



LATLC President  
**Megan E. Klein**

LOS ANGELES TRIAL LAWYERS' CHARITIES



OCTLC President  
**Michelle West**

ORANGE COUNTY TRIAL LAWYERS' CHARITIES



# Trial lawyers' charities can improve your mental health

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS THAT FOSTER THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, which has been observed since 1949.

Sadly, the mental health crisis in the U.S. has only grown, especially since the pandemic, with a significant portion of the population experiencing mental illness and facing barriers to accessing adequate care. Statistics support this: One in five adults report experiencing mental illness, and nearly 1 in 10 Americans report experiencing depression. The mental health of youth is also of major concern, with increases in reported feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and suicide attempts among young people. Both OCTLC and LATLC support organizations that specifically deal with mental health or include programs to help those with mental health issues.

## Supporting US Vets

US Vets is a wonderful organization that both LATLC and OCTLC support. Veterans transitioning into civilian life often experience great difficulty and stress during their adjustment. Many times, those difficulties are due to combat-related traumatic events which, if left untreated, could cause serious obstacles to stability and prosperity in civilian life. US Vets offers free counseling and treatment services designed to address the unique needs of each client in a safe and confidential environment. In addition to grants, we assemble 1,000 toiletry kits during the joint Great Tryke Giveaway for US Vets' outreach efforts in Orange County and Los Angeles. Last month, LATLC and OCTLC were honored by US Vets during their 5K Run, Walk and Roll Event in Inglewood.

Other organizations that focus on mental health include Shanti Orange County (whose psychologists provide individual counseling for mental health needs including depression, anxiety, trauma, addiction, and much more), the Alcott Center, that provides mental health and supportive housing services to low and no-income adults throughout LA County, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Orange County, Airport Marina Counseling, which both provide programs for all, including teens and young children, and Free Arts, whose mission is to reduce the impact of trauma while leveraging art programs for children while fostering self-expression, creativity, and coping skills.

Even during the fire relief efforts, LATLC supported Adult Art Therapy activities with DENA Rebuild for those displaced, and traumatized, because of the Eaton fires.

But did you know that OCTLC and LATLC can improve *your own* mental health? Studies have shown that volunteering and helping others reduces stress, increases positive feelings, and fosters a sense of purpose. According to VolunteerHub, here are some specific benefits:

- **Stress reduction:** Volunteering can lower stress and increase positive, relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine in the brain.
- **Sense of purpose:** The act of helping others can provide a strong sense of purpose and meaning, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing mental health challenges like obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- **Improved mood:** Many studies have shown that volunteering can lead to an improved mood, with some research indicating that 93% of volunteers report an improved mood.
- **Social connection:** Volunteering fosters social connections and helps individuals meet new people, which can combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Increased life satisfaction:** Volunteering can increase life satisfaction and overall well-being, according to research cited by *Forbes*.

Every month, LATLC and OCTLC organize volunteer opportunities. In the next few weeks, you can celebrate Mother's Day with Bresee Foundation (May 8) or volunteer on May 9th for a Mother's Day Lunch at Age Well Senior Services in Tustin with OCTLC. Keep checking our websites ([latlc.org](http://latlc.org) and [octlc.org](http://octlc.org)) to find local service projects that can help our community – and improve *your* mental health – at the same time.

