



Pony Creek

Science has never drummed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day.

W. Earl Hall

SPRING 2009

ColumbiaCare Newsletter



ColumbiaCare Services, Inc. Mission Statement:

"To promote the mental health and welfare of individuals and communities by developing progressive, regional systems of behavioral health care facilities and service programs in collaboration with public and private providers of social, judicial and health care services".

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Finally Oregon is making an attempt at warm weather; after returning from a vacation in sunny Palm Springs the cold weather is tough to take.

One of the first tasks on the "to do" list upon my return was to review benefits package proposals with ColumbiaCare's Human Resource staff. I realize that you have already been through the enrollment process, but I wanted to highlight a couple of important things about our decisions this year. Although we try to avoid switching insurance companies for all of the obvious reasons (not the least of which is the hassle of filling out new forms) this year we felt it was important to do for the following reasons. Number One: Our current health insurance company was going to raise our rates 22% or over \$100 per month per employee. We may or may not have been able to avoid sharing that increased cost with you. Number Two: We did the research (thanks to Michelle Gibson for all of her hard work) and found that by switching companies, we could offer a similar, even slightly better benefit package that also included an option for you to take advantage of flex spending and save some tax

dollars. We are living in a time of economic uncertainty-not just on a national scale-but global. I cannot promise that next year we will be able to continue the same great coverage at the same low cost. This is just another reason why I believe we need to implement a national insurance program. I could go on about that, but don't have room here. I can promise that in the meantime, and even in the midst of a slow economy, ColumbiaCare will continue to work very diligently to pursue and make available to you affordable and quality health coverage.

Also, if you don't already know, ColumbiaCare is celebrating our 5th Anniversary!! Five years ago we started this company with 3 staff members and now employ over 150. We are serving over 100 residents. ColumbiaCare is making a positive difference in the lives of our residents, we create and sustain jobs in multiple communities, and (now speaking from my own perspective) we are having a great time doing it.

Bob

NEW FACILITY UPDATE!: PONY CREEK

One of the latest developments at ColumbiaCare Services is Pony Creek, located in North Bend, Oregon. This type of facility is a first for us, as it is a short-term Respite Treatment Foster Care Home for children. We are partnering with Coos County Mental Health and Southern Oregon Adolescent Study and Treatment Center to ensure a professional, high quality and successful treatment delivery program.

The facility will provide short-term, planned and crisis respite treatment foster care, and skills training services for children ages 4 -17, who are residents of Coos, Curry and coastal Douglas County. It will be a safe, structured yet home-like atmosphere for children to stay for 2-7 days, while the mental and behavioral problems that threaten to disrupt their home situation are treated.

As current resources are located as far away as Portland, Pony Creek will greatly benefit families and children as they will be able to receive

care in their own communities. Families will have the opportunity to be involved with the child throughout the crisis, enabling them to be an active part of the solution, reducing family disruption and improving outcomes.

The effort is directly in line with the Statewide Children's Wraparound Initiative, which supports the development of flexible, close-to-home services that encourage family involvement and help reduce the need for more institutionalized care.

ColumbiaCare has purchased the building that was used by the Pacific Child Center, and has recently completed the renovation process. The outside has also received a little make-over, thanks to Dave, Theresa, John, Richard, Katherine and Stacy. Thank you for all your hard work, it is truly appreciated!

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT

Sasha Gordanier

Sasha has been an employee at ColumbiaCare for one year. While she enjoys expanding her knowledge at trainings, the aspect she enjoys most about her job is interacting with the residents and getting to know them better. She has found that working with the different personalities and temperaments of residents has helped her to become a more patient and understanding person.

Sasha strives to be a better associate, and has a long term professional goal of becoming a nurse. She views her parents as her heroes.

Her favorite saying is, "Showing you pity doesn't do you any favors."



Heroes Amongst Us

Two accounts of heroic actions performed by ColumbiaCare staff have recently been reported! Both Joanne Steinbauer and Karri Alexander found themselves faced with a client choking on food and in desperate need of assistance. They each were able to quickly assess the situation, tap into their training skills, perform the Heimlich Maneuver and save the resident! Way to go Joanne and Karri! It is so good to know our clients are in such capable hands!

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

The love of delicious home grown produce (and maybe playing around in the dirt a bit) has infected those at ColumbiaCare once again. A few of our facilities have started up their annual gardening programs, where staff and residents are able to get outside and cultivate their own little piece of land.

We have found that not only can gardening be therapeutic (and let's be honest, we all need a little solace in our lives), but facilities are able to enjoy nutritious produce while saving a little money in the process.

Cedar Bay is currently enjoying fresh herbs such as sage and

thyme, and when their vegetables ripen will have peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, squash and carrots.



Flowerbed at Fairview Firs

John Crowley has done an amazing job of developing both vegetable and flower beds at our facilities in the Portland area.

Fieldstone and Fairview Firs each have a few raised beds filled with an assortment of vegetables such as leaf lettuce, red

lettuce, peas and onion sets. A variety of herbs such as peppermint, rosemary, chives and cilantro also can be found in the beds.

It's hard not to feel that encouraging touch of spring when looking at all the beautiful flowers at the facilities!

SPRING CONFERENCE

The annual Spring Administrator Conference is scheduled for May 19-20. Not only will it be a time to continue learning and developing as a company, but will also be a time of celebration as we recognize the company's five year anniversary!

Supported Employment Success Story

The following is an encouraging story from our OVRS Supported Employment program

One of our first successful placements in the fledgling supported employment program was with a client that appeared to be a very unlikely candidate. There were many things that exemplified how ill-equipped this client was to survive the competitive work environment. For one, he had many restrictions on community involvement. Also, for several years he had spent majority of the time inside a locked facility. And lastly, the client had never held a competitive job before. But in spite of these challenges (and with some creative job crafting), we were able to find a part-time position that not only fit his needs, but was one to be proud of.

Once the job became a regular fixture in the client's routine, it produced positive changes that were visible to all. One immediate improvement was seen in the increased amount of self esteem exuded when given a task, especially after seeing the results of successfully completing it. Another area in which progress was noted was his physical fitness, as the hours he once passed idly in a facility were now spent being active. He was also more engaged mentally, and used this experience as a springboard to continue to set goals that would lead to a more independent living situation.

But as incredible as these changes were, the most significant aspect that being employed held for the client was the additional money earned. He was now able to be a contributing family member, and could do things such as treat his mom to a movie and popcorn, or even take her out to dinner. Being able to do these little things for the family that played such a vital role in his well-being provided such an amazing boost in this client's everyday demeanor.

Get Your Walk On!



ColumbiaCare is pleased to sponsor a team for the 2009 NAMI Walks For the Mind of America. The walk is 5Km, and is occurring Sunday, May 17th. It is a nationwide fundraising and mental health awareness program that is being held in more than 80 communities, including Portland, and is expected to raise approximately 9 million dollars.

We are proud of all our staff that will be lacing up and hitting the pavement! Go team ColumbiaCare! Don't forget to eat your Wheaties!

So You Think You Know Me, Huh?

Let's see if you can guess which Administrative Office ColumbiaCare staff member...

1. Has been to over 60 Grateful Dead concerts?
2. Once owned a monkey named Sparky?
3. Helped develop a written language for an indigenous people group in Papa New Guinea?

Answers are posted upside down on bottom of front page. No cheating!