May is Mental Health Month

Wellness - it’s essential to living a full and productive life. We may have different ideas about what wellness means, but it involves a set of skills and strategies that prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. It’s about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.

Pathways to Wellness - this year’s theme of May is Mental Health Month - calls attention to strategies and approaches that help all Americans achieve wellness and good mental and overall health.

Wellness is more than an absence of disease. It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.

Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress given the demands of daily life and the challenges it brings - at home, at work and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and the community.

These steps should be complemented by taking stock of one’s well-being through regular mental health checkups. Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it’s a good idea to take a periodic reading of our emotional well-being. One recent study said everyone should get their mental health checked as often as they get a physical, and many doctors routinely screen for mental health, which typically include a series of questions about lifestyle, eating and drinking habits and mental wellness. While conditions like depression are common - roughly 1 in 5 Americans have a mental health condition - they are extremely treatable.

Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one’s potential to lead a full and productive life. Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society. (Source: Mental Health America)
A Message from Our President & CEO

“Making Connections”

Every day your support helps more than 3,000 individuals and families with mental illness make connections.

Treatment for mental health issues has never been more effective. One in four of us will experience a significant mental health illness in the course of our lives, and new evidence-based treatments help keep recovery rates at a record high of 80 percent of more.

BHcare connects clients to supports for living, working, learning and participating fully in the community. Our services connect them to the guidance, encouragement and help needed to improve their mental health and well-being. These connections help clients to participate in life to the fullest extent possible through productive, meaningful activities and strong relationships. We provide the connection to hope, health and recovery to change lives for the better every day!

You, our donors, make these connections possible. Your gift supports mental health services, increases community awareness, and helps our efforts to fight the stigma of mental illness.

Please help us keep our clients connected by making a gift today. For your convenience we have enclosed a reply envelope for your gift. You may also go to our website at bhcare.org.

Thank you for your continued support in helping to get our clients connected to the resources to help them live happy, healthy, productive lives.

Marilyn Cormack
President

Roberta J. Cook
Chief Executive Officer

BHcare Receives 10th Consecutive CARF Accreditation

BHcare received CARF accreditation, the highest level of accreditation that a rehabilitation service provider can be awarded. New accreditation status was achieved for IOP programs and consumer run psychosocial rehab programs (Social Clubs). BHcare also expanded its Behavioral Health Field designation to Integrated AOD (Alcohol and other drugs)/Mental Health. This reflects the fact that all of our programs are designed to provide a seamless system of care for individuals with needs in one or both areas or for persons with identified co-occurring disorders.

BHcare has been accredited for 3 years for the following programs:

- Case Management/Services Coordination: Integrated: AOD/MH (Adults)
- Community Housing: Integrated: AOD/MH (Adults)
- Community Integration: Integrated: AOD/MH (Adults)
- Community Integration: Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Consumer Run)
- Intensive Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: AOD/MH (Adults)
- Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: AOD/MH (Adults)
- Prevention: Alcohol and Other Drugs/Addictions (Adults)
- Prevention: Alcohol and Other Drugs/Addictions (Children and Adolescents)
- Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
- Community Employment Services: Job Development

The accreditation will extend through June 2015.
Bowl-2-Benefit Raises over 88k!

Over 1,300 community members showed up to “bowl a strike” against domestic violence at BHcare’s 25th Annual Bowl-To-Benefit held on March 9, 2013 at AMF Lanes in Milford. Two-hundred-and-sixty teams packed AMF’s lanes throughout the day, raising more than $88,000 for our Center for Domestic Violence Services.

New Haven Family Relations is once again our top fundraising team raising $7,000. This is the fourth year they have participated in the Bowl-2-Benefit fundraiser. As a group they became involved in this cause as they work first hand with victims and witness the pain and suffering that is endured by those affected. They were further drawn to this cause when they became aware that their efforts would directly serve those in our community as well as support our court-based victim advocacy program.

New Haven Family Relations participates in a number of fundraising activities throughout the year and this is yet another example of their generosity, commitment and support for the community in which they live and work. Committee Chairman, CJ Forcier noted, “the overwhelming success of our fundraising efforts is due to the hard work, devotion and commitment our members put forth year in and year out.”

Thank you to New Haven Family Relations and all the teams that participated in this year’s event. A big thank you to the tremendous efforts of the committee leading up to the event and the incredible work of the volunteers on event day. Thank you also to our sponsors Bassett Brands and Cox Radio: WPLR 99.1-FM and Star 99.9-FM.

Next year’s Bowl-2-Benefit will be held on March 8, 2014.

Mental Health Month Calendar of Events

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, mental health concerns affect 1 in 4 Americans today, but fewer than 25 percent of people with a diagnosable mental disorder seek treatment. Mental Health Awareness Month hopes to help increase the number of people who will talk to their doctor or a mental health professional about their concern.

BHcare is celebrating Mental Health Month with a variety of events and activities to raise awareness about mental health issues and the resources available to those that live with a mental health condition. Some of the activities and events include:

- **May 1** - *Employment Salute*, 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm, Molto Bene, 557 Wakelee Ave., Ansonia, CT
  “Connecticut’s Economy: The future and its effect on mental health”

- **May 3** - *OPTIONS Art Show*, Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford, 5:30 pm -7:30 pm.

- **May 15** - *Day of Hope*, Consumer poetry contest, Valley Social Club, Ansonia, 12:00 pm -1:00 pm.

- **May 18** - *Annual NAMI Walk*, Bushnell Park, Hartford, 10 am.

- **May 22** - “How Connecticut Legal Rights Project Helps Our Consumers in Legal Issues”, Attorney Gina Teixeira, Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Ansonia National Guard Armory, 5 State Street, Ansonia, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm. RSVP to 203-732-7089.

- **May 28 -30** - *Valley Social Club Art Show*, Derby Neck Library, Derby, Tuesday at 10:00 am - Thursday 1:00 pm. Meet the artist on Tues., May 28, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

- **May 29** - *OPTIONS Annual Cook Out*, Branford, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm. (Consumers and staff only)

For more information and/or a full list of activities and events, visit our website at bhcare.org.
BHcare will host its 4th Annual Girl’s Night Out Fashion Show Fundraiser on Friday, May 10 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at WoodWinds in Branford.

The evening will feature fashions and accessories by Ella where She shops… and Carol’s Creations, as well as signature cocktails, boutique shopping, DJ and food along with hair and makeup by Robyn Dostie-Sudock and the Bravada Hair Lounge team.

Guests will enjoy a red carpet entrance, photo booth, Hollywood Glam theme, and much more.

Emcee: News 8 Morning Anchor, Chris Velardi

$35/pp includes hors d’oeuvres, dessert, food, fashion and fun!

Purchase your tickets today at bhcare.org.

All proceeds benefit BHcare programs that provide comprehensive behavioral health, prevention and domestic violence services to individuals and families throughout the Greater New Haven, Shoreline and Valley communities.

Presenting Sponsor: GSB

Media Sponsor: THE SOUND

Show Stopper Sponsors: RK
My Sister’s Place Remains Closed

My Sister’s Place, a family thrift shop on Ansonia’s Main Street that benefits the Center for Domestic Violence Services has been closed for several weeks after suffering extensive smoke damage during a fire on March 11, 2013. The fire started in the basement of the Asylum bar and nightclub next door, but heavy smoke filled My Sister’s Place, which was packed with clothes, toys, books and a ton of other merchandise.

Staff and volunteers have been working to clean up the store and get it ready for re-opening. A professional cleaning company scoured the building in the days after the fire. The store has been cleaned from top to bottom. Five thousand pieces of clothing had to be sent out for dry-cleaning.

The fire prompted a visit by Senator Chris Murphy. Murphy lamented the fact that the shop, which benefits the Center for Domestic Violence Services, is only in business to cover “a funding gap that shouldn’t exist.”

Murphy, who during his visit presented a box of clothes and some handbags donated by members of his office. He said he would tell his new colleagues in the U.S. Senate about the lengths BHcare goes to keep things up and running. He said that the store is only in business to cover “a funding gap that shouldn’t exist.”

“You shouldn’t have to run all these ancillary operations to take care of women and children who have been victims of domestic violence,” Murphy said. “We should make a decision as a civilized, compassionate community that we’re going to provide those families everything they need to get back on their feet.”

“And because we don’t, you have to go to these extraordinary means to make the budgets work,” he went on. “And thank God you do.”

“The demand is so great, and we get funding, but not enough,” said Marilyn Cormack, BHcare’s president. “Our shelters are full statewide, and they’re always full. If we have to turn (domestic violence victims) away, where are they going to go?”

After making some brief remarks and taking a tour, Murphy left to visit one of the company’s shelters for domestic violence victims.

The store, at 380 Main Street, supports BHcare’s Center for Domestic Violence services to the tune of about $120,000 a year.

MSP is currently in the process of remodeling the store due to the damage suffered during the fire. A grand re-opening will be scheduled after the remodel is complete.

The store’s donation center remains open and the donations continue to pour in. Valley residents have been more than responsive with contributions in the days since the store put out a call for donations after the fire. The donation center, located on West Main Street, is open Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 4:30 pm.

Nancy Cahoon, MSP Manager, said the community “has just been wonderful” in its support since the fire.
VSAAC Offers Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid arms the public with skills to help individuals who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The clinical and qualitative evidence behind the program demonstrates that it helps the public better identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness, thus improving outcomes for individuals experiencing these illnesses. Mental Health First Aid training was recommended by President Obama and Vice President Biden as part of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

Mental Health First Aid training can help people recognize signs of mental illness in people of all ages and refer them to treatment. Did you know that three quarters of mental illnesses appear by the age of 24, yet less than half of children with diagnosable mental health problems receive treatment?

Are you ready to become a Mental Health First Aider? If yes, call VSAAC at 203-736-8566 for more information or to schedule training in your community, work-place, school, or faith community!

Participants in recent trainings with VSAAC said:

“Great course...highly edifying and useful! Recommended.”

“Excellent class for the layman and professional alike. The instructor, Pam Mautte, is extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter and uses multiple techniques and classroom exercises that keep the participants interested and motivate them to learn.”

“I used my MHFA within 3 weeks of attending the training, one of the most valuable and useful trainings I have attended.”

Walnut Hill 5k Raises over $2,000 for CDVS

On Saturday, March 30, 2013, Walnut Hill Community Church hosted their first annual 5k Easter Run-Walk at the Derby Greenway benefiting our Center for Domestic Violence Services. Over 150 participants registered for the event which raised over $2,000.

Pastor Walter Mayhew said he wanted to give back to the community and work with BHcare as a means to do so. “I’m planning for this to become an annual event,” he said. “It is one way for us to get involved, start giving back, and meet the needs in the Valley.”

Susan DeLeon, Director, Center for Domestic Violence Services, said the Easter Run-Walk is a wonderful program and is glad to be working with Mayhew and Walnut Hill.

“It’s not just about raising money, it’s about raising awareness,” DeLeon said.
**Doctor’s Corner**

**Praise**

By: Karl-Otto Liebmann, M.D.
Medical Director - Shoreline

We are quick to blame others and sometimes even blame ourselves. It is easy, we can do it all by ourselves and not tell anyone. It is more difficult to praise because we have to show it, share it, and tell it. We have to articulate our thoughts and speak or write or give.

Praise comes in many shapes. It may just be a smile, a thank you, a word or two acknowledging someone’s help. It will mean more if it is specific, saying what you are thanking for, or even why. You validate what another person is doing for you. Any praise is appreciated. It makes what you do precious.

Poisoned praise is worse than none at all. The same holds true for exaggerated or ill-deserved praise. It devalues the giver and the recipient.

We should include our patients. Their efforts to overcome incredible obstacles deserves praise; no money, poor housing, inadequate benefits, erratic transportation, chaotic family environment, physical illness and disability.

Look around you. The people you work with or live with are not chips in a computer that you turn on or off. They have hearts and minds and feelings. They have weaknesses and strengths, as do we. We can expect a reasonable performance from them and from us. If we see faults, we should find ways to correct them and not forget what merits praise. If we hear “Thank you” in response then a friendly “You are welcome” would be, well, welcomed.

**CDVS News**

**Quinnipiac University Raises over $32K for CDVS**

On Sunday, October 7, 2012, Quinnipiac University’s Alpha Chi Omega held their 15th annual Frisbee Fest. Frisbee Fest is Alpha Chi Omega’s main philanthropy event that raises awareness to support the fight against domestic violence.

This successful campus-wide event raises thousands of dollars each year and the money is donated to the Center for Domestic Violence Services. This year’s event raised over $32,000.

Frisbee Fest honors an Alpha Chi fallen sister, Elizabeth Pernel, who was killed in a domestic violence dispute. Students, faculty, and community members along with Pernel’s family were all in attendance. The event included raffles, a photo booth, dunk tank, BBQ, the infamous “pie an Alpha Chi” and the main event, the Frisbee Tournament.

**How I’m Helping...**

ABC Marketing presented BHcare a check for $1803.67 as a result of their nonprofit marketing contest this past fall. BHcare was nominated through ABC Marketing’s Facebook page. The winner received a portion of ABC Marketing’s profits for a set period of time along with marketing support to raise awareness and aid in their fundraising efforts.

This is the third year ABC Marketing has held its nonprofit marketing contest. Every year they try to pick a local nonprofit agency that they can help out. “This year BHcare, with all of their great support that they provide to the local community, won our non-profit contest. ABC Marketing was proud to represent them in our fundraising event and will continue to support them,” said Sal Vadala, President ABC Marketing.

ABC Marketing is located in East Haven, CT and specializes in services such as graphic design, logo design, website development, SEO, offset printing, large format printing, digital printing, email broadcasting, and mailing. Visit abcprintingink.com for more information.

**My Recovery**

by: Michael Hayes

The support that I have received from BHcare and its staff have given me a second chance at life, and have provided me with a foundation and the momentum to overcome my social and life issues.

Their support has enabled me to improve my social life and interactions with people, given me the encouragement to return to school and have given me both group and one-on-one support which has provided me with a constant source of positive reinforcement and encouragement to continue in my recovery.

I have no doubt that without the help, kindness, caring and insight that the staff of BHcare have shown me over the past two years, I would not have been able to reach the point in my recovery that I have.

I feel so thankful and grateful that this program was in place at a time when I so critically needed it. BHcare has given me hope for my life again, and given me hope that, despite my personal issues and struggles, I can finally overcome my problems and return to a fully normal, productive life.
BHcare is supported by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Guilford Community Fund, the Guilford Human Services Council, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, The Valley United Way, United Way of Milford, The Valley Community Foundation and the Towns of Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton and Woodbridge.

BHcare is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and is licensed by the Department of Public Health.

BHcare is a partner agency of CommuniCare, Inc.

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

We apologize for any omissions or oversights. If your department, foundation or municipality has been overlooked, please bring it to our attention.

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