

## From Our Offices



HEMOCARE continues to celebrate 15 years of providing high-quality services to individuals with disabilities and to their families. At the beginning of this month, both our **Wilmington** and **Whiteville** offices had open houses; our workers, those we serve, agencies with which we work, and other community friends were invited to drop by and have a piece of cake and a glass of punch to celebrate this milestone with us. In difficult times, it is especially nice to take a little bit of time to laugh together and celebrate our successes.

We're also celebrating spring, and HEMOCARE has joined with the towns of Huntersville, Davidson and Cornelius and with Bethel Presbyterian Church in Cornelius to sponsor a **Spring Fling** on May 16 for adults with special needs. This will be a time to dance the night away with a great DJ and enjoy an evening out socializing with friends and peers. **Lisa Hunter**, a supervisor in our Statesville office, has taken a lead role in organizing the event, which was enjoyed

by more than 100 last year. Everyone had so much fun that they're expecting a much larger turn-out this year. The event will be held at the Bethel Church. Every adult with special needs is welcome, as are caretakers. Anyone interested can obtain more information from Davidson Parks & Recreation at 704-892-3349 or from Lisa at 704-873-5399.



**Teresa Barnhill and her sister Lisa West enjoy Whiteville's anniversary reception. It was a celebration for Teresa as well, as in May she will celebrate her 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary receiving services from HEMOCARE.**

We'd also like to give you advance notice of the Advocacy Rally Day in Raleigh on Wednesday, May 20, 2009. This is an annual event put together by the Coalition for MH/DD/SAS, a group of organizations that has come together to provide coordinated advocacy efforts for individuals with mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse issues.

The Coalition has put forth its proposal to the NC legislature for additional support for MH/DD/SA services totaling \$33.1 million. The bill has been introduced in both the House and Senate in bills H602 and S517. The legislation would provide additional funding for important areas such as housing, recovery supports, START crisis dollars, and supports for individuals who are deaf and mentally ill.

It is important for stakeholders to participate in the political process and show grassroots support for our service system. The Advocacy Rally provides an opportunity to demonstrate to the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Employee Spotlight

**Jeffery Littlejohn** has worked as a behavioral technician for HEMOCARE Management for five years. Littlejohn is a Qualified Professional who received his Bachelor's Degree in Theater Arts with a second major in Psychology from Mars Hill College. He was born and raised in Rutherford County and graduated from East Rutherford High in Forest City. He enjoys spending time with his family, including his three siblings and eight nephews. His mother and his sister also work in human services.

Littlejohn was involved in a variety of career fields before coming to work for HEMOCARE. He studied to be an actor in college and pursued his acting career in New Jersey. He discovered that he missed small town life and the friendliness of his hometown. At that point, he returned to North Carolina and became a successful model for the John Casablanca Modeling Agency in Charlotte. Littlejohn was featured in commercial advertising, participated in bridal fashion shows and taught modeling to students. Mr. Littlejohn has also worked as a substitute teacher, a manager of a fast food restaurant, and is currently working at Watts Regulator, where he's been for 11 years.

Littlejohn has worked with both children and adults in his role as a behavioral technician. He enjoys getting to know consumers and building a trusting relationship with them. His best advice to someone interested in this field of work is to have patience and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Client Spotlight

**Tracy** is a consumer in our Wilmington office. She and her support staff, **Kathy Tosoni**, make a great team and can accomplish almost anything when they put their minds to it. Tracy always expresses great appreciation for Kathy. Tracy and Kathy have worked together for two years. Tracy stated "I love her smile and laughs. And she is active."



With the support from family, services and support staff, Tracy has remained very involved in her community. Tracy participates in Special Olympics swimming, bocce ball and bowling. She has been awarded many metals in sporting events during Special Olympic competitions.

Tracy is actively involved with Port City Community Church as a teacher assistant in the Treasure Island Program, assisting with Sunday school classes for the children.

On Oct. 15, 2008, Tracy was recognized by Mayor Bill Saffo during Disability Employment Awareness Month for her outstanding work performance. In November 2008, Tracy received an employee of the month award for outstanding work performance

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Oppositional Defiant Disorder is often used to describe defiant behavior from a child with no remorse for his or her actions. This makes it difficult to identify treatment options, because remorse or conscience cannot be taught. Establishing the diagnosis includes identifying some or all of the following behaviors:

- Demonstrates hostile, negative and defiant behavior toward most adults.
- Acts as if authority figures (parents, teachers, principals) are “the enemy.”
- Erupts into tantrums when given direction from an adult.
- Often refuses to comply with reasonable requests and rules.
- Deliberately annoys people and is easily annoyed by others.
- Frequently blames others for own mistakes and misbehavior.
- Often spiteful or vindictive; frequently argues with adults.
- Performs poorly academically due to disruptive behavior interfering with learning.

Counseling, including active listening and unconditional positive regard can help build trust with an adult. Therapy should also include exploration of the youth’s perception of his or her oppositional pattern toward rules and authority figures and assessment of past situations that may have triggered the thoughts, feelings and actions that characterize angry responses. The therapist may also teach calming strategies such as muscle relaxation, paced breathing, and calming imagery. Another effective therapeutic intervention is exploration of self talk that mediates angry feelings and actions; the youth can be taught the skills to identify statements that include ‘must,’ ‘have to’ or ‘should’ and replace them with cooperative statements.

Medication evaluation is important; however some doctors do not prescribe medication for this disorder unless the angry outbursts are intense and prove dangerous to client or others. Frequently other diagnoses such as ADHD and Conduct Disorder include similar behaviors.

Community Support is beneficial in teaching new ways to think about and manage anger and misbehavior. Identify the positive consequences of managing anger such as respect and cooperation from others. Use modeling and role playing to teach assertive communication, conflict resolution skills (empathy, active listening, ‘I’ messages, respectful communication, compromise). Parent education is an important component of making changes in oppositional behavior. This may include teaching parents skills to specifically define and identify problem behaviors, identify their own reactions to the behavior, determine whether the reaction encourages or discourages the behavior, and generate alternative responses where needed. Community Support can also be used to teach implementation of key parenting skills such as establishing age appropriate rules, employing positive reinforcement to encourage desired behavior, giving clear instructions, and using time out and loss of privileges.

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*CLIENT SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)*  
and 10 years of dedication to her job.

Tracy is continuously looking for new activities and experiences. In addition to her current activities, Tracy would like to become involved in horseback riding and art classes. Tracy even mentioned volunteering at the local library.

Tracy is a very caring and compassionate person. She is known for her energy, smile and great sense of humor. Tracy is gifted with the ability to make others smile and feel good.

Tracy and her sense of humor brings energy to our office every time she visits. She helped HOMECARE celebrate its 15-year anniversary when visiting an open house at the Wilmington office. Tracy composed a special anniversary song and dance routine for the occasion. and made our celebration complete with her performance.

# Opportunities For Learning

- **DSM: Discussing Diagnoses**, Lenoir, May 7, 9-11 a.m.; repeated May 21, 9-11 a.m.
- **Non-Verbal Communications**, United Way office in Wilkesboro, May 8, 9-11 a.m.
- **Cultural Competency**, Charlotte, May 13, 2-4 p.m.
- **Family Dynamics**, Forest City, May 20, 11-2 p.m.
- **Working With Hispanic Families**, Wilmington, May 26, 5-7 p.m.

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## Anniversaries

In our 15 years of service, we have appreciated the fact that so many direct care workers remain with us for a long time. **Nick McClain** of Charlotte first began to work with us 13 years ago. Nick has a full-time job with DSS, so he works intermittently and part-time, but he is always willing to take on a difficult assignment. **Bruce Alderman** of Whiteville is another reliable old-timer, having served HOMECARE clients for 10 years. With us almost as long — 9 years — are **Shondia Hall** and **Jackie Norris**, both from our Whiteville office, and **Amy Harrison** of Statesville. **Gladys Shull** of Boone has served consumers for 8 years, and **Paula Anderson** of Statesville, **Kezia Hayes** and **Sabrina Keith** of Wilmington, and **Katrinia Murphy** of Whiteville are celebrating 7 years of service. **Teresa Garrett** of Tarboro, **Amber Greene** and **Erika Singletary** of Whiteville, **Angela Hunt** of Forest City, **Courtney McClain** of Charlotte, and **Geralene Mosley** of Wilmington round out our list of those celebrating anniversaries with us this month; each has provided services for 5 years.

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*FROM OUR OFFICES (Continued from page 1)*

members of the legislature and the media the number of people who are affected by the service system. It also provides an opportunity to talk directly to your legislators about the issues most important to you.

The Coalition will have information packets for attendees with details on legislation affecting MH/DD/SA services and a message to take to legislators. Members of the Coalition will also be available to offer pointers on effectively communicating this message to elected officials. We encourage anyone who can to attend the rally. As we learn more specific details about the gathering places and other details, we will make them available to you. Call your Clinical Supervisor at HOMECARE for the details as the day draws near, but make your plans to attend. **When individuals with MH/DD/SA issues tell their stories, legislators listen.**

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*EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT (Continued from page 1)*

develop skills in interacting with people. He believes that one has to be able to appreciate the small steps of success but also be prepared for and patient with backwards steps as we work with people trying to change.

Active away from the office, Littlejohn believes that in order to lead a fulfilling life, experience happiness, and prevent job burnout, it is important to pursue healthy hobbies and activities that help others.