



January/February 2023 | Issue #115

WELCOMING • TRUSTED • INCLUSIVE • INTEGRATED • IMPACTFUL • RESPONSIVE

Health Brigade provides exceptional health services to those least served in a caring and non-judgmental environment.

# WELCOME

*Hello and welcome to Health Brigade's bimonthly newsletter. You are receiving this because you signed up on our website, you are a community partner, a HB supporter, a HB volunteer or a HB staff member.*

*We started INSIDE SCOOP in 2010. The December 2022 issue was #114. The purpose was to keep the board, staff members and volunteers in the loop of our dynamic, ever-in-action brigade.*

*But we keep hearing from our outside constituents that they want to hear Health Brigade news too.*

*So we will email blast INSIDE SCOOP as of January/February 2023 to anyone who*

*has registered an email with us. (Folks can always opt out if they wish.)*

*We will also have it available as a pdf in case anyone wishes to print an article or two.*

*The INSIDE SCOOP will be published on the last day of every two months. If you ever have any feedback or questions, please contact Julie Sulik, HB PR Manager.*

*We hope you enjoy this issue.*



*Karen A Legato*  
Executive Director

1010 North Thompson Street • Richmond, Virginia 23230 • [www.healthbrigade.org](http://www.healthbrigade.org)



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# News and Noteworthy

## Agency Celebrates 20th Art Brigade Exhibit

On January 26, eleven alumni artists participated in the 20th exhibition of The Art Brigade. This initiative began in 2016 shortly after we changed our name from Fan Free Clinic to Health Brigade.

It was the brainchild of our executive director Karen Legato who had the foresight to have picture railings hung in the lobby and along the administrative hallway during a renovation of the building.

The Art Brigade came to life through the creativity and dedication of two artists and an interior designer: **Jill Powell, Virginia McConnell** and **Kelly Powell**. PR Manager **Julie M. Sulik** has provided staff support to this committee. The intention of The Art Brigade has always been to bring community-born art into our space to aid the health and healing of our patients, clients, staff, volunteers and visitors.

We hope you enjoy seeing the photos from the lovely evening we shared as a community communing with the power of art. We'd like to thank our photographers capturing the event: **Patricia Munford** and **Robert Papas**, both artists in the show.

The show is also virtual. You can view and still buy pieces until March 31 on our website at: <https://www.healthbrigade.org/artbrigade2023/>



Presents Its 20th Exhibition  
Featuring Work from Art Brigade Alumni Artists

 Mike Haubenstock	 Kheila Jones	 James Khatcheressian	 Virginia McConnell
 Patricia Munford	 Robert Papas	 Jill Powell	 Monica Rao
 Dallas Roquemore	 Avian Van Auken	 Suzanne L. Vinson	

Opening Event:  
Thursday, January 26, 2023  
5:30pm-7pm  
Refreshments/Entrance & Parking in Rear of the Building  
Art available for sale/Questions, call 804-358-6343, Ext. 1121



**healthbrigade**  
1010 N. Thompson Street, Richmond, VA 23230  
[healthbrigade.org/artbrigade2023](https://www.healthbrigade.org/artbrigade2023)



Bob Papas



Bob Papas



Photos on left by Bob Papas except where indicated.

Photos in middle and to right by Patricia Munford except where indicated.



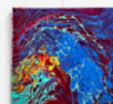
Patricia Munford



Bob Papas



Bob Papas



except where indicated.



## Representing HB in the Community

Photo by Jamie Burch



On **January 10**, the Emerging Leaders Council (ELC) gathered for an informal mixer at the home of one of the members.

The 27-member council is a group of young professionals, advocates, and activists passionate about supporting the mission of Health Brigade through

fundraising, friendraising, volunteering, and community engagement. These ambassadors are committed to Health Brigade's legacy of delivering medical and mental health, wellness, community outreach, and care coordination services to the least served, in an inclusive and welcoming environment. The group is staffed by HB Resource & Development Coordinator **Jamie Burch, MSW**.



On **February 20**, Health Brigade Mental Health Counselor **Paula Schoenau, LPC, CGP, CCTP** (bottom photo) was interviewed by La Casa de la Salud (LCS) for their bimonthly FacebookLIVE and 1380AM Radio Poder broadcasts. The discussion focused on the stigma of mental health for Latino populations in Richmond, the impact of the pandemic and navigating it now, some strategies to deal with stress, and all the services Health Brigade provides.

Health Brigade often partners with LCS on health programs. LCS began as an initiative to eliminate barriers to accessing health information, health services, and prevention programs for the Latino community.

Listen to interview here: <https://fb.watch/iYAxIXes1b/>



On **February 25**, Health Brigade staff participated in a *Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Drug Abuse Awareness Summit* at New Deliverance Evangelistic Church in North Chesterfield. The goal of the summit was to inform and educate the community on ways to get assistance or treatment in any of these health areas.

L to R: **Dr. Muriel Azria Evans**, Director of Mental Health & Wellness; **Dziko Singleton** Co-coordinator of CHR/Needle Exchange; **Narayan Hurt**, CHR Program Associate and **Kelsea Jeter**, Volunteer Program Manager



On **February 25**, Health Brigade staff participated in a health fair sponsored by La Casa de La Salud at Iglesia Vida Nueva on Warwick Road in Richmond. Some 14 participants were vaccinated, eight received a COVID-19 booster and six received a flu shot. The event included several other community organizations working to bring health information and services to our Latino neighbors.



L to R: HB Clinic Manager **Marianny De Aza** gives COVID-19 booster shot to **Dr. Antonio Villa** of La Casa de La Salud

L to R: **Emely Baez Salazar**, HB Community Health Worker; **Marianny De Aza**, HB Clinic Manager and HB volunteer **John Bavaro, RN**



## Spotlights

In each issue of *INSIDE SCOOP* we will spotlight new staff members, longtime staff members, volunteers, donors, board members, clients and patients. We hope you enjoy learning about the brigade of people who make us tick and the people we serve.

### Welcoming New Staff



**Josette Utsey, MS, LPC** joined the Health Brigade staff as a Mental Health Counselor in December 2022. She previously completed her counseling internship with HB in 2019 and continued as a volunteer provider into 2020. She will primarily be providing counseling services to Ryan White and CHARLII clients and will be working directly with both the Mental Health & Wellness and Health Outreach Department. Josette was born and raised in New York City, specifically Harlem and the South Bronx, and relocated to Richmond in 2008.

She has a diverse and varied work experience ranging from blue to white collar positions in retail, civil service, corporate and non-profit environments. She graduated from SUNY Empire State College with degrees in Sociology (AA) and Psychology (BA), and Capella University with a degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MS).

Josette stated, "the one theme that ties all my work and academic endeavors together has been meeting the needs of others. Life has been an amazing journey thus far and every road I've walked has found me attempting to make a positive difference in someone's life in some way, from clients and customers to colleagues and co-workers. So, I am overjoyed to be back at Health Brigade and getting to put all these experiences to good use again."



**Sarah Zaidan** joined Health Brigade as a Medical Assistant (MA) in December 2022. "I have been in Richmond since 2016. I went to VCU where I earned my degree in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Mathematics. I have been working as an MA now for the past year and a half in preparation to apply to Physician's Assistant school. In my free time, my partner and I like to try new restaurants, go on walks with our little Yorkie-Pit mix named Scout, and just enjoy all the beautiful things the city has to offer. I am just so happy to be a part of Health Brigade and can't wait to help give back to Richmond in all the ways I possibly can."

## Volunteers Giving Back A Q&A session with Dr. Joel A. Blum

**Q. How long have you been a psychiatrist and where did you primarily practice before retiring?**

**A.** I have been a psychiatrist for a VERY long time. I finished my training in 1974 in Boston, Massachusetts. Initially, I maintained a part-time private practice but most of my work throughout my career has been as a hospital-based psychiatrist. I moved to Richmond in 1987 and from then until 2011 I worked as a full-time Psychiatrist at the Veterans Affairs Hospital here.

**Q. How did you learn about Health Brigade?**

**A.** I have known about the Fan Free Clinic/Health Brigade\* for many years and I knew of several physicians who worked or volunteered at the Health Brigade. I have been a member of the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond (1st UU) from the time I arrived here and somewhere along the way I learned of the early connection between the Fan Free Clinic and 1st UU.

**Q. What made you decide to volunteer with HB?**

**A.** I have, for many years, been actively involved in volunteering in the community. When I retired, I planned on expanding my volunteering activities but I did not realize that continuing the clinical practice of psychiatry as a volunteer would be an option for me, due to potential liability issues.

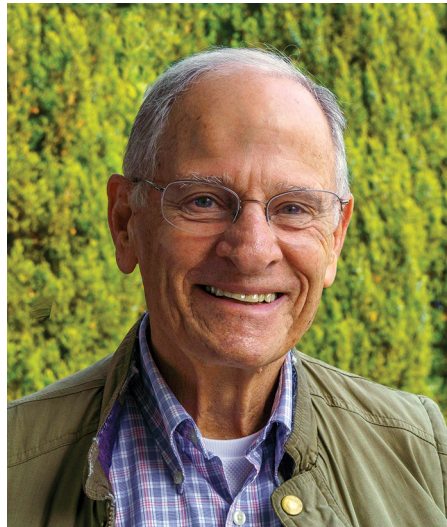


Photo: Patricia Munford

A friend mentioned that it would be possible at a free clinic since there would be umbrella liability coverage available there. The staff at Health Brigade confirmed this to be the case. From there, my decision was easy. I had such positive feelings about Health Brigade, from all that I had heard and known, and I still loved the relationships I could have and the work I could do as a psychiatrist. I just did not wish to do it as a paid job and I wanted to be able to limit my hours of work, so I could also continue my other volunteer activities. Health Brigade provided for all of this.

**Q. How long have you volunteered with HB?**

**A.** It took me a little over a year to realize I might be able to volunteer as a psychiatrist who provided clinical services, so it was in the summer of 2020 that I initially made contact with the Health Brigade. I do not recall my exact starting date, but I believe it was late in the summer of 2020.

**Q. Why is volunteering with HB meaningful for you?**

**A.** A major life lesson for me has been that nothing

enables me to feel as good as providing service. HB gives me the opportunity to continue using the skills, knowledge, and experience I have accumulated over the years. It also enables me to have contact with a whole range of people who have different life circumstances from those I have been working with in the past, and I am able to be part of a great team. So, in a nutshell, HB enables me to provide service, continue learning, and be part of a great team, all of which add meaning to my life.

**Q. Do you believe "there is no health without mental health"? If yes, why?**

**A.** My answer is an absolute YES to this question. The body and mind go hand in hand and cannot be separated. I have known people who have been in dreadful circumstances and are able to maintain and still find meaning and hope. I have also known people who are very privileged, with good "physical health," who yet feel despair and hopelessness. Mental Health must be part of the equation when considering overall health.

**Q. Why is HB an important organization for the community?**

**A.** HB has always been a safe place for those in our community who do not have the means to seek care in traditional settings and who are members of our community who have reason to feel misunderstood or not accepted in traditional settings. This still is the case, so I believe HB continues to provide vital services.

**\*DID YOU KNOW?**



Fan Free Clinic, today Health Brigade, opened its doors in October 1970 working out of a few closets in the basement of the First Unitarian Universalist Church at the corner of Floyd Avenue and Harrison Street in the Fan. Called the Emerson House, the building now belongs to VCU.

1st Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond Library



health brigade

# The Bucket Brigade



## Volunteers Recognized in January 2023

Congratulations to **Dr. Katherine Laybourn**, winner of the January drawing! On 1/26 Kelsea Jeter, Volunteer Program Manager, wrote, "WOW! You've given over 30 hours this month! Thank you so much for your time and service!"

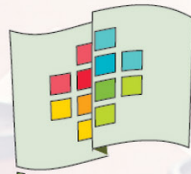
Dr. Shabeen Ali  
 John Bavaro  
 Jordan Dail  
 Carl Erickson  
 Lorraine Garcia  
 Jamie Gayne  
 Rebecca Gunnin  
 Anita Kozakewicz  
 Tanya Kurnootala  
 Karthik Lalwani  
 Dr. Katherine Laybourn  
 Cameron Lewis  
 Kerry Lim  
 Nuha Mahboob  
 Ashley Mottley  
 Brian Napier  
 Lisa Shawler  
 Alaysia Simmons  
 Anusha Suresh  
 Rhea Tammireddi  
 Garrett Vollino  
 Leon Zheng

## Volunteers Recognized in February 2023

The February Bucket Brigade winner is **Dr. Shabeen Ali, PharmD!** HB Medication Coordinator **Sasha Poggi** shared, "Thank you for your patience during the Athena transition!"

Dr. Shabeen Ali  
 Aaron Carr  
 Jordan Dail  
 Carl Erickson  
 Dr. Steve Farber  
 Lorraine Garcia  
 Dr. David Gardner  
 Carmen Herrera  
 Tanner Kerckhove  
 Anita Kozakewicz  
 Karthik Lalwani  
 Dr. Katherine Laybourn  
 Cameron Lewis  
 Kerry Lim  
 Nuha Mahboob  
 Patricia Munford  
 Che Neba  
 Bob Papas  
 Lisa Shawler  
 Garrett Vollino  
 Jo Ann Weissbart  
 Leon Zheng





health brigade

# Volunteer Appreciation

BECAUSE WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

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**For:**

*Volunteers, interns, board members, staff*

**Where:**

*Tang & Biscuit in Scott's Addition*

3406 W Moore St, Richmond, VA 23230

**When:**

*Friday, April 14th from 4-6pm*

- Dedicated Service Awards
- Parking is available onsite
- Casual dress code
- Three shuffleboard lanes reserved
- Food & drink provided



RSVP to Kelsea by 4/7/23  
at [kjeter@healthbrigade.org](mailto:kjeter@healthbrigade.org)

## Our Mission

Part of our mission as an organization is to be committed to Trauma Informed Care. Every month, Health Brigade's Trauma Informed Leadership Team (TILT) highlights a new concept, book recommendation, video or resource that might assist staff and volunteers in the work they do.

## Benefits for Psychological Flexibility

By Muriel Azria-Evans, PhD, LPC  
HB Director of Mental Health & Wellness

Most counselors agree that the effectiveness of therapy is less dependent on the type of intervention (although evidence-based interventions are preferred) and more dependent on the therapeutic relationship.

Relatedly, while research supports the idea that there is not just one pathway to change, there are some combination of skills that might fall under the title "psychological flexibility" that prove to be more effective than anything else.

Steven C. Hayes, PhD argues that "psychological flexibility is the most commonly proven skill of importance to mental health and emotional well-being." Regardless of your presenting problem, it is argued that developing psychological flexibility will help you move your life in a meaningful direction.

### Psychological flexibility includes:

1. AWARENESS: noticing what happens in the present moment, in the here and now; includes thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc.
2. OPENESS: allowing yourself to feel and process difficult thoughts and feelings exactly as they are; acceptance; allowing thoughts and feelings to JUST BE thoughts and feelings.
3. VALUED ENGAGEMENT: knowing what matters to you and taking steps in that direction; freely chosen goals and values.

As we go through 2023, here are some

questions to ponder:

- What can you do to be more mindful, present, and aware?
- Can you set reminders or create a mantra to accept thoughts and feelings for what they are, not more or less?
- What priorities are you setting? What has meaning and value?

Based on *Why Therapy Works* by Steven C. Hayes, PhD in *Psychology Today* (January/February 2023)

