

THE Writing on the Wall



Making life better together.

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Director's Corner

by Kamala Bauers
Quality Assurance Director

Relationships First!

We want to thank all of you who sent emails, wrote letters and / or visited with your state legislators about the potential impact that the Waiver Redesign reimbursement rates would have on sponsored residential services. We will continue to seek parity in reimbursement rates for sponsored residential services to four bed group homes. Same person, same (smaller) service, same reimbursement rates. As you know, the methodology that Burns and Associates used in determining rates was flawed, incomplete and did not account for all of the expenses that sponsored residential providers have. We will continue to make decision makers aware of this and continue developing relationships. We will continue to build relationships with decision makers in the state so they better understand the impact their decisions have on sponsored services.

In all of the concern over the impact of changes in reimbursement rates, and the adoption of Electronic Health Records, we regret that mistakes were made in communication at times. To get back on track, our motto for 2016 is *Relationships First*. Fundamentally, we believe that relationships matter. Good relationships begin with good quality communication and sharing positive time together. We hope to include time for connection into training sessions,

and regional meetings and to support more efforts of providers to create informal networks of sharing. In the SWVA region, for example, a provider FB page has been set up for sharing information regarding opportunities



for connection. This was provider instigated and led (thank you, Kelly Parks), but is also facilitated by our office staff. SWVA is active with a "men's club", facilitated by Scott Mays, which includes trips to ball parks. The Wall Residences office building in the SWVA area is also used for signing and cooking classes. In Central Virginia, crafts classes are provided for the individuals we support, coordinated by Sandi Johnson in the Madison Heights office building. Danville has a provider group that meets and supports recreational activities in that area. Jim Golas has organized a "Breakfast Club" in the Orange area that includes providers and individuals for educational presentations, in community

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A Different Kind of Family

*Reprinted with permission from the Fluvanna Review.
Photos/Written by Tricia Johnson*

Nelson has beautiful blue eyes, and a charming, ready smile; he loves gardening, and singing hymns in church. Lois is passionate about exercising, John Wayne movies, playing in the bell choir, and her work at the local grocery store. Both of them are adults with intellectual disabilities living in Scottsville as chosen members of the family of Charlotte and Everette Horton.

"People get the general idea if you refer to it as 'foster care,'" said Pam Golas, admissions coordinator for Wall Residences, "but that isn't really what we do. We provide sponsored residential services for adults with intellectual disabilities. We have qualified family providers who are licensed to be able to provide support to our clients," she explained. "Our services are much more regulated than foster care is, and the reimbursement rate is better, because it is regulated through a Medicaid Waiver. Our family providers are people who want to see the people living with them flourish and really be part of their community."

Charlotte and Everette Horton fit that description perfectly. Charlotte, with an enthusiastic and positive air, has spent a lifetime working with adults with intellectual disabilities; Everette is quiet and patient, and clearly devoted to the people in their care. Nelson and Lois are friendly and confident and happy in their environment. When asked what his favorite thing is about living with the Hortons, Nelson answered with a laugh, "Y'all are," nodding towards Charlotte and Everette.

Seated around the square table where they eat dinner family style every night, this extended family talked, laughing often, about what it is that they do. "Everywhere we go

- even on vacation to the beach - they go with us," said Everette. "We are just like a family." Lois nodded. "Going to the beach to pick up seashells - it's fun."

Charlotte laughed, "Our goal is to incorporate Nelson and Lois into our family. My sister who lives out of state - my other sister who lives at Virginia Beach - they know Lois and Nelson." The Hortons' daughter, a retired school teacher who is also certified, provides backup should Charlotte and Everette need it.

Nelson checked his watch, and went to sit in the window seat to work on his puzzles; Lois, becoming restless, decided to go upstairs to her room to watch John Wayne.

"Lois had been living by herself and was not happy," said Charlotte. "It has been very important to her to learn that she is valued; to know that what she thinks is important. Never in her whole life has she felt that. Now she speaks up and enjoys her life," Charlotte added. "They both just love to fit in, to be respected, to have their opinion valued, to be able to make independent choices. I take pride in being able to offer all of that to them."

Nelson's elderly mother was no longer able to take care of him, so he ended up staying with Charlotte and Everette. He keeps in close touch with a brother in Tennessee.

"Imagine that you are the mother of an individual with an intellectual disability," Charlotte said. "It is normal for your child to grow up and move on. It is just so stifling



Lois, with host family Charlotte and Everette Horton, and Nelson.

and unfair that you wouldn't have that opportunity - both the mother and the child. The mother to move on with her life, and the child to grow up to become independent of the mother, to have new experiences."

Unfortunately, because of a lack of funding at the state level, the waiting list for placement of adults with disabilities is more than ten years and 6000 individuals long. Despite being ranked in the top ten U.S. states for income, Virginia is ranked 46th for its fiscal commitment to community-based services for adults with intellectual disabilities. Fully funded Medicaid waivers are required for clients to be able to live in homes like the Hortons'; the state is committed to this in theory, but rarely allocates the funds needed for the project. Meanwhile, people who could be living fulfilled lives, like Nelson and Lois, are instead languishing in group homes, in institutions, or alone or with their natural families who cannot provide them with what they need.

Conversations at the Horton home are happily chaotic, with speakers talking over each other or adding bits to the conversation, interspersed with laughter.

"Nelson and Lois go to day support, which is an adult day program," Charlotte said.

“Lois goes four days a week and Nelson five days a week. They do water aerobics, the library...” “They go on field trips,” said Everette. “I am in the bell choir,” added Lois.

“Last week they went to the theater and movie...” said Everette.

“It was good,” Lois confided.

“We try to give them as many opportunities to do things in the community as we can,” explained Everette.

“It was a good movie, it was called Kung Fu Panda,” said Lois, nodding her head vigorously. “Yeah, it made me laugh,” said Nelson. “He rolls down the hill,” he added, eyes alight.

Participation in this program isn’t all trips to the beach and bell choir practice, however. Recently, Nelson was sick, in and out of the hospital for six months. There are medications to keep track of, and a never-ending

river of paperwork to be done. “Each of them have an authorized representative,” explained Everette.

“Lois’ is a member of our church, and Nelson’s is his brother. We report to them as well as to Wall. We get annual inspections from the federal government; we get a monthly inspection from Wall.

“I take great pride in what I do and I’m not perfect, but I want to do the best I can,” said Charlotte. “I have no objections to any of the requirements, even though some of it is a pain the behind – the paperwork we do, the training that we do – but it is all for a reason – it protects these guys and it protects us, too,” Charlotte added. “That is just one more person with a finger in there, making sure we are doing things right.”

not violated, and they have the best life,” Charlotte said. “But when the match is right, between you and the people you provide care for, you don’t feel it is a commitment - you feel it is a lifestyle.” Charlotte and Everette were quick to explain that Wall Services works hard to ensure a good match between the clients and the caregivers; this is partly why this system seems to truly work for them.

“If you truly care, and want to give back to other people, and you have the room in your home...it is very rewarding,” Charlottes said. “They have brought us back a lot of joy. Christmas, Easter – it went back to when my kids were young. They have the enthusiasm; they expect the decorations. I bet that each of them received over 100 Christmas cards this year.”

“It is one of the best things that have ever happened to me,” said Charlotte. “I’ve always thought all along that this is what God wanted me to do.”

The family – truly a family – bundled up in jackets and went outside to groom their donkey, Bridey. Lois brushed him carefully while Nelson held the lead rope. Charlotte bantered with them while Everette stood looking on. Later, Lois and Nelson sat on the porch swing together teasing and laughing like brother and sister. Just like family.



Lois and Nelson enjoying time on the front porch.

“All of our training is documented and done by a licensed person,” Everette said. “It probably takes an hour a day just to do their paperwork. Every time we give a pill, every time we give them their bath, we have to document it,” he explained.

“There is a lot of responsibility to see that their rights are

Magen’s Driver’s License

This past summer Magen Lawhorne, of Staunton, fulfilled her dream of getting a driver’s license. With the help of Woodrow Wilson Workforce Center, and a lot of time and effort on her part, she was able to achieve that dream. She went to class every weekday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for a month. Once she passed the classroom portion, she had behind-the-wheel for two weeks with a very patient instructor.

Magen had been told in the past that she could never learn, but she proved that when you have a goal, you should never give up. Magen is very proud of her achievement as you can see by the big smile on her face. She drives all the time, is currently looking for employment, and wants to buy a car of her own.



Admissions Corner

by Alex Jackson

The Wall Residences admissions committee has been busy over the past few months as we navigate an ever changing state system and referral base. The admissions committee has been hard at work marketing your vacancies to various agencies across the state including the community services boards, state training centers, and state hospitals. We have had successful presentations at a variety of agencies over recent months and have also researched opportunities for various provider fairs across the state for additional marketing opportunities. We are working hard for you to ensure that your vacancies are known to our referral sources and marketed well. We appreciate all of the work you do each day, whether providing services or preparing your home for an individual. All of this is very important work and is making a difference in the lives of the referrals Wall Residences receives.

We want to support you to fill your vacancy with an individual who will find a forever home with you. Finding a match for someone with a complex need can be challenging. Due to a recent increase in re-

errals who have complex behavioral, mobility, or medical needs, the admissions team met to review ideas to meet the needs of these individuals. We determined that sending you a description of the individual would be a way to establish possible services. Due to confidentiality, this description would include no identifying information about the individual. It would include information about the challenges that the individual has. Potential providers can review this and determine if they have ideas for the service that would make sense. We want to hear about your ideas and strengths as potential providers. You may have a skill set that we do not yet know of that would be a perfect match for someone with a complex need. Our hope is to locate services within our existing vacancies for someone with a complex need by developing these descriptions and sending them to you for review. This is a benefit to you because it helps us learn more about you so we can continue locating the perfect match for your service.

Wall Residences continues to provide the highest quality residential services with the most talented providers in the state

of Virginia. It can be difficult to wait for a referral. You became providers to serve an individual in need and waiting for that referral can seem like forever.

We are always open to ideas on ways we can better advertise. It is important to remember that if you have a change in your circumstances that affects your vacancy, please communicate that to us. As a reminder, it is a good idea to review your website listing from time to time to determine if any changes need to be made. Our website is still one of our most effective marketing tools since it is accessible 24-hours a day. We are also utilizing Facebook more often to market vacancies by spotlighting them on our Facebook page. Please let us know if you would like your vacancy included. We would love to hear from any of you who have recommendations on how we can better advocate for you. You are welcome to contact me directly at **ajackson@wallresidences.com** or by phone at (434) 610-7578 with your ideas. We value each and every one of you and look forward to filling your vacancies!

Congratulations John



John Weatherspoon, LCSW has been named Executive Director of Wall Residences, Inc. John moves into this position after serving three years as Program Director of Wall Residences. Prior to coming to Wall, John served as Director of Emergency Services within a CSB. He has also served as State Director of Community Based Services and Clinical Director at other private agencies. John is a 95' Graduate of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work and practiced for a number of years as an Outpatient Therapist prior to moving into administration. He has also served as Adjunct Faculty in the Radford University Social Work Department. He currently resides in Montgomery County with his two daughters and wife, Dr. Carey Weatherspoon.

Wall Residences Honor Roll - 2016

15 Year Anniversary – started in 2001

Debra & Marvin Boyette Feb. 1st
Larry & Barbara Hatcher May 1st
Robert & Cornelia Droney June 1st
Scott McDorman Nov. 1st
Tabitha Humphreys Nov. 1st
Don & Rebecca Vest Dec. 1st

10 Year Anniversary – started in 2006

Crystal Anderson March 1st
Dennis Henderson April 14th
Pamela Matthes May 1st
Kathy Hubbard June 1st
Ron & Sandra Snodgrass Sept. 4th
Kathy & Kenneth Wakeman Oct. 1st
Mike Robinson Oct. 2nd
Jim Mitchell Nov. 1st
Peggy & Allan Wooldridge Nov. 4th
Mary & Jeffery Lester Nov. 4th
Roxana & Joseph Hartmann Dec. 1st
Tony & Kelly Parks Dec. 1st

Employees – 10 year

Jenise Burford April 18th
Courtney Evans Dec. 11th

5 Year Anniversary – started in 2011

Carmelita Bishop Jan. 1st
Janet & Jeff Gordon Jan. 11th
Shellby Knicley Jan. 14th
Carolyn & Garrett Weatherholtz Feb. 7th
Belinda & Roscoe Harris April 1st
Ana & Tito Iglesias April 22nd
Chris Valenzuela & Vera Hailey May 6th
Linda Williams June 1st
Mark & Laurie Heilman June 1st
Laura Belcher & Peter Street June 13th
Katrina Childress & Edwin Ogden June 17th
Patti Henderson June 20th
Charlotte & Everette Horton July 8th
Danny Campbell & Joan Healy July 22nd
Marietje Walean Aug. 22nd
Hester Bruce Aug. 22nd
Tilly Waller Sept. 1st
David & Abby Owen Sept. 1st
Jerelyn Anderson Sept. 15th
Eric & Debbie Noble Sept. 19th
Marie & Donald Sankolewicz Oct. 1st
Gloria Faulkner Oct. 3rd

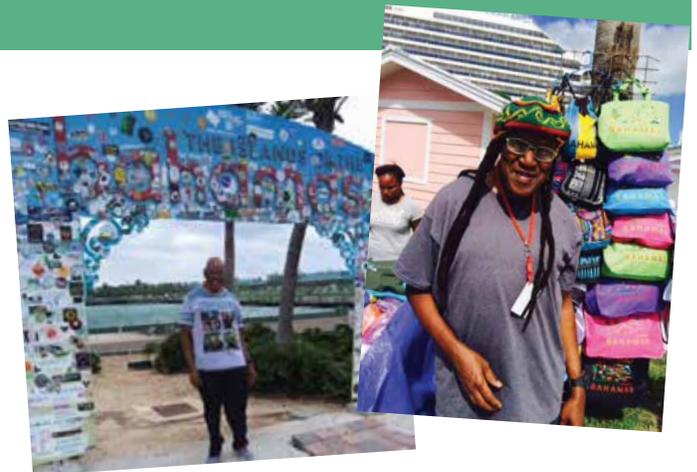
Employees – 5 year

Christine Wickham June 15th
Rebecca Ledingham Sept. 6th
Bea Cleveland March 14th
Amy Dodson April 18th
Samantha Lawson June 6th

First Cruise

Melvin Washington recently enjoyed his first cruise when he and his Locust Grove providers, Angela and Leroy White, took a trip to the Bahamas. He participated in karaoke, a Motown sing along, Family Feud, bingo, dancing, and formal dining. "Melvin's favorite part was shopping at the ports in Free Port and Nassau," says Angela.

He toured Nassau, shopped at the straw market, walked the beach and had a blast! He's now looking forward to putting his scrapbook together and showing the pictures to his friends and family. "He didn't want to get off the ship when it was time to go," says Angela. "He said he wasn't ready to go home."



Making a Positive Difference

An activity at a recent Regional Provider Meeting in Central Virginia allowed providers to share how they have facilitated positive changes through their work as providers. Their outcomes ran the gamut from communication strides and improvements in self-confidence, to health improvements and increased sports and community involvement. Here are a few samples of providers' responses to "I have made a positive difference in the life of someone I support! I can tell because..."

- We have been using a headset with educational video and audio music to engage the individual we support in a fun learning experience. We have seen positive results in demeanor and expression, with singing, repeating her ABC's, and what she has learned. It has been amazing for the individual we support!

- The person I support visits her brother now, and she is in the community more often. She is meeting and making more friends.

- An individual moved into my home that had a bad experience at her previous placement. She came in angry and ready to cause trouble for the other individual in the home. She realized that she could trust everyone in the home. That she could feel love, and she was able to make choices and have input into her life. She now speaks about how happy she is almost daily. She loves that she can make choices about how she wants to live her life.

- The individual I support learned to use a debit card, and quit smoking.

- The individual I support lost 30 lbs, takes less medicine, is no longer lonely, goes out in the community, has more hobbies, has balanced diabetes, participates in counseling, and the family is relieved.

- I've seen a sense of humor develop. The individual I support is able to laugh at herself whereas she used to become frustrated quickly. She has an increased ability to reason and think through her situations, and also now acknowledges her influence on situations. She receives help and support with redirection; she now views this as "help" instead of "being controlled". I have seen growth because of it.

- The individual I support has tried several day support and other programs unsuccessfully. He is now able to stay in day support and participate in wood-working. He has never gone to a camp before, and now he will be going for a week!

- Family members are overjoyed that their sister is recognizing them, smiling at them, and letting them hold her hand. That never happened at CVTC.

- I provide stability for the person I support.



- The individual I support is now sharing with others, and thinking of others more. They show appreciation for the supports by saying, "I love you, doll."

- I encouraged the individual I support to eat some on her own after years of not doing so. She now eats cheeseburgers, Chinese egg rolls, and popcorn on her own! I help plug ear-phones into her cell phone to listen to music. She uses the buttons to raise or lower the volume.

- The individual I support stopped smoking within 6 months, lost 45 pounds in two years, and is now very active in the community including bowling and line dancing with Challenge Sports Exchange group.

Providers, thank you for the work you do! Your dedication and caring make a huge difference in the lives of individuals.

Director's Corner continues

spaces. This is not a complete list of all the great things that are going on, just a sample to provide some ideas. We want to support these efforts and encourage more of them! It is the intention of Wall Residences to communicate more on the great work that providers are doing each and every day. We know we get caught up in regulatory requirements and forget to comment frequently enough on the good stuff!

Wall Residences Providers have been invited to the Spring All Provider meeting on April 21st at the Hotel Roanoke. In attendance will be 300 providers and Wall Residences staff, and we have invited representatives from DMAS, DBHDS and the Virginia State Legislature to join us and offer their perspectives on the changes ahead. We will be taking time to celebrate those providers and staff reaching their 5, 10, and 15 year milestones in 2016. We will spend the afternoon learning some techniques for self-care and recharge our batteries, remembering the blessings

that are shared by doing the important work of care giving.

There are more changes ahead, and some will be relatively fast paced. Many of these changes will be positive in the long term for the individuals we support, but we know any change can be stressful. Wall Residences is committed to the individuals we support and their families, to the providers and back up workers who work with us, and to the government bodies that fund and regulate us. Our leadership team will continue to educate ourselves on the changes ahead, to be responsive to concerns presented, to create additional opportunities for the individuals we support and the providers who support them, and to continue to improve communication.

Wall Residences staff and leadership team stand ready to face the challenges ahead and to provide the support that is needed.

New Certification

"I became interested in behavioral analysis because I thought it was a positive and proactive way to support people that experience challenging behaviors," says Heather Cromer, Wall Residences Regional Behavioral Coordinator. In January, after completing two years of course work and direct supervision, Heather became a licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). "Behavior analysts are able to support people with challenging behaviors by taking baseline data, analyzing that data, then structuring the environment and supports in order to better support that person with these behaviors," explains Cromer.

Prior to joining Wall Residences, Cromer, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in special education, taught special education in the public school system for eight years and saw an increase in the need for supports for students with autism. She pursued the Certificate of Autism Studies before she knew anything about behavior analysis. "The last several years of my teaching were focused on supporting individuals with autism and with that population came a lot of behavioral concerns due to their difficulties with communication. All behavior is a form of communication,"

says Cromer. "The county I worked for consulted with a BCBA and I learned about behavioral analysis through the school system. I saw a lot of encouraging outcomes through the use of positive behavior support."



*Regional Behavioral Coordinator
and BCBA, Heather Cromer*

Cromer is excited to be a part of Wall Residences and really appreciates the agency's collaborative team approach. Program managers will consult with Cromer based on individual's needs. "I will be part of the team along with the individual, provider, and program manager. We will work together to support the individual with challenging behaviors," says Cromer. "I am happy to be an additional resource to help the team."

Repeat Winner



Charles Campbell, who lives with Jim & Pam Golas, gets to keep his champion's apron for another year. He is the first person to win the Orange Presbyterian Church's annual Chili Cook-Off two years in a row. The contest inspired 12 members of the community to participate in the competition and the winner was determined after each chili was tasted by the voters. The chefs were not identified until the winner was chosen.

Last year Charles won with a white chili and this year he entered a dessert chili – a spicy fruit poured over pound cake. His effort brought a win in two categories – Best Returning Entrant and Best Overall.

Along with the apron, Charles won utensils. He's already planning next year's entry but don't ask him what it will be. It's a secret!

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Celebrate
Springtime!
FROM WALL RESIDENCES