



RISING TIDE

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SWINGIN' IN THE RAIN

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Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network

BHINews

IOL volunteers have 'high impact'

Peer counseling group honored with annual innovation award

The New England Association of Directors of Healthcare Volunteer Services (NEADHVS) chose the Institute of Living's Peer Volunteer Program as the recipient of its annual President's Award for Outstanding Program Development in the category of High Impact Volunteer Services.

NEADHVS is an affiliate chapter of the Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals that works to develop, establish, recommend and implement best practice standards in healthcare volunteer services management. The award recognizes the IOL's peer volunteer program as an innovative and effective initiative in the realm of volunteer work.

"I want to recognize this vitally important work by the entire team," said Stuart Markowitz, MD, president of



Some of the leaders of the IOL's Peer Volunteer Program include, from left, Nancy Hubbard, Laura Durst, Patricia Graham and Paula Rego.

Hartford Hospital and senior vice president of Hartford HealthCare.

"You have a lot to be proud of and we are all so proud and thankful for this program and the impact it is having on our staff and our community."

The program was implemented on the IOL campus in 2014 by Nancy Hubbard and Patricia Graham of the Family Resource Center. The program has vastly

improved patient experience by incorporating individuals who have lived experience with mental illness in inpatient and outpatient environments.

"This is truly a wonderful and well-deserved recognition of a terrific program," said Harold Schwartz, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living and vice president of behavioral health for Hartford HealthCare. "The peer program is central to our increasing involvement in the recovery movement.

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‘This is a great example of leadership and discretionary effort.’

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People living with mental illness often face discrimination, which may add to the belief they are alone in their suffering. Despite good intentions, friends, family and other members of the community may struggle to connect during these difficult times and unknowingly create an even deeper divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on their misperceptions of experience.

In this unique IOL program, volunteers work directly with patients in inpatient and outpatient settings, including the Emergency Department at Hartford Hospital. These remarkable volunteers, who each bring first-person knowledge and their own diverse experiences into their work, help instill hope and show that recovery is possible through peer-led support groups, one-on-one support and even yoga.

The formal and informal activities help patients feel less isolated and more connected to real people who have been through what they are going through.

“By rejecting the ‘us and them’ mentality, the peer movement humanizes a patient and creates a reality where those suffering from mental illness can truly get better and lead more fulfilling lives,” said Patty Graham, case worker at the Family Resource Center.

Along with staff members Laura Durst and Paula Rego, and up to 30 peer volunteers, the Institute of Living is delivering important services typically found only in community settings.

The award was given during the NEADHVS annual spring conference in May. The Family Resource Center from the Institute of Living will present details of the program at the organization’s fall conference on Oct. 27 in Nashua, N.H.

Financial assistance for patients

Do you know a patient who is in need of financial assistance? Hartford HealthCare can provide help to patients in need. Learn more about the program at <https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support>.

HHC employee discount for Infinity Hall shows

Hartford HealthCare employees receive a 15 percent discount on Infinity Hall shows. To receive the discount when purchasing tickets online you can use the code: HHCMUSIC or when calling you can say you are a HHC employee to receive the discount.

For a list of shows please visit: <http://www.infinityhall.com/events>



Friday, June 30 | 7:30pm
Celebrate America!
The Annual Red, White and Blue Tradition with Fireworks!



Friday, July 7 | 7:30pm
Sgt. Pepper's 50th!
featuring Classical Mystery Tour



Friday, July 14 | 7:30pm
The Music of David Bowie



Friday, July 21 | 7:30pm
Williams & Warner Bros.



Friday, July 28 | 7:30pm
Broadway A to Z

Call 860-987-5900 or www.hartfordsymphony.org

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Report: CT opioid admissions among nation's highest

Connecticut has one of the nation's highest rates of opioid-related inpatient stays in the country, according to a federal government report released June 20 that also shows 1.27 million emergency department visits or inpatient stays nationwide in a one-year period.

The data, compiled by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, represents a 99 percent increase for emergency treatment and a 64 percent increase for inpatient care in 2014 (the latest available figures) compared to 2005. In 2014,



Allen

Connecticut had the sixth-highest rate of inpatient stays for males (377.3 visits per 100,000 population) and 11th-highest for females (299.8). It also had the fourth-highest rate of emergency department visits among males (323.7 per 100,000 population) and eight-highest among females (188.9).

Besides more evidence of an opioid epidemic in the state, what does it mean?

"It's not necessarily a bad thing that Connecticut has high rates of hospitalization for opioid use disorder," said J. Craig Allen, MD, Rushford's medical director. "Providers and the state have engaged with insurance companies and, coupled with parity pressures, strongly encouraged insurance providers to pay for an appropriate level of care — particularly for the opioid use disorder population, which is at such high risk for death and morbidity."

Last year, 917 people died from a drug overdose in Connecticut, a 25 percent increase from 2015. The high rates of emergency department visits, said Dr. Allen, reflect a high concentration of opioid-related issues in nearby Northeast states, particularly Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and Maine — each among the highest opioid-overdose death rates in the nation.

"The low cost and easy availability of heroin," said Dr. Allen, "and, now, the mixing with synthetic opioids like fentanyl are driving the deaths."

Yet preventative measures, he said, have made a difference in Connecticut:



Last year, 917 people died from a drug overdose in Connecticut, a 25 percent increase from 2015.

- The healthcare industry and local communities are better educated about the risks of long-term use of opioid medications.
- Naloxone, the opioid overdose reversal medication.
- Fewer opioid analgesics have been prescribed, according to recent data from the state Department of Consumer Protection.

Prevention, screening, early intervention and improved access to evidence-based treatments are the surest ways to reduce opioid-use disorder cases, said Dr. Allen.

"The first-line treatment for opioid use disorder is Medication Assisted Treatment," he said.

Hartford HealthCare's Behavioral Health Network's MATCH (or Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home) clinics, created two years ago amid the state's opioid crisis, use psychotherapy naloxone to treat patients with an opiate dependency paired with buprenorphine-based agonist medications (such as Suboxone) or opioid receptor antagonist medications like naltrexone (Vivitrol) to treat people suffering from an opioid addiction.

"We went from treating 300 patients in 2015 to over 1,000 in 2016," said Dr. Allen. "Patients who are engaged in medication-assisted treatment half their risk of overdose and subsequently experience fewer emergency department visits and inpatient stays."

For information on the Behavioral Health Network's MATCH program, go to <https://hartfordhealthcare.org/services/match>.



Dr. Allen weighs in on tranquilizer drug

J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director at Rushford, discussed a new potent drug that's caused at least one fatality in Connecticut. Carfentanil, originally developed as an elephant tranquilizer, is 100 times more powerful than Fentanyl, 1,000 times more potent than morphine, and can cause overdoses if it even comes in contact with the skin of an inexperienced user, according to Dr. Allen. To read more, visit <http://bit.ly/2tl76pu>.

Dr. Schwartz speaks on 'political fatigue'

Harold Schwartz, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living and vice president of behavioral health at Hartford HealthCare, weighed in on the angry and intolerant political climate that is developing across the country. "The standards of civil behavior and the standards of how government institutions should work... are eroding," Schwartz said. To read more, visit <http://cour.at/2uiwk15>.

For more behavioral health news updates, subscribe to the BHN's e-newsletter on www.healthnewshub.org.

National events encourage suicide conversation

Once a taboo subject, suicide is being talked about openly lately due to the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" and a recent controversial court case in Taunton, Mass., in which a teenage girl was convicted of involuntary manslaughter for encouraging her boyfriend to commit suicide through text messages and phone calls.

Both the show and the court case have some disturbing traits. The show has been criticized for glorifying suicide; in the court case, just as Michelle Carter's

friend Conrad Roy III had a change of heart and decided to get out of his vehicle that he had filled with generator fumes, Carter talked him into getting back in and he died. This phone call followed a series of texts in which she urged her depressed friend to follow through on his threats of suicide.

The judge's decision to find her guilty stunned many legal experts with its conclusion that words alone can be considered a cause of suicide — but not Institute of Living Medical Director Linda Durst, MD, who chairs the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network's Zero Suicide Initiative, which includes strategies to reduce suicides in behavioral health settings. She said that encouraging someone to follow up on suicidal thoughts can be a tipping point.



Durst

"People who have chronic suicidal ideation experience waves of impulse to act on their ideation," Dr. Durst said. "At these points, they are ambivalent at best about acting on their suicidal thoughts. To avoid acting on these thoughts it is important to distract them until the wave or impulse is less strong or over. People are extremely vulnerable at these times."

Dr. Durst said because of their vulnerability, the Veterans Administration developed a suicide prevention treatment plan with a hierarchy of distractions (including activities and people to call) to distract people until the intense wave of suicidal thoughts are over.

"At the same time, if someone was encouraged to engage in suicidal behavior during this very vulnerable time, it could tip an individual in the direction of self-harm and it would be extremely irresponsible, in fact, cruel to engage in such encouragement."

Dr. Durst said if someone reveals that they are having thoughts of suicide, you have an opportunity to help them.

"Offer your support in getting them help," she said. "Being critical or judgmental about their experience will only invalidate their experience and shut down their ability to communicate with you."

Dr. Durst said if you or someone you know is considering suicide, visit the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1.800.273.8255** or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.

Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, July 11, at noon.

IOL Awards recognize special contributions

The annual Institute of Living Awards and Recognition Day was held Tuesday, June 27, in the Commons Building. IOL and hospital leaders were on hand to congratulate and acknowledge employees who went above and beyond the call of duty in the areas of patient care, research, family support and more.

“The work that you do is probably among the most challenging in health-care,” said Dr. Stuart K. Markowitz, president of Hartford Hospital and senior vice president of Hartford HealthCare’s Hartford Region. “Your tireless commitment to this work is more important today than ever before. You all are making an incredible difference in this community and in the world.

“Whether they are being honored for their skill, for their commitment, for their longevity or for the compassion they bring to the work each and every day, I want to offer my personal congratulations to all the people who were recognized today,” Dr. Markowitz added.

Strawberry shortcake was served to attendees who turned out for the popular event and many honorees had the opportunity to take photos with their managers and presenters.

“We want to express our admiration for everything you all do,” said Dr. Harold Schwartz, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living and vice president of behavioral health for Hartford HealthCare. “We are truly a team, but some individuals stand out and deserve special appreciation from time to time, and it’s a great pleasure to be able to provide that recognition today.”

The Psychiatrist-in-Chief’s Award was established by Dr. Hank Schwartz to recognize outstanding contributions to psychiatry at the Institute of Living and Hartford Hospital. Past award-ees have been selected from a diverse



Anna Kinghorn, left, and Junior Lawrence, center, were two recipients of The Linda J. Stacy Service Excellence Award at the Institute of Living Awards Ceremony. They were joined by Ellen Blair, right, who was honored with the Psychiatrist-in-Chief’s Award.

group of employees, voluntary staff and members of the community. This year’s winner was **Ellen W. Blair**, DNP, APRN, NEA-BC, director of nursing at the IOL.

“This year, I made a decision in secrecy; I thought long and hard about it — but as it turns out, it wasn’t really that hard,” Dr. Schwartz said. “The award this year goes to someone you all know and love. Ellen gets the job done, she gets it done with grace, caring, empathy, persistence; she’s just a model of the excellence that all at the IOL can learn from.”

“I am so surprised and so honored,” Blair said. “I love working with all of you, it’s a pleasure for me every day.”

Throughout the ceremony, speakers introduced more than 30 winners in more than a dozen award categories.

■ **The Arne Welhaven, M.D. Memorial Award** is a humanitarian award that honors the outstanding accomplishments of Dr. Arne Welhaven. It is given

each year to a staff person within the Department of Psychiatry who best exemplifies genuine concern, respect and generosity toward patients and a quest for excellence in mentorship or education. This year’s winner is **Linda Bosnak**, special education teacher at the Grace S. Webb School.

■ **The Ned Graffagnino, M.D. Honorary Award** honors the outstanding accomplishments of Dr. Ned Graffagnino, former division chief of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services. It recognizes an individual employee who has demonstrated distinguished service or job performance in the areas of community-oriented work or collaborative efforts with other mental health professionals, especially in the area of training. This year’s honoree is **Patty Graham**, case worker at the Family Resource Center.

■ **The Linda J. Stacy Service Excel-**

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'We are truly a team, but some individuals stand out.'

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lence Award is given by the Family Resource Center Board to employees who have demonstrated superior understanding and compassion for the unique needs of patients' families, and towards improving the quality of The Institute of Living's interactions with its patients and their families. This year's winners are **Linda Bosnak**, teacher at the Grace S. Webb School; **Anna Kinghorn**, administrative associate II in the Donnelly Building; **Junior Lawrence**, ED security officer; **Paula Rego**, case worker at the Family Resource Center; and **Justine McGowan**, LMSW, Young Adult Services.

■ **The 2017 CT Alzheimer's Association Physician's Leadership Award** recognizes physicians and medical professionals who have gone above and beyond in supporting persons with dementia after diagnosis by referring them and their families to the Alzheimer's Association for additional support during their journey with the disease. This year's winner was **Dr. Karen Blank**.

■ **Dr. Linda Durst** became an official member of The American College of Psychiatrists. Unlike the American Psychiatric Association, the College is an honorary organization with just 800 members. Each member must be nominated, supported by several letters of recommendation and subjected to thorough vetting.

■ **Annetta Caplinger**, MSN, vice president of clinical operations at the IOL, joined the Board of Directors for the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems.

■ **The Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing** recognizes nurses who demonstrate excellence in clinical



Blank receives Alzheimer's honor

Dr. Karen Blank, medical director of the Memory Disorders Center at the Institute of Living, was awarded the Physician's Leadership Award from the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter at the Brain Ball on June 10. The award recognizes Dr. Blank's work referring patients and their families to the organization for continued support throughout their journey with the disease.

practice, leadership, scholarship or education. This year's winner at the IOL is **Tiffany Otto**, RN, of Donnelly 1N.

■ **The Professional Practice Nursing Award** was presented to **Lorraine Moustakakis**, RN, of Donnelly 2N.

■ **The Dedicated to Caring Award** recognizes PCAs and Psych Techs who support the Hartford Hospital values of integrity, safety, excellence and caring. Employees who develop collaborative working relationships with patients, families and healthcare team members and actively seek new skills that contribute to positive patient outcomes and experiences while encouraging others to learn are among those chosen for the award. This year's honorees are **Inna Roytman**, psych tech, D1S; **Emily Maldonado**, psych tech, D2N; **Awilda Almonte**, PAA, D1S/CARES; **Myriam Monterroso**, psych tech, CARES.

■ **The Every Moment Matters Award** recognizes an employee who goes above and beyond in the jobs they do, making a difference either for the patients they serve, earning customer loyalty or for their colleagues, ultimately connecting to employee engagement. This year's winner is **Faye Jenkins**.

■ **The Connecticut Association of Private Special Education Facilities Golden Apple Award** is given by the Connecticut Association of Private Spe-

cial Education Facilities to school staff members within the association who have made significant contributions to their students and program. This year's winners are **Denise Ackeifi**, teacher, Grace S. Webb School; **Jennifer Bolduc**, school nurse, Grace S. Webb School; **Taniah Callender**, assistant teacher, Grace S. Webb School; **Jazmin Garcia**, instructional assistant, Webb School at Cheshire; **Cori Harwood**, school clinician, Grace S. Webb School; **Marc Miller**, assistant teacher, Grace S. Webb School; **Krista Pelletier**, instructional aid, Grace S. Webb School; **Neil Tobin**, teacher, Grace S. Webb School.

■ **The New England Association of Directors of Healthcare Volunteer Services President's Award** was given to **Patricia Graham**, **Laura Durst**, **Paula Rego** and **Nancy Hubbard** of the Family Resource Center; and **Erin McCallon-Estremera**, **Eileen Pelletier** and **Kelley Boothby**, of Hartford Hospital Volunteer Services.

■ **Joining the Quarter Century Club** this year are **Dr. Karen Blank** of the Braceland Center for Aging; **Stephen Fredette**, therapist, Rehabilitation Services; **Anne Gerstein**, treatment manager, Adult Day Treatment Center; **Susan Atamian**, manager, ECT; and **Marino Boccuzzi**, mental health counselor, Grace S. Webb School.

Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. For additional information, please contact the FRC at **860.545.7665** or **860.545.1888**. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** *June 30, July 7, 14, 21, 28, Aug. 4, 11, 18, 25 (Every Friday), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room.* For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and build a positive, future-oriented focus with realistic goals. To RSVP, please call Elizabeth Alve-Hedegaard, APRN, at **860.545.7050**.
- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** *July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Aug. 7, 14, 21, 28 (Every Monday), noon - 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 (Every Wednesday), 7 - 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Litchfield Room.* Peer run support group for those who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder.
- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** *July 6, 20, Aug. 3, 17, Sept. 7, 21 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room.* For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Share your success and struggles. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.
- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** *July 6, 13, 20, 27, Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m.* One hour topic discussion.
- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** *July 9, Aug. 16, Sept. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20 (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m.* Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or with another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective.
- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** *July 11, Aug. 1, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor.* Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling **860.545.7665**.
- **Bipolar: An Introduction To The Disorder.** *July 11, Oct. 3, Dec. 19, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.* This program is for family members and friends of individuals who have bipolar or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help family members and friends better cope with the illness.
- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** *July 12, 26, Aug. 9, 23, Sept. 13, 27 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 - 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room.* Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.
- **Trauma Support Group.** *July 12, 26, Aug. 9, 23, Sept. 13, 27 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 6-7 p.m.* A peer-led group that offers a supportive environment for individuals with any type of trauma history. Attendees will discuss relevant topics and educational materials will be available.
- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** *July 13, Aug. 1, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 - 5 p.m.* For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.
- **Managing Schizophrenia.** *July 25, Oct. 17, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.* This presentation will discuss the impact that symptoms of schizophrenia have on everyday activities, and provide tips on what you can do to make things better at home.
- **Depression: An Introduction To The Disorder.** *Aug. 8, Nov. 7, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.* This program is for family and friends of individuals who suffer from depression. It will present a basic understanding of major depression, its treatment, and ways family members might better cope with the illness.
- **Schizophrenia: An Introduction To The Disorder.** *Aug. 22, Nov. 21, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.* This program is for family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with suggestions to help family members and friends cope with the illness.

Swingin' in the rain

More than 200 people attended the inaugural Natchaug Hospital charity co-ed softball tournament on Saturday, June 24 in Willimantic.

The event, which fielded 10 teams and offered food trucks, family activities, a bake sale and basket raffles, raised more than \$5,000 for the Natchaug child and adolescent inpatient unit.



Natchaug mental health worker and tournament organizer Ben Nazario prepares to swing at a pitch.



Young Skylar, Carchidi, left, was soggy, but undeterred while watching the games.



The Natchaug team included staff from all across the hospital, including the inpatient units, plant operations, training and education, admissions, Journey House, Mansfield CDT and leadership.



Team FWB was the eventual winner of the double-elimination tournament after more than 10 hours of action.



Sherry Smardon, left, Ashley Laprade, center, and Mayra Santana-Robles show off the trophies for the tournament.



JCTV students visit equine center

On Friday, June 16, students from Joshua Center Thames Valley visited Beech Brooke Equine Rescue in North Stonington, which saves horses from abuse, neglect and slaughter, to volunteer and deliver two picnic tables built by YouthWorks vocational students.

Left: Students helped groom Peanut, a rescue mini horse on the farm. Right: Students donated two picnic tables built through JCTV's vocational program



Titanic teamwork



One of the cross-curricular themes for students at Joshua Center Northeast was a study of the Titanic era. Students read a novel about the ship, watched documentaries, completed a comprehensive science experiment and researched the topic thoroughly in preparation to build a large model in the classroom. Students individually and collaboratively completed a total of 32 dioramas (many of which contained two rooms) which represented the various rooms and areas within the Titanic. The project taught teamwork, patience, problem-solving, design/engineering, all of which gave students an opportunity to learn about the period in history.

Have you heard the news?

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Hartford HealthCare's new online health news site delivers lively, informative and useful health news in a whole new way. Look for print, video and audio stories produced by HHC's News Service, as well as timely tips on nutrition, fitness, health and wellness, and medical innovations.

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Stonegate staff, clients feast at picnic



Staff and clients from Rushford's Stonegate and CDT program celebrated the end of the year with a picnic on Thursday, June 15. The fun and relaxing afternoon included lunch, ice cream from the Mr. Softee ice cream truck and lawn games including Kan Jam, Spike Ball, Giant Jenga and Ladder Ball. The event was organized by recreation therapist Taryn Petrillo.



Lake Compounce trip

It was a day of food and fun on Saturday, June 17, as employees enjoyed themselves at the annual Rushford Family picnic at Lake Compounce in Bristol.

Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers throughout the HHC Behavioral Health Network? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner. For more information, e-mail amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.