

Good day! My name is Betty and I just turned 75 years old. I am so grateful to God having reached another milestone in my life. I struggled with depression and schizophrenia most of my adult life. I went through a rough time, but I am blessed to say that I pulled through it by the grace of God and the right treatment. I don't let my age and illness stop me from doing what I have always wanted to do in life. That is helping others and advocating for mental health.

I learned about the Oakland Community Health Network Strategic Planning Workgroup from a friend in 2014. I liked the group's mission and goals, so I wanted to be a part of it to help out. Today I am a passionate member of several other OCHN workgroups and committees where I'm helping to make things better for persons served.....including me. Although, I enjoy being a part of all of the groups. The B.E.S.T. (Begin Ending Stigma Today) Workgroup stands out the most. There, we have produced several videos on stigma and raising awareness which I have been a part of. This has been an exciting experience for me knowing that I was able to express myself on You Tube through webinars and videos helping out. I also took part in a video with Debbie Stabenow on Stigma. In 2017, I was awarded the OCHN Dan Moran Award for Inclusion and Advocacy. I have taken part in several Walk-A-Mile in My Shoes Rallies, advocating and rallying. One year I help carry the Oakland County Flag at the Rally. Plus, I had to give a short speech. In 2019 I told my story as an Oakland County Constituent at a State Capitol Tri-County Public Mental Health Legislative Luncheon advocating for mental health. I'm pride to say, the speech was well received by all who were there. I have spoken on many occasions at other organizations and meetings as well, doing what I like to do....telling my story, raising awareness. I am a mental health writer and have published three books on the subject. I write to help others who are struggling with mental health. My three books are 1) "Betty's Battle," 2) "The Subject of Schizophrenia" -and 3) "Depression.....". The City of Southfield, Southfielder Spotlight website, interviewed me about my books in January 2023. I've had the pleasure of writing an article, "A Long Road to Recovery from Schizophrenia and Depression" in the "Connections - CMHA Magazine." I wrote an article for the "Schizophrenia Bulletin" Journal of Psychoses and Related Disorders, Volume 45, March 2019 entitled, "From Failing Meds to the Ones That Worked" and an article for the SchizophreniaBulletin.com website.

I will end by saying, I enjoy very much what I am doing, and my heart is to keep helping others in any way that I can as long as I am able to. Thank you for reading this, and God Bless.

Betty R.
Southfield, Michigan