



Manifesting Healthy Futures: 24/7 Voices and Visions of Wellness
A Visual and Performance Arts Event Born through Storytelling

Call for Creative Nonfiction Stories
Curator: Mary Ruth Coffey, Executive Director

Mental Health America of Illinois (MHAI) is accepting 24 short creative nonfiction stories of recovery from lived mental health experience and movement toward wellness. Stories may be written in the style of poetry or prose, memoir or essay, and may include creative elements such as magical realism, humor, surprise, sonnets, mythology, history, etc....

Each accepted story will be matched with an artist who will interpret the stories through a visual art piece. The stories will be on display with the art at a fundraising event in the winter of 2015 in the Chicago area to raise funds for the Youth Wellness programs of MHAI. Five of the stories will win a writing contest. These storytellers will have first option to read their stories at the fundraising event, and win free entrance to 2 of MHAI's public education seminars in the calendar year 2015 (located downtown Chicago - see MHAI website for information on our MHEP series). All 24 storytellers will be invited to attend the fundraising event at no cost to represent their work.

The particulars:

- Stories should strongly reflect optimism, vision, recovery and creative journeys to wellness after having lived (and/or continuing to live) with: mental or physical illness, loss, trauma, violence, addiction, bullying, unemployment, poverty, shunning, etc...
- Stories, whether poetry or prose, should not exceed 5 typed pages in length, with 1-inch borders, and double-spaced.
- Deadline for Submissions: October 28, 2014
- As this project develops, storytellers may have the opportunity to tell their stories more widely, through a variety of publications, including the possibility of a documentary.
- **Stories should be sent electronically as an attachment (Word format), with a brief author bio (6-8 sentences) in the body of the email, to: events@mhai.org with the title "24/7 Story" in the subject line.**
- Each entry sent by midnight (CST) October 28, 2014 will receive the courtesy of a reply. Entries received after the deadline may not be reviewed.
- Writers of all ages, experience and backgrounds are encouraged to submit.

Each of us has a voice and a vision; everyone has a story; we all have mental health to achieve and maintain; and we all are... wellness, joy and creativity.

Together, we share our stories and our vision, reduce the stigma surrounding mental wellness journeys, and manifest healthy futures.