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 **Newark Campus Students Award Grant to Mental Health America of Licking County**

 *NEWARK, Ohio, January 9, 2017 –* One in five people experience a mental health issue every year in the United States, but students at The Ohio State University at Newark are doing what they can to let those battling mental health issues in Licking County know they are not alone. Students from the Cultures of Professional Writing English class (English 4150) recently awarded a $250 grant to Mental Health America of Licking County (MHALC) in support of the Compeer program. MHALC is an affiliate of Mental Health America and a provider agency of Mental Health and Recovery for Licking and Knox Counties. It’s also a partner agency of the United Way.

Students in Associate Professor of English Dr. Elizabeth Weiser’s class practice their real-world writing skills by submitting grant proposals for local nonprofit organizations. Each proposal then competes for actual funding, underwritten by Dr. Weiser. The students themselves are the judging panel, determining a winner based on which proposal is the best written and most persuasive. This year’s winning proposal was written by Chelsea Olms.

“The project allows students to go off campus and learn about their local nonprofit organizations and the life-changing work that they do,” said Weiser. “By writing a grant, they get the chance to be a part of that change and give back to the community. This experience also prepares students for the real world by giving their writing real consequences. Being able to write and persuade donors to share their wealth makes them indispensable for any organization.”

“MHALC would like to thank Ohio State Newark for this opportunity to raise awareness and help break down the stigma associated with mental illness,” said MHALC Development/Program Manager Jill Goddard. “MHALC is thrilled to be part of this collaborative effort with Ohio State Newark.”

The mission of the MHALC Compeer program, which the grant is funding, is to reduce the isolation and stigma for individuals who experience mental illness, with a commitment to enhance mental health recovery and holistic wellness and increase their community reintegration and inclusion through friendship, meaningful involvement and service. Individuals served by the program work to develop supportive relationships within the community to directly address isolation and self-esteem. The Compeer program is a peer-centered recovery program which utilizes evidence-based social integration and wellness programs serving all of Licking County.

**The objectives of the MHALC Compeer program are:**

* to decrease the isolation of individuals in the community who experience severe and persistent mental illness,
* to support and educate program participants about available community resources and to assist them in achieving their personal goals,
* to provide community education about mental health,
* to provide nutritional and wellness education specific to individuals who experience mental illness, and
* to reduce stigmatizing attitudes in the community.

The Ohio State University at Newark offers an academic environment that’s challenging but supportive with world-renowned professors and access to Ohio State’s more than 200 majors. It’s where learning comes to life. Research, study abroad and service learning opportunities prepare students for their careers in ways they never expected.

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