

A newsletter for and about AltaPointe Health Systems' Employees

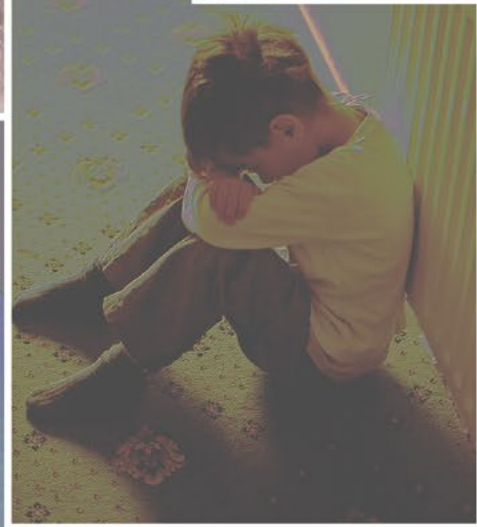
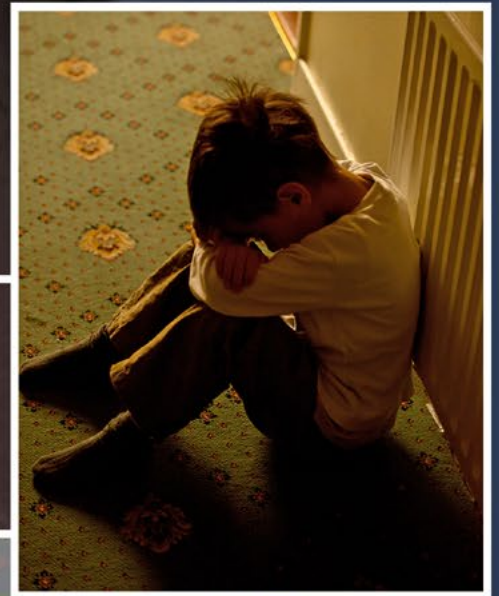
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AltaNews

AltaNewsOnline.org

**EMDR aids AltaPointe patients
in the desensitization and
reprocessing of memories.**

4-5



From our CEO...

Patients succeed, caregivers rejoice – every day

AltaPointe's healthcare professionals rejoice when they see their patients' lives improve. Despite the odds, however, successful outcomes happen every day. The following success stories are just a few examples.

From social eccentric to college scholarship – One kindergartener's parents were crushed because their son didn't fit in socially. They sought help at our children's outpatient services because they were upset; the child was not. He never thought about having friends. He would play Legos® for hours. When teachers told him to walk in a straight line with his classmates, he would face the opposite way.

That first contact with AltaPointe began 13 years of outpatient services for this child who was eccentric, on the spectrum and had ADHD. Our therapists helped his parents to accept their son for who he was.

Eventually, this "special ed kid" who loved science won the right to take chemistry and calculus. He not only passed the classes, he earned a regular high school diploma and was awarded college scholarships to study science and robotics. With the help of our therapists, he succeeded because he didn't give up and didn't let the mental illness label get in his way.

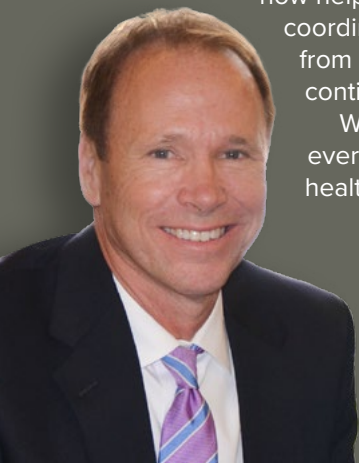
From homeless missing person to treatment to reunion with family – A middle-aged man recently was reunited with his family after 12 years of separation thanks to our adult residential services staff members. Three years ago, Mobile police found him homeless, lying in a ditch, disheveled and disoriented. He knew his name, Social Security number and date of birth, but he could not recall any other aspects of his life. From a local ER, he was admitted to EastPointe Hospital where he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. From there, he was placed in an AltaPointe Intensive Care Facility and has lived in a group home for two years.

His residential manager did the research and learned he had been reported as a "missing person" and that he had a wife, child and sister in another state. Thanks to her diligence, plans have begun for him to move to his sister's home. We have been working with a mental health center there so that his care will continue.

From despair to suicide threat to life-saving care – A man called CarePointe from an AltaPointe parking lot, threatening suicide. The CarePointe specialist, who was on the phone with the consumer, simultaneously worked with another staff member, who was working with a 9-1-1 officer, who was tag teaming with the first responders onsite. All these efforts combined to save the man's life and to make sure he received the services he needed.

How we respond makes the difference – These stories show how helping our patients succeed requires well-coordinated responses. These responses flow from systems of services within the AltaPointe continuum and the community.

When all involved are focused on success, everyone can celebrate when our patients lead healthier lives.



Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO

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On our cover

This issue of AltaNews highlights positive outcomes some of our patients have experienced through mental health treatment. These stories sometimes are difficult to share because many patients, rightfully, want to maintain their anonymity. The individuals who agreed to be interviewed and have their names and images used in this issue not only have achieved success through therapy, they have helped to fight the stigma related to mental illness by giving open accounts of their journeys. The cover illustration shows how the trauma-informed therapy called EMDR is used by AltaPointe therapists to help patients for whom the method would be beneficial.

Cover design by Steven Lutz, Pixallure Design



Annual meeting speakers hit 2016 highlights for AltaPointe; Milius discusses funding uncertainties

“Seven months in, and things couldn’t be better.”

That’s how AltaPointe CEO **Tuerk Schlesinger** described the state of business since AltaPointe merged with Cheaha Regional Mental Health

Center in August 2016. Schlesinger made the comments during a presentation at the board of directors’ annual meeting March 8.

“This [merger] has given us the opportunity to step out in ways we otherwise couldn’t,” Schlesinger said. Board president George Noonan, also addressing the audience of dignitaries, employees and community members, added that “the whole process has gone extremely smooth.”

Other highlights of Schlesinger’s remarks:

- AltaPointe’s operating revenue in the previous year was nearly \$83 million while expenditures were about \$77 million. The merger accounted for about \$4 million of the revenue.
- AltaPointe served nearly 33,000 individuals and answered 75,385 calls to its CarePointe, crisis and other lines in 2016. The top three diagnoses were depressive disorder, attention deficit disorder and schizophrenia.
- AltaPointe successfully partnered with North Rock Pharmacy of Oklahoma to provide pharmacy services at its hospitals.
- A \$1.2 million grant allowed AltaPointe’s leaders to create a team to improve coordination of court-ordered commitments to its EastPointe Hospital.

Guest speaker addresses ‘whole person health’

In addition to the status reports, guest speaker Hank Milius, president and CEO of Meridian Health Services, headquartered in Muncie, Indiana, spoke of the uncertainties arising from federal and state funding and how those uncertainties affect behavioral healthcare.

Meridian is a regional private, not-for-profit healthcare system and Indiana’s largest behavioral healthcare provider with more than \$100 million in revenue. It serves 39 counties and specializes in “whole person health” integrating physical, mental and social well-being.

Milius said Meridian focuses on a broad spectrum of health including primary medical care, behavioral health and human services. He said his agency, AltaPointe and mental health organizations across America are struggling to meet the surging challenges and shrinking federal and state allocations for mental healthcare.

“From 2009 to 2012, states cut a total of \$5 billion from mental health services,” Milius said. “And we got zero from the Affordable Care Act. And yet the New England Journal of Medicine says that in one year, about a third of general physician visits involved psychiatric disorders.”

Milius praises AltaPointe

Milius praised AltaPointe’s leaders for their willingness to envision and plan for the future.



“Tuerk is a good leader,” Milius said. “He understands things, and he has an excellent staff and a board who look at the big picture, who look beyond the four walls, so to speak.”

AltaPointe, he said, “also has some very good dynamics” that position it well for growth as well as for coping with ongoing changes in the nation’s mental health systems.

“If you don’t have all of those things, you’re not going to do well,” Milius added, characterizing AltaPointe and its staff members as “the guardian of a very vulnerable segment of the population.”



Visit AltaNewsOnline.org to watch video of the Annual meeting.



AltaPointe names its Shining Star of the Year during its annual meeting in March. Eddie Pratt, assistant coordinator children’s day treatment services in Baldwin County, took home the honor. He is praised for providing compassionate, accountable, respectful, and encouraging care each day.

Pratt is one of five AltaPointe staff members named as an AltaPointe star of the year. To learn more about Pratt and the other five stars turn to page 6.



Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy opens



Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy staff members standing on front row from left, Cheree Dewberry, PerTrina Jackson, Gwen Stringer, Hollie Reed, Tomikia Smith and Julie Bell

AltaPointe patients now have a new choice when it comes to filling their prescriptions, and it's a convenient one. A joint venture between AltaPointe and Northrock Pharmacy based in Oklahoma City, Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy, LLC, has opened shop off the lobby of adult outpatient services on Gordon Smith Drive in Mobile.

"It is a full retail pharmacy with the ability to service all AltaPointe patients," **Julie Bell**, pharmacy manager, said. "Before we only served the indigent population. Now we can service those patients as well as patients with insurance."

The pharmacy is filling 3,000 prescriptions a month using E-scribe, an electronic prescription service that sends the script straight from the physician to the pharmacy. The only physical location of Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy is at Gordon Smith. It is currently serving programs throughout AltaPointe including adult outpatient services, BayPointe Hospital residential, the two adolescent transitional age group homes, as well as the Sylacauga region's residential programs. Right now, it is only serving patients. It is supplying psychotropic as well as primary medications.

"The goal of the pharmacy is to increase patient adherence to their medication compliance," **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, said. "After all, the healthier our patients are the better."

Full-scale pharmacy anticipated for years

Schlesinger says opening a full-scale pharmacy has been in the works for years, but has only now found an avenue by which to do it. "This is tremendously exciting for me because I enjoy working with and around pharmacies," Schlesinger said. "Northrock Pharmacy brings tremendous experience in taking care of behavioral healthcare providers and, specifically, has a scalable module that can work with behavioral health-care centers."


The plan is to take profits from the pharmacy and put them back into expanding coverage ultimately allowing AltaPointe to take care of more people. Schlesinger believes the pharmacy could grow to 5,000 prescriptions per month before the end the year.

"We are providing more medications to more people regardless of their ability to pay, and we also are offsetting the costs of the pharmacy," Schlesinger added. "While this is significant, we also want our patients to know they have a choice to use an outside pharmacy."

Bell says the growth of the pharmacy has been amazing to watch and believes more growth is on the horizon.

"Since we opened, we have been able to hire three new technicians bringing our staff to two full-time pharmacists and six technicians," Bell added. "There is a lot of job growth and opportunity."

Schlesinger praised Bell's efforts in bringing Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy to fruition. "We were able to pull this off because she has the ability to handle a start-up and work through all the miscellaneous things that come up. I was very comfortable using one of our in-house pharmacists. Much of our success is due to Julie's leadership."

 **To learn more about the Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy.**
Visit AltaNewsOnline.org



Cheree Dewberry, pharmacy technician, works to fill a patient's prescription at the Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy.

Treatment for anxiety

results in positive outcome

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates 40 million adults in the U.S. have an anxiety disorder. Becca Knodel is one of them.

"I missed a lot of things in my life because of my anxiety," Becca Knodel explained. "I missed my brother's graduation. I missed the births of my nieces and nephews. I lived like this for years."

The 39-year-old says she experienced anxiety for the first time at age 11. In the nearly three decades that followed, Knodel says, her anxiety worsened to the point she developed agoraphobia, a type of anxiety disorder in which you fear and avoid places or situations that might cause you to panic and make you feel trapped, helpless or embarrassed.

Trauma led to anxiety

Knodel says a series of traumatic experiences fueled her anxiety; including her father's near death experience of being struck by lightning, and being sexual abused by two different family members. Knodel says coming to BayView Professional Associates was the turning point in her treatment.

"It is like I am waking up!," Knodel said. "It is like I have been asleep for a long time and then waking up for the first time in my life. It is strange and it is exciting because when you live in a box for so long, it is scary no matter what you do."

Knodel credits **John Conrad's**, BayView Professional Associates assistant director, with her recovery. She says he encouraged her to expand her comfort zone and pushed her to believe in herself. She says Conrad was the first person to listen to her.

"It had been 16 years since I had driven a car. I've never had a job, and I thought that was my life," Knodel said. "And that was how was I was going to die. But then I met John."

Anxiety-altered life

Conrad says for people living with true anxiety, it can be incapacitating. He says their world often gets smaller and smaller because they tend to avoid things that cause them anxiety and panic; as was the case for Becca.

"She has worked extremely hard to overcome her anxiety," Conrad said. "It has been very fulfilling for me personally because



John Conrad, BayView Professional Associates assistant director, meets with client Becca Knodel. **Watch the video on AltaNewsOnline.org.**

I saw her at her worst. From that first day she came to my office and I could not close the door and she would not sit down to where she is now planning a trip to Disney World."

Knodel says her goal is to go to Disney World, and she believes she will finally get there, "For the first time in my life I truly believe I will go."

Therapy works

Conrad says through cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem-solving; coupled with desensitization therapy, a type of exposure therapy, Becca has been able to achieve recovery.

Knodel wants others to know treatment works. Conrad agrees. "Anxiety is very treatable," Conrad said. "Typically people drop out of therapy because their symptoms are so overwhelming, but they are treatable and you do not have to live that way. You do not have to live with anxiety."

For more information on how BayView Professional Associates can help, call (251) 660-2360.



A Therapist's Perspective The stigma attached to mental illness affects all of society. Therapists understand this better than anyone. This first-person account of a successful therapeutic intervention is written from the perspective of the therapist. This therapist's personal account will help explain that mental illness is not an excuse for, but an explanation of behavior, personal limitations, and inner processes.



EMDR therapy can free patients from burden of trauma

EMDR.

It is not an acronym that rolls easily off the tongue, nor does the name of the treatment therapy for which it stands: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. Lay people may never have heard of it. Yet EMDR is considered “a best-practices therapy for trauma,” according to **John Conrad**, assistant director of AltaPointe’s BayView Professional Associates. Four BayView clinical team members have received EMDR training and are undergoing certification procedures.

“The military has been using it [EMDR] for quite a while for treatment of post traumatic stress disorder,” Conrad said. “People are beginning to hear about it; just yesterday, we had someone call to schedule an appointment with an EMDR therapist. Or someone may come in for his or her first appointment, and we’ll realize that the person may be a candidate for EMDR.”

What is the EMDR approach?

EMDR therapy is based on therapists’ understanding that when a person is very upset, his or her brain cannot process information normally, and an event can become “frozen in time,” according to Dr. Francine Shapiro, who in 1987 observed that eye movements can reduce the intensity of disturbing thoughts. Today, she is among recognized experts and authors on the subject, and EMDR steadily has become recognized as an effective treatment for certain people who have experienced deeply disturbing events or issues.

At BayView, therapist **Elizabeth Wood, Ph.D.**, said she has found the therapy helpful in relieving patients’ anxiety.

“It frees them to not carry such a burden of their trauma,” she said. “They learn to use coping skills so they don’t have to carry that burden with them every single day. We try to see what they can do to lower their distress levels.”

Though EMDR therapy initially incorporated mainly eye movements, it includes other forms of stimulation such as knee tapping and foot-tapping, according to Wood, who added that “some people want the touch, the physical sensation of tapping.”

Why use EMDR therapy?

In a typical EMDR therapy session, the client may call to mind a disturbing issue or event — what was seen, felt, heard, thought, etc., — and what thoughts and beliefs are currently held about the event. The therapist facilitates the directional movement of the eyes or other dual attention stimulation of the brain, while the client focuses on the disturbing material. Sets of eye movements are continued until the memory becomes less disturbing and is associated with positive thoughts and beliefs about himself or herself.

“It can help the person reprocess the trauma so that ultimately they have a more positive belief about themselves,” Wood said. “It can be used with somebody who hasn’t responded well to ‘talk therapies.’ We don’t push it on anybody, but we’ll sit down with them, explain what it is and how it might help.”

The goal, she said, is “for them to be able to move forward and move away from the trauma.”

BayView therapists initially attended two three-day sessions of intensive EMDR training, and as part of their certification will each log 50 hours of EMDR therapy.

Conrad said the decision to offer EMDR therapy is “very much in keeping” with AltaPointe CEO Tuerk Schlesinger’s challenge for the staff to implement the profession’s “best practices” in patient care.



Visit AltaNewsOnline.org to see a patient and therapist share the success stories related to EMDR therapy.

Bringing closure to traumatic events

The therapy known as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing has helped AltaPointe client Laurissa Shorter achieve “some sense of closure” to traumatic events in her childhood, she said.

In EMDR, a therapist trained in the technique facilitates directional movements of the client’s eyes as he or she helps the client recall a disturbing event.

As a child, Shorter endured many years of abuse.

“It has helped me recall in greater detail things that happened to me when I was a little girl, and things I’d forgotten,” she said. “I didn’t remember all of the pieces. Now I’m able to look at the whole thing a little more logically and thoroughly. EMDR has helped me gain some sense of closure.”

Shorter said some people might mistakenly think the therapy is a form of hypnosis, which it’s not.

“It’s not like you don’t have control; you do,” she said. “My therapist will have my eyes follow her finger for a few minutes,

and I breathe and I talk about what I’m feeling. It helps me process what happened to me.”

Shorter came to AltaPointe in January, she said, and began EMDR therapy in February.

“I had always been able to bounce back from stress, but at some point, I couldn’t,” she explained. “I am a social worker. I realize now that I was taking care of everybody else’s needs but not seeking the treatment I needed.”

Four staff members at AltaPointe’s BayView Professional Associates have received EMDR training.

Shorter said she would recommend it to other people suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

“It can help you process things,” she said. “It gives you the ability to move on. The pain is still there, but you can begin to let go of the feelings associated with it.”

AltaPointe participates in National Crime Victims’ Rights Week

Families affected by trauma learn of AltaPointe’s services

It was a somber scene in downtown Mobile at Cathedral Square April 6 as families gathered to remember loved ones killed in violent crimes. The Mobile County District Attorney’s office and the victim assistance unit brought families together as part of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week activities.

AltaPointe was just one of the local resources that came out to support the families during this annual event. According to City-Data.com., a large section of AltaPointe’s treatment area have crime rates higher than the national average, a major reason it is important to provide resources that help individuals and families to cope with the trauma caused by crime.

Mobile County’s District Attorney Ashley Rich told the audience she and her office are dedicated to helping these families find justice. Then, the families were invited to publicly share the names of their loved ones and release white balloons into the evening sky in their memories.

A second National Crime Victims’ Rights Week event at Arlington Park included a community 5K run Saturday morning April 8. Following the run, the Mobile Police Department crime prevention unit hosted a cookout for victims and their families.



National Crime Victims’ Rights week observed during special event held in Cathedral Square on April 6.

Eddie Pratt, assistant coordinator of AltaPointe’s Fairhope child day treatment program, spoke to attendees about the effects of a tragedy occurring in one’s life and how to respond. “Emotional struggles after a tragedy are normal; it is okay to be sad,” Pratt said. “It is essential to get the appropriate help. And it is important to make both mental and physical self-care a priority.”

Events such as these give AltaPointe an opportunity to inform the public about its services and the resources that are available throughout the

community. Crimes committed every day force innocent people to deal with the unwanted effects on their lives. Victims and their families will find valuable resources to help them navigate these dangerous times at City-Data.com, which collects and analyzes data from government and private sources to create detailed and informative profiles for every U.S. city.

Read more at city-data.com. In 2015, the treatment areas of Chickasaw, Mobile, Prichard, and Talladega all showed crime rates higher than the national average (U.S. average = 286.7) as reported by City-Data for the cities of *Chickasaw, Mobile, Prichard and Talladega*.

AltaPointe recognizes Pratt as its 2016 Shining Star of the Year

Ask **Eddie Pratt** what he does well and he will tell you that he can “play the guitar like Eddie Van Halen.” What he won’t tell you is that he is a shining light during a time of darkness for a lot of people; especially the children in Baldwin County day treatment. For this and many other reasons, Pratt was named the AltaPointe Shining Star of the Year for 2016 for delivering extraordinary Five-Star Customer Care.



Tuerk Schlesinger and Julie Bellcase present Eddie Pratt with his Shining Star award.

He’s praised for being compassionate and encouraging to these kids who struggle with difficult situations and emotional problems. Pratt says he just has a natural desire to help others.

“I want them to fully experience and feel everything like it could be the last time,” he said. “That’s what I do and love. I’ve probably worked with more than 1,000 kids in 17

years. And, in return, they have touched my life.”

Pratt was born, raised and continues to live in Robertsedale. He earned a bachelor’s in criminal justice with a minor in psychology from the University of South Alabama and a master’s in counseling and psychology from Troy University. He is a certified Mental Health First Aid instructor.

Tragedy led to his career choice

He was led to work in mental healthcare after a close friend completed suicide, an experience that changed the course of Pratt’s life.

“It was devastating to me and my peers,” Pratt added. “I vowed to become someone that would do whatever possible to help anyone better their life.” That’s exactly what he’s done working as a therapist.

Pratt says it is a rewarding job with its fair share of challenges. He says advice from a friend helped shape the care he provides. “My friend told me the best thing you can give someone is your time because within that moment with them you can share a word, a cup of coffee, a hug, a feeling; time is the most precious gift of all.”

Pratt says some days it doesn’t feel like there is enough time, and he’ll go home and think, “I didn’t spend enough time with this person, with this kid, or slow down enough during that moment. I didn’t listen fully to that person.”

His patients are his biggest fans

While Pratt is his own worst critic, the kids are his biggest fans.

“When he comes in the building, they calm down,” **Anne Chipman**, assistant director of children’s outpatient services, said. “They almost see him as a father figure, but in a healthy way. He brings normalcy and calmness to these kids that a lot of them do not have. I have known Eddie for years, and he has always been a caring person who really embraces the opportunity to get to know a kid. Eddie is a star.”

Pratt was recognized as AltaPointe’s Shining Star of the Year during AltaPointe’s annual meeting in March.

“AltaPointe established a Five-Star Customer Care program to help us improve the quality of service we provide, and Eddie delivers five-star care daily,” **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, said. “He is always willing to step up and lead grief counseling or Mental Health First Aid in the community, and speak to young people about suicide. He is a great ambassador for AltaPointe and an asset to our patients.”

When asked if he had any advice for someone thinking of a career as a children’s therapist, Eddie replied: “This is heart work; this is hard work. If your heart is not into it, and you’re not willing to work hard, then you probably need to do something else.”

Want to recognize someone for extraordinary CARE?

We Want All The Details!

Your ‘AltaPraise’ must show how the employee or team you’re praising has gone beyond expectations. An AltaPraise is the best way to show how you and they CARE.

Write-in Submissions: Available at any AltaPraise Collection Box

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VISIT:

AltaPointe.org/AltaPraise

Our 'Stars of the Year' exceed expectations



Kevin Ming

Kevin Ming is an assistant maintenance engineer II in the environment of care department. Ming oversees the maintenance and repairs of AltaPointe's Baldwin County facilities. He has worked in behavioral healthcare for more than 10 years and is a veteran of the U.S. Army. Co-workers applaud Ming's optimistic outlook and say his customer service exceeds five stars. "He goes above and beyond each day," Robert Carlock, environment of care director, said. "Kevin does not hop to the next job before making sure people are satisfied with his work. He goes the extra mile to make sure things are done and done to the highest standard."



La Quanda Wingate

La Quanda Wingate worked throughout the AltaPointe continuum before landing at CarePointe where she is on the front lines of mental health each time she picks up the phone. Wingate is an aftercare and referral specialist. She has nearly 10 years of experience working in the mental health field. Wingate is commended for being calm, cool, collected and compassionate in a crisis. "She is diligent, resourceful, friendly, flexible and just goes with the flow," Ingrid Hartman, assistant director CarePointe, said. "She is an asset to this department and to the people we serve."



My Kim Nguyen

My Kim Nguyen is a therapist at AltaPointe's Community Counseling Center of South Mobile. In addition to helping families cope with mental illness, she is also the center's resident artist sprucing up the office to create an inviting atmosphere. Nguyen is praised by patients and co-workers for her pleasant personality and compassionate care. "She does so much for her patients, not just when they are in the office but also when they are not here," Brittany Rice, coordinator, said. "She is just so creative in everything she does, and all the work she does I know is to 110 percent."




Andrea Yohn

Andrea Yohn works in the information technology department. She joined AltaPointe in 2014 but has more than two decades working in the mental health arena. Yohn is described as the picture of patience by people who need help navigating through the tunnels of technology. She is praised time and again for delivering respectful and encouraging customer service with each interaction. "The first thing she says to someone she is working with is, 'Is there anything you need; how may I help?'" Kartik Joshi, assistant director information technology, shared. "She always asks, what do you need so I can help you?"



The 2016 AltaPointe Stars of the Year pose with their directors and supervisors. Seated from left, Kevin Ming, La Quanda Wingate, Eddie Pratt, Andrea Yohn and My Kym Nguyen; standing, Julie Bellcase, Robert Carlock, Ingrid Hartman, Anne Chipman, Olivia Nettles, Steve Dolan, Kartik Joshi, Megan Griggs, Brittany Rice and Tuerk Schlesinger.

 Visit AltaNewsOnline.org to learn more about the AltaPointe Stars.

Bravo!



Polly Parrish

Polly Parrish, special education teacher at the Fairhope children's day treatment program, received the 2017 Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the world's leading special education professional association. She received the recognition during the CEC 2017 Convention and Expo on April 19 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Mass.

Parrish was praised for her commitment to building a positive learning environment based on mutual trust and the desire to help all students discover their own strengths. Parrish also is valued beyond the classroom for her service to her local chapter of CEC and to CEC's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, where she has served two terms as president.



Barbie Leigh

Barbie Leigh LPC-S, NCC, therapist at BayView Fairhope, has received certification as a clinical trauma professional through the International Association of Trauma Professionals. The special training, examination, and subsequent certification will allow her to perform more highly specialized trauma resolution therapy for people with PTSD. Leigh also received LPC supervising

counselor certification from the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling, which permits her to mentor new clinicians and supervise clinicians who are in the process of obtaining their 3,000 hours of clinically supervised work.

Please submit your achievement or professional milestone for Bravo! to info@altapointe.org.

Congratulations to **Patricia Chambers, Evelyn "Evie" Harbaugh, Lucretia Hurst and Pamela Hurst** who retired from AltaPointe recently. Chambers retired in April after 13 years of service. She most recently worked as a behavioral aide for adult residential services. Harbaugh retired in February after being with AltaPointe for more than 37 years. She worked as a registered nurse in adult outpatient services. Lucretia Hurst and Pamela Hurst, both from the Sylacauga region, retired late spring. Lucretia retired after 25 years of service with the former Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center and had acted as the health information professional in that region for AltaPointe. Pamela Hurst had 12 years of service with CRMHC and most recently worked as a licensed practical nurse in outpatient services since the merger with AltaPointe in August 2016.

Congratulations to **Mark Haygood, M.D.**, for recently being elected the Young Physicians' Representative on the Medical Association's Board of Censors.

Rita Brown presented the Power of Dance/Movement Therapy during University of South Alabama's Spring Ethics Workshop with Chapter VIII of the Alabama Counseling Association held March 17 at South's Student Center Ballroom.



April Douglas

Congratulations to **April Douglas**, public relations coordinator. She was recognized by the Public Relations Council of Alabama for her work on a community service project. Douglas was awarded second place by PRCA at its annual conference in April.

NAMI Walks 2017

The Mobile chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) held its annual walk on Saturday, May 6, at Medal of Honor Park. Nineteen teams helped raise almost \$38,000 for the program. Out of the 277 walkers, AltaPointe was well represented with teams from across the continuum including the administration, adult residential services, BayPointe Hospital, BayView Professional Associates, children's outpatient, and EastPointe Hospital.

Special team awards were given to a couple of well-deserving AltaPointe teams:

- Most funds raised by a team (not a NAMI board member team): The "A" Team/Team Captain, **Cindy Gibson**, assistant director, intensive services (Raised \$2,530)
- Most team spirit: AKA-DTO/Team Captain, **Anitra Jarreau, R.N.**, PI nurse



AltaPointe staff members walk alongside NAMI supporters who came out for the 2017 NAMI Walk at Mobile's Medal of Honor Park May 6.

People & Positions



Laurel Thorpe

Laurel H. Thorpe, J.D., has recently joined AltaPointe as the human resources worker's compensation and leave of absence specialist. Thorpe earned her Juris Doctorate, cum laude, through a joint degree program with the University of Houston Law Center and the University of Texas Health Science Center, where she served as the managing editor of the Houston Journal of Health Law and Policy. Her career focus has been in designing employee benefits and compensation plans, ADA and HIPAA compliance programs, as well as federal and state health care regulatory policies.



Chanda Willis

Chanda Willis has joined AltaPointe as a human resources specialist. Before joining AltaPointe, she worked for the Alabama Department of Labor at the Bay Minette Career Center as an employment security representative and for the Mobile County Department of Human Resources as a social service caseworker. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of South Alabama and is pursuing a master's in human resources and personnel management from Troy University.



Riley Rigsby

Riley Rigsby has joined the human resources department as talent acquisition specialist. She received a bachelor's degree from the University

of Alabama in business administration with a concentration in human resources management. While in college, she was the treasurer for the UA's Society for Human Resource Management student chapter.



John Conrad

John Conrad, LICSW, has been promoted to the newly created position of assistant director of BayView Professional Associates. Conrad has been with BayView for more than 11 years and most recently served as clinical coordinator for BayView Professional Associates Employee Assistance Program (EAP). He has been instrumental in the success of the recent BayView practice expansion to its new location in Fairhope.

Conrad, a substance abuse professional with more than 25 years of experience as a psychotherapist, earned his undergraduate degree from Athens State College and his master's from the University of Southern Mississippi. He is trained in cognitive behavioral therapy, family systems theory and addictive medicine, with experience in marital and family systems, addictive disorders and general psychiatric disorders.



Katie Herrera Emer

Katie Herrera Emer has joined AltaPointe as the marketing executive for BayPointe Hospital. Emer has worked in communications across Alabama for the last 10 years. She has been a television news reporter in Birmingham, Huntsville and Mobile. She comes to AltaPointe after two years as the morning reporter for WPMI Local15 News. Emer also spent three years as the public

relations director for The Salvation Army of Coastal Alabama — managing a variety of duties from marketing, media, special events, social media and web design.



Aneek Shoemaker

Aneek Shoemaker, M.D., has joined AltaPointe as psychiatrist at the BayView Professional Associates Fairhope location. Shoemaker is board certified in both adult, and child and adolescent psychiatry. She previously was the director of child psychiatry at a community mental health center in southwestern New Hampshire. She attended medical school at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City and completed her adult residency in psychiatry at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, affiliated with the Albert Einstein School of Medicine. She completed fellowships in both addiction psychiatry, and child and adolescent psychiatry at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H. Shoemaker's special interests lie in preschool mental health, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, and treating children and adolescents with complex psychiatric presentations.



Neil Secor

Neil Secor, R.N., was promoted to nurse manager for adult residential services. In 2014, he joined the AltaPointe staff as a residential staff nurse, moved to Zeigler ICF as charge nurse and was promoted to assistant nurse manager in adult residential services. Secor graduated with an associate degree in nursing from Faulkner State Community College in 2013.



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AltaPointe.org/resources/mental-health-first-aid
(251) 450-4340



AltaPointe stands out as expert in behavioral healthcare

The League of Women Voters reached out to AltaPointe as the expert on behavioral healthcare in the region when it turned its attention to mental healthcare beginning with its January 2017 meeting. Trusted AltaPointe staff members have served as featured guest speakers for its luncheons delivering compelling information about the state of mental health, which has included substance abuse issues presented by **Halie Jones**, assistant director of substance abuse services; and Mental Health First Aid, presented by certified MHFA trainer **Tamieka Martin**, coordinator of adult community services. Martin also spoke to senior citizens in Bayou La Batre concerning depression as it relates to aging.

Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, served as the keynote speaker for the League's annual meeting in April. Schlesinger addressed an audience of more than 50 people about the closure of Searcy State Psychiatric Hospital, funding for mental healthcare, and children's services. During the meeting Kenyen Brown, former U.S. attorney, recognized AltaPointe's efforts to provide the utmost care to people living with mental illness.

Katherine Rouse, coordinator of transitional age services, took to the airways to promote Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in May. Rouse was a guest on Fox 10 News' Studio Ten. The segment reached an estimated 23,000 households. WKRQ-TV5 and Fox10 News reached out to AltaPointe requesting to interview a therapist about a suicide app called "Blue Whale Challenge." **Eddie Pratt**, assistant coordinator of children's day treatment services, represented AltaPointe and passed along helpful information for teens about using technology wisely. Pratt also provided crisis intervention at Robertsedale High School after a student completed suicide, and to Gulf Shores High School after an accident injured several students Mardi Gras Day.

Mission ambassadors reaching more of the public

Across the continuum staff members participated in more than two dozen community health fairs, professional conferences, and academic ceremonies serving as ambassadors of AltaPointe's mission to plan and facilitate a comprehensive, behavioral healthcare system that promotes the wellness and recovery of people living with mental illness, substance abuse and intellectual disability.

Facebook and Twitter audiences continue to grow reaching thousands of people. In March, AltaPointe conducted its first live broadcast via Facebook during its annual meeting receiving positive feedback from staff and community members.



Katherine Rouse joined Joe Emer, Studio 10 host, to promote Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

Prepare for 2017 hurricane season

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) says the Atlantic could see another above-normal hurricane season, which began June 1. As we know all too well in our area, it only takes one hurricane to wreak havoc. Being prepared is important.

AltaPointe's Emergency Operations Plan is required reading for employees and is located on the AltaLink Environment of Care page. During a hurricane emergency, staff members should check for staffing updates by going to one of the following options:

- Call the AltaPointe Emergency Hotline at (251) 660-2399.
- Log onto AltaPointe.org, AltaLink, AltaPointe Health Systems on Facebook.
- Tune in to local TV and radio news outlets.
- Follow other instructions provided by your direct manager or supervisor.

Remember, being prepared will ensure safety.

CarePointeSM CORNER

Between December 2016 - May 2017:

- CarePointe answered nearly 40,000 calls, during both business and after hours
- CarePointe facilitated/assisted more than 1,300 EastPointe and BayPointe hospital referrals
- May 2017 saw the highest record of BayPointe Hospital admission screenings

CarePointe caller thankful for compassionate care...

"I felt like the person I spoke to actually listened and didn't try to rush me or make me get to the point. She let me get everything off my chest and gave me recommendations on how to proceed and was able to get my daughter the help she needed."



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