



December 2023

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A private non-profit organization supporting
the Connecticut Mental Health Center and
the people and community it serves.

Dear Friends,

Rupture and repair.

In September, CMHC lost one of its leading lights when María Elena Oliva, PhD, LCSW, unexpectedly passed away. Dr. Oliva had been the Director of Social Work at CMHC since 2015. She was a fierce advocate for clients and a mentor to social workers and many others. And she was my colleague and friend.

On Wednesday, October 18, we dedicated and named a conference room at CMHC in her honor on the fifth anniversary of Dialogues on Difference, a monthly conversation she facilitated to help us practice having difficult conversations about race and other challenging topics.

Rupture and repair was a constant theme for Maria, informed by her many years working with children, families, and adults across the age spectrum and influenced by her deep love and understanding of psychoanalytic theory and practice.

At CMHC, we see firsthand the effects of lives ruptured by serious mental health and substance use disorders. We see people whose lives have been fractured by discrimination, housing displacement, unemployment and economic hardship, food insecurity, educational disruption, domestic violence, and other traumas.

Repair comes in the form of the restorative relationships and person-centered care provided by our dedicated clinical staff to over 4,000 people every year.

Repair also comes in the form of emergency financial assistance from the CMHC Foundation for nutritious food, household items, seasonal clothing, personal hygiene products, and much more. The CMHC Foundation also provides support and resources for innovative programs that enable our staff to provide the very best care possible.

You can help repair a life today by contributing a gift to the CMHC Foundation. You can donate online at cmhcfoundation.org or by using the enclosed envelope.

We miss Maria every day and carry her wisdom with us that in every *rupture* there is an opportunity for *repair*.

With deepest gratitude,

Kyle Pedersen, *Director*