

Mental Health Outreach seeks to provide new community



BY ALLISON STALBERG
STAFF WRITER

A new group has been born on campus, seeking to empower students on the topic of mental illness.

Guilford College Mental Health Outreach was created to support and educate individuals who have either been diagnosed or impacted by mental illness.

"I felt like there needed to be a larger amount of awareness and support for those who have mental health issues," said junior Shelby Smith, who started Guilford Outreach. "College is a time in which stress and mental strain are as common as lengthy papers and student loans.

"There needs to be a clear and available network of individuals who support those suffering from mental health problems in order to truly make our college years the wonderful times that they should be."

The National Alliance on Mental Illness states that 75 percent of lifetime cases of mental health conditions begin around age 24. With college enrollment increasing across the country, counseling centers have also noticed an increase in mental health issues experienced by students.

According to these statistics, groups like Guilford Outreach could be more necessary than some may think.

"Both at Guilford and in the college population in general, anxiety and depression are the most common presenting problems," said Director of Counseling Gaither Terrell.

"Both can have many antecedents, and these will vary from one person to another. For instance, one person may have a genetic vulnerability to increased anxiety, while another's excessive anxiety may be brought on by a specific event or situation."

At school, mental health issues can get in the way of academics and social life.

"It took my father forever to understand that, yes, in high school, it was important for me and my brother to be on ADD medication because we couldn't focus without them," said senior Vita Price. "While we could go without them, we both probably would have flunked out of high school, if not middle school."

Guilford Outreach plans to be a support group for students with mental illness, as well as a way to educate people who want to learn more. Smith hopes to keep the group creative and fun as well as to provide people with resources.

"I would personally like to see events like mental health movie nights, art and photography exhibits, and poetry and prose readings that all help individuals who are mentally ill express the nature of their struggles while also allowing non-mentally ill individuals to empathize with those who have mental health issues," said Smith.

She continued, "Guilford Outreach seeks to connect students with valuable mental health resources both on and off-campus so that the quality of their lives or the lives the people they care about who have mental health issues can be improved.

"While we have great resources on campus now, their presence needs to be made more evident to the student body and, in some areas, expanded. Guilford Outreach seeks to promote that."

The group meetings are planned to be on Fridays at 1:00 p.m. in the Bonner House Sunroom. All are welcome.

Junior **Shelby Smith** created Guilford College Mental Health Outreach as a community for individuals impacted by mental illness.

CAMPAIGNS

Warren helps education reform campaign in NC, Organize 2020

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Organize 2020.

"Organize 2020 is basically a group of educators across the state working to build grassroots campaigns to support public education and teachers," said Warren. "We're building a campaign to defend and transform public education. ... We want the funding attacks, professional attacks on teachers, and educational attacks on students to stop and rather, transform. We don't think public education is the best that it could be."

Warren has been working tirelessly to help promote this new campaign, from writing op-eds for the Northwest Observer to giving speeches to local groups, such as The League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad, and Aim Higher NC, a group working to raise N.C. teacher salaries.

Unfortunately, the issues that plague North Carolina's public education system are the not type that can be solved merely with public support and a few short months of protesting.

"The real value of education is being missed because of ideas like No Child Left Behind," said EducateUS Online Tutoring Coordinator Dylan Caskie. "It's cheaper for the state to just push a kid through high school than it is to actually motivate them to get excited about learning."

"We can't just be worried about singular issues like teacher pay," said Warren. "We have to take into account the struggles of our students, our parents, the low wage workers. Right now, one in four kids in our classrooms live in poverty. Poverty is the single biggest issue we face without a structural way to address it. Having one in four kids in poverty is shameful. We need to be able to say that and make that an educational issue, because it is."

Fortunately, Warren knows that his work is far from over.

"It takes a lot more to put things back together than it does to rip things asunder like they're done now," said Warren. "We're not Organize 2014. 2020 is our estimation for how long it will actually take."

So, why is Serendipity inside?

Dear Guilford,

I am one of the three Serendipity Chairs on the Campus Activities Board who had the honor and privilege of planning and coordinating the annual event. It has been a long, fun and tedious process, as we have been preparing for this weekend for an entire year.

When I signed up to be the chairman, I honestly underestimated how much time and work goes into the planning. Every little detail must be accounted for, from organizing band voting to making sure we reserve trash cans from facilities at certain locations. I've gained a ton of valuable experience and I have succeeded in my initial goal — I wanted to provide an amazing time for my peers at an institute I care a heck of a lot about while getting to leave my mark by organizing an event that adds to the history of our school. It is something I will never forget.

Unfortunately, a lot of our work is behind the scenes, and students might not understand certain logistical and executive decisions we have had to make. We have heard some criticism about the Friday performances being placed inside the Alumni Gym, which is what led me to write this letter. I'd like to take this time to explain why we have chosen to do this so as to help you see where we are coming from. It is our goal to do whatever we can to make everyone happy and satisfied.

When we first began planning we were informed immediately that in years past, neighboring residents to the school have called in numerous noise complaints. There is a city ordinance to turn volume below a certain number of decibels — so low the performers are practically performing an acoustic set (poor RJD2 in 2011).

In the past, our school has basically ignored these regulations, let Serendipity shows last until our campus quiet hours of 1 a.m., and apologize when the Greensboro Police Department approaches us the next day. After Serendipity 2013, however, the GPD finally stopped threatening to fine us for breaking the city noise ordinance (fines exceeding \$40,000); instead, they promised if it happened again they wouldn't think twice to charge us.

So as to avoid these fines, we decided to compromise. We put one night of concerts in the Alumni Gym so we could rage through the night without any disturbances, and the other night we are having music outdoors until the 11 p.m. ordinance before making the crowd move indoors.

We saw this as being a good compromise and hope you can see where we are coming from. We apologize if this isn't optimal — we want to be outdoors as much as anyone else! But we know that if you can look past this and make the best of being indoors that you are still going to have the time of your life. (There may or may not be lasers!)

Please be safe, take care of one another, make the best of every moment, have fun and just be merry! Love your community; we've got a special one. You have so many fun activities planned just for YOU! We really hope you enjoy. Love to all.

Zach Kronisch, senior & CAB serendipity chair