

NOVEMBER 2018

RHA

DEFINING QUALITY & SETTING THE PACE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEALTHCARE

We Salute Our Employees

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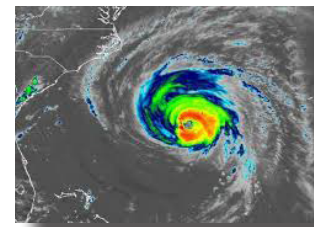
Changing Futures

For the latest news visit:
rhahealthservices.org



“Team RHA” Gives Back

Wilmington, NC - Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina with enough wind speed to uproot trees and cause widespread power outages throughout the Carolinas. It also caused flooding along a long stretch of the North Carolina coast, from New Bern to Wilmington. Most major roads and highways in the area experienced some flooding, with large stretches of I-40, I-95, and US Route 70 remaining impassable for days after the storm had passed. The city of Wilmington was cut off entirely from the rest of the mainland by floodwaters. That's where **Operation BBQ Relief** comes in.



On Thursday September 27th John Gibbons, RHA Director of Case Management-CAP (Community Alternative Program Services) donated a day to working with Operation BBQ Relief and The American Red Cross. They delivered meals to the hard hit city of Wilmington, NC. Most of the food was donated by Smithfield's Foods who provided a dozen 18-wheelers on site.



John left his home near Raleigh at 4AM and arrived in Wilmington at 6AM. He helped with all aspects including loading the cooker with meat, seasoning/saucing the meat, and packaging containers to send off with delivery runners to the community. They served 14,400 plates on this day but had serviced over 266,000 plates that week! John said, "It was an incredible experience to serve that community." And his work did not go unnoticed.

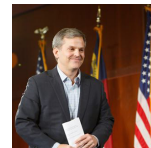
See page 3 for thanks from Pattie Weaver and Tom Grazioso of Wilmington Medical Supply.

Alamance County, NC - As part of the **Alamance County Emergency Management Plan**, the RHA Alamance team was instrumental in providing mental health services during Hurricane Florence. The County's five-day plan included emergency shelter for displaced individuals and families throughout the weather event. RHA provided clinical coverage for three Red Cross shelters in collaboration with the Alamance Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and local agencies to include, the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Health Department, and the Alamance Sheriff's Department. One resident shared, "I was scared to come here, but having you here helps me to calm down. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to me." One of our community partners shared, "RHA is awesome! You guys were the only ones to step up and support the County so we don't know where we would have been if you hadn't helped out." *See page 3 for more*



From left to right: Vanessa Tribble, Jessica Yates, Sharon McDaniel, Tonda Osteen and Betsy "Lauren" Robertson. Not pictured, Dayo Phoenix, Carolyn Clarey, Makeba Casey, Angela Canada, and Harvey Bryant.

-Josh Stein serves as the current Attorney General of North Carolina.
He shared this post on his Facebook page.



“The sorrow and pain that the opioid epidemic is causing people with addiction and their families is so difficult to capture in words. This obituary does as good a job as possible.”

Madelyn Ellen Linsenmeir 1988 - 2018

Published in The Burlington Free Press on Oct. 14, 2018

- - Our beloved Madelyn Ellen Linsenmeir died on Sunday, October 7. While her death was unexpected, Madelyn suffered from drug addiction, and for years we feared her addiction would claim her life. We are grateful that when she died she was safe and she was with her family. Maddie was born on March 31, 1988, in Burlington, Vermont, where she grew up and lived on and off throughout her adult life; she also spent time in Sarasota, Florida; Keene, New Hampshire; and Boulder, Colorado.



Madelyn was a born performer, and had a singing voice so beautiful it would stop people on the street. Whether she was on stage in a musical or around the kitchen table with her family, when she shared her voice, she shared her light....She loved to ski and snowboard, and she swam on the YMCA swim team, winning medals at the New England regionals.

When she was 16 she moved with her parents from Vermont to Florida to attend a performing arts high school. Soon after, she tried OxyContin for the first time at a high school party, and so began a relationship with opiates that would dominate the rest of her life.

Maddie loved her family and the world. But more than anyone else, she loved her son, Ayden, who was born in 2014. She transformed her life to mother him. Every afternoon in all kinds of weather, she would put him in a backpack and take him for a walk. She sang rather than spoke to him, filling his life with song. Like his mom, Ayden loves to swim; together they would spend hours in the lake or pool. And she so loved to snuggle him up, surrounding him with her love. After having Ayden Maddie tried harder and more relentlessly to stay sober than we have ever seen anyone try at anything. But she relapsed and ultimately lost custody of her son, a loss that was unbearable.

During the past two years especially, her disease brought her to places of incredible darkness, but for 12 days this summer she was home, and for most of that time she was sober. For those 12 wonderful days, full of swimming and Disney movies and family dinners, we believed as we always did that she would overcome her disease and make the life for herself we knew she deserved. We believed this until the moment she took her last breath. But her addiction stalked her and stole her once again.

If you yourself are struggling from addiction, know that every breath is a fresh start. Know that hundreds of thousands of families who have lost someone to this disease are praying and rooting for you. Know that we believe with all our hearts that you can and will make it. It is never too late.

If you are reading this with judgment, educate yourself about this disease, because that is what it is. It is not a choice or a weakness. And chances are very good that someone you know is struggling with it, and that person needs and deserves your empathy and support.

If you work in one of the many institutions through which addicts often pass—rehab, hospitals, jails, courts—and treat them with the compassion and respect they deserve, thank you. If instead you see a junkie or thief or liar in front of you rather than a human being in need of help, consider a new profession.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/burlingtonfreepress/obituary.aspx?n=madelyn-ellen-linsenmeir&pid=190469930>

“Team RHA” Gives Back

cont'pag 1

Lumberton NC- Many RHA staffers volunteered at a shelter set up at the Lumberton High School. They all work in the Robeson Psychosocial Rehabilitation program (PSR) and volunteered at the shelter while the PSR program was administratively closed.



Elaine Campbell, (Red Cross Staff), Kimberly Worley, and Courtney Paige.

“We want to share our humbling experience that we encountered while volunteering at the different shelters in Lumberton during Hurricane Florence. While volunteering we were used in the capacity of counselors, organizers, janitors, package distributors, provided available resources that we were aware of in the community, and entertainment by coming together and singing uplifting songs. We also interacted with the evacuees, provided positive feedback offering words of encouragement and hope to ensure them that we were there to help. When we arrived each day our new friends shouted **-Here comes our sunshine for the day!**

Thank you for the encouragement and opportunity to help others in their time of need as we all dealt with Hurricane Florence!” **Kimberly Worley, Courtney Paige, Elaine Campbell**

cont' from pg 1 - Wilmington-Operation BBQ Relief

“The employees in our company were blown away by your willingness to give of your time and talent for our hurting city. You never cease to amaze us! Thanks for all you do!”

-Pattie Weaver-Griglock, Personal Product Advisor Wilmington Medical Supply

“Good afternoon everyone! I just wanted to give a HUGE SHOUT OUT to John Gibbons, Director of Case management for RHA Health Services. He is with a group of volunteers cooking and serving thousands of



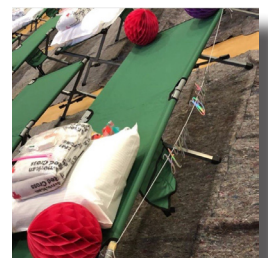
hot lunches and dinners today in Wilmington! His group has been waiting for two weeks to come and serve our community. It is inspiring to see a member of an agency that we serve, come and give his time to give back to our city in this time of distress. Thanks John for all that you and your group are doing! We truly appreciate it!” **-Tom J. Grazioso, Director of Inside Sales, Incontinence Division /Wilmington**

Operation BBQ Relief was founded in May 2011 in response to a need for relief efforts in tornado-stricken Joplin, Missouri. Volunteers from competition BBQ teams from eight states answered the need to help feed displaced families, police, fire, National Guard and emergency personnel. Operation BBQ Relief continues to respond to natural disasters.

cont' from pg 1 -Alamance County Emergency Management

“During the Alamance County Emergency Management after the event closing session, RHA was recognized as the sole MH provider involved in this emergency event, and was praised by Cardinal Innovations and the County stakeholders involved. Our team truly has the skills and the heart to serve. We’re proud to be a part of the RHA family!” **-Sharon McDaniel, RHA Alamance Director**

On the first night at the shelter, a family showed up on their daughter’s 13th birthday. RHA staff assisted DSS and the Health department with decorating the cots, buying a cake, and celebrating!



“As the Disaster Team Supervisor for the American Red Cross Emergency Shelter at Fairchild Recreation Center September 14th 2018. I want to express my appreciation for the awesome support RHA provided to us last week. You and your staff were there from the moment we opened last Friday. RHA provided great assistance to some of our people who were struggling with mental health distress after being displaced by Florence. Because of RHA, we also had some local high school students show up to offer support.

Again thank you for partnering with us and supporting our mission to provide emergency care and shelter for the citizens of Alamance County.” **-Kevin K Hinton, DAT Shelter Supervisor for Alamance County**

Georgia House of Representatives-

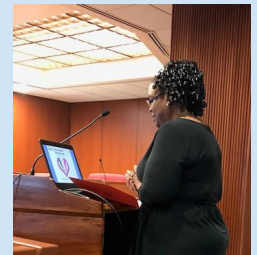
Submitted by Tonya Self, Administrator-Augusta Georgia



Erma Jean Lowery

Our Georgia Team is very proud to share that two of our Augusta Home Managers had the opportunity to represent RHA Health Services and the Georgia Unit at the House of Representatives. Carla Garrison Green and Erma Jean Lowery provided testimony at the Coverdell Legislative Office in Atlanta Georgia Office of Media Services.

They shared their life stories with the Georgia House Study Committee on the Workforce Shortage and Crisis in House and Community Based Settings. Each employee submitted their testimony on the challenges Georgia providers and providers across the country face with hiring, training, and retaining Direct Support Associates that serve those with IDD, and other developmental disabilities.



Carla Garrison

They did a wonderful job of providing very heartfelt and emotional testimony. Each in very different and bold dialogue. Each shared the dedication required of employees that serve this population. The current crisis that providers face with attempting to offer fair and competitive wages. They shared how that service is provided, and how over 85% of their employees have to work long hours and often two, sometimes three jobs to meet their own financial responsibility.

They expressed that many employees have to use public housings, food stamps, and go without medical insurance to supplement their wages. While working for a provider like RHA Health Services that makes every attempt to provide fair wages, it is still very difficult. The provider is faced with the cost associated with maintaining the homes, vehicle fleet, and properties, leaving very little money to pay employees that provide such needed services in a population that is aging, growing, and requiring more funding to provide services.

Ms. Lowery and Ms. Garrison advocated for fair wages and encouraged the panel of legislators to consider those with disabilities and the dedicated staff made up largely of women. They even evoked them to consider that there are a shortage of men in this field, as a direct result of inadequate salaries, which are not enough to provide for their families.



L- R Carla Garrison Green, DSP-Milledgeville, SPADD Representative, Committee Chair Jesse Petra, a Representative from the Georgia House of Delegates, Deborah Conway, CEO of Cross Plains Community Services.

Please join me in honoring Carla Garrison Green and Erma Lowery, for their efforts in representing Georgia in such an important time in our community. They were willing to face a very large crowd with standing room only, to advocate for a cause they have dedicated their careers. Each of them have served over 30 years in both the hospital setting and in community based services.

Thank you to Frank Kirkland, Director of Operations, Georgia and Margaret Gartlgruber, IDD Executive Management Team, for supporting them in their efforts to improve services for RHA Health Services in Georgia.

For more information about our Georgia programs please contact:
Frank Kirkland, RHA Health Services Director of Operations, Georgia
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Alamance County “Steps Up” to Reduce Number of People with Mental Illness in Jail

Excerpt from CSG Justice Center Staff Submitted by Sandy Feutz

In his four decades in law enforcement Kirk Puckett, Director of Community Relations for the Alamance County, North Carolina Sheriff’s Department, has seen a sea change in the way that police interact with people who have mental illnesses in the criminal justice system. “It used to be that police had two options, either arrest that person and take them to jail or send them to the emergency department if they didn’t violate the law,” he said. “Many times we may not even have recognized the person had a mental illness.”



Sara Huffman, clinical director for the county's crisis service contractor, RHA Health Services, couldn't agree more. "Every time that a law enforcement officer brings someone in and helps get them connected to services instead of taking them to jail, we've done one good thing," said Huffman.

But in 2015, Alamance County joined **Stepping Up—a national initiative whose goal is to achieve a measurable reduction in the number of people in jails who have mental illnesses**—and Puckett counts this decision as critical to the change he’s seen.

Using funding from a JMHCP grant, Alamance County was able to expand the reach of its Stepping Up initiative to include increasing the number of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)-trained police officers as well as providing mental health first-aid training to detention and court staff, expanding a co-responder pilot program, and establishing a 24-hour diversion center. “We’re not treating people short term, we’re treating them for the long term,” says Puckett.

Since starting the Alamance County Stepping Up, more than 200 police officers have been CIT trained and more than 300 officers have received mental health first-aid training. information sharing has increased across behavioral health and criminal justice agencies, strengthening the collaboration between law enforcement and behavioral health.

To read the entire article and view the video visit

https://csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health/posts/alamance-county-steps-up-to-reduce-number-of-people-with-mental-illnesses-in-jail/?mc_cid=f1bedb2206&mc_eid=19d5a1fc88

Governor appoints Wease to N.C. Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services

Posted By: Anna Burton September 5, 2018

RUTHERFORD COUNTY, N.C. — Congratulations to Jerry Wease on his appointment by Governor Roy Cooper to the N.C. Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services.



Wease is a NAMI member and has earned certification as a LPC, LCAS, CSI, and NCC. After graduating at the top of his class from Gardner-Webb University with his MA/Ed.S in Mental Health Counseling, Jerry has provided clinical services and advocacy in many roles across the state from enhanced treatment services, clinical supervision, community advocacy, and teaching at the university level.

Jerry has worked with adolescents and adults with mental health and substance use disorders and primarily endorses a cognitive behavioral approach. Jerry believes that recovery is possible for individuals, families, and communities.

In his spare time Jerry enjoys volunteering, singing, animals, and sitting on the porch with a good book and a cup of coffee.

Thanks for your service not only to our community, but also to our state.



L-R NC Court of Appeals Judge John Arrowood, N.C. Representative Carla Cunningham, Jerry Wease, Rueleen Wease

<https://rhahealthseices.org/nc-governor-roy-cooper-appoints-rhas-jerry-wease-to-commission/>

Burke County Emergency Management Mobile Kitchen Assists Clear Creek



RHA's Clear Creek facility, which is home to 120 adults and children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Charlotte, NC, was in desperate need of plumbing repairs. The needed repairs were in the kitchen where approximately **300-350 meals are prepared every day** and the timeline required full closure of the kitchen for multiple days.

In the process of planning the repairs, the Clear Creek team partnered with the **Metrolina Healthcare Coalition** which serves counties from Burke to Scotland, along the southern NC border. The Coalition was excited to offer assistance, and provided a tremendous amount of aid and relief by supplying a mobile kitchen from **Burke County Emergency Management**.

The kitchen was fully functional, and enabled the Clear Creek Dietary Support Staff to carry out all meal and dietary related tasks during the kitchen repairs.

Michelle Robertson, Regional Administrator stated, "The Clear Creek team would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Metrolina Healthcare Coalition and Burke County Emergency Management, for their assistance during the plumbing repairs. Their assistance and generosity helped us to ensure meals were prepared and served, as usual, with no disruption to the people we support at Clear Creek. The use of the mobile kitchen, paired with the team's organized coordination and preparation for the repairs, was seamless and was a great relief to a very stressful situation!"

For more information about the Metrolina Healthcare Coalition and/or other Healthcare Coalitions in NC please visit: <http://nchealthcarecoalitions.org>

For more information about RHA Clear Creek contact:

RHA Salem Homes of Florida Honors Circle Of Champions Award Recipients

Each year the statewide provider group, **Florida ARF**, honors individuals for special contributions, commitments, and continuing service to people with disabilities. *The Circle of Champions Award* is given to an employee who has displayed the highest commitment of professional growth in their position.



L-R Larry Porter, Gail Arvie, Rachelle Dhaiti, Betsy Johnson, Administrator

This year, RHA Salem Homes of Florida had 3 employees to receive the award. They are: **Gail Arvie, Day Program Supervisor at the Jacksonville Day Program, Larry Porter, Direct Support Professional at the Frederick Group Home,**

and Rachelle Dhaiti, Direct Support Professional at the Suffridge group home. All three exemplify our commitment to enhancing the quality of life of the people we support.

RHA Health Services Florida

Contact Betsy Johnston, Administrator betsy.johnson@rhanet.org

Joyce Norman Meets The Commodores!

Submitted by Nita Yurco. RN

Joyce Norman met her music idols, The Commodores!! She had the opportunity to attend a concert in Kannapolis, NC and see her all-time favorite band perform some of her favorite songs. She was happy just to see them but with the help of the Kannapolis Police Department, she was able to get a VIP pass and had the amazing experience of meeting them in person. The Commodores showed her a lot of love!



Joyce is a 61 year old "young at heart" lady who lives in Yadkin I group home. She has been with us since 1990 (28 years!). Joyce loves her music, likes to sing, and is a joy to be around.

RHA Health Services Iredell/Yadkin

Contact Michael Heller, Administrator (704) 872-3257

Congressional Art Competition Winner Attends DC Unveiling Ceremony

Since 1982, House members have helped select art from a competition of high school students in their

The Congressional Art Competition winner for the First District, Leon Bradford, II of Durham, attended the unveiling ceremony in Washington, DC. Congressman G.K. Butterfield's office received over 50 art submissions this year from students across the First District. As winner, 18-year old Leon's artwork, *"Shining Stars of the Universe"* will be on display in the U.S. Capitol for the next year.



Leon in the tunnel linking the Cannon Office Building and the Capitol



Congressman G.K. Butterfield with Leon at the Capitol

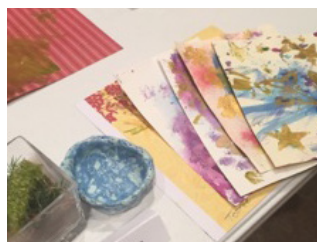
Marie Bradford, Leon's mom says, "Leon has worked with RHA Employment Specialist, Linda Ross, this summer to explore different jobs and careers. He met with a photo journalist to shadow a photo shoot and learn more about photography. He received a business overview and behind the scenes tour of Habitat for Humanity. Earlier this year, he interviewed a sales person at the Porsche dealership. This meeting led him to changing his college enrollment from auto mechanics to business! *We truly appreciate the job exposures arranged by Ms. Ross and RHA via your outreach.*"



Leon with RHA Employment Specialist, Linda Ross

Leon's parents, Marie and Leon Bradford of Durham, N.C. are a strong support in his employment endeavors. Leon is a recent high school graduate of Jordan High School (June 2018) and is currently enrolled at Durham Technical Community

Greenville Museum of Art Holds Art Exhibit for Greenville Group Homes



Residents of Forest Hill, King George, and Curry House in Greenville, NC have been taking art classes with the Greenville Museum of Arts, for several months. Alyssa, Assistant Director, and Cynthia Stevens RHA Administrator arranged for

an art exhibit for all the projects these three group homes have completed. All participants were able to take their projects home, after the exhibit. All individuals, guardians, staff, management, and directors were welcomed to attend.

The Fruitful Journey of a DSP

By Amber McGuire

Benson, NC



Most people happen upon this job because it requires no degree and positions are often open and free.

If you're like me, you've been in the field for many years – seen many things and cried many tears. But, what you don't realize when you begin this journey, is that you'll make lifelong friends and make an impact on people's lives that has no end.

Some folks you support have little to no family and same with friends – that's where US DSP's come in. Though we are a paid support, we are there for them day in and day out; we shall not cut them short. We come into their homes to aid in their everyday lives. They depend on us, like we do our husbands and wives.

Being a DSP is not all butterflies and rainbows. You'll be tired and it'll show.

What we have to remember is that they need our help. To show them and teach them – but often times, we end up being the student. Occasionally, you have to step back from the clinical side and recognize what puts a sparkle in their eye. Take time to talk, learn and listen. I am sure you will be surprised.

The Benson unit celebrated ANCOR 2018 Direct Support Professionals and this was one of the winning essays. DSP Amber McGuire is VERY loved at our Elm Street Program.

learn more about RHA Employment Services programs contact Program Manager Suerontinette Parker

Watch the video: https://www.rollcall.com/video/artistic_representation_students_from_across_america_showcase_art_in_the_capitol

To

IPS - Supported Employment Services

Work plays a central role in most people's lives, offering rewards beyond that of income. Experts say that enabling people to gain and retain employment has a profound effect on more life domains than almost any other medical or social intervention.

Here are success stories written by two great people who wanted their story published. They are receiving services from the RHA IPS-Supported Employment program in New Bern.

Alexis Miller



"I was at a point in my life that I didn't know what to do. I was pregnant, I didn't have place to stay. So I had to figure out a way to do what was best for me and my baby because I was about to be giving birth soon. If it wasn't for IPS Supported Employment and Peer Support Services I would not be where I am right now. I am currently getting the help that I need, I have a job, and I can provide for my son who is 8 months old.

I really appreciate you guys a lot because I don't know where I would be with out your help and support. My Employment Support Professional as never judged me. You, Mr. Stokes, have been very supportive of me and always been there no matter what. You made me like your friend and I can trust you more than I trust others. You welcomed me in and never pushed me away. You would always tell me the truth and not just what I need to hear. You would always give me advice and I really appreciated that.

I would recommend these services for any woman out there, but they have to understand that things take time. If you are willing to get the help then go get it!"

Changing Futures



Submitted by James Stokes BS QP, CPSS, CSAC-R
For more information on this program contact: james.stokes@rhanet.org

Angel Vargasrios

"To be able to take advantage of the RHA Supported Employment/IPS programs in the community has been a blessing for me. My 20 years in the Marine Corps and the PTSD illness that I have has been so challenging. However, I have learned that my illness will not stop me from being productive out there. I feel more open to people now more than ever.



I started my new job working in the back warehouse as a laborer. I didn't like how disorganized everything was, so I created an organization system for the warehouse. Because of twais, the company was able to bring in more inventory which is a huge plus. Two weeks later I was promoted to assistant manager which was another accomplishment for me.

Eventually I was given small tasks by the regional director to accomplish. Last week he came down and asked who rearranged everything. All the workers pointed at me and the regional director yelled my name for me to come to the warehouse. I came running and assumed that I was about to be fired!!!

His exacted words to me were, "Angelo you don't belong here doing this work, you belong as a manger and I want you to run this warehouse! You are now in charge". *I was promoted right there on the spot to manager and got a pay raise as well to \$15.00 per hr.*

Now I love what I do. so if you come to my job looking for me, Just ask for Commando 67, that's the nickname they have given me. My life has changed and I have also been participating in the Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) re-entry.

One thing that the RHA program has helped me with was learning how to control my eplosive behavior and thought through coping skills. Now I can sit down with people and talk without having any anxiety at all. *Over all I am a diferent person and if I can do it, anyone can!!!*

Contributing Writers

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