

THE COMCARE

October 2009

Volume 4 Number 1

CONNECTION

INSIDE

2
Camp COMCARE a Success!
Parent Management Training
CAPS Receives National Award
Children's Art Fair

3
Supported Employment News
June Brownbag
October Brownbag Invitation
Mental Health Court
is the Right Approach

4
Intake and Assessment Center
Makes Quality Improvement
September is National Alcohol
and Drug Addiction Recovery Month
Dual Diagnosis Transitional Housing

5
Employees Spotlight

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marilyn Cook, Executive Director



I recently moved to a different office in the Administration building and was glad to have the opportunity to sort through files, piles and boxes to see which should be kept and what should be tossed. In that process I looked again at a paper outline that had been traced around a young child's hand. I've brought this paper handprint with me through 3 office changes since I got it. It's now faded pink in color and the edges of the fingers are bent. For one brief moment I considered whether or not it had served its purpose and perhaps should be discarded. I peeled it off the bookcase where it had resided, clumsily taped to the wood for a number of years and found myself lovingly turning it in my hand. The moment I touched it I realized that I would never part with it, no matter how worn it had become. You see, it was one of several hundred handprints that staff traced of children receiving services in 1999 to make our services and the kids we serve more real to others. They were strung up in the children's program initially much like paper doll cutouts. I was happy to receive one when the display was taken down. It represented a child who had struggled, a family that was affected and a mental health center and a community who responded to the need for help. I don't know if the handprint is of a boy or a girl. It really doesn't matter. It's small, yet its message and is almost larger than life.

Every day we face challenges and stressors at work but I find that I can better put those in perspective when I glimpse at that small handprint. It reminds me why we're here each day; it reminds me of the desire to serve others that drew so many of us to this meaningful work; and most importantly, it reminds me of the hope we provide to those who come to us for our help.

I would recommend you each find your own symbol or reminder but in the meantime, I'm happy to share mine with you.

Thanks for your services, commitment, and desire to help others. It makes a difference and it's a privilege to share that commitment with you.

Marilyn Cook



COMCARE
Sedgwick County...
working for you

"COMCARE of Sedgwick County helps people with Mental Health and Substance Abuse needs to improve the quality of their lives."

Mission

Camp COMCARE a Success!

COMCARE's Children's Services completed their first summer psychosocial camp and it was a success! The mission of camp provided campers with the opportunity to develop self-worth, confidence, social skills and to discover personal strengths and enhance relationships in a safe, supportive, and challenging environment.

Children's Services took a total of 36 kids to Wa Shun Ga--Rock Springs Ranch (south of Junction City) to participate in outdoor activities. The campers participated in activities such as horseback riding, canoes, swimming, leadership adventure course (low ropes), and water world (learning about the environment and streams). Other organized group activities consisted of making team posters, camp t-shirts, team problem solving, proving peers with positive support, and various group games. Throughout the duration of camp, staff recognized the campers who displayed positive role modeling skills and volunteered for various tasks. By the last day, most of the campers wanted to add another week to their stay! Children's Services is now looking ahead and planning for next year. The goal is to take 60 kids and utilize the Rock Springs Ranch side of the camp.



Children's Services offer Parent Management Training

On September 9, 2009, Children's Services will begin providing Parent Management Training (PMT) for parents of the youth served. The Parent Management Training is an evidence-based model of educating parents to successfully parent children with conduct related behavior problems, specifically aggression and opposition. The training is conducted in one-hour sessions for twelve weeks and will be held in the evenings. The training will be facilitated by Team Supervisors and Case Managers. Currently, seventeen sets of parents are scheduled to attend as well as twenty-six children will be participating in a social skills building curriculum while their parents are being trained.

THE COMCARE CONNECTION

Community Assessment Program For Seniors Receives National Award

On July 21st, the National Association of Area Agencies presented the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging a \$1000 Aging Achievement Award for their collaboration with COMCARE's Community Assessment Program for Seniors (CAPS). This award showcases innovative and successful aging programs that assist older adults and caregivers in communities across the country. The need for successful cost-effective aging services is especially important in light of our rapidly growing aging population. The honored programs serve as models for other agencies looking for new approaches to serve the older population within their own communities.

The Community Assessment Program for Seniors provides in-home mental health assessment and counseling services to seniors 60 years of age or older who are residents of Sedgwick County and are identified at risk for mental health issues. The Community Assessment Program for Seniors (CAPS) is paid by mill levy funding through the Kansas Department on Aging. In 2001 the Community Assessment Program received national recognition as an honorable mention for innovative behavioral health care programming through the Thomas Wernert award.



COMCARE's Children's Services Hosts Children's Art Fair

COMCARE's Children's Services hosted a Children's Art Fair on Tuesday, June 2nd. Children's Services does this each year in coordination with the WSU Kids Training Team. The WSU Kids Training Team then publishes a yearly calendar that utilizes art that comes from Kansas youth receiving community mental health services. Doug Bolt, Children's Case Manager Supervisor organized this year's event and says "I am not a very good artist and that is probably why I appreciate beautiful pieces of art". Youth in the children's program were notified of the art fair and were given three months to turn in their art. Doug says "this is an opportunity for kids to shine, show their expressive talent and get involved in something they enjoy doing". This year Children's Services received 39 pieces of art ranging from drawings, collages of magazine articles, paintings, photographs, and ceramics. The top five artists from COMCARE's Children's Services will get their art work published in the 2010 Kids Training Calendar. The winning youth and their families from across the state will attend the Statewide Art Expo at the 2009 Behavioral Health Conference in Wichita, Kansas, where all the winning artwork is unveiled for the calendar.

Steve Bell, Team Leader Reports on Supported Employment News

The 2009 Fidelity Review for the COMCARE Community Support Services (CSS) Supported Employment Program was held on August 4th and 5th making it the seventh yearly review. Some of you may be wondering, "So what does this mean?" Well, as an evidenced based practice tied to the Dartmouth University model, CSS's Supported Employment program undergoes these yearly "Fidelity Reviews" in order to ensure that we are remaining true to the national standard.

You may also be wondering "Why? Why go through these rigorous reviews?" The answer is really two-fold. For one thing, we adopted this model because it is proven and we believe in it. Quite simply we want to provide the best services possible for the consumers we serve....so remaining true to the model helps ensure that we are doing just that. Secondly, by meeting a high standard of fidelity, SRS/KHS grants us an "enhanced billing rate" above and beyond the normal standard for the CPST we provide.

"So, how did the program do, you ask?" Well, on Tuesday August 11th Nancy Rapp, Performance Improvement Coordinator for SRS Mental Health sent us her congratulations and the program results. The CSS Supported Employment Program had raised their score by 24 points from the previous year! Based on an evaluation of the 25 general criteria of the fidelity scale, we received a total fidelity score of 114 points out of a possible 125, easily receiving the enhanced rate. But here's the heartbreaker: "Good Fidelity" is granted for a score range of 100-114 points; "Exemplary Fidelity" for 115-125 points. Argghh.....we missed "Exemplary" by one...count it...one point!!!

So what's next? I can tell you one thing, we're not going to sit around and feel sorry for ourselves. In fact I can tell you that I am very proud of the crew and all of the hard work that everyone put into the program over the past year. With a 24 point improvement over last year and a needed improvement of only 1 point for next....we're putting our noses to the grindstone and are already feeling pretty positive about next year's outcome.

Mental Health Court is the Right Approach

One year after the City of Wichita Municipal Court and COMCARE of Sedgwick County was awarded the Bureau of Justice Grant to collaborate in the planning and implementation of a Mental Health Court, the Wichita Mental Health Court (MHC) will begin taking clients in September 2009. The Mental Health Court team includes the Honorable Bryce Abbott, Michelle Meier, City of Wichita Prosecutor's office, Cherie Nelson of Wichita Adult Probation and Daryl Handlin, LMSW of COMCARE's Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program (SCOAP).

The Wichita Mental Health Court will serve individuals with a diagnosed severe mental illness who has been charged with a misdemeanor crime. Individuals with a dual diagnosis will also be accepted. Referrals will come from judges, attorneys, probation officers and the Sedgwick County Adult Detention Facility. Specialized dockets will address the unique needs of those consumers whose

THE COMCARE CONNECTION



June Brownbag

COMCARE's June Brown Bag was held at the Sedgwick Zoo on Friday, June 5th. The day was perfect and 68 employees showed up at the Brown Bear Watering Hole to relax, have some lunch, share time with other employees and after it was all over sneak a peek at the New Slawson Family Tiger exhibit. Marilyn Cook, Executive Director of COMCARE welcomed employees, County Manager Bill Buchanan was in attendance and Schanee Anderson with the Sedgwick County Zoo talked about the newest exhibits.

You are cordially invited to participate in COMCARE's Brown Bag Lunch Friday, October 2, 2009, 12:00 – 1:30pm, Sunflower Shelter at the Sedgwick County Park (13th Street entrance)

RSVP to Michelle Caldwell, mcaldwel@sedgwick.gov or call 660-7655



psychological problems contribute to the offending behavior. Two different tracks will be offered: a pre-conviction diversion program and a post-probation program. As a problem solving court, the MHC will work to help address the underlying cause of crime. The Court will promote personal accountability and understanding of public duty as it helps connect participants to the community through mental health services. Regular meetings between MHC team members will increase communication between the mental health providers and the court. Individualized sanctions and incentives will be developed for each participant to facilitate adherence to treatment plans. Participation in the program is voluntary and will last a minimum of one year. Success will be celebrated with a "graduation" from the program. Mental health services will be provided by COMCARE's Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program.

COMCARE's Intake and Assessment Center Makes Quality Improvement

In an effort to improve client access to services offered at COMCARE's Intake & Assessment Center (CIAC), a Quality Improvement workgroup was chartered to evaluate current barriers and recommend strategies for process improvement. Staff representing a variety of programs and provider roles participated in the workgroup meeting regularly over the course of several months. One significant concern was access to medication evaluations and utilization of scheduled appointments with our COMCARE medical providers. On average, clients were waiting an average of 5 weeks for their medication evaluation appointment and the CIAC medical providers were experiencing a 52% fail-to-show rate; meaning that only 48% of the clients scheduled for a medication evaluation were presenting as scheduled.

Beginning June 1st, COMCARE's Intake and Assessment Center implemented a new call-in procedure for clients needing a medication evaluation. Clients coming through CIAC who are not emergent hospital discharges, who are not homeless and without communication means or who are not so symptomatic that they could not maneuver the process are instructed to follow a call-in procedure to self schedule their initial medication appointment based on their convenience and availability.

This has been a dramatic change for both our clients and staff, as it does put some of the responsibility for treatment in the hands of our clients and, the benefits are beginning to show. From June 1st until July 15th, the fail-to-show rate for scheduled medication evaluation appointments dropped from an average of 52% to 37%, meaning that 63% of the clients who are offered a scheduled medication appointment are presenting as scheduled. More notable is the impact that the call-in procedure has had on clients' access to first appointments and their participation in those appointments. During this same time frame of June 1st through July 15th, the average wait time to first appointment for clients seeking medication services went from an average of 5 weeks from intake to an average of 4.25 days from intake. Remarkably, 92% of the clients using the call-in procedure to access their initial medication evaluation attended as planned. An analysis of the statistics for July 15th through August 15th continue to show similar outcomes with the fail-to-show rate for scheduled appointments improving slightly still dropping to 34%, translating into 66% of the scheduled appointments presenting for scheduled services. The fail-to-show rate for clients using the call-in procedure remained at a steady 8%. While the average wait time for an initial appointment did increase slightly to 6.3 days, we continue to demonstrate much improvement over the previous 5 week wait for initial medical services.



September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

In 2007, twenty three million people age 12 and older needed treatment for a substance use disorder in the United States. In Kansas, 225,155 people and their families were affected by this disease. From January 1 through December 31, 2008, there were 3,601 adult admissions into drug and alcohol treatment programs in Sedgwick County.

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. "Drug and alcohol addiction touches nearly everyone," said Dee Staudt, Director of COMCARE's Addiction Treatment Services. "Each of us can provide a story involving a friend or family member who has been impacted by this disease. Many people do not understand that addiction is not only preventable but treatable, and this misconception can keep people from getting the help they need".

National Recovery Month offers us an opportunity to celebrate the process of recovery, and to help remove the stigmas that often accompany those who suffer from addictions. It also gives us a chance to recognize and thank those dedicated professionals who work each day in the challenging world of addiction treatment and prevention.

On September 2nd, a Proclamation was read during the weekly Board of Sedgwick County Commission meeting proclaiming September as National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery month in Sedgwick County. On September 15th the proclamation was read and signed by Mayor Carl Brewer.

Center City's Dual Diagnosis Transitional Housing

COMCARE Homeless Program implemented the Dual Diagnosis Transitional Housing Project (THP) under a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant in August 2003. Serving 20 adults for up to 2 years, COMCARE provides consumers housing and supportive services. Eligibility includes active or "literally homeless" status; mental illness and co-occurring addiction disorder as well as a commitment to recovery and willingness to engage in services. COMCARE Homeless Program maintains an office amid these scattered site apartments providing easy access to integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment while living in the community.

Center City's Transitional Housing Project celebrates the following summer successes: consumer participation in attending and presenting at the Recovery Conference; two new self-initiated weekly consumer led groups (Crafts; Alcoholics Anonymous); a consumer enrolling as a full time WSU student this fall; and signing 14 consumers up for Section 8 permanent housing certificates to transition from THP upon completion of the program. Finally, Center City experienced a successful HUD monitoring audit in August and highlighted the THP at a legislative community reception.

Center City's Dual Diagnosis THP staff work closely to support consumers. Their collaborative team creates the positive synergy to partner with consumers ready to make recovery a reality.

In the picture to the right Bottom Row (left to right) Office Specialist - Nadine Sauerwein, Team Leader/Housing Specialist - Jesse Soria, Team Leader - Stacy Morris, LMFT, Addictions' Counselor - Ella Watley, CADCI and CC the therapy cat. Second row: Case Manager - Anissa Freeman, Case Manager - Mark Irvine





Employees Spotlight



Dr. Charles Gaynor, Ph.D., a Senior Psychologist at COMCARE's Outpatient Services program has several passions; one of them is art. His office walls are filled with photography that he has done over the years. He fills most of his free time creating digital art work utilizing photography and computer graphics. Dr.

Gaynor has been creating art work for several decades now, and considers his art a "work in progress". He uses a variety of computer programs to create his digital art work, and says that all the skills learned have been completely self-taught. He believes that art is important to contributing to society and human life.

Dr. Gaynor's art has been featured in two art shows in Wichita, one at REALS Art Gallery at the KU School of Medicine and another one at CITY ARTS downtown. His art ranges from abstract to realist. His work can be viewed on Renderosity.com under C Gaynor. His photograph "Rose 2" is currently featured on the Gallery of the Week. He has over 270 images on this site with over 8,000 viewings and 1,000 comments internationally.

His beliefs lead him to an ongoing interest in creativity which includes fostering and utilizing art and creativity in work with his clients he sees in therapy. He has shared his expertise at COMCARE for 34 years and he hopes to live a creative life when he retires.



Phillip Crayton is a Substance Abuse Counselor at COMCARE's Addiction Treatment Services. When not at work, Phillip serves as the designated Director of Outreach for his church Greater Mount Zion. Greater Mount Zion is big on helping out the community and as a result they offer three programs

that he directly provides oversight for including, the Jacob's Ladder Soup Kitchen, Sharon's Closet Clothing Ministry and Commodities Outreach. Phillip says he spends about 10 hours a week volunteering with these outreach programs in which he likes the interaction it provides him with people. "I like the idea of the church being there for the community", says Phillip. He went on to explain that some of the people served by these programs are homeless however, that is not a requirement and stated that the Church intends to serve whoever is in need.



Chris Hall was hired on July 6, 2009 as a drug and alcohol case manager specialist for COMCARE's Children's Services. Chris had worked at COMCARE from 2001 to 2004 as a case manager for Community Support Services. In 2004, Chris began working with the Friends of Recovery Association, where he was a program coordinator. Chris applied to be the state of Kansas's delegate to the 2nd Annual Recovery Rally (sponsored by the A&E Network) in New York City on September 12, 2009. One delegate was selected to represent each state of the union. Chris was chosen and went to New York City to represent the state of Kansas.

The goal of the Recovery Rally is to generate widespread awareness that addiction is a treatable disease and recovery is possible. The campaign seeks to help erase the stigma of addiction. Chris's story of recovery will

be used to illustrate this point to the media. At the height of the festivities, delegates will hold hands across the Brooklyn Bridge.



Joe Wharton is part of the van fleet/building support team at COMCARE's Community Support Services (CSS). Staff at CSS recognize Joe for always being pleasant and helpful, working in an area of the program that works hard, often with little thanks or fanfare. A couple of months ago, Joe provided transportation for case manager Wendy Mejia and one of her clients on a very bad day. When the client became physically ill her primary care physician wanted her to go to his office to be seen. Brian Grier, Program Manager, agreed to let Joe transport with Wendy riding along. When the client expressed suicidal ideation at the doctor's office, Joe drove Wendy and the client to COMCARE's Crisis Intervention Services. The client requested to be brought back to her Community Integration Program group after Crisis staff dismissed her, but she then began to get very ill, so instead of having to wait until the end of the program day at 3:00 p.m., Joe and

Brian took her home. Joe is always willing to meet consumer and staff needs and quickly volunteers to accept a task when something unexpected arises. Thanks, Joe!



Kristi Hecker and her husband Josh were recently nominated as the West Region Care Provider of the Month. You see, Kristi and Josh are fairly new foster parents. Starting out with two children with high needs in December of 2008, they have worked with the children and placement workers extremely well. Kristi and Josh are very committed to these children and have included these children in their daily lives and lives with the extended members of the foster family. The children are now participating in gymnastics, soccer, swimming lessons and camp and have improved greatly since being in the home. Kristi and Josh have recently had a baby placed in their home and they continue to provide the same care and loving family atmosphere. Kristi says "being a foster parent has really shed some light on all of the things we take for granted. These kids had never been to a movie theatre, played sports, or stayed in a hotel--and to see the light in their eyes as they experience these things for the first time is a truly amazing opportunity. Though there are struggles when it comes to helping raise kids with high needs, you can't help but consider the things they may have gone through that brought them into your home--every day is a new chance to make a difference!" Kristi is a Case Management Specialist at COMCARE's Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program.



This summer was a busy one for **Debbie Scroggin!** In addition to performing her regular duties as program manager for COMCARE's Intake and Assessment Center and Outpatient Services, Debbie spent over 40 hours in Intensive Motivational Interviewing training. Debbie spent a great deal of time outside of her regular work hours preparing for class and for the training presentation required to graduate from the program. Debbie graduated on July 23rd and is now able to coach staff and conduct Basic Motivational Interviewing trainings for COMCARE employees. Debbie previously had attended the Motivational Interviewing Assessment-Supervisory Tools for Enhancing Proficiency training. She is very excited to be able to bring this training to our agency staff. Debbie says, "Our clients often become 'stuck' in the desire to change and putting that desire into action. Motivational interviewing provides a valuable process for helping our consumers turn their internal desires

into fuel for forward movement. I am excited about all the ways it can be utilized to help them be encouraged and hopeful about the change process."