



AROUND THE BHN

BHN President Pat Rehmer talks about the year that lies ahead.

• PAGE 3



HERE'S TO YOU!

Give a shout out to your co-workers in our new employee recognition feature. • PAGE 4



GOOD TIDINGS TO YOU

BHN locations across the state did their part to provide holiday cheer.

• PAGES 5, 6, 7, 9

Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network

BHINews

Clients serving clients

Advisory councils allow those who have been helped to help others

On a recent evening at Rushford's Paddock Avenue location in Meriden, Ed Skiffington sat at a table as co-chair of the Rushford Client Advisory Council and got ready to call the group's monthly meeting to order.

"I'm just trying to give back what was so freely given to me," said Skiffington, a former Rushford client who now serves on the council as a way to advocate for clients now receiving care, and to offer support for Rushford caregivers and staff.

With that, Skiffington launched into a busy agenda that included discussions on ways to further enhance the level of care and empowerment that Rushford clients receive. Attending the meeting were eight active and former Rushford clients — including two newcomers — as well as Rushford counselors and clinicians. Among the agenda's topics: the placement of additional suggestion boxes on Rushford sites as ways for clients to provide feedback on their care; and the development of a survey card for clients to fill out upon discharge.

Scenes such as this will be increasingly common this year across the



Client advisory councils, made up of former and current clients, family members and staff, offer entities across the BHN a way to gain first-hand insight on the needs of clients. Here is the team of employees who sit on the Rushford Client Advisory Council, from left: Mike Sienkiewicz, Clinician at Stonehaven; Jahnel Mills, Lead CSP/RP Specialist; Caitlin Swartz, Manager of Customer Service; and Greg Hogan, Program Coordinator ITP.

Behavioral Health Network, as client advisory councils continue to evolve into their roles as important sources of feedback and insight on the needs of clients.

"It's a wonderful way to make sure we are hearing the voices of those we serve," said Patricia Rehmer, MSN, ACHE,

..... Continued on page 2

Get the new year off to a healthy start with Weight Watchers

The Hartford HealthCare Wellness Committee is encouraging employees across the organization to take advantage of HHC's new partnership with Weight Watchers. Free one-year memberships are available to all employees beginning Jan. 1.

Special launch celebrations will take place at entities across the Behavioral Health Network in mid-January. Stay tuned for more details about dates, times and locations.

Employees can take part in regular Weight Watchers meetings at locations across the state or online. If 15 employees from a particular location decide to take part, meetings can also be scheduled at that location as well, so encourage your co-workers to sign up.

Employees can register online on a special portal that has been set up and will be open to employees after Jan. 1. Go to <https://wellness.weightwatchers.com>, then enter Employee ID: 11256026 and Employer Passcode: WW11256026. Then follow the prompts to fill out your information.



Wake up your taste buds
And get ready to spoon up something new

Weight Watchers® is coming to teach you how you can lose weight while enjoying your favorite foods—because it's time to change your relationship with food, for good.

weightwatchers
Help with the hard part.

Learn how Weight Watchers can help.

- **New benefit starts Jan. 1, 2016**
- **Free one-year membership for all employees (with or without HHC health insurance)**
- **Free one-year membership for spouses only if they are covered by an HHC health plan**
- **Attend meetings at work, online or in your community**
- **Enroll on HHC Connect starting Jan. 1, 2016**

'I'm just trying to give back what was so freely given to me'

continued from page 1

Hartford HealthCare senior vice president for behavioral health and president of the BHN. "It's also a great experience for the former clients because they get to serve as a mouthpiece for those who are going through the same thing they went through."

Along with the council at Rushford, there is an active and successful Patient and Family Advisory Council that has been meeting regularly at the Institute of Living for several months, and now numbers 20 former clients, family members of clients and staff. The IOL council meets every other month and recently conducted a survey to identify pressing

needs and priorities that will be taken up this year.

The IOL council has developed a list of goals and objectives that will guide the group's efforts, including:

- Recognition and respect for differences among patients and families
- Communication, education and collaboration among group members
- Use of "best practice" standards in place throughout the IOL
- Incorporating Hartford HealthCare core values.

"We are very excited with the direction we are going and the collaborative nature of the group," said Nancy Hubbard, IOL's director of outpatient and rehabilitative services, who co-chairs the

group along with Ellen Blair, IOL director of nursing.

At Natchaug, a newly formed Client & Family Advisory Council is set to hold its first meeting on Jan. 28 at the main location in Mansfield. The council currently has four clients with more expected to sign up over the next several weeks, said Amy Young, quality analyst for Natchaug and coordinator for the council. She said the group includes a current resident and family members with experience with various Natchaug services, including inpatient, ambulatory, school and residential services.

"We are looking forward to making the most of the insights these group members have to offer," she said.



Looking ahead to a year of opportunities

Happy New Year to staff, clients and all those who contribute to our mission of care across the Behavioral Health Network.

I am looking forward to continuing to get to know you all better as we broaden and deepen our commitment to those we serve. In the months since I assumed a leadership role within Hartford HealthCare, I have developed a profound appreciation for the dedication, innovation and compassion that you all bring to your work every day.

These qualities will continue to play a critical role in the months ahead, as we further position ourselves as the

premier resource for comprehensive behavioral health care in Connecticut. As you know, there is growing interest in our field in communities not only across our state, but the entire country, as people become more open about the need to recognize behavioral health as fundamental to overall health and well-being.

We will continue to be leaders in this effort, providing innovative, evidence-based care for the treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders, across the care continuum - in our inpatient settings and our wide array of ambulatory options in our communities.

It's going to be a year of tremendous opportunities for all of us, as we take on a number of important priorities, including:

- Enhancing our connections to community groups and agencies across the state which serve the same populations

- Greatly expanding our commitment to integrating behavioral health services in the primary care setting

- Continuing the terrific work done by my predecessor, Steve Larcen, in bringing cohesion and a sense of common purpose among the various entities of the BHN — this process is vital to our success.

I'm very excited about working with all of you!

Pat Rehmer, MSN, ACHE, is Hartford HealthCare senior vice president for behavioral health and president of the Behavioral Health Network. Her column will appear once a month in BHNews.



Hartford HealthCare 

SAVE THE DATE

The Fourth Annual Hartford HealthCare Patient Experience Showcase

Connecting Patients to Healthier

Friday, April 8, 2016 | 7:30 AM to 12:15 PM

Heublein Hall, Education & Resource Center (ERC), Hartford Hospital, 560 Hudson Street, Hartford

Learn, network and collaborate with colleagues and patients to advance the HHC patient experience.

.....

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 submission for length and grammar.

Greatness every day

I would like to take some time to recognize the staff on the Adult unit at Natchaug for their unwavering dedication to the patients we serve.

I have been the Adult unit clerk for a long time, and before that a Mental Health Worker. From my position I see the hard work and dedication these people bring to their jobs every day.

They strive on a daily basis to make the patients comfortable and provide support for those involved. They are the lifeline for our patients.

The work they do is of the utmost importance, and deserves recognition.

— **Bruce Bessette, Adult Unit
Natchaug Hospital**

Secret Santa

At Thames Valley this past week staff members were looking to collect a few dollars to purchase a bike for a patient from a family that has limited resources for Christmas gifts. Upon asking Diane Daniels from Thames Valley CDT, she generously decided to pay for the bike in full. Due to her special gesture the child will receive a brand new Star Wars bike. I'm sure she didn't do it for recognition but it speaks to the holiday spirit and her kind heart. I wanted people to know what a sweet person she is.

— **Rebecca Stefanelli, BA, MBA,
Clinical Care manager**

Kudos to Kerri

Kerri Sisson has been with EDT at Natchaug since March. She has worked with staff and community members to identify a variety of creative, fun and educating outings for the kids. Last fall she planned our first annual Trunk or Treat, bringing a safe Halloween to our kids. Over the Christmas holiday, Kerri made sure that our families in need would be provided for. Her discretionary effort not only improves the quality of care for our clients but puts staff in the holiday spirit as well!

— **Stephanie E. Bonardi, LPC, Program Director,
Joshua Center Thames Valley**

inthenews

Article shows the need for services in Meriden

A Meriden woman spoke out about the struggles her two sons are having with heroin addiction in an article that recently appeared in the Meriden Record-Journal. The article also highlighted steps taken by Rushford and other community groups to call attention to the issue.

The Jan. 2 article showed the impact

that addiction has been having on Sue Willette and her sons, Jonathan and Christopher, who were both arrested over the past several months on drug-related charges. Sue Willette told the newspaper that her sons are suffering from a disease that is becoming more dangerous as young people increasingly turn to opioids and heroin.

The article also pointed to ongoing efforts by community groups such as Rushford to call attention to the issue.

Last fall, Rushford was one of several groups to sponsor a community education forum in Meriden meant to help coordinate prevention and treatment efforts among all those who work closely with young people, including parents, educators, coaches and counselors.

The article can be found at <http://www.myrecordjournal.com/meriden/meridennews/8172551-129/mother-speaks-out-about-sons-addiction-underlying-major-meriden-drug.html>.

Dr. Schwartz to lead discussion on art and trauma

Harold I. Schwartz, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living and Hartford HealthCare regional vice president, will take part in a discussion about the impact of war trauma in a special production at Hartford Stage featuring award-winning photojournalist Paul Watson and playwright Dan O'Brien.

The discussion will take place Monday, Jan. 11 at 7 p.m., and is free and open to the public. Dr. Schwartz will serve as moderator in the discussion while also offering insight on the psychological consequences for those who experience trauma, particularly in a war setting.

The relationship between Watson and O'Brien began after Watson won a Pulitzer Prize in 2004 for a photo showing an American soldier being dragged down a street in Mogadishu, Somalia. Watson later commented that he felt haunted by the photo, a comment that influenced O'Brien to write the play, *The Body of An American*, which is playing at Hartford Stage through Jan. 31. The play focuses on the common experiences that Watson and O'Brien share as it relates to trauma, and the friendship they share as a result.

For more information, or to reserve tickets, go to www.hartfordstage.org.

Holiday harmonies



Music filled the air at the Institute of Living over the holiday season. At left, members of the Hartford Hospital choir volunteered on Christmas Day to spread cheer to patients on Donnelly 1 North.

From left are Marjorie Reid from HIM, Carol Blanks-Lawson from Patient Relations, Felix Correa JB OR, and Novelette Shields, Donnelly 1 North.



At right, a barbershop quartet led by retired Hartford Hospital physician Carl Braren, MD, second from left, toured the Institute of Living on Dec. 23 singing holiday songs and spreading good cheer.

Elementary students' winter art on display at IOL

Staff at the Institute of Living are invited to view the seasonal art displays in the Commons Building made by elementary-aged students at the Grace Webb School.

The fall art displays, which included cloth strip weavings and Mexican-inspired wrappings, were recently replaced by pastel prints with objects such as cardboard and textured placemats.

Fans of the recently distributed HHC Behavioral Health Network Children's Art Calendar will enjoy the exhibition, displayed on the far left, behind the divider.

Bringing warmth and cheer

Students in the American Medical Association chapter at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine donated three full carloads of new and gently used clothing to patients at the Institute of Living during the holiday season. In all, students donated 45 bags to IOL inpatient units and



patients in the *On the Horizon* program. Shown here are, from left, UConn AMA project leaders Christina Klecker, Elise Mester and Karen Xiao, with IOL staff members Jamie Santaniello, Nurse Manager, Donnelly 2 South; and Joseph Kalinosky, Rehab Therapist, Donnelly 2 South. Not shown is Paula Rego, Case Worker, IOL Family Resource Center.

BrainDance Awards highlight student projects

The Institute of Living/Hartford Hospital is sponsoring an academic and art competition designed to decrease the stigma of mental illness. The 13th annual BrainDance Awards encourage high school students to gain knowledge about psychiatric diseases and develop a more tolerant and realistic perspective toward people with severe psychiatric problems. The competition also aims to promote students' interest in careers in mental health care.

The projects will be judged by expert clinicians and researchers in the field, based on:

- Relevance to the issue of stigma
- Creativity
- Accuracy of information
- Scientific rigor.

Projects on any theme related to severe mental illness will be considered for an award. The categories are: Academic, Art, and Mixed Media.

All applicants, their teachers, families and classmates will be invited to an awards day celebration hosted by the Institute of Living on April 21. Winners are encouraged to present a brief synopsis summarizing their projects. The student lecture and presentations are designed so all participants can cite their BrainDance projects on future school or job applications.

To apply for the awards: please log on to: www.nrc-iol.org and follow the link to BrainDance for application forms, information and procedures. Submission deadline is Feb. 1.

For more information: contact Nancy Hubbard at **860-545-7665** or nancy.hubbard@hhchealth.org

Santa visits the IOL



Santa and Mrs. Claus are pretty busy around the holidays, but they always make time to visit the children's unit at the Institute of Living. Here, Santa and Mrs. Claus meet with Donnelly lobby receptionist Lillian Ruiz during their recent stop before Christmas. Some IOL employees have heard (unconfirmed) reports that "Santa" is actually former IOL employee Caleb Cutler and "Mrs. Claus" is his wife, Helen.

Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. 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. For addition information on these support groups, please contact the FRC at **860-545-7665** or **860-545-1888**. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **An Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services.** Jan. 12, May 24, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities.
- **Peer Support Group.** Jan. 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 (Every Wednesday of each month), 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. in the Carolina Cottage, Lower Level Conference Room. A peer run support group for those who have a mental illness.
- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Jan. 13, Jan. 27, Feb. 10, Feb. 24, March 9, March 23, April 13, April 27, May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22 (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.
- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.
- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Jan. 21, Feb. 4, Feb. 18, March 3, March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (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 you are caring for others.

New program director at JC Enfield

Natchaug Hospital is pleased to welcome Brett Carra, MSW, as the program director at Joshua Center Enfield.



Carra

Carra comes to Natchaug from Massachusetts where he worked at Behavioral Health Network in Springfield as a team leader and in-home therapy clinician, and at Springfield Technical Community College as adjunct professor of psychology/human growth and development. Previously, Carra worked for Key Programs, Inc. and At Home VNA providing in-home clinical services.

Carra received his Master's Degree in Social Work from Springfield College and his Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Eastern Connecticut State University.

Santa Claus came to town



Santa Claus made his annual visit to the child, adolescent and adult inpatient units on Wednesday, Dec. 23, accompanied by his elves, Shawn Cyr and Michelle Ducat. Santa visited with clients, delivered unit presents and spread holiday cheer to those spending the holidays on the units.

Students bring holiday cheer to Blair Manor

Students from the Joshua Center Enfield CDT Leadership Club brought holiday cheer to Blair Manor nursing home in Enfield in December. Students began by singing carols for the residents and followed up their performance with homemade holiday cards and book marks for the residents. They finished the day with a lively game of bingo with each student sitting at a table with a couple of residents.

Client and Family Advisory Council set first meeting

Natchaug Hospital will host its first-ever Client and Family Advisory Council meeting on Jan. 28, at 6 p.m. at the main hospital.

The purpose of this council is to give clients and their families the opportunity to provide feedback on our services and identify areas of improvement.

The group plans to meet on the last Thursday of every month from 6 - 7:15 p.m. We are still looking for members to join the council. Contact Amy Young for more information or to suggest a member at amy.young@hhchealth.org or ext. 69992.

Conantville staff adopts local family

Staff from the Conantville Building teamed up with the Natchaug H3W Friends workgroup to carry on their annual tradition of adopting a family for the holidays. Principals helped identify two families in need, one from Mansfield CDT and the other

from Windham CDT, and staff donated a mix of toys, clothing, gift cards and other presents for the families.



New look for leadership rounding in the new year

Starting in January, Natchaug is rolling out a new Leadership Rounding format, which will include work groups from every site and location. The new format is in response to feedback from staff who want more leadership involvement and will also prepare programs for the transition to Lean Daily Management.

Natchaug leadership has committed that:

- Every work group will be rounded face to face for the entire meeting, at least quarterly
- Every work group will be rounded every month (during idea generation time when it is not a “face-to-face” month),

either in-person or virtually using the new Virtual Meeting Room capability

- Every work group will be rounded by a member of ELT at least once per year

The goal of leadership rounding is to get feedback about what is going well, what are the current opportunities and what barriers should be brought back to leadership to address.

When rounded, for either the entire meeting or during idea generation, conduct your meeting as you have always done — the rounder is there to learn and assist.



Hilary's Closet lives on at Quinebaug

Quinebaug therapist Hilary Lange retired from Natchaug Hospital in October, her co-worker, Mary O'Keefe honored her legacy by starting Hilary's Closet.

Lange, who served Natchaug for 15 years, always had a bookshelf in her office with non-perishable food for clients in need at Quinebaug. O'Keefe, an evening therapist at the program, transformed an old chart cabinet into “Hilary's Closet” and stocked it with food donated by staff and clients. Quinebaug clients who need food are welcome to take what they need during difficult times.



You Are Not Alone

Support Group for Children and Families Living With High Functioning Autism Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)

The focus of the group is to provide support and education to parents and families raising children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders. The group will:

- Connect parents with similar concerns
- Help families understand the needs of children with PDD
- Develop strategies to parent and educate children with PDD
- Support family members who live with a PDD child
- Support the children identified as PDD



Dates: Jan. 20 - Feb. 17 - March 16
Time: 5:30 — 6:30 p.m.
Where: Natchaug Hospital, 189 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center 06250

www.natchaug.org
860-456-1311

Parent Support group

- Understand the nature of the disorder
- View things differently
 - Poor social skills
 - Over stimulated
 - Have melt downs
- Develop strategies to provide consistency, predictability and understanding (especially during a meltdown)

Client Support Group

Learn conversational skills, social skills and behavioral expectations or “rules of engagement”

Sibling Support Group

Provide care and fun for siblings while helping them learn and understand that everyone is different, and therefore, have different needs

If interested in attending, please contact:

Stanley Hospod
860-705-7644
Stanley.Hospod@hhchealth.org



Please register for these FREE support groups, so we will have enough PIZZA

Opioids in our communities: a wake-up call

This FREE community discussion will focus on:

- The impact of the opioid crisis in Middlesex County and across the state
- Reducing opioid use
- Addressing the impact on our youth and communities

Local experts from treatment centers, law enforcement, and the State’s Attorney’s Office will lead a discussion on how communities can work together to find new solutions for the substance abuse problem. Light dinner provided.

Tuesday, Jan. 19 | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Community Health Center, Community Room
675 Main Street, Middletown

- Speakers:**
- Patricia Rehmer, President, Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network
 - Peter McShane, State’s Attorney for the Judicial District of Middlesex
 - A representative from the Statewide Narcotics Task Force
 - Dr. J. Craig Allen, Rushford Medical Director

Presented by Rushford and the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council, with funding provided by The Community Foundation of Middlesex County



Rushford 
Connect to healthier.™

Registration is preferred.

☎ 1.855.HHC.HERE 🌐 hartfordhealthcare.org/events

Spirit of the season



Employees at the Rushford location on Paddock Avenue in Meriden exemplified the true meaning of the holidays by donating numerous items to a local family which was overseen by Krystle Blake in the prevention department. She said employees donated an unusually large amount of items to support this year’s family, including a twin-size “Minnie Mouse” bed with matching sheets and pillow cases as well as necessities such as dish sets, a toaster oven and other home goods. Shown here are the numerous items being stacked in Blake’s car for delivery to the family. “Thank you to everyone who showed such great generosity,” she said.

Rushford 
Connect to healthier.™

Staff Holiday Party

Friday, Jan. 8
7-11 p.m.

Villa Capri
Route 5,
Wallingford, CT

Tickets: \$10/person
(2 tickets max)

Join your co-workers for a celebration of the holiday season, including a buffet, DJ and photo booth.

Staff may bring one adult guest.

For tickets, see Ani Cruz or Sheila Gosselin by Tuesday, Dec. 29.

