

# *Bright Horizons*

SUMMER 2016

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**BHcare**  
*Hope • Health • Recovery*

## A Message from Roberta & Michael



We're excited to announce that PCRC joined the BHcare family of services on July 1. Our Boards of Directors voted unanimously to approve the affiliation in early June after months of careful consideration and planning. BHcare and PCRC offer complementary programs and services, and together we form a stronger and unified resource for our communities.

We are thrilled that we have the opportunity to take this important step. Together, BHcare and PCRC will provide a more coordinated and comprehensive system of care for our clients and families. Our affiliation will give us an opportunity to close the gaps in services, and build stronger and healthier communities.



We want to assure you that this affiliation will not change the services that BHcare or PCRC are currently providing. We will continue offering the same programs in the same locations. We are committed to providing the best local programs and services for individuals, children, parents, families and our community.

Sincerely,

Roberta J. Cook  
President/CEO

Michael J. Wynne  
Vice President, Children's Services, PCRC

*"The more honest you are with yourself, the better you will be, and better is such an amazing feeling."*

I grew up in a dysfunctional home. My father was an alcoholic and he beat my mom. I never knew what would set my dad off, so for most of my childhood I lived in fear for my mom's life. My father committed suicide when I was 17, and for years afterward I was in denial that he actually died.



Death seemed to be all around me at that time, and with each family member's passing my anxiety became stronger and more difficult to control. I was in and out of treatment, and on and off of medication. I moved around a lot and in 2014 I moved into an apartment in the Valley. I needed to find a new facility to treat my anxiety, and found BHcare. I worked with a clinician who made me face my anxiety head on. She pushed me to do things I could not do before. I attended group therapy and, although I still had anxiety, I had it under control.

My son Brandon began having behavioral issues when he was about seven years old. For months it seemed he wouldn't express any emotion, and then suddenly he would be filled with rage and anger. He would bang his head on the floor for hours at a time. He had complete meltdowns over the smallest issues. He received therapy for a little while and learned some coping skills, but I did not feel like he was receiving the consistent care he needed. His behavior slowly got worse and school became a big issue. I received phone calls, sometimes five or six times a day from the school and when he threatened to kill himself, he was expelled. I spoke with my clinician at BHcare about it and she recommended I reach out to PCRC.

Now Brandon sees a clinician at PCRC. The clinician established a level of trust with him, the clinician is patient, but also demands respect which is exactly what Brandon needs. Brandon has gone from someone who was angry all the time to a kid that has some control in his life. He is learning how to behave in large groups and is less reluctant in social interactions. Brandon still needs a very structured environment, but has made so much progress and I'm excited to see what he can accomplish with the help of PCRC.

Brandon and I have both come a long way in the last two years, thanks to the help of BHcare and PCRC. I was reluctant to seek help at first, but quickly realized that I needed to face my issues and address Brandon's. The more honest you are with yourself, the better you will be, and better is such an amazing feeling.

## VSAAC Changes Name to Alliance for Prevention & Wellness

Your support, commitment and donations helped The Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council (VSAAC) evolve to cover much more than substance abuse issues and reach far beyond the Valley. On August 1, VSAAC will become the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness (APW).

"We felt it was necessary for the program's name to reflect all that we do," said Pam Mautte, Director of VSAAC. "VSAAC has a long history of substance abuse prevention activities and continues to expand its programs to address substances of abuse, suicide, risky behaviors and to promote good mental health. Our service area continues to grow throughout the Lower Naugatuck Valley and Greater New Haven. The Alliance for Prevention & Wellness is a direct result of our donors and community partners commitment to improving our communities," Pam continued.

VSAAC was formed in 1990 as a result of a community retreat held by the Valley United Way with concerned citizens to address substance abuse issues in the Valley. It operates as one of 13 Regional Action Councils across the State of Connecticut.

For 25 years, VSAAC has engaged churches, schools, businesses, human service agencies, neighborhood organizations, government offices, law enforcement, and concerned citizens of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds in prevention activities. The program maintains strong collaborative relationships with area police departments, the local prevention councils, social service agencies, and youth service bureaus and has an extensive repertoire of culturally competent substance abuse/high-risk behavior prevention and wellness programs.

Your support over the past 25 years helped more than 150,000 youth and adults in our communities. Thank you for continuing to make a difference.



**Our New Mission:**  
We foster positive mental health by preventing substance misuse and other health-risk behaviors and by building resources that promote wellness.

## Donate + Shop + Volunteer = Saving Lives



*"I had so much stuff stored in my basement and garage that I could not possibly fit my car in. It was full of good quality items that I just no longer used," said Sally Attianese of Branford. "I donated truckloads to My Sister's Place because I wanted my things to go to a good cause. I've known many women who were in abusive relationships and knowing that I am helping other battered women is a perfect way for me to help the community."*

*"I shop at MSP all the time and find such wonderful things here at great prices. I'm an avid reader and always can pick up a best-selling book. It means the world to me to know that the money I spend at the store is helping domestic violence victims," said Lois Anderson of Seymour.*



*"I have been volunteering at My Sister's Place two days a week for nearly two years," said Denise Stromp of Derby. "After I retired, I wanted to give back to the community. I volunteer at the store because I know I am helping to keep thousands of women and children safe."*

For more information about My Sister's Place and how you can help join the fight against domestic violence, please call (203) 734-2960.

# Doctor's Corner

by David A. Sperling, M.D., Medical Director, BHcare

## Mental Health and Mental Illness Across the Lifespan

In the year 2000, the Surgeon General of the United States, David Satcher, M.D. issued a groundbreaking report on mental health and mental disorders. One of the key aspects of the report was examining mental health and mental illness across the entire span of life. The report looked at four periods of life; childhood, adolescence, adulthood and later adult life. The report also looked at how gender and culture influence diagnosis and treatment in addition to the age of the client. The report recognized the importance of genetics interacting with life experiences.

With the addition of PCRC to the BHcare family, we are moving towards the goals set by the former Surgeon General. We are now in a better position to integrate assessment and treatment from childhood, through adolescence, adulthood and late adulthood into old age. It is much the same as passing a baton in a relay race. It represents a continuation of a natural process rather than an artificial age demarcation. The process of growth and development is a continual one and one stage builds upon the previous stages for both better and worse. To effectively treat a client requires an understanding of where they have been, where they are now and how did they arrive at their current state. It is important to integrate their culture, genetics, life experiences, gender, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, work history, medical history, in addition to their symptoms and course of illness.

We at BHcare are moving to integrate ourselves more fully in areas of improved coordination with primary care, expanding our substance abuse services, working closely with our hospital systems to keep people in the community, in addition to expanding the age range of services we provide to the people we serve.

BHcare is supported by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Connecticut Health Foundation, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Derby Discovery Committee/ William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, Griffing Trust, Katharine Matthies Foundation, Norma F. Pfriem Foundation, the Guilford Community Fund, the Guilford Human Services Council, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, The Valley United Way, United Way of Milford, The Valley Community Foundation and the Towns of Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven and Woodbridge.

BHcare is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation Rehabilitation Facilities and is licensed by the Department of Public Health.

BHcare is a partner agency of CommuniCare, Inc.

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We apologize for any omissions or oversights. If your department, foundation or municipality has been overlooked, please bring it to our attention.



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