

NETWORK

News from Sertoma Centre, Inc

Giving from the Heart

For this donor, it's all about helping Sertoma fulfill its mission

If you have attended a Sertoma Centre event in the last three decades, you have most likely met a dynamic-duo father-son team. The father, Michael Ryan (Mike), has been involved with Sertoma since the 1990s and is a valuable member of our Sertoma community as a donor, volunteer, board member, Consumer parent, and all-around-great supporter. His son is a Sertoma consumer who started here in January 2005.



Mike Ryan (right), with his son Mike, a Sertoma consumer

The elder Ryan is a long-time member of the Knights of Columbus and first learned about Sertoma Centre as one of the charities the Council funds. In addition to being an active donor and volunteer, Mike sits on the Sertoma Centre Foundation Board.

“My support of Sertoma as a parent, Knight of Columbus member, and donor stems from its Mission to help the Consumers be as successful in life as possible. That led me to volunteer and become a Foundation Board member because I saw first-hand the impact Sertoma had on my son and his fellow Consumers. I saw him grow and obtain life skills to help him,” said Mike.

He also sees first-hand how cutbacks in government funding have caused the need for public funding to increase for an organization like Sertoma.

“Financially helping Sertoma makes a tangible difference in the lives of its Consumers and their families,” says Mike. “The skills obtained at Sertoma can help reduce the reliance on the government programs to help put Consumers in jobs and potentially reduce

their healthcare costs.”

Earlier this year, the Ryan Family made a gift to Sertoma by donating stocks. Mike encourages more people to consider stock gifts because it's like contributing money but with more benefits. He explains, “when donated, stock is designated a gift, and the value determined at the time of transfer. There is no reduction in cash balances. When financial conditions are uncertain, the value of your gift does not draw down your available cash.” Additionally, distributions of stock from a retirement account are not taxable and can satisfy the required minimum distributions set by the IRS. It also allows you to contribute more to Sertoma than you might be able to with a traditional gift.

In addition to Sertoma, the Ryan's support their church, Our Lady of the Woods, St. Coletta's, Special Olympics of Illinois Region E, Shady Oaks Camp, and St. Mary's College. As a father, he empathetically shares that his favorite place in the world is with family. He lives by the motto, “God doesn't give you any more than you can handle,” but laughingly adds, “I just wish He didn't have so much confidence in me.”



The Ryan Family

Meet Our Sertoma Staff

Introducing Ashley Schehr, LCPC, Clinical Services Manager

The mission of Sertoma Centre is to provide opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve personal success. This mission is carried out through many different programs and services, but without the staff dedicated to supporting our Consumers, these successes could not be achieved. Today, we would like to introduce you to one of these staff members, Ashley Schehr, LCPC.



Ashley Schehr

Ashley is a Clinical Services Manager supporting staff and consumers in our clinical programs at Sertoma's Community Mental Health and Counseling. Programs include adult services in PSR and Outpatient Therapy Groups, START, and Private Practice. She has been with Sertoma for six years and is passionate about helping others achieve their treatment and recovery goals. She finds it rewarding that her work can help Sertoma develop client-centered programs that reach more people in our community.

"Sertoma staff do a wonderful job of looking at our clients' mental health from different perspectives to assist them in their recovery and help them reach their goals. The consumers and staff are a big part of why I like my job so much," says Ashley.

She just wishes others understood that she and her team are working to change the narrative about mental health. "I am passionate about working with people who share the same passion in helping others reach their treatment and recovery goals. We are continually developing programs to reach more people in our community. To be able to look back and see everything we built in the program and to have consumers successfully transitioning out of services is a great feeling," says Ashley proudly.

She developed a true love of psychology in college and began working in this field after completing her master's

program. She admits she never thought about working with individuals with disabilities, but after interviewing and starting at Sertoma, she has never looked back. "It's funny how you think you have a plan for your life, and it ends up in a different but better place."

One clinical program that Ashley manages is the Supporting Treatment and Recovery Together (START) program. START is a specialized psychosocial rehabilitation program supporting people with an intellectual or developmental disability AND a mental illness. She explains that programs like START are so important because it is one-of-a-kind. "So many people get excited about our program because of the number of individuals that need these supports. We built a program desperately needed in our community."

To know Ashley is to know she truly likes to have a positive outlook on life and believes you should do the things you might be scared to do; take the risk because you usually, end up happier you did. For instance, in her free time, she likes to kayak – going by the kayak name Teeka the Trailblazer – and to travel. Tennessee is one of her favorite places to visit for the wonderful food and people and spectacular views. But she also would like to go to the countries of her heritage: Germany, Wales, and Ireland! She is all about living life to the fullest because life is short.

"Do the things you might be scared to do; take the risk because you usually end up happier you did"

- believes Ashley

And if she had a superpower? "I would really like to be able to fly, so I could see distant friends and family quicker but also travel easier to faraway places! I can be impatient in traffic and at airports!" she admits.

Unexpected Gift Makes an Emotional Impact Staff member surprised with donation from “Band Moms”

Sertoma recently received a donation from The Music Moms of Orland Park, IL. While the gift itself was appreciated wholeheartedly, it was who it was from that made it even more significant.

As a group that helped their children in the high school band, The Music Moms are no strangers to ensuring everyone is taken care of. When they heard Sertoma’s Clinical Services Manager Ashley Schehr, LCPC—one of those students who benefited from the Music Moms’ generosity all those years ago—needed donations, they were happy to help.

“Throughout my high school career, I was part of the marching band and played the flute,” said Ashley. “I was



Sertoma had the good fortune of receiving a donation from the Music Moms thanks to CMHC staff member and former band student Ashley Schehr.

a Sandburg Marching Eagle, and we had a group of “band moms” that supported the students with their uniforms, hats, first aid situations, hair—really you name it, they helped us with it! These moms worked hard to ensure we looked our best for football games, competitions, and performances.”

Ashley kept in contact with high school friends and the band moms through Facebook. She often shared how Sertoma could use donations to support the consumers. The Music Mom’s saw the donation appeal and always eager and willing to help, contacted Ashley. “Keeping in touch with those in your life is more important than you think,” said Ashley. “This donation has made me reflect on the impact people have in your life.”

For Ashley, the gift was especially meaningful because it was made by a group of women willing to step up and help once again. “The hard work and dedication our staff give every day to our consumers makes a difference, and it means so much to me that my relationship with our band moms from years ago is able to help us support our consumers even more,” said Ashley.

SPECIAL THANKS

Old National Bank donates \$10,000 to Sertoma Employment Services



On December 9, Old National Bank executives visited Sertoma Centre to present a check for \$10,000, to be earmarked for Employment Services. Old National Bank is very dedicated to Workforce Development, and our ongoing efforts to secure employment for those we support at Sertoma Centre. Thank you!

Pictured left to right: Adnan Assad (Senior VP), Joseph Bullington (Senior VP), Mary Gonzalez, Gus van den Brink and Robert ‘Bob’ Kelly (Executive VP).

Action Sertoma Club hosts annual holiday pizza party for our Consumers

Consumers enjoyed a pizza lunch while shopping at the Holiday Bazaar. Santa popped in for a visit, too! See the photos at <https://sertomacentre.org/blog/visit-with-santa/>

UPCOMING EVENTS



We need over 200 volunteers to make this event a success... **We Need You!**

**Volunteer for one day or two
Individuals & Groups Welcome**

**Day One: March 7 | 1:00 to 9:00pm
Day Two: March 8 | 11:00am to 3:00pm**

Ready to Volunteer?

Contact Gwen Rucker, Development Associate, at grucker@sertomacentre.org or 708-730-6210

SAVE THE DATE

**Heroes Cook-Off
May 20, 2023 5:00–9:00pm**

This fun event raises money for Sertoma Centre AND celebrates local First Responder Superheroes. First-responder Chefs vie for bragging rights and judges' votes while guests sample the delicious entrées prepared by these heroes. Includes celebrity judges, dancing to classic rock-n-roll hits, and funtastic children's activities. Sponsorships available.

**Housewares Super Sale
April 1-2, 2023, 9:00am–5:00pm
4100 W. 127th Street, Alsip**

A great way to stock up on housewares while supporting our mission. We are one of five organizations receiving donated items from vendors attending the Inspired Home Show. These new items are sold at the Super Sale, raising much-needed funds for the programs and services at Sertoma. Volunteer opportunities available.



**Our Annual Report
2022 is online!**

We invite you to look back at the programs, events, and people that contributed to keeping us Sertoma Strong for fiscal year 2022.

sertomacentre.org/annualreport2022