



### JOIN THE TEAM

Staff members needed to help boost the BHN on social media.

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### THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK

Holiday parties and gatherings can be tricky to navigate when it comes to alcohol • PAGE 3



### IN THE SPIRIT

Rushford diversity council encourages seasonal celebrations across all cultures. • PAGE 7

Hartford HealthCare   
Behavioral Health Network

# BHINews

## 'A special moment'

*Diane Richards bids farewell to Natchaug after 47 years of helping kids find their way*

**H**e was an awkward teenager in Diane Richards' inpatient adolescent group at Natchaug Hospital, fretting that girls didn't want to date him after he tried to commit suicide.

The mental health worker, in her frank yet nurturing way, suggested that girls might be afraid to get close to someone who wanted to harm himself.

"We talked about how it was important for him to be honest with himself," Richards said.

Decades later, a 35-year-old man sought her out to thank her "for turning his life around." That uncertain teenager became a successful multi-billionaire



*Natchaug Employee Diane Richards will be retiring after working for 47 years at the hospital. She began her work when the facility was still a nursing home, and currently works in the Joshua Center.*

raising a family of his own.

"That was a special moment," said Richards, who retires Dec. 21 after 47 years at Natchaug.

There have been many such moments validating her decision to remain at Natchaug when it evolved from a convalescent home where she started as a nurse's assistant in 1971 into a behav-

ioral health hospital.

"I always see other kids in the mall. It's nice to see if they're doing well or, if not, getting them the help they need," she said.

After the Natchaug transition began in the 1990s, Richards worked in Montville for several months to help establish a new Joshua Center program patterned after the Mansfield site. She has worked

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at the Joshua Center Mansfield for a few decades.

“A lot of people left when they changed to a psychiatric focus but I decided to try it and see how I did,” she said. “I always liked working with kids. I wanted to help them look at themselves. It’s not what their parents want, but what they want to gain from the program. That empowers them.”

“(When) Natchaug closed services (for elderly patients), Diane transferred with great fear to the inpatient adolescent psychiatric unit,” said David Klein, PhD, who was an administrator at Natchaug at the time. “She never stopped working with children and adolescents for the rest of her lengthy career, and never ran out of compassion for her clients or for the staff who work those clients.”

She learned how to help adolescents with behavioral health issues and, when she started at the Joshua Center, she asked for training to run the support groups.

“I didn’t just want to be a body in the hallway. They taught me how to set objectives for the kids and how to have a back-up plan if the original plan doesn’t

work,” she said. “The focus is on behavior management — giving them coping skills when they’re anxious, speaking up in a way that they’ll be heard and dealing with substance abuse issues.”

She leads groups for teens ages 13 to 18 with anywhere from three to 15.

“Her gentle manner has allowed her to calm many youngsters who were enraged, and on one occasion, allowed her to disarm a young man who arrived at her program with a weapon. She has demonstrated the strength of kindness,” Dr. Klein said.

The Mansfield mother of one and grandmother of one enjoyed learning and growing at work, speaking with a passion that did not go unnoticed even after Klein left.

“I’ve worked with Diane for 10 years and, despite how long she’s been here, she continually tries to come up with new ideas for the kids to meet them where they’re at,” said Jonathan Watts, LCSW, program director at Natchaug. “It speaks to her passion for the job.”

In her 46 years at the hospital, Richards witnessed changes both good and bad in the field. She remembers taking

flocks of teens to Six Flags as a reward for good behavior, but care must now take place on site for insurance purposes.

“Employees like Diane are precious in this field because they do everything with their hearts, focusing on the needs and best interests of the clients at all times,” said Patricia Rehmer, MSN, ACHE, president of the Behavioral Health Network (BHN) and senior vice president at HHC. “The entire Behavioral Health Network owes her a debt of gratitude for the selfless way she has helped hundreds of clients and been an integral part of the growth and success of Natchaug Hospital.”

John Santopietro, MD, physician-in-chief of the BHN, added, “The ‘care’ in healthcare comes from the heart of dedicated, compassionate people like Diane. We cannot even begin to imagine the lives she has touched through her years of service, leaving each client and their family feeling stronger and empowered. We are so blessed that she opted to stay at Natchaug and blaze a new direction in her career and wish her the best in retirement.”

## BHN looking to boost social media presence

Are you interested in joining the BHN Social Media Squad? You can help the BHN improve its social media content and engagement as a member of the Social Media Squad. Participants will:

- Write Health News Hub stories from your professional perspective (i.e. thought leadership pieces, consumer friendly clinical pieces, highlights of published research).
- Take photos/videos at employee and public events for posting to social media sites.
- Lead and monitor support private Facebook support groups across all institutes and service lines and more!

For more information or to join, contact [socialmedia@hhchealth.org](mailto:socialmedia@hhchealth.org).

## Sounds of the season



*The Just4Fun Quartet, including retired Hartford Hospital internist Carl Braren, MD, second from left, sang Christmas carols for staff at the Institute of Living’s Terry Building on Wednesday, Dec. 12.*

# Holiday festivities can mean spike in alcohol use

With the parties, charcuterie platters and twinkling lights of the holiday season comes an increase in alcohol consumption.

Adding to the typical warnings about drinking and driving, however, is the heightened responsibility for front-line clinicians to screen for risky drinking and signs of alcohol use disorder (AUD), according to J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director at Rushford.

There is a marked increase of AUD in patients having behavioral health conditions, and the stress of the holiday season exacerbates both in certain populations, he explained.

“There are simple, quick screening

tools to identify risky alcohol use,” he said, noting that tools can be as basic as a few pointed questions to discover how often the person drinks alcohol and how much they drink.

From 2002 to 2013, he said, high-risk drinking among females in the United States jumped 58 percent, with a spike in AUD noted among women of 83.7 percent in the same time period. In the decade from 2007 to 2017, there was a 35 percent increase in deaths attributed to alcohol. In women, the increase was 85 percent.

“This is clearly an issue, one that was outlined in a 2016 Surgeon General’s report entitled ‘Facing Addiction in

America,” Dr. Allen said.

Hartford HealthCare providers use the AUDIT-C screen targeting alcohol consumption. High-risk drinking in men, according to this tool, is defined as any episode in the year of drinking more than four drinks a day. For women, the number is three drinks a day. High-risk drinking means the person is at enhanced risk for having or developing an AUD and/or the physical results of alcohol exposure like hypertension, liver disease, gastrointestinal issues and cancers.

Other techniques to detect use or manage treatment of AUD are biochemical tests that can identify drinking through urine or blood samples.

Treatment of AUD should include pharmacologic intervention as recommended by the American Psychiatric Association guidelines issued last January, Dr. Allen said. This strategy, combined with therapy, is employed in all Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home (MATCH) programs in place across the Behavioral Health Network.



Allen

For clients with AUD who are not open to treatment, he suggested “motivational interviewing” and harm-reduction as strategies to meet the client where they’re at and engage them in discussion about a healthier lifestyle.

“We know that 29 percent of adults will have AUD in their lifetime and that carries a host of related medical concerns. But, in our field, the impact on psychiatric illness and suicide warrants a best practice of universal screening,” Dr. Allen said. “Once identified with AUD, we know that best outcomes result from concurrent treatment of co-occurring disorders.”

Introducing the  
**HHC EMMie Awards**

Nominate colleagues who made a moment matter for those in our care ~ patients, residents, clients, families, visitors, and students in our schools.

## Recognize moments that matter in four categories:



Nominate a colleague who you caught doing the right thing for someone in our care.

Nominate a colleague mentioned in a letter, comment, or media story that came from someone who had such an exceptional experience that they felt compelled to share.

Nominate a colleague who found a way to improve the experience for someone in our care through one of the Lean/H3W continuous improvement venues.

Nominate a colleague who did the safe thing by catching an error and preventing harm to someone in our care.



## Nominations due no later than Feb. 15, 2019

Eight regional finalists and one winner from each category will be honored at an awards ceremony in April.

Visit HHC Connect for nomination and eligibility details. Nominations submitted through Momentum.

**momentum**

Hartford  
HealthCare  
Connect to healthier.™

For more information on the MATCH program at Hartford HealthCare, go to [hhcbehavioralhealth.org/match](http://hhcbehavioralhealth.org/match).



■ HHC CEO Elliott Joseph penned a commentary on the tragedy of hospital shootings for a recent issue of *Modern Health-care*. <https://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20181210/NEWS/181219993>

■ Harold (Hank) Schwartz, MD, former psychiatrist-in-chief of the Institute of Living, was quoted in a Hartford Courant article on the mental health status of Sandy Hook shooter Adam Lanza. <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-news-sandy-hook-lanza-new-documents-20181204-story.html>

■ Dr. Schwartz was quoted in a second Sandy Hook-related story on signs of gun violence in this piece. <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Sandy-Hook-Promise-Releases-Powerful-Short-Film-on-Warning-Signs-of-Gun-Violent-502353301.html> on NBC CT.

For more behavioral health news updates, subscribe to the BHN's e-newsletter on [www.healthnewshub.org](http://www.healthnewshub.org).

## Next issue is Jan. 11

■ There will not be an issue of BHNews printed for Friday, Dec. 28. Enjoy the holidays!

## About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to [amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org](mailto:amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org) or [susan.mcdonald@hhchealth.org](mailto:susan.mcdonald@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.

**The deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Jan. 8, at noon**

We're proud to introduce our new joint venture!



CarePartners of Connecticut is a new kind of health plan that brings together the medical expertise of Hartford HealthCare and the insurance experience of Tufts Health Plan to create innovative Medicare Advantage (HMO) plans focused on patient care.

CarePartners of Connecticut empowers primary care providers to decide what's best for their patients.

**Spread the word!** Recommend CarePartners of Connecticut to your friends, neighbors and loved ones. Visit [carepartnersct.com](http://carepartnersct.com) to learn more today.



## Coat and food drive under way to help IOL families

Please join the IOL PHP/TOPS programs in supporting those in need with food and outerwear to help protect them from the cold.

Our families would benefit from receiving the following items:

- Non-perishable items (boxed stuffing, canned goods, etc.) for a holiday dinner
- Monetary gifts or supermarket gift cards (Stop & Shop, Big Y, Walmart, etc.) so that turkeys or hams may be purchased
- New/lightly worn hats, gloves, scarves and coats

■ Other donations of food, household items and toys are also welcomed

Donations will be accepted through Tuesday, Dec. 18. Please bring all items to the PHP/IOP hallway located in the Brace-land Building on the first floor. Items such as hats, gloves and scarves may be hung on the giving tree directly. There will also be a box for larger items. Please place all food items in the designated food bin.

If you have any questions, please contact Corrado D'Ambrogio at **860.696.0042** or Kelsey Socha at **860.696.0025**.

## 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. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** Dec. 14, 21, 28. (Every Friday except the first of the month), 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 email [marissa.sicley-rogers@hhchealth.org](mailto:marissa.sicley-rogers@hhchealth.org).
- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** Dec. 17, 24, 31. (Every Monday), noon - 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room, Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26. (Every Wednesday), 7 - 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, second floor, Litchfield Room. Peer-run support group for those who have been diagnosed with

depression or bipolar disorder.

- **Anxiety Disorders: An Introduction.** Dec. 18, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m. This lecture is for families and friends of individuals who have an anxiety disorder or a related disorder. Participants will acquire a basic understanding of anxiety disorders, their treatments and suggestions to help them better cope with the illness. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at **860.545.7324**.
- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** Dec. 19. (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or 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. Please RSVP to Goviana at **860.560.1711** or [gmorales@spedconnecticut.org](mailto:gmorales@spedconnecticut.org).

- **It's Hard To Be A Mom.** Dec. 20. (First and third Thursday of each month), 10 - 11:30 a.m. Peer-led group that acknowledges the inherent challenges with modern-day mothering and offers an opportunity for mothers

to come together, share experiences, and support each other. This group welcomes expecting mothers and mothers with babies to discuss any and all challenges associated with motherhood. Babies welcome! Please RSVP to Laura at **860.545.7324**.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Dec. 20. (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.
- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** Dec. 20, 27. (Every Thursday), 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room. Peer-run support group based firmly on a belief of self-help, mutual respect and understanding where people can safely share their experiences of voices, visions, unusual sensory perceptions. The groups offer an opportunity for people to accept and find meaning in their experiences that help them regain power over their lives.
- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** Dec. 20, 27. (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One-hour topic discussion.

## Annual staff campaign needs your help

Support Natchaug programs, services and clients with a tax-deductible donation to the 2018 Natchaug Hospital Annual Staff Campaign. You make a difference every day, by helping people with mental illness and substance use disorders recover and find new beginnings. Unfortunately, many of the wonderful services you and your peers provide are not reimbursed by insurance. In fact, many of our most successful programs rely on your generosity for support.

Things to know:

- All donations stay local to Natchaug Hospital and support its pro-

grams and client needs.

- No donation goes towards wages/salaries.

- Weekly drawings give you the chance to win multiple times.

- Donations and pledges of \$25 or more can win a weekly drawing (entries based on giving level)\*

- New for this year — donations/pledges of \$25 or more received before Dec. 31 are eligible to receive Natchaug gear (mug, winter hat, long sleeve t-shirt, hooded sweatshirt, fleece vest, zip-up fleece — item based on giving level)

- As a reminder — if you have a

current pay roll deduction pledge, it will continue at the current level for 2019 unless you tell us you want to change your giving amount or cancel your pledge. Pledge “renewals” are eligible for both the raffle drawings and the gear (please complete the form for your gear item/size). Payroll deductions will begin in the first pay period of January 2019

The Donation/pledge form is available on the Natchaug intranet or by emailing [sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org](mailto:sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org). Forms can be emailed or inter-office mailed to Sherry Smardon in Philanthropy and Development.

### 'Tis the season



*On Saturday, Dec. 1, more than 150 Natchaug employees attended the annual holiday party at the Elks Club in Willimantic for a night of food, raffles and dancing.*

### Donations needed for toy drive

Natchaug Hospital is collecting donations of new, unwrapped toys for children ranging from five to 18 years old to make the holidays special for families in the community and those who may spend the holidays receiving treatment on the child and adolescent inpatient unit.

Donations may be dropped off in the main lobby at 189 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center from now through Monday, Dec. 17, between 7 a.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Suggested donations include gift cards, toiletries, Play-Doh, Legos, dolls, puzzle books, reading books, playing cards, socks, blankets, stuffed animals, etc.

## Winter CultureLand celebrates all seasons

Rushford's Diversity and Inclusion Council is inviting all departments to participate in a holiday celebration called Winter CultureLand.

Managers will be assigned different cultural/religious holidays that are celebrated in the United States in the winter season. Celebrations should be held any time between now and Dec. 31. Celebrations can be coordinated with other teams or on separate days.

Teams should take pictures of the

event and submit to [amy.dimauro@hhchealth.org](mailto:amy.dimauro@hhchealth.org). Winners will be named based on most creative and best representation of the assigned holiday.

Celebrations should include at minimum the following:

- Poster with info on the holiday (i.e. history, who celebrates, how, etc.)
- At least one food dish that represents the holiday
- Decoration and/or dress that are specific to the holiday.

Assignments include the following:

- Billy/Katie: Winter Solstice and Three Kings Day
- Cassie/UM: Kwanzaa
- Darcy's teams: Winter Solstice
- Deanna/Jim/Kuhn: Mardi Gras
- Debra/Colleen's Teams: three Kings Day
- Enza/Francis/Christina's teams: Winter Solstice
- Greg: Chanukah
- Jack: Mardi Gras
- Jen R/Admissions: Winter Solstice
- Jim/Dietary: Three King's Day
- JoAnn's teams: Chanukah
- Karen's teams: Christmas
- Karen/Kevin/Joe: Mardi Gras
- Meagen: Kwanzaa
- Megan: Chanukah
- Michelle: Three King's Day
- Reggie/Gordon: Christmas and Mardi Gras
- Sami Jo/Paddock: Christmas
- Tara/Krystle's teams: Kwanzaa
- Tom: Christmas
- Val: Mardi Gras



### Multi-Family Group *Allies in Recovery Model*



Join us for a support group focused on helping the parents, family members, caregivers and friends of those with addiction. Find support and understanding while also working to:

- Reduce pain, anger, & worry
- Gain skills proven to work
- Reduce substance use
- Get your loved one into treatment
- Improve your well-being

**Sundays from 10-11 AM**  
Starting Dec. 2, 2018

**Rushford at Stonegate**  
459 Wallingford Road, Durham, CT

**For questions, confirmation, and all other inquires please contact:**

Peter Doria 860-349-2043 x308 or Lareina Lacz 860-349-2043 x303

### Did you know?

Since 2017, Rushford has hosted 150 interns (including 47 this school year). So far, 14 have been hired as employees after graduation.

Thank you for all you do help teach and mentor the next generation of behavioral health professionals!

### Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner.

To learn more, e-mail [amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org](mailto:amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org).