

## HealthRx

### New Beginnings Program is designed for people living with HIV/AIDS

Living with HIV/AIDS can be challenging, whether a person is just coming to terms with the diagnosis or needs some extra support. At Horizon's New Beginnings program, there are people who care and who can offer new therapies and new treatments. We understand the consumers' unique needs, and can assist with medication, managing feelings and helping them to learn more about the disease and about themselves. Most importantly, we let them know they are not alone.

Horizon began this innovative program nearly eight years ago, and today it stands unique among AIDS-related services available in WNY. According to coordinator Maureen Wilk, no other programs are as all-inclusive.

"Our goal is to provide quality care and compassion to our consumers," says Maureen. "Most patients with HIV/AIDS are ostracized by friends, family, co-workers and the general public, so it's very important for them to be around people who know and understand what they are going through and who offer hope."



Eric Frick Photography

Michelle Doedema, case manager at New Beginnings, prepares lunch for an average of 10 consumers daily.

New Beginnings is designed to serve individuals who have HIV/AIDS; are 18 years of age or older; ambulatory and able to attend to their own basic daily living needs. For more information, call the New Beginnings program at 716.833.3792. ♥

“Consumers living with HIV/AIDS need compassion as well as structure to help keep them in balance as they deal with this disease.”

New Beginnings offers private, confidential support to assist consumers in maximizing independence and maintaining a positive quality of life. Services include mental health counseling; substance abuse counseling; psychiatric care and medication management; acupuncture; massage and healing touch; spiritual/pastoral care; case management; nutrition counseling and hot daily meals and health education.

The program has four full-time staff members; besides Maureen there is a social worker, a program assistant and a case manager. In addition, consultants include a registered nurse; registered dietician; massage therapist; Reiki Master; meditation consultant and yoga instructor. New Beginnings also performs HIV testing and counseling for other Horizon consumers, as well as guidance on course of treatment and therapies upon diagnosis.

"Some of our consumers have been with us since the program began," says Maureen. "They come back because they know we will support them and do whatever we can to help them learn more about themselves, and about their disease."

“People who have HIV/AIDS can – and often do – live with this disease for 20 years or more.”

### From the desk of...



Corbin James Photography

#### Hak Ko, M.D.

Recently, I read an article about the H.H. Richardson building on the campus of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. The article discussed how the building is a historical and architectural gem, and what the state had considered doing to preserve and restore it. What the article neglected to mention was that the beautiful facade of the building held within it a sad and tragic history. Until 1955, the Center housed more than 3,500 people who were considered mentally ill, which was a very loosely-defined medical term at the time. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that the "treatment" administered by the Center was nothing more than room and board, with occasional doses of various ineffectual shock treatments and tranquilizers.

In 1980, when I graduated from my medical residency, the treatment options for major psychiatric disorders were not that different from the methods used at the Center. Generally speaking, they included Thorazine, Haldol, Elavil or Tofranil, all of which frequently featured dreadfully uncomfortable side effects. Electric shock treatment had been modified and was not as painful as previous incarnations, but still brought up painful memories and disgust. Therapy was a monthly visit to a counselor, with no other support system. Under those conditions it is no small wonder the mental health system of that time earned such a bad reputation.

(Continued on page 2)



## Horizon Village: long-term care for long-term results.

For a very long time, Western New Yorkers had no access to long-term, inpatient facilities to assist with overcoming addiction and helping to ease them back into the mainstream of life. That all changed in 1994, when Horizon opened Horizon Village, a not-for-profit residential program for the treatment of drug addiction. Today, this facility – located on more than three acres in the Town of Wheatfield in Niagara County – has 50 beds in its two residential wings. The co-ed Village also offers a dining hall, a recreation/ exercise center, lecture/group treatment rooms and on-site outdoor sport facilities.

The primary goal at Horizon Village is to help residents achieve and maintain a drug-free lifestyle. The Village operates from the perspective that drug addictions are primary, progressive, chronic and potentially fatal diseases. The belief is that recovery from chemical dependency requires abstinence from all mind-altering substances and the establishment of stable functioning in other life areas. The Village specializes in providing treatment to individuals who have been unsuccessful in outpatient and shorter-term inpatient chemical dependency programs.

There are more than 35 full- or part-time employees at the Village, including clinical counselors, nurses, residential aides and a full office and support staff.

Up to 50 individuals may be in residence at any one time; during the course of a year, the Village handles as many as 300 residents. More than 30 percent of its residents are over age 40; nearly 60 percent are male.

“Our residents come to us from all walks of life, from all socio-economic backgrounds,” says Ron Stewart, executive director.

The length of stay at the Village is variable, with the average stay being 60-90 days. Shorter intervention/relapse prevention programs are also available, depending on an individual’s unique needs.

Residents participate in a comprehensive daily treatment program designed to help them develop the skills to maintain abstinence and successfully reintegrate them into their communities. They attend up to 60 groups per week, including relapse prevention, anger management and assertiveness skills, urge management, vocational rehabilitation, health



education and more. There is on-site, 24-hour nursing care, psychiatric consultation and psychological testing and spiritual counseling available as well. New treatment programs have been initiated, such as an acupuncture program and the “fast-track” treatment model.

Residents also participate in day-to-day chores, such as meal planning, cooking, cleanup, dusting, etc. “Our goal is to prepare the individual to re-enter society as prepared as possible,” says Ron. “In addition to our addiction programs, we also offer a pre-vocational program designed to test and prepare them for a vocational or work program when they leave the Village.”

More than 50 percent of residents are successfully discharged from the program each year; nearly 80 percent of those remain in treatment six weeks after discharge.

*Admission to Horizon Village is available to all persons without regard to race, religion, age (18 years or older), gender, sexual preference, national origin, veteran status, physical or mental disability, HIV status or ability to pay. In most cases, admission is through referral from an outpatient chemical dependency program, a shorter-term residential facility, the criminal justice system or inpatient/outpatient detox programs. ♥*

Plans are underway for an expansion to begin at Horizon Village in 2003 that will add one-third more space to the building. New facilities will include additional space for the Village’s women-specific services and will feature a new recreational facility, women’s locker room/showers and a group room.

(From the Desk of... continued from page 1)

By the time I joined Horizon, the mental health treatment field was changing at a breathtaking pace. The first of the SSR2 family of antidepressants, Prozac, appeared in the late 1980s, followed by the introduction of atypical antipsychotics such as Risperidone. Today, there are many antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs available that feature a very low incidence of uncomfortable side effects, as well as a major decline in serious side effects.

**“Today, there are many antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs available that feature a very low incidence of uncomfortable side effects...”**

Recently, the first of the second generation of atypical antipsychotic drugs was introduced, the aptly-named Abilify. The drug features a promising new mechanism action on the brain’s receptor functions, and a subsequent reduction of the most unpleasant side effects, such as sedation and weight gain.

With the advances found in the medical treatment of psychiatric disorders, we now find ourselves on the brink of a new horizon of the entire mental health system. No longer are our goals limited simply to symptom control. With the teamwork of groups of professionals who are no longer trained solely as counselors, but also as vocational specialists, rehabilitation specialists and even acupuncturists, our goal as mental health specialists is to improve the patient’s quality of life and to facilitate his or her reintegration into society, family and the workplace. ♥

# Best Practices Program

## Co-occurring conditions: dual diagnosis is now the expectation, not the exception.

*New York State has defined several "best practices" areas that treatment providers around the state should focus on as a way to offer better treatments and more choices for consumers. As part of its strategic plan, Horizon has made a commitment to review and improve its practices in those areas and more.*

*The "best practices" focus during fourth quarter 2002 was Integrated Treatment.*

Research indicates that the majority of individuals with serious mental illness – particularly those with unstable conditions – also suffer from some sort of substance abuse disorder. At the same time, 39 to 56 percent of individuals with substance disorders also suffer from psychiatric disorders. Horizon has been working diligently to revamp its system so that consumers can have easy access to all of the treatment and support services they require and request to begin the recovery process.

"We have redesigned our assessment process to make it seamless, so that it is less disruptive for the consumers and more responsive to their total needs," says Carol Sabatino, chief operating officer responsible for the oversight of best practices implementation.

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Horizon is doing this in a variety of ways. Staff members are now cross-trained to be aware of potential other issues and, more importantly, to know what to do about them. There is more open and systematic communication between departments, allowing for more integrated treatment to occur, which can be critical for consumers.

"We know that the most effective treatment is individualized and deals with all of the issues affecting the person," says Sabatino.

Horizon is relying on the research and theories of Kenneth Minkoff, M.D., a nationally-known expert in dual diagnosis from Choate Health Management in Massachusetts. Dr. Minkoff offers research-based principles of successful treatment interventions in individuals with co-occurring disorders. Horizon has used his theories to re-evaluate many of its practices related to integrated treatment.

And because Horizon is a multi-service organization that offers a full range of treatment options, it is able to offer consumers a very comprehensive course of treatment when co-occurrence is involved.

"We've had great results already," says Sabatino, "and we will continue to refine our system even more during 2003." ♥

**Hello**  
My name is  
**Christine Marie Ziemba**  
HHS Coordinator of  
Mental Health Court



Christine's second role is that of BMHC liaison within the court system. "I act as a liaison between the judicial and the treatment systems," says Christine. "Judge (Robert) Russell will ask me to assess a case to determine the level of care needed. At the same time, I help the treatment provider interact with the judicial system to expedite the proper treatment."

Christine has only been in her new positions since August, but already sees the positive effects this new court has had. "Consumers with mental health issues need a voice in the judicial system," she says. "The Mental Health Court empowers them to make choices, to right the wrong in a way that will hopefully help keep them out of the courts."

A 10-year veteran of the mental health industry, Christine has found the development of the BMHC to be exciting and challenging. "We are lucky to be able to do this," she says. "Besides giving individuals a better chance at

the right treatment, this idea will help the mental health system evolve more positively, and give it a more favorable outlook in the community." ♥

Horizon has named Christine Marie Ziemba as its new coordinator to work with the Buffalo Mental Health Court (BMHC) (see article in this issue). In this position, Christine actually has two roles: as Horizon's coordinator, she will provide care coordination for consumers who have active cases within the BMHC. "We offer a person-centered approach to care coordination," says Christine. "The consumer comes up with a plan, and we do what we can to help implement that plan. It's a "person-first" approach that focuses on the consumer's priorities rather than the system's."

**Up to 56 percent of individuals with substance disorders also suffer from a psychiatric disorder.**

## theRoadtoRecovery

Here is the true story of a consumer who overcame many obstacles with the help of Horizon Health Services and Horizon Village to turn his life around. Last names have been omitted for privacy.

Kimmessee says his drug of choice was marijuana, but it was an arrest on federal charges for selling cocaine that started the downward spiral in his life.

Thinking he could maintain his lifestyle while he awaited his day in court on those charges, Kimmessee continued his bad habits even as he was attending Horizon's outpatient program. A second arrest for possession of cocaine soon followed, and it was at this point that his probation officer suggested he might do better in an inpatient treatment program.

Kimmessee was against it. As he saw it, he didn't have a problem with drugs or anything else. The 33-year-old was given an ultimatum: go to Horizon Village or have his bail revoked and go to jail. Reluctantly, he went to Horizon Village but, once there, didn't comply with the program, still believing he did not have a problem.

"As time went on, I started to see things more clearly," says Kimmessee. "Pretty

soon, as everything in my life seemed to fall apart at once, I did turn a corner."

He went straight to his counselor's office and started to speak out, to let go of things. "My counselor didn't want to hear about anything except me wanting to turn my life around," Kimmessee recalls.

Kimmessee hadn't thought he had a chance at doing that. He saw himself as "just another young black male society didn't care about." He didn't trust anyone, which is another reason he wouldn't comply with the program.

"But then I realized the people at Horizon Village were my best advocates. They reached out to me, they kept their promises to me," Kimmessee says. "I finally caught on to what I needed to do."

From there, he went to two halfway houses and to prison for two and a half years. More people reached out to him, and connected with him regarding his problems. In prison, Kimmessee completed a nine-month drug rehabilitation program, completing all levels successfully. While he was in prison, his mother passed away, and Kimmessee was not allowed to attend her funeral.

"But I used that situation to motivate me to turn my life around," he says.

"I kept thinking of Horizon Village while I was in prison," he says. "I thought it would not be a bad place to work, and a good place for me to help, to give back. So I applied for a job...and I was hired!"

Today, Kimmessee has distanced himself from the street mentality he was used to. He's learning to become more humble and more professional, and he's working at the first job he's ever had that he actually likes...though there are some rough spots.

"It's not always easy dealing with chemically-dependent people," says Kimmessee. "I look at them, and I see myself. But then I see how much better things have gotten for me, and I try to help others in similar situations."

Another bright spot for Kimmessee is that he recently learned he has an 18-year-old son living in Kentucky. He has had contact with his son, who seems eager to meet the father he never knew. And Kimmessee is equally eager to bring his son into his life.

"It's very overwhelming and a bit scary," says Kimmessee. "I'm trying to take everything all in, and to handle things on a day-to-day basis. But I know I have many people pulling for me, and that keeps me going." ♥

## Helping consumers enter or re-enter the workforce.

Horizon's Vocational Program is designed to serve individuals with mental health and chemical dependency disabilities who have expressed an interest and desire to enter or return to the workforce. The objective of the program is to provide a thorough assessment of the individual's skills and positive work behaviors. Training is then provided in vocational adjustment and job preparation skills using a formal classroom format. Specific job skills training may also be provided on the job.

The program also offers assessment and counseling to assist in the exploration of educational opportunities to match trainees' skills and abilities with specific job requirements and functions.

According to Kathy Dietrich-Green, Horizon's director of vocational services, the program placed more than 60 consumers during 2002. Approximately 60 percent of the consumers who complete Horizon's

program go on to other training programs or to attend college, with the long-term goal of permanent employment.

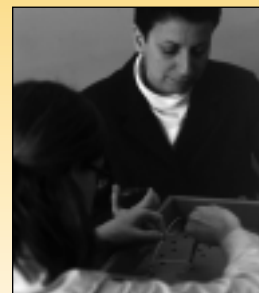
"We have a very thorough assessment and training process for our consumers," says Kathy.

Art Ruska, counselor supervisor for the Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities agency, agrees. "We have worked with Horizon's Vocational Program for nearly 15 years. They have a very dedicated staff, and the program offers many beneficial services and helpful training programs to assist the consumers."

Consumers are referred to Horizon's Vocational Program from many sources, including Horizon's own program, other treatment programs, physicians and from the Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities program. Approximately 300 consumers go through

Horizon's Vocational Program each year, all with a mental health or substance abuse problem or a physical disability.

*Horizon's Vocational Program operates out of three locations: the Bailey LaSalle Center on Bailey Avenue in Buffalo; the Black Rock Center on Hertel Avenue and at Horizon's newest location on Pine Avenue in Niagara Falls. For more information, call 716.836.3247. ♥*



Eric Frick Photography

Natalie DeLuca, a vocational tester at Horizon, is testing a consumer's manual dexterity, hand/eye coordination and ability to follow instruction by administering the "wiring exercise."



## New Court Focuses on Mentally Ill Offenders

The newly-formed Buffalo Mental Health Court (BMHC) is the first court in Upstate New York dedicated to addressing issues of non-violent offenders with serious, persistent mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or post traumatic stress disorder.

This project represents a significant collaboration between the Erie County Department of Mental Health, Buffalo City Court, the nationally-recognized Buffalo Drug Treatment Court and community treatment providers and advocates, including Horizon Health Services. It is anticipated that the Mental Health Court will reduce incarceration of non-violent mentally ill offenders, reduce costs and improve the quality of life for those individuals by ensuring access to treatment and other services.

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“The relationship with the judge and support and assistance from case managers can have a positive effect on the outcome for these individuals,” says Maria Rivett, Horizon’s director for new program development. “A mental health court can provide the ongoing support and accountability to make those positive changes.”

According to Hank Pirowski, coordinator of the Buffalo City Court C.O.U.R.T.S. Program, “More than one third of individuals in the Buffalo Drug Court have serious mental illness. Many mentally ill offenders previously have not been able to participate in treatment courts because of the inability to meet court expectations without additional supports. The Mental Health Court offers the option of keeping individuals in the community while ensuring public safety.”

The BMHC is a voluntary program that will provide continuous judicial oversight and deferred prosecution pending completion of treatment and support services. Each participant in the program is provided with constant judicial supervision and support that is more intensive than would

otherwise be available, with emphasis on accountability and monitoring of the participant’s performance.

The court employs a system of sanctions and incentives that will provide therapeutic direction, overall accountability and stimulation for compliance with the treatment process. The Court will seek to target both high-risk, high-need individuals with a mental illness or individuals with a co-occurring substance abuse and demonstrable mental illness that was likely to have contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system.

It is anticipated that the Buffalo Mental Health Court will decrease the mentally ill offenders’ frequency of contact with the Criminal Justice System by improving their social functioning through stable employment, housing, treatment and the provision of case management and support services.

Judge Robert T. Russell, a nationally recognized authority on drug courts and the presiding judge of the BMHC, concurs. “As we have proven with our highly-successful Drug Court, it is possible to provide certain offenders with treatment while, at the same time, ensuring the safety of our community,” he says.

“Horizon has many years’ experience collaborating with the criminal justice system in providing services to individuals with mental illness and chemical dependency,” says Carol Sabatino, Horizon’s chief operating officer. “As an agency with multiple treatment resources and community relationships, we understand the needs and have the expertise to provide effective, consumer-sensitive response. Individuals with mental illness need treatment, not incarceration. The BMHC will give us the opportunity to ensure those people get the help they need.” ♥

**Annually, there are more than 25,000 admissions to the Erie County Holding Center; Erie County Forensic Mental Health Services annually screens 3,000 offenders who are held at the Erie County Correctional Facility.**

## MEET OUR Board

**Name:**  
Katie Phillips Kenny



Gordon James Photography

**Length of Term:**  
Katie became a member of the Horizon Health Services Board in September 2000 and her term continues through September 2003. She joined the Horizon Village Board in August 2001 and her term continues through August 2004.

**How did you come to be on these Boards?** “I have known Anne Constantino for years, since she was a counselor. I watched her progress over at Horizon and, at the same time, she was very aware of the volunteer and fundraising work I do for various organizations. I have been involved in many community-service oriented roles, working with troubled youths, etc. Anne thought we would be a good fit, and I have truly enjoyed serving on the boards.”

**Why did you want to serve on the Board?** “Horizon was going through some difficult times when I joined the board. I credit the Senior Management team with helping to turn the company around. I believe in the work that Horizon is doing; they perform a very valuable service here in Western New York. I wanted to help them become stronger and more visible; I didn’t want WNY to lose Horizon.”

**What do you hope to accomplish as a Board Member?** “I want to help introduce Horizon to groups where they’re not as well known as they could be, and to help see that Horizon has access to available funding by helping to promote its mission wherever I can.”

**What do you want people to know about Horizon?** “Many people ignore or downplay addiction or mental illness, pretending they don’t exist. But these are serious medical conditions that can cross many socio-economic borders. More people need to see the importance of the work Horizon does.” ♥

# It was Standing Room Only at City Market.

In November, Horizon Health Services celebrated the opening of its newest service location in Niagara Falls, at 1750 Pine Avenue in the City Market Plaza. Niagara Falls Mayor Irene Elia; Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte and County Mental Health Commissioner Antoinette Lech were among the nearly 100 who attended the open house. Also in attendance were representatives of the NYS Offices of Mental Health, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and Department of Health, as well as representatives from behavioral health care agencies and the community.

Dr. Isaac Koilpillai, director of the Bureau of Special Clinical Services of the NYS Office of Mental Health, delivered the keynote address. Dr. Koilpillai spoke of the special needs of individuals with co-occurring mental illness and chemical dependency, including the need for effective coordination of care between providers and the criminal justice system.

Attendees were given a tour of the new facility, which houses Horizon's Comprehensive Case Management Program, its Career Opportunity Centers that provide vocational and education assessment and placement services, and an outpatient chemical dependency treatment program.

“The new facility provides assessment and placement services, and an outpatient chemical dependency treatment program.”



Sheriff Thomas Bellein

At Horizon's City Market open house, Niagara County Sheriff Thomas Bellein was presented with Horizon's "Road to Recovery" Leadership Award for his efforts to support the delivery of mental health and chemical dependency services.

This facility is Horizon's fourth in Niagara County, and its second in Niagara Falls. Other Niagara County locations include a facility in Lockport and Horizon Village in Sanborn. Horizon employs approximately 80 in Niagara County. ♥

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

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**President & CEO . . . . .Anne Constantino**



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**INSIDE:** The benefits of integrated treatment...

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