

Compeer looks back at past year

Staff report

The local Compeer program held its annual banquet this spring to celebrate the past year's friendships and accomplishments.

Compeer is a non-profit organization that matches community volunteers in relationships with children and adults in mental-health care or with emotional challenges. The chapters' volunteerbased programs and services — which serve as a complement to therapy — empower people to become more socially integrated and combat the effects of mental illness, such as loneliness, isolation and low self-worth.

Much of the focus in 2014 was on how thoughts can affect health. The local Compeer held several informational coffee hours relating to positive attitudes, focusing thoughts on wellness and the recovery model.

Locally, 21 skill-building activities — activities geared toward learning in addition to socialization — were held. There were 21 enrichment activities geared toward socialization and social support. There were four outreach activities geared toward helping others and the community.

And local volunteers gave more than 1,800 hours of their time in the 1-to-1 matches Compeer is best known for.

"We received a generous grant from Mental Health Recovery Services to send four adults receiving mental health services to a 40-plus hour training given by Ohio Empowerment Coalition to become Certified Peer Specialists and to have them begin helping with Compeer," stated Michelle Rolf, the Compeer director who serves Clinton and Warren counties.

Compeer needs volunteers to share their friendship with adults receiving services for mental health issues, she said.

"In just a few hours a month, you can make a difference. The hours are flexible and you can spend time doing things you enjoy. You meet great people and have fun while volunteering — not to mention the benefits to the clients," added Rolf.

Volunteers will meet with the coordinator for training and then be matched with a participant in the program.

Compeer is funded by Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties, United Way of Clinton County, United Way of Warren County and donations from area businesses.

Contact the Compeer office for more information at 513-562-2581 or mrolf@mhankyswoh.org.