

Clozaril: an effective treatment for schizoaffective disorder.

In her early twenties, Ann Marie was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, a neurobiological illness where symptoms of mood disorder and schizophrenia are both present. Those diagnosed with this illness may have an impaired perception of reality – usually through auditory hallucinations, paranoid or bizarre delusions or disorganized speech and thinking abilities.

In Ann Marie's case, she was also diagnosed as having bipolar disorder.

"I was hearing angel voices, and I couldn't make them stop – I couldn't make them go away," says Ann Marie, now in her late thirties. She was put through different treatment programs, has been hospitalized and has tried various medications, all with limited success.

In 2003, Ann Marie came to Horizon for treatment. She participates in group and individual therapy sessions and has been taking clozaril daily for six years, with minimal side effects. Clozaril, which was introduced in 1990, reduces the symptoms associated with schizophrenia, as well as reduces the risk of suicidal behavior. It is largely used for those for whom other drugs' side effects are too severe or who have had other problems with medication and treatment.

"Clozaril is often referred to as the "superstar" antipsychotic because the results can be tremendous, especially when an individual has not responded well to any other medication," says Kristin Ahrens, MD, Horizon's medical director. "It gives individuals the chance to

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reclaim their life, re-enter relationships, school, employment and parenting. At Horizon, we provide clozaril services in a group format, which the consumers really like because of the education and the ability to meet others who have shared their struggle."

"Ann Marie has made amazing progress in the management of her symptoms," says Jill Stadelmaier, LMSW, Ann Marie's counselor at Horizon's Boulevard Counseling Center. "She's learned how to put herself first and is working hard toward her goals." According to Jill, Ann Marie is living in supportive housing and is working 30 hours per week.

Ann Marie says the drug has helped her tremendously. "Clozaril has been a lifesaver," she says. "I am grateful to Horizon, especially DeeDee, Rachel, Sara and Jill. I know now I'm not alone and that I can turn my life around."

She says her goals include getting her Certified Nurse's Aid certificate (she's well on her way!), buying a car, getting her own place and reconnecting with her three kids, whom she hasn't seen in nearly 10 years because of her illness. For those just starting on the journey Ann Marie has been on for years, she says, "Think positively! Don't let other people bother you. Recovery IS possible and you CAN take control." ♥

thePathtoRecovery

Here is the true story of a consumer who overcame many obstacles to turn his life around. Last names have been omitted for privacy.

Imagine not meeting your birth mother until you are 15 years old. Imagine being raised from birth to the age of 12 in foster home after foster home, and then pretty much being on your own, living on the street or with friends. Many people would follow the wrong path in life after a childhood like that. And Will was no exception.

He started smoking marijuana at age 12. He dropped out of school. He was arrested more than once. As others gave up on him, he also gave up on himself. Almost.

When he was arrested last December, 20-year-old Will became annoyed at his attorney, who he felt "was asking too many questions."

Continued on page 3



Herb Weis (left), executive administrator of quality improvement and Don Will, VP of infrastructure and resource management, review final details on the blueprints for Freedom House, the specialized residential drug treatment facility for WNY-area veterans to be built at Horizon Village. Construction begins next spring.

FROM THE DESK OF... PAGE 2 EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES PAGE 2 BOARD SPOTLIGHT PAGE 2 HELLO MY NAME IS PAGE 3



From the desk of...

Anne Constantino
President & CEO

An increasing number of soldiers are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with devastating and lasting effects of war, including physical and mental disorders and substance abuse. In fact, the Department of Veterans Affairs says mental health is the second largest area of illness (after orthopedic problems) for which Iraq and Afghanistan veterans seek treatment at VA hospitals and clinics. These problems are not visible but can be just as disabling as a physical problem. Unfortunately, the need for treatment far exceeds the capacity of the Veterans Administration.

We at Horizon Health Services are learning everything we can about the effects of war, and we are ready to provide the best treatment for our troops with disabling mental and substance use disorders. Consistent with our mission, we are committed to working with veterans and their families to achieve recovery and attain their personal life goals.

We are so grateful to all of the men and women who have sacrificed for our freedom and safety. We will do everything we can to provide resources and support for our veterans and their families. ♥

Relapse to substance use after a period of abstinence is a common pattern among substance abusers. Many are admitted to substance abuse treatment multiple times before they achieve long-term abstinence.

SOURCE: Drug & Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS)

Reaching A Milestone

We'd like to congratulate and acknowledge the following employees, who are marking milestone anniversaries of continuous service at Horizon as of 12/31/08.

10+ years

- Lawler Brown (11 years)
- Michael Dawkins (10 years)
- Khrist Decker (10 years)
- Jacqueline Gamble (10 years)
- Doris Houghton (10 years)
- Ann Johnson (14 years)
- Helianna Justice (11 years)
- Diane E. Marsh (14 years)
- Paige K. Prentice (13 years)
- Jennifer Sobieraj (10 years)
- Marcia R. Valente (14 years)

15+ years

- Carolyn Messana-Morrow (16 years)
- Lori Posluszny (19 years)
- Ann Vitale (17 years)

20+ years

- Anne Constantino (22 years)
- Kathy Dietrich-Green (20 years)
- Michelle Doedema (20 years)
- Brenda John-Banach (20 years)
- Marion Kiekbusch (24 years)
- Donna Lewis (22 years)
- Susan Temperato (21 years)
- Herb Weis (23 years)

25+ years

- Michelle Curto (26 years)
- Michelle Jacob (29 years)
- Don Will (26 years)

Spotlight on the Board



Dan DiPofi, Chief Operating Officer, The Buffalo Sabres

Dan DiPofi joined our Health Management Group board in 2004, after developing a friendship with Anne Constantino through board member Mike Mistriner. He welcomed the idea of using the experience he'd gained in the private sector in a positive way to help "the community where I live, raise my family and work – and of which I am proud to be part."

Since joining the board, Dan says he has learned it takes an intricate network and organization of professionals to continually meet the needs of the community at large. "The staff at Horizon have that fine balance of compassion and professionalism that truly makes the organization a leader in the mental health and addiction recovery field," he says.

Dan, who recently became part owner of the Buffalo Sabres, says that working in professional sports is a lot like working at any mid-sized company. You have to wear many hats – marketing, finance, PR, human resources, etc. – and that experience translates well in dealing with and providing guidance for the Horizon challenges and opportunities.

"I am continually impressed by the real-life success stories," says Dan. "A colleague of mine re-introduced me to a young lady I had met several years ago and who I knew had an ongoing battle with drug dependency. She is now working with my colleague's company, has been clean for more than three years and has a real future. Now that is impressive!"

Dan says that, under Anne's leadership and with the dedication shown by the entire organization, Horizon will be a valuable community asset for many years to come, providing services, awareness and career opportunity for Western New Yorkers. ♥

thePathtoRecovery

"The Path to Recovery" continued from page 1

But the attorney saw something in Will, and thought he'd be a better candidate for a recovery program than for jail. Will resisted. He wasn't interested. He was happy with his life and didn't want to change it. When he entered the Road To Recovery program at Horizon Village, he was, at first, uncooperative. But then he started paying attention. He liked what he was hearing and he began to participate. He opened up and talked about things he hadn't talked about for years. "I learned a lot about myself," says Will. "I got the chance to talk in-depth about pretty much everything, and it felt good to get it all out."

Suddenly Will began to reap the rewards. His relationships with family members improved. His self-esteem rose, as did

his self-respect. In the nearly six months he was at Horizon Village, Will took the opportunity offered him and never looked back. He has been clean for six months and, in May, earned his GED diploma. Suddenly, he's thinking college and career.

"Will is bright, charismatic and inquisitive," says Patrick Mackenna, program manager at Horizon Village. "He has had some difficulties in his life and certainly hasn't received proper guidance. His perseverance is perhaps his strongest attribute. Some people would have stopped after obtaining their GED and done some self-admiring. Will continued to set goals for himself that would help to change the direction of his life. Many people at Horizon Village will take pride in Will's admission to ECC."

"Rehab is a good opportunity if you want it to be," says Will. "It's hard for people my age to see that, because they don't want to change. But talking to people who really care helps. I realize now how much better my life can be and I don't want to lose all that I've accomplished. Horizon Village is a great place and I recommend it to anybody. It really can help. It saved my life."

The Structured Treatment to Enhance Public Safety (STEPS)/Road to Recovery program (RtR) is an alternative to incarceration program targeting individuals who are prior felons, as well as those who have no prior felony in need of intensive residential chemical dependency treatment, have a reasonable chance of success, and meet certain conditions. For more information, contact Melissa Colley at (716) 831.1800. ♥

Hello

My name is

Kathy Dietrich-Green
Director of Vocational Services
Horizon Career Opportunity Centers



In October, Kathy Dietrich-Green celebrated her 20th anniversary as a Horizon employee. She's seen a lot of changes – mostly for the better – in the many years she's worked in this industry, and says she feels very lucky to have found a great place like Horizon at which to work.

"Horizon has grown by leaps and bounds," says Kathy. "There are so many new special programs for consumers. Horizon Village has expanded considerably and the new HR efforts have contributed greatly to the positive morale around here. I've been lucky to have had several wonderful supervisors and mentors in the years I've been here. It's a great place to work!"

Kathy heads up the vocational program at Horizon's Career Opportunity Centers (COC), which is offered through three of Horizon's counseling centers to help consumers re-enter the workforce. After assessing an individual's skills and positive work behaviors, the COC will provide training and job preparations skills, assessment and counseling, as well as educational opportunity exploration, before assisting the consumer in finding the right job with the right employer.

"So far this year, we've placed 38 consumers in jobs in the health-care, hospitality, food service, retail and day care industries," says Kathy. "They are doing everything from maintenance to customer service to teacher's aides to secretarial and earning, on average, close to \$9.00 per hour. The employers have all been very helpful and very satisfied."

Kathy says the program's success is due largely to Horizon's counselors, who recognize the importance of vocational services in a consumer's recovery and consistently send them to the COC. "The counselors have been wonderful in spotting consumers who would be good candidates for our program," says Kathy. "It's very rewarding to see consumers' self-confidence and self-esteem rise considerably once they are placed in a job where they can contribute." Kathy also credits "the wonderful team I work with" for making the program work. ♥

The criminal justice system is the principal referral source to substance abuse treatment for both 18- to 25-year-old repeat admissions (46 percent) and first-time admissions (52 percent).

SOURCE: Drug & Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS)

Check us out online

Horizon's website is full of helpful information on chemical dependency, alcoholism, mental health issues and so much more. We're constantly updating our site to provide valuable information on the services we provide to assist consumers



and their families, as well as links to other helpful organizations.

Here are five things you'll find on our website right now:

- FAQs about alcohol and chemical dependency
- Profiles on community leaders who make up our boards of directors
- Explanatory presentation about our planned Horizon Village veterans' facility
- Admissions application for Horizon Village
- Information on our two Medical Unit locations (open to the public)

Visit our website at www.horizon-health.org.

Horizon is the largest and most comprehensive outpatient provider of integrated mental health, chemical dependency and medical services in WNY.

HorizonHealthPulse is published for the employees, consumers, Board and friends of Horizon Health Services. Please share this newsletter with a friend. If you would like additional copies of this newsletter or if you have any questions or comments about its content, please call Pat Chrzanowski at 716-831-1800 or email her at pchrzanowski@horizon-health.org.

President & CEO Anne Constantino
Medical Director Kristin Ahrens, M.D.



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Many people think schizophrenia means split or multiple personalities, but that is incorrect. Schizophrenia is a type of mental illness and is a result of an imbalance of certain brain chemicals that affects the way people think, feel or interact with others. Its symptoms can be treated with counseling and medication.

INSIDE: Effectively treating schizoaffective disorder.

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