

# The Outlook

Alabama Department of Mental Health Newsletter



**MORE  
GOOD  
DAYS**  
*together*



## More Good Days Together

### ADMH Celebrates Mental Health Awareness Month with Resources and Support

Each May, the [Alabama Department of Mental Health](#) (ADMH) joins organizations throughout the state and country in observing [Mental Health Awareness Month](#), a national commemoration spotlighting the need for increased understanding and acceptance of mental illness.

The 2026 theme, “More Good Days, Together,” underscores the importance of helping people with mental illness thrive through community connections

and person-centered support, while also recognizing that the definition of a “good day” varies from person to person.

“Mental Health Awareness Month is a reminder that no one has to struggle alone,” said ADMH Commissioner Kimberly Boswell. “We want every Alabamian to have ‘more good days,’ connect with friends and family, and to remember that help is always within reach through our steadily growing [Alabama Crisis System of Care](#) and statewide resources and support.”

The state’s three-pronged Crisis System of Care of 988, Crisis Centers and Mobile Crisis Services saves lives and eases the impact on law enforcement and hospitals by

giving Alabamians “someone to call, someone to respond and somewhere to go” during a mental health crisis.

The ADMH celebrates Mental Health Awareness Month with the 8th Annual Strike Out Stigma game on May 8 at DABOS Park (formerly Riverwalk Stadium in Montgomery) and the [Capitol Art Showcase](#), an annual art exhibition that highlights the creativity, resilience, and lived experiences of individuals receiving mental health services throughout Alabama.

For more information on Mental Health Awareness Month, contact the ADMH Office of Public Information at [publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov) or 334-242-3417.

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## Want to be included in the next issue?

Send us your stories, achievements and events!

[publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov)

334-242-3417

# Strike Out Stigma Baseball Night Returns for its 8th Year on May 8!

The [Alabama Department of Mental Health](#) (ADMH), in partnership with local community providers and the [Montgomery Biscuits](#), invites the public to attend Strike Out Stigma Night on Friday, May 8 at 6:35 p.m. at DABOS Park (formerly known as Riverwalk Stadium).

More than 1.5 million Alabamians experience mental illness or substance use disorders each year (Mental Health America, 2025). Despite how common these challenges are, stigma continues to prevent many from seeking the help they need.

Strike Out Stigma Night aims to break down those barriers by creating a welcoming, approachable space for education, conversation, and connection.

This annual event brings together baseball fans, families, and community organizations for an evening focused on raising awareness about mental health, substance use disorders, and co-occurring conditions, while connecting individuals directly to resources and support.

Tickets for Strike Out Stigma Night are available now. To purchase, visit <https://www.milb.com/montgomery/tickets/single-game-tickets>.



## Autism Acceptance Month 2026

April marked Autism Acceptance Month, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health emphasizes a shift from awareness to true acceptance. With autism affecting an estimated 1 in 31 children in the U.S., the department highlights the importance of accessible services and inclusive communities.

### KEY THEMES INCLUDE:

- Identity first language (“autistic person”) preferred by many
- Amplifying autistic voices through creators and advocates
- Removing barriers in schools, workplaces, and community spaces
- Supporting advocacy organizations that provide practical resources

ADMH also offers a wide range of supports for autistic individuals ages birth–20, including intensive care coordination, therapeutic mentoring, behavioral and mental health support, and in-home services. The agency continues its leadership role with the Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council, strengthening statewide planning and access to resources.



# ASADS

## 50 Years of fostering collaboration and expanding access to resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support

**Celebrating its 50th year, ASADS welcomed just under 650 participants over four days, alongside 45 vendors, and 78 speakers who played a vital role in fostering collaboration and expanding access to resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support.**

Celebrating its 50th year, ASADS welcomed just under 650 participants over four days, alongside 45 vendors, and 78 speakers who played a vital role in fostering collaboration and expanding access to resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support. Over 25 Continuing Education opportunities were offered to those in full attendance. The conference highlighted the importance of strong, purpose-driven leadership across both professional and community settings, while delivering innovative content spanning the full continuum of care. Signature moments included a recovery-focused ASADS birthday celebration reception at Bryce Museum, engagement events, meaningful networking, and interactive games for those in attendance, and even a first-ever ASADS visit from Winnie the mini therapy horse. These celebration moments created a unique environment that reinforced connection, resilience, and hope.

Reflecting on the milestone event, ASADS President Debbi Metzger shared, “Having attended more than 15 years of ASADS, I can honestly say this was the most impactful, memorable, fun, and joyful one I have attended yet. What stood out most to me is the deep love and care we have for one another – clearly, marked evidence of our collective purpose shining through in how we serve and walk alongside those who are struggling. It is a true embodiment of this year’s school theme: **Celebrating our Legacy: Perseverance, Progress, and Purpose.**

# NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK

# weEK

A CELEBRATION OF POSSIBILITY

National Prevention Week will take place May 10–16, 2026, celebrating the work of communities nationwide in preventing substance use and promoting mental wellbeing.

**SAMHSA ENCOURAGES YEAR-ROUND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH:**

- Sharing prevention stories using #NationalPreventionWeek and #MyPreventionStory
- Accessing prevention and mental health focused activities and toolkits
- Watching and sharing SAMHSA’s new prevention video highlighting community impact
- Participating in local events and using SAMHSA’s planning and promotional resources

The initiative spotlights the power of prevention and the individuals and organizations working daily to build healthier communities.



## Welcome to the Team – K-9 Donja!

We have a new K-9 currently in training at our state mental health facilities!

Special Agent Davis and Donja are assigned to the Office of Law Enforcement, Facilities Investigations, and will be tasked with narcotics and electronics searches of the facilities.



# Congrats!

The Friendship Club of Mental Health America Montgomery took home the award for Adult Group Volunteers at the recent

[@HandsOnRiverRegion](#) awards!

We are so proud of them and thank them for the dedication to serving individuals with mental illness! They make the lives of so many, so much more fun!



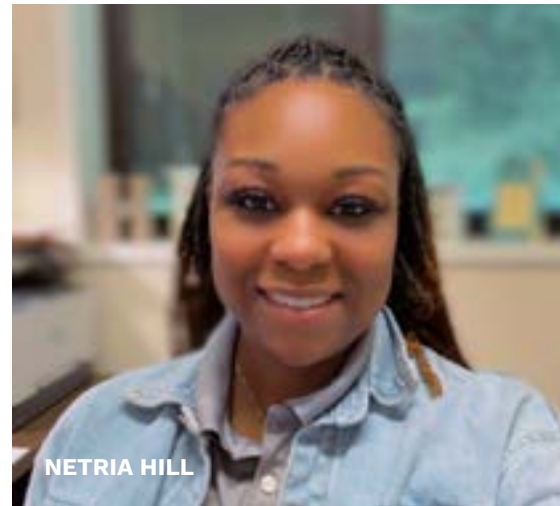
**Charlene Crump** had a recent article published: [Diagnostic Trends and Service Enhancements in Deaf Mental Health: A Longitudinal Analysis](#).

Congratulations to ADMH Autism Services' very own **Cody Farmer** on being the recipient of this year's CARES Award from the Alabama Autism Conference! This honor is given to an organization or individual who consistently shows commitment to autism research, education, and service. Cody consistently provides meaningful service for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. His passion, leadership, and unwavering commitment embody the very spirit of the CARES Award, and his impact continues to inspire our community!



**Elana Merriweather** received the Ally of Recovery Award at the CRSS Conference Awards Banquet.

**Netria Hill** received her LPC-S (Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor License) from the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling.



**Serve.**  
**Empower.**  
**Support.**

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