

It's never too late to graduate.

Residents of Horizon Village now have another opportunity to help turn their lives around while staying at the Village: a GED program available through Niagara/Orleans BOCES Continuing Education.

"The GED program, which is funded by Niagara County Social Services, is designed to help our residents become less dependent on social services and re-enter society as productive citizens, which is a win-win for everyone," says Patrick Mackenna, vocational counselor at Horizon Village.

Any resident of Horizon Village is eligible to participate, regardless of educational background and, so far, 65 residents ranging in age from 18 to the late 50s have participated since the program began 13 months ago.

Five have received their GED diploma, with several more just about ready to take the test. Classes are held at Horizon Village and taught by BOCES instructor, Edward Ahrens, who says, "I have been very impressed by the level of support from the staff. They do whatever they can to assist residents in the program, and take great pride in seeing each one succeed."

Jason, a resident in his late 20s, was never motivated to get his diploma, despite encouragement from his family. He thought it was too late.



Ed Ahrens (standing) helps (left to right) Eric McEntire, Maxine Wiley, Carmella Rivera and Tyra Lee study for their GED exams.

"The GED program is one more way we can help our residents grow and strengthen so they can make positive changes in their lives." ♥

According to Wikipedia, more than 15 million people have received a GED credential since the program began. One in every seven Americans with high school credentials received the GED, as well as one in 20 college students.

"I was always good at math, and I want to be an electrician," says Jason, who recently completed the program and received his diploma. "Now my goal is to go to college at night and eventually start a business with my dad."

Michelle, also a recent graduate of the program, always felt guilty that she didn't finish high school and was determined to accomplish something positive. "I want to go into cosmetology or computer programming," says Michelle. "And now I'm grateful I have those options."

"At Horizon Village, it's always about hope and recovery," says Mackenna.

From the desk of...



Condon James Photography

Hak Ko, MD
Medical Director

I began working at Horizon in the summer of 1987, at the old Tonawanda Counseling Center on Delaware Avenue. There were very few people in the waiting room, regardless of the time of day. Thorazine, Haldol and Elavil were the most-prescribed psychotropic medicines, and lithium was the only medicine available for individuals with manic depression. Drug therapy for addiction was unheard of, except for Antabuse.

The past 20 years have witnessed change at a breathtaking pace, including various therapy modalities, the concept of case management and an explosion of psychotropic drugs. Prozac revolutionized treatment of depression, followed by other SSRIs and many different classes of antidepressants. Risperidone changed the landscape of schizophrenic treatment with various atypical anti-psychotics. Naltrexone, Campral and Suboxone added new dimensions to the medical treatment of addiction.

The progress made in treatment is showing its impact in key statistics. The number of inpatient beds at Buffalo Psychiatric Center is down to 350 from its peak of 3,000 in 1960. The average length of stay in a general psychiatric unit is now around 12 days. Residential treatment centers, ICM, TCM and ACT teams are working together to improve quality-of-life issues.

At the end of August, I leave my work at Horizon. I was 39 when I started, but will soon be 60. My youngest son, who was two years old when I started, will soon start his first job after graduating from college.

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Horizon expansion to offer services in Genesee, Orleans counties

Adolescents and adults in Genesee and Orleans counties will soon have access to chemical dependency services and treatment when Horizon opens its newest clinic in early September.

Located on Ellicott Street in Batavia, the Horizon Village Recovery Center has been granted a license by the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to provide outpatient services for individuals and families, as well as vocational services, Monday through Friday.

"A needs assessment completed by OASAS indicated there is a great need for chemical dependency services in these two counties," says Maria Pasceri, Horizon vice president for program development. "Horizon is very excited to be able to expand our efforts to offer chemical

dependency treatment and services to the residents of these two counties."

The clinic will be staffed by Rachel Anauo, CASAC, LMHC, as well as two additional counselors and a secretary. Anauo has been with Horizon for nearly two years, most recently at its Lockport clinic.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to lead this new program," says Anauo. "I look forward to working closely with the Batavia Drug Courts and the community. I've heard from so many people that there's a real need for what we offer, and I'm glad Horizon will be there to give the residents another option for treatment services."

For more information on the Horizon Village Recovery Center in Batavia, contact Maria Pasceri at 831.1800. ❤️

MEET OUR Board

Name: Suzanne K. Johnson, LCSW, MS, CASAC

Title: Senior Counselor, Buffalo State College



On which Horizon board(s) do you serve? "I serve on the Horizon Health Services and Horizon Village boards."

How did you come to be on the board(s)? "I was previously employed at Horizon as a senior mental health counselor. When I left Horizon, Anne Constantino asked me to consider being on the board. I had worked at Horizon for 12 years so I was thrilled to continue to contribute to this agency."

What have you found most rewarding about serving on the boards? "After being a part of the clinical side of Horizon for so long, it is interesting and encouraging to be part of the board, to hear how much people believe and care about the individuals and families Horizon serves, as well as respecting the skills and needs of the people who are involved in providing the clinical care. I believe I have a unique perspective, having been a part of the clinical process and participating on several multidisciplinary teams while I was an employee. I have seen the process of recovery at work."

What do you want people to know about Horizon? "That Horizon employs quality, skilled therapists and counselors. Horizon is a lot of people who really care." ❤️

Between 150 and 200 million people worldwide are infected with Hepatitis C; IV drug users and inhaled drug users are particularly at risk.

Hello
My name is
Vicky Wideman
Senior Substance and
Alcohol Abuse Counselor



Vicky Wideman, pictured here with Hank Pirowski of the Buffalo City Courts, received the Outstanding Counselor Award from the Buffalo Drug Treatment Courts Alumni Association in May.

Vicky Wideman, senior substance and alcohol abuse counselor at Horizon's Bailey LaSalle counseling center, figures she sees 20-25 consumers every day, each struggling with addiction. With each person she counsels, Vicky focuses on the strengths that person possesses, to help him or her work toward recovery.

"It's my job to empower my consumers toward recovery and to achieve their goals," says Vicky. "I do that by encouraging their strengths and building on their weaknesses. I teach communication skills and I help bring families together."

Vicky said she really loves the fact that Horizon is client-centered and is always looking for innovative ways to help its

consumers. "It's not about prestige or money at Horizon, it's about helping people, and I find that very gratifying," says Vicky.

Teaching consumers to communicate and realize the value of relationships helps bring families together and greatly assists in recovery. Vicky says she finds it very rewarding to see consumers take a look inside themselves to make the necessary changes to turn their lives around and to know that she helped them along the way.

Vicky, who has worked at Horizon for nearly four years, received her Associate's degree from ECC in mental health and substance abuse counseling and her Bachelor's degree in social work from Buffalo State College. She lives in Buffalo with her 16-year-old son. ❤️

thePathtoRecovery

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

When she was a teenager, Sandy, now in her late 40s, drank beer and smoked pot with friends. At 18, she began frequenting bars and getting into "the hard stuff." "Vodka was definitely my drink of choice," says Sandy.

She graduated from high school and began working, but the drinking continued. Sandy tried to stop, even entering an inpatient facility on her own, but that didn't work. An outpatient stint after a DWI conviction also failed, as Sandy continued to drink during and after the treatment.

"I tried to stop drinking, especially when my godchild was born," says Sandy. "But I couldn't do it. I didn't want to do it."

As her drinking escalated, so did her problems. She lost her job. She attempted suicide. Friends brought her to the hospital, where she finally realized she had hit rock bottom. But then she was referred to Horizon and, as Sandy says, "life got a whole lot better very quickly."

Sandy credits Alcoholics Anonymous and Horizon with helping her to get back on the right track, but she also realizes

that, by the time she got to Horizon, she was truly ready to conquer her addiction, and that made all the difference.

"My addictions counselor, Marcia Valente, has been just wonderful," says Sandy. "Both she and my mental health counselor helped me to see I was not a bad person. They made me believe in myself and, most importantly, they gave me hope."

"Sandy has done a remarkable job in terms of becoming sober, remaining sober and making the determination that she wanted to go back to school to become a counselor and working toward that," says Marcia. "She's really done well."

Sandy graduated from Horizon's addiction program last year, and got her old job back with the stipulation that she remain in counseling for 18 months, so she continued in Horizon's co-dependency program. She has been sober since 2004.

Today, Sandy is also attending school to become a full-fledged counselor, where she hopes to apply her knowledge and experience to help those who think recovery is not possible.

"The best gift you can give yourself is recovery," says Sandy. "Because there is hope, there is a way out – for anybody who wants it." ♥

Horizon Welcomes Lisa Arnet

Lisa Arnet has joined the Horizon staff as senior director of Human Resources.



Formerly an Employee Benefits Consultant for Vanner Insurance Agency and former president of We Care Transportation, Lisa brings a wealth of experience and expertise to Horizon. Her new responsibilities include creating new recruitment and retention strategies; developing "wow" benefits for employees; creating employee recognition programs; providing overall strategic leadership to HR; developing and implementing policies/procedures and program/services for organizational development and overseeing compliance, employee benefits, compensation and employee relations.

"I wanted to work for an organization that makes a difference in peoples' lives," says Arnet. "I wanted to live life with a purpose, and Horizon gives me the opportunity to do both."

"Lisa is a former Horizon board member, so she's familiar with our mission and vision," says Anne Constantino, president & CEO. "Her skills and experience will help us achieve both through the recruitment and retention of capable employees."

Lisa is a member of the Buffalo/Niagara Human Resource Association and the Society for Human Resource Management. She resides in Williamsville with her husband and son. ♥

From the desk of (cont'd from page 1)

I learned a great deal, gained valuable experience and met wonderful people along the way, and I developed much more understanding and respect for the people I tried to help.

I thank all the people I have worked with and appreciate all they have done to help me grow and mature, both professionally and personally. ♥

Been to our website lately?

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

valuable and critical information regarding these topics and the services we provide to assist consumers and their families, as well as links to the websites of other helpful organizations. ♥

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



Horizon CEO Anne Constantino (center) received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Buffalo Drug Treatment Courts Alumni Association for her commitment to the treatment of addiction. Anne is shown here with (left) Hank Pirowski, Project Director, Buffalo City Court, and the Hon. Robert T. Russell, Presiding Buffalo Drug and Mental Health Court Judge. Horizon senior substance and alcohol abuse counselor Vicky Wideman (see profile in this issue) also received the award for Outstanding Counselor. The awards were presented in May at the organization's annual conference in Buffalo, NY.

Horizon announces officer appointments.

At its annual meeting in May, Horizon Health Services, Inc., announced the following officer appointments to its boards of directors:

Horizon Health Services Board

Mark Cramer, Esq., Associate General Counsel, Delaware North Companies, was elected to his second term as Chair.

Michael Maxwell, Esq., a partner at Hodgson Russ Attorneys LLP, was elected to his first term as Vice Chair.

Stefanie Zakowicz, Vice President of Communications for Empire State Development Corp., has been elected to her first term as Secretary.

Horizon Village Board

Michael Maxwell, Esq., Hodgson Russ Attorneys LLP, was elected to his first term as Chair.

Kevin D. Robinson, Esq., Assistant U.S. Attorney in the United States Attorney's

Office, was elected to his first term as Vice Chair.

Stefanie Zakowicz, Vice President of Communications for Empire State Development Corp., has been elected to her first term as Secretary.

Health Management Group Board

Pete Grum, President, Rand Capital, was elected to his third term as Chair.

Dan DiPofi, Chief Operating Officer, Hockey Western New York, LLC, was elected to his third term as Vice Chair.

Mark Cramer, Esq., Delaware North Companies, was elected to his third term as Secretary.

Our thanks to all those who generously serve on our boards of directors, giving their time and expertise. For a complete listing of all board members, please visit 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**Hak Ko, M.D.**



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HEALTH SERVICES

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It's never too late to graduate!
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