

### From Our Offices

#### Happy Holidays everyone!

The biggest news from our offices this month is that the site reviewers from the Council on Accreditation (COA) have just completed a successful visit with us. This represented a lot of work by a lot of people, and everyone who participated in the process deserves a big THANKS, no matter what their role.

We were impressed with the quality of the team that came to review us. It was evident that they had done their homework: reading the huge amount of information that we had pulled together about HEMOCARE, our programs, our policies and procedures, our Web site, and our newsletters. Then, when they got here, they hit the ground running, reviewing charts and talking to staff, consumers, and family members.

These interviews with those we serve and with staff from all parts of HEMOCARE were the most important part of the visit. We appreciate all who took the time to meet and discuss the services offered by HEMOCARE and what these services and the staff who provide them have meant in their lives. We also appreciate staff who were willing to share their experiences working for HEMOCARE.

At the exit interview, several things were clear:

- The reviewers were impressed by our staff — our knowledge and the quality of our services.
- They especially enjoyed talking with consumers and families, and they were impressed by the progress consumers were making toward reaching their goals.
- They were impressed by the results of our satisfaction surveys. The return rate was higher than usual and was overwhelming positive among all groups, our consumers, our staff, and community organizations we work with.
- They were impressed by the training we provide and saw training and supervision as real strengths.
- They were especially impressed by our emphasis on Quality Assurance and Improvement. They observed a commitment to constant improvement which involves everyone throughout the organization, and they identified us as an organization with a culture promoting quality.

The next steps to HEMOCARE achieving national accreditation, a hallmark of quality: The COA board will meet early next year and review the site reviewers' report. The board may ask us more questions or we might get our accreditation soon after the meeting. After we achieve accreditation, we will then have to make periodic reports to COA, including descriptions on how we are continuing to work on improving quality. We will keep you posted as we all work together to provide the highest quality services possible.

## Employee Spotlight

**Jessica Brooks** has been with HEMOCARE Management Corporation since October 2004. A tremendous asset to the company, Jessica never shies away from a difficult case. Totally committed to her work, Jessica has had several clients and always stays with them long term. She is a very hard worker, very reliable, and all her families love her. Jessica strives to help people to reach their goals and accomplish all that they are capable of doing.



Jessica's passion is helping people that can't help themselves. She told supervisor Julie Cameron that watching the people grow and change is the most rewarding part of her job. She stated that it feels good knowing that you did such a great job for that person and made such an impact that they request you back if you leave. The hardest part is losing clients, especially after working a long time with them and building that bond. She said that to maintain yourself in this profession, you need to keep an open mind and professional attitude especially when dealing with your most difficult situations. "Keep smiling and let them know that you love your job."

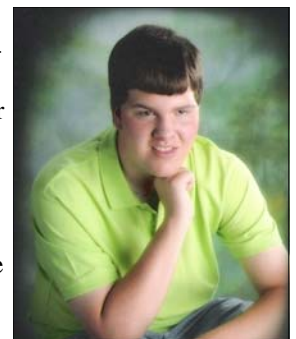
Jessica is also a single parent to her 8-year-old daughter, who she

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## Client Spotlight

**Patrick Marshall** has been receiving services at HEMOCARE Management Corporation since March 2000. Patrick lives with his parents and his older brother Christopher in Hiddenite; he is a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Alexander Central High School.

Working with his HEMOCARE technician, **Mary Harmon**, Patrick has accomplished quite a lot in the last three years. He enjoys being out in his community and participates with Walk-n-Roll so he can spend time with his peers. Patrick looks forward to exercising and lifting weights to stay healthy, so he and Mary also go to the YMCA every day.



Patrick has made great strides in his communication abilities and is proud of what he has accomplished. His parents and his brother are extremely supportive of him and wish for him to be as independent as possible and enjoy his life. Patrick continues to work on counting, communication, and his daily living skills with Mary. Patrick also relishes time with his aunt **Karen Blair**, who provides personal care and respite. In his leisure time Patrick enjoys riding the golf cart, swimming, T-ball, bowling, attending community events, and singing in the

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# Rett Syndrome

Rett Syndrome is a childhood neuro-developmental disorder characterized by normal early development followed by loss of purposeful use of the hands, distinctive hand movements, slowed brain and head growth, gait abnormalities, seizures, and mental retardation. It affects females almost exclusively.

The course of Rett syndrome varies from child to child. The child appears to grow and develop normally at first, but gradually, mental and physical symptoms appear. Hypotonia (loss of muscle tone) is usually the first symptom. The child then loses purposeful use of her hands and the ability to speak. Other early symptoms may include problems crawling or walking and diminished eye contact. The loss of functional use of the hands is followed by compulsive hand movements. Apraxia, the inability to perform motor functions, is perhaps the most severely disabling feature of Rett syndrome, interfering with every body movement, including eye gaze and speech. Other symptoms may include toe walking; sleep problems; wide-based gait; teeth grinding and difficulty chewing; slowed growth; seizures; cognitive disabilities; and breathing difficulties while awake such as hyperventilation, breath holding, and air swallowing.

There are four stages of Rett syndrome. **Early onset**, generally begins between 6 and 18 months of age. Quite frequently, this stage is overlooked because symptoms of the disorder may be somewhat vague. The infant may begin to show less eye contact and have reduced interest in toys. The **rapid destructive** stage usually begins between ages 1 and 4 and may last for weeks or months; purposeful hand skills and spoken language are lost. The **plateau** stage usually begins between ages 2 and 10 and can last for years; apraxia, motor problems, and seizures are prominent. Many girls remain in this stage for most of their lives. The **late motor deterioration** stage can last for years and is characterized by reduced mobility, muscle weakness, stiffness, increased muscle tone, and curvature of the spine are other prominent features.

Rett syndrome is caused by structural alterations or defects in a specific gene found on the X chromosome. Although it is a genetic disorder, less than 1 percent of recorded cases are inherited or passed from one generation to the next.

The course and severity of Rett syndrome varies from individual to individual; there is no known cure. Treatment focuses on the management of symptoms. Medication, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and hydrotherapy along with special academic, social, vocational, and support services are often required; HOMECARE staff can help identify and arrange these services as needed.

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## PaySchedule

Services Delivered	Checks Mailed
Dec. 1-15	Jan. 7
Dec. 16-31	Jan. 22
Jan. 1-15	Feb. 6
Jan. 16-31	Feb. 22
Feb. 1-15	March 6

# Opportunities For Learning

- **How to Survive the Holidays**, Charlotte, Dec. 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- **Cultural Diversity**, Statesville, Jan. 22, 9-10 a.m. or 4-5 p.m.
- **Love and Logic**, Boone, Jan. 24, 2-4 p.m.
- **Therapeutic Interventions (CS)**, Fire Mountain, Wilkesboro, Feb. 13, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- **Let's Talk About Staph with the Staff**, Statesville, Feb. 26, 10-11:30 a.m. or 1-2:30 p.m.

*Please contact your supervisor for more information on these valuable training sessions and additional opportunities for you to obtain required CS training as well as for required re-certification trainings.*

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## Anniversaries

Not everyone celebrates the holidays by beginning a brand new job, but eight years ago **Deborah Crouchley** of Wilmington did just that; she started to work with HOMECARE on Dec. 20, 1999. Five of our long-term employees from the Statesville office also began work in December: **Pam Burchette** and **Barbara Dalton** are celebrating their seventh anniversary with us this month, **Mary Vernon** has been with us for six years, and both **Carol Pruitt** and **Martha Wilkinson** started five years ago. Each is a valuable member of our team, and we join the consumers they work with in saying "Thanks" as we wish them Happy Holidays.

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*EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)*

loves dearly and with whom she tries to spend as much as she can. On her "off time," which she will be very quick to tell you she doesn't have much of, she loves to take her daughter to Myrtle Beach for the weekend and go swimming, bowling, skating, and other "girl stuff." She states that she is a mom and friend to her daughter and that is the kind of relationship she enjoys.

Jessica has big plans for the future. She will be returning to school in January majoring in Criminal Justice at Bladen Community College but then will transfer to Fayetteville State and major in Social Work. After graduation, she hopes to continue working for HOMECARE in a supervisory position. She would also like to foster children that need a loving family and have the option of adopting them.

Jessica has both skills and heart — a wonderful combination! We look forward to many more years working with her!

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*CLIENT SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)*

Celebration Choir with his Walk-n-Roll group. One of Patrick's favorite things these days is to go with his family to watch his brother play football for Appalachian State University.

Mary said, "Patrick has come so far in the last three years and has grown a lot." She is proud of his accomplishments and loves working with him every day. In addition, Patrick's family is very involved and supports him in every way so that he can grow and continue to learn to be as independent as possible in his life.

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## Documentation

**Documentation for CAP/MR-DD, CAP/DA, and Personal Care** must be postmarked or delivered the 16th for services delivered the 1st through the 15th and the 1st for the 16th through the end of the month. **Documentation for all other services** must be postmarked or delivered the 9<sup>th</sup> for services delivered the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 16<sup>th</sup> for the 9<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>, the 24<sup>th</sup> for the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the 1<sup>st</sup> for the 24<sup>th</sup> through the end of the month.