



“ I Stand Before You a Sober and Better Man ”

“I stand before you a sober and better man. My years of alcohol abuse had taken a toll on my body and mind. Now I can say I am healing in so many ways....I have been sober for 558 days!” These are the inspiring words of Mr. Smith* (name has been changed to protect privacy). At his graduation from Sobriety Court in Asheville, NC, Mr. Smith described how he used drinking to cope with the personal distress of having troubles on his job and being a divorced father. He thought he was “escaping reality”, but after several DWIs and incarceration, being “locked away from everything that I loved”, Mr. Smith realized he needed to get help for his addiction. “Being incarcerated makes a person think about the choices that brought them to that point in their life. That time I spent reassured me that I was done with the old life. It only brought grief and emptiness.”

Mr. Smith attributes his transformation from feeling down-and-out to being hopeful about his future to participation in Sobriety Court in Buncombe County. Sobriety Court offers substance use treatment to high-risk, high-need DWI offenders. “I was so lucky to be accepted into Sobriety Court, a much needed experience- a program to lay down structure and discipline to lead me in the right direction.”

Sobriety Court and several other innovative recovery programs in the Asheville area are the result of various partnerships between the RHA Forensic Services Team, Buncombe County government, local law enforcement, and the 28th Judicial District. RHA Program Coordinators and Case Managers offer leadership and aid in navigating complex service systems, assessing and linking individuals involved in the criminal justice system with services, and providing support to individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders.



Other Services Provided By The RHA Forensic Team in Buncombe County

- **Jail Diversion & Re-Entry Programs** – these programs seek to divert individuals from the criminal justice system to community-based recovery programs and other resources. The goal is to help people achieve greater stability and better quality of life through accepting treatment, learning to better manage their symptoms, and motivating them to adopt more positive behaviors.
- **Family Treatment Court** - provides case management, care coordination, and treatment support to parents/caregivers who have substance use issues to help them achieve and maintain recovery, with the goal of increasing their ability to safely care for their children.
- **Adult Drug Treatment Court** – a voluntary criminal court program that seeks to reduce recidivism, while providing guidance, treatment, and discipline to individuals seeking recovery from alcohol and other drugs.

➤ *Article is continued on page 3*

INSIDE



FEATURE ARTICLE page 2
“Speechless”

LEADERSHIP page 3
“Thought Leaders” spotlight
Charlotte Wooten Magnolia Place

LATEST UPDATES page 4, 5

- CAP/C employee, Sara Robinson wins Meredith College Award
- Out of Reach, film about teens abusing prescription drugs screened in Weaverville, NC
- TNCO Awards For Excellence
- Michelle Robertson named new Clear Creek Administrator

AROUND THE COMPANY page 6,7

- Anson Children’s Center stays healthy with Shape NC
- Clear Creek Nursing has mobile blood drive with CBC of the Carolinas.
- Girl Scouts select Bear Creek for Silver Project
- McDowell BH wins award
- Bojangles hires with Employment Services

BACK PAGE Page 8
NC DDNA is officially inducted at San Diego Conference

How the Sitcom ‘Speechless’ Understands Families Like Mine

The
New York
Times

By NEIL GENZLINGER SEPT. 9, 2016

If you live in a household like mine — one with a nonverbal child — you’re anticipating one television show above all others this fall: “Speechless,” which begins Sept. 21 on ABC. A prime-time series on a major network about “us”? It’s occasion for excitement, and for reflection. What, exactly, do we who live in the “Speechless” universe hope this series will accomplish?

“Speechless” is a classic domestic comedy — yes, a comedy — centered on a 16-year-old, named JJ DiMeo who has cerebral palsy, can’t speak and uses an alternative-communication device to express himself. He’s the eldest of three children, and he’s played by Micah Fowler, an actor, who himself has cerebral palsy, a casting decision that alone makes this series stand out.

Minnie Driver portrays his mother, Maya, who like a lot of parents of children with disabilities sometimes turns into a wild-eyed, not-always-rational warrior for her son. JJ has two siblings (Mason Cook and Kyla Kenedy) whose own needs tend to get overlooked, a familiar theme in such households. John Ross Bowie plays the father, Jimmy, who struggles to keep Maya from sailing off the edge.

When ABC picked up this show last spring, word spread quickly through the chat rooms and Facebook pages where nonverbal people and their parents hang out. The YouTube trailer has had about 1.5 million views. I watched the pilot episode over the summer at Camp Communicate in Maine, which is for children who use alternative-communication devices. Staff members and campers watching with me agreed: Whoever’s behind this show “gets it.”

There’s a reason for that: The show’s creator, Scott Silveri, grew up in a home much like the one in “Speechless,” with a nonverbal brother with cerebral palsy and other health issues.

“It’s a story that I’ve been wanting to tell as long as I’ve been writing,” said Mr. Silveri, who has written and been a producer for “Friends” and other shows. “Not so much focused on doing a story about disability; I was really interested in doing a family show and exploring how one family member with a disability affects everybody else and turns them into the specific kind of weirdos that they become.”

It is largely unexplored territory. For decades, enduring TV characters with a disability were rare. Name one from the medium’s first 50 years. “Ironside,” says practically everyone. Name five more? Not so easy.

Usually a disability equals struggle equals nothing but pain and misery. We “insiders” hate that. Yes, having a serious disability or caring for someone who does is hard, but hardship doesn’t define that life. Just the other day, I laughed a couple of times, and so did my daughter, who has Rett syndrome*. Mr. Silveri said the No. 1 reaction he has had from “inside” families when they hear about the show has been, “Please tell me it’s a comedy.”

Though I’ve been writing as “us,” one thing you learn quickly when you have a child with a disability is that there is no “disability community”; the opinions, aspirations and beliefs within that world are as wildly divergent as in the population at large. So I won’t presume to say what “we” want “Speechless” to accomplish; only what I’d like.



From left, Kyla Kenedy, Mason Cook, Micah Fowler and Minnie Driver in “Speechless,” centered on a teenager who has cerebral palsy, can’t speak and uses an alternative-communication device to express himself.
Credit Nicole Wilder/ABC

“

I hope it gives another, especially hard, kick to the door that has made characters and actors with disabilities so scarce on TV. And I hope it helps break down the sense of isolation that envelops families like the DiMeos. Many people still either stare or look away when they see someone like JJ. I don’t expect that those reactions will ever disappear. Maybe “Speechless” will make them a little less common. ”

The author, Neil Genzlinger began working for The Times as a television critic in 2011. Prior to becoming a television critic, he worked for The Times as an editor. His reviews tend to shift more towards theater and television related to disabilities such as a 2002 play called “Syndrome,” “Autism: The Musical,” and “Push Girls.” He has a daughter named Abby who has Rett syndrome. Abby has appeared in Julia Roberts’ documentary “Silent Angels.”*

***Rett Syndrome is a neurological disorder that affects girls almost exclusively.**



C Charlotte Wooten
1958-2016

Thought Leader

Magnolia Place

Submitted by Debbie Valentine and Krystal Valentine

Feisty, spirited, determined, or hell-bent as we say “Down East” in North Carolina; Charlotte Wooten never met a kid or a young adult that she didn’t think she could help to achieve great things. She touched the lives of over 1,200 people with remarkable results. She never gave up on them and she made sure *they never gave up on themselves*. She had an uncanny ability to recognize the unique skills and qualities of each person she guided when *no one else* seemed to. She had four to five months to prepare these young people to return to their respective communities armed with independent skills needed to secure jobs and to be a meaningful part of those communities. Even after her students completed the program, she kept in touch with many of them, often receiving pictures and letters about how they had begun new jobs or married and started families.

Charlotte ran the Magnolia Place program in Goldsboro, NC since 2006. Their mission is to provide quality training and residential services for selected students of the Work Source East Vocational Rehabilitation Facility in partnership with Wayne Community College. She was tough and expected hard work, but she was also a champion in human and civil rights for her students. She was determined to provide an environment for personal growth, independence, and community inclusion for people with disabilities long before it was the norm.

She was a legendary force in the former RHA Howell organization for over 40 years and won the prestigious *Chris Schlaeppli Award of Excellence*. So we remember a shining star that will always shine brightly in the futures of those she guided and cared so much about Farewell, my hero, our hero, Charlotte Wooten.

(continued from front page) I Stand Before You a Sober and Better Man

Services Provided By The RHA Forensic Team in Buncombe County cont’

- **Buncombe County Re-Entry Council** – a collective of community agencies, non-profits, and faith based organizations seeking to assist individuals returning home from prison. The Council’s mission is to increase public safety by reducing recidivism through helping clients reach educational and training goals and aiding them in finding employment.
- **Crisis Intervention Team** – 40-hr specialized training for law enforcement that helps them identify a person having a mental health/substance use crisis, teaches how to safely de-escalate the person, and helps them connect the person with needed help and resources in the community

Mr. Smith continues to praise the comprehensive, wraparound support he received from the RHA Forensic Services team: “Everyone involved in [Sobriety Court] has changed my life and I will never forget! I’ve been able to reach a part of my life I have missed for so many years thanks to the many people that have surrounded me with their support. I am truly grateful to everyone who helped and believed in me. I owe them my life!”



<< RHA Forensic Services Team

Front: Lindsley Doddridge, Vera Pathways/Prison Re-Entry Navigator; Tracie Bodford, Adult Drug Treatment Court Coordinator; Joe Mackey, Substance Use Jail Re-Entry Case Manager; Jillian Davis, DWI/Sobriety Court Coordinator; Sarah Regala, Jail Diversion Coordinator; Denise Miller, SOAR Family Drug Treatment Court Coordinator

Rear: James Dillingham, Prison Re-Entry Case Manager; Howard Anderson, BSW Intern and Peer Support Specialist/Case Manager; Amy Griffith, Director of Forensic Services; Brent Bailey, Prison Re-Entry Council Coordinator; Ron Harrison, Mental Health Jail Re-Entry Case Manager

Sara Robinson, RHA CAP/C Employee Wins Prestigious Award at Meredith College

Raleigh, NC



Sara Robinson was presented with the 2016 Award for Achievement in Applied Psychology by Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. She was selected during "Celebrating Student Achievement Day" for her work with children at RHA Health Services, numerous extracurricular charitable efforts, along with her scholastic excellence.

Sara has worked at RHA Health Services for the past 4 years in the Community Alternative Program for Children (CAP/C). Her duties include walking a parent through the process of applying for services, fielding questions about the program from families across the state of North Carolina, and sending out welcome packets.

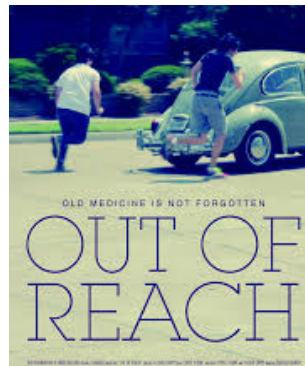
Over the years, Sara has volunteered at numerous charity benefits supporting children and their families. Volunteering runs in the family. Her mother CAP/C Case Manager Casey Robinson organizes many of these events. Sara also belongs to the Excelsior League, a non-profit that focuses on "brightening the lives and smiles of children fighting life threatening illnesses" using costume building and character portrayal at special events, functions, and private visits. To date Sara has been Snow White, Wonder Woman, and Spider Woman at various hospitals including Duke Children's Hospital and UNC Hospitals. A little boy at Duke named Micha, wished for a visit from Cat Woman and Sara did not disappoint. She brightened his smile at least that one day, as he would pass away very soon thereafter.



Sara plans to continue her education and her charitable work. She is very interested in addiction counseling and hopes to get her masters degree in the next couple of years. We are very proud of our "Wonder Woman", who has already made a significant difference in the lives of many children and their families.

For more information on the RHA CAP/C program contact Director of Case Management, John Gibbons at john.gibbons@rhanet.org or 888-207-7828

RHA Prevention Resource Centers and The Partnership for Substance Free Youth Present "Out of Reach" in Buncombe County



A short film documentary about a rising high school senior who sets out to uncover the growing problem of teens abusing prescription medicine in his hometown.

Dallas native and high school student Cyrus Stowe was selected by Entertainment Company Genart and Partnership for Drug-Free Kids to turn his entry into a short documentary with the help of director Tucker Capps (of A&E's "Intervention"). The short documentary, entitled "Out of Reach," captures the issue of teen prescription drug abuse as it exists in Cyrus' world, and is a reflection of the issue of teen medicine abuse across the country.

Amy Lynch Prevention Specialist with RHA will be showing the film at the Weaverville Church of The Latter Day Saints, Thursday Sept. 29, 2016 at 7:30 PM. She will be representing The Partnership for Substance Free Youth in Buncombe County & RHA Prevention Resource Centers. Lt. Kevin Calhoun, Co-Chair of The Partnership and also with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, will assist her in answering questions and leading a discussion after the film about the problem and what we are doing locally to prevent youth substance misuse/abuse.

"This film is a teen's wake-up-call to parents. Seeing how rampant prescription drug abuse is in a typical American high school will help put this dangerous behavior on parents' radar and motivate them to take action," said Robin Brown of the Weaverville Ward. "We are proud to partner with Partnership for Drug-Free Kids to shed light on this epidemic and motivate families and communities to take action."

For more information about the RHA Prevention Resource Centers and The Partnership for Substance Free Youth contact :
Amy Lynch alynch@rhanet.org or 828.348.2652
www.facebook.com/SubstanceFreeBuncombeYouth

The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids is dedicated to reduce teen substance abuse and help families impacted by addiction. Visit www.drugfree.org, or call our help line (1-855-DRUGFREE).

Leslie Cloninger Joins RHA Behavioral Health Burlington, NC

LGBTQIA Written by Leslie Cloninger



I am joining RHA Burlington in hopes of reaching the LGBTQIA identified consumers in need of mental health supports. I am brimming with ideas about group work focused on gender identity exploration and dissection of the ways in which we communicate with each other about our place on the sexuality spectrum.

LGBTQIA is the acronym that I use to describe my community and to self-identify as a community member. I came out in my late 20's and use the term "lesbian" to describe my sexual identity, world view, and cultural perceptions.

I experience it, and encourage others to experience it, as a living, breathing group of letters that help guide us through the changing landscape of human sexual experiences and human rights. It is not a complete list nor is it to stand unquestioned or unchallenged. My experiences with this descriptor are as follows:

L	stands for Lesbian
G	stands for Gay
B	for Bi-Sexual
T	denotes Transgender folks
Q	can be interpreted as Queer or Questioning
I	Indicates Intersex individuals
A	Ally

The last letter is perhaps the most important...

The A, for Ally, is a call for everyone to join in the continued battle toward equal rights, equality, equity. Allies come in all shapes, all sizes, all nationalities, and ALL sexual identities. As a social worker, my hope is to do what I can on a daily basis to reduce discrimination for all human differences. If some of the words or concepts in this article make you uncomfortable, that is great! I gently challenge you to lean in to the discomfort and explore your thoughts and feelings. *Fear should not keep us apart.*

If you have questions or would like to discuss anything further, please reach out to me at leslie.cloninger@rhanet.org

Clear Creek Names Michelle Robertson New Administrator

Charlotte, NC

Jennifer Lineberger, COO RHA Health Services announced that Michelle Robertson has accepted the permanent role as Administrator of the Clear Creek unit in Charlotte, NC.



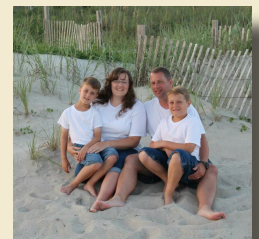
Michelle Robertson

"I am grateful for Michelle's hard work as she stepped in as the interim Administrator this summer, says Lineberger. I'm confident her leadership will empower our hard-working employees to continue providing quality care and supervision to the people we support at Clear Creek."

Michelle joined RHA in 2001 as a Qualified Professional. Over the years, she has continually demonstrated her dedication to the people we support and has increased her knowledge and expertise. This dedication has led to roles as a Program Manager, and most recently as a Regional Manager.

"Over the years I have tried to venture into other areas to work, says Michelle, but my passion and heart for people with IDD always comes to the forefront. I love what I do and I truly enjoy working in the IDD field. I am very excited to be able to join the Clear Creek Team. They are wonderful people and I consider myself fortunate to be a part of their team!"

Michelle lives in Cleveland, NC with husband Ron and her two sons, Jake (11) and Cody (9). She graduated from East Carolina University (Go Pirates!) with a BS in Recreational Therapy in 2001.



Clear Creek is located in Charlotte, NC and is home to 120 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities requiring 24 hour supervision and support services.

For more information about the Clear Creek program please contact Michelle: mrobertson2@rhanet.org 404.545.7200

AROUND THE COMPANY



Eating squash snacks they grew in their garden at Anson Children's Center.

Anson Children's Center

Polkton, NC

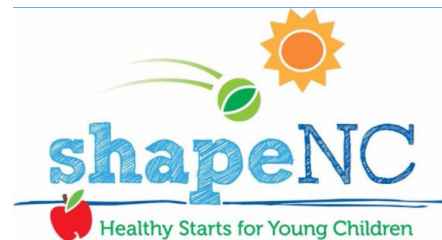
Hosts Demonstration Site Tour for Shape NC on October 25th 4-5PM

Anson Children's Center is one of sixteen of the 213 participating childcare sites for the Shape NC initiative that has been named a Demonstration Site, and serves as a model of excellence in their communities. Other child care sites looking to improve the quality of their own programs may tour these sites to learn about the implementation of healthy best practices in nutrition, physical activity, and outdoor play.

Healthy Starts for Young Children is a six year, \$6 million initiative of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation and The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) created to increase the number of children starting kindergarten at a healthy weight.

Anson Children's Center is a 5 star Daycare center mainstreaming children with and without disabilities. They participate in partnerships with the Early Childhood Education and Special Education programs of South Piedmont Community College and UNC. The campus is located at 383 Cotton Street, Polkton, NC 28135

For more information about this innovative program contact: Administrator Ginny Johnson gjohnson@rhanet.org 704-272-7076



At a time when the nation is facing rising health care costs and high obesity rates, Shape NC is taking a preventive approach to proactively address the issue, focusing on the states youngest children.

1. Children who are obese by age 6 have a greater than 50% likelihood of becoming obese adults. Almost a third of adult North Carolinians are obese.

2. Approximately 38% of North Carolina's children are enrolled in almost 5000 regulated childcare centers, where they receive most meals and spend most of their waking hours.

>> To learn more about Shape NC, visit smartstart.org/shape-nc-home



What is Alyx?

Of the blood components that are transfused most (red blood cells, platelets, and plasma), red blood cells are in the greatest demand. An Alyx donation counts as two credits for "Go for the Gold."

Charlotte, NC



Clear Creek Nursing

Submitted by Selina Olomua RN

On September 8th RHA Clear Creek Nursing department sponsored a mobile blood drive with Community Blood Center of the Carolinas. (CBC) Selina Sluyter, RN charge nurse, was the catalyst for the drive after identifying a shortage and need for blood products by area hospitals. CBC of the Carolinas stayed on campus from 11am until 2pm and brought pizza! Pictured L-R Selina Sluyter RN charge nurse, Ginger Gardner NAI, Sue Friedah LPN Charge Nurse, Selina Olomua Director of Nursing, Catherine Cooke RN Charge Nurse.

Clear Creek had 22 donors in all and two donors were approved to donate **packed red blood cells** via Alyx, which count as a double donation and are available for immediate use (after testing) by a patient. The regular blood donation will return to the blood bank for processing and delay availability until complete. Alyx removes blood and then centrifuges right in the mobile van. The Community Blood Center of the Carolinas provides blood products in state only, so when you donate with them, you help your neighbors!

For more information on this program please contact Michelle Robertson: mrobertson2@rhanet.org



AROUND THE COMPANY

Bear Creek Girl Scouts Partner with Bear Creek

LaGrange, NC

Submitted by Claudia Robinson



L-R Kayla and Gabrielle

It was a very lucky day when we got a call from Kristen Pittman of Goldsboro, NC. Mrs. Pittman explained that her daughter Kayla and her friend Gabrielle Pender were looking for recipients of their service project. Both girls are Cadets in Girl Scout Troop #249 from the Rosewood area in Goldsboro. They were working on their Silver Project and wanted to know if they could construct

book shelves for us and fill them with donated books! The project was completed by the girls in July. Our staff and residents are thrilled and continue to enjoy the wonderful books that they collected. The Bear Creek campus gives a big shout out to Girl Scout Troop #249 and especially Kayla and Gabrielle!

To learn more about Bear Creek please contact:

Administrator Luanne Davis ldavis@rhanet.org 252-566-9011

Behavioral Health Team wins Award Marion, NC



The McDowell County office was voted **Best Counseling Center** by the *McDowell News*. This well deserved recognition is a testament to the great work they do. Kudos for being honored by your community!

To learn more about the Behavioral Health McDowell County Office, please contact:

Director Laura McIlvaine 828-652-2919 laura.mcilvaine@rhanet.org



TNCO Awards for Excellence

Knoxville, TN

Submitted by Kim Perkins

Sheila Coin was recently awarded the Individual Achievement Honor at the 2016 TNCO Awards for Excellence Luncheon. This award is given to an individual who has made outstanding progress towards achieving their personal goals. Sheila was recognized for her dedication and determination to walk after being confined to a wheelchair for 29 years. She has developed a great relationship with her Physical Therapist, Jason, and was excited to share this extraordinary accomplishment with him. Sheila's journey was featured in the April 2016 issue of the RHA Newsletter. She lives in an RHA home in Knoxville, TN. We would like to congratulate Sheila on this amazing achievement!

For more information on our Knoxville program contact:

LouAnn Childress lchildress@rhanet.org or 865-769-7491 x 101

To see archived newsletters visit www.rahealthservices.org



Employment Services

Durham, NC

Submitted by
Jaqueline Kennedy



Carolyn and Unit Manager Larry Mims



Carolyn was on a journey to find a job; a journey to find the 'right' job that would treat her like anyone else and recognize what strengths she could bring to the table. Her strengths included a strong work ethic, the dedication to perform her duties, and the ability to work independently and as a team member. The journey ended at Bojangles where she feels a sense of belonging, appreciation, respect, and dignity.

Carolyn was hired at Bojangles as part of maintenance staff on December 12, 2015. Larry Mims the Unit Director and his management team have worked with Carolyn to allow her to shine and become a valued employee. Carolyn says she feels better about herself as a person and is proud to be working at Bojangles.

Carolyn has gained work experiences through cross training in maintenance, as a dining room attendant, making salads and iced tea, and assisting co-workers during peak hours. She has proven over and over that management can really depend on her.

Larry has now successfully hired and retained six people in our program, including Carolyn. RHA Employment Services is proud to partner with Bojangles. Kudos to Larry and his entire team!

For more information about the Durham program contact:
audrey.hart@rhanet.org 919-803-2960 x 224

NC DDNA is Officially Inducted at San Diego conference



The NC DDNA Chapter was officially inducted into the national association at the DDNA's 2016 annual education conference in San Diego, California in April. As nurses in the specialized field of Developmental Disabilities, the chapter's mission is to "continually develop

our expertise to assure the highest quality of life for the people we support throughout their lifespan."

In an effort to promote nursing education opportunities regarding intellectual and developmental disabilities, the NC Chapter combined forces with the *North Carolina Provider's Council* at their annual conference that was held in September 2016. Talented speakers were brought in to educate nurses and other clinicians on sleep disorders, trauma focused care, the effects of psychopharmacology, and identifying signs and symptoms of common medical disorders.



Robin Correll, Vice President of Nursing Services for RHA, has been a long-term member of the National Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (DDNA). She is a registered nurse with over 18 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

She received her Bachelors of Science in Nursing in 1994 and her Masters of Science in Nursing in 1999 from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama in 2012. Robin, along with several other nurses across North Carolina, has been actively involved in establishing the North Carolina chapter of the DDNA and currently serves as the Vice-President for the North Carolina Chapter.

"Participation and support of the NC DDNA Chapter by RHA Health Services will provide educational opportunities for our nurses and will help tremendously with recruitment. Enhancing their knowledge and expertise will have a direct impact on the quality of our nursing care", says Robin.

RHA serves as the host site for the quarterly meetings using Polycom technology to offer remote meeting sites to nurses in the Charlotte, LaGrange, Raleigh, and High Point areas. This allows networking opportunities so nurses across the state can participate in the meetings and educational seminars. The DDNA also offers certification to both RN's and LPN's after passing a national certification exam. This is the only certification exam offered to nurses working specifically in intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For more information about RHA Nursing Services or NC DDNA, contact: Robin Correll RN, DNP rcorrell@rhanet.org or 828-244-3230

Sam Hedrick, JD Receives the Steve Jordan Lighthouse Award

Sam Hedrick was presented with the *Steve Jordan Lighthouse Award* at the North Carolina Providers Council (NCPC) Conference in Greensboro September 22, 2016. She is the former President of RHA Howell, and currently serves as Executive Vice President of Strategic Business Development for RHA Health Services.

The winner of this award exemplifies the leadership practices that reflect the virtues Steve Jordan espoused throughout his life and career. Sam was selected on the basis of transformative leadership, advocacy, mentoring of future leaders, innovative practices, and improved outcomes.

We congratulate Sam Hedrick for her creative leadership and positive change in IDD/MH/ SA services at the community, state, and national level!



Steve Jordan was an uplifting, inspiring leader and a passionate advocate for people in need. His work was a mission of the heart and he extolled the virtues

of integrity, compassion, and loyalty with the uncanny ability to build consensus among diverse groups. Steve served as state director for ResCare-North Carolina and for NC MENTOR. Both organizations support persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs. Steve served as President of the North Carolina Providers Council in 2010.

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