

A newsletter for and about AltaPointe Health Systems' Employees

AltaNews

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**AltaPointe & Cheaha
join forces to face
merger transition
6-7**



From our CEO...

We must reverse high morbidity and mortality rates of people living with SMI

Decades of studies have shown two sad, indisputable facts about people living with serious mental illness: they contract more chronic diseases and die younger than the rest of the population. In fact, the life expectancy of individuals with mental illness is 25 years less than the rest of the population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As behavioral healthcare providers we must help find solutions to reverse these higher-than-expected morbidity and mortality rates and determine our role in the solution.

These studies have revealed the reasons why the mortality rate of the mentally ill is so high. Contributing factors include deficits in primary and preventive medical care, lack of health insurance, under-recognition of illness, inadequate treatment, poor monitoring, the individual's resistance to seeking care and being compliant with treatment.

Risky lifestyle choices, such as the use and abuse of tobacco, non-prescribed and illegal drugs, and alcohol; and poor nutritional choices increase the risks of chronic medical illness including coronary disease, diabetes, obesity and asthma.

AltaPointe recognizes the impact of medical conditions on psychiatric and mental health disorders and encourages patients to seek and use primary healthcare. For instance, we routinely document the patient's medical history of conditions, symptoms and medications upon intake and update it at each contact.

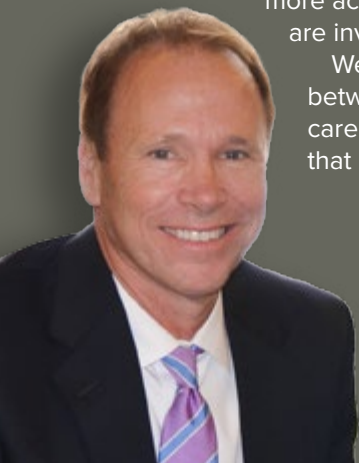
As we identify medical conditions, we encourage patients to comply with medical follow-up. Each patient is asked if they have a primary care physician whose contact information we record. If they do not have a PCP, we give them information about local clinics; we do not recommend specific PCPs.

Once established with a medical provider, we ask the patient to provide consent to allow sharing of information that would impact overall care between AltaPointe and other providers. The treatment team follows up with all patients on the status of their medical conditions.

In addition, AltaPointe uses an online lab that permits immediate access to a patient's test results for medication levels, blood chemistry, drug screens or any other special labs. Using this lab allows us to share the information throughout our continuum of care. We have a plan in place to improve how we share and coordinate medical information with PCPs.

A positive approach to encourage proactive primary healthcare helps us take better care of the whole person. As we move into a more integrated healthcare environment, we are beginning to look at more prevention of medical problems and take a more active role to make sure our patients' PCPs are involved.

We believe that close collaboration between behavioral providers and primary care physicians will improve the quality of life that our patients so deserve.



Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO

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On our cover

The merger of AltaPointe Health Systems and Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center brought together under one corporate culture two distinctively different geographic regions of Alabama. The Mobile Bay Region borders the Gulf of Mexico, Mobile Bay and the rivers that make up the area's estuary system. The Sylacauga Region boasts the state's highest elevation in the Cheaha mountain range. This issue's cover illustrates both the coastal and mountainous beauty where AltaPointe serves the areas' residents.

Photo of Cheaha State Park's Lake Pier courtesy of Alabama State Parks Division and Jeff Drake

Cover design by Steven Lutz, Pixallure Design

As AltaPointe expands, so does its board of directors

With 30,000 patients and about 1,450 employees in southwest Alabama and east-central Alabama, AltaPointe Health Systems is overseen by a board of directors as diverse as the geographical regions its members serve.

Since the merger last year with Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center, AltaPointe's board members now represent an additional four counties into which it has expanded its continuum of behavioral healthcare. In addition to the southwest counties of Mobile, Baldwin and Washington, AltaPointe now provides services in Coosa, Clay, Randolph and Talladega counties.

Board president George Noonan, who resides in Orange Beach, is vice president of First National Bank of Baldwin County and was appointed to the board by the Baldwin County Commission.

"Our board members bring a wide array of business experience and a diverse and longstanding community service background to the table," Noonan said. "Their dedication and commitment to AltaPointe's mission spans all the communities in which we serve."

Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, said the board's leadership and oversight are crucial in guiding AltaPointe through current and future challenges including stagnant funding and communities' increasing needs for service. Noonan said AltaPointe's 310 board provides guidance and perspective that, "combined with the strategic vision and leadership of our management team and the daily contribution of our employees, come together to achieve what we believe is the highest standard of community mental health service in our region."

A brief history

Alabama's public system of mental health care began in the mid-1800s, when Bryce Hospital opened in Tuscaloosa as a

state-of-the-art facility. Mental health authority boards have not always existed. In fact, the state community mental health center system came about as part of an act passed in 1963 by the U.S. Congress under President John Kennedy. Under this legislation the deinstitutionalizing of large state hospitals was initiated.

In 1965, the Alabama Legislature created the Alabama Department of Mental Health as we know it today that oversees a network of community-based services. And, finally, in 1967, the legislature passed Act 310 to enable city and county governments to establish community mental health centers as part of the state's deinstitutionalization process. Governing bodies, such as AltaPointe's board of directors, are known as "310 boards."

AHS board directors and advisory members

Officers serving with Noonan include the board's vice president, Gaylord Lyon of Mobile, an owner of Lyon Frye Cadden Insurance, appointed by Mobile County Commission; secretary, Jean Williams of Fruitdale, a registered nurse who has spent nearly five decades in the mental health field, appointed by Washington County Commission; and treasurer, Larry Jackson of Mobile, an investment banker and founder of Tearing Down Walls International Ministries Inc., appointed by the City of Mobile.

In addition to its officers, board members appointed from Mobile County include, Malvina Holloway, retired educator and charter member of the board; Pamela Millsaps, attorney and former Mobile County juvenile judge; and Mary Zoghby, former state representative and retired executive director of Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama; and Gil Laden, attorney, appointed by the City of Mobile.

Other board members from Baldwin County are businessman Aubrey Fuller of Summerdale and attorney Bob Wills of Bay Minette. Board members from Washington County include MelAnn B. Sullivan of Millry and the Hon. Jerry L. Turner of Chatham, a Washington County district judge.

Serving from Talladega County are Dr. Edward Hall, retired educator and president of The ARC of North Talladega County; and Georgia Christian and George Dye; Coosa County's representatives include Mary Bennett of Weogufka; Louise McGrady, former vice president of Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center's board of directors; and Marion Embry of Sylacauga.

From Clay County, board members include retired educator Karin Christopherson, Sherri Clark and Kay Robertson, all of Lineville. Board members from Randolph County are Alan Hurst of Wedowee and the Hon. Pat Whaley and Robin Hall, both of Roanoke.

Advisory members from the Mobile Bay Region include the Hon. Victor Gaston, Mary Stewart Crane, Ola Anise, Susie Carpenter, Starke Irvine, and the Hon. Nick Williams. Advisory members from the Sylacauga region include Beverly White, Vicki Bacon, Mavis Newman and Dr. P. Duncan Roy.



AltaPointe Board of Directors representing the Sylacauga Region listen intently to meeting participants in Mobile via teleconference during a December 2016 meeting. Attending the meeting are, clockwise from left, Cindy Atkinson, Tuerk Schlesinger, Jessica Williams, Dr. Edward Hall, Marion Embry, Louise McGrady, Sherri Clark, Karin Christopherson and Robin Hall.

School-based therapy works *magic* with kids

What makes a social outcast who is constantly bullied in middle school become a successful, graduating senior with self-confidence, friends and plans to go to college? If you ask 18-year-old Garrett, it's a little bit of magic and AltaPointe's school-based therapy program. For the past six years, Garrett has routinely been seen by **Tiffany Shea**, his school-based therapist.

When Shea met Garrett, he was admittedly a kid having troubles. He was doing poorly in school, had anger issues and fought with bouts of depression. Before the school-based therapy program was introduced into the Mobile County Public School System, Garrett would have to take time away from classes he was already failing to attend his counseling sessions at one of AltaPointe's outpatient offices. This meant time away from his studies; time that he could not afford. Once the program started, Garrett was able to visit with Shea regularly with little or no interruption in school.

Shea encouraged him to step up and improve himself. "I used to be extremely lazy and didn't want to do anything in school," Garrett acknowledged. "Each year, she would encourage me to move up, so I would do more and more stuff each year."

In the summer prior to ninth grade, Garrett made a life-changing decision. "I decided that what better way to improve my social skills than to learn the nerdy thing – magic," he said. "And it actually worked. My first day of school I walked up to someone that I didn't know and showed them a couple of magic tricks. The word just spread. I had so many people asking me to do magic tricks. Now people ask me to do birthday parties and stuff."

Shea explained that magic tricks became Garrett's thing. "He'd even do magic tricks in [therapy] sessions," she said. "He didn't have a lot of



Being in front of the camera is a new experience for Garrett, a participant in AltaPointe's school-based therapy, who is pursuing his dream and currently a broadcast intern.

friends, but he found a way to make friends with the card tricks and magic."

School employees recognize program's importance

School-based therapy can work magic and, according to one public school employee, help children grow and excel with the encouragement and consistent counseling the program provides. Donna Henderson, a counselor at the local high school Garrett attends, recognizes the importance of having Shea and others like her in the school system.

"When Mobile County public schools started the program, we had some questions about how it was going to work," Henderson said. "But, from day one it has been awesome. We are working as a cohesive team."

Like most counselors in the program, Shea works in more than one school in a specific feeder pattern where therapists follow the children from elementary through high school. She said working with the same children consistently from an early age makes a big difference in their progress.



A few members of the team required to help students involved in school-based therapy, include, from left, Terry Short, school-based therapist; Patrice Davis, intervention supervisor, Baldwin County Public School System; Joe Roh, Robertsedale High School administrator; and Amanda Boyington, case manager, AltaPointe Children's Outpatient services.



Olivia Nettles, AltaPointe's children's outpatient director for the Mobile Bay Region, center, conducts a meeting to plan for school-based therapy in the Sylacauga City Schools with Dr. Todd Freeman, superintendent, left of Nettles; clockwise from Freeman, Monte Abner, Indian Valley; Carol Martin and Paula Bruno, Nichols-Lawson; Leslie Armstrong, school-based therapist; and Brandy Richardson, clinical director, AltaPointe Sylacauga Region. Debbie Barnett, Pinecrest; Chad Murphy, Sylacauga High School; and Cindy Atkinson, AltaPointe Associate Executive Director of Community Mental Health for Sylacauga Region also participated in the meeting.

"Children that I get when they are little know they have someone who cares and someone who they can talk to; it is so much better," she said. "The kids that I only get in middle school or high school – who did not have the school-based therapy all the way through – well, it seems so much worse because their behavior or the situation has escalated so much before they get to me. That is why I think a feeder pattern is really necessary and important."

Success stories like Garrett's are not uncommon among students in the program. "The school-based program is a win-win for everyone; it is key for us," Patrice Davis, intervention supervisor with Baldwin County Public Schools, said. "The students don't have to miss as much time from school and parents don't have to miss time from work. Here at the local school, they are able to work out what class time is going to be best for that child to miss. So it has really been well received by everyone who is involved, and we are certainly pleased with our partnership."

School-based growth continues

AltaPointe's school-based therapy program currently reaches 28 schools in Mobile County and virtually all 45 schools in the Baldwin County system, in addition to all of the schools in the Saraland, Chickasaw, Satsuma and Washington County school systems. The program is currently being introduced into the Sylacauga region as well.

AltaPointe Children's Outpatient clinical director Olivia Nettles, LPC, NCC, spearheaded the Mobile County school-based program and is helping AltaPointe's Sylacauga region to establish a school-based therapy relationship. "Early in my career, when I was a children's therapist working in the Mississippi schools, I recognized the importance of consistent and convenient access to care for children and their families," she said.

Visit AltaNewsOnline.org to learn more about AltaPointe's school-based programs.

NAMI names Nettles as its Alabama Mental Health Professional of the Year



Olivia Nettles

board, the group that nominated her for the award.

Nettles, who has worked in various positions at AltaPointe for more than 20 years, received the award based on her work,

Olivia Nettles, director of AltaPointe's children's outpatient services and BayView Professional Associates, was named the NAMI Alabama 2016 Mental Health Professional of the Year at the organization's annual meeting in Montgomery. Nettles has been active in NAMI Mobile working on the NAMI Walks and gala events. She has served the past four years on the NAMI Mobile

primarily with children. Connie Ewing, representing NAMI Mobile, read the following nomination before presenting Nettles with the award:

"Her dedication, passion and vision for improving the lives of children with mental and emotional disorders are unsurpassed. This is most evident with her goal of increasing the number of schools in Mobile and Baldwin counties that have school-based therapists. With her clinical vision and leadership, Olivia has ensured that there are a total of 77 schools in Mobile and Baldwin counties with school-based therapists. Her efforts have led to more than 2,500 school-aged children receiving much needed therapy services in their school."

Performance improvement surveys give a voice to patients

For nearly two decades patient and family satisfaction surveys have been distributed across the AltaPointe continuum. From residential to outpatient to hospitals, every program and age level receives a survey.

Sherill Alexander, director of performance improvement, says the surveys are fashioned after the Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program and have been used by community mental health centers statewide since the late '90s.

"We use five surveys at AltaPointe, which include the Patient Perception of Care, Treatment and Services; Quality of Life; Family Perception of Care, Treatment and Services; Youth Perception of Care, Treatment and Services; Youth Family Perception of Care, Treatment and Services," Alexander said. "The surveys give our patients a voice, a say in their treatment and that is important."

Answers provide path to improvement

The questions are general and focus on a patient's satisfaction with services. The following examples show the type of information asked: "Do you feel you were treated with respect?" and "How do you feel about the staff?" as well as the simplest of questions about the food served in the cafeterias.

Brandi Williams, consumer needs coordinator, says some of the more beneficial answers come from the comment sections of the surveys.

Staff treated me with respect.

Please respond based on your most recent experience	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
1) I helped to choose my child's treatment goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) I feel my child had someone to talk to when helping was needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) The services my child and/or family received were right for us.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Staff treated me with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Staff respected my families religious/spiritual beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) As a result of the services my child has received, I know people who will listen and understand me when I need to talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) As a result of the services my child and/or family received, my child is better at handling daily life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) As a result of the services my child and/or family received, my child is doing better in school and/or work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) As a result of the services my child and/or family received, my child gets along better with friends and other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) As a result of the services my child and/or family received, I am satisfied with our family life right now.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) Overall, I am satisfied with the services my child received.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, I am satisfied with the services my child received.

Performance Improvement surveys target patients' responses to quality of service and staff members' behaviors.

"A lot of times patients are truly open about how they feel about their treatment and will go into great

length about our programs,"

Williams said. "The surveys and responses are imperative to our organization and allow us to identify trends and issues in any areas that may seem problematic so we can address and correct them."

Performance improvement distributed more than 6,000 surveys during fiscal year 2015-2016. Each year results show AltaPointe is meeting the needs of its patients with most demographics scoring in the 80 to 90 percentile range. Williams says the target goal for overall satisfaction is 95 percent.

Electronic surveys will improve system

Surveys are circulated on a quarterly rotation, which means each program receives a survey four

times a year. Williams says it is up to each program to make sure every active patient is given one to complete. Without the surveys, Williams says there is no way of gauging AltaPointe's performance.

Alexander says it is her hope the surveys evolve to include electronic surveying, which she believes will increase participation among programs and patients.

"I believe paper surveys create a barrier, and once they become electronic the patient's voice will become even louder and clearer," Alexander said. "Then we will receive even more information about the care and services provided by AltaPointe."

EOC planning ensures safety and well-being

Ensuring the safety and well-being of 30,000 patients, 1,450 staff members and every visitor to AltaPointe requires hundreds of hours of ongoing oversight and planning. New annual plans are written for six major areas, which include the Life Safety Plan, Medical Equipment Plan, Hazardous Waste Plan, Utilities Management Plan, Safety Plan and Security Plan. These are combined into one document titled "Plans for the Management for the EOC."

Robert Carlock, AltaPointe's environment of care director, leads the development, evaluation and implementation of the annual plans that apply to maintenance, housekeeping, food services, emergency preparedness and disaster recovery.

According to Carlock, the EOC Committee, subcommittee and program representatives have evaluated the 2015-16 plans and found them to be effective.

"Measurement of the progress toward reaching the plans' established goals and objectives determines their effectiveness," Carlock said. "We strive to make AltaPointe the best environment in which patients receive services and employees work. I encourage all employees to become familiar with ways they can contribute to a successful and safe environment of care."

The 2017 EOC plans are posted on the EOC page of AltaLink, AltaPointe's intranet.



What does compassion look like?

The first of AltaPointe's Five-Star Standards of CARE is compassionate, which is defined as one's ability to show feelings or empathy and concern for others. How individuals perceive an act of compassion may vary.

Is it day treatment consumers who read well helping others who cannot? Is a co-worker showing compassion when he volunteers to step in to help a fellow co-worker when the staff is short-handed? Could it be a CarePointe specialist patiently assisting a distressed mother to make arrangements for her daughter? Even the simplest of gestures, such as holding a hand or sharing an umbrella, is a sign of compassion.

Understanding the role that CARE standards play in our daily treatment of others is important. The stories of compassion at AltaPointe seem to be unlimited and often are reflected in AltaPraises. Your AltaPointe Five-Star Care Committee encourages all staff members to keep up the good work and make sure to share what they think "Accountable" – the second CARE standard – looks like. Examples of being accountable will be included in the next edition of AltaNews.

To submit an AltaPraise or share a story, visit our website, AltaPointe.org.

AltaPointe.org

Submit an
AltaPraise Online



What does being 'compassionate' mean to you?



"... always having an open door and 10 minutes for someone in need."

Neil Secor,
Assistant Nurse
Manager, Bradford
Residential
– Robertsedale



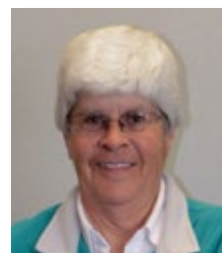
"... caring for others and their needs while often times placing their needs above your own."

Jameron "Deon" Gatson, Coordinator,
Children's Outpatient
Case Management
– Mobile



"... having sympathy and concern for other people's well-being."

Delois Coleman,
Accounting Clerk,
Finance & Accounting
– Sylacauga



"... listening, understanding, and being passionate about caring for others."

Catherine Shropshire,
Compliance Specialist,
Environment of Care
– Mobile



"... having empathy for others during difficult situations in their lives and being genuinely kind to others."

Elizabeth Campbell,
Hillwood Residential
Manager – Sylacauga

AltaPointe names its 2016 Stars of the Year

The AltaPraise review team has selected five staff members as the 2016 AltaPointe Stars of the Year whose AltaPraises were chosen from among more than 875 cards submitted between January and December 2016. AltaPointe staff members from across our continuum serve on the review team, which pours over the cards in search of those that exceed our standards of care.

This year's five Stars of the Year include **Kevin Ming**, assistant maintenance engineer II in environment of care; **My Kim Nguyen**, therapist south Mobile outpatient services; **Eddie Pratt**, children's outpatient services' assistant coordinator; **La Quanda Wingate**, CarePointe specialist; and **Andrea Yohn**, implementer/QA support in information technology services. AltaPointe will honor the stars

at its annual meeting March 8. One of these individuals will be named the Shining Star of the Year during the meeting.

AltaPointe is proud of its stars, all of whom provide compassionate, accountable, respectful, and encouraging care to the thousands of patients we serve each year. More information about each of the stars and the shining star will be available in our next edition of AltaNews and at AltaNewsOnline.org.





AltaPointe & Cheaha join forces

Editor's note: Nearly four months after the official launch date of the AltaPointe Health Systems and Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center merger, AltaNews writers interviewed staff members in both regions about the changes. The following article comprises comments from several employees. Their attitudes and opinions were overwhelmingly positive despite the many challenges related to the merger.

Cheaha-AltaPointe meet challenges

The AltaPointe Health Systems and Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center merger presented different challenges for people in both organizations.

At the former CRMHC, employees were faced with learning to use new computer software and hardware, new tactics and techniques needed to do their jobs, and building new relationships with their south Alabama partners. Once their new colleagues got over some understandable jitters, as one of our trainers said, they were ready to learn as fast as the trainers could teach.

For employees from the Mobile Bay region who provided training during the merger transition, traveling to and from the Sylacauga region was tough, at least in the beginning. Many of them said with each subsequent visit, as they became more familiar with their new coworkers and the community, traveling became easier.

Prospect of expanding services motivates Cheaha

It was the potential ability to offer a broader level of services that initially attracted the CRMHC's board of directors to AltaPointe,



Cindy Atkinson

according to **Cindy Atkinson**, the former CRMHC executive director and now AltaPointe's associate executive director of community mental health for the Sylacauga region. Having worked at CRMHC for 36 years, she recognized that the changes in healthcare were placing

ever-increasing demands on the mental health center as it served patients in Clay, Coosa, Randolph and Talladega counties.

"Every year, we found ourselves trying to decide what services would have to be cut," Atkinson said. "We were fortunate that our

board was very engaged in governance, and when board members gave us the go-ahead to look for a partner, I knew we needed to talk to AltaPointe."

Atkinson, who led the movement toward a merger, said a major key to the successful merger was closely working with state and local political leaders, the Alabama Department of Mental Health as well as legislators, mayors, city council members, county commissioners and chambers of commerce leaders.

"Our legislative delegation became our champions," she recalled. "They knew that there was not going to be any additional money in the state budget for mental health services."

Another crucial step toward creating a smooth transition, Atkinson said, was easing CRMHC staff members' concerns about shifting from being a CRMHC employee to working for

AltaPointe. During regular updates about the coming changes, she said she made sure the CRMHC employees knew why the merger was necessary and responded to their questions.

"They were worried about their jobs, their pay and their benefits," Atkinson said. "But we went into the merger with our employees knowing ahead of time that they would have their jobs, their benefits and the same rate of pay. They felt good about that."

"Every year, we found ourselves trying to decide what services would have to be cut."

Cindy Atkinson

Associate Executive Director
Community Mental Health Sylacauga Region

Chief executives, HR welcome new 'family' members

During their first visit after the merger went into effect Aug. 1, **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, and **Julie Bellcase**, AltaPointe Chief of Staff, traveled north to meet as many Sylacauga region employees as possible.

"They set a gracious and inclusive tone for the cultural changes, encouraged questions and expressed their pleasure that we were now part of the AltaPointe family," Atkinson said. "They were totally transparent about the merger: the changes that could be expected and the ones yet to be discovered."

Soon after, AltaPointe's human resources' team was one of the first groups from Mobile to meet the newest 125 Sylacauga region coworkers. HR introduced them to AltaPointe, provided information about their jobs, rates of pay, time and attendance, and scheduling among many other pertinent details. The HR staff members answered their questions and had a lot of "face time" with the new employees.

"We were the first team on the ground to talk about who AltaPointe is as an employer," **Alicia Donoghue** director of human

ces to face merger transition

resources, said. "Really, we were the 'welcome wagon' for the AltaPointe Sylacauga Region's staff members."

The HR team spent four days in July prior to the launch of the merger having onboarding meetings with the Sylacauga staff members. Donoghue said the meetings went well "simply because Cindy Atkinson had given them time leading up to the merger so they would know what to expect."

AltaPointe leadership realized that their new coworkers might fear the merger if they did not know what to expect. According to many studies, most people fear the unknown, which causes stress; and so every effort was made to give AltaPointe's new east central Alabama employees as much information as possible.

"Anytime you have a big change, it's going to be stressful," said



Ann Cunningham

Ann Cunningham, division coordinator for intellectual disabilities. "But, when the AltaPointe people came up from Mobile to train us, they encouraged us. Each training session was very thorough, lessening the stress level."

Cunningham also observed that though the merger's benefits are multifaceted, the Sylacauga region staff members have enjoyed one enormous advantage. "They now can be much more efficient with patient admissions and discharges because of the administrative resources AltaPointe brought to the table."

Staff can now focus on main job responsibilities

Kathleen Robinson, human resources manager in the Sylacauga region, is one of those people who felt good about the changes



Kathleen Robinson

that came with the resources AltaPointe brought to the table. Describing the merger as a "godsend," Robinson had been working as a one-person department. "Before the merger, I would spend my days ricocheting from job interviews to

benefits management, workers comp issues, recruiting and record-keeping," Robinson said. "Now, thanks to the technology employed by AltaPointe HR, people apply for jobs online, employees use computers to manage many of their benefits and recruiting new employees is easier."

She agreed with Cunningham that the trainers were patient, which made the training easier for her and her colleagues. "If I asked a question 50 times, they answered it 50 times," she said,

laughing. More seriously, she added, "Everybody had to learn something new, and I mean everybody."



Michele Ryan

Michele Ryan, practice manager, agreed that the merger relieved the burden on her and others of having to wear multiple hats.

"Before the merger, I never knew from day to day what I might be dealing with," she said.

"Now I can focus on being the practice manager. It seemed like every year brought another cut that we had to make and more tasks we had to absorb. We were never expanding. Now we have the chance to grow."

Ryan praised the CarePointe department, which handles AltaPointe's access to care. The access procedures and systems eliminated manual scheduling in the Sylacauga Region, and staff members can now spend more time treating patients. She acknowledged that the new resources are what will make it possible to expand outpatient services, including school-based therapy, in the region.

Electronic systems improve efficiency



Brandy Richardson

Brandy Richardson, former day treatment coordinator and now the associate clinical director for the Sylacauga region, said she likes the "changes, possibilities and challenges" afforded by the merger.

"There have been a lot of positives," she said. "With electronic records, we're much more efficient in our ability to do admissions and discharges. And, I know we will be able to offer more services to the community."

In-home therapist **Michael Gooden** said the merger has dramatically affected the way he can relate to clients and their families. "There are always medical staff members on duty," he said. "We haven't had that in the past. It used to be that it might have been a week before I could get someone an appointment; now I can call and get them something quickly."



Michael Gooden

Continued on page 8

Going from “paper to non-paper” has been “a tremendous tool,” he added. “You sit down, pull up a person’s file, and there everything is, right in front of you.”

In addition, he now has more time to visit with patients in their homes where he can see firsthand the conditions with which they may be contending. “A lot of times, you take it for granted that people have running water, that they have food, that they have lights,” Gooden said. “And then you see that they don’t.”

He said patients and residents in the Sylacauga region have asked him questions about the merger, and he’s been happy to explain its benefits.

“We’re still here, and we’re bigger and better,” Gooden said. “That’s what I tell everybody.”

Staff member welcomes changes



Kenya Nix

Kenya Nix calls herself “a warrior who loves a challenge,” including the challenges posed by the merger. A child and adolescent in-home therapist, she joined the Cheaha center 10 years ago because she has “always been the type of person who wants to help people.”

She said their new colleagues from Mobile “came with a warm spirit” to help CRMHC employees learn the new technology. Nix said the changes have given her more time to spend with her patients. “That’s what I like best about my job: interacting with the kids and their families.”

Their new colleagues from Mobile not only showed up with a “warm spirit,” they brought equipment and expertise intended to help the CRMHC folks embrace their new or expanded roles. At the top of the equipment list were all-things related to computer technology and communication.

In all, AltaPointe’s chief information officer **Steve Dolan** said he and his 21-member staff delivered, installed and implemented about 270 devices including desktop and laptop computers, servers, monitors, phones, printers and switches.

The IT team began preparing well before the merger was announced, devoting approximately 1,100 man hours to the transition.

“I knew about a year out that AltaPointe was talking to Cheaha about a merger,” Dolan recalled. “We tried to clear as much off of our plates as we could, so that we would have the time to devote to it. We started with a pre-merger analysis, assessing each of Cheaha’s facilities and their manpower and needs.”

He said the AltaPointe north region, as it is called internally, went “live” with electronic medical records on day one of the merger along with payroll and employee data.

“Other things took a little longer,” Dolan said, “but it all happened pretty quickly. We had people stationed in every facility

up there on that first day, walking the halls and making ourselves available to answer questions or put them in touch with people who could help them. Things started to normalize and settle down pretty quickly.”

He applauded Atkinson’s staff for their can-do outlook and attitudes of trust.

“Everybody I encountered at Cheaha was pleasant and enthusiastic,” he said. “Enough can’t be said about how the administration prepared the employees with definite transparency all along the way.”

Systems manager **Eric Talton**

was among Dolan’s team members who spent many hours in the Sylacauga region, training employees to use the newly installed phone system, telehealth equipment and software for electronic records and human resources.

Providing the Sylacauga region with connectivity that enabled the two regions to talk was top priority followed quickly by getting all employees on AltaPointe’s email.

“They were very receptive to the training which made the transition easier,” Talton recalled. “Having been involved in mergers during my career, it was easy to understand how the change could be viewed. We answered questions and attempted to make the transition as easy as possible.”

Review shows benefits greater than expected

Reporting on the merger transition to the AltaPointe Board of Directors this past fall that, **Schlesinger** said the lessons learned from the 2014 Baldwin County merger helped AltaPointe succeed in the Sylacauga Region. “I feel good about how blended the two organizations’ staff members are,” he said. “We are one large team now.”

Atkinson said in her report that the merger had done so much more for the former Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center than she ever expected. “It is clear the merger was the right decision. The benefits are far greater than I ever realized they would be.”

Overall, **Bellcase** said in an interview that the merger has been a “good fit” for both organizations, allowing AltaPointe to serve more Alabamians and the Cheaha staff members “to become what they wanted to be.”

“They came to the merger energized and ready to be supportive,” Bellcase said. “They were behind the merger; they were the ones who initiated it.”

In both locations, she said, employees are committed to their communities.

“There are so many good people working at AltaPointe who really care about the folks we serve,” Bellcase said. “We’re making a difference in people’s lives.”

Go to AltaNewsOnline.org for video interviews of AltaPointe employees commenting on their perspectives of the merger.

**“Going from
‘paper to non-paper’
has been a
tremendous tool.”**

Michael Gooden
In-home Therapist

History of Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center

- 1970** Filed Certificate of Formation as Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center
- 1974** CRMHC Board appointed Marilyn Lauber as first CRMHC Executive Director
- 1974** Program Expansion: Avondale Mills donated 7.5 acres for construction of the community mental health center in Sylacauga. Grants were approved for construction and staffing of a community mental health center in Sylacauga.
Full-time outpatient services begin in Clay County at the White building in Lineville on Highway 9.
- 1975** Avondale Mills donates the Cotton Bowl structure alcoholism treatment center. This was the first location of Caradale Lodge.
- 1976** CRMHC Activity Center opens in Talladega to serve individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- 1977** CRMHC appoints Dr. Larry Morris as executive director succeeding Marilyn Lauber.
- 1987** A new Caradale Lodge and Annex for residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment replaces the Cotton Bowl structure.
- 1991** Hillwood Group Home, a 15-bed HUD project, began operation as a therapeutic group home in Sylacauga.
- 1993** The Talladega Outpatient Clinic and Burton Developmental Center are constructed in Talladega on Bemiston Avenue.
- 1995** The Randolph County Clinic relocates to a renovated historical home on Main Avenue in Roanoke.
- 1996** Hickory Village, an Alabama Housing Finance Authority Tax Credit Project, began operation of 20 apartments and a clubhouse.
- 1998** Hooten Apartments, consisting of five, two-bedroom apartments, was constructed next to the Clay County office.
- 2009** CRMHC Board appoints Cindy Atkinson as executive director succeeding Larry Morris.
- 2010** Green Retrofit awards CRMHC a \$269,153 grant to renovate Hillwood Group Home.
- 2011** Haynes-Moncus Group Home began operation serving individuals with intellectual disabilities. Mr. and Mrs. Tom McVey donated the land on which the home sits in Clay County.
- 2011** Rural Utilities Services distributed through the US Department of Agriculture awards CRMHC a \$157,560 grant for telepsychiatry services in Clay and Randolph counties.
- 2012** CRMHC began offering Mental Health First Aid courses to the community.
- 2014** CRMHC secures USAC funding to substantially improve and lower its ongoing telecommunication costs.
- 2016** Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center merges with AltaPointe Health Systems, Aug. 1.



Administration A Building



Caradale Lodge

Bravo!



Jeff Barker

Jeff Barker, MSN, recently earned his master of science in nursing degree graduating magna cum laude from the University of South Alabama. Barker was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and on track to graduate from USA with his doctor of nursing practice degree in May 2018. He works in adult outpatient services.

Eddie Pratt, M.S., assistant coordinator of AltaPointe Children's Day Treatment Services in Baldwin County, recently gave a special presentation on suicide awareness titled "More than Sad" to more than 500 Fairhope High School ninth graders.

ARC recognizes AltaPointe employee



Attending the awards presentation with Joyce Burt, second from left, are Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO of AltaPointe; Ed Hall, PhD, president of the North Talladega County ARC Board of Directors and an AltaPointe board member; Ann Cunningham, AltaPointe Division Coordinator for ID Services; and Cindy Atkinson, AltaPointe Associate Executive Director of Community Mental Health Services for the Sylacauga Region.

Joyce Burt, an AltaPointe behavioral health aide, was awarded the Burton Center Employee of the Year by the ARC of North Talladega County in September. She was recognized for her 21 years of services and her dedication to the Burton Center where she helps create a safe and fun learning environment.

W. Bogan Brooks, M.D., had the distinguished honor of being selected by the American Psychiatric Association as a recipient of the Nancy C.A. Roeske, M.D., Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Medical Student Education. This award recognizes Dr. Brooks' contributions as a faculty member at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine.

At the Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association Fall Conference in Tuscaloosa, **Brooks** presented "Treatment of Agitation in the Patient with Dementia," which focused on defining and explaining agitation in dementia patients, where it might come from, how to assess for it and how to treat it.

Supported Employment employer earns recognition



Jackson Janitorial, a local employer that uses AltaPointe's supported employment program, was named the Small Business Employer of the Year by the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities this October. **Lisa Gable**, supported employment specialist, nominated the Jacksons for their continued dedication to AltaPointe's program and its consumers. After the awards presentation, the following AltaPointe Supported Employment team members joined Felicia and Tyrone Jackson, seated, for a photo. They are, from left, **Emily Demouey**, benefits specialist; **Doris Gayle**, **Jennifer Motes**, and **Lisa Gable**, supported employment specialists; **Pam Maumenee**, AltaPointe Assistant Director of Adult Services; and **Tonya Fistein** and **Jennifer Crain**, supported employment specialists.

The AltaPointe Health System's Human Rights Committee (HRC) Annual Workshop was held Nov. 11 at the Goodwill Easter Seals auditorium in Mobile. AltaPointe worked in collaboration with Region III to host the workshop. The HRC Committee was joined by more than 60 providers from Baldwin, Mobile and area counties. A four-member panel representing the Alabama Department of Mental Health's Developmental Disabilities Division addressed confidentiality, due process, choice and the HRC Guidelines affecting the consumers and individuals served in Region III.

Ellen Parker, outpatient practice manager for Baldwin County, won the grand prize drawing from the AltaPointe Benefits Fairs held this fall for employees in both the Mobile Bay and Sylacauga regions. Employees were encouraged to meet vendors and inquire about the benefits available to them and their families. The 315 employees in attendance could sign up for special prizes during the annual event. For a complete list of the lucky winners visit AltaNewsOnline.org.

Mary Harrell retired from AltaPointe in January after 10 years of service as a behavioral aide for adult residential services. We wish you well, Mary.

People & Positions



Jessica Williams

After a nation-wide search, **Jessica Williams** has been named AltaPointe chief financial officer, a position she began in September. Williams joined AltaPointe in 2014 and has served

as the director of patient accounting. She has a bachelor's degree in health services administration from Auburn University and expects to complete her master's in business administration in 2017, also from Auburn. Her career focus has been in healthcare financial operations, particularly revenue cycle management and fiscal accountability.



Hannah Rush

Hannah Rush, MSN, PMHNP-BC, FNP-C, has joined AltaPointe as a board certified psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and a board certified family nurse practitioner.

Rush earned a bachelor's in nursing from the University of Southern Mississippi and a dual nurse practitioner and master of science in nursing degree from the University of Alabama. She has worked in ICU healthcare settings in both Mississippi and Alabama.

Kinjal Ghelani, M.D., recently joined AltaPointe after completing her general psychiatry residency at the University of Alabama in Birmingham where she was named resident of the month in 2012 and 2013. In her fourth year of residency, she achieved certification in electroconvulsive therapy. Ghelani also is an experienced telepsychiatry provider. She earned her medical degree from Grant Medical College & Sir JJ Group of Hospitals in Mumbai, India. Ghelani was trained and worked in internal medicine and critical care at Bombay Hospital, also in Mumbai. She speaks English, Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi.



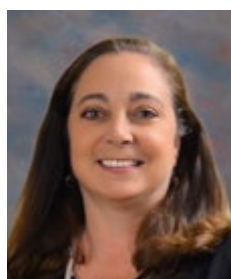
Tristan Tave

Tristan T. Tave, MSN, CRNP, PMHNP-BC, has joined AltaPointe as a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner. In 2012, he received a bachelor's in nursing from Jacksonville State

University and a master's in nursing at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where he completed a doctor of nursing degree this year. Tave has worked with veterans at the Birmingham VAMC conducting comprehensive psychiatric evaluations, treatment and consultations in the emergency department.

Noel Andrews has been promoted to director of patient accounting after having served as assistant controller since he joined AltaPointe in 2014. Andrews has a master's degree in business administration from the University of Mobile and is a certified public accountant.

Phil Cusa has been promoted to AltaPointe hospital director, overseeing both EastPointe and BayPointe hospitals. Cusa joined AltaPointe in 2013 as the EastPointe Hospital assistant administrator. He also has served as hospital administrator for both EastPointe and BayPointe. He has a bachelor's degree in accounting and business from Florida Atlantic University.



Lorian Kriner

Lorian Kriner, LPC, now serves in the newly created position of assistant director of AltaPointe Children's Outpatient Intensive Services.

She oversees child and adolescent case management, in-home therapy services, and transitional age residential services. Kriner joined AltaPointe as an in-home therapist in 2011, and also has served as assistant coordinator and coordinator of in-home and case management. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Spring Hill College and a master's of science in community counseling from the University of South Alabama.

Jameron "Deon" Gatson, MA, has been promoted to the AltaPointe coordinator of case management and in-home services. He previously served as assistant coordinator of case management. Gatson has a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Mobile. He also has worked as a youth detention officer at the Mobile County Juvenile Court. Gatson joined AltaPointe as a full-time therapist in 2013.



Jarrett Crum

Jarrett Crum, LCSW-PIP, has been named BayPointe Hospital administrator. Crum was the administrator of EastPointe Hospital when it opened in 2012. He left EastPointe in 2014

to serve as the CEO of Lighthouse Care Center, a 79-bed, children's acute psychiatric hospital and residential treatment facility in Augusta, Ga. Crum has an undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in social work from the University of Southern Mississippi. Crum received the Alabama Hospital Association-Psychiatric Constituency Outstanding Service Chairman award in 2012.

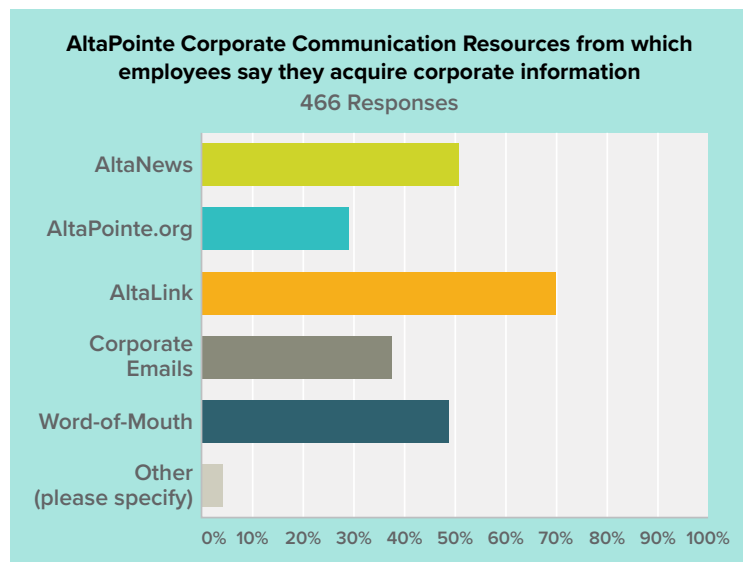
Robin Riggins, LCSW, has been named as the director of integrated healthcare services to help place AltaPointe in a position that will better serve its patients in a managed care environment. The creation of this position is consistent with a nationwide shift toward the integration of behavioral healthcare and primary care services. She most recently served as AltaPointe's executive director of community mental health services for the Mobile Bay region. Riggins joined AltaPointe in April 2014 after its merger with Baldwin County Mental Health, where she served as the executive director.

Sam Skidmore, CRNP, has earned certification as a registered nurse practitioner. Prior to his certification, he worked in adult outpatient services as a nursing intern.

2016 AHS Communication Survey garners 466 respondents

In 2016, when the AltaPointe Office of Public Relations asked employees to answer a communication survey, 466 responded. At that time, around 850 employees used computers daily. That means this survey had a response rate of at least 55 percent, a substantial return.

Effective communication is the key to our understanding job expectations, our coworkers and the people we serve. We surveyed you to get an idea of how you absorb and use official communication published or posted by AltaPointe. AltaNews, the employee newsletter; AltaLink, AltaPointe's intranet site; AltaPointe.org, the corporate website; and AltaPointe's social media sites.



Communication Survey Summary

We asked employees to indicate how they receive corporate information, marking all methods. The following chart shows your responses.

Respondents ranked the following topics posted or published by AltaPointe in order of greatest to least interest: 1-feature videos, 2-employee photos, 3-political issues related to mental health system, 4-customer service, 5-patient success stories and 6-behavioral healthcare trends.

AltaNews

Eighty-six percent of respondents said they read AltaNews, with 51% saying they read each issue. You rated your level of interest in the following AltaNews content: "AltaPointe in the Community" ranked highest followed by news stories, the CEO column, "Program Progress," 5-Star Customer Care updates, and "People." The ratings were close with only .9 separating the highest rating from the lowest. A majority of respondents ranked the quality of AltaNews as excellent or above average. Forty-one percent said AltaNews helped them "somewhat" to discuss AltaPointe's mission, to better understand its business objectives and community involvement. When asked to agree or disagree with this statement: "AltaNews strengthens my personal connection to AltaPointe," 59% agreed, 6% disagreed.

AltaPointe.org

Our corporate website, AltaPointe.org, is visited weekly by 41% of respondents with 44% of them saying the site met their needs "very well." Information on AltaPointe.org is "completely" or "mostly" trusted by 81% of respondents. Thirty-three percent said they had viewed the posted videos and that the videos made them appreciate the work AltaPointe does. Still, 32% had never watched a video on the site, and 22% said they preferred to read rather than watching videos.

AltaLink

Forty-three percent of respondents said they visited AltaLink, AltaPointe's internal website, several times a day. Of the respondents using AltaLink, 32% said the site met their needs "extremely well," 44% said it met their needs "very well." The same respondents agreed it is easy to locate information on AltaLink. As for usefulness of the site, "API Time & Attendance" and "Employee Self Service" ranked as most useful with 85% and 76% respectively. "Avatar," "IT-Pointe Help Desk" and "Policies & Procedures" were next with 75%, 57% and 49% respectively. Respondents like the "Announcements" section on the AltaLink home page and placed the most value on the HR Department's page.

Social Media

Only 39% of respondents said they knew about and were "fans" of the AltaPointe Facebook page. Of those respondents, 44% found the FB page "very useful" and 50% said they were extremely likely to visit the page each week. Only 11% of respondents said they had ever visited the AHS YouTube channel but they found the posted videos beneficial. Even fewer respondents, 4%, were aware of AltaPointe on Twitter. Of these respondents, 86% said Facebook was their preferred social media platform.

What is the take away?

In response to answers and suggestions taken from the survey, changes to corporate communication pieces have been made and plans include more improvements, such as:

- Redesigned and updated the look of AltaNews, making it more news-focused
- Created AltaNewsOnline.org to expand the print version, add video and more photos
- Planning a new AltaLink intranet site to increase use, provide more services and information to use on the job
- Researching digital communication boards/monitors to be placed throughout the continuum that will bring timely information to staff members, be used for emergency/urgent communication
- Reviewing AltaPointe.org to make it more interactive, integrate with social media and other feeds
- Increasing the use of video to tell the stories about AltaPointe patients, families, friends, and more
- Researching ways to increase attention to AltaPointe's social media sites

Peer specialist paves path to recovery for others

Natalie Bryant knows all too well what it is like living with mental illness. She also knows she wishes she'd gotten treatment much sooner. The 36-year-old says she thought she could handle her disease on her own.

"You know when I think about how much life I lost dealing with this without any help, if I had just gotten help back then who knows where I would be now," Bryant said. "I was too embarrassed to admit I needed help." But things have a way of working out and perhaps Bryant is exactly where she is supposed to be... encouraging others to seek help when they notice the first sign that something isn't right.

Bryant is a beacon to others living with mental illness showing them that recovery is possible. She is one of six peer specialist working in AltaPointe's adult residential services program.

"I wish I had someone like me on my road to recovery because you know even with people who have medical degrees and therapists and all that...it is great to know the terminology, but it is another thing to live through it," Bryant added.

AltaPointe gave me a reason to get out of bed

Each day Bryant meets with residents to tell her story of survival including all of the highs and lows that come with battling anxiety and depression. The college graduate with a degree in political science from the University of Alabama tells others about her days when holding a job or even the simplest of tasks such as getting out of bed didn't seem possible.

"I knew then I needed help, and I reached out to AltaPointe because I did not have a job or insurance so I visited adult outpatient services," Bryant shared. "AltaPointe got me out of bed and going again. A few years later I saw the posting for the



Gwen Mose, adult residential services assistant coordinator, left, visits with Natalie Bryant on the Zeigler residential campus in Mobile where Bryant works as a peer specialist.

peer specialist position; I've been here ever since."

Peer specialists build relationships based on shared experiences

Bryant says her job is as much therapeutic for her peers as it is for her. "All of this is part of the recovery process," Bryant said. "I will be dealing with this for the rest of my life and that is okay. It gets easier every day."

Patricia McNair, adult residential services assistant director, says peer support was a part of the statewide transformation of the mental health system to

shift patient care from state hospitals to community care.

"It is about giving consumers a voice in decisions that affect their lives and treatment," McNair added. "Hope, encouragement, resiliency, and recovery are the principles that are the foundation of peer support."

Gwen Mose, adult residential services assistant coordinator, manages the ARS peer specialist program.

"They are very important because they help our residents and serve as mentors," Mose added. "The resident can open up to them in ways they cannot to others, and it helps motivate them to achieve their recovery goals."

The requirements to be considered for a peer specialist position include; current or former recipient of mental health services for at least one year with a significant mental health disorder as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, ability to identify as a consumer of mental health services and speak openly regarding diagnosis and treatment, successful completion of the Peer Specialist training for certification. "One of the best decisions I made was to get help and in turn help others," Bryant shared. "I love my job."

Pipefitters and plumbers give generously to BayPointe's children

Days before Christmas, a group of plumbers and pipefitters pulled up to BayPointe Hospital in an SUV packed with presents. One by one the gifts were loaded onto a cart and delivered to the gymnasium where they would be wrapped and sorted. These weren't just any presents; they were handpicked for each child that would be spending Christmas on BayPointe's children's residential unit.

In years past an angel tree was set up in the hospital's lobby and staff members would select a child's name from the tree, purchase the gift they desire and make a child's wish come true. This year members of the UA Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 119 adopted all 30 children in the residential program.

"We wanted to do something special for children in our community," Edward Sellw, Local 119's business manager, said. "When we heard about the kids at BayPointe and the generosity of their staff, we knew this was the perfect project for us." Administrative 'A' staff members also chipped in and bought balls, board games and more for the recreational department.



Edward Sellw, UA Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 119 business manager, presents a stuffed animal to one of the BayPointe residential children.

The AltaPointe story reaches thousands through print, television, in person and online

AltaPointe continues to be respected as the expert for behavioral healthcare along the Gulf Coast and beyond. **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe's CEO, along with physicians, CarePointe specialists, and others were featured in newspapers and in television spots that focused on healthcare.

A series of reports published to AL.com took an in-depth look at mental healthcare in the state of Alabama. Articles chronicled AltaPointe's efforts to care for mentally ill inmates and offered a guided tour of CarePointe with direction from **Ingrid Hartman**, CarePointe assistant director. The stories reached approximately 130,000 households.



An image from the Fox10 News website shows Tamiaka Martin, far right, as she teaches Mental Health First Aid at EastPointe Hospital.

interviewed **Sandra Parker**, M.D., AltaPointe Chief Medical Officer, about AltaPointe's jail diversion program. **Halie Jones**, assistant director substance abuse services, was a guest on "Fox 10 News at 4 p.m." where she discussed the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Community connections

From "Bayou on the Move" to a national conference in Nashville, AltaPointe staff members served on panels, participated in health fairs, and attended conferences all aimed at spreading the message of AltaPointe's programs and services while working with our community partners. The more than 30 events included Schlesinger's contribution as a panel expert on value-based care and evolution trends at the Netsmart 2016 Connections Conference in Nashville. Locally, **Eddie Pratt**, children's outpatient therapist, gave a presentation to Baldwin County students titled "More than Sad" and explored the warning signs of suicide. **Teresa McMillan**, developmental disability assistant coordinator, and **Shanevia Robinson**, school-based therapist, represented AltaPointe at various Mobile County Public School System parenting day events.

AltaNewsOnline.org makes its debut

AltaPointe's Office of Public Relations launched a digital version of its newsletter called AltaNewsOnline with its 2016 summer issue. The digital publication features highlights news and features, videos, and photos. Since the first week of its release the audience has doubled. AltaNewsOnline is published alongside the print edition of AltaNews. Visit AltaNewsOnline.org to see what all the excitement is about. You can also follow AltaPointe on Twitter and become a fan on Facebook.

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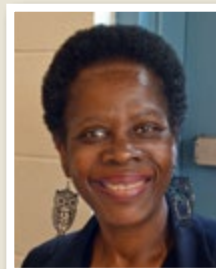
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IN MEMORY

Renee Stewart



AltaPointe staff members are mourning the death of **Renee Stewart**, certified peer specialist, who died Oct. 29, 2016, surrounded by her family after a battle

with cancer. Stewart worked in the adult residential programs sharing her recovery story in hopes of helping others achieve recovery too.

Stewart worked for AltaPointe for five years and fellow coworkers and friends say she will be dearly missed.

"She loved her job and was very compassionate about it," **Gwen Mose**, assistant coordinator adult residential services, said. "When she was on her death bed, she gave me a call to tell me how much she loved her job and how she was going to pray for us; she wanted us to be at ease. It was so touching.

"Renee asked me to come over a few days before she died and asked me to call **David Beech** [ARS director] because she wanted to tell him what a pleasure it was for her to have worked at AltaPointe and that she appreciated him," **Monica Jones**, adult residential services administrative assistant, said. "She told him she wanted to laugh with him one more time, and they laughed. Renee truly loved working at AltaPointe. ARS will miss her dearly."

Renee was a mother, grandmother and avid Auburn fan.

CarePointeSM

CORNER



Business Hour Calls (both regions)

September 2016 6,000
October 2016 6,300
Total 12,300

After-hour Crisis Calls (both regions)

September/
October 2016 470