GENERATION TO GENERATION:
Impacting Addiction, Pregnancy and the Family

The 20th Annual Women and Children’s Conference was held in Harrisburg on March 21–22, targeting healthcare professionals, social workers, drug and alcohol treatment professionals and health service providers. The goal was to promote healthier outcomes for pregnant women and families in high risk situations. Presentations spanned assessment, treatment, medical, legal and social impact of substance abuse. Focus areas promoted better outcomes for families, pregnant and parenting women, as well as children and adolescents with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD). Topic areas included HIV/AIDS, synthetic drugs, medication misuse, trauma, domestic violence, incarceration, women with co-occurring disorders and other healthcare and family related issues.
Visits to Concept 90, Harrisburg

On March 8, Patty Kim, PA State Representative was welcomed by Mark Sarneso, Regional Director for Gaudenzia’s Central and Western Regions; Kelly Catherman, Division Director and Dan Deele, Program Director.

Visit to Tioga Arms, Philadelphia

On February 20, Tom Blackwell, Community Liaison for U.S. Representative Bob Brady, toured Tioga Arms Apartments. Resident Cheryl W. shared the importance of stable housing for her family.

Visit to Fresh Start, Wilmington

March 6, Dr. Harry Smith, DE Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Health and Human Services.

Visits to Vantage, Lancaster

On their March 11 visit, the Penn Manor Girl Scouts and Brownies donated 30 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies to the residents of the program.

On March 13, Kate Walker and Deb Brandt of Moxie House Publishing, producers of Fig Magazine, visited. Among the people they met was Sheri P., program graduate.

On March 27, PA State Representative Mindy Fee learned about the benefits of treatment from Paula Kiernan, Program Director and Florence Paige, Division Director.

On March 1, Keith Wolfe, NASCAR crewmember, Dr. Michael Peck, Todd Peck and Dr. Sue Peck of Peck Motorsports toured the facility to better understand Gaudenzia’s modality of treatment for recovering individuals.

On April 2, Rob Teplitz, PA State Senator was welcomed by Paula Ruane, Central Region Director.

Visit to Tioga Arms, Philadelphia

On April 12, State Representative Steven C. Mentzer was received by Sheri P., program graduate and Cindi Reinhold, Intake Supervisor.

On March 8, Leslie P., program graduate greeted Thomas Wren, immediate past Chair and Fred Sears, President and CEO, both of Delaware Community Foundation.

March 11, Tyrone Jones (right), Director of External Relations for AstraZeneca.
Justin V. is an executive chef. He returns regularly to Gaudenzia Fresh Start in Wilmington, DE, a residential program for 18 – 25 year olds, to serve as a role model and mentor for individuals there. He also visits his parents, is a responsible friend, roommate and employee.

But, life has not always been this way for Justin. He began experimenting with alcohol and marijuana at age 11 and had been arrested 30 times since age eight. After graduating from high school in 2004, Justin’s life spiraled downward. He overdosed in his parent’s home and remembers hearing his father pleading, “Don’t leave us yet.” Justin thought he could overcome addiction on his own but in a few months he was using heroin again. In December 2009, he was court-mandated to Gaudenzia Fresh Start. According to Justin, “Gaudenzia saved my life. If it wasn’t for Gaudenzia, I’d probably be dead. I am forever grateful.”

In June 2011, Justin became a Gaudenzia graduate. He is now a contributing member to his community and to Gaudenzia, presently serving on Fresh Start’s 10th Anniversary Planning Committee. Justin recently presented his mother a family photo and inscribed this message on it; “When struggles turn into dreams, hate turns into love, things that didn't matter start to matter, problems turn into prayers, sadness turns into uncontrollable happiness, hopelessness turns into hope, the true meaning of life is taking place. Never give up.”

John entered treatment at Gaudenzia as part of his court ordered probation; but he was looking for help before he went to jail. He chose to enter treatment at Gaudenzia because he wanted a better life for himself. “Seeing people in treatment gave me the motivation to do better. I wasn’t always down and out or depressed. I knew how it felt to live right, I just missed using and wanted to do it again.” When he completed treatment last year, Gaudenzia’s Care Coordination staff pointed him to community resources for job training and helped him obtain his ServSafe certification. When asked why he decided to come back to work for Gaudenzia, John responded that it was the people he met while he was here and wanting to give back to others beginning treatment. John intends to complete his graduation requirements and walk proudly across the stage at Chesapeake Region Graduation in October.

On March 1, Meg Diamond and Steven Heird, M.D., Harrisburg area volunteers, participated in a Community Education Breakfast to learn more about Gaudenzia’s work.

In Lancaster, Diane Horton-Lewis, Marie Murray and Briana Rowe, Vantage staff members, sort through needed supplies that were purchased by contributions donated in loving memory of Heather Hrywnak, intended to benefit the residents of the program.

Proud Parent: Bob Spurrier continued from high school but his life was consumed with chasing the high. He was on probation for two years and in and out of rehabs for five years.

The inevitable happened, Bobby overdosed. In the hospital, last rites were given, the doctor told the family to think about final arrangements, but somehow Bobby survived.

Struggling with his son’s addiction and looking for a solution, Bob decided that his son needed long-term residential treatment and he was admitted into one of Gaudenzia’s Philadelphia programs. Gaudenzia’s continuum of care provided the necessary steps for Bobby to become the responsible and productive member of society he is today. When he was ready, he moved to another Gaudenzia program before continuing on to a transitional housing arrangement near his hometown. Today, Bobby drives to work at his full-time job; coaches his company’s softball team and participates in his church softball league.

Bob Spurrier Sr. is grateful to have his son back and wants others to know there is hope for those who persevere.
On March 28, at a conference for social work students at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in Philadelphia, Karen Plowman, Prevention Supervisor at Vantage in Lancaster and Michelle Woltz, Director of Nursing for Gaudenzia’s Eastern Region presented aspects of substance abuse and the resulting effects in the community. A personal illustration was provided by Bonita P., who only a few years ago was homeless. Today, she is a proud Gaudenzia graduate and resides in a stable, affordable housing unit that was recently developed by Gaudenzia. Bonita provided an inspiring message of recovery and hope, sharing her journey from the depths of addiction to her life in recovery as a grateful mother, deacon, entrepreneur, role model and responsible citizen. St. Christopher Hospital’s check supporting Gaudenzia’s services was gratefully received.

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Michael Harle, M.H.S.
President and CEO

Richard Z. Freemann, Jr.
Chairman,
Gaudenzia Inc.

R. Max Bockol
Chairman,
Gaudenzia Foundation

Gadi Aronson
Director of Development

Sara Baumgardner
Julie Girsch
Andrew Keimig
Carole Lee
Lynnane Schaeffer
Carol Schonour

Contributors

Please forward address changes to:
Gaudenzia Gazette
106 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA 19401
fmveis@gaudenzia.org

EDUCATING the Community

Leah Markowitz and Lauren Wagner of St. Christopher’s Hospital; Karen Plowman, Bonita P., Michelle Woltz and Lyanne Schaeffer of Gaudenzia; Liz Horsey, Robin Capecci, and Shannon Kiry of St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children Social Work Department.

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