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## CONNECTICUT MENTAL HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION, INC.

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A 501(c)(3) supporting organization for the Connecticut Mental Health Center helping people in recovery sustain healthy and meaningful lives in the community.

Dear Friend,

Our son Allan so wanted to be *normal*.

He had schizoaffective disorder, a serious illness that caused him to hear and see things that weren't there, to fear things he didn't need to fear, to be very moody, to struggle with self-expression, and to lose confidence in almost every facet of his ability to perform life's simplest tasks. A real hard life all around!

Now, I know there's no such classification as *normal*. Our local chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) once put it this way on a t-shirt: *Normal is just a setting on your dryer!* But as a father, I felt for Allan. He wanted to be able to do the things that most of us take for granted. After struggling for over 30 years, he died at age 47, not unlike many with serious mental illness who die 25 years too young from chronic disease problems.

As a board member of the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) Foundation, I've learned there are many who are in Allan's shoes. Every year over 5,000 men and women—all of whom are poor—come to CMHC for help with serious mental illnesses and addiction problems so they can live well and do things most of us find easy.

Thanks to serious research (there should be more!), new medications and cutting-edge therapies have vastly improved the outlook for people like my son. A life of institutionalized care—once the norm—has been replaced with person-centered care and a life in the community—the new normal.

That's where CMHC and the Foundation come in. Together they are developing more ways for people to gain a foothold in recovery, thrive in the community, and restore and grow capacities essential for a *normal* life, like the life Allan so desperately wanted.

On behalf of all the people and families who rely on CMHC everyday, the Foundation needs your help now. The list of needs is long and includes everything from managing diet and personal finances to pursuing creative and personal interests. Thanks to your support, the CMHC Foundation has initiated projects in all these areas: access to fresh food and nutrition counseling, financial coaching to reduce poverty stress, and opportunities for creativity and self-expression. Together we can do even more to round out the lives of people who really deserve a break.

This year the CMHC Foundation is launching the *Circle of Care*, a new effort to recognize and thank those who contribute \$250 or more to advance the important work CMHC is doing in our community. I am delighted and proud to be a Charter Member of this Circle and hope you will give serious consideration to joining as well.

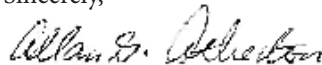
CMHC and the Foundation work hard all year long for the individuals and families who count on its care and services. I hope you will join me—and all our donors—by contributing your most generous amount to the CMHC Foundation. You may use the enclosed envelope or donate online at:

[www.cmhcfoundation.org](http://www.cmhcfoundation.org)

**This spring you can make your gift grow!** Donate online during the Great Give 36 hour online giving campaign and you could help us secure matching funds and financial prizes from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. Visit [www.thegreatgive.org](http://www.thegreatgive.org) between 8am May 5 and 8pm May 6, search for CMHC Foundation, and click "Donate Now."

Thank you. Your gift is an investment in the people we serve that benefits the wellbeing of our whole community. *Now that's a new normal!*

Sincerely,



Allan G. Atherton  
Board Member, Development Committee

*P.S. Join us on July 10 for opening day at the Hill Farmers' Market—now in its 6th season! Every Friday, 11am-2pm, through October 30...right in front of CMHC on 34 Park Street in New Haven.*