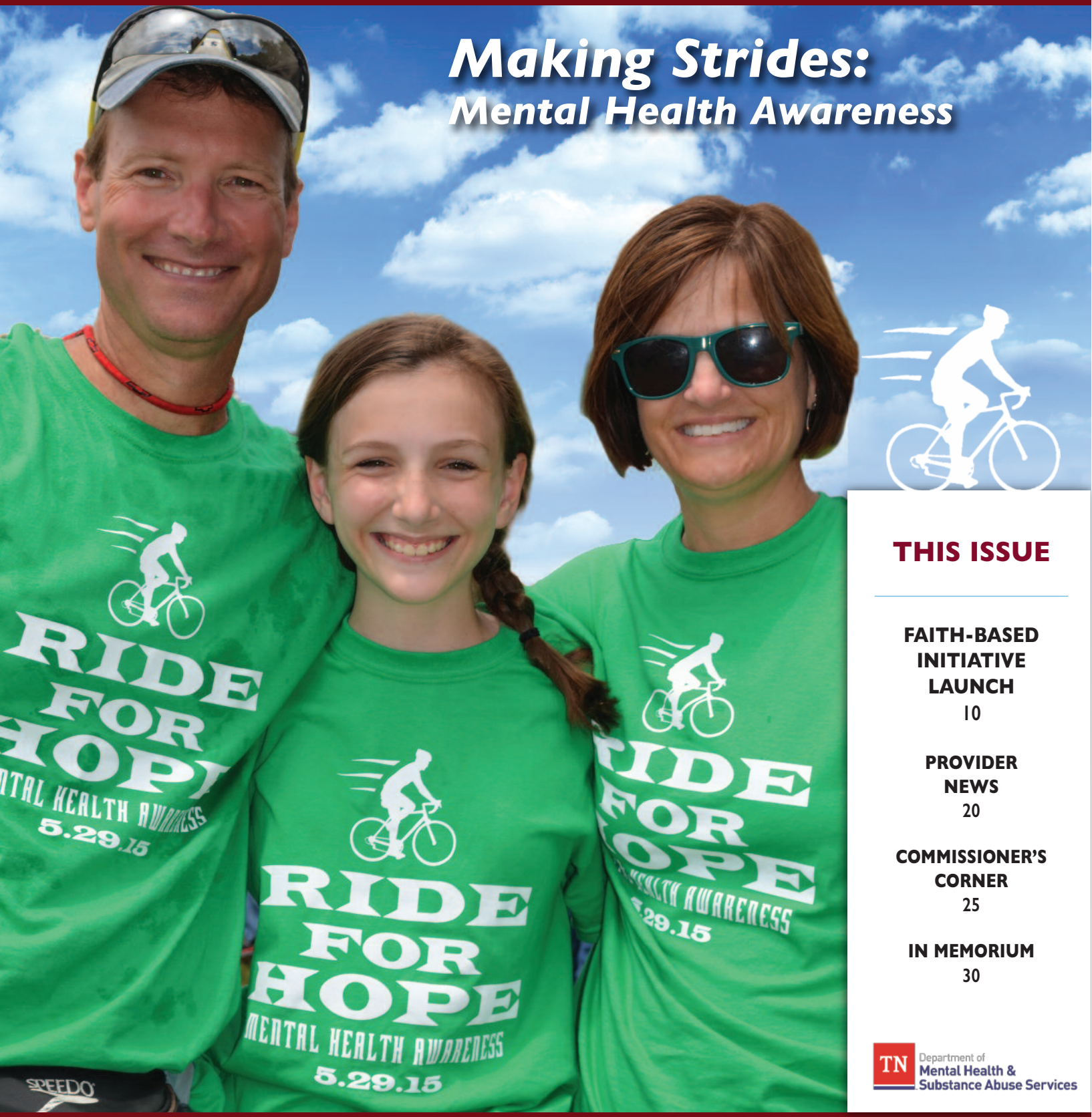
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Update

VOLUME 17 NO. 3 AUGUST 2015

Making Strides: Mental Health Awareness



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TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

There are many things to love about summer…the chance to take a break, to spend more time with loved ones, and just getting away from it all to do the things you love to do. Hopefully, you've had time this summer to enjoy the outdoors, longer days, and perhaps a vacation.

The Commissioner and SAS Director Monty Burks were on hand for the June 2015 Faith-Based Initiative launch in Memphis.

This summer here at the department we embarked on something new, the launch of our new faith-based recovery initiative, which will offer more Tennesseans the opportunity to break the cycle of addiction.

In the month of June, we celebrated the start of this endeavor at the historic St. John's United Methodist Church in Memphis. All of these efforts is just the beginning of something really special you can read more about in this edition of Update. All of our faith-based, non-profit, and local community organizations are so valuable in this and all our endeavors to help people deal with substance abuse and mental health issues.

Fall and eventually winter will be here before you know it, so make the most of these summer days before they're gone.

Warmest regards,

E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

Our VISION

To be one of the nation's most innovative and proactive state behavioral health authorities for Tennesseans dealing with mental health and substance abuse problems.

Our MISSION

Provide, plan for, and promote a comprehensive array of quality prevention, early intervention, treatment, habilitation, rehabilitation and recovery support services for Tennesseans with mental illness and substance abuse issues.

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES **Update**

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TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

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Legislative Summary

The 109th Tennessee General Assembly adjourned their 2015 legislative session on April 22, 2015. The General Assembly considered many mental health and substance abuse issues including:

- Establishment of operating and administrative procedures for Veterans Treatment Courts in Tennessee, as well as a permanent funding stream for those courts
- Establishment of a Good Samaritan Law in Tennessee
- Passage of a bill that will allow Tennessee pharmacies to set up prescription drug take-back/disposal boxes.

The 2016 Legislative Session of the 109th Tennessee General Assembly will convene on January 12, 2016.

Read the 2015 TDMHSAS Legislative Summary in its entirety.

The Legislative Summary was prepared by Kurt Hippel, TDMHSAS Office of Legislation and Rules.

Change has Come

Tennessee State Government went through some significant changes in June that affects us here at the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

www.tn.gov/behavioral-health

1) New Logo

You may have noticed we have a new Department logo. If you are using our "vintage" logo in printed materials or online, please contact us for our new logo.

2) New Website

Second, we have a new website! If you haven't already, take a look at the new tn.gov. The website has been improved in many ways including having more helpful information at your fingertips. Plus, the search box, in the upper, right-hand corner, has been supercharged. If you can't find what you are looking for or if you would like to submit to our event calendar, please let us know! Email OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov

3) New Ways to Connect

We have just launched our Facebook page! "Like us" to follow what the Department is doing in real time.

"Like us" to follow what the Department is doing in real time.

Like us on Facebook

Behavorial Health Day on the Hill

Governor Ron Ramsey addresses the audience.

Efforts to maintain and enhance mental health services in Tennessee were the focus of the 2015 Behavioral Health Day on the Hill, held March 18 at Nashville's War Memorial Auditorium. People came from all over the state for a morning of education, fellowship, and advocacy training. Many met with their legislators afterward.

Speaker of the House Beth Harwell and Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey were among the lawmakers who came out to share their support for Tennesseans who have experienced a mental health condition and/or who struggle with substance abuse.

Sponsored by The Tennessee Coalition of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Behavioral Health Day on the Hill serves to provide important information on the issues facing individuals with mental illness and to promote conversations with lawmakers about the need to maintain effective treatment and services. It occurs annually in March.

Standing with Commissioner E. Douglas Varney is Speaker of the House Beth Harwell.

Art for Awareness

The 10th annual Art for Awareness was held in War Memorial Auditorium following Behavioral Health Day on the Hill. The free event gives people with mental illness or substance use disorder an opportunity to share their artwork and to raise awareness. It encourages the use of a creative outlet for self-expression, self-discovery, and emotional growth. Art for Awareness is co-sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Healing Arts Project, Inc. | HAPI.

(Left) HAPI founders, Jane and Richard Baxter, are advocates for the healing power of art in mental health and addiction recovery. (Above) Art by Augustine Collier. (Below) Attendees take a group shot.

Milly Douglas | Tennessee Crisis Services

Outstanding Employee

by Mike Machak

Gatlinburg native Milly Douglas has been a Crisis Responder with Youth Villages for more than a decade.

She considers herself an "agent of change" when she gets involved with a youth and family in crisis. For Milly, it's exhilarating to be making a positive difference in everyone's life.

"It's walking into an emergency room and the doctor saying, 'thank God, you're here,'" said Milly. "It's seeing the light dawn in a kid's eyes after you've explained a new way to negotiate with their parents, and it's knowing that I have made a positive difference in someone's life."

Crisis Services is an introduction to the mental health system for many of the families Milly serves. Milly sees her role as an educator, to ensure children and families better understand mental health. And she advocates for them with schools and providers, too. "We have to be mindful of the entire situation going on with the families that we are working with," said Milly. "Many times it's like unraveling a gigantic knot to work through all the barriers in the situation to get the kids the help they need."

Milly has a master's degree in psychology and brings diverse work experience to her job. "In high school, I waited tables and cooked in restaurants, worked as a hotel desk clerk and maid, telephone answering service, cake decorator, camp counselor, and eventually taught undergraduate level psychology classes," she said.

She also brings strong clinical assessment skills, advocacy for families, and commitment to coordinating care, said Supervisor Connie French. "Milly typically works the night shift which often has more difficulties with coordination of care in the moment," said Connie. "She understands the importance of aligning the key players involved with the child and the family in order to best meet the needs of the child."

Milly sees an "all for one and one for all" motto at Youth Villages, where the focus is on keeping families together whenever safely possible. And that support extended to her in a very personal way following a fire four years ago when Milly's home burned to the ground. "My teammates were there for me," Milly said.

Just as she has been for so many others.

Milly Douglas wanted to be photographed with the Youth Villages Specialized Crisis Services, East TN Team. Seated, left to right, are: Crisis Responders Cathy Witmer, Milly Douglas, Vickie Daugherty, and Melanie Dagostino. Standing, left to right, are: Maria Munday, Crisis Responder, and Supervisor Connie French.

TO NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE

as a Crisis Services Outstanding Employee, download a nomination form here and follow the instructions. Completed forms are placed in a pool of applicants and reviewed by a special TDMHSAS committee.
Download a nomination form here.

UNITE 2015: Focusing on Children and Families

Coffee County TN – Helping families overcome substance abuse and focusing on what's in the best interest of children were the reasons that a community of providers and professionals gathered this past spring at the Tullahoma National Guard Readiness Center.

"The Building Strong Families Conference was indeed a conference of and for community partners," said Edwina Chappell, TDMHSAS Principal Investigator, Building Strong Families and TIES Grant Projects. "The collaboration continues to be inspirational."

Although conference organizers were forced to reschedule due to February's winter storm, the event, held April 22-23, was well attended by juvenile justice workers, educators, community mental health experts, substance abuse treatment providers, and other professionals. The conference was sponsored by the Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition in conjunction with the Coffee County Children's Advocacy Center. There was no charge to attend.

(Above) Special Agent Cuvalo J. Truesdell, Public Information Officer for the Drug Enforcement Administration, Atlanta Field Division.

(Left) Danette Wilson, TDMHSAS Division of Clinical Leadership

The Building Families Conference offered workshops on a variety of critical subjects including: Improving Client Engagement, Why Scare Tactics Don't Work, Understanding Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Improving Client Engagement through Teaching, Engaging, and Assessment, Communication Skills for Prevention Specialists, Human Trafficking in Our Backyard, and Co-Dependency: The Role of Co-Dependency in Addicted Families. (Above) Tom Murdoch, Centerstone, hosts a plenary session.

Family Support Specialists are awesome!!

Know someone who would be an awesome Family Support Specialist?
Now is a great time to start the certification process.

Scholarships are Available

to cover the cost of the Competency Course required for certification

A $500 value!

Deadline to apply: Sept. 30, 2015

The Certified Family Support Specialist program provides State certification for caregivers who provide direct support services to families of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or co-occurring disorders. Family Support Specialists use their unique experiences as a caregiver to inspire hope and to provide support to others facing similar challenges. Specialists help caregivers navigate the varying child-serving systems. They teach caregivers to become advocates for their children by participating in committees and councils which determine policy and affect change. They make a huge difference in the lives of children and of caregivers.

To request a scholarship application and to learn more, contact:
Brenda Donaldson, Family & Youth Engagement Coordinator
Phone: 615-770-1788 or email: Brenda.Donaldson@tn.gov

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

TENNESSEE SYSTEM of CARE

Children's Advocacy Days

Your favorite superheroes were on hand for the 27th annual Children's Advocacy Days.

The theme was "Everyday Superheroes, Every Day!" While War Memorial Auditorium was decked out with classic superhero decor, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) honored real-life heroes, Tennesseans who have made in the lives of children in our state.

Along with the recognitions, the event included presentations and a Commissioners' Panel made up Commissioners E. Douglas Varney; John Dryzehner, Health; Raquel Hatter, Human Services; Jim Henry, Children's Services; and Candice McQueen, Education.

TCCY works with state agencies, juvenile courts, child advocacy groups, and many organizations and citizens to improve services to children.

(Left) Vanderbilt student Kaila Gilbert; Nichelle Foster, Metro Public Health Department; Lynette Hicks, Department of Health; and Gwen Hamer, TDMHSAS Division of Clinical Leadership.

Dr. Louise Barnes, TDMHSAS Office of Children and Youth Mental Health (center) stands with Diane Oman (left) and Genneta Gross, Technical Assistants for the statewide Project B.A.S.I.C. program.

We'd love to promote your conference here and online. Email leslie.judson@tn.gov.

You Gotta Have Faith

by Mike Machak

New initiative launches, State's first Recovery Congregations are certified in Memphis

Monty Burks, TDMHSAS Director of Faith-Based Initiatives, Bishop Jerry Ivery and Annie Ivory-Simpson from Urban Family Ministries hold their certification alongside Commissioner E. Douglas Varney who traveled to Memphis to attend the launch ceremony.

In the pews of the historic St. John's United Methodist Church in Memphis, leaders from more than 20 faith communities came together for a common goal, to help more Tennesseans overcome their substance use issues. They answered a call put out by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to offer more Tennesseans the opportunity to beat their addictions. In the spirit of healing, these faith community leaders in Memphis responded, welcoming the opportunity to become Tennessee's first Faith-Based recovery communities in the state.

"This partnership represents a meaningful opportunity for faith communities across the state to become proactive in serving individuals struggling with substance use issues," said Commissioner E. Douglas Varney. "I'm really excited and full of hope that this will really gain momentum all across our state. My hope is for this outreach to impact literally hundreds of thousands of lives across our state."

At this Inaugural Celebration, certificates were presented to each of the newly certified Recovery Churches. A first for them and a first for Tennessee.

"I really want to celebrate and salute those in the State of Tennessee who are making this program happen," said Bishop Brandon Porter, Greater Community Temple. "I'm so glad our ministry along with other ministries in Tennessee can band together and make something wonderful happen for someone else."

For these faith leaders, who have dedicated their lives to helping and healing those in pain and suffering, their participation as one of Tennessee's NEW Faith Based Recovery communities only furthers their mission to bring comfort and healing to those seeking help.

"What I reasonably foresee in the future is knocking a serious dent in the addiction problem in Tennessee," said Monty Burks, Director of Special Projects. "There is power in the pews. It's our hope that these recovery communities will offer one more opportunity for people to change their lives with the support of their family and friends."

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At the Faith-Based Intitiative launch in Memphis, Rev Dr. Jane Abraham and Keith Henderson, LCSW from The Hart Center receive their certification alongside Commissioner Varney and Director Monty Burks.

To learn more about TN Faith-Based Recovery communities and to get involved, contact Monty Burks at 615-770-1783 or email Monty.Burks@tn.gov. Or visit the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services online, and search 'Faith'.

National Suicide and the Black Church Conference

Since 2003, this conference has been the nation's leading suicide awareness forum for faith leaders in the African-American community. The conference goal is to open a dialog among church leaders and experts in the field of suicide prevention and mental health, to share best practices that can help congregations recognize suicidal behaviors, and to provide individuals in crisis support and intervention.

(Right) Commissioner E. Douglas Varney, Altha J. Stewart, MD, Director, System of Care Office of Shelby County Public Defender, Memphis, TN; Dianne Young, Pastor, The Healing Word Center and Conference Co-Chair; William Young, Sr., DMin, LPC, LMFT, Bishop, The Healing Word Center and Conference Co-Chair; and Gwen Hamer, Director of Education and Development & Coordinator of Civil Rights Compliance for the Department join together at the start of the 2015 conference.

Staff Briefs — *To submit to Staff Briefs: email OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov.*

Kelley Sallas has joined the Division of Hospital Services as an Administrative Assistant. Kelley comes to Central Office from Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute where she worked as a Treatment Plan Coordinator. For the past five years, she has also been employed as a part-time Mental Health Specialist at Vanderbilt Hospital where she enjoys her work in direct patient care. In her free time, Kelley likes watersports and yoga and spending time with her two cats. She is a Memphis native.

Lesley Head has joined the Office of Housing and Homeless Services as Program Manager for the Tennessee Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals. He will be responsible for administering this $3.6 million, 3-year federal grant to provide housing and support services to homeless veterans and other chronically homeless people who experience severe mental illness, substance use, and co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders. A public servant with the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Community Health Network and Population Health and Prevention for more than 12 years, Lesley is originally from Charleston. Having lived in East Tennessee for 14 years, Lesley is excited about the 'homecoming' back to the Volunteer State and is looking forward to establishing roots in Nashville.

Debbie Wynn has been named Mandatory Outpatient Treatment Coordinator in the Office of Forensic and Juvenile Court Services. Debbie was most recently with TriStar Behavioral Health and was previously employed at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute where she served as Director of Social Services and MOT Coordinator. She has also served as Children's Program Director at the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, worked in the Department of Human Services, taught at Trevecca Nazarene College, and provided counseling services in the community. Debbie brings a wealth of knowledge about aftercare planning for patients returning to the community following treatment from the Regional Mental Health Institutes. Debbie earned her Master of Science in social work from the University of Tennessee and is a licensed clinical social worker.

Kisha Ledlow is the new Project Director for Tennessee's Healthy Transitions TEAM Initiative. This is a 5-year, $5 million grant awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Kisha most recently served as the Statewide System of Care Technical Assistance Coordinator and Grants Manager of federal grants at TDMHSAS. Her tenure in this position, among other relevant past experience, has provided her the background and opportunity to bring a unique focus and familiarity with the intricacies of developing and furthering a statewide system of care for children's (and in this case, transitional youth's) mental health.

Morenike Murphy has joined the Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention as the Grant Coordinator for two new suicide prevention grants awarded by SAMHSA. Morenike was previously employed by the Mental Health Cooperative where she spent one year working as a Mental Health Criminal Justice Liaison and ten years working as an Emergency Psychiatric Services Crisis Counselor. She has a Master's in Mental Health Counseling as well as a Master's in Criminal Justice. In her spare time, Morenike also served for five years as a conservator representative for individuals with mental health or intellectual disability with Comcare Inc. Her compassion for individuals in crisis, experience in suicide prevention, and multifaceted skills will be a valuable asset.

During a guest appearance on 106.9 FM Kick's Country Radio in Cookeville, Angie McKinney-Jones, Director of TDMHSAS Prevention Services, shared strategies about ways to prevent substance abuse. Angie talked with host Larry Stone and explained how she works with community coalitions and providers statewide who are dedicated to reducing drug use.

Sarah Sanders has joined the Office of Children and Youth Mental Health as Program Manager 2. Sarah has 10 years experience in the mental health field including in direct care, consumer advocacy, management, education, strategic planning, and administration. Her experience includes working with children and youth with Severe Emotional Disturbance and/or delinquency adjudication within the juvenile court system; adults with Severe Mental Illness; in-home therapy and support services for parents and families of children with SED; law enforcement; and school and community-based mental health education to children grades pre-K through high school. Sarah most recently served as a Planner in the Division of Planning, Research, and Forensics where she completed annual needs assessments, managed projects in conjunction with the Research Team, and worked with Planning and Policy Councils. In her new role, she provides direct oversight of state contracts addressing anti-stigma and mental health education; violence and bullying prevention; and school-based mental health, as well as indirect oversight of a variety of early-intervention contracts.

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Contract Specialist Karen Colyer retired on April 30 after 40 years of service to the State of Tennessee. Commissioner E. Douglas Varney and General Counsel Zack Griffith presented Karen with the Award of Merit for her years of service. She was described as dedicated, hardworking, kindhearted, and well respected with a very good sense of humor. Thank you for your service, Karen!

LeAnn Duncan has joined the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as an East Tennessee Licensure Surveyor. She has 13 years' experience with the State of Tennessee in Child Protective Services and Children's Special Services, having previously worked with the Department of Children's Services and the Department of Health, respectively. LeAnn has also served in the private sector as a founding member and on the Board of Directors for a non-profit agency serving women and children in crisis. She earned her bachelor's degree from Berea College in Child and Family Studies and Master's Degree in Education from Tusculum College.

Kara Miller has joined the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as an Administrative Assistant in Central Office and in the Middle Tennessee Office of Licensure. Kara currently attends Park University Online where she is in pursuit of her Bachelor's Degree with a concentration in Healthcare Management; her anticipated graduation is June 2016. Kara is new to the Nashville area having formerly worked in the Law Office of Paula L. Thomas and the Crossroads Animal Hospital in El Paso, TX, as well as the University of Purdue Bookstore in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Adrienne Brent has joined the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as a West Tennessee Licensure Surveyor. Adrienne has more than 10 years' experience in the mental health field as a counselor, supervisor, trainer, and manager. Recently, Adrienne worked at Youth Villages in Memphis where she served as a Program Manager and Residential Coordinator for the Memphis Group Homes. Adrienne is originally from Martin and attended the University of Tennessee, Martin. She is a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta sorority.

Mario Baum and Don Walker have joined the Office of Research. Mario is a statistical research specialist responsible for the submission of data to SAMHSA and for compiling data books for the Department. For the past two years, Mario worked as a Research Fellow at Vanderbilt University as well as an online teacher for Universities in Austria. He worked as a researcher at the University of Vienna, Austria, from 2007 to 2013. From 2008 to 2011, he led a project studying online-based social skills trainings for shy adolescents and adults. Mario has a Master's and Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology.

Don Walker has 20 years' experience in the mental health field as an evaluation and outcomes specialist, case manager, counselor, and adjunct professor. He has worked in public sector, non-profit, university, and private settings. Don also provided training, organizational development, team facilitation, and quality auditing in the electronics industry. He has two Master's degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Christian Education. Also a statistical research specialist, Don will be the evaluator for the System of Care Expansion initiative and other children's programs in the Division of Mental Health Services.

Find more staffing news in Commissioner's Corner, page 26.

Employee of the Year is James McGowan

by Lisa Coleman, Western Mental Health Institute

"He serves his colleagues as well as our patients with willingness, care, and compassion," said CEO Roger Pursley as he introduced James McGowan, this year's Western Mental Health Institute (WMHI) and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) Employee of the Year. Chosen out of some 1,700 hospital staff, the Employee of the Year is awarded annually.

During a special reception held in McGowan's honor at WMHI, John Arredondo, Assistant Commissioner of Hospital Services for TDMHSAS, added that McGowan's, "commitment to service and to being a team player are important values within our department." The reception was attended by fellow WMHI employees, past and present, as well as several members of McGowan's family.

McGowan came to work at WMHI in 1973 following his second tour of duty in Vietnam as part of the United States Army 101st Airborne Division. He brought with him a sense of duty to job and to his fellow man to his work at Western and has continued to do so during his 40-plus years at WMHI.

McGowan's first job at Western was as a custodian. He moved through the ranks until he was promoted to Property Officer I in 1998. In this position, McGowan is responsible for managing and maintaining the institute's equipment and property inventory.

"James is not the kind of person to seek out recognition, but he is certainly most deserving of being honored and recognized for the work he does each day," said Pursley. McGowan was praised by both Pursley and Arredondo for his commitment to a strong work ethic and his willingness to go the extra mile to get a job done.

CEO Roger Pursley, Western Mental Health Institute (left) and John Arredondo, Assistant Commissioner, TDMHSAS Division of Hospital Services (right) congratulate Employee of the Year Roger McGowan.

"I consider the employees and the patients here to be my friends," said McGowan. "I also respect each of them, and I want to do my part to help people who are here for whatever reason."

This is the second year in a row that a WMHI employee has been named as the TDMHSAS employee of the year.

Lisa C. Coleman is an ASA2 in the Legal Services Office at Western Mental Health Institute and serves as the hospital's historian. She writes a weekly column for "The County Journal" newspaper, is the author of Images of America: Hardeman County Tennessee, and is a co-author of Big Black Creek Vol. 1 & 2. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, photography, reading, crafts, cooking, and her dachshund, Elsie.

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services | Western Mental Health Institute

Congratulations Runners Up!

The Employee of the Year race is a tight one at the Department. All hospital staff are eligible. Here, we recognize our runners-up. Thanks for all you do!

2nd Place

Dr. Quentin Fannin, M.D.

Staff Physician and Clinical Preceptor
Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute

Patients and colleagues all seem to agree, Dr. Fannin is a likable doctor and very approachable too. Since 2006, Dr. Fannin has offered what many describe as a bedside manner that's respectful of everyone. Despite a demanding workload, Dr. Fannin and his team focus daily on addressing the needs of every patient in a caring and cost effective manner. Colleagues consider Dr. Fannin's most valuable asset as his ability to think creatively. Dr. Fannin and his wife, who is also a physician, have five children and reside in Chattanooga.

3rd Place

Cheryl Hatcher

Practical Nurse 2
Memphis Mental Health Institute

For 25 years, Cheryl Hatcher has served Tennesseans, dedicating her work to the health and welfare of the patients in her care. Friends and colleagues say she is a problem solver and someone who's always willing to lend a hand. Those closest to Cheryl consider her to be the ultimate team player, eager to jump in to cover when there's a staff shortage or a patient in need. In addition to being regarded as an exceptional employee, Cheryl's level of enthusiasm is considered one of a kind. Cheryl and her husband have three children and reside in Memphis.

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Life Changing Experiences

Submitted by our Regional Mental Health Institutes

Doris Littleton has worked for the State of Tennessee for 34 years. She has seen her share of achievement and happy endings. One of those remarkable opportunities occurred this past spring. Doris' work in Social Services at Western Mental Health Institute resulted in a chance encounter with a patient who had become homeless and estranged from family in nearby Memphis.

"The patient was transferred to my unit and charged with stalking," said Doris. "He didn't know where his family was, no phone numbers, no social security number, nothing."

In the spirit of not giving up, Doris worked tirelessly to locate loved ones and offer the patient all available benefits she could identify to help in his recovery. "We did not give up on him," said Doris. "One day with the help of a small amount of medication he remembered his sister's phone number in New York and I was able to contact her."

With the patient's memory restored, family was located and so very thankful to find their loved one safe and in good hands at Western. "The family was crying and was very thankful that he was safe," said Doris.

Fast forward a few years later.

Doris and staff psychiatrist Dr. Janel Batchellor receive an unexpected request. They are invited to attend the former patient's college graduation. He was graduating Magna Cum Laude in Computer Science and Mathematics.

Doris was beaming filled with a joy and so honored to witness her former patient's achievement.

"We met his family again and he presented us with special cards thanking us for his recovery.," said Doris. "This is proof that mental illness does not stop you from achieving your goals in life. We can make a difference as a team in the care we provide daily for our patients."

Making Tomorrow Better Than Today

Western Mental Health Institute social worker Nakita Odom, MSW, lives by that mantra of a better tomorrow. "I do what I do on a daily basis because I love people," said Nakita. Recently, a loved one of a patient at Western who has struggled with mental illness for many years, took notice of Nakita's dedication to make things better. "The patient's mother wrote a letter of gratitude to our CEO concerning her son," said Nakita. "She expressed how I went above and beyond what anyone has ever done for her son in his 19 years of struggling with and managing his mental illness." While very appreciative, Nakita says this was not a case of special attention. "I believe we all have a commitment to be of service to mankind," said Nakita. "In this case and every case my goal is the same, to make tomorrow better than today." Nakita says she is "above honored" to have made such an impact on the patient for his family to notice and express appreciation.

Psych Tech to the Rescue

Monday April 20 will be a day Moccasin Bend Psychiatric Tech Chann Carney will never forget. It started out as a typical day for Chann who began his career at Moccasin Bend in August 2013 as a member of the security team.

On that Monday in April, an unexpected situation forced Chann to make a now or never decision. A patient had fled from the property and had jumped into the Tennessee River. At that very moment, Chann made a life-changing decision.

"He was drowning, he was about to die," said Chann who dove into the river in an effort to save the patient. "I couldn't let someone die on my watch so I went in."

Chann saved the patient's life and in the process realized the powerful impact a single person can have on the lives of others.

About his job, he said: "I love to see the change in people," said Chann. "If I can better our community for my kids to come up in, I am all for it."

"Saving a drowning patient definitely makes you appreciate what you have, where you are and your life ahead," said Chann.

Chann lives in LaFayette, Georgia, with his fiance and stepdaughter.

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4th Place - Employee of the Year Genieve Graham

Lead Psychiatric Technician
Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Genieve Graham is looked upon as a role model, with a dedication to the work that's considered extraordinary. She is responsible for coordinating the scheduling of daily assignment for all psychiatric technicians on Unit F in the Acute Treatment Program. She also helps to provide orientation to new and agency staff as well as leads admission and discharge activities. Genieve is known for putting patients and staff at ease and maintains a spirit of optimism in everything she does.

Healthy Heros at our RMHIs

Professional staff as well as patients are developing healthier habits thanks to planned activities such as bike rides and an improved fitness room (right) at the Memphis Mental Health Institute. The space, originally designed for patient use only, is now being shared by everyone.

"We were able to improve the availability of exercise opportunities by relocating the equipment to a larger space," said Ellouise Warr, Program Director for Active Treatment. "As more staff started getting in workouts, more patients started taking an interest too."

Recently, the facility's Health Task Force held an open house at the fitness room which included training on the new equipment, sharing healthy eating literature, and blood pressure screenings.

Submitted by Charles E. Taylor, Admissions Program Director, MMHI

Staff at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute let their feet do the walking and the talking in a friendly competition. Staff were asked to participate in a walking challenge and asked to track their steps. They were rewarded for their efforts with better health and bragging rights. Good job, MTMHI!

Walk for a Good Cause

Make exercise meaningful and fun

A multitude of supporters, including TDMHSAS staff, came together for the 2015 NAMI Walk held in Shelby Park in Nashville. The annual event is a fundraiser for NAMI Davidson Co.

(Right) Sheila Plowman, TDMHSAS Peer Support Services staff Vik Moore and Lisa Ragan, and Sean Ragan-Plowman, along with furry friends Puff and Asher, check out the booths before the NAMI Walk began.

(Below) Mike Machak, TDMHSAS Office of Communications, and Sarah Sanders, Office of Children and Youth Mental Health, give a thumbs-up following their participation in the event's 5K. Mike took home first-place honors for coming in first in his age group.

A Super Time at Central Office

With football season approaching remember: game time can be fun and healthy! At Central Office in January, a pre-Super Bowl healthy potluck hit the spot with delicious dishes that are also good for you. Folks were encouraged to get into the spirit and wear their favorite team gear. The pre-game lunch offered a friendly, cooking competition with ribbons for the top three dishes judged to be the most delicious. Congratulations to **Ellen Roberts** for taking home the top prize for her healthy Mexican Layer Salad. Afterward, it was time to get moving with "The Wave," the Hokey Pokey, and the Electric Slide. A winning performance by everyone.

WORKING FOR A HEALTHIER TN

UnitedHealthcare Grant to Open Doors

Pictured at the check presentation ceremony are: left to right: Bob Currie, TDMHSAS Director of Housing and Homeless Services; Gregory Fisher, Director of Community Outreach, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee; Jerry Vagnier, President & CEO, Helen Ross McNabb Center; Michelle Berthon, Clinical Director-Behavioral Health, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee; Maureen Arden, Vice President, Behavioral Dedicate Sites, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee; Commmissioner E. Douglas Varney; Rita Johnson-Mills, President & CEO, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee; Keith Gaither, Director of Managed Care Operations, Bureau of TennCare; Deputy Commissioner Marie Williams; Mary Shelton, Director of Behavioral Health Operation TennCare; Kubra Snow, Community Outreach Coordinator-Behavioral Health, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee; Sean McPherson, Vice President & COO, LifeCare Family Services Inc.; Mark Just, CEO, LifeCare Family Services Inc.

Commissioner Varney and Deputy Commissioner Williams had the honor of hosting a grant award ceremony at the Tennessee State Capitol in June. The grant monies will help fund housing for people who need a place to live after being discharged from a mental health facility. UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Tennessee awarded the grants, totaling $600,000, to LifeCare Family Services of Nashville and the Helen Ross McNabb Center in Chattanooga. This follows a $400,000 grant made to Alliance Healthcare Services in Memphis in April 2014 capping off UnitedHealthcare's $1 million commitment to support the development of appropriate housing for persons with mental illness. "There is a wealth of literature, both national and Tennessee-specific, to support the essential role of stable, safe, quality, and affordable permanent housing in the recovery process for persons with mental illness," said Commissioner Varney.

Jericho Project Wins National Honors

Shelby County program recognized with Innovations in Criminal Justice Award

The Jericho Project was recently selected as a program that has helped to break down barriers to recovery for hundreds of people since its launch from the Shelby County Public Defender's Office more than a decade ago.

The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Center for Court Innovation selected the Jericho Project along with seven other such programs in the United States for approaching criminal justice challenges in new and effective ways.

The Jericho Project serves people living with serious mental illness and substance use disorders who cycle through the criminal justice system. Nearly 60% of those participating in Jericho have successfully completed their recovery plans and also avoided further contact with the criminal justice system.

Stephen Bush, Shelby County Chief Public Defender, developed the initiative. "Supporting people who live with addiction and mental illness as they transition from jail to our community is vital work," he said, "and we hope this award helps other communities develop better ways of doing it."

Frontier Health Helps Children, Families

Diana Finlay, LCSW, Site Director for Charlotte Taylor Center in Elizabethton, "plants" a pinwheel for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, Frontier Health highlighted services that support children and families by planting Pinwheel Gardens. "Planting a Pinwheel Garden in April demonstrates our commitment to invest in children's lives as we build a healthy community together," said Tim Perry, Frontier Health Division Director of Tennessee Outpatient Children & Youth Services.

Nurturing Parenting classes and Child Abuse Prevention is another way Frontier Health supports area children and youth. "We provide services that help children develop strengths, acquire coping skills, learn to recover from hardships, and prepare for any future hardships," said Kathy Benedetto, Senior Vice President of Tennessee Children's Services.

Baptist Healing Trust Provides Mental Health Grant

The Baptist Healing Trust of Nashville has provided a $35,000 operations grant to Mental Health America of Middle Tennessee (MHAMT). "We are extremely grateful to Baptist Healing Trust for this grant which will expand our prevention and early identification programs," said MHAMT CEO Tom Starling.

Mental Health America of Middle Tennessee is celebrating its 69th year in promoting mental health and wellness through advocacy, services, and education. Agency programs focus on suicide prevention, Alzheimers support, anti-bullying in schools, recovery from abuse, and retention of students through graduation.

Helen Ross McNabb Foundation Exceeds Fundraising Goal

In March, Knoxville's Helen Ross McNabb Foundation launched a $3 million fundraising campaign to increase access to quality mental health care in East Tennessee. Funds raised will offset the cost of hiring quality clinical staff, including psychiatrists, and nurse practitioners and will be used to make needed renovations to facilities acquired after the Center's merger with Child and Family Tennessee.

"We have found that clean, inviting, therapeutic environments help facilitate the healing process. Our clients deserve to receive care in high quality settings," said Jerry Vagnier, Helen Ross McNabb Center CEO/President.

Helen Ross McNabb reports that $3,150,000 was raised, exceeding their goal by $150,000. They will begin to recruit clinical staff and facility renovations in Fall 2015.

HAVE NEWS?

Please share with us! Email press releases, event information, and photos to leslie.judson@tn.gov.

Visions of Hope Gala

NAMI Tennessee honors Commissioner E. Douglas Varney

NAMI Tennessee held its annual Vision of Hope Award Gala May 13 at the Omni Nashville Hotel. This year's Vision of Hope Award was presented to Commissioner Varney (left) in recognition of his work and service in the field of behavioral health.

In addition to the awards ceremony, attendees enjoyed dinner and a silent auction. NFL alum and Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George served as special guest.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) supports, educates, advocates, and provides assistance to individuals and families impacted by mental illness. For more for information about NAMI or to find a chapter in your area, visit www.namitn.org.

Eddie George speaking to the audience and (right) chatting with Deputy Commissioner Marie Williams.

NAMI Tennessee
National Alliance on Mental Illness

HAVE NEWS? Update

Please share with us! Email press releases, event information, and photos to leslie.judson@tn.gov.

In May, county and city leadership joined with Robertson County Recovery Court to show support for the program which helps offenders who are abusing substances get clean and stay out of jail. Sitting, left to right are: General Sessions Judge Joel Perry and Robertson County Mayor Howard Bradley. Standing, left to right are: Clint Primm, Recovery Community Treatment; Anlyn Hughes, Probation; Rosemary Thomas, Public Defender; Kecia Haris, Recovery Court Coordinator; Lyn Noland, Recovery Community Treatment; John Finklea, Assistant District Attorney; and Jake Roberts, Court Officer.

Tennessee's Recovery Courts Celebrate National Drug Court Month

Robertson County has the pics to prove it . . .

Chief of Police David Thompson

Robertson County believes in recovery! In recognition of Drug Court Month, Recovery Court staff photographed citizens who believe that the Recovery Court program is good for the community. Here are just a few of the photos we received.

Sheriff Bill Holt

City Manager Paul Nutting

Senator Kerry Roberts and wife Dianne

Rep. Sabi "Doc" Kumar

Hope for Mental Health Awareness

Ridgeview Behavioral Health, DCS host Ride for Hope

Mental health advocates took to the open road May 29 in Oak Ridge to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. Bike riders, accompanied by police escort and cheering bystanders, sported green t-shirts to signify support for Tennesseans who struggle with mental illness, specifically children and their families. Their aim: to raise community awareness and to stamp out stigma. TDMHSAS Commissioner Varney and Children's Services Commissioner Jim Henry served as special ambassadors.

(Above) Ridgeway CEO Brian Buuck, Commissioner Varney, and Stephanie Strutner, Executive Director of Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention of Anderson County/ASAP.

(Left) Deputy Chief Alan Massengill, Oak Ridge Police Department; Commissioner Varney; and Jan Cagle, Program Manager, Criminal Justice Services.

(Below) Folks in the behavioral health field know about support. Terry Meece, member of Ridgeview's Board of Directors is leading this pack, and is about to get high-fived by former Ridgeview CEO Bob Benning who was on the course cheering everyone on.

Mary C. Young Named Moccasin Bend CEO

Young offers dynamic leadership skills, passion for behavioral health services

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has appointed Mary C. Young its new Chief Executive Officer for the State of Tennessee Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute in Chattanooga.

"We are delighted and excited by the appointment of Mary C. Young," said E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. "She will be dedicated to improving clinical outcomes for the patients we serve across East Tennessee, being innovative, resolving challenges, and collaborating with her fellow professionals at Moccasin Bend and among community leaders across the Chattanooga region."

Young is a dedicated behavioral health professional with experience as a clinician, Clinical Director, and Executive Director of inpatient, residential and outpatient mental health and addiction services.

Highlights of Young's career included: Admissions Director of an 80-bed psychiatric hospital in Bowling Green, Kentucky | Director of clinical programming for a 72-bed psychiatric hospital in Bloomington, Indiana | Administrator for the HOPE Program/Universal Health Services in Fountain, Florida where she led the facility in treating adolescent girls with mental health issues and a history of sexual abuse | Associate Director for the Jefferson Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center in Louisville, Kentucky, where she directed an 80-bed community mental health center inpatient and outpatient addiction treatment center | and Executive Director of the Life Healing Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she spearheaded renewal of the adult residential treatment center for complex trauma, sexual, and chemical addiction.

Most recently Young served as Director of Mental Health with Chestnut Health System in Bloomington, Illinois where she developed and opened a Crisis Stabilization Unit serving adults experiencing a psychiatric emergency.

"I am honored to assume the role of Chief Executive Officer at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute and to continue the tradition of providing excellent psychiatric care and treatment for some of Tennessee's most vulnerable citizens," said Young. "It will be a pleasure to assume leadership of such a dedicated, professional, and caring staff, and I look forward to the improvements we can make together to provide an even higher level of patient care."

Young holds a Master's in Counseling from Indiana University at Purdue University in Indianapolis and a Bachelor of Science in Telecommunications and English Literature from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

"Based on a decade's long commitment to inpatient care and community experience, we foresee Mary Young leading improvements in the System of Care at Moccasin Bend to better serve patients across the East Tennessee region," said John Arredondo, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Hospital Services. "Additionally, Young will put an emphasis on collaboration, whether that's with members of the hospital staff or community leaders. "She is skilled at teambuilding, and we look to her to improve patient outcomes and offer innovative solutions to better service our patients and families."

Welcome Aboard

Shaudra Easley
Middle Tennessee Manager
Office of Licensure

Shaundra Easley has been named Manager of the Middle Tennessee Office of Licensure. She comes to the Nashville office from the West Tennessee Office of Licensure where she worked for 11 years as a surveyor. She was also designated as the Chief Investigator in the West Tennessee Office of Licensure as well as the IT liaison during the development of the Licensure Database. Prior to working with Licensure, Shaundra was with the Shelby County Department of Corrections managing a substance abuse treatment program.

Shaundra is the proud mother of a 19-year-old son, Alex. She enjoys volunteer work, crocheting blankets, reading, and watching movies. She has been a mentor to young adult women through Girl Talk and remains an active member of New Direction Christian Church. She is a Certified Life Coach.

Kristi Crawford
East Tennessee Manager
Office of Licensure

Kristi Crawford is the recently-appointed Manager of the East Tennessee Office of Licensure, where she has worked as a surveyor for the last seven years. She came to Licensure from the Department of Children's Services and Knox County Community Services Agency where she was a case manager.

Kristi has volunteered on the East Tennessee Children's Hospital Fantasy of Trees steering committee and Keep Knoxville Beautiful. She is a member of All Saints Catholic Church where she has taught religious education. She enjoys reading, watching movies, travel, and her two dogs, Ernie and Chloe.

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Jennifer Garrison
Director of Human Resources
Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Jennifer Garrison has more than 15 years of experience in human resources management. She began her career in corporate staffing for MasterBrand Cabinets, Inc. where she worked for seven years in both corporate and manufacturing settings. Since then she has worked for Calsonic Kansei North America in Lewisburg, TN and A.O. Smith Water Products in Ashland City, TN as a human resources manager focusing on employee relations, staffing, performance management and training.

Jennifer earned her BS in Management at Oakland City University in Oakland City, IN in 2002 and is working towards a Masters degree at Trevecca Nazarene University. She holds a Professional Human Resources (PHR) certification and is a member of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).

Kristy Leach
Director of Children and Youth Mental Health
Mental Health Services

Kristy Leach has been named Director of Children and Youth Mental Health. Kristy previously held the position of Director of Children and Youth Programs in which she had oversight of a continuum of state and mental health block grant funded children and youth programs. In Kristy's new position, her role has expanded to include the statewide System of Care initiatives providing a continuum of prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for children and youth with mental health needs and their families.

Kristy has over 21 years of experience in Tennessee and Mississippi, in mental health management and service provider roles including as a therapist, case manager, day treatment provider, and director of a 60+ member team.

When she is not working, Kristy enjoys traveling, camping, and spending time with friends and family.

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Wes Geminn, Pharm. D
Chief Pharmacist / State Opioid Treatment Authority
Division of Clinical Leadership

Wes Geminn has a total of 12 years of pharmacy experience with four years experience at the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Regional Mental Health Institutes. Wes started at the Department as a PGY1 Managed Care resident in 2011 and transitioned to a clinical/informatics pharmacist position at MMHI and WMHI in 2012. He has been an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy since 2011 where he guest lectures in the areas of psychiatry and drugs of abuse and also precepts pharmacy interns and residents.

Wes graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in 2011 where he received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree. After graduation, he completed a PGY1 residency in Managed Care Pharmacy at the University of Tennessee and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. He is also an instructor at the Memphis Police Academy and Shelby County Sheriff's Crisis Intervention Training.

Brenda Ramsey
Licensure Program Manager
Office of Licensure

Brenda Ramsey has been promoted to Licensure Program Manager, a new position in the Office of Licensure. She was formerly the Manager of the East Tennessee Office of Licensure as well as a surveyor in that office. She began her work with the Department over 30 years ago as a social worker at Lakeshore Mental Health Institute.

In her new position, Brenda serves as the Chief Licensure Liaison with the Department's IT Division. Her wealth of knowledge about Licensure procedures and rules will serve the Department well as she develops training for Licensure staff on conducting site visits and investigations, and in conjunction with community agencies, develops training and technical assistance for Department licensees. She also will work closely with the Director and Assistant Director of Licensure on reviewing staff use of the Licensure database while working to improve its efficiency. She enjoys reading, counted cross stitch, and spending time with her family.

Talking Corrections and Mental Health

On June 17 in Memphis, Commissioner E. Douglas Varney and Deputy Commissioner Marie Williams lead an open discussion aimed at improving communications between government agencies and service providers.

The purpose: to better serve individuals in need of mental health and substance abuse services and to reduce the likelihood of repeated arrests. They discussed the ongoing need for crisis services and involvement in the region's criminal justice system.

Among those present were: Shelby County judges, law enforcement officials, corrections professionals, healthcare and social workers, and community providers. The summitt was held at Case Management, Inc.

Commissioner Varney addresses the gathering.

Deputy Commissioner Williams fields questions.

IN MEMORIAM

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services remembers the staff we have lost recently.

Richie Santina

Division of Planning, Research, and Forensics

Richie was at the Department for 11 years. Since 2006, he worked as a Forensic Specialist in the Office of Forensics, a subject matter and a team that he loved. He was known to enjoy life as he is here at a June 2015 Nashville Sounds game.

Leta Graham

Division of Substance Abuse Services

Leta joined the Department in 2012 as an Administrative Assistant to Rod Bragg. She was an active participant at Department events. At the Healthy Super Bowl potluck in January, Leta took home a 3rd place ribbon for her meatball dish.