

“Putting Community First at Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center-Part four”
Submitted by Tamara L Smith, LMSW

Prevention, treatment and recovery support services are essential parts of successful health service systems and communitywide strategies. In order to help our clients achieve a “high-quality, self-directed, satisfying life” integrated in the community, one must focus on helping the client overcome or manage one’s disease (s) as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way and building relationships and social networks in the community that provide support, friendship, love and hope. ABMHC is taking action to make that happen.

In February, ABMHC promoted American Heart Month. Staff wore encouraged to wear RED every Friday in February to start conversations about becoming “heart healthy.” Topics included: Stress Management, How to Stop Smoking, Weight Management, Benefit of Exercise, and more. Staff demonstrated much enthusiasm and looked to creative ways to promote this very important topic. (See pictures)

On February 6, Rick Acton (ED) and Larry Elledge (Program Director-Polly Best Center) participated in a Community Forum with Governor Haley and the Original Six Foundation to determine the needs and desires of Barnwell County residents. The forum had over 60 attendees and 9 work groups instructed to determine the top issues in Barnwell County. Issues identified were: rural health care/hospital, jobs, infrastructure, schools, taxes and crime prevention. As a result of the meeting, “Barnwell County Day” was held on March 16. This included a health fair, job fair, information activities as well as events for children and adults. The Polly Best Staff/Barnwell Office- ABMHC participated in this event.

On February 26, Beverly King (CAF Coordinator) presented information on mental health to the Guardian Ad Litem Group.

In March, ABMHC promoted National Nutrition Month. A presentation was held on Nutrition in conjunction with Corine Simpkins, Health Educator/SCDHEC. The presentation “Eat the Best and Leave the Rest” focused on learning how to make healthier food selections.

ABMHC staff participated in several community health fairs. On March 11, Shannon Britt (Care-Coordinator) participated in the Aiken County Board of Disabilities Health Fair. Tamara Smith and April Kitchens participated in the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce Health Fair held on April 16. On April 18, Shannon made a presentation about ABMHC to the Kiwanis Club of Aiken, SC. A tabletop display and brochures were available for all participants.

ABMHC staff are looking to an event filled May to celebrate Mental Health Month.



Hartzog Center's Heart Heros
(Back: Dr. Greg Smith, Wanda Beasley, James Johnson
Front: Sherry Franklin, Angela Quinn)



Main Center's Healthy Heart Warriors
Elisa Rish, Cynthia Dunbar, Tecora Williams, Bernie Collins & Keisa Brooks-Bacote



Main Center's Administrative Heart Heros
(Front row: Tawana Price, Mary Beard, Judy Hicks
Back row: Monica Westall & Lisa Herndon)



Barnwell Forum- Picture from People's Sentinel
(Rick Acton & Governor Haley)



Barnwell County Day
(Dolly Still, Rick Acton, Governor Haley, Larry Elledge, Lacinda McCormack
Front-Sheryl Brown)



North Augusta Chamber of Commerce Health Fair
April Kitchens, Program Director/Hartzog Center- North Augusta Office