

The Support Report

Company Update

ACI is growing in size and developing new programs. Offices in Jacksonville & Elizabeth City have been added within the last year.

ACI's **Henderson** Office has been really busy. They have added 4 new Therapeutic Foster Homes recently in their area.

The names of the new Therapeutic Foster Parents are: Ms. Fannie Lawrence, Ms. Lula Wardrick, Reginald & Sharron Norflett, Jimmy & Melinda Lowery and Ms. Valerie Brown. Jimmy and Melinda transferred from Franklin Co DSS and the others transferred from Your Choice Health Services. ACI welcomes all of these families into the ACI family.

Henderson has also started an AFL Program in their office. The contact person for this program is Elaina Terry.

The **Winston Salem** office has been endorsed to provide TCM Services We would like to welcome Adolf Curtin as a new case manager at this office. Winston-Salem is also in the process developing an AFL Program

In the **Garner** office, Monique Louis Smith has transitioned from her role as a QP to a TFC coordinator.

Garner has also begun an AFL program. They are currently recruiting potential families to serve in Johnston, Wake, & Durham. The contact person is George Greene, Service Coordinator. Way to grow Garner!

Coastal Region's TFC program just completed two TFC trainings in the Elizabeth City area and the Greenville area; summer training has begun in the Jacksonville office. Fall trainings are scheduled for Brunswick/Pender County, Winton (near Ahoskie), and New Bern. Contact person at this time is Melissa Morris.

Pine Valley Group Home was recently audited by the State of North Carolina and received zero demerits thanks to the wonderful work of all the staff and their group home manager, Tisha Wilson!

If you haven't already, be sure to check out our website for updates of news in our agency, our locations, documents you may find helpful, this newsletter, and calendars of events. Also, be sure to be check back periodically, as we will be adding to it in the near future!



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Health Corner

WHY YOU SHOULD QUIT!

The ACI Wilmington office is collaborating with Southeastern Center on a study to address the effects of obesity & smoking on individuals using antipsychotic medications. At ACI, we care about all of our stakeholders. For this reason, we like to take the opportunity to tell you why we think YOU should quit smoking. We know that you are inundated with the warnings about the harmfulness of smoking, but do you really know ALL of the dangers? We want you to be informed, and we think you may be surprised to hear some of these facts.

- Time cut down from one's lifespan is approximately equal to the time indulged in smoking.
- Every minute, seven people die of tobacco use.
- 49 known carcinogenic compounds and 4000 other toxins constitute in a single cigarette.
- More than 90% of lung cancer deaths are due to cigarette smoking.
- The cost that smokers impose on US economy is more than \$150 billion a year.

(Source: <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/dangers-of-smoking.html>)

- Smokers on public assistance use 27% of their monthly income on cigarettes.
- More than 1000 Americans die every day because of smoking.

("Treating Smokers with Mental Illness"; NY State Cessation Center Collaborative Statewide Conference Call; June 29, 2011)

Many of the people we serve and other ACI stakeholders take antidepressants (ie. Amitriptyline, Fluvoxamine), antipsychotics (ie. Clozapine, Haloperidol) and/or use other non-prescribed drugs regularly, such as caffeine or acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol, Aleve). Smoking increases the metabolism, but not the levels, of medications, so smokers need higher doses of medications to be effective. These high levels can be dangerous and increase the possibilities of organ damage and blood pressure.

People with severe mental illness who take antipsychotics should have close monitoring of medication levels, blood pressure, weight, and smoking habits. Cardiac-related deaths among this population between the ages of 35-54 are increased 12 times smokers.

To increase your success with quitting:

- Lift weights! A recent study shows that weight-lifting "seemed to help curb cigarette cravings and withdraw symptoms, while lessening the weight gain that sometimes accompanies quitting." ("Pumping Iron Helps Find Smokers Quit: Study"; HealthDay News; Wednesday, August 10, 2011)
- Find a replacement activity for early morning. Studies show that 80% of smokers smoke within the first 30 minutes of waking up.
- Ban smoking at the workplace, hospital & college campuses, and other places such as malls.
- Personally set rules against smoking in your own home.
- All smoking members of the household quit together. Studies show that it is much harder to quit if you live with another smoker.
- Use a support system. One recommended support is 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

("Treating Smokers with Mental Illness"; NY State Cessation Center Collaborative Statewide Conference Call; June 29, 2011)

GOOD LUCK!

A MOMENT ON THE LIPS....

Good nutrition is built on the saying, "You are what you eat." Areas that influence our choices are time, money & habits. Often fast food restaurants are quick & cheap, but not very healthy.

The following is a list of the more popular eateries & some of their offerings at 400 calories or less.

McDonald's

- Grilled Chicken Caesar salad with Caesar dressing: 400 cal.
- Plain Hamburger: 260 cal.
- Chicken McGrill: 400 cal.
- 6 pc. Chicken Nuggets: 250 cal. + most sauces 60 cal.

Domino's Pizza

- Large thin crust pizza: 273 cal.
- Large hand-tossed cheese pizza: 374 cal.

Hardee's

- Turkeyburger: 480 cal.
- Cheeseburger: 320 cal.
- Grilled chicken sandwich: 350 cal.
- Hot Ham & Cheese sandwich: 300 cal.

Subway

- Based on 6-inch plain bread with oil & vinegar dressing—
- Ham deli style sandwich: 194 cal.
- Turkey deli style sandwich: 200 cal.
- Veggie Delite: 200 cal.
- Majority of salads are under 200 cal.

Taco Bell

- Grilled Chicken Burrito: 400 cal.
- 2 Grilled chicken soft tacos: 400 cal.
- 2 Tacos: 340 cal.
- Double Decker Taco Supreme: 380 cal.

Wendy's

- Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad: 260 cal.
- Plain hamburger: 360 cal.

Remember: extra sauces & mayo are calorie-busters!

A breakdown of nutritional facts & other restaurants can be found at www.fastfoodnutrition.org.

ACI Continues to Strive for Improvement

Below are results of recent data/surveys collected that our agency uses to improve our performance. Although all of our ratings are extremely high, there is always room for improvement. We also invite you to provide feedback & ideas at any time by using the suggestions boxes in our offices or go to www.acisupport.com & add suggestions to our online suggestion box.

MEDICAL RECORDS--Data collected from our medical records audits in 2010 show our weakest areas to be assessments, measurable goals, evaluations reflecting current diagnoses, and paid claims. ACI had employed many new case managers and QPs last year, which may contribute to some of these problems. Training in ACI's expectations have occurred quite extensively this year, which we hope will reduce some of these errors. We have also tried to reduce the errors in assessments by creating one intake assessment that combines the 3 we used last year. A huge improvement we saw last year was zero errors in discharge & transition summaries. We revised the form to make it more user friendly, which seems to have helped.

PERSONAL GROWTH SURVEY--Last June, ACI surveyed a random sample of individuals we serve to see with what personal outcomes they struggle. The weakest personal growth is adding unpaid supports to their lives. For that reason, we are trying to figure out ways to offer more opportunities for socialization. Watch for another update in the newsletter or our website.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY--Our 2010 employee survey reflected suggestions for improvement in pay, morale & mileage. To address pay & mileage, we have requested anonymous ideas from each office about ways to reduce wasteful spending & other costs. To increase pay, we must increase profits, which is very difficult with the recent Medicaid cuts. Another program that is just getting started involves gain-share, where teams that earn a profit can be allotted a percentage, to be distributed as they see fit. This team approach will hopefully increase morale. Other activities to build morale are restarting the employee of the quarter awards, recognition of personal & professional accomplishments, & company picnics/parties.

SERVICES SATISFACTION SURVEY--Our lowest (but still extremely high) ratings from the people we support suggest a need to increase case managers & coordinators' knowledge & advocate more, while suggestions for support specialists were to help more with goals & ensure a therapeutic relationship. Some things we are working on: increase training opportunities & adding advocacy links to our website. For the first time after this survey, we gave individual feedback to each coordinator/case manager if families specified who served them. Of course, all feedback still remains anonymous.

OUTSIDE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY--This past July, we surveyed stakeholders not included in the other surveys. These stakeholders included such agencies as LMEs, referring agencies & other people with whom we do business. Returning calls, communicating within & outside of our agency, being knowledgeable of supports/services seem to be the areas most in need of improvement. Trainings are encouraged & sometimes required to increase our performance in these areas. We are also trying to increase our communication to all stakeholders within & outside our agency by increasing the number of newsletters, meetings & the utilization of our website. We also give personal & general feedback from each of the surveys we receive so that all stakeholders can work towards improvement.

DISCHARGE DATA--We have begun tracking discharges to see why people generally leave our agency. Perhaps this data will give us some insight as to ways we can improve our services as well.

FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT...

Since January 1, 2011, we have hired 81 new employees! We welcome you all to ACI & hope you have a great experience.

We also want to remind everyone that it is mandatory by our local, state, federal & accreditation guidelines that all employees remain in compliance with trainings, certifications, & other current personnel records. Please attend required trainings prior to expiration dates & respond to your supervisor/HR requests for other needed submittals.

Thanks so much for everything that you do!

Continuous Quality Improvement Report

At ACI we are determined to not only continue growing and expanding as a company, but also to grow in quality. The ACI Leadership team would like to remind you of our Quality Improvement goals for this year. How are we doing?

1. Coordinators/case mgrs will increase response time to concerns/calls.
2. Staff will always work to help the people they support implement their goals & will maintain therapeutic relationships.
3. HR will explore at least 3 affordable options to our health insurance.
4. ACI will create at least 2 opportunities for people served to increase their unpaid supports.
5. ACI will promote advocacy opportunities.
6. New case mgrs will complete at least 20 hours of training related to their job requirements.
7. ACI will offer at least 2 trainings to increase the knowledge of professional staff.
8. 75% of charts audited will have current, thorough assessments, 80% will reflect measurable, updated goals, and 75% will have current psychological evaluations/clinical assessments.
9. All existing staff will have their cars inspected to meet safety standards of the Safety Committee.
10. ACI will promote advocacy groups in all areas we serve people.
11. ACI will increase server access to office staff.
12. At least 80% of professional staff will return POCs to show corrections to their medical records when requested.

Wedding & Engagement News Around ACI

CARF Accreditation 3-Year Survey October 17-19, 2011

We will be getting our 3-year survey done by our accrediting body, CARF, on October 17-19, 2011. They will evaluate us on how well we meet international standards for quality. The survey will tell us what we are doing well and ways we might improve.

All of our CAP services will be surveyed, which include Home & Community Supports, Home Supports, Targeted Case Management, Alternative Family Living homes, Residential Supports (Pine Valley Group Home), Supported Employment, Long-Term Vocational Supports, Personal Care & Respite.

Jacksonville is the only office where we do not provide CAP services, so expect a visit & possibly an interview. They interview various stakeholders throughout the agency. Some questions that may be asked are:

- Do we provide a clean & safe setting?
- Do you receive the services you need & want?
- Are you treated with respect?
- Do you take part in planning your services?
- Are you told what you need to know about your services?
- Are your questions answered in a way that you can understand?
- Do you know where to go with questions or concerns?

For more info, you can go to www.carf.org or call toll-free 1-866-510-2273.



Lakisha Edmonds has been a Support Specialist at ACI's Raleigh for the past 2 years. Lakisha married the love of her life, Demond Newell, in Roanoke Rapids, NC on April 23. The couple honeymooned in the Bahamas. They are expecting a child on January 22, 2012.



In the Winston region, **Shannon Haney** was married to Anthony Fulp at Calvary Hill Church of Greater Deliverance in Winston-Salem on June 25. They went to Myrtle Beach on their honeymoon & are planning a September trip to the Bahamas for a family reunion. Shannon & Anthony also closed on a new home in June as well. Shannon told us that she is very happy to be Anthony's wife & that he is a wonderful man!

Sarah Wagner married Eugene Doss May 21, just around the time she graduated from Meredith College.

Chelsea Perkins is got married in July, only 2 months after graduating from NCSU.

Two APs in the Wilmington office met, fell in love & married this spring. **Sam & Delphine Murray** say they are truly blessed to have found each other.

Christina Garland has been the Staff Development Coordinator in Wilmington for 4 1/2 years. She recently became engaged to William Myers after he returned from a tour of duty. Christina says that she is marrying her "true soul mate". They are making plans to marry on June 12, 2012 at the St. Thomas Preservation Hall in downtown Wilmington.

Christina's office-mate, **Emily Dimsdale**, has also been the Wilmington office for 4 1/2 years. She is our agency's Director of Quality Systems. She recently became engaged to Anthony (TJ) Tyndall, and they will be married September 24 on Kure Beach.

ACI Activities & Team Building

The Elizabeth City & Wilmington offices had cookouts for staff & the people they serve. Elizabeth City had theirs at "Funjunction Park" on July 1, & Wilmington had theirs at Hugh McCrae Park on June 17th.

The QPs from the Wilmington office went on a retreat together in Fayetteville on April 14 & 15. They left the coastal town of Wilmington with its fresh seafood restaurants and went to dinner at Red Lobster in Fayetteville! The team spent the night, then went to Zipquest, a zipline team & trust building activity. The team came back to Wilmington, relaxed & ready to go back to work.

The Winston office had a parent appreciation dinner for their foster parents on May 31st. Besides good food, they had an ACI trivia game, door prizes & named the foster parent of the quarter & of the year.

ACI ACHIEVERS

BABY OH BABY!!!!!!

Katie Honeycutt has been a Staff Development Coordinator in the Raleigh office for 4 1/2 years. She & her husband, Josh, welcomed their beautiful baby girl, Renley Lynn on December 15, 2010. She weighed 7 lbs., 14 oz. Katie says that Renley has a bright future as a QP, as she already likes to type on the computer & shuffle papers. She enjoys visiting the ACI office where there are lots of people to pay attention to her & give her hugs & kisses.



Therapeutic foster parents, Larry & Diana Root, from the Henderson area, have adopted their 3rd child.

Monique Smith is expecting her first "bundle of joy."

Kiona Autry is expecting her 2nd child this summer.

Shawn Alldredge & his wife welcomed a son this past October.

Renea Solis of the Jacksonville office is expecting a baby in December.

Fran Diggs will be taking maternity leave from the Wilmington office soon. She will be having her 2nd daughter.

Randall Evans, TFC Coordinator in Wilmington, & his wife, Jen just added twins to their family on August 15. Below shows a picture of his new boy, Brody, & girl, Taylor.



Markisha Jackson, who works with the Coastal Regions Therapeutic Foster Care team in New Bern is coaching a girls' ball team this summer. Her own children are involved in the team as well. Markisha is proud of her girls and her team and we're proud of her for helping the community. Her girls are also excellent students, winning achievement awards this spring.

Congratulations to **Takeshia Washington**. Takeshia is the paraprofessional of the quarter in Wake County for the first quarter of 2011. Takeshia has provided support to a pair of twin sisters for over 5 years. She goes above and beyond the call of duty for these young ladies, and has been a very important part of their journey through high school, and now into young adulthood.

April Lassiter is Henderson's "Employee of the Second Quarter". She has terrific attendance with those she supports, plus all trainings and meetings. She never complains, submits paper-work in a timely manner, & documents thoroughly. Parents of those she supports say she provides "the best services."

Kimber Dubois-Reynard is Wilmington's "Employee of the 1st Quarter". She is a very caring & compassionate staff who goes above & beyond to help those she supports. Her paperwork is always early & perfect!

Shannon Haney, now Shannon Fulp, is the new Therapeutic Foster Care Coordinator in the Winston-Salem region for ACI.

Recent graduates among ACI employees are:

Ali Alfonso--graduated from UNCW (psychology degree)

Chelsea Perkins--graduated from NCSU

Sarah Wagner--graduated from Meredith

Deanna Tesch--graduated from NCSU, accepted into chemistry PhD program

Carolyn Butler and **Nawatha Carter** from the Winston-Salem office are Domestic Violence Advocates For Alabaster Place Inc.

Kimberly Case, TFC Coordinator in Bolivia, got a new buckskin horse & "duelly" crew cab Ford truck to haul hay & feed for all of her horses. Ask her about her adventures on horseback! She has twice run into bears riding through the trails.

Jenell Yearwood, Lead Case Manager in Wilmington, would like to announce the marriage of her son, Kevin, on July 2nd. Jenell made all of the decorations and flower arrangements for the wedding & reception.

Sarah Ferguson, case manager in the Wilmington Coastal office has a second career as a runner. This spring she ran a half marathon that supported funds for several area programs that help us give extra supports to those we serve, including the Good Shepherd House and Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Recently she ran along side **Adeline Hines**, one of the girls that she supports, in a local Run/Walk for the Autism Society.

