

THE Writing on the Wall



Making life better together.

FALL & WINTER 2016

Open House for
Group Home

Director's Corner

W.R.A.P.

Sherando Lake

NASCAR

Hall of Famer



Open House for Group Home

By David Broyles | The Carroll News

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Wall Residences Open House on September 23 gave participants a peek into the new group home for individuals with significant disabilities and a look at the Commonwealth's vision of successors to the Southwestern Virginia Training Center.

"We've known for about three years the State training centers would be closed. We were approached by the State to get into building group homes, preferably four bedrooms to keep them small," said Wall Residences Director Jack Wall. He said the firm has been renovating and running similar facilities for more than 20 years.

The firm's web site states its purpose is "to support people to live the lives they find meaningful and fulfilling." This is accomplished through a focus on Person Centered Practices, or what is important to a person (their relationships, things they want to do, places they want to go) and helping them find balance between that and staying healthy and safe and being a valued community member.

Jack Wall, M.Ed and Kamala Bauers, LCSW founded the firm. Wall worked as the Director of Mental Retardation Services for two Virginia Community Services Boards with over 25 years of experience in the field before founding the agency. Bauers comes to this work primarily as a sister of an individual with significant support needs. The approach being to provide services around the needs of the individual, not making an individual fit into an existing service setting.

The group home will employ nine full-time staffers (three shifts) and maintain a listing of part-time personnel (to assist with routine and special activities) in addition to its management staffers (two persons).

"It's important we have a lot of part-time staffers to cover different situations," Wall said. The agency is working with Training Center Community Integration Specialist Michelle Laird and looks to add experienced talent from Center staffers to its full and part-time on call positions. The house has a backup



generator for security in power outages. An open floor plan for accessibility, two vans for transportation, and is developing message boards for residents to communicate better where they can more exactly indicate what their preferences are.

"We are building off the local community's resources (police, fire, pharmacies and physicians for instance) which is where some of the cost savings comes from. This is the wave of the future," said Wall. "We are pretty familiar with this area (he worked at the Training Center in 1975, leaving for a position with Mount Rogers in 1980.), we're already providing services and had a pretty good staff."

He said Laird indicated the section through Hillsville and Galax was a high-demand situation since the



Jack Wall, Wall Residences founder, cutting the ribbon at group home open house.

continues page 4

Director's Corner

By John Weatherspoon

Fall is a season of change. Here in Virginia we are blessed with some of the most beautiful fall colors seen anywhere. From the Shenandoah Valley, down the Blue Ridge and over to the Appalachian Plateau, Virginia becomes a painted landscape as the leaves change from lush green to deep reds, vibrant oranges and blazing yellows. It is during this time you often see people finishing up their last minute preparation for winter as the changing leaves signal coming cold. Then, there are those who have been preparing since last winter ended.

The end of summer and beginning of fall has brought change to the DD waiver system. Wall Residences prepared ahead of time so we could provide you with the knowledge and resources you need to continue to treat those in your care with the most innovative and person centered services available. As all of you know, on 09/01/2016 the Waiver Redesign was implemented. Wall Residences was prepared well in advance of the changes taking place. We are not in a position of reacting to the changes, but adjusting as smaller adaptations to the original plans are made during this initial phase. We strive to stay ahead and look to the future to what is next so that we may be able to influence and be a part of the process instead of reacting once it is upon us.

There have been some challenges for the new Waiver System as the

roll out occurred, but overall the DBHDS and Medicaid have been quick to respond to issues with billing or authorizations. New services are slowly starting to be tested and provided as other services, such as day support, undergo some fundamental changes.

Communication is key in making sure the state knows what is occurring and we make ourselves available at every opportunity to speak directly with decision makers to ensure the people we serve and our provider's voices are heard. This week alone Jack Wall and I have met with the Commissioner of DB-



HDS, the Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Developmental Services, the Assistant Commissioner of Finance, the Director of Provider Development, Director of Community Operations, Assistant Director of Licensing and Medicaid Representatives. Wall Residences actively participates in weekly stakeholder calls with DBHDS and DMAS and attends every provider round table meeting across the

state. In addition, Wall Residences takes on leadership roles within the Virginia Sponsored Residential Provider Group (VSRPG) as well as the Virginia Network of Private Providers.

VSRPG continues to meet regularly and is working now on development of a tool to gather data to share with members of the General Assembly. This will outline how rates are impacting the individuals we serve and family providers. We fully support this effort and independently we continue to advocate for parity of rates every time we have the opportunity or meet with someone in leadership at the state level.

While all of our family providers joined us in advocating for parity of rates over a year ago, some sponsored providers with other agencies are just now learning of the impact the rate changes will have. I have heard it in meetings as recently as this month, providers who are shocked at the proposed rate changes. As we move into the new year we will all need to continue to advocate for changes in the rates and a return to parity with four bed group homes. You will begin to see more communication from us encouraging providers, family members and friends, to reach out to members of the general assembly reminding them that the sponsored residential model of services is in need of their support.

continues page 5

Why make a referral to Wall Residences?



• **Experienced and person-centered leadership.** Wall Residences has been providing person-centered services in Virginia for over 20 years. All services are delivered around the support needs and wishes of the focus person and their closest family members or legal guardian.

• **Responsiveness** – in most cases, Wall Residences will make arrangements to visit a person referred to the agency within three business days and / or around the convenience of the family and referring Support Coordinator.

• **Many service locations to choose from** – Wall Residences has many available service options across the state and can develop services specific to an individual, given enough time. We have the most professional, experienced and well trained Family Providers in the state. Different living styles available – rural, city, quiet, active, with some providers bring special skills to the job – nurses, social workers, etc. Our current vacancies are listed on the

Wall Residences website. However, new services are constantly being developed. Contact our admissions team for a full list when exploring service options.

• **Careful supervision and support of programs**– families of individuals who receive services with Wall Residences know that their service is being reviewed regularly by qualified Program Management staff. Unannounced visits occur at least two times per year.

• **Family Members are encouraged to maintain relationships with the person who receives support** and are invited to visit the home or take their family member on home visits as they can or choose to. Pictures, letters, phone calls and even SKYPE are used to facilitate relationships from a distance.

• **24-hour emergency support** – the Quality Assurance Team and Regional Coordinators are available to assist a provider at any time day or night to prob-

lem solve critical incidents.

Of course, in a medical emergency, all staff are instructed to contact local emergency services first.

• **Transparency** – Wall Residences staff work as part of a team that includes the individual, the authorized representative or legal guardian for the individual, the Support Coordinator, and residential and day support providers. Information is shared with this team in a transparent manner to allow for more effective communication and better outcomes for the individual.

• **Documentation** – Wall Residences documentation is complete, accurate and timely. Support Coordinators and Authorized Representatives / Legal Guardians are provided quarterly reports that include a list of all medical appointments attended and outcomes. Everyone knows what is happening.

Open House for Group Home continues



Community enjoying the open house.

process began a year and a half ago with renovation starting in February.) Wall said this home is scheduled to open on October 13 with a second home on Training Center Road set to open in November.

“In these small homes we’re creating the flexibility and support, even though they are less expensive to run,

people coming out of the Training Center and the families are familiar with the area and with the availability of staff coming out of the center that already had experience with the population. (The

than a large training center,” Wall said. “The reality is each staff is so dedicated they can focus their attention on the smaller group of people to develop individualized services way better than what these people have had before. It is amazing what you can do in these small homes, small settings, employing local people with deep connections with the local community to get these people spending their time doing interesting things. It actually does create a better quality of life. I know there is a lot of resistance across the state to closing training centers but there is a big win for everyone in the state in my opinion. We get a better quality of care. It’s less expensive. The cost for services in a place like this is around \$90,000 total cost of care per year. I don’t know what the Training Center’s (exact) cost is but I believe it is over \$200,000 to run that big facility, the administration and all the things they’ve got there.”

Directors Corner continues

In the last 30 days we have seen a number of positive changes for Wall Residences. We are beginning to see the first individuals we support starting to receive Community Engagement, the new community based day service, through our Wall Residences Activities Program (WRAP). Sharon Stroble, Regional Director has been working nonstop with Jamie Gagnon, Christine Wickham, Keri Basham, and Celina Smith to develop this service from the ground up. The program is starting in select locations as it is tested, but in the last week there has been a significant increase in the number individuals who are awaiting approval from DBHDS to begin the service. Heather Cromer, BCBA and Regional Behavioral Coordinator has developed a training for DSPs to become Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) and has provided the training to 18 DSPs already. In addition, she is developing Therapeutic Consultation as a service we are adding to our agency offerings.

Celina Smith, RN, Regional Development Coordinator has spearheaded the development of two traditionally staffed group homes in Southwest VA to serve individuals with significant behavioral needs who will be transitioning from SWVA Training Center. These homes will serve 8 individuals and will be fully operational in November.

In Central Virginia we continue to grow services for individuals transitioning from CVTC who have been identified as having significant

medical needs. We will have two additional traditionally staffed group homes starting in the next two months under the direction and guidance of Jessa Layne, Alex Jackson, Rebecca Ledingham and others. The state has also asked us to develop some Sponsored Homes specifically for this population. We have several sponsored home providers increasing their capacity in this region as well.

Jessa Layne, MSN, RN Medical Quality Assurance Director is working to add Private Duty Nursing to the Skilled Nursing service we already provide. This service may also be available to individuals who receive support in sponsored residential services.

Wall Residences recognizes that Sponsored Residential is the residential service model of choice and where Virginia should be headed as services are developed. Sponsored Residential can serve the widest range of people in a very person centered, individualized setting. The majority of the services we are developing will accentuate and help grow the model within Wall Residences. Therapeutic Consultation and RBT training will be made available to sponsored homes as it grows. Private Duty and Skilled Nursing services will be available and utilized in Sponsored Homes. WRAP has the potential to enhance the model for not only individuals but also back up workers and providers.



The future is bright for Wall Residences because of all of the talent and skill of our team. The foundation of our team is the sponsored residential / group home providers and back up workers who provide the direct care to the people we support. We believe we have the best, most person-centered people working with us. We are working to ensure, through training and support, that hourly staff in our expanding services reach that same high mark. Program managers, leadership team, and office staff are always working to enhance and improve their skills so that they can provide even better support. Thank you to everyone on the Wall Residences team, for everything you do in serving the people of Virginia. I encourage you take some time to enjoy this beautiful time of year here in the Commonwealth.

Wall Residences Activities Program

WRAP is a newly licensed program of Wall Residences that has been formed under the direction and leadership of Sharon Stroble & Jamie Gagnon. WRAP will provide community engagement and workplace assistance including but not limited to:

- Volunteering – at a soup kitchen, community clean up, or other neighborhood service
- Learning experiences and activities, book clubs and art classes
- Joining, and active participation in, community organizations
- Recreation – swimming, bowling, dancing, movies
- Peer support groups
- Shopping
- Maintain health and wellness – walking, gym membership, sports activities
- Personal care – hairstyling, having nails done
- Spirituality: worship, meditation, yoga classes
- Hobbies: Pet care – walking the dog, gardening, painting, photography
- Employment assistance – help on the job with things such as navigating social cues, establishing priorities and /or managing time
- Micro business development



Darren Long participating in the WRAP program with a walk in the park.

The WRAP program began October 1st with interested individuals who reside in Wall Residences group home programs, and will expand to support individuals receiving sponsored residential support in January 2017. Wall Residences' sponsored residential providers are very particular about the support that is provided in the community. They have been most helpful in identifying staff who have a relationship with the individuals they support and have the skills and abilities to provide very individualized and quality support in the larger community.

Sherando Lake Picnic



For 15 years, Greg Floyd and Marie Elkins have given their time and efforts to hosting a summer picnic for local agencies serving adults with intellectual disabilities. This labor of love included a cook out alongside Sherando Lake in Augusta County and offered the opportunity for people to mingle, renew friendships, and meet newcomers to the annual event.

The lake provides the amenities of swimming, fishing, hiking, and enjoying the tree-cooled area with a grilled hot dog. Many years included raffled gift certificates or lawn games. With the invitation extending to all local agencies, this event brought everyone together at once and was an anticipated activity each summer. Now the torch is being passed on to other interested persons who would like to take over the role of host and grill master. We appreciate all of the work that the Floyd-Elkins service put into this picnic each year and wish them all the best in years to come.

Admissions Corner

Ensuring that the admissions process goes smoothly for the individual who is referred, is the primary focus of the Admissions Team. It is our intention to visit every individual who is referred within a few business days. We request documentation from the support coordinator regarding support needs and preferences, but nothing tells us more than actually meeting the person who is requesting a service and team members currently providing support. During the meeting with the individual, the natural family or legal guardian, and the support coordinator, we learn what is “important” to the individual and make recommendations of services for onsite review. We are typically able to offer three service options within Wall Residences.

Since our last newsletter, Alex Jackson, M. Ed, has been promoted to Director of Admissions, to ensure coordination with the state as we work on transition of individuals from the state training centers. Alex has worked with Wall Residences for almost 9 years, primarily in admissions, but he has also served as the Regional Coordinator in Danville. Pam Golas, was promoted to Senior Admissions Coordinator and continues to lead the referral process for community referrals in Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond, Shenandoah and areas east. In addition, Regional Coordinators across the state, in communication with the Admissions leadership team, assist with coordination of referrals to the agency in their regions.

On the other side of this equation, the Admissions Team and Regional Coordinators are also responsible



Winchester PM Stephanie Moore (L) and Senior Admissions Coordinator Pam Golas (R) meet with 23rd district delegate Thomas Gleason at a recent fair.

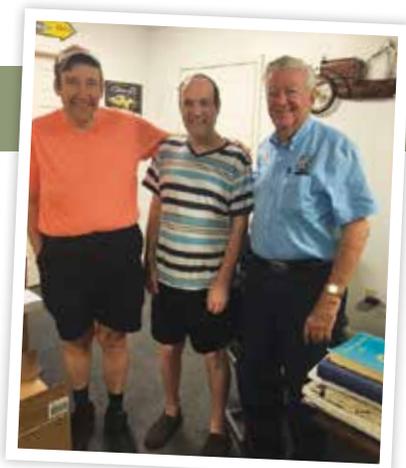
for ensuring that all sponsored residential provider vacancies are catalogued and monitored so that a good match can be quickly assessed. Provider Orientation sessions are being scheduled across the state so that we can offer choices and keep up with the demand for services.

Wall Residences makes agencies and individuals who are looking for services aware of what we have to offer. We do this through presentations to support coordinators at Community Services Boards and to guardians at public guardianship programs. We also attend transition fairs with local school systems, and set up displays at local disability related events. We are always interested to learn about new opportunities where we can share this information. If you know of any, please contact: Alex Jackson, 434.610.7578, ajackson@wallresidences.com or Pam Golas, 540.292.0608, pgolas@wallresidences.com. Wall Residences providers who have vacancies are encouraged to ensure that their listing is current on the website and to contact Michele Morris (mmorris@wallresidences.com) with any changes and/or corrections.

Visit with NASCAR Hall of Famer

Amanda McDormans’s service in Lexington was able to meet, eat lunch, and visit with legendary NASCAR hall of fame driver Bobby Allison. He was in town visiting Amanda’s father and Amanda, Alfred Ayres, and James Brads were able to spend time with him as well. This was especially great for James as he loves NASCAR and has decorated his room with its memorabilia.

Alfred Ayres and James Brads meet Bobby Allison





John Hatton of Colonial Beach recently ran in a Richmond 5K with area program managers Deanna Rennon and Angela Newman. "The three of us ran for the Arc and did an amazing job," says Angela. John placed 217 out of 416 participants.

Congratulations John!

Wall Residences

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Peaceful blessings
of the **Season**
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