

## Experience and preparation help AHS respond to oil spill disaster

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### At the Pointe

#### Hope of Recovery Art Exhibit

See page 12 for details.  
Sunday, Sept. 26,  
4-6 p.m.  
AHS Adult Outpatient  
West Mobile  
4211 Govt. Blvd.  
Contact:  
**Brandie Johnson,**  
602-6463

#### AHS Consumer Council Fundraiser

See page 12 for details.  
Week of Oct. 3-9,  
Time TBA  
National Mental Health  
Awareness Week  
Various AHS locations  
Contact: **Tina Wilson,**  
665-2563

Hurricanes and disasters such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill cause countless problems and often confirm the old adage "necessity is the mother of invention." In many ways, this has proven true for AltaPointe as each tragic event impels us to find new and better ways to deliver care.

Hurricane Ivan swept through the Gulf Coast in 2004, and then Hurricane Katrina struck the same areas, resulting in massive damage. These storms hit south Mobile County particularly hard. Afterwards, it became evident that we needed to establish an office and increase access to care in south Mobile County.

Together, with organizations such as the health-focused private foundation, Robert Wood Johnson, we began looking at behavioral healthcare trends for delivery-of-care best practices. This research led to partnerships with primary care clinics already established in this rural part of the county.

People seeking healthcare often have as many behavioral healthcare needs as physical needs. Working with primary healthcare providers, we have been able to offer south Mobile County residents better access to behavioral healthcare. Moreover, these relationships have given AltaPointe the opportunity to help people who do not normally seek mental health services.

Over the past five years, we have made sure this frequently underserved population receives the best possible care by using electronic health records and TeleHealth, which allows consumers to see a psychiatrist or psychiatric CRNP when needed.

Today, we are responding to yet another disaster. Many south Mobile County residents are beginning to experience extreme stress because the oil spill threatens the survival of their livelihoods and traditions. Our job is to reach out to the community and give support when needed.

We recently had the opportunity to speak alongside US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin and Substance



*US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin invited Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, and other AHS staff to tour her offices in Bayou La Batre July 14 when she visited her hometown. Taking the tour are Sandra Parker, MD, AHS medical director; Beverly Cook, AHS therapist; Melody Jefferson, AHS therapist; Dr. Benjamin; Schlesinger; Sherri Crane, AHS South Mobile County coordinator; Carol Mann, AHS director of public relations; and Pamela Hyde, SAMHSA administrator.*

Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Administrator Pamela Hyde at a Bayou La Batre community meeting July 14, to address the growing mental health service needs caused by this disaster. Dr. Benjamin specifically focused on AltaPointe as a model for how to handle disaster response by citing Project Rebound, which was part of the post-Katrina response.

AltaPointe is well prepared to respond to this crisis because we already had established best practices such as the primary care-behavioral healthcare model in south Mobile County.

We have arrived at this place through deliberate, thoughtful planning. Our ability to respond is a result of the determined and focused work of our information systems, performance improvement departments and our outpatient clinical staff.

One of our goals always has been to continually improve the quality of behavioral healthcare we deliver. Thanks to everyone who has ever played a role in fulfilling this goal. No matter what the next crisis may necessitate, I am confident that AltaPointe is equipped to respond appropriately.



# AltaPointe Responds to Oil Spill Crisis

On April 20, 2010, the residents of the Gulf Coast—and the rest of the world—watched as an explosion in the waters just south of Louisiana took the lives of 11 people and created the worst environmental disaster in American history. In the months since the catastrophic explosion, the damaging effects of the disaster have grown to such a degree that experts admittedly cannot calculate the immediate or long-term outcomes for the people of the region. Mental health and substance abuse service professionals quickly saw the potential for extreme mental health and behavioral distress related to the sadness, worry and anger felt by the people of the Gulf Coast.

While hundreds of workers and volunteers immediately went to work trying to stop the oil gusher and minimize the impact of the disaster, AltaPointe went into action to meet the community mental health and substance abuse needs in Bayou La Batre (BLB) and south Mobile County. AltaPointe took the following actions to increase visibility and services:

- Stationed a therapist at the BLB Community Center where city officials assembled local services beginning the week of June 28.
- Distributed informational flyers to promote crisis intervention counseling, beginning the week of June 28.
- Therapist Jessie Robertson presented session, “How to recognize mental stress” to nonprofit agency members at the BLB Community Center, Wednesday, July 6.
- AHS updated website with information about ways to deal with the stress of a crisis or disaster and when and where to seek professional help, Thursday, July 7.
- Posted roadside signs to direct people to AltaPointe mental health services, Friday July 8.
- AHS Public Relations Office worked with the Ala. Dept. of Mental Health and US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin’s office to coordinate a Wednesday, July 14 town hall meeting in Bayou La Batre where Benjamin, US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s administrator Pamela Hyde, and other federal, state, and local leaders spoke with residents. A press conference following the meeting attracted broad-based media attention.
- AHS psychiatrists and University of South Alabama College of Medicine officials held a free lecture on how to recognize and handle increased stress related to the oil spill, Tuesday, July 20.



AHS Therapist Jennifer Strickland works on her laptop at the Bayou La Batre Community Center. Strickland and other therapists have been available during work hours each weekday for residents who want to talk to someone about the stresses of the oil spill.

- AHS therapists responded to a request to speak with a group of day care workers on how best to cope with hearing about the stresses felt by the children in their care and the parents, Tuesday, July 27.
- AHS South Mobile County therapists began “Back-to-School Camp” Tuesday, Aug. 10 for children affected by the oil spill. The

camp invited participation from children ranging from kindergarten to eighth grade, along with their parents. The camp will run through Sept. 30.

The Alabama DMH has submitted a grant to BP via the US Federal Government that would provide funding for AltaPointe to revive Operation Rebound in south Mobile County. The program would provide support from therapists and counselors for the residents of affected communities along the Gulf Coast.

The full repercussions of this crisis are still unknown. So, too, is the extent of the behavioral and mental health effects on the people of the Gulf Coast. AltaPointe professionals plan to meet their mental health and substance abuse service needs until the repercussions have ended.

## Oil spill generates media coverage for AHS

- Mobile Press-Register featured AHS South Mobile County Counseling Center in “Little clinic, big job: Bayou La Batre mental health clinic braces for potential spike in services,” Monday, May 24
- Mobile Press-Register quoted **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AHS CEO, in “Oil spill-related crisis counseling expanding following charter boat captain’s suicide,” Sunday, June 27
- Mobile Press-Register quoted **Sandra Parker**, MD, AHS medical director, in “Gulf oil spews anxiety and despair,” Sunday, June 27
- FOX10 TV interviewed **Dr. Sandra Parker**, AHS Medical Director, in “Emotions run high amid oil spill,” Monday, June 28
- WKRQ-TV 5 interviewed **Sherri Crane**, AHS South Mobile County Office coordinator, for “Surgeon General returns to Gulf roots,” Wednesday, July 14
- Mobile Press-Register quoted **Dr. Parker** in “Handling oil spill stress focus of South Alabama lecture,” Monday, July 19
- Mobile Press-Register quoted **Schlesinger** in “Oil spill creating mental health issues, but funding for treatment comes slowly,” Thursday, July 21
- Mobile Press-Register published **Schlesinger’s** editorial, “Facing Our Fears: Spill crisis focuses attention on mental health problems,” Sunday, July 25

# 'Five-Star' continues to grow



AltaPointe's Five-Star Customer Service (5SCS) program reached a number of important goals this spring.

**Training**—A two-hour 5SCS training session has been integrated into the curriculum of the first day of new-hire orientation. The new training provides even more emphasis on giving good customer service to every consumer as well as the reasons why AHS consumers deserve such service.

**Standards**—The 5SCS Committee revised the company's standards of behavior and telephone communication standards and developed 21 new job-specific 5SCS standards cards. The new job-specific cards will hang behind the employee badge. Expect to receive your new job-specific cards in the coming weeks.

**Evaluation**—The 5SCS Evaluation Work Group continued to pilot test a new program that will allow AltaPointe employees to "Secret Shop" AHS services, and provide feedback about where the organization performs well and where improvements are needed. This multi-disciplinary shopping team comprises a wide range of staff members who represent all AHS positions and programs. These employees provide feedback about their internal interactions with various programs and services as a way to inform AHS's training and performance improvement efforts.

**Rewards & Recognition**—The 5SCS Committee members were very pleased to recognize 54 staff members with **AltaPraise** cards, new badge holders and new, handsome AltaPraise badge pins as part of the new employee rewards and recognition program. Either a consumer, a consumer's family member, a co-worker or a vendor recognized these staff members for providing excellent customer service. Supervisors recognized AltaPraise recipients during staff meetings.

AltaPraise recipients also received acknowledgement when their AltaPraise cards were posted in 5SCS display cases throughout AltaPointe, their names were listed in a special Five-Star Flyer distributed throughout AHS, and they received a personal letter of congratulations from AHS CEO, Tuerk Schlesinger. All AltaPraise recipients will be considered for the special designation of "Star of the Quarter" and "Star of the Year." These "stars" will receive additional recognition and rewards during a special 5SCS annual event.

## See our stars shine!

### Congratulations to these AltaPraise recipients:

Rhonda Ahmaad  
Beth Andrew  
Tina Baker  
Ann Bethea  
Judith Boswell  
Nick Brattoli  
Greg Broadnax  
Sonja Butts  
Suzanne Caglione  
Peter Coleman  
Mary Lee Collins  
Toby Cummings  
Kate Davis  
Jan DeMouy  
Richard Dockery  
Laura Durgin  
Dianna Enzor  
Jana Foster

Cassandra Franklin  
Dorn Frazer  
Meghan Glenn  
Vivian Gooding  
Laura Hunter  
Tameka Jackson  
Diane James  
Aloha Johnson  
Marcia Joiner  
Farah Khan  
Teresa Lanier  
Norris Laurence  
Cindy Martin  
Mark Miele  
Emily Minto-Head  
Nikkie Odom  
Danette Overstreet  
Geneva Ponds

Reneta Powe  
Dawn Robinson Turner  
Marianne Saitz  
Faye Schreiber  
Victoria Sharp  
Tiffany Shea  
Rose Skanes  
Jennifer Strickland  
Robert Tageant  
Perry Tan  
Jasmine Taylor  
Pamela Tidemann  
Kisha Turner  
Carla Walker  
Cella Walker  
Tina Wilson  
Sheila Wimberly  
Nadine Woods



## FIVE STAR Customer Service SPOTLIGHT

### ARS staff member helps choking consumer



Dogwood Residential Home Behavioral Aide **Pamela McConnell** was about to clock out one day this spring when she heard someone coughing repeatedly

in the dining room. She ran to the room to find a consumer leaning forward with his hands over his throat. McConnell reports the first thing that came to mind was her CPR training. She immediately approached the consumer and began performing the Heimlich Maneuver until a piece of food was dislodged from the consumer's airway.

After making sure the consumer was breathing again, she immediately called the medication-assisting supervisor (MAS) nurse, her supervisor and the residential assistant to tell them what happened. "After following the proper protocol, I continued to discuss with the consumer his level of wellness and how he felt," McConnell remembered.

Since the incident, McConnell says the consumer always greets her by saying, "Thanks, Pam, for saving my life." McConnell adds, "I always reply, 'I'm here to serve the consumers of AltaPointe. I was just doing my job.'"

For your quick thinking and for applying your orientation training skills, we say, "Job well done, indeed, Pamela!"

#### Your coworker deserves an AltaPraise

Consider submitting an AltaPraise to describe a coworker's exceptional customer service performance. Please include details of a specific situation. You may submit an online form at [altapointe.org](http://altapointe.org) or a paper AltaPraise form. Contact **Kendra Godbold** at 665-2537 for more information.

# People & Positions at the Pointe

The AHS Human Resources Department reports the following new employees joined AltaPointe from March 15 to June 21:

## Administration

Access to Care—Access Specialist: **Karen Miller**;

Finance—Business Manager: **Lora Tillman**



*Alicia Donoghue*

**Alicia Donoghue** joined AltaPointe on June 14 as director of human resources. Donoghue, a native of Mobile, earned her undergraduate degree in human resource management with a minor in psychology from the University of South Alabama. Prior to joining AltaPointe, Donoghue worked for eight years as the director of human resources for Evergreen Medical Center/Gilliard Health Services, Inc. She was an active member of the Escambia/Conecuh County chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management, most recently serving as vice president and president-elect. She is married to Jason Donoghue, a mechanical engineer for VT Halter Marine.

## Adult Outpatient Services Division

Adult Outpatient Services—ID Case Manager/Gordon Smith: **Amy Sherman**; Day Treatment Therapist/Gordon Smith: **Davey Chastang**; Intern/Gordon Smith: **Elizabeth Wood**; Behavioral Aide/South Mobile: **Lori Wallace**; LPN/Gateway: **Patricia Peterson, Kenyata Baliem**; Substance Abuse Therapist/West Mobile: **Garry Hill**

## Children's Outpatient Services Division

Behavioral Aide: **Eshundra Beck, Talicia Holcombe, Fallon Jackson, Stacey Morgan**; Switchboard Operator/Contractor: **Katie Miller**

## Inpatient Division

BayPointe – Behavioral Aide Acute: **Russell Benefield Jr., Michael Clark, Myles Criswell, Ryan Funk, Alecia Gregory, Bernadette Hudson, Leonard Jackson, Diana Moorner, Chermaine Odom, Victoria Patterson, Jessica Perryman, Tiffany Prim, Tyrell Pritchett, Larry Robinson Jr., Quincy Roundtree, LaToya Sullivan, Robert Wasp, Michele Wentworth**; Behavioral Specialist Acute: **Brittany Ferguson**; RN Acute: **LaShunda Lassiter, Lisbeth Melson, Diane Peavy, Sara Riddle**; LPN Acute: **Richard Cousins III**; Case Manager: **Trinette Law**; Therapist: **Laura Stisher**; Recreational Specialist: **David Roberts**; Admission Professional: **Leslie Smith**; Lifeguard/Behavioral Aide: **Lucas Brantley**; Unit Ward Clerk: **Taniqua Norfus**

## Residential Services Division

Adult Residential Services – Behavioral Aide: **April Bell-Bush (PRN), Conquista Craig (PRN), Audrey Curry (PRN), Michelle Hicks (PRN), Tokisha McCants (PRN)**; Behavioral Aide/Burtonwood: **Charee Calland**; Behavioral Aide/Dogwood:

Stare Cowan; Behavioral Aide/Countrywood Court: **Zelbra Williams**; Therapist/Countrywood Court: **John Marshall III**; Behavioral Aide Therapeutic/Lakefront: **Tandekila Wilkerson**; Assistant Coordinator/Lakefront: **Heather Metzger**; Behavioral Aide/Lott Road: **Velda Cawthon**; Behavioral Aide, Therapeutic/Medical House: **Victoria Kennedy**; RN/Medical House: **Sarah Bush, Oma Dobbs, Nancy Hand, Deirdre Sterghos**; LPN/Medical House: **Regina Anderson**; Behavioral Aide/Rosewood: **Darlene Dubose, Anjetta Payne, Alanda Robinson**; Behavioral Aide/Three Notch: **Tanya Cunningham, Tanisha Davis, Nikisha Johnson**; Behavioral Aide/Transitional Living: **Alicia Bettis**

## Promotions



*Melissa Agerton*

**Melissa Agerton**, ALC, therapist, is the new supervisor for Adult Day Treatment at AOP-West Mobile.

**Robert Carlock** is now the Assistant Director of Regional Specialized Services.

He oversees the project goals of the Region IV Census Reduction at Searcy Hospital. His duties include working for AltaPointe and coordinating with the four other mental health centers in south Alabama in the areas of census reduction, service development and contractual compliance.



*Robert Carlock*

**Christe Ellis**, RN, is now a nurse manager with Adult Outpatient Services at Zeigler.



*Christe Ellis*

**Kathy Rouse**, MS, is now the Children's Outpatient coordinator for Transitional Age Services, Case Management and In-Home services.



*Kathy Rouse*

## Moves

**Rebecca Stephens** is now a dual therapist with Adult Outpatient Services.

**Leslie Stinson**, ALC, is now working with Children's Outpatient In-home Team as a therapist.

Therapist **Steven Booker**, MA, ALC, is now working in Children's Outpatient Services.

**Michelle Dunson** is now an Access to Care aftercare and referral specialist.

## Expect great prizes, screenings, and more at the 2010 Benefits Fair

AltaPointe staff members will have chances to win an exciting grand prize as part of the 2010 Benefits Fair this fall. Organized by the AHS Human Resources Department, our benefit providers will host the fair and provide important benefit and health information. The Fair kicks off open enrollment again when staff members evaluate their benefit line-up and make changes. Watch for the dates and details in the coming weeks!

# Bravo! Bravo!

**Eric Velleux**, senior financial analyst in the Finance Department, completed his master's degree in business administration from Spring Hill College this spring.

**Mary Lee Collins** has completed the requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) certification. Collins is a therapist with Adult Outpatient (AOP) Services-Gordon Smith.

**Sherri Crane**, coordinator at AOP-Zeigler and supervisor of the Community Counseling Center of South Mobile, and **Jessica Robertson**, therapist with AOP-West Mobile, have received their Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) licensures.



William  
Billett, MD

**William Billett**, MD, was recently named "Faculty Teacher of the Year" by the USA Department of Psychiatry (DOP) residents who have worked at several AltaPointe locations.

**Kenan Penaskovic**, MD, won the Red Sash award from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine's graduating class of 2010. Medical students vote for the professor they feel was most valuable to their education. This year marks the third time in five years that a psychiatry faculty member has received this honor. Additionally, Dr. Penaskovic presented "I Wish I Knew Then What I Know Now" at the Association for Medical Student Education in Psychiatry's annual meeting. He also was named membership chair of the Alabama Psychiatric Society.



Kenan  
Penaskovic, MD

**Luke Engeriser**, MD, was elected treasurer of the Alabama Psychiatric Society. Dr. Engeriser is the administrator for the USA Department of Psychiatry residency program and is an AHS psychiatrist.

**Severin Grenoble**, MD, was named "Resident Teacher of the Year" by the USA-DOP residents.

Several USA-DOP residents have achieved a number of professional milestones. At the April 2010 Alabama Psychiatric Society meeting, posters were presented by four AHS psychiatry residents: **Severin Grenoble**, MD; **Shao Ye**, MD; **Mehtab Khan**, MD, MPH; and **Fasiha Haq**, MD. Dr. Haq won the William Patterson Award for her poster, "Anti-Psychotic Induced Priapism." Additionally, Dr. Grenoble recently co-authored a textbook chapter on adolescent substance use disorders, and Dr. Haq and **Shakeel Raza**, MD, working at BayPointe, recently published the case report "Ziprasidone Induced Galactorrhea in an Adolescent Female" in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry.

The **AHS Community Counseling Center of Washington County** (CCCWC) recently received three awards from the

United Way of Southwest Alabama. They include the 2009 Most Improved Campaign Award, the 2009 Honor Roll Award and the 2009 Employee Excellence Award. The Center also hosted the annual Leadership Washington County meeting, and **Michael Goldman**, MA, LMFT, CCCWC coordinator, graduated from the Leadership Washington County training program. Goldman also was featured in an Alabama Department of Human Resources newsletter article about child abuse.



Julie Bellcase

**Julie Bellcase**, AHS Chief Operating Officer, recently graduated from Leadership Mobile. Leadership Mobile is a community-based organization established to train and empower leaders who are committed to supporting and leading community growth and progress through networking and collaborative problem solving.

**Dean Milam**, Adult Residential Services (ARS) benefits specialist, graduated from the City of Mobile Fire and Rescue Department's Citizens Academy, a ten-week class aimed at educating the public about fire and emergency medical operations. During the class, Milam rode in a fire truck, rappelled from a four-story building and participated in life-safety training classes with firefighters.



Dean Milam



Bill Hamilton

**Bill Hamilton**, ARS coordinator, was elected Grand Knight of the Corpus Christi Knights of Columbus Council 13125. The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal men's service organization.

Team members of the **AHS Community Counseling Center of South Mobile County** were featured in a June Mobile Press-Register article "Little clinic, big job: Bayou La Batre mental health clinic braces for potential spike in services." The article focused on mental health services available in the Bayou La Batre area for residents affected by the recent Gulf Coast oil spill.

AltaPointe's information technology program—**Information Services Department**—was highlighted as a case study by Kevin Scalia, Netsmart, Inc. CEO, during the 2010 Connections Conference held in San Diego this spring.

Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast formally thanked AltaPointe at a recent luncheon for its efforts to teach reading to adult consumers. **Rachel Campbell**, AOP coordinator, received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the AHS AOP program from Lydia Gaudet. AltaPointe began its educational partnership with Goodwill in 2008.

Please send us news about your accomplishments and activities. You may submit your information for Bravo! Bravo! to Carol Mann at [cmann@altapointe.org](mailto:cmann@altapointe.org). Thanks.

# AHS Substance Abuse Services help consumers work toward recovery

## After five years as coordinator of Substance Abuse Services for AltaPointe, Cheryl Holmes is still enthusiastic about the substance abuse services AltaPointe provides.

Nearly 400 consumers regularly receive treatment for alcoholism or drug addiction through the AHS Adult Outpatient-West Mobile Office. AltaPointe's Intensive Outpatient, Specialized Women's, and Medication Assisted Treatment programs provide substance abuse services to adults 19 or older. Twenty-one staff members provide various outpatient substance abuse services that focus on recovery and wellness.

"People with substance abuse problems face discrimination and many other barriers to treatment," Holmes said. "Society neither values nor understands them."

AltaPointe's substance abuse program staff members do value and understand this population, according to Holmes. AHS therapists use a holistic approach to substance abuse treatment, which gives consumers a better chance of recovering and becoming productive.

Therapists use evidence-based interventions to learn the rationale behind a consumer's choices. They conduct individual and group sessions that include cognitive, dialectical behavioral and motivational interviewing therapies.

Therapists document and analyze stages of change, guide consumers in setting goals and continuously update the treatment plans. The program also involves the creation of art, which Holmes said has become a powerful self-expression tool for consumers within the intensive outpatient and specialized women's programs.

Therapists follow up with consumers a few months after they are discharged. "We check to see how their jobs and family lives are going, how they are medically," Holmes said. "It's nice to hear good reports from the therapists; however, frequently consumers do require treatment again."

"If we can help our consumers out of harmful relationships, discover how to enjoy life without drugs or alcohol and learn how to keep a job, they are more likely to live a life worth living," Holmes said.



Intensive Outpatient staff members, from left, Brandie Johnson and Garry Hill, therapists



Substance Abuse Services staff members, from left: Ishia Smith, admissions professional; Cheryl Holmes, substance abuse services coordinator; Valerie Green, team leader; and Kyla Lamar, office professional



HIV Aids Team staff members, from left: Lynn Mackie, HIV/AIDS specialist; Larry Pendleton, HIV/AIDS specialist; and Mary Brom Vinson, therapist

## Specialized Women's Program

At least 60 women diagnosed with substance abuse that are either pregnant or have dependent children participate in the Specialized Women's Program each year.

Many of the mothers in this program are referred by the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) and must complete AltaPointe's program or risk losing custody of their children.

"That is a huge motivator to succeed," Cynthia Stargell, program team leader, said. "But you can never underestimate the power of their disease. I have seen women continue to abuse drugs in spite of the negative consequences."

Stargell said this behavior is an indicator of the substance abuse diagnosis. "I tell the women that if they don't stop their abuse, they eventually could lose everything dear to them, end up in prison, lose their sanity or their lives."

Women deal with as many stressors as men do today. Many of them turn to alcohol or drugs to cope with life's situations. There are growing numbers of young people in their 20s and 30s addicted to highly addictive drugs such as crystal methamphetamine, Stargell said. Increasingly, many have multiple addictions and abuse numerous drugs.

"Addiction is a process," Stargell said. "The longer a person stays in addiction, the harder it is to get well. Likewise, recovery is a process and can take a very long time to achieve."

Many of the women in this program experienced severe childhood sexual abuse, which leads to psychological and physical disorders. "They have had to cope with abuse most of their lives," Stargell said. "Many of them believe that sex is the same thing as love. When they get high they are putting themselves at risk for sexual and physical abuse."

Most of the women in this program are well advanced in their addictions; they have burned many bridges, Stargell said. For these women, substance abuse is a symptom of a greater problem that can only be treated when the substance abuse stops. Getting well frequently depends on what a woman has lost and what she still has. Addiction affects not just the individual, but also the family. When a woman has lost her job, support system and her children, the road to wellness is much longer.

## Medication Assisted Treatment (Methadone Clinic)

AltaPointe's Medication Assisted Treatment program offers a management program that combines medication and therapy to help the opioid-dependent adult get back to a productive life without needing to seek out drugs. Opioids include drugs such as loratab, preferred by 80 percent of the abusers, or oxycontin, which is the next most abused drug.

Opioid dependency goes way beyond using drugs; it affects every facet of the user's life. A major goal of this program is to help consumers reconnect with their families.

"I have seen people who have lost everything; no job, no children or marriage," said Christe Damico, MAT program team leader. "When a consumer gets clean, they regain their job, trust and children, and begin to save money. The combination of medications and therapy works well."

Most patients are between the ages of 25 and 50. The drugs of choice that these patients abuse vary according to generation, Damico said. "The 20-something adults prefer loratab. The 50-plus generation abuse dilaudid or heroin."

For someone serious about stopping the abuse of drugs, methadone is one of the most effective medications created, according to Damico. "It can be life changing when used safely and effectively."

However, it can only be successful if the patients use no other drugs or alcohol; they must choose to stay with the program or go back to using.

The individual determines how long he or she wants to participate. "Consumers should spend at least 18 months in the program—that's in exchange for stability for the rest of their lives," Damico said. "One of the things I like about this program is that I get to know the consumers very well."

A unique aspect of the program is that nearly 95 percent seek medication assisted treatment voluntarily. "The majority desire to change," Damico said. "We treat them as peers and don't spend time digging up their past in therapy."

Damico related the story of one young man in his 20s, addicted to loratab, whose life was out of control when he came to AltaPointe's MAT program. He could barely manage to keep a job. His family relationships were strained, and he was in the court system. After he started the program, in addition to stopping the abuse of prescription drugs, he chose to quit smoking marijuana. His thoughts became clear and his actions more genuine. Damico says this young man is one of many success stories.

"People who come to this program are rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated," Damico said. "No matter what their social standing, we should look at these patients and try to be understanding and compassionate. Addiction doesn't discriminate and neither should we."

Continued on Page 8



Below, Gateway Medication Assisted Treatment staff members, from left: Jodie Matthews, counselor; Alecia Muhammad, therapist; Jeseka Hunt, counselor; Candis Patterson, dual specialty counselor; Cherish Brannon, therapist; and Christe Damico, Gateway team leader



Nurses and Pharmacist, from left: Beverly Crenshaw, LPN; Jennifer Blanks, LPN; Julie Roberts, pharmacist; and Patricia Peterson, LPN

## Features of each AHS substance abuse program

	Intensive OP-Oasis	Spec. Women's	MAT Gateway
<b>Services/Protocol</b>			
Case Management		✓	✓
Child care (during sessions)		✓	
Family support	✓	✓	✓
Group Therapy	✓	✓	✓
Educational counseling	✓	✓	✓
HIV Education/Testing	✓	✓	✓
Individual Therapy	✓	✓	✓
Intake Evaluation	✓	✓	✓
Medication administration			✓
Medication monitoring			✓
MH care consultation	✓	✓	✓
Outpatient detoxification			✓
Parenting skills training		✓	
Psychiatric consultation			✓
Random drug screen	✓	✓	✓
Referrals to supp. agencies	✓	✓	✓
Supportive counseling	✓	✓	✓
TB testing & counseling			✓
Transportation (to & from sessions)		✓	
Gas vouchers (to & from sessions)		✓	
Coordination w/Dept. Voc. Rehab to prevent unemployment	✓	✓	✓
Medicaid, private pay or reduced rate	✓	✓	✓

## Cindy's Story

*Editor's note: Cynthia Stargell, team leader for the Specialized Women's Program, related...the story of a young woman recently graduated from the program whom we shall call "Cindy."*

Cindy attended college but hid her addiction. Eventually, she could not hide it and every area of her life was affected. Her young son was placed in foster care. So, she enrolled in the specialized women's program to try to get her life back. Cindy continued using drugs but thought she could fake it. When she anticipated it was time for a drug screening, she made sure she was not present.

"When I confronted her and told her we needed to test her right then and there, she left the program," Stargell said. "Two years later, she came back. She wanted to get her son back and knew she had no choice but to finish the program this time."

Though skeptical about readmitting her, Stargell said they allowed her to enroll. She attended sessions regularly and began

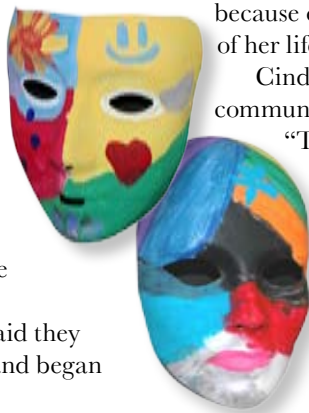
dialectical behavioral therapy. Cindy had a more positive attitude the second time around, but her family relationships were badly damaged.

"Her mother had stopped talking to her because of her addiction," Stargell explained. "We discovered her family's brokenness because of her addiction and knew she had to address that part of her life."

Cindy's mother attended a therapy session where lines of communication opened between the mother and daughter.

"That was a breakthrough and the beginning of a healed relationship. Now, Cindy is rebuilding her relationships with her siblings, has regained visitation rights with her son, and her father, an alcoholic, is trying to get sober.

"She has had to work hard to get her life back," Stargell said. "She's much stronger emotionally because of this program."



## Addiction in women

### Gender may affect susceptibility, recovery, and risk of relapse

Until the early 1990s, most research on substance abuse and dependence focused on men. That changed once US agencies began requiring federally funded studies to enroll more women. Since then, investigators have learned that important gender differences exist in some types of addiction.

Men are more likely than women to become addicts. In 2008, the US National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 11.5

percent of males ages 12 and older had a substance abuse or dependence problem, compared with 6.4 percent of females.

However, in other respects women face tougher challenges. They tend to progress

more quickly from using an addictive substance to dependence (a phenomenon known as telescoping). They also develop medical or social consequences of addiction faster than men, often find it harder to quit using addictive substances, and are more susceptible to relapse. These gender differences can affect treatment.

### Implications for treatment

Over 20 years, a growing body of evidence reveals that women who are addicted to substances often face challenges that men do not. A better appreciation of the gender differences should help women avoid the pitfalls of substance use and help clinicians help women with addiction achieve sobriety.

### Key points

- Traditional addiction treatment programs were developed based on research in men.
- Women develop medical or social consequences of addiction faster than men, often find it harder to quit, and are more susceptible to relapse.
- These gender differences can affect treatment, but the research about how to improve outcomes is still in its infancy.

### Addiction, dependence, or abuse?

Terminology matters. Addiction specialists use the following words in specific ways.

**Addiction.** The term does not appear in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), but incorporates elements of both substance abuse and dependence. Addiction involves craving for a particular substance, inability to control its use, and continued use despite negative consequences.

**Dependence.** According to the DSM-IV, people who are dependent on a substance exhibit at least three of the following symptoms or behaviors over a period of time, typically for a year or longer: greater tolerance for the substance, withdrawal symptoms, ongoing desire to quit using, loss of control over use, preoccupation with the substance, less focus on other meaningful activities or commitments, and continuing use in spite of negative consequences.

**Abuse.** The DSM-IV uses this term to describe people who use a substance excessively on a regular basis, in spite of incurring legal problems, endangering themselves, jeopardizing relationships, or falling through on major responsibilities. But, they do not yet show signs of dependence — such as a psychological compulsion or physical need to use the substance.

Source: Harvard Medical School Health Publications



Specialized Women's Program Team, from left, Leticeia Hooker, therapist; Cynthia Stargell, team leader; and Kimberly Meadows, case manager

# Program Progress

## Adult Outpatient Services Six staff members graduate from AOP Leadership Institute

Rhonda Ahmaad, bridge team case manager; **Melissa Agerton**, West Mobile Day Treatment therapist; **Ann Bethea**, ACT Team therapist; **Emily Minto-Head**, Bridge Team case manager; **Mark Miele**, Bridge Team case manager; and **Jennifer Strickland**, Bridge Team leader; graduated from Adult Outpatient Services' Leadership Institute at the Gordon Smith Center (AOP-GS) in April. The Institute curriculum topics included an overview of mental-health related governing bodies, the importance of self-reflection in leadership and employee performance management.

## Bridge Team staff members participate in an all-day retreat

AOP-GS Bridge Team therapists and case managers participated in a staff retreat Friday, April 30, at the Junior League of Mobile that included presentations, team-building exercises and entertaining raffle drawings. **Tameka Jackson**, AOP-GS nurse manager, discussed various nursing topics and InfoScriber; **Michelle Krulewicz-Dees** discussed individualized service plans and SUN-R needs assessment; and representatives from Janssen Pharmaceutica provided an overview of the new, long-acting schizophrenia drug Invega Sustenna.

## Dialectical behavioral therapy training helps AHS meet consumer needs

AOP Assistant Director **Beth Blair** provided training on dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) April 9 for the therapists of AOP-Zeigler, AOP-South Mobile and Substance Abuse Services to expand evidenced-based practices. **Jessica Robertson**, AOP-SM therapist, will implement the DBT training at AOP-Z and AOP-SM and conduct initial assessments to determine whether consumers are appropriate for the treatment.

## AOP Day Treatment consumers write thank-you notes to Gulf Coast recovery workers

When AOP-GS Day Treatment Therapist **Davey Chastang** noticed consumers were constantly talking about the Gulf oil spill, he began holding group sessions that focused on coping with and reducing stress related to a natural or man-made disaster. The group created thank-you notes for volunteers and workers who are helping clean the beaches and heal the animals.

## Adult Residential Services ARS receives good report after DMH Life Safety Inspection

The Alabama Department of Mental Health recently conducted a Life Safety Inspection of AHS Adult Residential Services (ARS) that included a review of its compliance with new state-mandated

standards. **Bill Hamilton**, ARS coordinator, said the 20 adult residential group homes had a great report from the inspectors.

## BayView therapists respond to tragedy

ThyssenKrupp Steel and Stainless USA managers recently reached out to AHS's BayView program for professional services after four of their employees lost their lives in a motor vehicle crash. **John Conrad**, LPC, BayView coordinator, and **Kim Dyson**, LPC, therapist – both trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) – spent two days at the northwest Mobile-County plant providing psychological first aid to the employees.

## Children's Services

### Consumers enjoy fun events during Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

Alabama Governor Bob Riley proclaimed May 1-8 "Children's Mental Health Week" to increase public awareness and foster a



Serving up barbecue, turnip greens and all the fixins during the COP Parents Appreciation Luncheon are, from right serving, in front of wall, staff members Fran McQuirter, Shameka Longmire, and Ryder Copeland.

greater awareness of serious emotional disturbances in children. To honor the week, AHS leadership and staff members organized events for consumers and their families, including a karaoke sing-along party complete with nachos and popcorn stations in the BayPointe gymnasium. Children's Outpatient Services (COP) held a special parent-appreciation lunch for consumers' families. In addition, singer/songwriter Troy Brannon performed for the AHS Transitional Living and Transitional Age In-home Team consumers.



David A. Roberts, recreational specialist, left, and Dominique Jenkins, visit during Children's MH Week event at BayPointe.

## AltaPointe staff members shed more than 1,000 pounds during Scale Back Alabama

AHS staff members broke company records for participation, winning individuals and winning teams during Scale Back Alabama 2010, the 10-week weight loss and fitness challenge sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health. AHS offered cash prizes to winners, and the incentive helped to draw 216 participants. A record 50 individuals reached the 10-pound weight loss goal and won \$20, and four teams' members all lost 10 pounds and won an additional \$50 each. Each participant received an AltaPointe baseball cap and water bottle.

Congratulations to the following winners: Carolyn Adams, Renarda Carson, Toby Cummings, Chiquita Adams, James Agee, Larry Bellamy, Melissa Bosley, Nick Brattoli, Tiffany Bush, Rita Brown, Shimeka Brown, Martis Cobb, Sherri Crane, Yashita Demings, Christe Ellis, Tomekia Finklea, Abe Gilchrist, Juanita Goodner, Charles Graham, Mary Harrell, Gayle Hearst, Bill Hamilton, Mildred Hopkins, Joyce Jackson, Alecia Jones, Monica Jones, Alicia Johnson, Kari Johnson, Earica Key, Lorraine King, Robin Lawrence, Kevin Markham, Phyllis Mason, Ed McGaughy, Dean Milam, Constance Mitchell, Demettrice Mitchell, Heather Morgan, Jim Persons, Veronica Pettway, Brenda Phelan, Contrice Powell, Orda Powell, Lorraine Pugh, LeShounda Robinson, Wanda Robinson, Walter Smith, Leslie Stinson, Patricia Sullivan, and Yolanda Williams.



*Ad-Men—Ed McGaughy, Toby Cummings, Nick Brattoli, and Kevin Markham*



*Big Boys Don't Cry Again—Bill Hamilton, Dean Milam, Martis Cobb, and Charles Graham*



*Wii Not Fit—Sherri Crane, Christe Ellis and Robin Lawrence. Demettrice Mitchell, in photo at right, also was a member of Wii Not Fit.*



*Demettrice Mitchell reaped the greatest reward of all when she won an additional \$100 in the statewide drawings, held on April 28.*



*New Attitude 2010—Tiffany Bush, from left, Heather Morgan, and Chiquita Adams. PRN staff member Melissa Bosley was not present when photograph was taken.*

# AltaPointe staff at work and play



Children's Outpatient staff members participated as a team in the Autism Association Walk this spring. Staff gathered on that day include, from left, Shameka Longmire, Jonna Sanders, Julie McMullen, Latrina Thomas, LaKeisha Watson and Kathy Rouse.



Connie Reynolds, coordinator of quality services, wears AltaPointe corporate colors brightening the day for her coworkers.



Brandon O'Banner, case manager, flips burgers at the Dual Graduation picnic this May.



Rebecca Stephens, Bridge Team therapist; Rachel Campbell, adult outpatient coordinator; Megan Griggs, clinical director of adult outpatient services; and Melissa Agerton, day treatment therapist, enjoy the beautiful day at Langan Park during the Dual Graduation picnic.

## APA inducts DOP into 100 Percent Club

University of South Alabama's (USA) Department of Psychiatry, which comprises psychiatry residents who train and work with AltaPointe physicians, recently became a member of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) 100 Percent Club, for the 2009-2010 academic year. The Club recognizes residency programs in which all residents are members of the APA. USA's is one of only 23 psychiatry residency programs to reach this honor out of more than 180 eligible programs nationwide.

AltaPointe provides administration and faculty for the USA College of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and provides both clinical and didactic training to residents, medical students, certified registered nurse practitioner students and physician assistant students.



Members of the 2009-2010 USA Department of Psychiatry (DOP) residents include, front row from left: Severin Grenoble, MD; Aimee Coleman, MD; Magdi Tageldin, MD; Ronald Franks, MD, Executive Vice President USA College of Medicine; Daa Noaman, MD; and Praveen Narahari, MD. Standing from left are Shao Ye, MD; Harshadkumar Patel, MD; Thuan Luc Tran, MD; Sandra Parker, MD, AltaPointe Medical Director; Marilyn Applin, USA Residency Program Coordinator; Luke Engeriser, MD; USA DOP Residency Training Director; Lalit Singh, MD; Mehtab Khan, MD; Woo-Jin Kwak, DO; and Fasiha Haq, MD.



## AltaPointe participates in US Surgeon General visit

Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, addresses an audience of Bayou La Batre residents, elected officials, agency representatives and news media during the July 14 BLB community meeting. Schlesinger explains the role AltaPointe plays in the South Mobile community and how AHS will respond to the oil spill crisis through expanded services. Listening to Schlesinger speak are US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin, left, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Administrator Pamela Hyde.

## AltaPointe in the Community

AltaPointe promotes understanding of mental illness

Promoting community understanding about mental health and substance abuse issues and increasing awareness about available services are two of AltaPointe's key organizational goals. To help reach these goals, AHS staff members provide support and sponsorship for many community and charitable events. AltaPointe sponsored or participated in more than 11 such events from February through May, including: the Area Agency on Aging Senior Lifestyles Expo; Crowne Nursing Home Health Fair; Leadership Washington County; University of South Alabama (USA) Annual OB/GYN Conference; Walk for Autism; Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce's (MACC) Pork and Politics in the Park; MACC's Annual Golf Tournament; Alabama Conference of Mental Health Boards Annual Meeting; Lighthouse Community Development Center Health Fair; USA Community Night and Ryla, Inc. Employee Health Fair.

AHS Speakers Bureau speakers have presented numerous mental health topics since February. The speakers, topics and locations include the following: **Michelle Krulewicz-Dees**, AOP coordinator, and **Vicki Charpie**, COP therapist, "Adult and Child Mental Illness," First Baptist Church of Baltimore Street's Wellness Program; **Judith Boswell**, AOP-GS therapist, "How to Cope with Stress," Somerby Independent Living; **Amy Conway**, assistant coordinator of BayPointe school day treatment, and **Kara Whitney**, assistant coordinator of BayPointe residential services, "The Psychological Causes and Effects of Eating Disorders, Clark Middle School; and **Cynthia Stargell**, AOP-West Mobile team leader, "The Specialized Women's Program," Alabama Department of Human Resources.

Any staff member wanting to participate in community outreach, please call **Kendra Godbold** at 665-2537.

**Think about this...**

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — *Maya Angelou*



*In Memory of  
William Welborn*

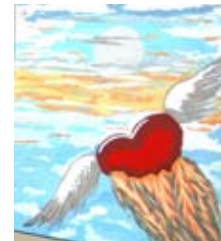


AltaPointe's Adult Residential Services (ARS) staff members, are mourning the sudden passing of colleague

**William "Jeff"**

**Welborn.** Staff members described Welborn as an exceptional coworker and consummate professional in his position as a behavioral aide at the Princess Helen Group Home, AHS's home for deaf consumers. His supervisor, ARS Coordinator Bill Hamilton, remembers that Welborn was eager to serve his consumers and always made their needs a priority. For his commitment, he was nominated for the Council of Organizations Serving Deaf Alabamians' Professional of the Year award this past year.

**You are invited to support our consumers**



The AltaPointe Substance Abuse Services Staff invites you to attend the third annual **Hope of Recovery Art Exhibit**, Sunday, Sept. 26, from 4 p.m.

to 6 p.m. at the AHS Adult Outpatient West Mobile Office, 4211 Government Blvd. The exhibit features works of art created by consumers fighting drug and alcohol addiction. Enjoy an afternoon of live music and refreshments while you appreciate the works of art. Select pieces will be for sale. Dress is business casual.

The **AHS Consumer Council** will hold its second annual fundraiser Oct. 3-9 to honor National Mental Health Awareness Week. The Council will host fundraising booths at various AHS locations throughout the week. Make a donation and receive a fun, useful give-away item.

**A refreshing, new look**

We hope you like the changes we made to AltaNews. With this issue, AltaNews begins its third year in circulation.