



MCF
maryland coalition of families

Family Focus

Closing the Year with Gratitude and Hope

As we approach the end of the year, we want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible resilience and accomplishments of the families we serve across Maryland. From Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, we have witnessed countless stories of strength, advocacy, and hope. Each region has its unique challenges, but the common thread is the determination of families to support their loved ones with behavioral health challenges.

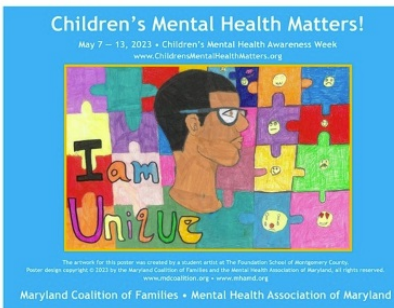
We will continue to highlight success stories from communities across Maryland, celebrating the impact made possible by your support. These stories demonstrate the role of connection, advocacy, and family peer support in transforming lives.

As we close out this year, we invite you to join us in continuing this important work. Your tax deductible year-end gift helps us expand our reach, develop new programs, and ensure that every family in Maryland has access to the resources and support they need. Together, we can make an even greater impact in 2025. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.



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MCF

The Children's Mental Health Matters Poster Contest is Open for 2025 Submissions!



Each year, MCF hosts a poster contest as part of the Children's Mental Health Matters campaign, an initiative to raise awareness of and decrease stigma surrounding children's mental health. **All Maryland students up to age 18 are invited to participate!**

This initiative is a collaboration between MCF and the Mental Health Association of Maryland with support from the Maryland Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration and Maryland Family Network. For more than 25 years, the Campaign has brought together partners, schools, nonprofits, and other agencies from across the state to increase public awareness of the importance of children's mental health, reduce stigma surrounding mental health, and connect children and families with resources for prevention and support for mental health conditions.

As in past years, the Campaign will showcase original artwork by children and youth that uses vibrant, eye-catching visuals to bring attention to and promote acceptance of mental health challenges, while inspiring others and combating stigma. **One student's artwork will be selected to be featured on the Campaign's 2025 poster!** All submissions will be collected electronically.

Feel free to reach out to cmhm@mdcoalition.org if you have any questions. For additional information about the Campaign, please visit our website at www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org

We hope you will take advantage of this exciting opportunity to help raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health. We look forward to seeing what your young ones create!

[Download the
Flyer](#)

[Submit
Artwork](#)

Empowering Families: Highlights from Our Latest Leadership Development Program

In November, MCF had the honor of hosting 13 Howard County parents and caregivers who have children with mental health challenges as part of our 2-day Family Leadership Program.

Starting Friday evening and extending through Saturday late afternoon, participants engaged in workshops on self-care, children's mental health, systems navigation, and advocacy training. We were joined by our partners from the Office of the Local Children's Board, Backpack Healthcare, and Councilmember Christiana Rigby.

Most importantly, participants had the opportunity to connect with other families in similar situations and take some time for themselves. As one parent stated *“Such a wonderful experience. It’s such a CHARGE! I didn’t realize that I needed that time, moment, break until I had it!”*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this transformative event possible!



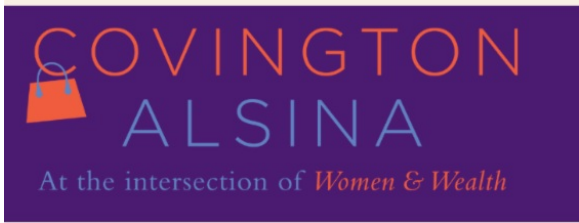
Make Your Voice Heard: Register for Family Day in Annapolis!

Don't forget to register for Family Day in Annapolis on **Thursday, January 30, 2025!** This empowering event is your chance to advocate directly with Maryland's elected officials on behalf of individuals with behavioral mental health challenges and their families.

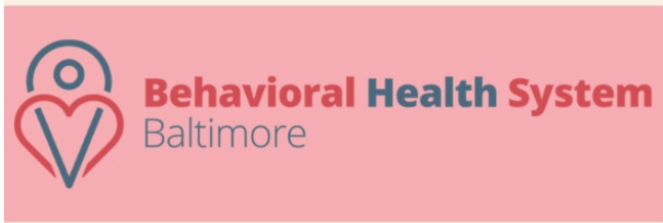
You'll enjoy lunch, hear from key state officials and leaders in behavioral health, and learn about the legislation under consideration during the 2025 Maryland General Assembly. We'll help you understand how these proposed policies could impact your loved ones and equip you to share your story effectively with legislators and their staff during scheduled meetings.

MCF provides transportation, meals, and support to make it easy for you to participate—**at no cost!** Registration is required for anyone over 18 to attend. Students aged 12 and older are welcome with their parent or caregiver. Don't miss this opportunity to make your voice heard—register today! Space is limited!

[Register Here](#)



Thank you to our Family Voice Advocate Sponsors



These generous donations support Family Day in Annapolis, an event that empowers families to share their voices and advocate for their needs.

Happy Holidays from MCF!

As the holiday season approaches, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for allowing us to support you and your family this year. It's been our privilege to walk alongside you, providing encouragement and connection.

We also want to express our gratitude to our partners and funders without whom we simply



could not do this crucial work.

To give our team time to rest and recharge with their loved ones, we will be closed from Wednesday, December 25, 2024, through Wednesday, January 1, 2025. We will reopen on Thursday, January 2, 2025.

During this time, we encourage you to take moments for self-care and connection with your family. If you need immediate support while we're away, please call or text 988.

Wishing you a season filled with warmth, joy, and togetherness. Thank you for being part of our community—we look forward to continuing to support you in the new year.

Get Connected! Stay Informed!

Online and In Person Support Groups

MCF offers many support groups to provide a safe space for you to learn, share and receive compassionate help. All are facilitated by trained Family Peer Support Specialists who have dealt with similar challenges in their own families. Groups are free for all participants and are held on different days of the week and different times of day. Find one or more that can work for you and join us soon!

[Find a Support Group](#)

Workshops, Trainings & Other Events

MCF offers a wide range of events, trainings and workshops for families who have a loved one with mental health, substance use or problem gambling challenges. Events are held in communities across the state or virtually and are offered at no cost to participants. Visit our website to learn more!

[Past and Upcoming Events](#)

MCF Employment Opportunities

MCF is growing, and we have employment opportunities that might be perfect for you or someone you know! We currently have openings in many areas of the State. Please check our website for a complete list of openings.

- **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Must Live in Calvert County)**
 - **Family Peer Support Specialist - Substance Use (Remote Worker - Must Live in Allegany or Garrett County)**
 - **Human Resources Coordinator (Central Office)**
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www.mdcoalition.org



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