The Duke Endowment and DMH: Partners with the Future

By John Hutto, Office of Public Affairs

Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation, established in 1924, by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke. The Duke Endowment’s mission is to serve the people of North Carolina and South Carolina by supporting selected programs of higher education, health care, children’s welfare, and spiritual life. In 2007, it awarded more than $185 million in grants, including $45.5 million in health care.

In the fall of 2006, representatives from The Duke Endowment came to Columbia on a courtesy call to meet John H. Magill, the new state director for mental health, and to discuss The Duke Endowment’s growing interest in mental health issues in South Carolina. Mr. Magill told his visitors that one of the more pressing problems in the state was people with behavioral health problems crowding into hospital emergency rooms (ERs) for treatment because of a scarcity of local resources. He suggested that DMH would be interested in talking to The Duke Endowment about the possibility of using telemedicine technology to help ease these problems. DMH already had a successful record of using telemedicine to serve its clients with mental illness who were deaf, and The Duke Endowment was known for investing in projects that advance innovation and improve performance. The representatives liked what they heard.

In subsequent meetings, The Duke Endowment came to learn more about the proposal, and Mr. Magill expanded his team to include others with a stake in finding an effective solution who could bring assets to the table, such as the South Carolina Hospital Association, (See DUKE, Page 4.)

Anti-Stigma DVD Now Available

By Greg Kirk, Waccamaw Center for Mental Health

In 2007, Will Shaw, a mental health counselor at the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health in Conway, had an idea for making an anti-stigma DVD. He took his plan to Mental Health America of Horry County, which agreed to help sponsor the project.

Mr. Shaw then enlisted the media department at Coastal Carolina University to help with the technical aspects, like lighting, shooting, and editing. Along the way, many members of the Waccamaw staff, other mental health professionals and clients joined the project and were included on the DVD.

All of those interviewed were asked to respond to two questions: “what is stigma?” and “what can we do in our professional and personal lives to help eliminate stigma?” John H. Magill, SCDMH state director, is featured, as is Murry Chesson, executive director of the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health.

In the end, the team developed a great, informative twenty-five minute DVD on mental health and stigma, called Stigma: Awareness and Prevention in Mental Health. (See STIGMA, Page 9.)
Serving Our Veterans

You probably have been following media reports about the numbers of our armed forces personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan in need of mental health services. A recent study indicated that out of 103,788 returning veterans, 31 percent were diagnosed with mental health or psychological problems. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, is the most common disorder, accounting for more than half of all mental health diagnoses.

South Carolina has one of the highest numbers of veterans per capita in the nation with about four-hundred thousand veterans calling the Palmetto State their home. As a state, we and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs face tremendous challenges in helping these veterans and their families return to this country and provide much needed services so that they can resume a normal life.

At the Department of Mental Health, we are putting ourselves in a position to be a part of the statewide solution to this growing concern. Through the Office of the Governor, South Carolina applied for and received from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services an invitation to participate in August with nine other states in a conference entitled The Returning Veterans and Their Families Strategic Planning Conference and Policy Academy.

As director for mental health, I will serve as team leader for our state. Our team includes the state agency directors of DAO-DAS, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Employment Security Commission. Other team members are representatives from the South Carolina National Guard, NAMI-SC, the Office of the Governor, and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

We believe that our state’s attendance at the Policy Academy will enable us to develop and implement a strategic plan to help returning veterans and their families. Each agency on the team brings its own strengths. For example:

- DMH operates over 500 nursing home beds for veterans; our community mental health centers report that they are treating more and more veterans and families; our school-based mental health program is reaching military families in public schools; and we are engaged with NAMI-SC on peer support and family reintegration projects;
- DAODAS is building faith-based programs to support veterans and their families and has taken steps to ensure that substance abuse treatment counselors are aware of deployment related issues;
- The Governor’s Office of Veterans Affairs has developed a road map on how to approach the top ten problems faced by returning veterans and their families;
- The Employment Security Commission will provide placement assistance and services to veterans as well as serve homeless veterans; and
- Vocational Rehabilitation has made veterans with disabilities a priority and is working with various partners to meet the employment needs of this population.

In a similar show of support, leaders of the Columbia regional community and local and state government officials, including SCDMH, joined with military officials from Fort Jackson, the Army Reserve, and the S.C. National Guard in a ceremony to honor and pledge continuing, expanded support for returning veterans and their families. The official signing for the Army Community Covenant was held June 13, 2008, at Dreher High School in Columbia, and I signed for our agency.

The Army Community Covenant is designed to develop state and community partnerships with the Army to help improve the quality of life for soldiers and their families, both at their current duty stations and as they transfer from state to state. Covenant signings began all over the United States in April 2008, and will continue until December 2008.

I am very proud of all that you continue to do to serve our clients and their families as we do our best to enable them to recover from mental illnesses.

Director’s Column
John H. Magill, State Director
Foundation Grant Helps Expand School-based Services Program

By Images Staff

A 2007 meeting between DMH State Director John H. Magill and Harvey Galloway, executive director of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation, will soon be paying dividends to school children in ten rural counties.

State Director John H. Magill said, “We learned that the Foundation’s mission is to promote the health of South Carolinians and to fund such projects as childhood health care, free medical clinics, mental health, health care research, and more. Their mission blended well with DMH’s, so we applied for a grant to help us expand our successful school-based services program.”

The Foundation recognized the value of school-based services and awarded $1.2 million over three years to expand the program into ten rural school districts throughout the state. “The Foundation fully supports the expansion of mental health services to better the learning environment for children,” said Mr. Galloway.

One school in each of the ten districts will receive a $52,414 grant for the first year, with additional money coming over the term of the grant. Schools receiving the grants are in Bamberg, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Fairfield, Hampton, Jasper, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg counties. To celebrate the awarding of the grants, leadership from the Foundation and DMH has been traveling to the districts presenting checks to school officials.

According to DMH School-based Program Consultant Elizabeth (Beth) Freeman, these grants are vital to schools in rural communities. “This money will enable schools to serve over 300 students and their families over the three year period. Without these funds, the local schools and community mental health centers would not be able to begin or sustain school-based mental health programs and students and families in rural areas would not be able to access mental health services in such a timely manner,” she said.

Last year, DMH served over 13,000 children in school-based programs. The agency has 282 mental health counselors in 457 schools, or 42 percent of all schools in South Carolina. The ultimate goal is to have counselors in all schools in the state.

Homeshare Family Weathers the Storm

By Greg Ross
Beckman Center for Mental Health Services

A spring storm that ripped through Greenwood County severely damaged the home of Sandy and Calvin Felthouse.

Sandy is a veteran Homeshare provider for the Beckman Center. Her Homeshare client, Susan Osscarson, just so happens to be from the Midwest and is all too familiar with severe storms and tornadoes. When a violent microburst, a strong downdraft that can be very hazardous and difficult to predict, hit the area March 25, Susan was in a position to comfort Sandy through the frightening turn of events. This was no small feat when one considers that the incident lasted nearly 20 minutes and featured hail the size of golf balls and tennis balls!

The property sustained roof and siding damage, shattered windows, shutters and blinds, and a completely destroyed vehicle. Later, as Sandy and Susan literally picked up the broken pieces of their home together, they were simply thankful to have made it through the storm unscathed.
the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, and the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Magill also held discussions with the heads of the departments of psychiatry at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the Medical College of Georgia, which could possibly participate in the proposed initiative in the future.

In June 2007, DMH submitted its application to The Duke Endowment, and in November, Mr. Magill received a letter saying that the agency had been awarded a $3.7 million grant to develop and implement the telepsychiatry consultation network in all emergency rooms around South Carolina. Furthermore, because the S.C. Office of Research and Statistics had been developing a multi-agency electronic health record, the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services awarded SCDMH a $1 million grant to design and implement an electronic delivery system for the health record, which would bring more information about patients to emergency room doctors and staff.

“The forming of this relationship with The Duke Endowment is a major step forward for our agency and for our state,” said Mr. Magill. “Having this degree of support from such a prestigious foundation will enable us to provide the type of solution that local hospitals need and people with behavioral health care problems deserve. No other system of its kind exists in the United States, so South Carolina will be the first to offer statewide, electronic, psychiatric consultation to all emergency rooms and will be setting the pace in the evolving world of psychiatric telemedicine.”

For some time, hospitals in South Carolina had expressed concerns over limited access to expert behavioral health consultations for doctors and staff working in emergency rooms, which affected the quality and timeliness of treatment. Further, in smaller, rural communities, community mental health center psychiatrists were not always available to provide emergency room consultations. The telemedicine project will use psychiatrists whose primary job duty will be to provide such consultations.

Here is how it will work. State-of-the-art video and voice equipment will be placed in all participating ERs. This equipment will be directly linked to DMH, where psychiatrists will be available at all times (24/7) to conduct face-to-face behavioral health consultations. The DMH psychiatrist will be able to see and speak with the patient, family (when needed), and the ER staff. Using this same equipment, participating hospitals may also contact each other for other medical consultations. The network will be Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant, thus assuring patient confidentiality.

Because of the technical complexity of the project, Mr. Magill formed The Connectivity Committee, a group comprised of DMH’s business partners, the leadership from other state agencies and universities, and other principals. The committee serves in an advisory capacity and reviews the status of DMH’s telemedicine project in light of other advanced technological initiatives taking place in and around South Carolina.

DMH’s telepsychiatry project will provide a “win-win situation” for behavioral health care patients and hospitals. Patients will receive treatment sooner and spend less time waiting. With reduced lengths of patient stays, hospitals will be able to save on cost-of-care and redirect manpower and finances to other needs. Thanks to The Duke Endowment and to other business partners, DMH is working to improve patient care, help hospitals save resources, and move South Carolina into tomorrow’s health care arena today.

Editor’s Note: Images will provide you with quarterly updates on this project, submitted by Ed Spencer and Ralph Strickland.
Columbia Area MHC Opens Young Adult Program
By Sheila Arnold
Columbia Area MHC

Young adulthood is a difficult time for most of us. So many transitions occur: leaving home, starting a career, becoming independent. But imagine facing those challenges when you have a serious mental illness; how does one find the drive to keep reaching for his or her goals? How does one find hope?

Columbia Area Mental Health Center (CAMHC) recently opened a program to help young adults find treatment, support, and, most importantly, hope. Insights, the first specialized young adult program at SCDMH, provides services that meet the age, developmental, cultural, and clinical needs of young men and women between the ages of 18 and 30 who have a serious mental illness. Most are referred from inpatient care, emergency rooms, and other crisis services, but they all have one thing in common: they want a place to recover, to belong. Insights is this place.

The program operates under a modified Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model and offers a wide range of services including drug abuse groups; psychosocial rehabilitation; individual, family, and group therapy; and job coaching. Kathy Hugg, coordinator at Insights, received two grants from SCDMH to create this program.

According to Ms. Hugg, Insights is a comprehensive program that offers group, individual and family counseling, intensive case management, and assertive outreach. Groups are offered every day until noon, and outreach services are offered the remainder of the day. Insights focuses on helping clients achieve what they want most: independence and employment.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program from Work In Progress provides job coaching and job placement services. So far, it has helped many of the young adults in finding work and learning interview skills. Insights can serve up to 60 clients, with 16 slots designated for Towards Local Care clients. Towards Local Care will serve young people who have several hospitalizations and will likely need very close monitoring and support.

Current clients of the program shared their thoughts about the new program:

“I think the program is cool!”

“I love the staff.”

“This program has been both inspiring and great. I like coming here for the trips, classes and meeting people close to my age. I’m not the youngest or oldest. I am having the most fun, my spirit is high… from the time I’m here to the time I leave in the afternoon.”

“The young adults program is a good facility. It’s a place to gain insight on my mental illness.”

“I think the young adults program is fun and it gives me something to do during the day.”

“I think the young adults program helps me a lot. Counselors help with remembering medications. Coming here gets me up early in the morning. Meeting people at this program is great for me.”

“This program is the most helpful because it helps you learn about yourself and about your weaknesses and strengths. It also helps you with getting your own apartment. When you are in this young adults program it will also help you learn about others that have the same illnesses and disorders you have. Sometimes in here you will have friends and/or enemies but in the end you will have more friends than you started out with.”

“After coming to the young adults program I feel they have taught me how to deal with my mental illness. Thank you for everything.”

Veterans’ Cemetery Dedicated in Anderson, S.C.
By Images Staff

On May 23, 2008, veterans and their families, DMH State Director John H. Magill, and other state and federal officials gathered in Anderson, S.C. to dedicate the M.J. “Dolly” Cooper Veterans Cemetery, a new cemetery for South Carolina’s veterans. The cemetery is adjacent to the Richard Michael Campbell Veterans Nursing Home on land transferred to the Governor’s Office of Veterans Affairs in 2002 by the SCDMH and the Mental Health Commission.

Dolly Cooper, a resident of Piedmont, S.C., served in World War II and is a former state legislator and S.C. National Guard Veteran. According to cemetery officials, the acreage named in his honor will provide more than 6,800 casket gravesites, 740 cremation burial sites, and 800 mausoleum niches for cremated remains. The Dolly Cooper Veterans’ cemetery is the first in the country that will be state run; it was funded by a $5.1 million federal grant.

About 400,000 veterans live in South Carolina. The Department of Mental Health provides services to over 500 veterans who are residents of Tucker Nursing Care Center, Campbell Veterans’ Nursing Home, and the recently opened Veterans’ Victory House: Home of the Greatest Generations.
SCDMH Celebrates Its 2007 Outstanding Employees!

Dawn Hamelin
Spartanburg Area MHC

Ginger Hardee
DOAS Central Administration

Mitchell Kneece
Beckman Center for MH Services

Nilsey Rapalo
Charleston/Dorchester CMHC

Joyce Davis-James
Columbia Area MHC

Charles Jackson
Greenville MHC

Sarah Thomas
Orangeburg Area MHC

Yvette McCray
Berkeley MHC

Elizabeth Lett
Pee Dee MHC

Jennifer Massey
Piedmont MHC

Ms. Kathleen Cornish
Tri-County MHC

Jerine Adams
C.M. Tucker, Jr. Nursing Care Center
Its 2007 Employees!

Our Overall Winner!

Dawn Hamelin, SCDMH employee of the year, receives her bonus of $1,000 from State Director John H. Magill for her outstanding service to the agency.

Photos Not Available:
- Betsy Franklin
  Waccamaw Center for MH Services
- Donald McRae
  Coastal Empire MHC
- Hyacinth White
  Sexually Violent Predator Treatment Program
- Diane Joseph
  Lexington County CMHC
- Zachary Dunlap
  Child & Adolescent Division
- Dorothy McMorris
  Forensics
- Elaine Tobin
  Nutritional Services
- Michael James
  Wellspring Nursing
- Patricia Porterfiled
  Morris Village
- Hattie Mull
  Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital

Ann Sistare
Anderson-Oconee-Pickens MHC

Felicia Davis
Aiken-Barnwell MHC

Allen Wilson
Acute Care Division

Betty McNeil
Central Services Pharmacy

Dorothy McMorris
Forensics

Elaine Tobin
Nutritional Services

Michael James
Wellspring Nursing

Patricia Porterfiled
Morris Village

Hattie Mull
Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital
Beckman Recovery Conference Educates, Inspires

By Tracy LaPointe
Office of Public Affairs

On Tuesday, May 20, Beckman Center for Mental Health Services held its sixth annual Recovery Conference at Mount Zion AME Church, in Promised Land, SC.

Director Melanie Gambrell welcomed the crowd of more than 200. She introduced Jeff Ham, program coordinator in the office of Community Mental Health Services, who gave rousing remarks of self-empowerment and celebration on behalf of the state director.

Greg Bullard, program coordinator at Beckman, served as emcee for the event, and introduced Katherine Roberts, director of the DMH Office of Client Affairs. Ms. Roberts shared her personal recovery story and encouraged clients to take active roles in advisory boards. She explained that it is vitally important for clients to make their voices heard and offer feedback on issues, programs, what works well, and where improvements can be made. Ms. Roberts discussed opportunities for employment, as Peer Support Specialists and Client Affairs Coordinators, and encouraged the audience to get involved with local mental health advocacy groups. She stressed the power of sharing one's personal experience to effect change and inspire others in their own recovery. She concluded with these words, "Together we can do it - become a leader!"

Next, Greg Ross, community support program coordinator at Beckman, discussed the new Medicaid healthcare plans and South Carolina Healthy Connections Choices. The state program assists clients by providing enrollment counselors to help recipients choose the best Medicaid plan for their individual needs. He noted that the enrollment counselors are charged with being impartial and even though they provide assistance, they may not persuade a recipient or select a plan for that person. Mr. Ross stressed the importance of selecting a plan; if a client does not make a selection, one will be made for him or her at random. He went on to explain that case managers can give advice about making choices, and offered his assistance with questions as well.

Following the morning break, during which attendees viewed banners for the yearly competition and visited exhibitors' tables, as well as a brief program from National Direct, it was time for Recovery Inspirations.

Several clients shared their personal recovery stories with the audience. One speaker relayed the accomplishments he'd made. Another spoke about the impact of stigma, and the importance of respect and dignity. A woman spoke of how invaluable her family and friends are to her; another shared her goals. A man discussed how important it was for him to recognize his problem, make good choices and keep his faith, followed by a woman who gave thanks for her friends and support system and talked about the importance of self-determination. The final speaker shared her love of artwork with the crowd, displaying pieces she had created, and talking about how she is using her talent not only as a tool for recovery, but also as a way to earn money. The words rang out to the audience, where listeners responded with applause, nods of understanding, and sometimes tears.

"As a person working in the mental health field, I find that nothing can match the raw power that's conveyed by merely hearing these real life stories of recovery directly from the mouths of those we serve. This event is simply unparalleled in its ability to motivate and inspire all in attendance," said Mr. Ross.

Following a delicious lunch, the audience was ready for the banner competition awards. The contest is always one of the most highly anticipated parts of the Beckman Conference. This year, there were nine entries from across the counties. The panel of judges had a very difficult task in choosing a winner, conferring several times before making the first place selection. Center Director Melanie Gambrell introduced the competing teams as South Carolina Mental Health Commissioner Jane Jones presented each of them with a trophy and presented the first place award to McCormick Sunshine House for the entry, Know Me as a Person, Not by my Mental Illness.

The conference ended with a talent show. The Beckman Talents featured a poet who shared a moving work, Life's Ups and Downs; a comedian who had the audience in stitches; a vocal group from Laurens; a singer who performed a beautiful hymn, a guitar and vocalist who played several selections, and a talented saxophone player.

It is clear why the Beckman Recovery Conference is so highly anticipated and well attended. The day provided clients, mental health professionals and members of the community with vital information, uplifting stories of achievement, words of wisdom and hope, an exhibition of outstanding talent, and visual representations of the recovery process. "The annual Recovery Conference is an event that staff and clients look forward to throughout the year. It is a time to share hope, which is in the true spirit of Recovery," Said Ms. Gambrell.

The dedication of the local community is also apparent. The Beckman Center board made a strong representation at the event. Far and away it is the Beckman staff who make this event a must-attend each year. They begin working many months in advance, and no detail is overlooked. Director Gambrell, Brenda Johnson, Greg Bullard, Greg Ross and the many others at Beckman who made this event possible do an outstanding job. It was obvious to this first-time (and future) attendee that the staff at Beckman are experts at putting on an informational and entertaining event.

It's hard to choose the highlight of the event; the recovery stories were enlightening and inspirational, the talent show was excellent, and the banners created by the various programs and clinics were outstanding. Congratulations and thanks to the Beckman Center for the Recovery Conference 2008.
The Electronic Medical Record: Using Technology to Help Clients Recover
By Barry Lloyd
Office of Network and Information Technology

DMH now has an Electronic Medical Record, or EMR, a computerized version of a client’s chart. With EMR capability, clinicians will no longer struggle with paper charts that often are illegible, unavailable, or difficult to access for information. Since the EMR data is typed, all of the records are easy to read, and because the EMR is a web-based application, it is available anywhere with an Internet connection. As with any computerized system, the data in the EMR can be easily searched and arranged in various ways to make information more useful to clinicians.

According to Herbert Drucker, director of the DMH Office of Network and Information Technology, the EMR is a significant piece in an enterprise-wide plan to improve patient care through advanced technology. “Building an integrated information network of software and hardware that treats each patient with a single Electronic Medical Record has been our goal. This seamless access to critical information will help streamline the data driven, clinical decision-making process for client recovery,” he said.

DMH’s Electronic Medical Record is the culmination of a great deal of work by a large number of people that began several years ago. In 2004, Glen Ross of Santee-Wateree Community Mental Health Center developed a prototype; a well-designed, user-friendly and effective system. As such, it generated a groundswell of interest among other mental health centers, but, while the EMR became a priority, the project had to wait until additional resources became available to bring it to fruition.

In 2006, DMH leadership instructed the Office of Network and Information Technology to make the Santee-Wateree EMR prototype a system that could be implemented throughout the agency. DMH formed an advisory committee, chaired by Ray Norris, executive director at Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center, to provide direction to the development team. The team includes Natalia Agafonova, Matt Gilmore, Lina Touma, Debra Barbitta, Alan Johns, and myself.

We began work in early 2006. In November, Santee-Wateree became the test site for the project. The staff there was very receptive of the new system. Dr. David Justice, Glen Ross, and Tammy Gainey worked very hard on the implementation and were instrumental in making the pilot a success.

In September 2007, the Electronic Medical Record was ready to move beyond the pilot stage, so the team installed it in the main office of the Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center. This installation was followed by Waccamaw Mental Health Center’s main office in January and Lexington Mental Health Center’s Adult Services and CAF offices in February of this year. Santee-Wateree has now expanded the system to all of its satellite offices as well.

“The EMR is an easy-to-use system that allows clinical staff quick access to client information and gives the staff the tools to complete the necessary documentation in a timely and efficient manner,” said Michelle Little, Waccamaw Mental Health Center’s quality assurance coordinator.

DMH’s Electronic Medical Record currently comprises four major sections: Client, Individual Treatment Plan (ITP), Scheduler, and Clinical Notes. The Client section is the electronic equivalent of flipping through the chart. A clinician would use this section to view information relating to a client. Treatment Plans and Progress Summaries are entered and tracked in the ITP section. Clients’ appointments are entered in the Scheduler section. Most clinical documentation is placed in the Clinical Notes section and includes the Psychiatric Medical Assessment (PMA), Medication Monitoring, and Clinical Service Notes (CSN).

The Initial Clinical Assessment (ICA) section is in development and will be added later this year, followed closely by the Psycho-Social Rehabilitative Service (PRS) note. After that, we will add new documentation in the order of what is most widely used.

As the Electronic Medical Record is implemented at the remaining mental health centers, it will continue to be enhanced to make the clinicians’ jobs easier and enable them to provide more effective services to clients.

STIGMA (Continued from Page 1.)

Will’s vision has turned into a very positive tool to spread the word about good mental health. We all are very thankful and appreciative of his efforts to put in extra hours to provide us with a great weapon to be used in the battle against stigma.

To receive a copy of this DVD, contact Mental Health American of Horry County.
MHA Horry County
P.O. Box 50944
Myrtle Beach, S.C., 29579
(843) 340-4726 or (843) 446-3464

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

In late May 2008, the United States House of Representatives passed House Resolution 134 supporting the designation of the month of July as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in honor of the late mental health activist and noted African-American author Bebe Moore Campbell.

Campbell, a co-founder of the Urban Los Angeles Chapter of NAMI, was pivotal in the fight for improving mental health resources and support systems for minorities across the country. Minority groups are not as likely to receive proper mental health care, according to the United States Surgeon General, due to lack of resources and cultural stigma.

The Multicultural Action Center website, www.diversityinbusiness.com/dib2008/dib20807/Health_MentalAwareness.htm provides more information illustrating the impact of mental illness on minority communities.
Leaphart Place Apartments: A New Youth in Transition Program

By Sarah Main
Lexington County Community MHC

Lexington County Community Mental Health Center has joined with Growing Home Southeast, Inc. to provide supported apartments for “Youth in Transition.” This new apartment complex is currently under construction off Leaphart Road in West Columbia. The apartment complex will include 20 individual apartments and an on-site office for staff. When completed, it will be home for 20 youths transitioning to adulthood.

Growing Home Southeast has devoted almost 20 years to providing services for at-risk children, youth, and families. Originally established in St Paul, Minnesota, it expanded to Bamberg, South Carolina, in 1987 and has addressed South Carolina’s growing needs for services for medically fragile youth with its foster care program. In addition, Growing Home Southeast also provides children and youth treatment foster care, home-based services, reintegration through foster care, and whole family placements. Leaphart Place Apartments will be a Toward Local Care (TLC) program to promote community integration and to reduce residents’ risk of hospitalization.

Leaphart Place Apartments will help address the growing need in South Carolina for placements for youth in transition. The program will provide support for developing the skills necessary to successfully live independently in the community. Due to the residents’ struggle with serious mental illness, they will need significant support to remain in the community and improve their ability to take care of themselves. Often, these residents will be coming from a situation in which they are homeless or in the process of being discharged from a placement or hospital with no place to go. In order to provide a safe environment for its residents, Leaphart Place Apartments will be a drug-free and violence-free program.

Residents will receive intensive case management services from Lexington County Community Mental Health Center to address their mental health needs and promote healthy community living. These services will include assessments, crisis interventions, individual therapy, group therapy, supported employment, independent living skills, nursing services, and psychiatric medical evaluations. The services will be tailored to the needs of each individual resident and will increase his or her ability to reach his or her full potential. All residents will also be expected to complete 25 hours per week of productive activity.

Due to the younger age of the residents, this program will promote education about mental illness and treatment options to improve their ability to be active in their own treatment. It will be a recovery-focused project, promoting hope and empowerment of its residents. The goal is to give residents the tools they need to lead meaningful and productive lives.

Construction of Leaphart Place Apartments is expected to be completed by July.

Leaphart Place Apartments: A New Youth in Transition Program

Living Well In the Workplace: New Committee to Bring Healthy Activities to Central Office

By Soraya Purvis
Community Mental Health Services

Did you know that you can choose to make lifestyle changes at work that will help you to live well and be more productive? According to an article in The New York Times, Americans spend, on average, 45 hours a week at work.

In an effort to promote living well and provide healthy incentives to employees, DMH has formed the Living Well Committee, previously known as the Wellness Committee. The group will sponsor health-focused activities for all central office employees in the coming months. The committee has the full support of John Magill, state director, and comprises a diverse group of members from a variety of areas in the DMH workforce, myself included:

Veronica Gates - Medical Director’s Office
Ashley Bishop - Financial Services
Evans Kohn - Physical Plant
Diane Dawson - Network Information Technology
Bryant Collins - Internal Audit
Melanie Ferretti - Network Information Technology
Avis Buchanan - Quality Management

Research has proven that offering healthy incentives to employees in the workplace yields positive gains, including increased work productivity and improved morale. It is the goal of the Living Well Committee to sponsor activities that have a healthy and positive influence on all who participate, so keep your eyes and ears open for our upcoming enlightening, fun, health-focused activities. You can choose to make positive lifestyle changes at any time; why not start by living well in the workplace? The choice is yours.
DMH Team Shines at Hilton Head Event

Coastal Empire MHC took part in the NAMI – Beaufort County event, held May 3 at Hilton Oceanfront Resort.

The center’s Coastal Marshers team won the Golden Flip-Flop Award for the Largest Team (42 Walkers) and 2nd place in Fundraising (over $4,500). “It was a wonderful sunny day on the beach to bring awareness to the fight against the stigma of mental illness and to raise funds for many important local NAMI programs,” said Jan Holt, Ed.D., director of Adult Clinical Services at the center.

Congressman Joe Wilson kicked off the event and joined more than 400 others in the walk, which has raised more than $60,000, with funds still coming in. Congratulations!

On April 19, the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), Mid-Carolina chapter, held a NAMI Walk for the Minds of America. One of three such walks in South Carolina, the event aimed to raise awareness about mental illness and funds to support those who live with these disorders and their families. The walk was not just a great experience, but also an overwhelming success; 52 sponsors, 75 teams and 826 walkers came out to answer the call, raising just under $113,000 – well over the set goal.

Participants at the Columbia event gathered at the West Columbia Riverwalk Amphitheater, carrying balloons and banners, visiting the face painting booth and joking around with Cocky, the University of South Carolina’s mascot, as they prepared for the start of the event. The weather was perfect for a walk under the trees along the Congaree River.

DMH employees turned out in force to take part. Teams quickly formed throughout the DMH Central Office. Internal Audit joined together with the Office of General Counsel to create a formidable team – The Fourth Floor Dreadnoughts: “Originally, Audit was going to form its own team. When I mentioned this to Mark Binkley, DMH General Counsel, he thought it would be even more fun to join forces. All of our staff members agreed that it is a great cause, with almost all taking part - either by walking or making a financial contribution. We had a great time, and look forward to next year’s walk,” said Valarie Perkins, director of DMH Internal Audit.

“It’s so important to take part in this event. With every walker, we are literally one step closer to ending stigma. With every step we take, we are raising awareness as well as funds,” said Sue Perry, team captain of the DMH Stigmabusters.

It was a beautiful Columbia day, a day of fun, friends, camaraderie, and raising funds and awareness for a great cause. See you there next year!
Images is an in-house newsletter published by the S.C. Department of Mental Health for its employees.

The S.C. Department of Mental Health provides services to the mentally ill citizens of South Carolina through 17 community mental health centers, four psychiatric hospitals, and three nursing homes.

The S.C. Department of Mental Health does not discriminate in any way in the delivery of services nor the employment of qualified persons.

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State Director of Mental Health

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