

Helping our vets find their way home.

According to U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, there are nearly 12,000 homeless veterans in Upstate New York, a problem that will worsen as soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan return home and continue to struggle with untreated mental health and substance abuse issues.

To help provide much-needed housing for homeless vets, Schumer unveiled his plan to establish a \$200 million assistance program for community and nonprofit organizations to purchase, build or rehabilitate housing for low-income veterans. The organizations would also provide supportive services such as substance abuse and mental health counseling, vocational and employment training, transportation, child care and other services to help veterans live independently.



“In Western New York, on any given day there are an estimated 2,400 homeless veterans.*”

“We are seeing more and more veterans returning with mental health and substance abuse issues, and we need to help,” says Anne Constantino, president of Horizon. “Our goal is to expand Horizon Village to meet the specific needs of returning veterans, and a program like Senator Schumer’s would go a long way toward that goal.”

The veterans’ treatment facility at Horizon Village will provide specialized chemical dependency and mental health services for veterans within the Village’s 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.

“It’s important that returning veterans get the proper care they need and deserve so they can resume an active, productive life in the country they fought so hard for,” says Paige Prentice, MM, CASAC, vice president of residential and medical operations. “We at Horizon want to do everything we can to help make that happen.” ♥

*Source: *The National Alliance to End Homelessness*

From the desk of...



Kristin Ahrens, M.D.
Medical Director

Americans have the fortune of modern medicine right at their doorstep.

So many new treatment options exist for cardiac, pulmonary, diabetic, pain and mental health illnesses. Advances in pharmacology have led to more individuals taking multiple medications for all their health conditions. With each additional medication comes an increased risk of drug side effects and drug interactions. Medical providers are well trained in using medications, but they are limited by what information their patients disclose. It is imperative that individuals tell their medical providers all the health conditions for which they are being treated, all the medications they are currently taking, and who is prescribing those medications. This information allows each provider to make safe and appropriate decisions as to which medications to prescribe. Individuals also need to encourage their medical providers to communicate with each other, especially regarding medical conditions that require significant polypharmacy. By coordinating medical care and increasing disclosure of all medications taken, patients will have a decreased risk of drug interactions and much improved health. ♥

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Suicide Warning Signs*

- ▶ Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself.
- ▶ Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means.
- ▶ Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.
- ▶ Feeling hopeless.
- ▶ Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge.
- ▶ Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities seemingly without thinking.
- ▶ Feeling trapped, like there is no way out.
- ▶ Increasing alcohol or drug use.
- ▶ Withdrawing from friends, family and society.
- ▶ Feeling anxious, agitated or unable to sleep, or sleeping all the time.
- ▶ Experiencing dramatic mood changes.
- ▶ Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

*From the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website: www.samhsa.gov. ♥

“I just don’t care about anything anymore.”

Young adults are under a lot of pressure these days. And more and more of them are finding it difficult to cope with the stresses of everyday life, particularly the pressures of attending college.

According to the National Institute of Health, suicide is the 11th most common cause of death in the United States. In 2006, suicide was the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24. Young people are more likely to use firearms, suffocation and poisoning than any other method of suicide overall.

Fortunately, many college campuses are more prepared than ever to provide assistance to students who find themselves overwhelmed, depressed and at risk for suicide.

SAMHSA’s Campus Suicide Prevention grant program, administered by the Agency’s Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), is helping more than 50 colleges and universities enhance services for students with mental and behavioral health problems. Grants are available to train campus community members to recognize the warning signs of suicide so students can get professional assessment. Awareness programs are also available to bring attention to the problem.

“Depression can affect anyone at any age,” says Anne Constantino, Horizon President

and CEO.

“The incidence of suicide in young adults is increasing at an alarming rate. We are seeing more and more young adults in our clinics. It’s wonderful that schools are taking a proactive role in getting students the help they need as quickly as possible.”



Suicide also is strongly associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. For young people age 18 to 22, the rates of serious psychological disorders are 17.8 percent for those enrolled in college and 19.0 percent for others in that age group, according to SAMHSA’s 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

“Mental illness and substance abuse often go hand in hand,” says Constantino. “Recognizing and treating all issues is key to a successful recovery. And recovery is possible.”

For more information on Horizon’s programs for young adults, contact Brenda Banach at 716-831-1800. ♥

thePath to Recovery

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

Stephanie is a bright, pretty, enthusiastic teenager who recently graduated from high school and is excited about going off to college. At first glance, she appears to be your typical teenager. But Stephanie has gone through some difficult times to get to the happy place in which she now finds herself.

In her junior year of high school, Stephanie began experimenting with alcohol and marijuana. She also struggled with mental health issues. She soon found

herself getting into trouble at school and, at the behest of her parents, was finally sent to town court. Her parents thought “tough love” would help Stephanie turn her life around. And it did.

When she arrived at Horizon, Stephanie came in kicking and screaming, not wanting any part of treatment. According to her counselor, Marcia Valente, however, Stephanie very quickly turned into a shining star.

“She realized the path she was taking wasn’t healthy,” says Marcia. “She worked very hard to make the necessary changes toward a better life. She dropped all the bad friends, turned her attention to school

and participated willingly in group and individual sessions at Horizon.”

It helped that Stephanie’s family was very involved in her recovery. Her parents attended the parent/adolescent groups with Stephanie and her siblings attended several sessions as well. “When the family participates and gains a better understanding of what their loved one is going through, it helps everyone through the recovery process,” says Marcia.

Clean now for more than one year, Stephanie’s focus is clearly on furthering her education and looking forward to a bright future. Just like most 18 year olds.

Hello
 My name is
**Rick Salada, MS,
 CASAC, LMHC**
 Sr. Program Director of Addiction
 Boulevard & Tonawanda
 Counseling Centers



In the 26 years he has been involved in mental health and addiction counseling, Rick Salada says he has never seen – much less worked for – an agency as caring about its employees as Horizon. Says Rick, “Horizon is a very family-oriented employer. Senior management – starting with Anne and including everyone else – cares about the employees not just as workers, but also as human beings. It’s very evident and it’s very supportive.”

Rick received his Bachelor’s degree in Communications from Buffalo State College, with a minor in Psychology, and his Master’s degree in Counseling Education from Niagara University. Since receiving his CASAC, his focus has been on addictions counseling and, in 2000, Rick started at Horizon as a senior addictions counselor at the Central Park Counseling Center (now known as Main-Amherst). He says he’s seen a lot of positive change at Horizon in those nine years.

“So many of the employees, including myself, started as counselors and were

promoted to be directors,” says Rick. “It strengthens the organization that so many of us started that way and are now there to assist new counselors coming in. That definitely helps us provide the best possible care for our consumers, which is the number one priority at Horizon.”

Rick says he also appreciates the autonomy he is given to market and promote the Horizon programs. He’s been able to establish relationships with several school districts, which now refer students in need of counseling to Horizon. “We have a very intensive outpatient addiction program for adolescents and their families,” says Rick. “It involves educating the family about addiction, helping them to understand it and teaching them how not to be co-dependent. More and more school districts are referring families in need of this type of counseling to Horizon, which is good because an addiction affects the entire family, not just the person with the addiction. And we’re here to help.” ♥

According to the analysis by the federal agency, the number of patients treated for mental disorders, including depression and bipolar disease, increased from 19 million to 36 million. The overall treatment costs for mental disorders rose from \$35 billion (in 2006 dollars) to nearly \$58 billion, making it the costliest medical condition between 1996 and 2006.

**Spotlight
 on the
 Board**



Mike Maxwell was somewhat familiar with Horizon Health Services when he met Anne

Mike Maxwell, Esq.
 Partner,
 Hodgson Russ LLP

Constantino during their Leadership Buffalo experience in 2003. Anne had just convinced fellow LB classmate, Kevin Robinson – a good friend of Mike’s – to join the board and ended up recruiting Mike as well.

“I had admired the work being done at Horizon, so I was happy to accept Anne’s offer to serve on the boards,” said Mike. “I had no idea, however, of the scope of services they offer at Horizon. I have learned a lot serving on the boards.” Mike is currently chair of the HHS board and vice chair of the Horizon Village board.

He says he’s learned that addiction and mental health can extend across many socio-economic situations and can affect anybody, “no matter how well off they are or how happy they seem.” Serving on the boards has opened his eyes to the effect this can have on the entire Western New York community, so he’s very eager to spread the word about the “quality of care provided by Horizon and to let people know there is absolutely no stigma attached to looking for help.”

Mike also says he’s very hopeful the community will step up and support Horizon’s expansion plans at Horizon Village. “Senior management truly has an amazing vision for what this facility can be, and we very much need this type of assistance in Western New York,” he says. “I hope the community will help Horizon accomplish its goal, because we will all be better off for it.” ♥

More than 30,000 Americans die by suicide each year.

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:

- ▶ News about special services for veterans and their families
- ▶ Admissions application for Horizon Village
- ▶ Stories of success on the Path To Recovery
- ▶ A blog with contributions from residents of Horizon Village, staff and administrators
- ▶ Online donation capabilities, with "in honor/memory of" option

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 & CEOAnne Constantino
Medical DirectorKristin Ahrens, M.D.



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INSIDE: Why veterans are finding themselves homeless.

Horizon Health Services
3020 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215

HORIZON HEALTH PULSE





Gone But Not Forgotten by Nick

At age 20, Nick has worked hard to make significant changes to improve his life. His dependence on alcohol and marijuana led to several on-campus violations at school; he repeatedly ignored opportunities to receive help in kicking his habits and was eventually dismissed from the college he was attending. After completing another treatment program, Nick was referred to Horizon. During his treatment, he began to understand more and more how his life was being affected, how his family history and other risk factors

played a role in his life and what changes he was willing and able to make to create a healthy and productive future. Nick has become an insightful, determined young man, willing to explore his options for improving his life.

He's been linked to VESID through Horizon's vocational program and has been reinstated at school, where he will receive supportive services. Nick is a great example of how it's never too late to turn your life around. Here is a poem Nick has written in hopes of helping others.

A 15 year old
Smokes a joint around 2 friends
And drinks a malt liquor 40
And stumbles around town on his bicycle
Enjoying the summer

A 16 year old
Smokes weed everyday
He does this before or after school
His already poor grades slip
And every single weekend is a party

A 17 year old
Drinks lots of booze
There is always a game on
Whether it's Sabres or Bills
Comes to school hung over
Self medicates with a high
Is interested in girls
Can rarely get one
It's hard to hit on a girl
When you're slurring your words
And baked out of your mind

An 18 year old
Keeps a stash of liquor in his basement
Gets a little loose before
He goes out with his friends
Smokes weed every single morning
There is always a party
We're seniors, let's party
Always partying too hard
But these are my friends
And this is normal

A 19 year old
Goes off to college
Has to find a new set of friends
Meets all his friends through weed
Becomes great friends with his dealer
New friends, same old shit

It's Wednesday, let's drink
It's Thursday, lets drink
Drink it up moose
Always cheap beer and liquor
He sleeps through the morning classes
And wakes up at noon hung over
He throws up in his sleep
Drinks beer instead of eating dinner
Keeps cooler full of Pabst in his truck
Every once in a while will have a cold one
Instead of walking to breakfast
Is caught by security
Is warned plenty of times
Is given one last chance
It's for one week
Comes back twice as strong
Drives out to campsite
Drinks a twelve-pack by himself
Drives back wasted
Keeps pushing his luck
Gets caught, no more chances
Pack your bags and leave
One last hurrah with his friends
All get drunk in a cabin

The 19 year old comes home
30 lbs overweight
Lungs painful from smoking everyday
Weed and the occasional cigarette
Feels bad, self pity, it's so unfair
Everyone drinks everyday
He drinks with his friends,
He drinks by himself
His friends are all in school,
He hangs out everyday
He smokes weed and he drinks

A 19 year old enters treatment
An outpatient ordeal
Thinks he can quit for a while
And be back to the game
He learns it's a problem
He sees where it has led people
He sees where it led him
He sees how it has held him back
for the last 5 years
He makes the connection between being
drunk and the trouble he has gotten in
He loses 20 lbs
He has money to spend
He wakes up early,
Not hung over and craving a drink
It's tough at times
It's tough most of the time
When the cravings come they are strong
He has vivid dreams of drinking and using
He gets tested every week
He loses old friends
He gets a girl friend
He starts running
First 2 miles, then 3, 5, 7, 9, and then 10
10 miles! Unthinkable a year ago
Who would have imagined
10 miles of running
Feels healthier every day
Both mentally and physically
But it's still really hard to stay sober
Learns to avoid all his triggers
Stays clean
It's still really hard
But he stays clean, one day at a time
Says goodbye to drugs and alcohol
You are gone but not forgotten
You will be missed
One day at a time
Good bye drugs and alcohol
One day at a time ♥