



#### DEFINING QUALITY & SETTING THE PACE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEALTHCARE

## RHA Announces New Leadership



## -Ensuring growth, financial stability and strength to the company for many years to come.

Jeanne Duncan has been named the new CEO at RHA Health Services. Ms. Duncan was the former President of RHA Health Services and RHA Management Services. She succeeds Gordon J. Simmons who retired in late 2017.

Ms. Duncan began her career as an RHA Administrator in Maiden in 1993 and moved to the Corporate office in 1995 as the Director of Community Based Services. She developed and marketed new service arrays for RHA, which prior to 1995 had been primarily an ICF/IDD service provider. She served as Chief Operating Officer from 2001 until 2005 where her efforts allowed RHA to become one of the largest Intellectual Developmental Disability providers in the state of NC and led to expansion in Tennessee and recently Georgia. Her experience prior to that time included 18 years of human services administration. She has extensive experience working with the Medicaid program and was involved in establishing the first pilot Community Alternative waiver Program in Gaston County while working with the Department of Social Services.

Ms. Duncan holds a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in Health Care Management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also attended the University of Connecticut majoring in Rehabilitation within the School of Education and has a degree in Social Work. She has served as the *President and Treasurer of the North Carolina Providers Council*, is a *Board Member with the Developmental Disability Facility Association*. She is active in policy development at the State level and has served on numerous committees over the years. Ms. Duncan is a founding member of the *Vaya Provider Advisory Committee* and the current President. She previously served on the *Cardinal Provider Network Council* and is the current *Chair of the Developmental Disabilities Facilities Association (DDFA)*.

ick Sulaiman assumes the role of President of RHA Health Services and continues as Chief Financial Officer. He has been with RHA since 2006 and brings a vast array of experience in strategic planning and maintaining financial strength and stability. Before joining RHA, Mr. Sulaiman was employed by *Verizon Business, Inc.* in Alpharetta, Georgia where he served as a senior manager and senior financial analyst. Prior to that he was with *Suntory Water Group* in Atlanta, Georgia as their manager of financial analysis, with *Eltrax Systems, Inc.* as their



senior corporate financial analyst, and worked for *Coca Cola Enterprises, Inc.* in senior account management. He graduated from Kennesaw State University with a Masters in Business Administration and also holds a Bachelors in Business Administration from the University of Georgia.

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For the latest news visit: rhahealthservices.org



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#### Nationa

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## Autism Rates Appear To Have Stabilized

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Researchers have a new reason to believe that the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders in the U.S. has reached a plateau. The evidence comes from the National Health Interview Survey, which polls American households about a variety of conditions.

A new question was added to the survey in 2014: "Has a doctor or health professional ever told you that (the child) had autism, Asperger's

disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, or autism spectrum disorder?" Between 2014 and 2016, this question was answered for 30,502 children ages 3 to 17. In 711 cases, the answer was "yes."

Once all the statistical work was done, the research team found that 2.41 percent of U.S. kids and teens had a form of autism between 2014 and 2016. That prevalence rose slightly over the three-year period — from 2.24 percent in 2014 to 2.41 percent in 2015 and then 2.58 percent in 2016. But that wasn't enough to be considered statistically significant. In other words, those changes were so small that they could have been due to chance.

Some groups were more likely to report a diagnosis than others. The prevalence for boys over the three-year period was 3.54 percent, compared with 1.22 percent for girls. The 1.78 percent prevalence among Latino children was significantly lower than for non-Latino blacks (2.36 percent) or for non-Latino whites (2.71 percent).

Geography was not a factor, however. The prevalence of autism spectrum disorders was 2.21 percent in the South, 2.24 percent in the West, 2.47 percent in the Midwest and 3.05 percent in the Northeast. None of those differences was large enough to be considered statistically significant.

The overall prevalence figures were higher than numbers reported in other surveys. For instance, data from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network put the prevalence at 1.46 percent in 2012. That was essentially unchanged from the 1.47 percent the ADDM survey reported in 2010 — marking the first time it had held steady since 2000.

But the differences between the two surveys may not be as significant as the fact that both suggest the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders has stabilized.

The lowa researchers said more work will be needed to determine whether changes in environmental risks, diagnostic criteria, public awareness or other factors are behind the apparent end to a decade-long increase.



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## E V E N T S C A L E N D A R

National Council for Behavioral Health presents



April 23 - 25 Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center Washington, DC

https://natcon18.thenationalcouncil.org

#### **2018 NAMI National Convention**



June 27-30 Sheraton Canal Street New Orleans, La

The NAMI National Convention is one of the largest annual gatherings of mental health advocates in the nation. The 2018 NAMI National Convention will convene at the Sheraton New Orleans on Canal St. in the heart of New Orleans!

This year's theme "Live. Learn. Share. Hope." describes the NAMI experience.

https://www.nami.org/convention



### RHA's Julie Huneycutt appointed to NC Senate Opioid Council





Sen. Chuck Edwards (R-Henderson) announced the N.C. Senate appointment of Julie Huneycutt, a Hendersonville resident, to the state's Task Force on Sentencing Reforms for Opioid Drug Convictions.

Huneycutt will work with the attorney general, secretary of Health and Human Services, secretary of Public Safety, chief deputy secretary of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, and executive director of the N.C. Sentencing and Advisory Commission to study the modification of current statutes and how

to recognize those convicted of opiate related crimes who would be able to successfully reintegrate into society.

"It is no surprise to those who know the work she has done in our community that Julie was selected to serve on this task force," Edwards said. "The opioid drug epidemic impacts everyone and every area of our state. Julie has been fighting for education and prevention for years. Her appointment to this task force strengthens the voice of our district in Raleigh and ensures that those best qualified are fighting to understand this epidemic.

"Julie will no doubt be very influential in this role, and each member of this task force will see her passion for this subject. I am grateful that Julie is willing to serve our area in such an important capacity to help make a difference and I was delighted to able to recommend her for this position."

Huneycutt has been advocating against opioid and prescription drug abuse for many years. She attended N.C. State University, earning her Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Reading Education. She also attended classes at Duke University, receiving her Prevention Coordinator Certification.



In 2014, Huneycutt became the director of HopeRx, Henderson County's coalition to address prescription drug abuse and prevention. She also co-founded Anna's Hope, an organization dedicated to raising awareness of prescription drug abuse.

She is an appointee to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and speaks regionally on issues surrounding prescription drug abuse. The Task Force on Sentencing Reform for Opioid Drug Convictions was created this year in House Bill 464. This task force will utilize those with extensive backgrounds and experience dealing with the opioid epidemic to better understand addicts and those convicted of related crimes.

hope-rx.org and our Facebook page is HopeRx, Henderson County. *Support Anna's Hope financially at www.cfhcforever.org/AnnasHope to make a secure online donation or contact the Community Foundation at 828-697-6224.* 

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Julie Huneycutt who has been with RHA since 2015 says, "We are confident that our footprint of prevention in Henderson County is contributing to awareness about this epidemic and is creating a platform to reduce the misuse of prescription, over the counter, and other illicit drugs through diversion and safe medication events, as well as public forums, and education in our schools. Our coalition continues to build a very strong partnership and is in full collaboration with local law enforcement, City and County Government, the Department of Public Health, City and County Schools, both area Hospitals, non-profit community clinics, EMS and Fire Departments as well as faith-based organizations, those with lived experience and community members."

# H ope4NC News



Ivan Pride (RHA), Dr. Kathy Smith (RHA), Melissa Harrell (Easter Seals UCP), Carlesha Suggs (Easter Seals UCP), Kathleen Edge, Martha Bromell (RHA), Karen Salacki (Eastpointe CEO), Cheryl Bryant (NCDHHS)

-Excerpt from Eastpointe Press Release by PIO Kathy Baker, kbaker@eastpointe.net

Each year, the NC Council of Community Programs seeks nominations in a variety of categories, from LME/MCOs for innovative community programs which have proven to be outstanding. This year, at their annual Excellence Awards Ceremony, Eastpointe was chosen as the award winner in the category of Crisis Response. Eastpointe's winning program is HOPE4NC.

Twenty-two FEMA-trained counselors provided services in local communities through HOPE4NC. Eastpointe chose Easter Seals/UCP to serve the counties of Edgecombe, Lenoir, Sampson, and Wayne in Eastpointe's northern area; and chose RHA Health Services to serve Eastpointe's southern counties of Bladen, Columbus, and Robeson.

HOPE4NC is a partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (NCDMH/ DD/SAS), Eastpointe, and Behavioral Healthcare Providers. Seven of Eastpointe's counties, Bladen, Columbus, Edgecombe, Lenoir, Robeson, Sampson, and Wayne, have been served through HOPE4NC.

HOPE4NC was developed in response to Hurricane Matthew. On October 8, 2016 when Hurricane Matthew blew into North Carolina, it wreaked devastation across seven of Eastpointe's counties. A lot of people needed help, direction, and support to recover from the emotional and psychological effects of the disaster, put the pieces of their lives back together, and move forward.

### LatestUpdates



### CQL Commends RHA During Their 18 Month Review

CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership

#### Submitted by Krissy S. Wood Director- Quality Assurance NC-IDD Group Homes

"RHA Health Services is highly commended for the work it has done toward addressing the items in the Person-Centered Excellence plan as well as making effective use of Basic Assurances<sup>®</sup> and Personal Outcome Measures<sup>®</sup> data to continuously make improvements in the service delivery system." -Tricia Wek Visker, Ph.D, CQL Lead Quality Enhancement Specialist

RHA has been accredited with The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) since 2001. In 2016, RHA received a 4- year Person Centered Excellence (PCE) Accreditation which led to organizational focuses based on feedback of people engaged in services, stakeholders and families.

#### The 2016-2020 PCE focuses include:

- Self-directed services
- A stable and qualified workforce
- People having meaningful work and activities
- Community memberships which facilitate personal opportunities, resources and relationships.

In September 2017, RHA facilitated an 18-month review with CQL. RHA demonstrated the continued commitment to CQL's Basic Assurances through evidence based policies, procedures and practices. CQL describes Basic Assurances as the "balance between concerns for individual Health, Safety and Security and the necessity of social constructs such as Respect, Natural Supports and Social Networks to ensure sustainable outcomes for people. "

The use of CQL's Personal Outcome Measures and RHA's Person Centered Excellences focuses were also at the center of the review; growth and personal impact continue to be the byproduct of our organizational cadence.

For More information contact: Krissy Wood Director- Quality Assurance NC-IDD Group Homes 336.455.1581 kwood@rhanet.org

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## RHA Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Submitted by Linda Harrington, LCSW, Director – Deaf Services



RHA is home to a nationally recognized program of behavioral health services for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. (DHH) This year alone we have provided consultation to the states of Georgia, Wisconsin and Minnesota on service delivery and program development for services to this population.

The RHA DHH program is presenting at *BreakOut, the only national Mental Health and Deafness conference in the nation,* later this year.



The RHA DHH program has ten licensed clinical therapists, including two licensed psychologists, six outreach consultant coordinators, along with the Director and support staff. All are fluent in both English and American Sign Language and most of the team is Deaf or hard of hearing. DHH staff is located in offices or can be available to see clients in Asheville, Lenoir, Charlotte, High Point, Burlington, Raleigh, Lumberton, Fayetteville, Wilson, New Bern and Wilmington. In addition, Polycom video teleconferencing services are available throughout the state so that clients can connect with clinicians from the location nearest to them.

RHA's DHH Services include comprehensive clinical assessment, case coordination and consultation, mental health and substance use counseling and therapy, outreach, as well as education and referral services. During this fiscal year, Peer Support Services have been added at three locations. Additionally, a statewide online video Narcotics Anonymous meeting for the deaf has been launched.

Regardless of the type of behavioral health services needed by someone who is Deaf or hard of hearing, DHH staff can provide assistance with determining communication needs, finding resources related to hearing loss, and assessing the cultural impact of deafness on treatment.

For More information contact: Linda Harrington LCSW Director – Deaf Services 919.825.2869 lharrington@rhanet.org

#### David Hecht named Senior Vice President of Finance

#### Atlanta, Georgia

We are pleased to announce that David Hecht, located in our Atlanta office has joined RHA Health Services as a Senior Vice President of Finance. He will be in charge of matters related to finance, accounting, financial planning and analysis and with overall business intelligence.



Before joining RHA, David worked for *Formation Capital* and was a principal involved in RHA's acquisition by the company. Leadership has worked with David for almost three years and looks forward to his approach towards client care and the appreciation of the challenges and opportunities we face as a health care provider. Join us in congratulating David and wishing him the best in his new position.

High Point, NC



#### Brandon Golder named Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health

We are pleased to welcome Brandon Golder to our Behavioral Health team. He brings an extensive background in public and private sector behavioral

health management and operations. Coming to us most recently from Colorado, he will be based in the High Point area, but will be working throughout the state.

Brandon will be focusing on our day to day operations and supporting the behavioral health leadership.

Brandon brings extensive education and experience to RHA. He received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga before earning two Master's degrees in Mental Health Services and Business Administration. Brandon began his work in our field serving as a Youth Counselor, Family Consultant, Case Manager and Family Consultant before moving into leadership positions.

Join us in congratulating Brandon and wishing him the best in his new position.



## John Ward Celebrates 30 years with RHA Health Services-Clear Creek



Charlotte, NC Submitted by Michelle Robertson

On December 21, 2017, John Ward, Direct Support Program Manager at RHA Clear Creek in Charlotte, NC, celebrated his 30 year anniversary at the Clear Creek Facility. John has worked in many different roles during his 30 years, including time at the

Charlotte Group Homes. Clear Creek is very fortunate for John's dedication to the people we support, the employees, and the facility. He is a role model for advocacy, and takes tremendous pride in ensuring the people we support receive the best quality care. Congratulations John. We are so grateful for all your service and dedication to Clear Creek, the people we support, and our employees!

For more information contact: Michelle Robertson, Administrator-Clear Creek 704-545-7200 michelle.robertson@rhanet.org

### Anson Children's Center Celebrates Martin Luther King Day!

Our 3 and 4 year old classes went on a field trip to the *Anson County Partnership for Children* for MLK Celebration story time. After learning about Martin Luther King, the children helped make a banner that was used in the Anson County MLK Day parade on January 13th.





Anson Children's Center is a Five-star licensed daycare center serving children with and without special needs.

For more information contact: Ginny Johnson, Administrator 704.272.7076 gjohnson@rhanet.org

## RHA's Harriet Carlton Is Newly Published Author



New Bern, NC Submitted by Elizabeth Carlton

Harriet Carlton has been working at RHA River Bend in New Bern NC for almost two years. She initially started working on a temporary basis and has proved herself to be an invaluable support. In addition to managing the busy switchboard on her days off from college, she

provides support for the administrative staff as needed including updating documents, assisting in medical records, and filing. Harriet has learned to interact and make friends with the people we support. They love to spend time with her in the reception area where they engage in "girl talk". And, girl talk is a vital part of Harriet's teen fiction book *"Angels Rising"* that has just been published.

Harriet is currently a junior at ECU studying a triple major in languages including English literature. She has been writing story books for many years with an ambition to see her name in print. She finally accomplished that goal in October 2017, following submission of a four part series of teen-fiction books. Eventually a publishing group in Australia accepted her work. She has sold her works internationally and is just about to release the second book in that series.

Harriet has lived in the United States since she was 4 years old and has drawn inspiration from international travel while her first book, *Angels Rising*, originates in Blowing Rock, North Carolina.

Harriet also has interests in equestrian work, where she rides on the ECU team. She used money earned while working at RHA River Bend to rescue a horse from a kill pen- bringing him back from starvation to good health. She credits the bond-building work with her horse as a path to work



successfully with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at RHA. We are so lucky to have her!

For more information contact: Tina Stewart, Administrator 252.638.6519 tstewart@rhanet.org

## Start the New Year with a job!

RHA Supported Employment Services Submitted by Mary McFadden, High Point, NC



## Did you know?

• We have almost 50 current participants in Guilford County, with about 31% actively employed.

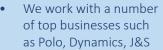
• Many of our clients maintain long term employment. One recently celebrated her one-year anniversary with her employer.

• We have 25 additional participants

in the Southern Region, with over 53% actively employed.
Your job search process begins immediately during the intake procedure.

• We review your employment history and employment

preferences to find the best options with the potential to begin working within 1 to 6 months, depending upon individual interest, personal motivation and active participation with the program.



Cafeteria, and a number of fast food restaurants including Wendy's, McDonald's, and Burger King.

• We also coordinate with temporary agencies such as Addecco, Graham Personnel, Bradley Personnel and Work Force Unlimited to place individuals in paid positions.



• We partner with NC Works and Vocational Rehabilitation



who also assist with locating employment positions.

• The average starting wage for most participants working in manufacturing and light industrial jobs has been around \$9/hr to \$10/hr, and starting pay in restaurants can vary from minimum wage to \$8/hr.

For information, contact Mary McFadden at 336-899-1505 mary.mcfadden@rhanet.org





## This & That



Deinition & Kinchess The quality & being generous, helpful and caring about other people, or an act showing this quality

Why start a movement that focuses on Kindness? Short answer ... because being kind and receiving kindness just feels GOOD. Long answer ...because it's a gesture that has no boundaries; it is appropriate for any occasion; and can be expressed and fully appreciated at any age. Kindness is an extension of empathy and compassion; and in the absence of it, we're left with experiencing rudeness, harshness and that stuff feels "not so Good"! From the Mountains...To the Triangle: Nestled in the heart of the mountains in Fletcher, NC or in the crevasses of the city streets in Creedmoor, NC, you may find a kindness rock which was designed and created by people we support as a direct outcome of the discovery and exploration found during the RHA Focus Groups. #kindnessrocksproject; kindnessrockproject.com

## **R**inging in a Tennessee Christmas!



Ronnie Lav





Christine Story

Submitted by Nicole Craig, Statewide Community Employment Coordinator

This holiday season, three people supported by RHA, Christine Storey, Heather Umphrey, and Ronnie Lay from Knoxville, TN, worked as "Kettle Workers" with the Salvation Army. Manned with aprons, bells, and smiles, they collected donations outside of the Northgate Mall to help raise thousands of dollars for a worthy cause. When asked what she liked most about her job, Heather happily responded, "Money!" When Ronnie was asked how he liked his job he said, "It's good; I love helping out." Heather echoed that sentiment when she said, "It warmed my heart to help others out." And Bill Jackson, the Salvation Army Kettle Worker Coordinator, can't say enough good things about his RHA staff. He was quick to respond by saying, "I love working with them. They do a great job!"

### BACK PAGE

Submitted by Laurie Clement, BSW, QP, CPSS Team Leader – Peer Living Room





C3356 is a place where people can learn about and receive services and supports for needs related to behavioral health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. A wide range of resources are available under one roof at C3356 and support is available 24 hours a day for individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. In our "Changing Futures" spotlight we highlight two stories shared by our staff that reflect successful outcomes at C3356.

"John" is in recovery from substance use disorder and is also



dealing with HIV/AIDS. He uses the Peer Living Room (PLR) on a daily basis, but it was the only support that he was engaging in. The PLR staff encouraged and supported him to actively participate in Outpatient Therapy (OPT) even though he felt he did not need it.

The PLR staff also connected "John" with HIV support groups in Buncombe County.

He had been residing in the same transitional house for quite some time, had no license, and no car. He was very hesitant about leaving the transitional house due to low self-esteem, fear of relapse, and fear of change.

Through group and individual sessions, the staff continued to build his self esteem and assisted with the necessary steps to get his driver's license back. They also helped him transition out of his housing to another safe location that happens to be in another state.

Before John left, the PLR staff made sure that he had NA/AA meetings close to his new residence, connected him with a free HIV clinic, and assisted him in making his first appointment. Not knowing if he would have transportation or not, the PLR staff reviewed the transit schedule in the county he was moving to and provided additional information on how to be successful in his recovery at this new location.



Update: We are happy to report that John is doing quite well in the new location, is still sober, acquired a drivers license and has even been able to purchase a car. We hope this is not the end of a great story, but a beginning, on the path to a new future!

For more information on the programs please contact: Laurie Clement, BSW, QP, CPSS Team Leader – Peer Living Room Office 828-254-2700 x 7065 or Iclement@rhanet.org

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"Amy" came to the Peer Living Room (PLR) to satisfy a group

meeting requirement from the new jail diversion program offered in Buncombe County. After completing the group, she engaged with a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) and discussed how she had lost her kids due to her heroin addiction and had also gotten into legal trouble.



They shared with "Amy" some of their lived experiences and regrets and encouraged her to go to the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center (BHUC) for crisis intervention and assessment. From there she was admitted to the Neil Dobbins Center for more intensive treatment.

Neil Dobbins provides crisis stabilization and short-term behavioral health services (including evaluation, therapy and treatment, and behavioral/medication management) for adults with mental illness. "Amy" returned to the PLR over the next couple of days and on the 4th day, she came in with her family and her family social worker. She agreed to go to the BHUC and then to Neil Dobbins.

Update: We are happy to report that when "Amy" completed her stay at Neil Dobbins, she returned to the PLR, expressed her gratitude and said very confidently with tears in her eyes, "I am going to get my babies back"! It's all about changing futures.

> Creative Director Debbie Valentine

Comments, suggestions or questions contact:

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