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## At the Pointe

**Scale Back Alabama 2012 Weigh In**  
Week of January 23  
Weigh-in schedule coming soon

**Harlem Ambassadors Basketball Game**  
January 26, 2012 – 7 p.m.  
Davidson High School  
Benefiting NAMI-Mobile  
For tickets, contact  
AltaPointe PR at  
450-5907

**AltaPointe Star of the Year Announcement**  
Feb. 29, 2012

**EastPointe Hospital Opening in 2012**  
Watch for details

# AltaPointe hosts packed town-hall meeting with ADMH Commissioner Zelia Baugh

Members of the Mobile community took advantage of a rare opportunity to meet Alabama's top mental health official Nov. 29 during a special town-hall meeting hosted by AltaPointe.

Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) Commissioner Zelia Baugh spoke to a packed house at Byrne Hall on Spring Hill College's campus, where approximately 300 consumers, consumer family members, service providers, professionals, legislators and public officials convened to voice their belief in the critical role of mental health services in the Mobile area. Many consumers used the forum to express concern about the impact of proposed funding reductions to the mental health system. These same consumers also gave moving testimonials and expressed gratitude for existing services.

"Commissioner Baugh is taking a unique and assertive approach to influencing the legislature about the importance of funding mental health services and keeping necessary funds intact to preserve care in our communities," said AltaPointe CEO Tuerk Schlesinger. "She is getting out there and listening to the people in her state, and she is motivating people who care about our mental health system to speak up and contact decision makers and the legislature."

The Commissioner told the audience that budget discussions and decisions are taking place for 2013, and that now is the time to write legislators about their concerns. A letter-writing toolkit developed by ADMH to assist in writing legislators is available at [www.altapointe.org](http://www.altapointe.org). Mobile Legislative Delegation members who attended the meeting, include Senators Ben Brooks, Vivian Figures and Rusty Glover and Representatives Napoleon Bracy, James Buskey, Victor Gaston, Jamie Ison and David Sessions. Mobile City Councilman John Williams and Mobile County Metro Jail Warden Trey Oliver also attended.



*Zelia Baugh, Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner, speaks to more than 300 people at the Meet & Greet reception Nov. 29 at Spring Hill College's Byrne Hall. Bill Fuller, right, moderator for the event stands in the background.*

## Innovative approach doubles day treatment attendance

You could almost hear a pin drop. A movie soundtrack playing in the distance was the only sound coming from the AltaPointe day treatment wing of the Gordon Smith adult outpatient location. It was a Friday, the day consumers can watch a movie if they choose. There was no confusion, no one sitting idly and no one smoking outside the entrance – not under the leadership of Davey Chastang.

Enrollment in the rehab and intensive day treatment programs has doubled since Chastang began as its team

leader in April. "More importantly to me," he said, "is the fact that attendance has doubled. Day treatment is not mandatory, which means that the 60 consumers who attend do so because they want to be here."

AltaNews toured the day treatment wing with Chastang to learn more about the program and the reasons it has become so popular.

See 'Innovative Approach' on page 4

# When staff members speak, we listen



Sometimes it's easy to think no one is listening, especially when you work for a large organization. This is precisely the *one* opinion we *do not* want our employees to have. It is of utmost importance to me that all AltaPointe employees know we recognize the roles you play in delivering services, that you are an integral part of what we do and that we are listening when you speak.

Hearing how consumers are treated by our staff is also significant because their messages reflect how well you, our employees, do your jobs. We had that opportunity at the Nov. 29 "Meet & Greet" reception for Zelia Baugh, Alabama Mental Health Commissioner, which AltaPointe hosted. Nearly 300 people filled Byrne Hall at Spring Hill College to listen, but also to be heard.

Consumers, family members and peer specialists told how AltaPointe affects their lives in positive ways. That's something I cannot do. Those messages must come from the people receiving the care. Their testimonials reminded me of the important role each AltaPointe employee plays in the positive outcomes realized by our consumers. AltaPointe would not operate as a system without your dedication to providing the best care and your willingness to work wherever you are needed.

For instance, when we decide to place case managers, or others, at various locations it is because we know what skills are needed, and in which areas they are needed to provide the best treatment. These strategic decisions guarantee that when we represent you, the employee, in the city, county, state and federal negotiations for contracts and funding, we can tout a comprehensive system of care that works well.

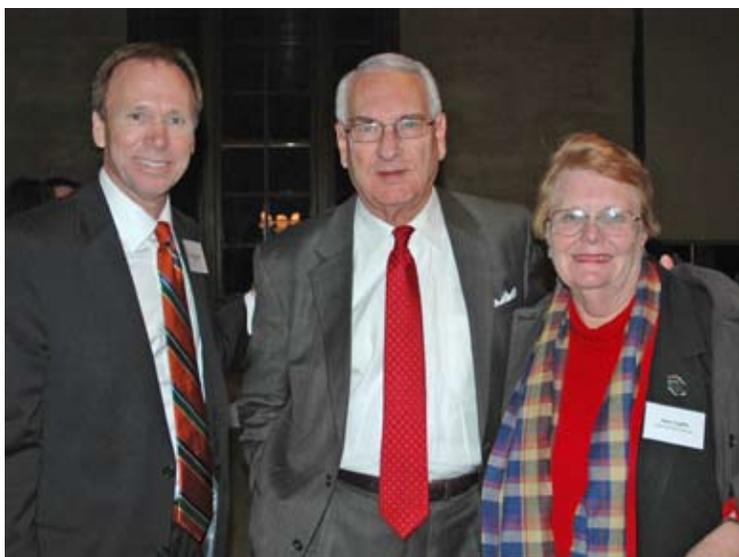
Our diversification allows me to describe AltaPointe as a system, which means we can meet a wider variety of mental health needs in the community. My job is to make sure we provide good, comprehensive service, which only happens when employees are performing their jobs well.

Commissioner Baugh has singled out AltaPointe in forums across the state as a provider that stands above the rest; that our treatment and our efforts to operate a complete system of care guarantees no person is left out. We have a big reputation that we must uphold.

You, our employees, are essential to the success of AltaPointe's business plan. We know what you do, and we value you. We want to do everything to support you so you can continue. We are listening.

Tuerk Schlessinger, CEO

## Meet & Greet reception mission a success



Tuerk Schlessinger, AltaPointe CEO, spoke on behalf of AltaPointe at the Nov. 29 Meet & Greet with ADMH Commissioner Zelia Baugh. Schlessinger, left, visits with AltaPointe board members Victor Gaston, Alabama State Representative, center, and Mary Zoghby, executive director of Boys and Girls Clubs of South Alabama, right, after the reception.



Olivia Nettles, AltaPointe Director of Children's Outpatient Services, left, shares a moment with Sister Lucindia Claghorn, longtime AltaPointe consumer, at the Meet & Greet reception.

# Program Progress

## Adult Outpatient Services

### Teams receive CTI training

Six AltaPointe teams have completed a two-day, Critical Time Intervention (CTI) training, an evidence-based, case management model that emphasizes personal empowerment and building strong natural supports for consumers in transition from institutions such as jail or hospitals. This training focused on how to properly utilize the CTI treatment modality and was led by Michael Goloub, who works for the Center for Urban Community Services in New York City.

CTI is a time-limited model “designed to prevent homelessness and other adverse outcomes in people with mental illness following discharge from hospitals, shelters, prisons and other institutions,” according to the CTI website, [www.criticaltime.org](http://www.criticaltime.org). CTI allows consumers to have increased chances of long-term success.

The six AltaPointe teams involved in the training included PATH, Permanent Housing, Bellehaven, Supportive Housing, Forensic, ACT and Bridge Teams. AltaPointe staff members who completed the training are part of a large research project that will determine the efficacy of training in therapeutic treatment models in person as compared to taking it on the Web.

### AOP changes, new initiative

AltaPointe has begun providing transportation to and from its Adult Outpatient West Mobile Day Treatment, Zeigler Rehab Day Treatment, AOP-GS Day Treatment and AOP-GS Rehab Day Treatment programs. Previously, transportation services were contracted.

The Dual Diagnosis program has expanded to include a second location. In addition to Dual’s being offered at the Gordon Smith location, consumers may now participate in the program at West Mobile Day Treatment four days per week.

AOP therapists have been attending weekly education groups at each outpatient location designed to bring them up to date and trained in evidenced-based practices. These groups will last up to eight weeks and are conducted for one hour at lunch. Topics will include Illness Management and Recovery, Motivational Interviewing, Wellness Self-Management, Dual Diagnosis, Trauma Informed Care and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

## Adult Residential Services

### Training and compliance come together at ARS

Adult Residential Services has developed a structured training program for all ARS employees as part of its recently established Training and Compliance Department.

“Having well-trained staff, knowledgeable in the day-to-day operations of the group home is the mission of the training department,” David Beech, ARS director, said. “And, the compliance staff members are working to help increase consistency in our systems

among group homes to provide optimum care for our consumers.”

The Joint Commission, which looks at standards for documentation and continuity of care, had identified areas in which ARS needed to improve. The new department has put a sustainable monitoring system in place to make sure all areas are compliant.

ARS staff members must make sure compliance systems are consistently being followed across 20 scatter-site facilities. Some areas being monitored include broad safety regulations, quality and standards of documentation by managers and program staff and nurse delegation compliance.

These needs resulted in the implementation of a structured employee training program that provides checklists, benchmarks to help ensure staff and nurse delegation compliance. “We want to make sure employees come out of training well equipped and understanding expectations,” Patricia Sullivan, ARS assistant director, said.

Bonita Smith has been with AltaPointe seven months as a behavioral aide at Azalea House. “The training has helped me know what is acceptable and what’s not,” she said. “The training was a rewarding experience that helped me feel well prepared.”

Training and compliance coordinator, Wanda Moore, spends time with new managers and direct care staff going over expectations and requirements that she monitors. “She makes sure managers understand the system,” Sullivan said.

“The ARS Training and Compliance Department has made a noticeable difference in strengthening our structure,” Beech said.

## BayPointe Hospital & Residential Services

### BayPointe’s New Look

A new, colorful dress code has made significant positive effects on the work environment at BayPointe Hospital and Children’s Residential Services, based on comments from several staff members and visitors to the facility.

Each unit’s behavioral staff members wear a polo shirt of a specific color designated for his or her team or unit, making it easier to differentiate between units.

The crisis team chose black, day treatment chose teal and the recreation staff chose purple. All other behavioral staff may choose between hunter green and navy blue.

The following comments from BayPointe staff members reflect a positive attitude about the dress standard:

“They all look so nice and professional. Whoever thought of doing this should know that this was a great idea.” – Parent of a Children’s Hospital Unit Consumer

“It is convenient, and I love it. For the people that don’t like the dress code, I am sure they will soon love it.” – Bessie Nobles, Adult Hospital Unit Staff.

“It is a good idea that should have been implemented a long time ago. It makes the team look more like a team and more professional.” – Urishica Kyles, Children’s Hospital Unit Staff

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## Innovative treatment approach well received continued from page 1

For four hours each week day morning, day treatment consumers are involved in fun and challenging activities and classes that include cooking, art, music, gardening and computer lab. Instruction includes consumers applying the basic living and socialization skills they learn while participating in the activities.



“Davey has taken this program in a new, positive direction,” Megan Griggs, director of AltaPointe Adult Outpatient Services, said. “His innovative approach to day treatment has made people want to attend. They do something different every day. It’s fun.”

Chastang said when he first came on board he observed that consumers were not as engaged as they should have been. “After being with the program about six months, I began gearing everything we do to a hands-on, applied approach. I wanted to increase their activities and find ways to help them learn skills. They needed to ‘practice, practice, practice.’”

Because of their illnesses and functional deficits, some consumers do not practice good hygiene. They do not know basic communication, math, reading and writing skills, or even simple manners. Chastang and his team members, LaTasha Chambers, Rehab Day Program behavioral specialist, and Kimberly Schambie and LeShounda Robinson, Intensive Day Treatment Program behavioral aides, have seen consumers make marked improvements in all areas since changing the day treatment curriculum.

### Where it all began

The first innovative idea Chastang put in place was the AOP Clothing Store, which came to him when he was cleaning out his closet and had good clothing he wanted to give away.

“I didn’t want to give things to just a few consumers,” Chastang said. “That’s when the idea for a store was born.”

The store is not just a place to purchase needed items; it provides consumers with the opportunity to apply what they have learned about money management. Each consumer can earn two “day treatment” dollars each week for attending the program, following the rules and treating others with respect. They can spend these dollars in the store where most items cost \$1.



*Bianca Hurd wears an outfit she purchased from the AOP Clothing & Novelty Store.*

The learning opportunities don’t stop there. Chastang has organized a bank where each consumer has an account in which to place their educational dollars. They learn to handle money, save dollars, exchange money for goods, put items on layaway and make payments through the store. They also learn to make wise buying decisions.

“Many, many employees and other friends have generously donated clothing, movies, books, toiletries, and other novelty items to the store,” Chastang said. “One therapist tied the treatment plan of a consumer who was a hoarder into donating to the store. The consumer who hoarded was required to bring one full box of items for the store each week. This same therapist had a friend who owned a hotel that sent bottles of lotion, shampoo and other toiletry items to us when the hotel closed.”

Connie Ewing, NAMI-Mobile president, discovered the need for clothing donations, especially large men’s sizes, and notified the NAMI membership. “That’s when NAMI member Jean-Marie Lee sprang right into action and contacted the Big & Tall Store to see if they could donate some things,” Ewing said. The owner pulled together several items, including winter coats, and took them to AOP-Gordon Smith two weeks before Christmas.

The clothing in the store is also utilized for consumers with special circumstances. Recently, a newly referred consumer didn’t show up on his first day as expected. “When he came the next day, I told him we missed him the day before. That’s when I learned that he didn’t come the first day because it was cold and rainy and he didn’t own a jacket. So, we walked down the hall to the clothing store and took care of that need.”

The entire outpatient program utilizes the store when consumers have unmet needs for clothing or toiletry items. “The consumers especially love it when we have clearance sales,” Chastang said.

Friday is the day consumers have a chance to relax and spend the “day treatment” dollars they have earned in what has now become known as the AOP Day Treatment Clothing and Novelty Store.

### Say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’

Each morning, consumers get coffee as they arrive at day treatment. To help teach etiquette, each consumer must ask for their coffee by saying, “May I please have some coffee?” And after receiving it saying, “Thank you.” Everyone who forgets to use manners must go to the back of the line and wait their turn for their morning java. Good grammar is part of this lesson, too. Using “can” instead of “may” will send them to the back of the line, too. By the time they have moved to the front of the line, they usually remember to be polite, Chastang said.



*Victoria Godbold assists during a cooking class.*

### Cooking, gardening, music – classes galore

Chastang has chosen activities that are visually



Davey Chastang, right, works with Vincent Davidson on the piano.

stimulating and in which each person plays a role. For example, during a cooking lesson one person will crack eggs, another will stir and another will pour the food into the pan. Each one is active and engaged and talks about how learning to cook can be a coping skill.

“One consumer told me that cooking has taught her how to be patient, which I hadn’t thought of. She said, ‘You have to follow directions, wait on it to bake, and check it to make sure it’s ready.’ It’s good to see her develop insight at the same time she’s learning a skill and having fun.”

Since Chastang is a pianist, he has taught basic lessons about the piano and composers. One week he taught consumers about Beethoven, who also had a mental illness. “It was important for them to know that persons with a mental illness can achieve success,” Chastang said.

Consumers who have chosen gardening as an activity have landscaped and improved the courtyard located behind the day treatment wing. And, all consumers may use the computer lab where they learn to use the computer, keyboard, software and other important skills.



Eddie Mitchell helps landscape the AOP Gordon Smith Day Treatment Courtyard.

### More lessons learned

Everything that’s done in day treatment becomes a lesson; if the courtyard is not clean, consumers have to pick up their trash and clean the area. “We tell them AltaPointe is part of your social support system and that ‘taking good care of your surroundings and your social support system is a healthy coping skill,’” Chastang said. “They get it; now we rarely have to remind them.”

All the lessons are good only if the information and knowledge are retained. “The good news is they are retaining it. Retention is way better since the program became more interactive.

We require them to be polite, so it’s especially rewarding to watch them be polite. It’s become second nature to a lot of them.”

Griggs said she wanted Chastang to take ownership of the program. “He’s made it his own, with his ideas,” she said. “We applaud the improvements and very much support his approaches.”



Chastang points to one of the many signs he uses in AltaPointe’s Adult Day Treatment program to keep consumers engaged and informed.

## Assessment determines treatment level

The purpose of day treatment is to teach consumers the skills necessary to function daily and achieve independence and recovery. Therapists refer people to day treatment. An assessment determines which treatment level is appropriate: Intensive Day Treatment I, Intensive Day Treatment II or Rehab Day Treatment.

“Two-thirds of consumers are more symptomatic and qualify for intensive programs. These individuals usually live in adult foster homes and need to learn basic living skills,” Chastang explained. “The other third are placed in Rehab Day Program because they are farther along in their recovery. The next step for them is usually an independent apartment.”

Rehab consumers are non-symptomatic and have mastered taking their medications and keeping doctors’ appointments. They meet separately in a classroom where they prepare for GED exams, learn how to fill out job applications and other skills necessary for them to live independently. They join the day treatment consumers for special occasions such as Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations.

All consumers must meet certain expectations to stay in the program and earn privileges only if they meet attendance requirements.



Chastang assesses each consumer referred to day treatment using illustrations on this white board as a visual aid.

# People & Positions at the Pointe

The AHS Human Resources Department reports the following new employees joined AltaPointe from June 6, 2011 to September 26, 2011:

## Administration

**Executive Office** – Executive Administrative Assistant: **Kelly Hughes**; **Management Information Systems** – Programmer: **Naresh Gannamaneni**; **Performance Improvement** – Performance Improvement Assistant: **Kathrina Celestra**.



**Robert Carlock** has been named to the new position of Director of Environmental Services. In his new role, Carlock will oversee operations for maintenance, housekeeping, dietary services, emergency preparedness, disaster recovery and the overall environment of care at all AltaPointe locations. Carlock's career with AltaPointe spans 15 years and includes roles in inpatient, outpatient and residential settings throughout the organization.

## Outpatient Division

**Adult Outpatient Services** – ID Case Managers/Gordon Smith: **Jennifer Baker, Crystal Spencer**; Bridge Team Case Managers/Gordon Smith: **Ashley McDonald**; Nurse Manager/Gordon Smith: **Jayne Wilson**; ACT Team LPN/Gordon Smith: **Alisha Prueett**; LPN/Gordon Smith: **Maretta Robbins**; Day Treatment Driver/Gordon Smith: **Charquita Rembert**; Office Professional/Gordon Smith: **Shanta Cobbs**; Supportive Housing Case Manager/Gordon Smith: **Christina Hutton**; Substance Abuse Therapists/West Mobile: **Rebecca Massey Faulkner, Carl McNatt**; Substance Abuse Counselor/West Mobile: **Natalie Miller**; Substance Abuse Case Manager/West Mobile: **Michella Mathews-Kopcha**; Office Professional/West Mobile: **Kera DuVall**; Therapist/South Mobile: **Melissa Meriwether**; Child/Adolescent Therapist/South Mobile: **Mary-Claire Marshall**; Crisis Team Therapists/South Mobile: **Patricia Crawford, Anna Simmons**; Crisis Team Counselors/South Mobile: **Markissha Lawson, Lindsay Lum, Cynthia Wilson**  
**Children's Outpatient Services** – In-Home Therapist: **Kevin Greene**; Case Manager: **Christopher Cordon**; Community Support Specialist/Three Notch: **Tiffany Ayala**; Behavioral Aides/Three Notch: **April Paige, Jessica Taylor, Shanta Williams**; Case Manager/Transitional Living: **Gregory Greene**; Behavioral Aide/Transitional Living: **Michelle Brooks**; LCSW/BayView: **Pamela Rawdon**.

## Inpatient Division

**BayPointe** – Psychiatric resident: **Candes Dotson**; Special Education Teacher: **Demetria Hendrix**; Behavioral Aide Acute: **Oluseyi Bello, Keni Boykin, Jessica Matchett, Christine Rankin**; Recreation Specialist Acute: **Christopher Wells**

## Residential Services Division

**Adult Residential Services** – RN: **Lisa Dyess**; Behavioral Aides: **Andrea Blount, Tarra Hicks, Tamara Thomas, Roslyn Washington**; LPN/Dogwood: **Michele Cook**; Behavioral Aide/Dogwood: **Shontell Thomas**; Behavioral Aide/Gardenia: **Shanda Wilson**; LPN/Lakefront: **Evelyn Paciorek**; Behavioral Aide/Lakefront: **Chastity Roberts**; LPN/Medical House: **LaShonda Raine**; Behavioral Aide/Rosewood: **Zandria Pinkney, Angelica Manassa-Rodgers, Cynthia Young**; Behavioral Aides/Safehaven: **Alecia Daniels**.

## Promotions

**Brandie Johnson** is coordinator of AOP-Gordon Smith. **Melissa Agerton Smilie** is team leader of AOP-West Mobile Intensive Day Treatment. **Davey Chastang** is team leader of AOP's Rehab Day Treatment and Intensive Day Treatment.

## Moves

**Ellen Lambert** is the new utilization review coordinator in Access to Care. **Kate Davis**, admission and referral specialist, and **Christine Curtis**, insurance clerk, have joined Access to Care. **Sherri Crane** is now coordinator of the Community Counseling Center of South Mobile. **Gil Fields** is now a corporate compliance auditor for Performance Improvement. **Ingrid Johnson**, behavioral aide, is working with the AOP-Zeigler Rehab Day Treatment program. **Alecia Jones** and **Stephanie Tellis**, behavioral aides, have moved to AOP-West Mobile's Intensive Day Treatment. **Rita Smith** is now an ACT Team case manager at AOP-Gordon Smith. **Rochelle Porter** is a child/adolescent/adult therapist at Community Counseling Center of South Mobile (CCCSM). **Cheryl Higgins** is a crisis response counselor at CCCSM. **Afiya Hooker** is a child and adolescent case manager for CCCSM. **Yolanda Williams** is an accounting clerk in the Finance Department. **Teresa McMillian** is now interim assistant coordinator for ID Case Management.

## From the AltaNews editor...

AltaPointe activities and special events are increasing with each week that passes. We want to keep you informed in a more timely fashion than can be accomplished with our printed, quarterly newsletter, AltaNews. Early in 2012, the Office of Public Relations will begin posting "People at the Pointe," the standard feature that reports new employees, along with more photos of activities and events on AltaLink, AltaPointe's internal website. "AltaPointe in the Community" will be posted on both AltaLink and our external website, AltaPointe.org. These changes will bring news to our employees as it happens. As always, we encourage you to send your suggestions and comments to us at [info@altapointe.org](mailto:info@altapointe.org).

– Carol Mann, AltaNews Editor

# Bravo! Bravo!

**Wanda Moore**, assistant coordinator for Adult Residential Services, earned a master's degree in counseling and psychology from the University of West Alabama.

**Jennifer Maxey**, assistant coordinator at AOP-Gordon Smith, and **Caroline Hale**, AOP-Gordon Smith therapist, have earned ALC licensure.



*Christe Damico, center, is flanked by Julie Bellcase, left, and Megan Griggs, right, after receiving the Spirit of Recovery award.*

**Christie Damico**, therapist at AOP-West Mobile, was honored with the "Spirit of Recovery" award by the Drug Education Council (DEC). Damico has been counseling for nearly 10 years and has helped adults reach recovery from drug and alcohol addiction at AltaPointe for more than six. "Christie embodies the Spirit of Recovery by being both a real therapist and an inspiring leader to her clients, her team, and to me," Cheryl Holmes, coordinator of substance abuse services, said.



*Bayani Abordo*

**Bayani Abordo**, MD, received the Red Sash Award from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine's graduating class of 2011. Medical students vote for the professor they feel was most valuable to their education. Abordo provides psychiatric services at Mobile Infirmary. Additionally, **Severin Grenoble, MD**, a resident at AltaPointe, received the Resident Teacher of the Year award from the graduating class.

The Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) presented two awards to AltaPointe for its **2010 Annual Report** and for **AltaNews**. **Carol Mann**, director of public relations and former president of the federation, accepted the award at SPRF's annual conference in Point Clear this October. SPRF comprises 1,400 public relations professionals who work in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and the Florida panhandle.

**Sandra Parker**, MD, AltaPointe Chief Medical Officer, has been appointed to the University of Alabama College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Board.

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education accredited the University of South Alabama **Department of Psychiatry** residency program for five years. This is the first five-year accreditation in the department's history. AltaPointe provides administration and faculty for the department within the USA College of Medicine and provides both clinical and didactic training to residents, medical students and certified registered nurse practitioner and physician assistant students.

**Robert Carlock**, AltaPointe's director of environmental services, is a US Marine and Desert Storm veteran and has taken on a unique challenge to draw attention to the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that offers a complete rehabilitative effort to help veterans who may not receive sufficient assistance from other agencies. To raise funds for WWP, Carlock is running three marathons in three Alabama cities in three months: Huntsville in Dec. 2011, Mobile in January and Birmingham in February 2012. To learn how to help Carlock attain his goal, contact him at [rcarlock@altapointe.org](mailto:rcarlock@altapointe.org).

## Andrews, Beatty and Boswell retire

### Claudia Andrews

After 36 years at AltaPointe, Finance Accounting Clerk **Claudia Andrews** finally hung up her calculator this September to spend more time with her family and friends. Andrews started at Mobile Mental Health in 1975 and worked in the Finance Department her entire career, with the exception of a brief post in the Human Resources Department. Andrews said the Finance Department was a wonderful place to work and that she misses her great friends at AltaPointe, but is enjoying cooking, taking care of her grandchild and spending time with her friends.

### Sharon Beatty

AltaPointe's administrative office executive assistant, **Sharon Beatty**, retired



*Sharon Beatty*

in July. Beatty joined AltaPointe shortly after Tuerk Schlesinger became AltaPointe's CEO in 1998. Her background as an executive assistant for

prominent Mobilians such as former Mayor Lambert Mims and businessman Gordon Smith, III, helped her bring a wealth of knowledge to the position about Mobile politics and community affairs. "I saw AHS grow into an amazing organization under this leadership team," Beatty said. "I miss everyone very much."

### Judy Boswell

AOP Therapist **Judy Boswell** also retired this September after seven years at AltaPointe. While Boswell is still handling a few speaking engagements, she said she usually is busy spoiling her three dogs or with activities such as taking Tai Chi lessons, art classes and enjoying having the time to paint. "Even though I stay busy, I miss very much the wonderful, caring, competent and dedicated staff at AltaPointe, and I miss my clients, whom I admired so much," Boswell said.

# Behavioral staff: AltaPointe's 'eyes and ears'

They have been called “the eyes and ears” of AltaPointe’s continuum. Anyone familiar with AltaPointe knows that its more than 250 behavioral aides and specialists also could be described as the heart of the organization. In other words, behavioral staff members are vital to the care we provide.

More than 200 behavioral aides and specialists work at BayPointe Hospital and Residential Services and at AltaPointe Adult Residential Services. Though less in number, behavioral staff members are equally as important to AltaPointe Adult Outpatient-Gordon Smith, West Mobile and Zeigler Outpatient Day and Rehab Treatment programs; Children’s Outpatient Services and the two Transitional Age Homes.

Their duties are wide-ranging. According to one AltaPointe behavioral aide job description, they monitor and interact with consumers, assess and document behaviors, provide training on basic communication and living skills, conduct group sessions as well as assist consumers with personal care, medical appointments, medication use, chores, outings, recreational activities and safety issues, as needed. They must learn competencies specific to the population with whom they are working and be able to demonstrate that they know how to de-escalate or resolve a crisis.

As they attend to these and many other duties, behavioral staff members must be able to apply each interaction with each consumer’s treatment goals and actively participate in the treatment team. “Behavioral staff members are an integral part of our team at BayPointe,” **Angela Ferrara**, BayPointe Hospital Administrator, said. “These staff members are with our consumers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“We count on them to help our consumers feel welcomed, supported and safe,” Ferrara continued. “They build such a good rapport with consumers that they are able to provide the other members of the treatment team with vital information that the consumers may not feel comfortable sharing with them.”

According to **David Beech**, AltaPointe’s director of adult residential services, behavioral aides “play the most important role in what we do at ARS. The behavioral staff act as family ensuring the consumers have a comfortable place to live that is as much like a home as possible,” he continued. “In essence, the behavioral staff members are the care that we provide.”

## In their own words

Three AltaPointe behavioral staff members explained some of their thoughts about their work, the challenges and the rewards.

### **Kim Schambie, Adult Day Treatment Behavioral Aid**



Kim Schambie works at Adult Outpatient’s Day Treatment program.

I was looking for something different when I started at AltaPointe. What I found working as a behavioral aide was a big change from being a nursing assistant. I never had worked with anyone with mental illness and I didn’t understand mental illness. Now I know that people can’t control their mental illnesses; I understand what’s going on.

The biggest challenge is trying to earn their trust. Many

of them isolate themselves. Being around them, you can tell when something’s bothering them. I say, ‘Hey talk to me. What’s going on?’ And they say, ‘Nothing.’ Then, eventually, they’ll start opening up about problems with family, Mom, money issues.

Some of the consumers have been in Searcy a very long time. This one particular consumer lived there from the time he was 8 years old until recently, at age 50. He wouldn’t speak to anyone when he first came to day treatment; now he speaks and can begin a conversation. It’s an experience seeing a person go from not talking

to making friends; seeing someone not being clean to caring about their hygiene and how they look; showing progress.

Every day, I teach basic living skills and help consumers understand why it’s important to learn and maintain those skills. Knowing that I helped them make advances is important.

I feel like I’m where I’m supposed to be. I’m staying right here. I love my consumers. I feel like I’m making a difference.

### **Vanessa Mobley, ARS/Roxboro Behavioral Aide**



Vanessa Mobley works at ARS’s Roxboro home.

“I left my previous job to take care of my mother. When I could go to work again, some friends told me about AltaPointe, so I applied. At Roxboro, we take care of cohort consumers [recently discharged from Searcy] and older consumers.

I like challenges. Every day is a challenge. How you handle a situation; that’s what drives me. I love seeing the outcomes. I love helping most of all when consumers progress—when they

reach the next level. Everybody is different. I have to come up with ways to handle each attitude. You have to challenge yourself and ask, “How am I handling this person this day? What can I do differently and how can I help without his getting aggressive?”

“I’ll give you an example of a big challenge we faced. We had one consumer [from Searcy] that had a toileting problem. We had

to figure out a way to handle this, to change this behavior. So, we pulled together as a team and worked with him every day, day by day. It affected his self-esteem and bothered him that we had to assist him like that. But now he goes on his own. I'm proud of him. If the situation hadn't been resolved, he would have had to move from the house. We didn't want to move him out of the house. It took everybody being on the same page.

We're here 12 hours and have direct contact with the consumers every day. They put more trust in the aides because they are more comfortable with us, at times more so than with their therapist or their doctor. In a three-bedroom house, consumers and staff go together like a little family. It's hard to see them leave [and go to the next level]. You wonder are they going to get the same kind of treatment [we've been giving]?"

### Hillie Sykes, BayPointe Children's Hospital

After college, I toured with a theater group specializing in productions for Title I schools about anti-bullying. I have learned there are more similarities than differences between acting and being a behavioral aide. This job also allows me to express myself and use my interpersonal skills.

When I first came here, it was my job to get the kids talking and expressing themselves during group sessions. That would open up a lot of areas where I could show the consumers they have special talents and weren't restricted by their disabilities or their illnesses.



Hillie Sykes works on BayPointe's adolescent hospital unit.

A lot of these kids don't have parents and may never have received any guidance or words of encouragement. I may be the first to have told them they're smart or they have talents. That can create a light within them. It's exciting when there's a self-esteem issue, and I can give them a sense of self-confidence.

When there are behavioral issues, I will create a game where the kids will list behaviors they have or reasons why they are at

BayPointe. I let them know that everybody has an issue. I encourage them to be mindful that their peers have sensitivities and issues. This can open the door and allow them to be more expressive.

These kids have undiscovered secrets and pain that are not easy to talk about. I've learned that a lot of these kids are good writers because they ask if I'd like to read their journals or poems. They have very good self-expression when it comes to writing.

Sometimes I see a dim light inside one of these kids that can be illuminated. There's a beauty in that, and it is the most exciting part of my job.

## Program Progress *continued from page 3*



BayPointe staff members wearing their units' colors are, from left, Elmarie Johnson, residential behavioral aide and code team member, black shirt; Urishica Kyles, children's hospital behavioral aide, navy shirt; Xavier Gillam, recreational specialist, purple shirt; Marie Crandle, adult hospital behavioral aide, green shirt; Emily Ikner, LeMoyné School Day Treatment Specialist, teal shirt.

## Children's Outpatient Services

### \$50K grant boosts start-up of in-home team for Strickland

AltaPointe has established an In-Home Intervention Team exclusively serving the Strickland Youth Center thanks to a \$50,000 Community Vision Grant awarded by the United Way of Southwest Alabama.

The demand for in-home treatment intervention already exceeds the supply with youth often having to wait for these services, according to Olivia Nettles, director of AltaPointe Children's Outpatient Services.

"More than 1,000 youth in Mobile County are currently on probation, the majority of whom most likely have co-occurring

mental health issues. This in-home team will have an impact on virtually hundreds of people connected to these youth." Nettles said. "Funding cuts have left Strickland Youth Center with nine fewer probation officers, and future funding cuts are expected. Hopefully, this team will help Strickland with the recent layoffs of probation officers."

Nettles said that this in-home team will be different from other AltaPointe in-home teams. Referrals can come from the judge or probation officers for youth who are not necessarily at the point of being adjudicated at Strickland. The youth served will have exhibited both criminal behavior and mental health issues.

The in-home team will work closely with the court officials and probation officers. The program's objectives are to decrease criminal activity and out-of-home placement as well as to increase school attendance, improved academic functioning and overall mental health and family functioning.

These youth require more frequent, intensive treatment services along with strong collaborative efforts with probation officers to attain success. Treatment services will be offered to both males and females between the ages of 12 and 17. Approximately 24 families will be served the first year of the program.

This new team expands AltaPointe's children's outpatient in-home services teams to a total of nine.

## Project Achieve renewal

The Project Achieve staff learned this fall that its contract with the Alabama Department of Mental Health has been renewed for an additional three years. Project Achieve provides services to dually diagnosed children.

# 2011 Benefits Fairs 'best yet'

"The 2011 Benefits Fairs surpassed all other years with more than 335 staff members attending. That makes this year's fairs the best yet," Cindy Martin, HR Specialist and organizer of the fairs, said.

Everyone who attended had the opportunity to participate in the grand prize drawing for an Apple iPad 2 with a leather case.

Congratulations to Letty Davis, this year's lucky winner. Other prizes included a \$150 Visa gift card awarded to Doris Gayle, an Apple iPod Touch awarded to Patricia James and a supervisor car wash awarded to Nick Brattoli."



Rita Brown, left, and Jamie Withers; examine the bean bag game during Benefits Fair at Children's Outpatient.



Nick Brattoli instructs his supervisor, Dorel Borlovan, on the finer techniques of car washing – all in good fun. Brattoli won the car wash offered through the Benefits Fairs bean bag toss competition.



Oluseyi Bello tries his hand stacking cups at one of the booths.



BayPointe staff members listen to a vendor explaining the benefits of nutrition at the BayPointe fair. Staff members are, from left, Joyce Jackson, Veronica Mercadel and Karla Manning.

## Staff, consumers enjoy entertainment, good food at ARS Fall Festival



Line dancing is a popular activity with, from left, Brandi Williams, Latisha Young and Chiquita Adams during the festival.



Peer Bridge Team Leader Kat Burnside emcees the talent show at the ARS Fall Festival 2011.

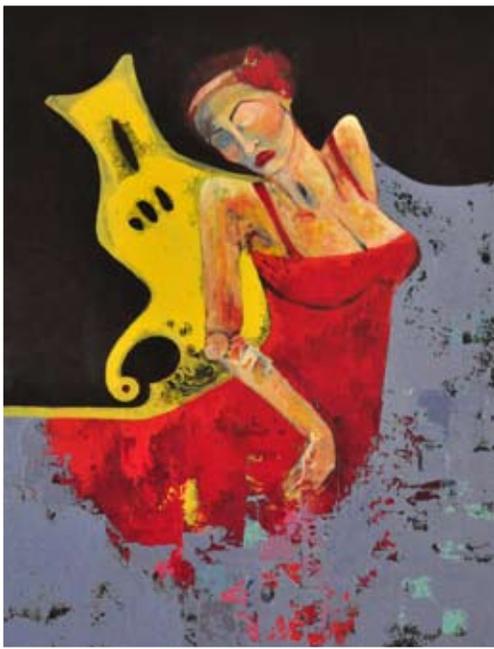


ARS staff members, from left, Carla Lang, Erica White and April Maye enjoy the beautiful day and the entertainment during the Fall Festival. David Beech is in the background, far left.

# Hope of Recovery Art Exhibit 2011

The Fourth Annual Hope of Recovery Art Exhibit showcased original artwork of AltaPointe consumers recovering from mental illness and substance abuse Sept. 25. WALA-FOX10 TV and the Press-Register covered the event with features about a consumer struggling with both bipolar disorder and drug addiction. All pieces

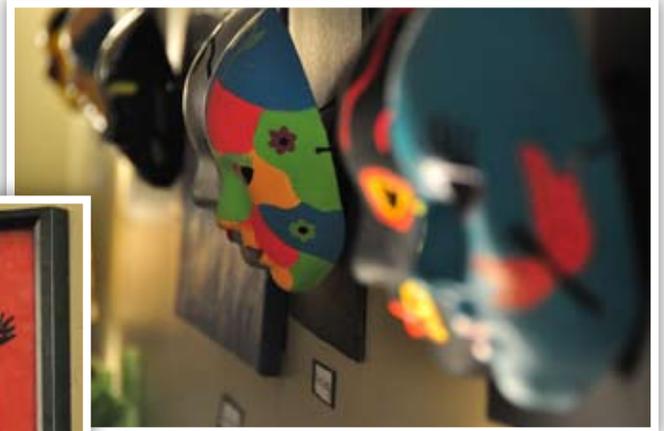
of art sold this year with the proceeds benefitting each artist. **Brandie Johnson**, therapist, coordinated the event for AltaPointe's Intensive Outpatient, Specialized Women's Intensive Outpatient, Adult Outpatient Dual Diagnosis and Medicated Assisted Treatment programs.



"Joy and Sorrow Wrapped" was sold to the highest bidder.



"Obsession" is a creation of paper mounted in a shadow box.



Painted masks, designed by the women of the Specialized Women's Program, are always a mainstay of the exhibit.

## 5SCS Update



The AltaPointe 5-Star Customer Service Committee recently added four new committee members **this summer**: **Jonna Sanders**, therapist, Children's Outpatient Services; **Stephanie Pope**, assistant coordinator, Children's Outpatient Services; **Christe Damico**, team leader, Substance Abuse Services; and **Lora Tillman**, business manager, Finance. The Committee moved a number of customer service projects forward over the past few months.

The Evaluation Work Group launched AltaPointe's 2012 Secret Shopper Program this fall. A team of staff members from all divisions shops in quarterly rotations will provide feedback to leadership about AltaPointe's overall delivery of customer service. Shoppers provide reports about their interactions with staff members in various programs and positions. The reports are kept confidential and only shared with the appropriate division director. The goal of the program is to provide leadership with accounts of both positive

and negative interactions within the AltaPointe continuum and to inform development of additional trainings regarding specific topics, programs or job descriptions.

The Standards Work Group developed a calendar and timeline for a new 5-Star Standards Spotlight Program. Flyers will be distributed quarterly, and each will include a crossword puzzle, quiz, word scramble, cartoon or other activity that depicts customer service situations and key standards of behavior. Staff members who submit correct answers will be eligible for a drawing to win gift cards to local restaurants or coffee shops.

The Rewards & Recognition Work Group distributed 186 AltaPraises to 123 staff members this fall. The AltaPraises were collected over the summer and spring. Another 100-plus AltaPraises were collected this fall. The cards are being verified and will be distributed in December. The Rewards & Recognition Work Group also will help the Office of Public Relations plan the Star of the Year presentation and special luncheon with AltaPointe leadership and board members.

# AltaPointe in the Community

## Staff members provide education, support to community

AHS staff members sponsored, participated in or supported 17 public education and community services from June to mid-September 2011.

As part of AltaPointe's Speakers Bureau, several staff members who made presentations at NAMI-Mobile monthly meetings as part of its Education Series included **Kathleen Burnside**, peer services program manager; **Dr. Luke Engeriser**, psychiatric services; **Ingrid Hartman**, assistant director of Access to Care. **David Beech**, Adult Residential Services director, and **Olivia Nettles**, Children's Outpatient Services (COP) director, spoke to graduate students in the counseling program at the University of South Alabama. Adult Outpatient Adult Community Services assistant coordinators **Dee Dee Cook** and **Renee Hunter** spoke at the Alabama Kidney Foundation's annual meeting in Mobile. **Kathy Rouse**, COP coordinator, spoke to the transitional living group at Penelope House. Substance Abuse Team Leader **Cynthia Stargell** spoke with Mobile probation officers.

## 2011 United Way Campaign at AltaPointe

AltaPointe staff members exceeded previous records and this year's pledge goal by donating more than \$8,000 to support the United Way's 2011 annual fundraising campaign. AHS doubled last year's donation total and pledged more than an average of \$10 per employee. The AltaPointe departments of Human Resources and Public Relations planned rallies at all AHS locations and invited special guest speakers from the United Way and other partner organizations. Cash prizes also were awarded this year through a random drawing to staff members who pledged during a rally or who pledged more than \$20 total. **Kathryn Callen**, behavioral



AltaPointe staff members Cathy Beech, Janice Long, Janet Langley and Mike Goldman join Alan Turner, II, United Way CEO, at the campaign kickoff in Washington County.

aide at ARS; **Reneta Powe**, RN at AOP; **Tamiaka Martin**, coordinator at BayPointe; and **Kathy Rouse**, coordinator at COP each won \$25 gift cards for submitting donations during their site's rally. COP Therapist **Sheila Wimberly** won a \$25 second-place prize for donating more than \$20 during the campaign, and **Cathy Beech**, admissions professional at Community Counseling Center of Washington County won the grand prize of \$150 for donating \$20 more.

"I am proud of the AltaPointe family for supporting this important community service organization in such a big way," AltaPointe COO **Julie Bellcase** said. "The United Way of Southwest Alabama has supported AltaPointe in Washington County for many years, and it is great to give back to the organization in a meaningful way."

# AltaPointe staff support 2011 NAMI Walk



AltaPointe staff members and friends wave to the camera at the starting line of the NAMI-Mobile Friends and Family Walk at Langan Park in October.

More than 80 AltaPointe staff members participated in the 2011 Friends & Family Walk held Oct. 1 at Langan Municipal Park, helping NAMI-Mobile raise more than \$5,000. A gold sponsor of the event, AltaPointe's administration volunteered dozens of hours and resources to help NAMI leadership plan, promote and implement its first walk sponsorship program.

"This year's success would not have been possible without the help and support of everyone at AltaPointe, and we are fortunate to have such a caring and supportive mental health provider here in Mobile," Connie Ewing, president of NAMI-Mobile, said. "Thanks to everyone who came out and walked, volunteered and shared their time and expertise with us. You are the best!"