

From Our Offices

This month we'd like to introduce the Wilmington office to those of you living and working across the state. **Karen Gertz**, Clinical Specialist, is the senior person in the office and provides day-to-day clinical and administrative guidance and supervision. Karen has a BS in Therapeutic Recreation and a BSN to go with extensive experience. She has filled many roles with HEMOCARE, starting 10 years ago as a Behavioral Technician and then joining us full-time as a DD and nursing supervisor before being promoted to her current position. She continues to provide nursing oversight for Personal Care, CAP/DA and CAP/C, and she supervises Supported Employment. **Brandi Skenes** also has a long history filling various roles within HEMOCARE. She, too, started as a Behavioral Technician 10 years ago, and after 7 years she became an Administrative Assistant. Her excellence in that role led to her being made Office Administrator a little over a year ago.

Kam Dillon has been a DD Supervisor for 7 years. Kam had previous experience as a tech as well as doing "Q" work. She has special interest and expertise in working with children with autism, including using Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). **Rachel Belch** and **Kerri Kelly** are also DD supervisors in this office. Rachel joined us 3 years ago. With her degree in Child Development and Family Relations and certification as an Infant and Toddler Specialist, she also leads our Early Intervention program, providing and supervising Community Based Rehabilitative Services (CBRS). She came to us with direct care experience working one on one with people with developmental disabilities and as a Case Manager. Kerri is the "newbie" who will celebrate her 2nd anniversary with us in January. She, too, has experience providing services to people with developmental disabilities, especially in a classroom setting.

Kristy Reed, MS, LPA rounds out our clinical team. Kristy is licensed as a therapist and joined HEMOCARE in 2006 to do evaluations, supervise CS, and provide therapy. After taking time off for maternity leave, she is now back with us. As the state makes changes in the mental health system to emphasize counseling and therapy, this will represent an increasingly important part of her role with HEMOCARE.

We also have two administrative assistants helping Brandi ensure that things run smoothly. **Anne Pierce** moved from Georgia 3½ years ago and has been with us ever since. Her previous experience as a Records Management Evidence Technician for the police department prepared her for the detail involved in working with MH/DD/SAS records and keeping track of personnel requirements. In an odd coincidence, **Rita Dittrich** also came to us with experience in police work, having been Secretary to the Chief of Police in Ashland, Ohio for 10 years. She was drawn to N.C. by the ocean and joined us a bit over a year ago.

For almost 5 years **Jennifer Moore**, Regional Manager, has provided overall guidance to this team of eight outstanding individuals. She has a Masters in Counseling and previous experience providing mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services. This team and the many outstanding **Behavioral Technicians** they work with make our Wilmington office a star in their catchment area. HEMOCARE is proud of them all!

Employee Spotlight

Stephanie Powell began working for HEMOCARE Management in the Lenoir Office in May 2008. She is a Behavioral Technician working with consumers with developmental disabilities and in the vocational rehabilitation program. For the past few months, Stephanie has provided personal assistance to **Edwina Poole**, assisting her with independent living skills and working on budgeting goals. Always independent, Edwina lives in an apartment by herself, has worked in a factory more than 20 and she also has her own vehicle.



For this reason, it was somewhat difficult for Edwina to acknowledge that she could use some assistance, but she has since said she made a good decision.

A HEMOCARE consumer since November 2008, Edwina especially likes having someone she trusts to look after her best interests. For example, Stephanie has assisted with Edwina's budgeting goals. She helped Edwina in writing down a list of all her expenditures to visually see the amount of bills that she is responsible for paying on a weekly and monthly basis.

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Client Spotlight

Edward McKinney, 13, of Union Mills, N.C., began treatment work with HEMOCARE Management Corporation's Forest City office in April 2009. At that time Edward was struggling significantly with following rules and laws, admitting and taking responsibility for mistakes, controlling anger, and socializing in positive ways with positive people. Edward's mother and stepfather were particularly concerned that Edward's struggles had gained the attention of juvenile probation authorities.

To his credit, Edward agreed right from the start to try to make positive changes in his overall conduct through cooperative work with HEMOCARE Management Corporation clinical supervisor **Stephen Cefalu**. Edward helped with the setting up of his own rewards and consequences behavioral change system and then put energy into making the system work. Edward participated well in a variety of skill training sessions. Edward even took part in specialized counseling.

The positive results of Edward's hard work soon were apparent. Through mature and responsible behavior at Youth Empowerment, a local social recreational program for young persons, Edward earned the opportunity to go on a very special summer field

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Opportunities For Learning

- **Changes in Services**, Statesville, Dec. 2, 9-10 a.m.
- **Hand Washing**, Tarboro, Dec. 10, 3-4 p.m.
- **Holiday Workshop: Crafts for Your Consumers**, Lenoir, Dec 10, 3-5 pm (Consumers welcomed, but please call the office so we have a head count.)
- **Conduct Disorder: An In-Depth Look**, Forest City, Dec. 16, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)

trip to Washington, D.C. “We had so much fun and did so many cool things,” he said of the trip. At the end of the summer Edward was offered the opportunity to become a junior counselor with Youth Empowerment. “It made us so proud,” said Edward’s mother, Regina. “I told Edward that it just goes to show that he has what it takes to be a leader.”

Edward also buckled down on his work at school and used his new self-control skills to greatly reduce school disciplinary incidents so that he gained promotion to 7th grade at the end of the school year. Edward also gained back certain meaningful school privileges. He now has his sights set on putting his athleticism to good use by possibly joining one of the school’s sports teams.

At home Edward has recently helped his stepfather Doug with a variety of special projects, such as chopping up a tree for firewood and building a floor for an outdoor shed. When difficulties with following house rules have arisen, Edward has accepted assistance from his family in working through them ; he even reached out one time for emergency after-hours telephone based crisis assistance from Whiteville-based HOMECARE Management Corporation clinical supervisor **Kimberly Morris**.

Edward’s efforts at home have earned him special privileges such as a trip to the beach and multiple trips to Carowinds.

Edward and his parents realize that he still has work to do in maintaining and building on all the good behavioral progress he has made this year. Still, Edward continues to voice commitment to doing the work.

“We sat down and talked about some struggles he has recently been having with his behavior at school and he told us he would do better,” says his mother, Regina. “We just want him to not let anything get in the way of his having a good future.” As for his plans for the future, Edward states that he most likely wants to find a way to pursue his passion for cars.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)

Edwina said that she enjoys being around Stephanie and that she feels like Stephanie has helped her so much with getting her on the right track with her finances. Edwina also said that she is glad Stephanie has been able to assist her with her cooking goal. Previously, Edwina only ate out or had simple items that didn’t require cooking. Now Edwina is comfortable enough to cook eggs for breakfast and cook meals in the oven. Edwina said that she isn’t too comfortable yet cooking on the stovetop without Stephanie’s assistance, but one day she should be able to do on her own. This is one more barrier that Stephanie is assisting Edwina to overcome.

Stephanie is the type of person that any consumer would be comfortable with, as she makes sure that their best interests always are in mind. HOMECARE Management Corporation joins Edwina in thanking Stephanie for all she is doing .

Empathy Fatigue

Empathy Fatigue results from a state of mental, emotional, social, physical, spiritual and occupational exhaustion. It typically occurs as the counselor or direct care worker’s own wounds are continually revisited by clients’ life stories of chronic illness, disability, trauma, grief, loss and extraordinary stressful events (Stebnicki, 2008). It is important that counselors, educators, supervisors and workers recognize this negative shift within the mind, body and spirit that may signal empathy fatigue. “High touch” (those who work directly with people) professionals and workers are more vulnerable than those who work with things or data. The symptoms range from low to moderate to high. The difficulty of empathy fatigue is a result of too many unhealthy thoughts, perceptions, feelings and other toxins.

Symptoms of Empathy Fatigue include lack of energy, poor circulation, restricted breathing, impaired defenses, toxic overload, feelings of exhaustion, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, depression, substance abuse and other mental health conditions.

Strategies for reducing or healing Empathy Fatigue include talking to someone, doing something active daily, expressing creatively (writing, drawing, painting, music), use of imagery, mindful breathing, deep breathing while listening to soothing music, making conscious choices in life, positive thinking, taking responsibility, self motivation, trying new things, practicing positive approaches to life situations and creating a positive routine.

Wake up each morning and affirm that you have a job (9.8 percent are unemployed). As you leave your house recognize the range of opportunities you have and be open to all the possibilities that your employment brings. As you travel to work, be aware of how you cultivate and prepare your mind, body and spirit for your work. While at work, take a moment to be aware of how you are progressing; be mindful of negative thoughts that get in the way of enjoying your job and your life. Take a lunch break and use it wisely. Be aware of how you communicate with others throughout your day, verbally and non-verbally. As you finish your workday get good closure with people and job tasks, and organize yourself for tomorrow. “Leave work at work, and BREATHEEE!!!

Anniversaries

The dedication of HOMECARE staff is remarkable. Day after day, and year after year, you work hard to make a difference in the lives of others. **Lee Krueger** of the Wilmington office has done this for 11 years, working much of that time with the same individual. **Edward Lankford** of the Statesville office is another long-timer with HOMECARE; he is celebrating his 10th anniversary. **Holly Miller** of the Boone office has been with us 9 years, and **Larronde Peterson** has been a mainstay at our Whiteville office for 8 years. **Cynthia Easton** of Forest City, **Trevis Grant** and **Michelle Jones** of Statesville, and **Billy McAbee White** of Whiteville are all celebrating their 5th anniversary with us. We appreciate you all!