable.



# The Spectrum

Thank you for reading!! Got Spectrum Newsletter Feedback? Do you like what you are reading and/or do you want more? We would love to hear what's on your mind. Please reach out to us if there are topics and ideas you would like to include or share in the next quarterly Spectrum. Anything goes – events, memorials, celebrations, recognition, thank you's, etc.

## *2021 Spectrum Schedule*

Q1: Spring Spectrum: Feb-Mar

Q2: May Mental Health Awareness

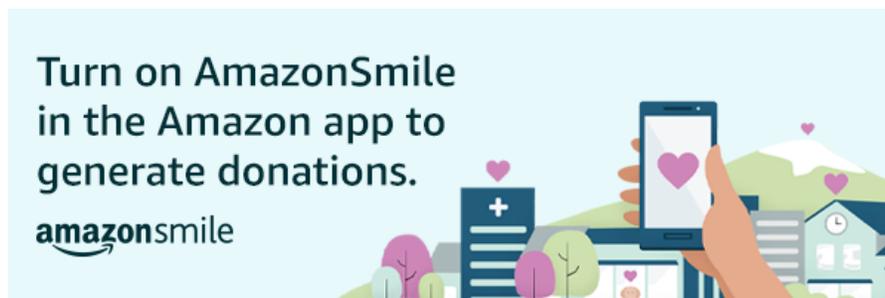
Q3: Aug-Sept

Q4: Nov-Dec

If you'd like to submit an article, event, celebration, recognition, etc. to be included in our Spectrum, please submit to [Margaux@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:Margaux@dbsa-gc.org) and we'll be happy to review!

## *Get in Touch with Us*

If you are feeling alone, please know we're here to support you. Your recovery matters to us. If you're experiencing a difficult time, please reach out and we'll do what we can to help you get back on track. Please join us for our virtual peer lead support groups. We have a group on Sunday evenings at 7pm, Wednesday evenings at 7pm, and we've added a senior citizen's group on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at 7pm. All groups are currently on Zoom. For questions on our peer lead virtual support group or anything else on you mind to get more involved, please reach out to us at: [wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org](mailto:wecanhelp@dbsa-gc.org) and visit [dbsa-gc.org](http://dbsa-gc.org). We'd love to speak with you and build our community foundation stronger.



## Amazon Smile

Shopping online? Support DBSA-GC by shopping with Amazon Smile! At NO CHARGE to you, just choose DBSA-GC as your preferred charity and a portion of your purchases are donated directly to us every time you shop on Amazon! Follow this [LINK](#) to shop on Amazon and AmazonSmile gives back to DBSA-GC! Thank you.

# Appreciation Spotlight from the DBSA GC Board

*Judy Sturm, DBSA-GC Vice President*

So often our mailboxes are full of pleas from a multitude of charities. Some we have supported in the past, some not, most are worthy, but the truth is that no one can possibly donate to all!

DBSA-GC was recently informed of a very loving, generous gift from someone who included us in her will. We were so touched that we helped her and perhaps her family. It is such an honor to receive this affirmation and gift from someone who thought our chapter was and continues to be so meaningful. As a volunteer Board, we appreciate all the engagement and support we get from attendance at our events to financial gifts. To donate to DBSA-GC click here: <https://www.dbsa-gc.org/donate>, with many different levels of giving: one time donations, memorial gifts, payroll deductions, sponsorships, affiliated events, planned giving. Make a tax-deductible donation to support DBSA-GCs work to provide hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people who have mood disorders. Your gift will help keep DBSA-GC run support groups, mental health education events, and community outreach in Greater Chicagoland. To donate to DBSA-GC, visit our PayPal by clicking [HERE](#) (Paypal account not needed to contribute, debit and credit cards accepted).

In closing, we wish you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season! Take care of yourself and make time to do things that feel good. We hope to see you virtually at the 12/14 holiday party and in virtual sessions! -Warm Regards, **DBSA Greater Chicago Board**

## Stay safe, be kind to yourself and to others.

- DBSA Greater Chicago Board of Directors