Community Support Journal

Montgomery County Community Support Program Committee *Newsletter*

January 2025

Volume 1



CSP Logo designed by Chris Ford

Nomination Time for Annual Mental Health Awards

Nominations are open for the 12th Annual CSP Conference & 47th Annual Mental Health Awards Reception. The 2025 event will be in person at Martha's Community Farm.

You may submit nominations in all categories, or pick and choose. Multiple nominations are welcome. Please complete nominations by Friday, April 4, 2025.



Awards will be presented at the event on May 20, 2025!

Recovery and Resiliency Award

The Montgomery County Recovery and Resiliency Awards are intended to recognize individuals, children, families, programs, and organizations that exemplify Recovery and/or Resiliency Principles. These awards recognize effort and accomplishment of significant quality that extends beyond the typical expectations of job description, typical role or position. Nomination forms should provide enough information that will allow the selection committee to see why the nominee meets these criteria and should be recognized from among their peers, coworkers or other community members. The Recovery and Resiliency Awards will be decided by a selection committee composed of individuals that have received service; provider representatives; and family members. Please see the final page of the nomination packet for a description of characteristics to be considered in nominating for the award. Use one electronic form per nominee. Multiple nominees will be chosen. To nominate:

12th Annual CSP Conference &47th Annual MH Awards Reception2025 Award Nominations

INSIDE this issue: CODE Blue Info 4 Point-in-Time Count 5 Homelessness Data... 6 Genny's Place 7 MLK Day of Service ... 8 CPS Graduation 9 LGBTQIA+ 10 2025 CSP Conference Sponsorship 11 MH First Aid 12 And more!

The People's Rally United for Democracy Equality & Justice

The People's Rally is just around the corner!

Join us on **Saturday, January 18th, 2025**, from **12–3 PM** at the Montgomery County Courthouse Steps in Norristown, PA, for a powerful day of unity and action.

Together, we're standing for **democracy, equality, and justice**, with incredible speakers addressing key issues like reproductive rights, climate action, healthcare, trans rights, and more. Help us spread the word! **Share this flyer** with your network and invite others to join the movement. The future is ours—let's fight for it!

- From Community for Change Facebook Page

Montgomery County

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S MARCH

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY & JUSTICE

Join us in building unity, and empowering action among the leaders, organizations, and individuals who believe in human rights and dignity for all.



目標器间 Stay up to date on announcements & Information.

IRSVP TODAY! https://bit.ly/4fNIl8u

SPEAKERS:

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Montgomery County Commissioner- Jamila Winder

Protecting our Reproductive Rights State Senator- Amanda Cappelletti

Building Youth Political Power PA Youth Vote- Angie Hinton

Climate: Fight for Our Right to Clean Air Clean Air Council- Liz Schultz

Protect Your People: Community Wealth Building Daydream Kreative-Nahjee Grant

Trans Rights & the ACLU Strategy to Protect These Rights Over the Next 4 Years

ACLU PA- Naiymah Sanchez, Trans Justice Coordinator

Protecting our Most Vulnerable Residents: How We Can Assist Our Homeless Neighbors Over the Next 4 Years Norristown Hospitality Center-Sunanda Charles

Immigration: The Threat Over the Next 4 Years to our Undocumented Neighbors HIAS- Cathryn Miller-Wilson, Esq

The Threat to DEI Over the Next 4 Years Accesso Care- Esther Hio-Tong Castillo, Ph.D. 鄭曉彤

Addressing the Economy Temple Law Tax Professor- Omeed Firouzi

Be the Light! State Senator- Art Haywood

Safeguarding Our Right to Medicare and Medicaid Put People First- Anita Knisely-Durham

Sign Language Interpreters provided by Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre, Inc.

THE FUTURE IS OURS-FIGHT FOR IT!

Montgomery County Courthouse Steps Norristown, Pa

Coalition Partners: Community For Change, PA Women Rise, Montco Activists United, Voices of Poverty, Lansdale Equality Coalition, Montco 30% Project, Reuniting Family Bail Fund, Norristown Citizens in Action, NAACP Cheltenham, Montgomery County Equality Caucus, Community Hero Action Group, Montgomery County Democratic Committee, Montgomery County LGBTQ Buinsness Council, West Norriton Human Relations Commission, CAARSEA, Unides Para Servir Norristown, Social Justice Indivisible, Souderton Area for All

To nominate: https://forms.office.com/r/pf6rsMm3V3



Nominations are open for the 12th Annual CSP Conference & 47th Annual Mental Health Awards Reception.

Please see below the details and the link for the nominations for the CSP Conference and MH Awards Ceremony.

Q: Who would be an excellent nominee(s) for this year's awards?

A: Any Person, Group, Organization that you would like to spotlight/highlight for their acts of service who live, work and/or has an interest in the Mental Health Community.

The 2025 event will be in person at Martha's Community Farm: 1350 Pawlings Rd. Audubon, PA 19401.

You may submit nominations in all categories, or pick and choose. Multiple nominations are welcome.

Please complete nominations by Friday, April 4, 2025

Awards will be presented at the event on May 20, 2025

https://forms.office.com/r/pf6rsMm3V3

LET THE VOTING BEGIN!!

Any questions, contact Chevaughn Satchell (chevaughn.satchell@montgomerycountypa.gov)

Norristown Hospitality Center

Our main location at 530 Church Street will be open each weekday from 7:00 AM - 2:50 PM for anyone who needs a daytime place to stay warm. Stay warm and safe! The Norristown Hospitality Center is opening a 25-bed emergency overnight shelter at St. Johns at Diocesan Center in the same location as the Cecil and Grace Bean's Soup Kitchen.

If you or someone you know needs emergency shelter during this cold weather emergency, please call 610-278-3522.



NORRISTOWN HOSPITALITY CENTER

Annual Point-in-Time to count homelessness

NORRISTOWN, PA — Montgomery County will conduct their annual count of the homeless population across the county in the last week of January 2025, as authorities continue to search for solutions to an ongoing crisis. The 2024 count found 435 individuals sleeping either outside or in emergency shelters. Your Way Home Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services are working together to distribute survival items to the homeless. And they're gathering donations from the public.

The list of needs ranges from waterproof backpacks to hand warmers and wool socks, as a dangerously cold and wet winter continues. Point in time counts are run every year by the county to get some semblance of a picture of the unhoused community, and what resources are needed to address a worsening problem. Counts are almost always on the short end of reality, as not every person without a home can be reliably found, and numbers inevitably fluctuate as the year goes on.

The 435 number was a sharp increase from 2023, when 357 homeless individuals were counted in 2023's event, including 217 in an emergency shelter, 30 in a transitional housing facility, and 110 sleeping outside. While the overall number was a 37 percent decrease from 2022 because of the individuals in temporary shelters due to Hurricane Ida in 2022, a key number — 110 sleeping outside — stuck out markedly to authorities.

Homelessness has been on the rise locally and nationally for years. The annual studies are yet another reminder of what officials have already known has been a growing problem over the past several years. The pandemic and inflation only exacerbated underlying systemic issues like income inequality and an insufficient safety net, and society's most vulnerable are paying the price.

According to the Montgomery County Planning Commission, there are only 37 affordable rental units per 100 households making below \$35,000 a year county-



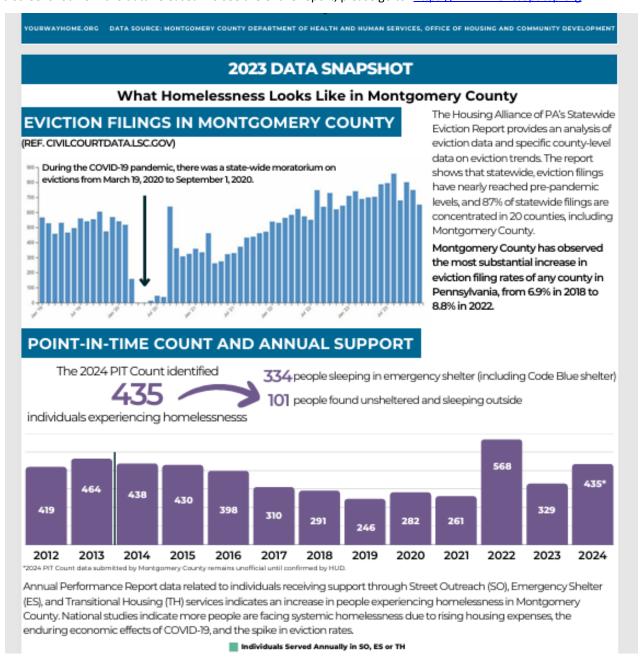
wide. Moreover, more than 65 percent of renter households below the \$35,000 a year threshold pay more than 50 percent of their monthly income toward rent and utilities. Sharp pushback from some NIMBY communities and corporate interests on affordable housing has complicated the process of providing affordable solutions.

From The Patch December 11, 2024

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Established in 2014, Your Way Home Montgomery County is a Public-Private partnership with cross sector collaborations between county agencies, nonprofit service providers, philanthropic foundations, property owners, faith organizations, homeless advocates, people with lived expertise, and other community partners committed to ending and preventing homelessness.

Here is a screenshot from the data released. To see the entire report, please go to: https://www.montcopacsp.org



The US Department of Housing and Urban Development requires every community to count the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night each year and submit it to them to track homelessness trends in the county. For more information, contact: Ruth Almy, YWH Development and Planning Mgr., Office of Housing and Community Development, Dept. of HHS, Montgomery County, PA.

Montco 30 Percent Blog Genny's Place in Lower Prov Still Has Life

By: Michael Hays, January 12, 2025

Genny's Place near Eagleville Hospital is not going down without a fight.

Despite the Lower Providence Board of Supervisors tabling the proposal several months ago for up to 60 supportive housing units – without any vote – RHD (Resources for Human Development) is proceeding with a public hearing before the township's zoning hearing board later this month. These meetings are unrelated to the lawsuit RHD filed last summer against Lower Providence, which remains unresolved in federal court.

Supporters of Genny's Place are encouraged to attend one (or both) meetings on January 29 and 30 at Arcola Intermediate School, beginning at 7 p.m. (4001 Eagleville Road).

At issue, in part, is whether or not Lower Providence Township is meeting its obligation under the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) to allow for all legal land uses within its boundaries. By pulling RHD's application for short-term, supportive housing near Eagleville Hospital, the plaintiffs are alleging that they are being deprived of an acceptable use within Lower Providence.

Last spring, this debate spilled out into the streets of Ridge Pike with opponents and supporters exercising their first amendment rights. This followed several contentious meetings, which we covered in this blog.

In a bipartisan unanimous vote last month, the Montgomery County Commissioners awarded RHD a contract to operate a year-round shelter in Lansdale Borough. It is expected to open in the first half of this year.







Congratulation Certified Peer Specialists! Montgomery County holds 28th CPS Graduation

By: Tracey Riper-Thomas, Coordinator of Peer Support and Career Services

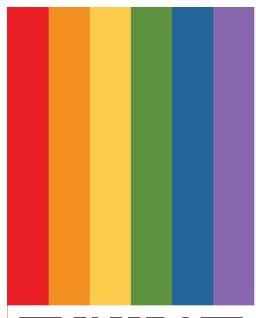
On December 13th, sixteen individuals choosing to share their lived experience with Mental Health challenges, graduated as a part of Montgomery County's Twenty-Eighth Class of Certified Peer Specialists. Peer Support Services consist of agency employees with Mental Health lived experience helping others with Mental Health challenges. County Commissioner, Chair, Neil Makhija gave inspiring congratulatory messages to the graduates. Pam Howard, Administrator of the Office of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Early Intervention, within the Department of Health and Human



Services, shared how Peer Support has grown in the County (Including the training of 469 CPS' to date, and currently having Peer Specialists employed in 35 programs)!

Recovery stories and other important information were shared in support of a long-standing Montgomery County service. Peer Specialists are often "the light at the end of the tunnel" for the peers they serve. Recovery happens in the community by engaging in work, having a holistic support system and by setting an example for others who are struggling. If you know someone who may be interested in the training and a rewarding career, please contact Tracey Riper-Thomas, Coordinator of Peer Support and Career Services at Tracey.Riper-Thomas@montgomerycountypa.gov.







Scan to learn more about Connections Support Groups

LGBTQIA+ SUPPORT GROUP

WHERE? VIRTUAL WHEN? 1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS

A safe place for support run by trained facilitators with lived experience.

For anyone in the LGBTQIA+ community living with a mental health challenge(s)



2025 CSP Conference

Sponsorship Information



12th Annual Montgomery County CSP Conference & 45th Montgomery County Mental Health Awards Reception

Please consider sponsoring this annual event, which brings together the Mental Health community in Montgomery County for a lovely picnic, activity sessions, and the annual awards reception!

All sponsors of this year's conference will be acknowledged in the Conference Program.

Thank you so much for your support. This conference costs approximately \$40 per person and we are planning for 300 attendees. Your generosity enables us to share this celebration with everyone in the Montgomery County mental health community, regardless of their ability to pay. It is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and promote recovery and holistic health within the entire community.

P **5 Attendee Tier**4 Page Advertisement

Workshop Tier ¼ Page Advertisement



Community Tier
½ Page Advertisement





CSP All-Star Tier Full Page Advertisement



For additional Information on **Payment Options** or to discuss an **Activity** your organization would like to host, please contact Harry Bowles at 610-270-3685 or hbowles@hopeworxinc.org





Youth Mental Health First Aid Jefferson Abington Hospital, Tuesday, February 4, 2025

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adolescents ages 12-18. You'll build skills and confidence you need to reach out and provide initial support to young people who are struggling. You'll also learn how to help connect them to appropriate support.

AFTER THE COURSE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO:

- Recognize common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD).
- · Recognize common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- · Understand how to interact with a young person in crisis.
- · Know how to connect a young person with help.
- Better understand trauma, substance use, self-care and the impact of social media and bullying.

According to MHFA, studies show that with proper care and treatment, children and youth with mental health and substance use challenges get better, and many recover completely

Sponsors:





www.fivecountymh.org

Youth Mental Health First Aid -Blended

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 8:30am-3:30pm Jefferson Abington Hospital 1200 Old York Road Abington, PA 19001 Frobese Classrooms 1&2

Register at www.fivecountymh.org

This course requires registration on the Connect Learning Management System and 2 hours online pre-work

Questions:

regionalmentalhealthfirstaid@pmhcc.org



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CREATING INCREAS CONNECTION S (CIC)

Creating Increased Connections

A program of Resources for Human Development

GROUPS





TAKING BACK OUR POWER

Taking Back Our Power is a peer support group for individuals with lived experience of sensory phenomena (like hearing things others don't hear) and unusual beliefs



2:00PM-3:00PM

Hopeworx 1210 Stanbridge St #600, Norristown, PA 19401

TUESDAYS 2:30PM-4:00PM

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church 625 Montgomery Ave Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

THURSDAYS 1:00PM-2:00PM

Trinity Reformed Church

60 N. Hanover St Pottstown, PA 19464



CIRCLE OF

HOPE

Circle of Hope is peer-to-Willow Grove Baptist Church peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes and challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

BEGINING 12/03

TUESDAYS 3:00PM-4:00PM

3600 Welsh Rd

Willow Grove, PA 19090

WEDNESDAYS 10:00AM-11:30AM

Willow Grove Baptist Church 3600 Welsh Rd Willow Grove, PA 19090

THURSDAYS 10:30AM-12:00PM

Hopeworx 1210 Stanbridge St #600, Norristown, PA 19401

LIVE ANOTHER DAY

TUESDAYS 12:30PM-1:45PM



Lansdale Library 301 Vine St Lansdale, PA 19446



Alternatives to Suicide groups are intended as non-judgmental spaces where people can share some of their darkest thoughts without being assumed to have an illness or being assessed for involuntary interventions. Openly exploring these thoughts - and the feelings and experiences underneath them is often the key to moving toward something different.



COMPAÑEROS (AS) CON VALOR Y EXITO

CIC se enorgullece de ofrecer nuestro grupo de discusión Companeros Con Valor y Exito. Únase con nosotros para un conversación animada sobre cómo nos sentimos, nuestros éxitos y desafíos, su recuperación y cómo mantenemos nuestro bienestar. Todo lo que se dice en grupo es confidencial y todos son bienvenidos.

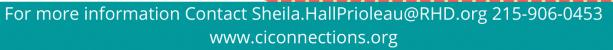
Pronto

WOMENS IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCES GROUP

WEDNESDAYS 3:00PM-4:30PM

This group was created for women as a safe environment to voice & openly share our life stories as women & to empower ourselves to https://rhd.zoom find greater meaning & purpose in us/j/83638683076

Zoom Link



STATEWIDE CSP MEETING SUMMARY

The Statewide CSP Committee met on December 5, 2024.

An update on the CSP grant was given by Kutztown Grants Manager Alice Fischer:

- Logistics o Grant runs Jan 2024 Dec 2025 o Have identified a shared scope of work and have created contracts o New funding model from OMHSAS ? Reimbursement model requires specific documentation ? Regional TAs have been able to help advise on the changes
- Have been working on county profiles to enable a snapshot view of mental health county to county o
 Pulled from Census data, OMHSAS Medicaid data, state is helping with incarceration numbers, county surveys, block funding reports
- Reporting system to help add supplemental data to the personal stories we already have o Everyone
 will have the opportunity to add their opinions via surveys o Engage in conversation with Kutztown
 and CSPs o Final report will detail what was done and how to do it
- Brainstorming session later in the meeting What would you like CSP to look like in 2027? o SWOT analysis
- Deadlines upcoming: o Feb 2025 2 2024 invoices must be submitted 2 Re-budgets must be submitted
- To provide feedback, notes or a recording will be done during the interview. All identifying information will be removed when the report is done. People can also let their regional TAs know the feedback to pass along.

Advocacy Updates were given by Kathy Quick and Candijoy Myers from PMHCA:

- Kutztown is working to collect a lot of data to help supplement and back up our voice in meetings to
 affect change o Adds to our credibility when speaking to ask for the things we need, instead of what
 other believe we want
- Short-term: Behavioral Health Stakeholders Conversation o Persons across the board from individuals, to providers, to system, and state are all dissatisfied with the current state of things o Meeting with stakeholders from across the state 2 Created a structure for asks; currently editing those asks
- Vision statement and possible slogan

 Meeting scheduled for January
- Finalized asks and prep to influence the budget for the upcoming year 2 Have been adding additional people to the meeting and conversation as it develops
- Currently attendance is by invite-only o Any person can give their suggestions to their Regional TA to be passed along to this meeting
- Long-term: o Have been working on an educational series and webinar to help with our advocacy efforts ② Committee has been started to write curriculum o County champions to delivery these trainings and be a resource for advocacy how to's ② County champions will be part of an advocacy network across PA
- Represent wellness, not necessarily just mental health
- To be part of the advocacy efforts, contact Kathy@pmhca.org and/or Candi@pmhca.org
- DRPA/Litigation o Kelly Darr from DRPA is investigating possible litigation against the state due to the exorbitant wait times for services without access to peer services ② PMHCA's portion of this has been to help identify individuals who have been harmed due to these circumstances ② DRPA will be creating a sign-up questionnaire that PMHCA will distribute to our contacts

Subcommittee Reports from December 2024

Advocacy Subcommittee: **Advocacy** – Akilah said Point in Time Count coming up in January. Looking for items to be donated. Will share link to donate. Dec. 30th OMHSAS meeting with CPSs. 9 a.m. Encouraged CPSs to attend and connect with OMHSAS directly. Can submit topics ahead of time to discuss. Jan. 18th People's Rally rain or shine from noon to 3 p.m. All kinds of partners there. Rally for human rights and social justice for all. Trainings for PIT count for volunteers. Link for donations:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2AQ5NH9A7C2ZD?ref =wl share.

Community Outreach – No meeting.

Conference Committee — Harry said he's updating sponsorship form for conference. Manna on Main hasn't responded yet. Will also get an estimate for Mission BBQ. Morgan suggested AAA Catering in Lansdale. Tuesday, May 20, 2025 is conference. Committee talked about vendors. Adding additional vendor. Peyton Hearts crochet activity was suggested. Vendor tables did small activities last year. We didn't receive feedback on how they were received. Recovery and Resiliency Awards are open. 12th Annual CSP

CSP MEETING CALENDER 2024-25 Meetings are held every third Thursday, monthly from 12: 00-2:30pm The next meetings will be: 16 January February 20 March 20 April 17 Meetings are held in person and via Zoom.

<u>Conference &47th Annual MH Awards Reception2025 Award Nominations</u> to nominate. Also, we are looking for suggestions on theme. Self-Care for all was suggested. Please email Harry.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2024/2025 Tri-Chairs

Provider Member: Jim Markey

Person in Recovery: Morgan Killian-Mosley

Family Member: Haniel Tracey

2024/2025 Sub-Committee Chairs

Community Outreach: Julie Whitmore, Erin Villarose

Advocacy: Akilah Williams, Anise Robinson

Conference: Harry Bowles

2024/2025 Treasurer

Justin Chamrin

County Liaison - Tracey Riper-Thomas

Fiduciary - HopeWorx, Inc.

1210 Stanbridge Street, Suite 600 Norristown, PA 19401 610-270-3685



CSP Principles

- * Person Centered/ Person Empowered
- * Culturally competent
- * Designed to Meet Special Needs
- * Community Based with Natural Supports
- * Flexible
- * Coordinated
- * Accountable
- * Strengths-Based

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Central Behavioral Health,
AdvocacyWorx, Community
Satisfaction Team of Montgomery
County, Magellan Health Services,
Montgomery Co. Department of
Behavioral Health, Montgomery
County Emergency Services (MCES),
NAMI Montgomery County,
Norristown Vet Center, Resources for
Human Development, Salisbury
Behavioral Health

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3rd Thursday of each month **HopeWorx**

1210 Stanbridge St.
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
In person & Zoom

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

Join our Mailing list!
We have an email list as
well as a regular mailing,
to join:

Send an e-mail to:

pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org

Or send your contact info to this mailing address:

Community Support Journal

CSP Mission Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large. The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

CSP Subcommittees:

- * Advocacy Subcommittee—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County. The newsletter editor can be contacted at: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.
- * Community Connections Subcommittee—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.
- * Conference Subcommittee The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.

Website: www.montcopacsp.org https://www.facebook.com/montcopacsp/