

Oakleaves

ISSUE 2009

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 2

AN OAKLAWN PUBLICATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

Oaklawn working to meet community needs

by Laurie N. Nafziger, president/CEO

"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."

- Yogi Berra

These words ring especially true when it comes to organizational work. Our planning must consider these questions: "What do we do?" "For whom do we do it?" "How do we excel?" Good planning helps to determine direction and how to get there.

It had been some time since our strategic planning included an audience broader than the Board of Directors and Oaklawn staff. So in June 2008, Oaklawn began a planning process that also included more than 60 leaders from all parts of the community. Together we considered the strengths and challenges of mental health services in Elkhart County and nationally.

At that occasion we also reviewed the Oaklawn vision, mission, and values statements and received helpful feedback that shaped our thinking as we set a direction for our future. One of our tasks was to update the mission to a simple yet meaningful statement that more accurately

reflects our current reality and practice. As Oaklawn board member Rebecca Ball-Miller so aptly stated: "You become what you say you are." Therefore we want to be very intentional about what we say in our vision, mission and values as they have a bearing on how we function day-to-day and guide us into the future.

In the subsequent months since the community forum, Oaklawn staff and board have continued discussing and tweaking these statements. You can see the results on page two of this *Oakleaves*.

Another area of discussion revolved around demand for and access into Oaklawn services. It's too often true that referral sources and individuals find it difficult to get help for mental health needs. To some it's simply intimidating, while others may find waiting lists too long or the system difficult to navigate. We are taking steps to fix that because we agree that we have not been as responsive as we would like to be.

The fact is that in the past few years Oaklawn has experienced an increasing demand for psychiatric care at the same time

that funding has stayed flat or, for some programs, has decreased. The pool of candidates for some of our clinical positions—psychiatrists or Spanish-speaking therapists, for example—is small and recruitment is an ongoing challenge.

So even though we serve close to 10,000 clients a year and have 7,500 active clients at any given moment, we realize we cannot be everything to everyone. Thus, we need to be more intentional about who we serve rather than taking everyone on a first-come, first-served basis.

As a result, we will begin prioritizing the work of our psychiatrists to serve Elkhart County clients and Elkhart County health system referrals. We recognize too that as the community mental health center, we also have a special responsibility to serve those in our county who cannot afford to pay for services.

Our psychiatrists have served many out-of-county clients over the years on a long-term basis. After a careful review, there are

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OAKLAWN
Toward Health and Wholeness

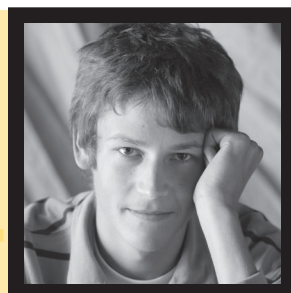
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some who are doing well who will be referred back to their family physician or psychiatric providers in their own communities for care. This prioritization pertains only to our outpatient psychiatric services and we continue to welcome out-of-county referrals for our intensive residential and inpatient programs where we have capacity to be responsive to these needs.

While Oaklawn will continue to be this county's largest provider of mental health services with expertise and experience to address challenging situations, we also want to be seen as Elkhart County's "go-to place" for mental health information, assessment and referral, whether it is at Oaklawn, another community agency or a private practitioner. We are working toward being the place that knows what is available and will help you get connected to the right provider or program. So look for some fairly significant changes coming soon in this area. We will keep you informed.

Community partnerships have always been important to Oaklawn and are even more critical today. We recognize that we are part of a larger mental health network that includes a wide range of people and we want to join others in this important work. To that end, we will give preference to our partners, broadly defined to include schools, private practice therapists, physicians, Department of Child Services, probation, and others. A current example of an exciting community partnership is the System of Care, which you can read about in detail in this *Oakleaves*.

I extend my thanks to our community partners, board members and staff who have joined in this extended planning process so that we don't find ourselves at Yogi Berra's "someplace else." Oaklawn wants to be a provider, a partner and a resource that contributes to the health and wholeness of our community and we are working toward that ideal.

Reinventing our System of Care

by Bonnie Raine, Ph.D., coordinator, Elkhart County System of Care

Playwright and political reformer, Vaclav Havel reminds us, "Vision is not enough – it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must step up the stairs."

In a dramatic example of combining vision with venture, leaders of Elkhart County's child serving community—including Oaklawn—worked tirelessly to reinvent the county's system of care in order to again provide a wraparound process to children and youth with significant emotional, behavioral and mental health needs.

Defined as a "comprehensive array of mental health and other services organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of children and families," the system of care is also made up of vital informal supports. Rather than addressing mental health treatment needs in isolation, the system of care recognizes that children and families have needs in many aspects of their lives. It promotes a holistic approach in which all dimensions of their lives are considered.

So a system of care is as much about collaboration as it is about services. Our project's name, *the SOURCE*, signals that inclusiveness: children and youth with the most challenging needs, their families and their community "R" the "U" in the **System Of Care: Elkhart**. Selection of this name is meant to characterize a truly collaborative effort in which youth and family voice and choice define us and are at the heart of all we are and do.

Systems of care are built on certain values: being community-based, involving families and youth as full partners, building on strengths of individuals and the assurance that each person's cultural and linguistic needs are taken into account. Other hallmarks are that services are individualized for the child and family, provided in the least restrictive setting, and persistent, meaning a team does not give up on, blame or reject

children, youth and families when faced with challenges or setbacks.

The system of care framework is organized around eight overlapping areas of need: mental health, social services, health, education, substance abuse, vocational services, recreation and juvenile justice. Without cross-system agency collaboration, there can be no system of care.

The wraparound process is the most popular strategy for realizing the system of care philosophy while providing care to individual children, youth and families with high levels of need. "Wraparound" describes the team-based, collaborative process for developing and implementing individualized care plans for the children served.

Elkhart County, and Oaklawn specifically, are no strangers to system of care or wraparound. Elkhart was one of Indiana's first communities to develop a system of care and wraparound in the last decade. Housed at Oaklawn, *the SOURCE* is working with community partners to once more be intentional about integrating services for children and youth in a robust way. This includes the wraparound work that Oaklawn is currently doing in its collaborative system of care project with Elkhart Community Schools and the state grant funded Community Alternatives program.

Because partnership is at the very heart of system of care, we were recently invited to share about collaboration with the broader child-serving community at a Summit on Children. Our thoughts included: the importance of representing diverse voices; developing a consensus on turning vision into action; the notion that mission is primary and agency affiliation is secondary; the willingness to look at all options and resources to make things happen; the importance of being future directed and oriented to excellence; and, measuring the

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FYI

Share the vision

A group of advocates in Elkhart County have a vision for a clubhouse in our community for adults with long-term mental illness. This long-time dream may finally become a reality. A preliminary information meeting was held on April 22 in Goshen. At that time staff and members from a certified clubhouse in Fort Wayne talked about the clubhouse model and the difference such a facility can make for people with mental illness in building confidence, skills and self-esteem. For more information about the clubhouse project go to <http://ec-clubhouse.adnetonline.org>. There you can indicate your interest in becoming involved by volunteering, giving a donation, serving on the board of directors, and more. For more information, call (574) 534-2718 or (574) 875-0074.

Oaklawn information

Keep informed about Oaklawn by visiting our web site at www.oaklawn.org. Here you will find information about:

- Oaklawn services
- bed openings in our residential programs and adolescent group home
- job opportunities
- volunteer possibilities
- archived issues of *Oakleaves* and a foster parent newsletter
- news about Oaklawn professional education events

If you would like a tour of our facility or information sent to you, call (574) 537-2680 or email info@oaklawn.org.

Terry Bradshaw at Oaklawn Spring Spectacular

Tickets are still available for Oaklawn's 10th annual Spring Spectacular on Friday, May 1, 2009, at Matterhorn Banquet & Conference Center in Elkhart. Featured speaker this year is former NFL quarterback Terry Bradshaw.

The first player chosen in the 1970 National Football League draft, Bradshaw went on to become the first quarterback ever to win four Super Bowl Championships — all with his beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. Having reached the heights of success, Bradshaw has also survived the depths of depression. His story is one of sacrifice, pain, competition and adversity and how he used the power of positive thinking to reach levels of success he never dreamed possible. Widely regarded as today's preeminent NFL studio personality, Bradshaw has also authored five books and recorded four albums. His work on behalf of those less fortunate has helped raise a tremendous amount of money and awareness for countless charitable organizations. Partnerships, tables and individual tickets are available for this event. Call (574) 537-2645.

Open house for The Orchard

Oaklawn's adolescent group home, known as The Orchard, will celebrate its second anniversary with an open house for referral sources on Thursday, May 21. Please drop by between 12:00 noon and 1:30 p.m. or 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. that day for:

- tours of the facility
- updates on the program
- a meet and greet with staff
- refreshments
- door prizes

The Orchard is located adjacent to Oaklawn's outpatient facility at 2600 Oakland Avenue, Elkhart. If you have questions or need more information, call Mandy VanZile, program coordinator, at (574) 537-2685.

Oaklawn Education Events

Oaklawn is committed to providing education events for professionals and the general public and to collaborating with other community agencies. Information about education events can also be found on our web site at www.oaklawn.org.

Professional training events

Pastoring Sexualized Youth

Speakers: Keith Graber Miller, Ph.D., M.Div. Danny Phillips, M.Div., Rob Staley, M.S.

When: Wednesday, May 13, 2009, 7:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Where: Oaklawn, 330 Lakeview Drive, Goshen, IN

Cost: \$20 (includes breakfast)

CEUs: 3.0

Who should attend: pastors and church lay leaders; others who work with youth or who are interested in the topic

Description: Topics covered are "Healthy Sexuality and Today's Youth" with Keith Graber Miller; "Unhealthy Sexuality and Today's Youth" with Danny Phillips; and "Youth Stories of Sexuality" with Rob Staley and youth from the Crossing Educational Center.

Deadline for registration: May 7, 2009

Sponsored by: Oaklawn

For more information or to register: Call (574) 537-2680 or email info@oaklawn.org. To download a brochure and registration form, visit Oaklawn's web site at www.oaklawn.org, then click on News & Events.

The professionals at Oaklawn



Tina Barton



Gary Helmuth

Tina Barton, M.S.W., is a therapist in the Bashor/Oaklawn program located at Bashor Home, Goshen, one of Oaklawn's partnership programs. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master of social work degree from Indiana University South Bend.

Gary Helmuth is an advocate for Oaklawn's program for the Amish. In that role he serves as a liaison between the Amish community and Oaklawn, ensuring a smooth transition for those needing services.

Staff changes/promotions

Carrie Cravahlo Miller, M.S.W., has been named residential clinical care coordinator. She continues her role as a social worker with residential services.

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success of making connections between vision and action.

Our community is alive with new collaborative initiatives in which *the SOURCE* and Oaklawn both participate. A new cooperative venture, "Partners for Parents" has commenced, as well as new partnerships in adolescent addictions, renewed community focus on culturally competent services, resource sharing in every venue, and emerging youth and family advocacy groups.

Havel would be pleased: combining compelling vision and collaborative action is the challenge as we work together in the system of care. Oaklawn and its partners have "stepped up a lot of stairs" in the intervening months and years, but the climb is not over for any of us. No less than the welfare of some of our community's children with the most challenging needs is at stake. It's been said that there's nothing like a dream to create the future. The community has dreamt of a child serving system that is collaborative, innovative and smart about how its resources are deployed. Now it's creating that future.

Oakleaves is published three times a year and is designed to address timely mental health and addictions clinical issues as well as inform professionals of Oaklawn's services and educational events.

Send changes of address, letters, and requests for free subscriptions to:

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Toward Health and Wholeness

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