



## Honoring Rosalynn Carter's Work to End Mental Health Stigma

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, who passed away on December 19, was a forerunner for the rights of people with mental illness. She and President Jimmy Carter formed The Carter Center dedicated to improving the quality of life for people at home and in the developing world through programs to alleviate suffering and advance human rights. One of Mrs. Carter's priorities was to reduce the stigma of mental illness and improve the lives of individuals who experience mental health challenges.

The Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition' mission reflects Mrs. Carter's trailblazing work to reduce stigma. Sharing stories about struggles and successes of people with mental illness reduces stigma and encourage people to get the help they need.

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Mark Nowak, Director of Marketing for BryLin Hospital says that Mrs. Carter's advocacy has changed the way mental illness is viewed.

“Mrs. Rosalynn Carter's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people with mental illness has left an indelible mark on the field of mental health advocacy. Her tireless efforts to reduce stigma, expand access to care, and champion evidence-based treatments have transformed the way we understand and address mental health challenges,” said Nowak.

“Her work has not only impacted countless individuals and families, but it has also paved the way for a more just and compassionate society,” he said.

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## Mrs. Carter's official biography from the Carter Center highlights her significant accomplishments.\*

★ Carter established the Carter Center's Mental Health Program to combat stigma and discrimination against people with mental illnesses and promote improved mental health care in the United States and abroad.

★ She chaired the Carter Center Mental Health Task Force to influence public policy; hosted an annual gathering of national mental health leaders to foster greater consensus on pivotal national policy issues; and established the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism to encourage accurate, in-depth reporting about mental health issues.

★ Recognizing the toll that caring for a loved one with mental illness has on a family, Mrs. Carter founded the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers (RCI) at Georgia Southwestern State University to support those who selflessly cared for others. Initially helping caregivers in Georgia through direct service programs, today it serves all family caregivers, who number over 40 million in the United States. Under Mrs. Carter's leadership, the RCI has increased public awareness of caregiver needs, advanced public and social policies to support caregivers, and become a catalyst for change.



## LOCAL MAN REFLECTS ON MRS. CARTER'S LEGACY

**William Pierce, a Buffalo native, and management consultant was a fellow at the Carter Center from 2016-2017 while a graduate student studying public health at Emory University. During his fellowship, he had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Carter and witness her dedication to improving the lives of others.**

"Mrs. Carter was very active at The Carter Center, and made a point to meet fellows, interns, and staff," Pierce recalls.

"She was very involved in developing mental health programs."

One of her priorities was eliminating the stigma of mental illness and advocating for people with mental illness and their families.

"Word choice was very important to her when it came to discussing mental health," Pierce said. "She didn't like the word crazy; it was too blunt and encouraged negative stereotypes. She was a strong advocate and would respectfully and politely ask for words to be changed."

Mrs. Carter's work also affected the way the topic of mental health is covered in the media. Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism offers journalism fellowships to support and encourage accurate and better-informed reporting on mental health and substance use issues.

"Carter fellows publish in prominent newspapers and have been awarded prestigious journalism prizes," Pierce said.

The Language Guide for Reporting on Mental Health is the go-to style guide for reporters covering mental health and substance use, providing guidelines that aim to avoid stereotypes and reduce stigma. Visit [mentalhealthjournalism.org](http://mentalhealthjournalism.org) for more information on this project. ■

## NEW MEMBER



Charlie Health's virtual Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) looks forward to partnering and collaborating with other providers, organizations, and community members to provide care to clients (ages 11–33). "Our clinical program is reimagining the delivery of evidence-based, trauma-informed mental health treatment. We're able to provide young people and families with an appropriate level of care for their needs, dramatically reducing rates of emergency room visits and admissions to inpatient care facilities." Dr. Caroline Fenkel, DSW, LCSW Chief Clinical Officer & Co-Founder

To learn more go to [charliehealth.com](https://charliehealth.com)

*Our evidence-based, intensive programs set clients and families up for long-term success. Therapy once a week isn't always enough. Charlie Health's Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) combines supported groups, family therapy, and individual therapy into a series of personalized sessions multiple times per week. Our experts use research to address mental health struggles at their roots."*

**Irina Kramkova**  
Regional Territory Director

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Positive Parenting Series

**December 6-January 10 | 4:00-5:30pm | Community Parent and Child Bonding Program**

This program works specifically with families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and/or displaced by domestic violence. The series will utilize the Positive Solutions for Families (PSF) evidence-based curriculum through the Pyramid Model.

### Youth Suicide Loss Grief Support Group

**Thursday, December 14 | Tosh Collins Community Center**

### Endeavor Health presents Mental Health First Aid

**Contact Erin Quinn: [erinn@ehsny.org](mailto:erinn@ehsny.org) or call 716-560-1452**

Teaches how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges and teaches how to recognize the warning signs of suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

### Endeavors Clubhouse

Endeavor's Clubhouse program strives to improve participants' quality of life by teaching skills in order to manage everyday stressors such as mental illness, physical illness, legal involvement, relationship conflicts, employment, and any other stressors.

### Mindful Music airing weekly on WBFO

**Saturdays: 4 PM - Sundays: 8 PM | Buffalo Toronto Public Media**

Mindful Music explores the intersection of music and mental health by providing a backdrop for conversations with guests who share how they use music to express their inner nature and manage their emotional wellbeing. Hosted by Karl Shallowhorn

### NAMI Programs

NAMI offers facilitated, confidential support groups for adult family members and caregivers concerned about and/or caring for a person with mental illness.

Visit [letstalkstigma.org/events](https://letstalkstigma.org/events) for more.

ERIE COUNTY  
**ANTI-STIGMA**  
COALITION

#### ERIE COUNTY ANTI-STIGMA COALITION FOUNDING MEMBERS

BryLin Hospital • Children's Mental Health Coalition of Western New York, Inc.  
Community Partners of Western New York • Compeer • Crisis Services of Erie County  
Erie County Department of Mental Health • Erie County Office for People with Disabilities  
Fellows Action Network • Fuerst Consulting Corporation • Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County  
The Mental Health Advocates of WNY • Millennium Collaborative Care • Patrick P. Lee Foundation  
Preventionfocus, Inc. • Telesco Creative Group • The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation