

OCTOBER 2017

DEFINING QUALITY & SETTING THE PACE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEALTHCARE

## Gordon J. Simmons Retires



Gordon J. Simmons, Chief Executive Officer of RHA Health Services and Pace Health Companies, has decided to retire at the end of October 2017 after twenty years of service and leadership. RHA Health Services provides a broad array of person-centered, integrated, and high quality supports and services focused on children and adults living with behavioral health and substance use challenges and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In 1997, Mr. Simmons joined RHA Health Services, Inc., in Asheville, NC, as President and CEO. He worked with the management team to build upon the existing organization and to identify and execute strategic initiatives. He instilled in the team the goals of following the principles of quality resident and client care, producing solid financial performance, and generating growth of the business. During his tenure, RHA Health Services' annual revenue has increased tremendously with services now provided in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. RHA employs over 5,000 staff and operates over 400 locations.

"I am very proud to have had the opportunity and privilege to be a part of RHA Health Services where commitment to excellence is embedded in the very nature and culture of the company. I look forward to watching RHA's continued growth and expansion as we deliver quality care to our communities" says Mr. Simmons.

RHA Health Services is extremely grateful for Gordon's leadership and years of service to the company. He is highly respected and loved by the entire RHA family and has been an inspiration to both employees and to the people we serve. He and his wife Kathleen look forward to spending a lot of time at their beach home on the Jersey Coast. We wish them much happiness as they enjoy time with their four children and six grandchildren.

"An RHA without Gordon Simmons...that is really hard to even think about. I am so fortunate to have had a job I love and a mentor the caliber of Gordon. His unwavering focus on quality is woven throughout our organization- it is the very fabric of who we are. Incredibly high standards, truthfulness, kindness, and compassion have made him a leader among leaders. Gordon will of course be missed by the RHA family, but also by an industry where he has been an advocate for the people we support. I wish him the best that retirement can offer. May he always have a big fish on the line and a grandchild on his knee!" -*Jeanne Duncan, President RHA Health Services*

He is one of the toughest CEO's around but the truth is his big heart is what founded, maintained, and has grown this company. Enriching the lives of the people we serve so they can live in their own communities as independently as they choose-that is his true passion. This will be his legacy.

-*Kathy Smith, PHD COO RHA Health Services, Behavioral Health*



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The Gift of Heart

For the latest news visit:  
rhahealthservices.org



## Google Wants Help Tagging Accessible Places

by Shaun Heasley | 2017

Google is looking to the public in an effort to make navigating the world easier for people with disabilities.

The search giant is asking users to add information about wheelchair accessibility to entries on Google Maps.

“Because anyone can identify and label wheelchair-friendly locations directly on the map, it’s easy to share this knowledge around the world. But not everyone knows this tool exists, so we want to do more,” wrote Sasha Blair-Goldensohn — a software engineer for Google Maps who uses a wheelchair in a post this month about the new push.

Read the entire article

> > **disabilityscoop**  
<https://www.disabilityscoop.com>

“We’re calling on Local Guides, a community of people who contribute their expertise about places on Google Maps, to add more wheelchair accessibility attributes to the map.”

Google Maps was updated last year to include details on wheelchair accessibility alongside basics like hours, addresses and telephone numbers of businesses and other locations. However, many entries still lack such information.

Google relies on users to submit details about accessibility and has created a one-page guide to help individuals assess locations they visit. To contribute information, users answer five simple questions in a process that Blair-Goldensohn said takes just seconds to complete.

## EVENTS CALENDAR



Registration is open for the  
**NADD Annual Conference**  
<http://thenadd.org/34th/>

**34th NADD Annual Conference  
 & Exhibit Show 2017**

**November 1-3** CHARLOTTE  
 NORTH CAROLINA

**Reaching your Potential  
 & Beyond: IDD/MI**

Sheraton  
 Charlotte Hotel



## Changing Futures

Danielle B. just began her junior year of college at the University of Memphis and she’s made the Dean’s List every semester since her freshman year. She is a very talented graphic arts major, has been recognized by faculty and peers, and her work is showcased in brochures for the art department at the university.

How is this different from many young college students? Danielle is on the autism spectrum. Twenty years ago she and her identical twin were born. Her mom knew early on that something wasn’t quite right and the autism diagnosis soon followed. Mom started early intervention for the twins and they were both mainstreamed in classes at school with typically developing kids.

## A Young Woman Determined

Submitted by Salihah Jenkins

Danielle wondered why she was “different” and has had to overcome many social challenges. She has anxiety attacks everyday and a great fear of being in crowds. Nonetheless, she is very driven and is one of the hardest working people that we know. It is extremely important to her and to her Mom that she has a meaningful career. So her mom, an RHA employee, works tirelessly as her personal assistant accompanying her to every class, assisting with taking notes, helping her communicate with professors, and ensuring that she feels safe and is integrated into campus life.

Salihah Jenkins RHA Memphis Administrator  
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Memphis, Tn



Danielle on the U of M Campus

Danielle dreams of working for a major graphic arts design company someday, and we are certain the odds are in her favor. Best of luck Danielle!

# GORDON SIMMONS RETIRES

Continued  
from page 1

“We hope to continue to build on his legacy.”

-Nick Sulaiman, Chief Financial  
Officer, RHA Health Services

I have learned a lot from Gordon through the years. One of the items that sticks out the most is his focus on Quality, Financial Performance, and Growth-these three factors have contributed to the success of our organization and all go hand in hand. He taught us that quality should always be our top priority, “if you're not growing you're dying, but at the end of the day "we have to pay the bills and feed the dog". -Jennifer Lineberger, COO RHA Health Services

Thank you cannot begin to express my gratitude for all the lessons you have taught me. It seems like only yesterday, I started with RHA in our Concord area. No office, no staff, no consumers but a mission and passion for community based services. The months turned to years in a blink of an eye! Each year brought exciting changes ,both professionally and personally, and with your support we met those challenges. You should retire with pride, not because you had a fantastic career but because your employees look up to you and want to be just like you when they retire. We are so excited for your new adventure!. Congrats! -Jill Lineberger Vice President of Operations, Behavioral Health

“Gordon has inspired me as a clinician and a leader. Early on in my leadership role with RHA I asked Gordon why he moved from direct care to leadership. His comment inspired me to continue my journey in the leadership role “Deb, when you lead you are helping others develop a vision and systems that translates to quality care touching many individuals.” I will always remember those words!

-Debra Vuocolo, RN, BSN, Vice President of Operations Behavioral Health

“RHA Health Services is extremely grateful for Gordon’s leadership and years of service to the company. He is highly respected and loved by the entire RHA family and has been an inspiration to both employees and to the people we serve. We wish them much happiness as they enjoy time with their six grandchildren.” -Denise Turner, PHR SHRM,-CP & CPP, VP of HR

“Quality, Quality, Quality, Quality....Financial Performance, and Growth. The sign of a strong leader is developing others to be good leaders.” -Cindy Myers, VP of Operations

“Gordon has touched thousands of lives by guiding us in growth, while ensuring quality, accountability and integrity. His heart and compassion has always been for the people of RHA.” -Jan Herring, VP of Operations

“My favorite quote from Gordon is “Facts Don’t Lie.” He always told me that whenever I have to present findings from audits or visits that may not be pleasant, just stick to the facts. The facts may not always be pleasant, but “facts don’t lie.” I have carried that message with me throughout the years.” -Robin Correll, RN, DNP Vice-President of Nursing Services

“Your influence and dedication at RHA truly made a lasting impact, and one that has changed the company for the better in so many ways. Not every leader can retire with such dignity, respect and a teary-eyed farewell from the whole organization. May you enjoy your grandchildren, and I wish you much happiness.” -Denise Redfern, Chief Information Officer

“Nothing is worse than missing a call with Gordon, because there was always a specific reason he was calling! I have learned a great deal from his leadership and have tried to apply his principles into how I do my job. “Safety, Quality and Financial Performance” will forever be ingrained in me. Thank you for your tremendous leadership!” -Margaret Gartlgruber Senior VP of Operations Tennessee

“One could never put into words the kind of person Gordon is and the type of culture he has created within RHA. The remarkable thing about his character is the way he has positively impacted so many people he has never come into contact with – including employees, clients, and the community. He has never once wavered on his principles to advocate for the people we serve. We hope to continue to build on his legacy.” -Nick Sulaiman, Chief Financial Officer, RHA Health Services

“Gordon has taught me to avoid thinking about whether or not something can be done, but *how* to accomplish it. His leadership is about doing the right thing, taking care of relationships, and focusing on the people we serve. It was very easy to take ownership for the ethics of RHA when you know that shortcuts and suppression are anathema to the CEO.” -Danny F. Fulmer II, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer

Gordon’s leadership has been such an inspiration and I’m honored to keep him informed on our BH services in Western NC. His unwavering focus on high quality care, enduring relationships, and problem solving are themes that I hope to continue in my career. You will be incredibly missed! -Sandy Feutz, VP of Operations

“Gordon brought an imposing physical presence for more than 20 years to RHA for which we all quickly learned was overshadowed by his caring and kind heart. He instilled his philosophy of client care always coming first into our organization. While he will be greatly missed, his philosophy and impact will live on with all of us.” -Steven Cumbee, Vice President I.S. & Treasury



## Mary Benson House News

Submitted by Amy Borskey Duffer, MA, LCAS, BC-DMT



The Mary Benson House is a grant-funded program offering residential, gender-specific substance abuse treatment to pregnant and parenting women. Our program is unique in that our residents complete treatment while continuing to

be the primary caregivers of their children, offering mothers and children the opportunity to establish, repair and maintain healthy attachment patterns. We are able to serve seven women at a time and our residents participate in the program for up to one year.

We have recently celebrated the graduation of three residents with an additional five residents that we expect to graduate in the upcoming year. All of our recent graduates were able to move out of Mary Benson House and into private residences and were able to get reliable vehicles from Working Wheels as well.

- One woman had just completed her GED the day of graduation and has started classes at AB Tech for the fall semester. This same graduate had also been at the Mary Benson House twice before in the past with her other pregnancies and had not made it longer than about 5 months in the program. We are extremely proud of her!
- Another resident had been in school for a semester already and is working on the prerequisites for the dental hygiene program at AB Tech.
- Another resident was able to regain custody of one of her older children and avoid DSS involvement with the baby she had while here.
- A past graduate recently met with Governor Roy Cooper on Overdose Awareness Day and told her story, which included a successful completion of the Mary Benson House. We cannot express how proud we are of this woman, mother and advocate!

We are extremely proud of all of the work these women do every day to ensure they are maintaining their recovery and providing the best possible care to their children. We look forward to seeing all of their accomplishments in the future and to serving more women struggling with the disease of addiction.



For more information on this program contact: Amy Borskey Duffer, Program Manager 828.252.5280 or [aborskey@rhanet.org](mailto:aborskey@rhanet.org)



## Vaya awards 2.3 million grant to fund CCM Pilot Program

Submitted by Cindy Long, MS CCM Program Manager

Vaya Health was awarded a 2.3 million dollar grant to fund the Comprehensive Case Management (CCM) pilot program in conjunction with Mission Health and RHA Health Services. The initiative will provide CCM for people with high utilization of Mission's Buncombe emergency department (ED) for behavioral health and substance use needs, as well as women who are pregnant and using drugs or alcohol.

The CCM program began July 2nd 2017 and is grant funded for 1 year, with the expectation the program will be funded and extended for multiple years to come. Goals of the CCM program include piloting the CCM Service Definition, reducing utilization of and boarding time in Emergency Departments (ED), and increasing collaboration between hospital and community partners, to more effectively meet the needs of this population.

The RHA CCM team consists of QPs and CPSS that are split between the community and onsite in Mission ED. Patrick Casale is the Team Lead over the community staff and Amy Miller is the team lead over the Mission ED CCM staff.



CCM provides 24/7 support for warm hand-offs from the ED to the community and among community agencies and service providers. The CCM team can assist with linkage to needed mental health or substance use services as well as other needs including basic benefits, Pisgah Legal Services, driver's license or ID's, birth certificates, medical care, disability benefits, clothing, food, shelter, natural supports, as well as many other community supports and services. It has been truly amazing to see the dedication and investment from the CCM team to make a difference in the lives of those who often are the most vulnerable and forgotten.

*For More information about CCM services*

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Amy Miller CCM ED Team Lead  
[Amy.miller@rhanet.org](mailto:Amy.miller@rhanet.org) 757-560-5544

24/7

Crisis Line

828-767-1991

## RHA Tennessee



Submitted by Elizabeth Kimball, Statewide ECF Coordinator

The Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver also known as the Statewide Waiver under the TN Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities closed effective June 30, 2016. The new waiver, Employment and Community First (ECF) began July 1, 2017 and is managed by three MCO's: BlueCare, Amerigroup, and United. RHA was chosen to be one of 24 providers across the state to implement this program.

Currently, there are well over 300 provider agencies in TN.

**RHA East TN** has been very privileged to be included in the ECF roll out. The people who are being supported in this program were on the waiting list for DIDD waiver services and/or aging out of the school program. RHA provides ACRE trained staff to assist with this process. ECF is very person centered and each service plan is specifically designed to meet that member's needs. Each east TN unit has experienced good outcomes along with a few challenges! A few success stories stand out in my mind, involving two new members and staff from our Bradley and Hamilton county TN services.

Staff member Carrie G in Bradley County assisted a new member for around a week and was able to secure an interview and obtain employment paying well above minimum wage. Keilah W, in Hamilton County used chess skills to teach a member how to weigh life decisions and circumstances which gave him confidence to be more independent and to eventually obtain employment despite suffering from sensory disturbances.



L-R Jocelyn Barby, ECF Coordinator for Chattanooga, and Carrie G on the right - staff responsible for assisting two served through ECF Competitive Employment.

### Other Tennessee news:

**Knoxville** is also providing great services. Their young staff is very excited to provide support so members can participate in new activities and be involved in the community.

**West TN and Middle TN** are now under contract with the MCO's and will begin providing services soon.

**Our Kingsport unit** was first to start the Choices program. It supports people in community homes who previously only had the option of facility care.

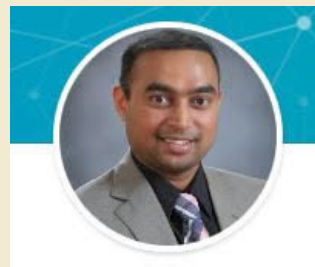
For more information on all of these services, please contact:

Lori Wooten State Director of Operations, TN [lwooten@rhanet.org](mailto:lwooten@rhanet.org)

## Chaitanya Kancharana, "CK" named Director of IT Infrastructure

Atlanta, Georgia

We are pleased to announce the addition of "CK" Chaitanya Kancharana as our new Director of IT Infrastructure. CK officially joined our team Monday August 14th in the Atlanta office. CK has an MBA and Masters in Electrical Engineering and brings 11+ years of experience with a proven track record of success, most recently within the healthcare industry at both Piedmont and WellStar Healthcare, which will be invaluable in meeting our strategic goals and objectives. RHA's regional IT Support Engineers led by Lee Nichols will report directly to CK.



We hope you'll all join in welcoming CK to the extended RHA family! Please reach out to him at [Chaitanya.Kancharana@rhanet.org](mailto:Chaitanya.Kancharana@rhanet.org)

## Angie Pascoli named Director of Business Process Management

We are pleased to announce the promotion of Angie Pascoli as our new Director of Business Process Management. Angie has worked at RHA for 4 years and has been an invaluable member of our organization. She has been highly influential in the creation of our new EMR system, PACenet, and has continued to show an exemplary dedication and commitment to RHA in every capacity. In her new role within the IT organization, Business Process Management focuses on improving workflow by optimizing business procedures with respect to systems so we become more effective, more efficient and more capable of adapting to an ever-changing environment. Angie brings to this position the understanding of our corporate organizational goals to balance competing requirements and resources to advance RHA's overall business strategy with both current business and new acquisitions. RHA Service Desk operations, Quality Assurance systems analysts and credentialing in the Atlanta office will report directly to Angie.



Join us in congratulating Angie on her outstanding performance and wishing her the best of luck in this future position.

# AROUND THE COMPANY

For More information about these programs contact:  
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336.899.1518



Before



After



## “Before and After”

*by the Recovery Education Center’s Creative Arts Group  
Diptych panels, acrylic on canvas, 2017*

RHA Behavioral Health  
High Point, NC

Through promoting an environment of education, support, recovery, community and structure, the Recovery Education Center (REC) groups have been dedicated to assisting participants with their recovery and wellness needs. Each week, the REC groups are focused on a different key concept of recovery and wellness. The REC’s Creative Arts Group has created some wonderful artwork this quarter as a result. The artwork is on display in one of the main hallways of the High Point office, showcased for all to see. Each piece is exhibited with a caption explaining the art and its respective meaning.

Participants in the Creative Arts Group created these pieces to express the emotions and thoughts they experienced before and after beginning their recovery and wellness journeys.

In **“Before,”** the dark colors with mixes of paint and swirl designs represent the overwhelming feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, entrapment, suffocation, confusion, and general chaos that participants associate with their lives and minds before they began their recovery and wellness journeys.

In **“After,”** bright colors with splashes of glitter and paint represent the feelings of excitement, happiness, motivation, peace, accomplishment, pride, comfort, and even the occasional bouts of doubt and confusion, that participants associate with their lives and minds after they began their recovery and wellness journeys.

The contrasting colors and styles of design display the contrasting emotions and thoughts the participants experienced. Participants wanted to portray the differences in their lives and minds before they began their recovery journeys to afterwards. The darkness and chaos from their past is a stark contrast to the light and energy they feel now that they are in recovery, and it is perfectly reflected in these two pieces.

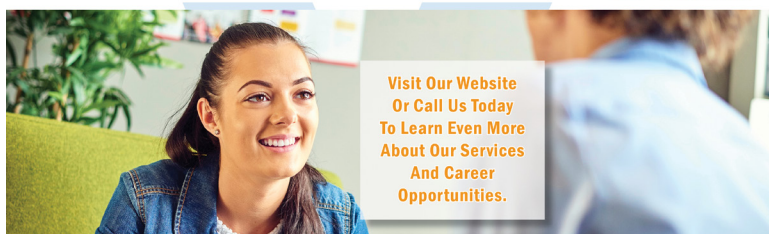
RHA would like to personally thank the many employees that work days, nights, weekends and holidays to serve the people we support. **THANK YOU!**



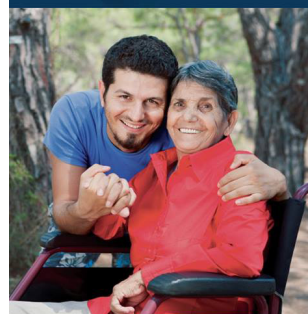
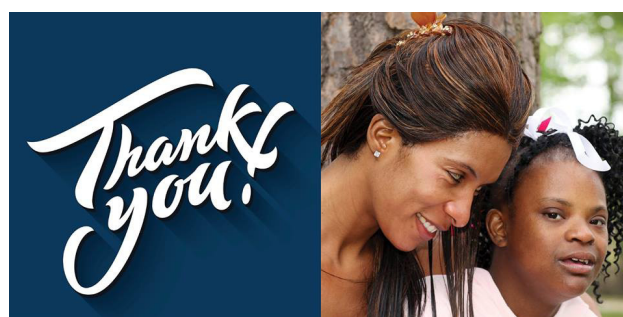
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Health Services

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To Learn Even More  
About Our Services  
And Career  
Opportunities.





## Project Search Success Story

RHA Employment Services  
Greenville, NC

Submitted by Cynthia Stevens,  
Director Greenville Group Homes

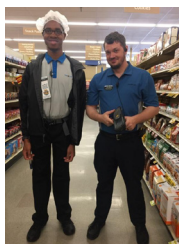


Isaiah and Food Lion  
Supervisor

**Isaiah Houston** came to the RHA Greenville Group Homes program in March 2010. He attended high school at J. H. Rose High School and graduated in May 2016. During his junior year, Isaiah interviewed for and was selected, among a group of his peers throughout Pitt County, to participate in an internship program through the Project SEARCH High School Transition Program.

Project SEARCH is a unique, business led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. For Isaiah, this accomplishment marked a major step toward independence. During his entire senior year of high school, he served as an intern at Vidant Medical Center located in Greenville, North Carolina. During his internship, he received training in food service, environmental services, sterilization, and quality assurance. He successfully completed the program and graduated from Project SEARCH in June 2016.

Following graduation, Isaiah participated in the RHA Employment Services Program in conjunction with Vocational Rehabilitation. Given his determination and drive as well as working day-to-day with his job coach, he obtained employment at a local Food Lion. He was hired as a Quality Assurance Specialist in July 2016 and was recently rewarded for his one year anniversary as an employee.



In addition to his education and vocational accomplishments, Isaiah has also obtained a great deal of independent living skills. As a result, he is seeking a less restrictive living environment where he can continue his employment and become an active member of his local community. We are very proud of Isaiah because of the great accomplishments he has made!

For more information on Project Search contact:  
Tommy Cox [tc Cox@rhanet.org](mailto:tc Cox@rhanet.org) or 919-738-3540

## This & That

### Milledgeville Community Access

Submitted by Lillian M. Veal

RHA Health Services  
Milledgeville, Georgia

#### Garden Fresh



RHA Milledgeville Community Access Services is so proud of our garden. We have cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, and peppers. This is our 4th year planting a garden as

members of Harrisburg Community Garden. Our team works hard with to water, weed, and pick the vegetables.

We enjoy fried green tomatoes, tomato sandwiches and fresh vegetables. Coordinator Lillian Veal shares the vegetables with the community, staff, and families. The Garden is over flowing!!!! MMMMM GOOD!!



For more information about this program contact:  
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### Passageways

Submitted by Carlo Black

RHA Behavioral Health  
Lexington, North Carolina

#### Mind and Body

Calming the mind by mining for gems. While visiting Dan Nicholas Park, members learned how gems and crystals can be a healing source for stress and anxiety.



Passageways members participate in a monthly exercise session with a certified personal trainer. It's important for all people, including those with a disability, to have an exercise regime suited to their needs. It may seem daunting at first, but they are encouraged to dive in and give it a go!

> For more information on our Passageways PSR program contact:  
Carlo Black [carlo.black@rhanet.org](mailto:carlo.black@rhanet.org) or 336-242-2403

## The Gift Of Heart

RHA Employment Services  
Raleigh, NC



Krystyna Stallings

**W**hen I met Krystyna she was a nervous young lady with no idea where she was headed or for what. Starting out as a graduate from high school, which way do you turn first? Krystyna Stallings is one of those bright stars you occasionally meet in life. She said she wanted to be a veterinarian, but is allergic

to cats and has no experience with large animals so we decided to take another route to employment!

Krystyna has a sweet smile and a willing spirit and so I suggested that she may enjoy working with the elderly. She immediately thought so too with the reply, "Wow that would be neat!". With that, I went to work searching for a potential employer close her home, as she has no transportation. I discovered Carillion Assisted Living in Knightdale, NC and picked up an employment application, filled it out in the parking lot and returned it immediately.

The next day I called the director who told me he had 150 applicants and wanted someone with experience. I asked him where he would be if someone hadn't given him a chance, to which he replied "Bring her in at 10 a.m. tomorrow".



Krystyna and her supervisor

At the interview Krystyna was hired! Her first day of work provided exposure to Alzheimer's clients, which she enjoyed. She asked me if I was surprised, which I was, in a way, as she had been quite shy. After the third day of training, she said, "Ms. Lorraine, you changed my life". I said "No, I didn't, I just gave you direction".

She said she was going to make me proud, and that, she did! The fourth day she sent me a text saying "My new goal is to be employee of the month". Every time I did a site-visit, she and her supervisor, Ivan, reminded me she was going to be Employee of the Month. Ivan would say "she is awesome" and asked if I had more like her. Well, the day came and YES, Krystyna had done it in just two months... *Employee of the Month!*

This is not the end of a great story, but a beginning, on the path of a new future. Krystyna has expressed a desire to become a Certified Nursing Assistant or supervisor someday.

“ I call my clients my children... I guess I can, as I am 70 and driven by seeing the potential in each of them.

This is what RHA strives for... to give people hope and a chance at a great future. Yes, Krystyna and her supervisor would say I am the best, and give me hugs, but that is not why we do what we do. Anyone can have a resume and credentials but you must have the heart, and the people must feel you're caring for them. I call my clients my "children"... I guess I can, as I am 70 and driven by seeing the potential in each of them. It is very rewarding to see the hope they have in a new future. She is one of my many children, all colors, backgrounds, shapes, sizes and with various physical or mental disabilities. We concentrate on "abilities" not disabilities.



*Lorraine McGuire is 70 years young and is an Employment Specialist with RHA Health Services. Her back ground is in recruiting, welfare to work programs, and Independent Living Programs for teens in foster care.*

*Lorraine and her husband are foster parents to a 12 year old boy and currently in the adoption process. In her "spare time" she is a 4-H leader teaching life skills to children ages 8-16.*

For more information about Employment Services contact:  
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**Special thanks to**  
**Richelle Mitchell**

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