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Employee Appreciation**
Nov. 19 & 20

LifeSouth Blood Drive
BayPointe &
AOP-Gordon Smith
Dec. 6
Call 665-2532 for info.

**Mobile Project
Homeless Connect**
Volunteer for this
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service event.
Jan. 31, 2014
Call Housing First at
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Check out AltaLink for
articles, photos and
details about events.

CarePointe, CRT help save another life

Suicide is a serious and preventable public health concern. At any time, AltaPointe's CarePointe and Crisis Response Team staff members may be called into action to help someone threatening suicide. On this particular day, AltaPointe's phones were down due to a national outage. This case began with a short email.

"I am about ten minutes away from killing myself. I just cannot find a reason to go on," the email read.

Sent just minutes after 12 p.m. on a spring day, the message set off a chain reaction within AltaPointe to find this individual and save his life.

Michelle Dunson Eddins, Aftercare and Referral Specialist, replied immediately and urged the individual to seek help.

"Please go to the nearest emergency room to keep yourself safe...feel free to write back. I am here to talk to you," Eddins wrote.

Eddins didn't stop there with her attempts to get this individual the help so desperately needed. Along with help from other CarePointe staff members by using the name in the return email address, she located the individual using Avatar, AltaPointe's electronic medical record system, and called the number listed.

CRT team called into action

With no answer, Eddins contacted the AltaPointe Crisis Response Team to ask the team to respond, though she was still unsure about the individual's identity.

Cindy Gipson, CRT coordinator, says she remembers the call very well.

"I saw the 'Crisis Service Request' and realized this person expressed intent to harm himself, immediately," Gipson

said. "We were determined that we were going to locate him somehow."

Gipson called the police and sent crisis team members Robert Tageant and Kelly Navan to meet police at the address she had found. The individual who had emailed the suicide threat answered the door. He initially was upset that police had been called until he realized someone cared.

Tageant and Navan, outreach therapists, explained that they called the police because so much time had passed while they searched for him and that their fear was that he had already harmed himself. The therapists talked to the individual about the email and what he was feeling when he wrote it.

The email read:
"I am about ten minutes away
from killing myself."

See **CarePointe** on page 3

Emergency healthcare preparedness: Is AltaPointe ready?

Getting and staying prepared for any emergency is an ongoing process and one to which AltaPointe Health Systems is deeply committed. Providing staff members with realistic training and building key community-based emergency management relationships are two ways AltaPointe stays poised and ready to respond.

Realistic Training: Hurricane Drill

As everyone who lives or works along the Gulf Coast knows, it is especially critical that healthcare providers

are prepared for a hurricane. To that end, AltaPointe conducted a thorough, planned and implemented hurricane preparedness drills during the summer of 2013.

The drill addressed all six functions of emergency preparedness: communication, resources, safety, utilities management, clinical activities, and staff responsibilities.

"The drill was announced in advance so the departments had time to prepare and focus on doing

See **Emergency healthcare** on page 10

Smooth transition to community care began one year ago



Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO

Searcy State Psychiatric Hospital in Mt. Vernon ceased operation and closed its door one year ago on Oct. 31, 2012. For more than 110 years, south Alabamians living with severe mental illness and who were a danger to themselves or others received treatment at Searcy.

Making the transition to community care for the seriously mentally ill in our region has been successful. We know this because AltaPointe staff members, and the programs we

have developed, have been the backbone of its success.

Possibly the greatest asset in making the transition was the opening of EastPointe Hospital in Daphne three months before Searcy closed. Without EastPointe, AltaPointe's staff would have had to employ truly innovative ways to find beds for the discharged patients.

The AltaPointe Centralized Services Center (CSC) was another new initiative that made the transition smooth. The CSC team has been placing patients in the most appropriate settings and monitoring their inpatient and residential stays for a year now. We have seen great success in reducing inpatient commitments due to the CSC's efforts. In fact, there were 108 involuntary commitments during this fiscal year as compared to 161 last year. That's nearly a 33 percent decrease. That's a remarkable feat.

So, what has made this possible? First of all, AltaPointe has opened two, 16-bed intermediate care facilities (ICF) to serve individuals under inpatient commitment who need a high level of

care in a secure environment. One ICF is located at EastPointe, the other on the Zeigler campus in west Mobile.

In addition, CarePointe, AltaPointe's access to care department, has expanded its hours to make care more accessible. And, the AltaPointe Crisis Response Team (CRT) was established in anticipation of increased needs when the hospital closed.

Over the past year the CRT has gone into the community responding to 1,499 psychiatric crisis calls that resulted in 3,395 patient interactions. Often, these calls made the difference between life and death. Furthermore, out of 672 total petitions for commitment this past fiscal year, the adult outpatient services diverted, 173 individuals from the often traumatizing process of going through involuntary commitment.

New programs and additional beds helped make the transition a success, but it is our dedicated and skilled AltaPointe staff members – from the CSC to CarePointe teams, to the adult residential and adult

outpatient teams, to our EastPointe Hospital teams – who have gone above and beyond their job descriptions, providing care to patients with much more challenging symptoms.

So many people have done so much to make this new system work well, and their work has not gone unnoticed.

De-institutionalization has been successful in our region. Patients are receiving better care. Our teams of healthcare workers are changing lives every day for the better. Congratulations to everyone involved for a job well done. So many people have done so much to make this new system work well.

“So many people have done so much to make this new system work well.”

Mayor proclaims Sept. 3, 2013, Richard ‘Dick’ Little Day in the City of Mobile



Mobile Mayor Sam Jones, second from left, congratulates Dick Little, third from left, after declaring Sept. 3, 2013, Richard “Dick” Little Day. Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, left, and Jeanne Little, far right, join in the celebration at the Mobile City Council Chambers.

One of AltaPointe Health Systems' most beloved and respected friends, Richard “Dick” Little, was recognized recently by his family, friends, and the AltaPointe Board of Directors for his steadfast leadership. The public recognition came when Samuel L. Jones, Mayor of the City of Mobile, along with the Mobile City Council, proclaimed Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2013, as “Richard Dick Little Day” in the City of Mobile.

Little was recognized as having been instrumental in the provision of the highest quality mental health services to the Mobile community through his role as the 310 Board Chairman. “He was a pioneer in the establishment of the board in 1975,” Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, said of his long-time colleague.

The proclamation read, in part: “Richard ‘Dick’ Little has been a tireless advocate and champion for individuals living with mental illness, substance abuse and developmental disability for more than 35 years, and is well known for his integrity, and for being a trustworthy steward...”

Schlesinger went on to praise Little on a personal level. “Dick Little is admired for his wisdom and respected as a compassionate and devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend by all who know him.”

Bravo! Bravo!



Joyce Barber

Joyce Barber, EastPointe's involuntary unit coordinator, was chosen to perform in the chorus of the Mobile Opera's performance of the comic opera, “The Mikado,” which ran Oct. 25 and 27. Eleven women and 11 men make up the chorus. Barber is a mezzo soprano and sings second soprano and alto in the performances.

Robert A. Carlock, MBA, AltaPointe's director of environment of care, has been asked to be a member of the newly formed Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Planner Program Advisory Committee. The committee will lay the foundation for a new Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Planner Certificate Program, with plans to host the first class in 2014. The committee will provide a formal, standardized training approach that will be made available to the healthcare facilities in the state of Alabama.



Edgar Finn

Dr. Edgar Finn, MD, child and adolescent psychiatrist at BayPointe Children's Hospital, was the recipient of the 2013 Clinical Instructor of the Year for the University of South Alabama's Department of Physician Assistant Studies. It is an award chosen by the class of 2013, for its favorite clinical instructor, and recognizes Dr. Finn's supportive efforts.

Carol Mann, AltaPointe's director of public relations, was inducted into the Southern Public Relations (SPRF) 2013 Hall of Fame for her significant contributions to the field of public relations, decades of leadership and for mentoring current public relations practitioners in the southeast region. She is accredited in public relations and has been a member of SPRF and the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) since 1987. She is a past president of SPRF, PRCA and the PRCA Mobile Chapter. Mann represented

CarePointe continued from page 1

“We listened to how he was feeling and explained some treatment options,” Tagueant said. “He became more open, and we discussed the possibility that what he was going through might be medical.”

The team spent nearly an hour with the individual, who went to a primary care doctor the next day. The behaviors were caused by a medical problem, not a psychiatric problem.

‘Thank you’

The same day of the ominous email threatening suicide, CarePointe received another one saying how much he had been helped and expressing his gratitude. Four months later, another email from this same individual showed the CRT and CarePointe staff members how their dedication and efficiency truly does save lives.

SPRF on the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) from 2001 to 2004, the governing body for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), which is an international credential.

Mann, and, public relations coordinator, **April Douglas**, received an award of merit for the AltaPraise Stars of the Year 2012 Video from the Southern Public Relations Federation's Lantern Awards program. Mann also received an award of merit for her work on AltaNews, and an award of excellence for her work on the EastPointe Hospital opening.

Steve Dolan, AltaPointe's chief information officer, accepted the Edge Partner Technology Award from Netsmart during its Connections 2013 conference Sept. 16-19 at the Dallas Omni. The award goes to the Edge Partner who has been the most influential and provided the greatest impact on technology innovation throughout the year. This is the third consecutive year AltaPointe has been an Edge Partner award recipient. The annual conference is attended by thousands of behavioral healthcare information managers and executives.



Steve Dolan accepts award for AltaPointe at Netsmart Connections in Dallas.

Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, presented “Managing in an Era of Dynamic Change” to Netsmart attendees. He gave an overview of how AltaPointe has used and continues to use technology as it grows and expands into an even more comprehensive behavioral healthcare organization.

“I just wanted to write you and say that I am alright. Thank you for all that you've done. Everything is not 100 percent yet, but my life is coming along fine now. I also know that if things look down, I will immediately make an appointment with AltaPointe.”

The individual also mailed a letter to the response team members thanking them and praising their efforts.

“The response teams also were very kind...I still don't believe that I really have anything to live for. But I thought that if these four people took the time out of their lives to speak to me, then maybe things are not as hard as I may believe.”

CarePointe
Call · Connect · Care
(251) 450-2211

People & Positions at the Pointe

Welcome new staff members



Phil Cusa

Phil Cusa has joined EastPointe Hospital as assistant administrator. Cusa retired as administrator at Thomas Hospital in June 2011, where he spent 19 years serving in various leadership roles. Cusa joined Thomas after 11 years of healthcare experience with JFK Medical Center and Good Samaritan Hospital in West Palm Beach. Cusa received his bachelor's degree in accounting and business in 1974 from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. He has been active in the Alabama chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association since 1993, and was state president in 2002.



Miriam Sevilla

Dr. Miriam Sevilla, MD, has joined the AltaPointe Department of Psychiatric Services. Sevilla, originally from Guantanamo, Cuba, graduated from the University of Granada, Faculty of Medicine located in Spain. She participated in a five-month externship in general psychiatry at Jamaica Hospital Medical Center in New York where she became very involved in the treatment of psychiatric illness in the Hispanic population. Sevilla was awarded the Psychiatry Resident-in-Training Examination Excellence Award for best class score in neurology in 2009, and best class score in psychiatry and neurology in 2008. She completed a child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) where she served as chief resident during her senior year and became a UAB Children's Hospital faculty member.

Courtney Washington has been hired as human resource assistant. Washington earned her bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in human resource management from the University of South Alabama and is pursuing a master's degree in human resource management from Troy University.

Promotions

Anitra Jarreau, RN, is now a performance improvement nurse after serving as assistant coordinator for transitional age services for four years. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Old Dominion University and an associate's degree in nursing from Bishop State Community College.

Cherish Brannon, MS, is now the team leader of forensics and intensive outpatient programs. Brannon earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of South Alabama.

Christina Sciulli, MS, is now the CarePointe crisis and hospital coordination specialist. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in clinical psychology from

Auburn University Montgomery. She previously worked for Auburn University as a graduate clinician for juvenile sex offenders through the Department of Youth Services in Mount Meigs, Ala.

Jennifer Palomo, NCC, LPC, is now the assistant coordinator for children's outpatient services. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in community counseling from the University of South Alabama. Palomo began working with AltaPointe in 2007 as a behavioral aide at BayPointe Hospital.

Mollie Miller is now a credentialing specialist in the finance and accounting department. Since joining AltaPointe in 2010, she has worked as an admissions professional and most recently as a CarePointe financial investigation planner.



Pam Maumenee

Pam Maumenee, MS, is now with AltaPointe Adult Outpatient Services as an assistant director overseeing the adult community services department. Her previous AltaPointe positions included team leader for Project Rebound, which provided relief and assistance in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; and coordinator for the AltaPointe Centralized Services Center, which ensures clinically sound, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of services. Maumenee earned bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from the University of South Alabama, and has worked in the mental health and legal fields in Mobile, Baldwin, and Tuscaloosa counties.

Xylina Reed is now assistant coordinator of the adolescent transitional age services. Reed earned her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of West Florida. She is currently attending the University of Alabama working on a master's degree in social work. Reed joined transitional age services in 2009 as a residential manager. She has more than 10 years of experience working with the young adult population in group homes, private settings and the agency for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Think about this...

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do, so throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover.

— Mark Twain

USA psychology doctoral students intern with AltaPointe

AltaPointe began working with the University of South Alabama (USA) in a new way this summer with the implementation of an internship program in collaboration with the university's PhD program in Clinical and Counseling Psychology (CCP).

Internship collaboration

When David Beech, director of AltaPointe Adult Residential Services (ARS), reached out to Kim Zlomke, PhD, assistant professor in USA's CCP program, on an unrelated matter, the conversation turned to AltaPointe's staffing needs and USA's need for additional internship sites for CCP doctoral students.

Heather Joseph, administrator for BayPointe Children's Hospital, was brought into the conversation and a decision was made to establish two internship positions at AltaPointe.

Zlomke is enthusiastic about the opportunity for CCP doctoral students to intern with AltaPointe. "These internships are providing a great opportunity for our students to get diverse experience in community-based organizations, specifically in residential facilities," she said. "The cross-training opportunity is great. We like our students to have a chance to be exposed to psychiatry, social work and psychology."

Inaugural interns

Sarah Bauman and Kathryn Jeter became AltaPointe's first two psychology doctoral interns in June of 2013. Both are expected to work 20 hours per week for 12 months.

Bauman is at ARS working with two EastPointe residents who need a behavioral plan in place before being placed into group homes. "Sarah has conducted functional assessment interviews with the residents to develop behavioral plans," Beech explained. "She also will provide training to the staff in the group homes where the consumers are placed to help staff members learn how to implement the behavioral plans through modeling and education."

Jeter is assigned to BayPointe where she is focusing on what Zlomke describes as restructuring the residential units. "Kathryn has worked with us to put in place a new rewards system for the adolescent units," Joseph said. "She has helped staff members understand the importance of having goals set in a shorter timeframe. She also will be training front line staff members."

Unique experience for doctoral students

Just a few months into their internships, Bauman and Jeter agreed that working first-hand with consumers who have severe mental illness is beneficial.

"I would have had limited to no exposure or experience with this population at the university clinic," Bauman said. "As a psychologist-in-training in a competitive field, the opportunity for me to work with diverse populations and gain varied clinical experiences is invaluable. I also am becoming a more competitive doctoral candidate."

Jeter concurred that the program experience is very useful. "Through my participation, I have been able to gain valuable insight into the challenges that mental health providers face when working in a residential setting," she said. "I also have benefited from working in collaborative care settings where a range of healthcare providers work together at every level to ensure the best outcomes for consumers."



Kathryn Jeter, left, and Sarah Bauman, center, are University of South Alabama psychology doctoral interns working at AltaPointe locations this year. Kim Zlomke, PhD, right, is the USA Clinical and Counseling Psychology assistant professor who oversees the internships.

Collaboration is a 'win-win-win'

The AltaPointe and USA CCP doctoral program collaboration benefits everyone involved.

"I see the internship program between AltaPointe and the University of South Alabama's doctoral program in psychology as a win-win-win," Beech said. "It helps the university and AltaPointe, as well as strengthens the relationship between the two. It also helps the patients and the students."

AltaPointe's first two doctoral in psychology interns agree. "By partnering with USA's CCP program, AltaPointe and its consumers gain support and assistance from doctoral students who are trained in evidence-based practice and supervised by licensed psychologists," Jeter said.

"Doctoral interns are eager to take on challenging and diverse clinical experiences," Bauman said. "They also have ties to the community and may be looking to settle in Mobile after receiving their degrees."

The benefits don't end here. "USA's doctoral program students are being funded and have access to clinical experiences and a breadth of training that would not be possible from just a university psychological clinic," Bauman added.

Bauman also illustrates benefits to participating students. "We obtain good clinical experience, are able to network with mental health care providers in the area and receive help with the substantial cost of graduate school."

Zlomke summed up the attitude about the collaboration with AltaPointe. "We're really excited this has come to fruition and hope it continues and expands," she said. "It's an opportunity for both organizations and advances our mission of service, teaching and research."

Unique collaboration benefits medicine, community and the patient

AltaPointe and University of South Alabama continue building clinical relationships

The relationship between AltaPointe and the University of South Alabama (USA) College of Medicine (COM) is long-standing and one-of-a-kind. It is similar to those between community mental health centers and medical college's psychiatry departments across the country where residents and medical students do some of their training at the CMHC. However, the AltaPointe-USA relationship is truly unique for one major reason.

"To my knowledge, ours is the nation's only university-based training program where the attending psychiatrists of a behavioral healthcare organization comprise the entire psychiatry department faculty," Sandra Parker, MD, and AltaPointe Chief Medical Officer, said. "This collaborative effort has benefited our two organizations, the medical profession and the larger community for nine years now."

The alliance began with clinical rotations and quickly expanded into teaching and a full residency program. Today, AltaPointe psychiatrists serve as the faculty for the USA COM Department of Psychiatry.

Clinical rotation clerkships came first

In 2004, third-year medical students began doing clinical rotation clerkships at AltaPointe under Dr. Parker's guidance as a way of providing the medical students with an opportunity to see patients with diverse diagnoses in hospital and clinic settings.

In 2005, AltaPointe's psychiatrists began teaching courses in psychiatry to the university's medical students. Now, many fourth-year medical students complete elective rotations with AltaPointe in addition to their mandatory third-year rotations. W. Bogan Brooks, MD, serves as director of USA Medical Student Clerkship in addition to his role as psychiatrist with AltaPointe.

Psychiatric residency program begins

AltaPointe became involved with the psychiatric residency program



Dr. William Bogan Brooks, left, director of the University of South Alabama Medical Student Clerkship, and Dr. J. Luke Engeriser, AltaPointe Deputy Chief Medical Officer and USA COM Residency Program Director, work with residents, students, AltaPointe staff and patients at the 3650 Old Shell Road location in Mobile.

in 2007. "At that time, the university was thinking about doing away with its psychiatric residency program," Parker said. "I felt very strongly that the program should be kept, especially since there are so few psychiatrists in the United States and in Alabama, in particular. The only other psychiatric residency program in the state is at the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB)."

Ronald Franks, MD, vice-president for health sciences with the USA College of Medicine, who is also a psychiatrist, agreed there was a need for the residency program, according to Parker.

"So when the decision was made for the program

to continue, AltaPointe became the 'department of psychiatry' in collaboration with USA COM," Parker explained.

In addition to her role with AltaPointe, Parker is the vice-chair for the USA-COM Department of Psychiatry.

Psychiatrist, J. Luke Engeriser, MD, serves as USA COM Residency Program Director as well as AltaPointe Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

"The residents have the best of both worlds," Engeriser explained, "a program associated with a strong academic medical school and having their core clinical experiences within the rich, real-world community mental health environment of AltaPointe. Residents have exposure to an amazingly diverse patient population and broad array of clinical environments within the AltaPointe system."

AltaPointe accepts four residents each year, with 16 residents admitted to the program at any given time. All classes for the psychiatry residents are taught at AltaPointe.

PA, CRNP students rotate here, too

The clinical relationship between USA and AltaPointe is not limited to working with and training medical students and psychiatry residents. USA's physician assistant (PA) and nurse practitioner students also complete clinical rotations at AltaPointe. All of the PA

students spend a month with AltaPointe taking classes and doing clinical rotations. Nurse practitioner students who are specializing in psychiatric care spend three months shadowing AltaPointe's nurse practitioners.

Collaboration benefits recruitment, advancement and patient care

There are numerous benefits to the collaboration between AltaPointe and USA, as Parker and Engeriser explained.

Recruiting physicians to work at AltaPointe has proven to be one of the strongest benefits. The fact that AltaPointe's psychiatrists are on the faculty for the USA COM Department of Psychiatry helps with recruiting high quality physicians who find the balance between clinical and educational roles appealing. AltaPointe also has been able to hire some of the residents as staff psychiatrists.

Severin Grenoble, MD, whom AltaPointe hired last year, personifies this benefit. "I chose the residency program here for its community emphasis and close interaction with faculty," Grenoble said. "Likewise, I was honored to be offered a position at AltaPointe as an attending psychiatrist and be a part of a caring, closely integrated faculty with an excellent balance between patient care and education."

Advancing the profession of psychiatry is another advantage to the relationship. The positive exposure medical students have through their clinical rotations helps increase the number of people going into psychiatry. Since the beginning of the collaboration,

the percentage of USA College of Medicine graduates choosing to pursue psychiatry as a career has consistently been above the national average.

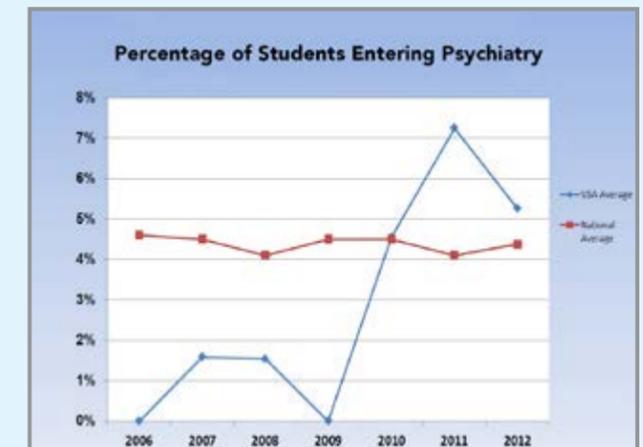
Most important of all, the collaboration has profited the patients. "It is good for AltaPointe's patients to have an opportunity to be exposed to, and receive outstanding care from, very bright, enthusiastic students and residents as well as dedicated attending physicians," Parker added.

Future leaders in psychiatry emerge from program

The clinical relationship between AltaPointe and USA also is helping to develop future leaders of the profession. "We are encouraging residents to be leaders in the state, in medicine overall and in the field of psychiatry," Parker said. "The fact that they are becoming leaders helps highlight and bring attention to the issues and needs of consumers in community mental health."

Brooks summed up the global impact of the collaboration between AltaPointe and USA COM as having been remarkably successful.

"The creation of an academic environment at AltaPointe has enabled Dr. Parker to recruit an outstanding staff of psychiatrists who, in turn, have done a superb job of training the next generation of physicians," he said. "While everyone benefits from this collaboration between the college of medicine and our community mental health center, we believe that the primary beneficiaries are our patients."



Statistics prove successes of AltaPointe & USA Department of Psychiatry collaboration

For medical students, the collaboration between USA and AltaPointe Health Systems has contributed to a significant improvement in the performance on the NBME shelf examination, overall improvement in satisfaction towards the clerkship, and an increase in the number of students choosing psychiatry as a career.

Program Progress

Adult Outpatient Services

Capitol Showcase Art Exhibit paints the picture of mental illness

The old expression, 'a picture is worth a thousand words' refers to the idea that a complex thought or feeling can be conveyed with just a single still image or simple stroke of the brush.

Charles Mason, AltaPointe peer specialist and self-taught artist, knows this firsthand. Mason was among seven AltaPointe patients and more than 100 individuals from across Alabama who displayed their artwork at the 2013 Capitol Showcase Consumer Art Exhibit, hosted by the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) and held at the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery.

"Painting has helped me...express the lessons I have learned when dealing with a mental health disorder," Mason said.

Each participant in the exhibit lives with a mental illness, developmental disability, substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder. The exhibition promoted dignity and worked to foster better understanding. Patients also shared their testimonies about the obstacles they have overcome and the role creativity through artwork played.



Using vivid colors and a single butterfly to represent his transformation, Charles Mason's painting titled, 'Metamorphoo= Change,' was on display at the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery this past May.

Mason said he has dealt with the ups and downs of living with a mental illness for more than 10 years. He compares his triumphs and tribulations to Watty Piper's book, "The Little Engine That Could."

"There is a phrase in the book that says, 'I think I can...I think I can', and I believe this best describes what I felt at times," Mason added. "Faced with derailment or hospitalization and relapse, I came to the conclusion that I had to remain strong even at a low point in my life."

Mason added that a mental illness diagnosis brought tremendous change to his life. Art has helped him adapt to the changes he faced and still faces today.

"I used a word from the ancient Greeks for my title, 'Metamorphoo.' It means change. And a butterfly is symbolic of change," shared Mason. "A butterfly does not start off a butterfly. It goes through a stage called metamorphosis and turns out to be a new creature."

Children's Outpatient Services

'School-based therapy makes sense'

Time is of the essence when it comes to treating children with mental health issues. A new program will make it easier for children who live a great distance from AltaPointe's offices to be seen more frequently.

AltaPointe therapists Stephanie Pope and Vickie Charpie, LPC, are filling new positions as school-based counselors who will work onsite at several area schools during office hours.

"With an increased collaboration between school counselors and teachers, our patients should experience a reduction in symptoms and an improvement in coping skills and other strengths in a shorter period of time," Stephanie Gatlin, children's outpatient coordinator, said.

Pope, a marriage and family therapist with seven years of experience working with families, is working with children and

teens in Saraland City Schools and Satsuma School System.

"School-based therapy makes sense," Pope said. "It puts school staff, parents, and therapists on the same page. Communication and compliance are two of the most important things for success in therapy; these are increased in school-based therapy."

Charpie, who has eight years of experience and is a certified trainer in Parenting with Love and Logic, will work with children and teens at Leinkauf Elementary and the Continuous Learning Center in Mobile, as well as McDavid-Jones Elementary, Lott Middle and Citronelle High schools in Citronelle.

AltaPointe plans to place more therapists in schools by January 2014.

BayPointe Children's Hospital

BayPointe strengthens customer service as hospital rebrands



One year ago, BayPointe Hospital closed its adult unit and became the only children's psychiatric hospital along the Gulf Coast. At the helm of BayPointe Children's Hospital, Heather Joseph, hospital administrator, is devoted to ensuring that each child is surrounded by caring and qualified people. That means

that each psychiatrist, psychologist, nurse, therapist and any other staff member on a treatment team is hearing her message.

"Since I started in December, my team and I have been steadfast in trying to hire staff members that truly want to work with children," Joseph said. "We like to ensure these children have a safe and therapeutic environment while receiving the help they need."

She will be the first to tell you this year hasn't been easy, that there are still twists in the road. But she has seen success.

"We are averaging 13 more admissions per month than in previous years," Joseph added. "So it's even more important to make BayPointe a positive customer-service environment as we rebrand as a children's hospital."

BayPointe has been known for a decade for treating adult involuntary patients, so Joseph and her staff have had to re-educate providers, referral sources and the public. Hiring a marketing executive, Leslie Johnson, has helped spread the word that BayPointe offers unique therapeutic and treatment options for children.

Since what works for one child may not work for another, BayPointe has developed a variety of activities, such as equine therapy, art and music therapy and a running club that helps every child receive the help and treatment needed to live a better life.

Barbara Adams, a therapist on the residential unit, focuses on achieving that every day. "The most rewarding part of my job is to see a child, who has come to us broken and untrusting, and then finding that one of those different activities helps them to break through and be able to heal," Adams said.

BayPointe has 44 hospital beds for children ages 5 to 18 that are in crisis and 50 residential beds for children available who need more time to recover. The most frequent diagnoses of children treated at BayPointe include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), mood disorder and psychotic disorder. Other frequent but less predominant issues treated at BayPointe include Asperger's, an autism spectrum disorder; generalized anxiety disorder; and problems related to sexual abuse and physical abuse.

Community needs require expansion

BayPointe's residential unit administration has recognized a need for additional intensive residential beds.

"We have a lot of requests, especially for our male adolescent population and often keep a waiting list," Carla Ladnier, BayPointe assistant director of the residential unit, said. "To meet the needs of the community, we expanded our residential unit from 34 to 50 beds this year."

Children stay on the hospital unit until they are stabilized for discharge, which may be up to 10 days. Children may stay on the residential unit for more than a year in some cases. Joseph says no matter where these children are placed, her personal charge is to make sure customer service is a top priority.

"Patients have to be happy when they leave, happy with their experience and happy with the staff," added Joseph. "That is our goal."

There are indications that Joseph and the hospital staff are reaching their goals. Whether it is a patient's family member expressing their satisfaction or the smiles from children on their way home, responses like these make traveling this road less traveled worth the journey.

Program Progress continued on page 10

Riding horses helps children and teens learn how to relate

Riding the range on horseback may be a dream of lots of children. Several children receiving treatment in the BayPointe Children's Hospital residential unit had the opportunity this summer to make that dream come true. The goal was for these children to learn skills to help them better relate to their peers and families and learn a lot about themselves in the process.

"From that first session the children were engaged, worked on communication skills and read body language," Carla Ladnier, BayPointe Children's Hospital assistant director, said. For six weeks this summer, the kids left the hospital each Friday bound for the countryside of north Mobile County and the Equine Therapy Group.

"Asking a teenaged boy or girl to talk about their feelings can be difficult," Kari Whatley, owner of Equine Therapy Group, said. "But with equine therapy, the horse's innate nature and heightened awareness of body language provide immediate feedback. The kids don't necessarily have to talk to get a lot of work done."



Equine therapy uses the nature and relationship with the horse to bring out a child's natural patterns of relating, handling of new situations, and problem-solving skills.

Environment of Care

EOC develops safety training for its team



Safety is an important concern for every organization, and AltaPointe is no exception. That's one reason why the Environment of Care (EOC) Department is in the process of implementing a new safety training program customized to meet the needs of a behavioral healthcare organization.

EOC Director Robert A. Carlock, said he is committed to making certain the department's staff members have the training they need

Roylyn Chaney, AltaPointe's facilities manager for hospitals, demonstrates the safety aspects of using tools and how each tool fits into the storage toolbox.

to increase their knowledge about safe practices and decrease safety incidents. "The EOC employees deal with many facilities and use different types of equipment on a daily basis that could lead to unsafe situations if not handled correctly," Carlock explained. "If we are

going to convey safety to the entire organization, we have to start with our department."

The training program is being developed specifically for AltaPointe's EOC team and includes topics such as: Personal Protective Equipment, Ladder Hazards and Safety, Tool Box Security and Safety, Lifting and Materials Handling, Facility Safety, and Post-Storm Safety and Protection.

"This training will give EOC employees the confidence to know they are doing their jobs in the safest manner possible," Carlock said. "When you know you're being safe, you're likely to perform your tasks even better."

The EOC Department also has addressed safety issues as they apply to contractors AltaPointe employs. Contractors are required to attend a safety briefing before they begin work at AltaPointe, must follow a detailed check-in/check-out process and wear identification badges at all times.

"In addition, we require contractors to train the EOC department staff members on safety aspects related to their expertise, such as, electrical, plumbing and general construction safety," Carlock said.

Emergency healthcare continued from page 1

things right," Environment of Care (EOC) Director Robert A. Carlock said. "We drilled on aspects of preparedness that we never have before and made the scenarios as realistic as possible."

Examples of drill exercises include:

- Closing the kitchen at EastPointe to practice meeting dietary needs using emergency equipment
- Reducing staffing at some facilities to gain experience with employee deployment in emergency circumstances
- Dealing with scenarios of plumbing and water outages to train on resource placement and handling a scarce water supply
- Functioning with generator support to get a realistic sense of what it is like to work without power

Boarding up facilities designated for use as shelter sites to prepare for an efficient response Carlock is responsible for making sure AltaPointe's emergency plans meet regulations and prepare staff members for any disaster.

The results of the drill were positive, with all of the departments functioning well. "This drill shows that we have stepped up our game in the areas of preparation and mitigation," Carlock said. "I can say without hesitation that we are better prepared for a hurricane than we ever have been."

Community Connections: In Times of Crisis

AltaPointe's emergency response preparation efforts don't stop with drill exercises. Communication and coordination of effort

is critical in times of crisis. "Within AltaPointe, we have great committee members to make sure information gets passed down at the program level," Carlock explained, "and we also have strong connections within the community."

The Alabama Department of Public Health requires AltaPointe to be part of Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF8), a group that meets at least quarterly. "Through this group, we are connected with all other healthcare providers in the area as well as local emergency management agencies, public utility providers and emergency responders," he continued.

Additional steps have been taken to ensure that AltaPointe is ready for emergency situations.

"I have established relationships with my counterparts at other facilities and with essential utility providers to put us on what they refer to as a 'critical account,'" Carlock said. "They will address our needs as they would all the local hospitals, and we have a direct line to these providers in the event of emergencies."

Commitment to Preparation

Carlock said that AltaPointe is fully committed to employee and patient safety at all times, and this includes disaster and emergency situations. "As a company, we have stepped up our efforts to ensure that we are ready for emergencies, and we have true backing from leadership to support preparation efforts."

NAMI Gala raises funds for patients, families

Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO AltaPointe Health Systems, served as the honorary chair of the NAMI Mobile 2nd Annual Unmasking Mental Illness Gala, Oct. 11 at the Mobile Museum of Art. AltaPointe was a major sponsor for the event. Proceeds from the Gala will be used to fund travel expenses and lodging for families whose loved ones receive treatment at Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa

and for families from outside of Mobile County who have children receiving treatment at BayPointe Children's Hospital, a dental fund to help offset the cost of routine dental treatment for patients, and an education and scholarship fund for family members and individuals living with mental illness.



Zina May, president NAMI Mobile, standing at right, introduces Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, seated left, as the 2013 NAMI Gala honorary chair. Also seated are, counter clockwise beginning at right, Mac and Gina Walcott, Walcott Adams Architects; Charles White, Franklin Primary Health Center and his wife, Clotelia White, and Jarrett Crum, EastPointe Hospital Administrator



Ola Anise, AltaPointe board member, left, Olivia Nettles, children's outpatient services director, center, and Calvin Nettles enjoy the evening.



Dr. Edgar Finn, left, BayPointe Children's Hospital psychiatrist, Dr. Severin Grenoble, AltaPointe psychiatrist, and his wife, Amber Grenoble, center, represent the medical staff at the Gala.



G. Wayne Ashbee, SOMI Mobile board president, and Connie Ewing, NAMI Mobile past president, discuss the benefits SOMI brings to the community.



Beverly Parker, NAMI Mobile, left, and Christi Collins, NAMI Baldwin County, survey the Gala Silent Auction items

Performance Improvement hopes to increase flu vaccinations

Flu season is here and the AltaPointe Performance Improvement Department is on a mission to wipe out the spread of the virus in all its facilities. After all, influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death.

Every flu season is different, beginning as early as October and as late as May. Influenza infection can affect people differently. Unvaccinated individuals who become infected are contagious at least one day before any signs or symptoms of influenza appear and, therefore, these individuals can infect others without knowing they are contagious.

The Joint Commission has a new standard that mandates healthcare organizations set incremental influenza vaccination goals to achieve a 90 percent compliance rate by the year 2020. The AltaPointe Employee Health Department has established initiatives to assist AltaPointe in achieving its goal to spread the word that getting the vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu.

Influenza vaccination for healthcare employees is a major safety issue in the United States. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, vaccination remains the single most effective preventive measure available against the influenza virus.

In 2012, AltaPointe administered 400 flu shots to 35 percent of its staff members free of charge. For more information, please call the AltaPointe Employee Health Department at 665-2532, or visit AltaLink.

Benefits Fairs well attended; open enrollment deadline November 30

Nearly 300 staff members attended the six 2013 AltaPointe Benefits Fairs. They were able to visit several vendors' booths and register for two major door prizes.

Karla Manning, administrative assistant at EastPointe Hospital, won a 50-inch LED TV that was provided by donations from the following vendors: Blue Cross Blue Shield, Rx Benefits, Superior Vision, Chappelle Consulting Group, Lincoln Financial Group, Unum, Principal Financial Group, Wells Fargo Bank, Azalea City Credit Union, Chiropractic Works, and Industrial Medical Clinic.



Jason Holston, left, presents Karla Manning, with the 2013 Benefits Fairs Grand Prize – a 50-inch LED TV.

Mery Lee Long, LPN at EastPointe, won the 19-inch TV provided by Lincoln Financial.

Open enrollment deadline approaches

The AltaPointe Human Resources Department has announced that the open enrollment for benefits ends Nov. 30. Staff members should return their benefit enrollment applications and change forms to HR. New enrollments and changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2014.

Any staff member who does not have the necessary forms may download them from the HR AltaLink page. For more information contact Jason Holston at 450-5917.

Pool tourney at ARS brings residents together



Jimmy "Blue" Oliver shows off his fifth AltaPointe Adult Residential Services pool tournament championship trophy at the Zeigler campus's recreation room Sept. 26.



Jimmy "Blue" Oliver knows a thing or five about what it takes to win a pool tournament.

Oliver has won the Adult Residential Services (ARS) pool tournament five times in a row, giving him official bragging rights, which he says he will enjoy to the fullest.

Oliver says he grew up playing pool and proudly showed off his trophies and first place ribbon.

"The first time I won, I got this trophy, then I got this golden star, and then I got this ribbon," said Oliver. "I was happy!"

While showing off his hardware several residents congratulated Oliver on his triumph with high fives, pats on the back and cries for an ice cream party to celebrate.

Gwen Mose, ARS assistant coordinator, organizes the monthly tournaments held at Zeigler's Safehaven house.

"This is an opportunity for our residents to get together and enjoy each other's company," said Mose. "The feedback is always positive and they really enjoy the fun, fellowship and friendly competition."