When Melissa Pelletier began working at Natchaug Hospital’s Journey House residential treatment program in 2007, an alarming trend was starting to emerge among the adolescent girls treated there.

“We were seeing girls coming in who were in ‘relationships’ with men that encouraged them to have sex for money,” said Pelletier, who serves as clinical director for the program. “At that time, it was considered prostitution.”

Since then, the language and legal landscape have changed drastically. Minors under the age of 18 that have been coerced or forced into commercial sex acts are no longer labeled as prostitutes, but as victims of sex trafficking. And rather than being prosecuted, they receive the appropriate medical care and protection.

As sex trafficking has become better defined and understood, the number of cases and referrals has steadily increased. In 2008, there were less than five referrals for domestic minor sex trafficking, according to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families; in 2015, referrals to DCF peaked at 133.

At Journey House, which treats girls from across Connecticut that are involved in the juvenile justice system, Pelletier estimates that between a quarter and half of the residents have been the victim of sex trafficking.

“When we look at vulnerabilities, mental health and people’s support networks play a role in victimization,” Pelletier said. “Many of the girls at Journey House lack substantial support networks. Unfortunately, that puts them at risk for being exploited.”

[Continued on page 2]
Sex trafficking among minors on the rise

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Sex traffickers often replicate a family system for vulnerable young people, offering clothes, money, shelter and food.

“We had one girl say that the female pimp bought her socks when she needed them,” Pelletier said. “They come in and fill voids of need for individuals.”

With incidences of domestic minor sex trafficking on the rise and an at-risk population at Journey House, Pelletier and the treatment team have been proactive in addressing the issue.

In 2011, staff was trained by the Justice Resource Institute in the My Life My Choice curriculum. More recently, Pelletier implemented Not A #Number, a child trafficking and exploitation prevention curriculum from Love 146.

“The girls at Journey House have often been in many different treatment settings. Some have been in dozens of placements over the course of their life, and these are 16- and 17-year-old girls,” said Christy Calkins, assistant director at Journey House. “We have to think out of the box to find treatment modalities that are different and effective, and Melissa has done a terrific job finding and implementing programs that the girls can relate to.”

The Not A Number curriculum is broken down into five modules — a general overview of human trafficking and exploitation; myths and misconceptions; the power of language; vulnerabilities and healthy vs. unhealthy relationships; and reducing risky behavior and getting help.

“The girls love this curriculum. It’s very interactive and brings a lot of current issues into discussion,” Pelletier said. “For example, we looked at the song by 50 Cent called P.I.M.P. and how so much of this exploitation is mainstreamed into our culture and normalized, and how it’s even considered to be ‘cool’ to take advantage of people.”

Although some girls at Journey House have first-hand experiences with trafficking, the training and education can be beneficial to anyone.

“What if this hasn’t happened to you, maybe it happened to a friend or a family member, and you can bring this knowledge, because the help and resources are out there” Pelletier said.

For more information on domestic minor sex trafficking, visit DCF’s Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (HART) website at http://1.usa.gov/1OVXFDr.
BHN names new patient experience coordinator

Shawna Cain, a longtime leader within the Behavioral Health Network, has been named Strategic Experience Advisor, a new role meant to help elevate and enhance the experience for patients who are cared for at entities across the BHN.

“I have the best job,” said Cain, who previously was Director of Quality and Risk Management at Natchaug and Rushford. “I get to come to work every day to improve how people experience the amazing work we do.”

In her new role, Cain will serve as an advisor and consultant to all of the organizations within the BHN in identifying, developing and implementing best practices in order to improve the overall experience for patients. She said her goals are to bring forward the phenomenal work already being done in specific areas so they can be elevated to a system-level best practice.

“We are so pleased to have Shawna in this very important role for us,” said Patricia Rehmer, president of the BHN. “She has great institutional knowledge of the organization and is well positioned to help us better understand what the individuals we serve want to see improved.”

Helpful with huddles

The Adult Unit would like to recognize the following people for being noted as going beyond during the month of May at our morning huddles.

Scot M., Monica, Laura, Jose, Bruce, Allyson, the nurses and therapists, Jenn H., Sandra, Sue W., the management team, Kelly S. and all individuals on the unit. Our thanks to all for the dedication and team work.

— Bruce D. Bessette, Unit Clerk, Adult Unit, Natchaug

Movin’ on up

I want to recognize Brian, Scott and new employee David, for their professionalism and positive attitude when delivering furniture to Quinebaug.

They worked well as a team and helped our team get their new offices furnished. Thank you for all you do at Q and throughout Natchaug!

— Leah Russack-Baker, Quinebaug Program Director

Here’s to you!

A weekly roundup of kudos from staff and patients. Please email your submissions to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org. Editors reserve the right to edit submissions for length and grammar.
Hartford HealthCare’s Behavioral Health Network now offers Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home (MATCH™) for people struggling with opioid and other addictions. MATCH™ makes treatment convenient, with schedules built for the working professional. The program, with Suboxone®, Naltrexone and other medications, also includes confidential, private support services and small relapse-prevention groups.

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Addiction has met its MATCH™

Shawn Mawhiney, former Marketing Director of the East Region and newly named Director of Service Line Communications for Hartford HealthCare, has been named Gold Medal Manager for his dedication to living the organization’s values through his interactions with the employees he supervises.

Mawhiney, who currently oversees the BHN communications team, was given the award based on numerous nominations from staff members under his supervision who credited him with creating a true spirit of teamwork that motivated them to work their best every day. Mawhiney has been a director at Hartford HealthCare for the past three years and served as a communications director at Backus Hospital for 10 years before assuming his regional role with HHC. He came to Backus after working as a reporter and city editor for the Norwich Bulletin.

“He genuinely cares about each of his employees and in turn, we all feel loyal and driven to do our best work each and every day,” one of his employees wrote in a nomination.

“His leadership style makes it clear that we both fail and succeed as a team — and that he is part of that team,” another employee wrote.

The HHC Manager Recognition program allows staff to recognize managers as models for excellence in managing people and delivering exceptional results.

To nominate a manager, visit the Human Resources page on the HHC Intranet.

Find hidden treasure every week on the HHC Intranet

To have some fun and help you find your way around the HHC Connect Intranet, we’ve planned a little treasure hunt. Every two weeks or so, look for a new clue in BHNews. To find the buried treasure, log into HHC Connect (intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org) and use the clue to find the treasure chest icon (shown here) buried on a page deep within the Intranet.

Once you find it, click on the treasure chest to reveal the secret question. The answer to the question will be located on the page or a subpage in the section of where the treasure chest was found. Submit the correct answer and be entered to win a prize.

To unlock this week’s buried treasure search the Retirement page of HHC Connect at https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/hr-careers/employees/retirement.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday, except for the weeks of Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org or 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 5, at noon.
The Institute of Living held its annual Employee Awards and Recognition Day June 14. The awards and their recipients are:

- **Psychiatrist-in-Chief Award, recognizing outstanding contributions to psychiatry**: Dr. Joanna Fogg-Waberski, assistant medical director, Geriatric Services

- **Arne Welhaven, MD Memorial Award**, recognizing individuals or groups who best exemplify concern, respect and generosity toward patients and a quest for excellence in mentorship or education: Robert Sahl, MD, assistant medical director, Child & Adolescent Services; and the IDEA Team: Kathy Braswell, John Connor, Grzegorz Cukrowski, Kathryn DePucchio, Joseph Kalinosky, Keith Kendall, Eric Krupa, Andrew Lee, Andre Marriot, Raveen Mehendru, Paul Paseos, Wendy Picard, Robert Renstrom, David Robles, Kenneth Santiago, Michelle Scott, Renee Simone, Semonea Virgo. (Mentors: Cynthia Belonick, Ellen Blair, Linda Durst, Ed Cluckey and Jamie Santaniello.)

- **Linda J. Stacy Service Excellence Award**, recognizing superior understanding and compassion for patients and their families, given by the Family Resource Center Board: Jodi Peck, LCSW, Memories Disorders Center

- **Ned Graffagnino, MD, Honorary Award**, recognizing distinguished service/job performance in community-oriented work and/or collaborative efforts with other mental health professionals: Ed Cluckey, RN, nurse manager on D3N

- **Blue Ribbon Award from Division 40, Society of Clinical Neuropsychology**: James Choi, MD

- **Golden Lamp Award**: John W. Goethe, MD, Director of Clinical Research

- **Inducted into the Johns Hopkins Society of Clinical Neuropsychology**: Godfrey D. Pearson, MD

- **PCA/Psychiatric Technician Dedicated to Caring Award**: Brendan McCann, Psych Tech, D1S; Shelly Molina, Psych Tech, D3S; Robert Renstrom, Psych Tech, CARES; Semonea Virgo, PCA, D2N

- **Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing**: Kathryn DePucchio, BSN, RN

- **Hartford Hospital 2016 Employee of the Year**: Joseph Pedemonti, Educational

- **CT Association of Private Special Education Facilities Golden Apple Award**, recognizing staff members who have made significant contributions to their students and program: Joy Sperry, school nurse, Grace S. Webb School; Marie Reynolds, assistant teacher, Grace S. Webb School; Becky Lyman, teacher, Grace S. Webb School; Beth Farber, student support coordinator, Grace S. Webb School; Jen Taylor, assistant teacher, Webb School at Cheshire; Stephanie Royka, assistant teacher, Webb School at Cheshire

- **National Program of the Year Award**: Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Health, recognizing a program that exemplifies innovation, excellence and/or advocacy: Institute of Living’s Young Adult Services (YAS) Program; Larry Haber, director of Ambulatory, Young Adult and Health Psychology; David Vaughan, LCSW, program manager, Young Adult Services

- **Members Newly Inducted into the Quarter Century Club this year**: Dr. Adrienne Bentman, director, Adult Psychiatry Residency Program; Linda Harrison, Grace Webb School, Physical Education Teacher
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:

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** July 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.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous.** July 5 (Every Tuesday), 12:30-1:30 p.m. Join us for coffee and a one-hour topic discussion. To learn more, contact the AA General Service Office at 212-870-3400 or P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** July 5, 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.

- **Survivors Of Suicide Support Group.** July 6 (First Wednesday of the month), 7 – 8:15 p.m. For those who have lost someone close to them by suicide. Please call the RSVP numbers with questions or concerns. 860-545-7716 or 860-545-7665.

- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** July 6 (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 7 (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 those who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.

- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** July 7 (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.

- **Youth Psychosis Family Support Group.** July 7 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. For parents with youth up to age 18 who have psychotic symptoms such as: hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, disorganized thoughts and behavior or are diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other related disorders. Join us to receive support, guidance and education on how to cope with and help your young person.

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**The Family Resource Center is offering FREE Monthly Yoga Classes**

The class is a Gentle Yoga class and begins with breathing exercises and gentle stretches, followed by a series of poses and ends with relaxation and meditation.

**Tuesday, June 28th, 2016** from 5:00pm-6:00pm Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Hartford Room

OPEN to adult staff and family members. Mats are provided or bring your own!

Instructor: Valerie Raggio, LCSW YOGA Fit, Level 1 Certified

To RSVP or inquire, call the Family Resource Center at 860.545.7324 or email Laura.Durst@hhchealth.org

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Following the Orlando nightclub shooting, Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network experts have been highly visible on television, online and social media offering insights on how to cope with the growing number of mass shootings — and the fear that comes along with them.

More than 50 people were shot and killed at an Orlando nightclub during the early morning hours of June 12 — the latest and deadliest in a series of mass shootings in public settings across the United States.

Incidents like this shake the public’s sense of safety and psychological well-being, and lead to profound questions about how someone could carry out such a senseless act of violence. The Orlando tragedy was allegedly fueled by radical ideology and a hatred for gay people — two factors that Hartford HealthCare behavioral health experts addressed in a wide range of forums, including:

- Dr. Laura Saunders, a staff psychologist in the Young Adult Services Program at the Institute of Living, spoke to WTNH-TV and NBC-CT about how to talk about mass shootings with children and adolescents. She also discussed the impact the incident could have on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

- Dr. Paul Weigle, a staff psychiatrist at Natchaug Hospital, appeared live on the FOX 61-TV news to discuss the effect such graphic images on television and the Internet can have on children, at what age it is appropriate to share with them, and what to say.

- Dr. Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living, spoke to WFSB-TV about extremist ideologies and what psychological factors draw people to them.

HHC experts also went beyond traditional media to help people cope and to describe the psychological factors that might drive someone to violence.

James F. O’Dea, PhD, MBA, vice president of operations for the HHC Behavioral Health Network, said the Orlando massacre shows the need for resources to help people who have been impacted by the tragedy — either directly or indirectly — cope with feelings of distress or despair.

Dr. O’Dea said it’s important for parents to be careful how they discuss the tragedy with children. For young children, he said, parents should try to shield them from media coverage as much as possible. For older children and teens, discussions should be open and honest and may even lead to deeper discussions with their children about many related issues.
Chamber’s annual breakfast focuses on mental wellness

The Midstate Chamber of Commerce’s annual Health & Wellness Breakfast featured words of expertise and demonstrations on how to identify signs of stress or behavioral health issues in the workplace — and some helpful ways to bring relief.

The chamber, which serves the Meriden business community, hosted the annual breakfast at Il Monticello in Meriden, which was co-sponsored by Rushford and drew several dozen business representatives. Among the speakers were Sheryl Sprague, Rushford Prevention Manager, and Krystle Blake, Rushford Prevention Specialist, who provided a presentation on Mental Health First Aid and how it can benefit the workplace.

Sprague and Blake pointed out that behavioral health issues must be acknowledged as clinical problems in the same way as other diseases, such as cancer and heart disease, are viewed. They said Mental Health First Aid programs, which are offered at Rushford and throughout the Behavioral Health Network, can help employers identify workers who may be suffering from behavioral health issues such as substance abuse.

“A disease is a disease is a disease,” said Sprague. “It doesn’t matter if it’s a disease of the brain or the heart, it needs to be acknowledged. And those who are suffering need to be treated with respect.”

To show some of the ways that employees can relieve stress, the breakfast featured a Zumba demonstration to show how exercise can help, as well as an introduction to meditation offered by keynote speaker Kelvin Young of Advocacy Unlimited in Hartford. Young credited his recovery from addiction to the discovery of meditation and other holistic practices while he was in prison.

“These are things you can do to nourish the soul, no matter how challenging your environment may be,” said Young, who also led the audience in a series of breathing exercises and meditation featuring chimes.

A joyful occasion

Katie Gomes, principal of Rushford Academy School, offers words of congratulations and appreciation to four members of the Academy who graduated after completing their requirements over the past year. The graduation ceremony — the first of its kind at the Academy — took place June 10 at the Academy campus in Durham, where dozens of the graduates’ family members and friends came to show their support. Gomes told each of the graduates how she admired the unique traits and qualities that helped them stay on track with the Academy’s educational requirements while also remaining on a path of recovery. After each of the graduates was given a diploma, a celebration followed featuring cake and other refreshments.

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 or matt.burgard@hhchealth.org.
Members of the Kuhn employment team at Rushford – an employment vendor that helps Rushford clients find and retain employment – celebrated a year of success with an awards ceremony in which clients were recognized for overcoming behavioral health issues to find new jobs and hold onto them. The June 20 ceremony at the Meriden Public Library featured games, prizes, refreshments and awards that were handed out to 15 clients for showing persistence, dedication and reliability in meeting their employment goals. Shown here at the ceremony are members of the Kuhn team at Rushford, from left: Charles Wilson, Geoff Crandall, Vanessa Avila and Darryl Pytlak.