

## Empowering consumers to effect positive change.

In an ongoing effort to provide its consumers with the best treatment services possible, Horizon recently agreed to take part in a Patient Feedback Study sponsored by the National Institute of Drug Abuse and conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and NYU School of Medicine.

For 12 weeks, consumers at five of Horizon's chemical dependency clinics responded anonymously to questionnaires following various group sessions. Typical questions included "Did you feel accepted and respected by your clinician?" and "Did you feel you and your clinician are working together to overcome your problems?" While some consumers were initially reluctant to participate, clinicians explained that the confidential surveys presented the opportunity to empower the consumers, enabling them to share their true feelings about treatment. The questionnaires were then forwarded to NYU for data analysis by site; results were then sent back to Horizon.

"We were able to discuss the feedback on a weekly basis," says Marisa Shepherd, Ed.M., CASAC, interim senior program director at Horizon's Hertel Elmwood Addiction Outpatient Clinic. "Then we were able to make any adjustments necessary to treatment services – based on the feedback we received – to better satisfy and help our consumers."

Why did Horizon decide to participate in this study when they were approached? "Our participation reflects Horizon's ongoing commitment to contributing to research efforts to identify effective treatment interventions, particularly regarding motivating consumer engagement and providing person-centered care," says Herbert M. Weis, Ph.D., Horizon's executive administrator of quality improvement.

"We definitely saw improvements as the weeks went by," says Marisa. "Productivity went up as changes were made, we saw more group participation and more involvement – people wanted to be here." ♥



Consumers who participated in the study were able to provide honest and confidential input regarding their treatment.

## 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.

For Ulysses, with age came wisdom. In his mid-fifties, he took stock of the jobs he'd lost because of his drinking. The marriage that ended in divorce. The DWIs. The consequences he'd suffered because of his actions. He realized he couldn't drink safely and, when he was arrested for yet another DWI and the judge recommended probation and counseling, Ulysses turned to Horizon.

Ulysses was in denial regarding the severity of his use of alcohol when he first started treatment. By taking an inventory of his life and addressing his use and the consequences, he began to accept he had a problem and that is when recovery began.

"At Horizon, they were there to help me with my recovery in any way they could," says Ulysses. "I started there on November 7, 2007 and have been sober now since November 4, 2007. I couldn't have done it without the help of the wonderful people at Horizon."

"Ulysses has been a model consumer," says Amber Zito, LMSW, senior addictions counselor at Horizon's Bailey LaSalle Clinic. "He has done very well accepting feedback from his peers and the treatment team. He has also accepted the challenges that come with recovery and has not given up on himself when feeling challenged. He appears to have a genuine desire to change and save his life from addiction."

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From the desk of...

**Kristin Ahrens, MD**  
Medical Director

It is a wonderful thing when life treats us well, when we are healthy and when our basic needs are met. We sleep well at night knowing that each new day brings contentment. Unfortunately, life is not always that kind to us. Traumatic events occur every minute of every day to people. Childhood neglect and abuse, sexual assaults, accidents, domestic violence, gang activity and war are just some of the serious and life-altering events that many individuals are faced with. Humans are not intuitively programmed to recover easily from trauma. Many individuals are left to suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, depression, paranoia, insomnia and irritability.

When symptoms are so impairing that an individual is no longer able to function, he or she is generally diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Coping with trauma should not be done alone, yet so many people do not know where to turn. Both counseling and medication have been shown to be effective in helping people to recover from traumatic events that have negatively impacted their lives. Health can return and contentment can once again be found. Everyone deserves an opportunity to be healthy. ❤️

## New facility at Horizon Village to focus on specialized services for veterans.



**Governor David A. Paterson and The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) have approved funding in excess of \$3 million for the construction of a facility on the Horizon Village campus to serve the intensive residential addiction treatment needs of area veterans.**

The 22,000-square-foot treatment facility will contain 25 beds and will provide specialized chemical dependency and mental health services for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) within its current, unique and intensive addiction recovery and family programs. Residents will have full access to

Horizon Village's broad range of services, including pre-vocational preparation and on- and off-site educational opportunities.

"These funds will allow us to increase the services we offer area veterans and allow us to better assist them achieve the recovery they so deserve," says Paige Prentice, executive director of Horizon Village. "We're very grateful to all who helped us secure these much-needed funds."

The grant was secured with the help of NY State Assemblyman Sam Hoyt (D-Buffalo, Grand Island), Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) and NY State Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte (D-Lewiston).

Construction is to begin in early Fall 2008. ❤️

**The National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors indicates that "approximately 40 percent of veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan will experience a mental health problem and, of those, 60 percent will experience issues with chemical dependency."**

**Hello**  
My name is  
**Marisa Shepherd,**  
Ed.M., CASAC

Interim Senior Program Director  
Hertel Elmwood Addiction  
Outpatient Clinic/Horizon  
Village Recovery Center



**One of the things Marisa Shepherd loves most about working at Horizon is the team atmosphere.**

She says everyone helps out each other, and senior staff is extremely supportive. "We're truly like a family here," says Marisa. "It makes for a great environment in which to work.."

Marisa came to Horizon nearly four years ago from the University of Rochester, where

she was a research assistant for the Mt. Hope Family Center. She started as a counselor at Horizon's Tonawanda Addiction Outpatient Clinic and today divides her time between two of Horizon's outpatient clinics.

"I really enjoy working with our consumers," says Marisa. "One of my core values is personal growth, and I very much enjoy helping consumers realize their fullest potential. There is nothing more gratifying in this field than seeing our consumers achieve their goals and reap the rewards of sobriety."

A native of Victor, New York, Marisa received her bachelor's degree in Educational Studies and English from Colgate University and her master's degree in School Counseling from the University at Buffalo. She lives in the city of Buffalo. ❤️

## For Village consumers, a future filled with hope.

"We know that consumers who attend these workshops have a higher success rate for completing our recovery program," says Patrick Mackenna, vocational/education counselor at Horizon Village. "That was our main motivation in starting this program, and NCCC has been a huge help in making it so successful and popular with our consumers."

The program Patrick is referring to is a series of workshops at the Village designed to assist consumers in residence in obtaining their GED and preparing for college. Workshops focus on everything from reading to writing to math to career vision, learning styles and more. It was made possible by grants funded through Niagara County Community College (NCCC).

"Our goal is to integrate or re-integrate consumers into the academic world with preparatory classes and workshops that help prepare them for college and/or the workforce," says Cindy L. Oberjosh, Ed.D., coordinator of Academic Exploration at NCCC. "It is a unique program and we're very pleased at the success Horizon Village is having with this."

Consumers who choose to participate are able to develop a more positive vision for their future; higher education suddenly becomes a reality rather than a dream, and Horizon helps clear away the details so the consumers can focus on learning.

"This program gave me hope," says Will, a consumer who received his GED diploma in June through Horizon Village and who would like a career as a nurse or social worker. "I never knew I could learn so much or achieve so much."

Oberjosh says much of the credit goes to the Village staff, who are so dedicated to helping consumers succeed in any way they can. NCCC and Horizon Village are working to expand the program and, hopefully, eventually make it possible for consumers to get credit for the workshops should they decide to attend NCCC.

"We're trying to address the consumers' needs as they come up and respond with appropriate programming," says Oberjosh. ♥



Cindy Oberjosh, Ed.D., helps Horizon Village consumers prepare for higher education in an on-site workshop.

## Horizon Village Counselor Recognized for Helping Consumers

Horizon Village Counselor II Ann-Marie Caruso, BA, CASAC, recently received the Outstanding Service Award from the Buffalo Drug Treatment Court. The award recognized "the standards set by Ms. Caruso to empower those in recovery who seek to achieve sobriety against all odds."

Congratulations Ann-Marie! ♥



Ann-Marie Caruso (right) is congratulated by Horizon employee Sara Hall and Mikel Morris from the Buffalo Courts.

## Horizon Village is Expanding!

In addition to Freedom House, the new 25-bed treatment facility we are developing specifically for veterans, we are also planning an additional 30-bed general expansion that is needed to meet the needs and demand in our community. We know that long-term, intensive residential treatment is the best option available for individuals and their families to begin a life of recovery. It is our intention to build a new facility that will provide 30 additional beds and allow a facility separation for younger adults. We are in the capital development and financial planning phase of the project. We will keep you informed of our progress each quarter. ♥

### "The Path to Recovery" cont'd from page 1

The drinking started early – when Ulysses was 11 or 12. His parents would have parties and, in the morning, he and his brother would steal sips of leftover alcohol from the cups lying around. In high school, he started drinking beer socially, with his peers. "We would find ourselves a bottle and slip away to enjoy it. It seemed harmless," he said.

Married for 29 years, Ulysses has been divorced for five years. He is still very close to his three children, who have supported him as best they can in his recovery. And he loves his new job as a machine operator. "I got into the VESID program through Horizon and it helped me tremendously," says Ulysses. "I was able to find a job doing something I love, and that's been really nice."

Since starting his job in March, Ulysses has earned the respect of his co-workers and his boss, and was recently promoted.

"I would say to anyone out there considering recovery to 'let go and let God.' Get to Horizon and get into the program and get involved with VESID. I guarantee you will find a job you love and things will turn around." After all, they did for Ulysses. ♥

## A parent's thanks.

Here is an excerpt from a letter recently sent to Paige Prentice at Horizon Village by a thankful parent:

"Not only has the Village helped my daughter, it has given me insight and understanding of mental illness and chemical dependency. The information at the family session was truly inspiring. Vicki (Wideman) and your other staff members have made a difference for me. I now will have the strength to guide my daughter and other situations that may come my way. The understanding and trust that is shared by your staff is a "gift." God has placed the right people in the path of these residents. Thank you again for the opportunity to share this experience." ♥

**"I now will have the strength to guide my daughter."**

**Deaths from overdoses on methadone rose 390 percent between 1999 and 2004, according to a new report from the National Drug Intelligence Center. The overdose rate was highest among those ages 15 to 24.**

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

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**INSIDE:** Consumer survey brings positive change.

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