

# Now You Know

the staff newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 2  
Second Quarter  
2014

edited by  
Roger Richmond

## KAREN GALLAHER WALKS THE TALK!

Sally Wilkerson  
and Roger Richmond



Karen Gallaher is the very embodiment of what the Walking the Talk is all about. We are delighted to present her as this quarter's recipient of the Walk the Talk Award! For many years, she has quietly gone about the business of providing outstanding services with compassion and integrity. She respects the value of the people she supports and treats everyone with dignity. She displays the utmost professional conduct, is a perfect example of a good team player, and is not only open to new ideas and methods, but she looks for ways to provide each person with the supports they need and want. She's been providing person centered supports her entire career and probably couldn't imagine doing it any other way.

Karen is always good natured, helpful to others and supportive of both co-workers and people who receive services and of Michael Dunn Center. She serves as a daily mentor with the things she does and always sets a good example, often working

*(Continued on page 2)*

## COMPASSION IS A VIRTUE

Roger Richmond

***Compassion— We value honesty and openness, and treat people with dignity, compassion and mutual respect.***

When we created our new Values Statement, we essentially threw a hundred thoughts at the wall to see what would stick. Each of us brought to the table all the values that we felt applied to what we do at Michael Dunn Center. Our goal was to define who we are, what we stand for, and how we want to conduct our agency.

From that initial list we combined "like" values until we had six that we agreed fit our mission- three related to ethical standards and three to quality of services. It was not simply happenstance that Compassion was first on the list.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### DID YOU KNOW? Falls Prevention Program

We have a new Falls Prevention Policy in the final stages of development. We all need to focus on preventing falls even before the first one occurs. A fall can lead to decreased independence, fractures, pain, head injuries, spinal cord injuries and even death. Look for training on the new policy and procedures related to falls in your June and July staff meetings. If you think you have someone at risk in the meantime, please contact your supervisor or one of the case managers assigned to your work location.

### What's Inside

Employee Appreciation	4
Changes Are Expected	5
PCT Success Stories	6-7
Prom 2014	8-9
Meet Patti and Christin	11

## Gallaher, continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

with our most challenging people to help them participate in their community with fewer problems.

Karen has been a dedicated employee of Michael Dunn Center since July, 1993. During her long tenure in Adult Day Hab, many changes have taken place with how services are provided. When she first started, the model for the Adult Day Program was classroom-based training, with "task work", daily living skills training, and "field trips" into the community.

We started doing community based activities before they were funded by DMRS (Division of Mental Retardation Services, which is now DIDD). Karen was the one we turned to take small groups into the community for job training and community based activities. In 1997, DMRS began funding community-based day services and the service model changed to provide for one staff person per 3 people supported.

Working with MDC Greenhouses, which we operated for some 25 years, Karen was the reason for the success of a contract to beautify the downtown Harriman with flowers and hanging

gardens. Every day, Karen took her group to plant and maintain flower beds and hanging baskets. People all over Harriman knew Karen and her crew and praised the beautiful results of their work.

The job not only required Karen to work regular daytime hours, but she had to go out nightly, around 2 AM, to water everything. Driving a pickup truck

**"It takes a special kind  
of person to do what  
Karen does.  
She has a very  
compassionate heart."**

with a water barrel and pump on back, she and a volunteer did the watering after all traffic was off the street. Karen was always willing to share this experience with the few who wanted to do a midnight flower watering "ride along".

She was back at it the following morning, every day, perpetual good nature intact, to do it all over again! We weren't sure how she managed, but we didn't argue! It was Karen's hard work and dedication that kept the program going.

During the times that she was not working the flowers, Karen supervised her crew on janitorial jobs in the community. She has always been eager to support MDC individuals any way she can to allow them to gain more independence and live fulfilled lives, while always keeping everyone safe.

Karen has long been the go-to person with individuals who display major aggressive behaviors. She has improved the lives of quite a few individuals with challenging behaviors, and always appears to do it with ease! She is patient, shows respect, and completely earns the person's trust. Often thinking outside of the box and looking for different ways that she could support them, she helps people overcome obstacles in order to be successful.

Largely because of Karen's skills, one person she supports now successfully lives in a three-person home, going into the community daily. Previously, he always had to be by himself away from others, never letting anyone else into his world. Karen played a very important role in improving his quality of life.

She is not only committed to the people we support during her regular shifts at MDC. For years

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Compassion is a Virtue, continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

I've often said that we're very compassionate with the people we support. People who aren't generally don't last very long.

We have some of the most caring, compassionate employees you'll find in any workplace and it shows in the good things they do every day.

I've also said we aren't always so good at showing compassion for our co-workers, especially new hires. I've been told by some of you that tenured employees are sometimes not very welcoming towards new people and don't help them get adjusted to their new job.

Retention is one of our biggest problems and I suspect we lose a few new people because they felt unsupported or were scared away by the job responsibilities. Some of our difficult behavior problems and the high level of care

some people need can certainly be intimidating.

It helps to remember your first days on the job. Were other people friendly and helpful? Did they help you become comfortable in your job or were they unsupportive and unfriendly. Did they help you put aside your misconceptions, or



did they just ignore you and leave you on your own?

More than your average job, new employees working in this field can be very intimidated by their job responsibilities, with difficult behavioral incidents and the level of need often required for personal care and other needs.

Think back to your earliest days. I suspect some of you wondered exactly what you had gotten yourselves into! It probably helped you if a

co-worker had gone the extra mile to show you the ropes and help you feel comfortable.

I recall a comment made by Karen Gallaher, this quarter's Walk the Talk Award recipient, some years after I hired her. She told me that for her first few weeks she wasn't sure that she would make it because she didn't think she could do the job.

Karen had come to us when the hosiery mill she was working in closed down. Her previous work experiences did not prepared her for the work we do! Of course, she came to become one of our very best DSPs and most valued employees!

Next time you meet a new co-worker, reach out and offer your guidance and support. Be compassionate, treat the new person with respect, and offer them your knowledge and experience. And keep your interactions positive.

Everyone will benefit. I guarantee it.

### Webster Dictionary:

#### **Virtue:**

noun

\ 'vər-(.)chü\

- **morally good behavior or character**
- **a good and moral quality**
- **the good result that comes from something**

### Wikipedia:

**Virtue is moral excellence.**

**A virtue is a positive trait or quality deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being.**

**Personal virtues valued as promoting collective and individual greatness.**



# EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

## Compliments Received and Appreciated Melinda Johnson

While I was at Roane Medical Center Emergency Room, recently, a Covenant nurse came up to me and was very complimentary of the services we provide. Below is what she told me:

**“I’m a health care provider with Covenant Health. As a nurse, I’ve had the opportunity to observe many individuals with special needs coming and going.**

**I’ve come across many individuals from many different agencies that seemed unhappy and had unprofessional caregivers. It gives me great pleasure to report that this is not the case with the patients at Michael Dunn Center.**

**The overall well-being of the individuals shows that not only are they well cared for, but that they feel a sense of family. They are loved.**

**In a field as important and necessary as special needs health care, the Michael Dunn Center is exemplary in this manner. You are an example of the most hardworking people ever.**

**I hope you continue working with so much dedication and continue to make a difference in the lives of the individuals you support.”**

Just remember to always treat people the way you want to be treated. Talk to people the way you want to be talked to.

You never know who might be listening and watching!

## CHANGES ARE EXPECTED

Mike McElhinney

As you know Michael Dunn Center is a member of Tennessee Community Organizations, or TNCO, which is a statewide association of agencies like Michael Dunn supporting children and adults with disabilities. I am honored to be assuming the volunteer role of President of TNCO on July 1, 2014 for a one year term.

TNCO is a member in turn of a nationwide association of agencies and trade associations known as the American Network of Community Options and Resources, or ANCOR, based in Washington, D.C.

**The new definitions and rules will “indeed be a game changer, one that history will record as a turning point for federal disability policy.”**

I attended the annual ANCOR conference as the TNCO representative May 3-7. There were several very interesting speakers but the one that was the most memorable was Barbara Edwards, a top ranking official from the Center for Medicaid, CMS. Two thirds of all Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) funds that come to Michael Dunn Center start at CMS, with Nashville and DIDD then adding the remaining one third. This means that people like Barbara Edwards establish the policies that follow the money, the “strings that are attached”.

Ms. Edwards made it very clear that President Obama’s administration is deeply committed to vigorous enforcement of the Olmstead court decision and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The new definitions and rules they are putting in place will “indeed be a game changer, one that history will record as a turning point for federal disability policy.” Their ultimate goal is to “insure that services for people with disabilities are truly home and community-based.”

Traditional sheltered workshops, work centers or work programs are now viewed as isolated, segregated environments that keep people with disabilities out of the community and separated from others without disabilities. Adult day habilitation programs that are facility or center-based do the same thing. There is very limited interaction, exchange, the chance to build relationships and friendships with people in the community at such facilities.

States are being encouraged and incentivized to make changes. And agencies across the country like Michael Dunn Center have been and will be encouraged and financially incentivized to make changes as well. In five years I predict there will not be a work or day program in a facility like we have today. So we need to start preparing and planning for this change now. There is little doubt it is coming.

# PERSON CENTERED SUCCESSES SHARED!

Tonya Watts

What does Person Centered Thinking look like in Residential Habilitation at Michael Dunn Center?

We see many positive things happening. These can be big things, like a person joining the choir at their church, or small things, like adjusting a person's shower schedule.

Sandy Bryant, Simmons Manor House Manager, shared that she tried several times to get Shane to join her and his roommates at the grocery store and he would always decline. One day, she decided to take just Shane. She stated that Shane had the time of his life helping find the items they needed and placing them in the cart. Shane was smiling and laughing and greeting people in the local grocery store. Sandy plans to schedule more one-on-one shopping days with Shane since he enjoyed his "me time" so much.

Sometimes we forgot that the people we support are just like us. We all like our "me time". Some of us like to hang out in big crowds and some of us like a smaller group. These are things we always need to be aware of

to make sure those who like the smaller, one-on-one "me time" can have that from time to time. Doing this will build your trust with that person and might just develop into a lasting friendship.

Cecilia Yarnell, House Manager at Walnut House, shared how much Richard and Owen's lives

have changed since their move to a Supported Living home. Sometimes people want and need to live with a small group and they don't know how to tell us.

With their behaviors rising, the Circles of Support for both of these men agreed they should live in a smaller environment. Richard and Owen now enjoy

their community almost daily. They are going to the mall, to local shops in town and grocery shopping.

Sometimes we make assumptions. We assume people should know how to brush their teeth, take a shower or put their dirty clothes in the hamper rather than back in with the clean clothing. Vicki Murray, Harris House Manager, learned that simply praising Kathy for completing her chores correctly had a huge impact on Kathy's overall attitude.

Kathy, who is quiet and withdrawn most of the time, causing people to assume she just wants to be in her room alone, is now smiling more and talkative to staff. She loves being praised when she has done a good job. Don't we all?

April and Carol used Level One changes to improve or enhance people's lives by testing the waters, so to speak. Changing shower times made for a better day for Gail. And Carol found that adding a few extra warm showers to Linda's day made her happy.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Success, continued

*(Continued from page 6)*

Tabitha Cox reports how using the Matching Tool to match staff's hobbies with the people we support pays off. Tabitha was able to match Leta with an employee with similar hobbies as she has. This has led to Leta joining the Harriman Garden Club and creating a raised-bed garden at her home. Leta loves flowers and gardening. For years she worked in the MDC greenhouse, when it was in operation. Matching staff with people we support can grow flowers, vegetables and even friendships.

Chad Goodman, House Manager at Lilac, shared that his staff noticed that, since Sue has moved to her new home, being prompted and assisted has led to her regaining some of her independence with her ADLs. Staff monitors her and assists when needed.

Sue is also more active. Prior to her move, she would just sit in one spot, not wanting to get up to do anything. Now, she will follow staff around the house, help wipe off counters and the table, and has shown an interest in wanting to help with dishes. Staff help her dry non-breakable

items, and silverware. Sue is also showing "mothers instinct" towards her housemate, helping straighten out the clothing that she wears and adjusting things that look out of place

Sharon is regaining independence with proper equipment and/or modifications. She is starting to open up more and talk to staff more. She is starting to take interest in things like why a staff person is not working on a day they should be.

*Person Centered*  
**Thinking MAKING A DIFFERENCE**  
*Person Centered*  
**Thinking MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

For instance, last Thursday Sharon heard Chad say he would be off on Friday. She wanted to know why and he told her he had a class to attend all weekend, starting Friday evening. She wanted to know what it was for. When he told her it was for his work with the Fire Department, she wanted to know how things are done and what happens in a Fire Dept. Chad asked her if she

would like to visit the Fire Department and plans were made to take her for a visit.

And let's not forget Mary, who is the mother of two boys and now a grandmother. Mary has the sweetest grandson you could ever meet! She is a member of her church and of their choir. She has friends in the community where she shops and at her beauty salon. She works in the community and has friends at work. Mary is learning more about her role as a Self Advocate Mentor, and she has made many new friends that have helped her along the way.

They all have the same goal—"This is your life, live it." They teach people to speak up for themselves when it comes to their life. Not ours. I often stop and think in the midst of the busy weeks we all experience, "What I am missing? What are they missing?"

A good life is the ultimate goal for everyone. We can put missing pieces together by looking at the persons hobbies and interests and talking with their family and friends to determine what that means for the person. Doing so can help us offer each person a good community-driven life.



# A Starry Night! Prom 2014

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Michael Dunn hosted our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual prom, "A Starry Night", at Midtown Elementary. Everyone had a magical evening of dinner and dancing. We would like to thank our sponsor, Michael Hardin, of Chase Drugs, Harriman, for his generous donation; the staff at Midtown Elementary, for the use of their facility and for their hospitality; to Ashley Ruppe Photography for capturing the everlasting memories of the night; to Dian Sutton, for making the beautiful corsages and boutonnieres; to Hearts and Hands Women's Group of Unaka, NC, for making the special clothes protectors; and to all the Michael Dunn Center staff for all their help in making this night so special for the individuals we support. Without each of you this night would not have been possible. I also would like to add a special thank you to Roger Richmond for coming to the rescue and preparing such a wonderful dinner for everyone.      STEPHANIE GOODSON





# A Starry Night! Prom 2014!

Everyone looked awesome in their dresses and tuxes. We hosted approximately 230 people. Matt McClure was amazing with the entertainment and the food was delicious. We all considered this year's prom a huge success! We are very pleased with all the positive feedback we've received. Everyone reported they enjoyed the theme of the prom and the decorations and colors were perfect! We are very appreciative of all the dedicated Michael Dunn Center employees that helped with making the prom such a success. For several employees, this was their first prom. Thanks go out to all of our special visitors, including ISC Anna Marie Giannone; MDC Board Member Ted Bowers and his wife, Teresa; and Noel Puchel, Barry Lurry, husbands of Deb and Denise, from Nursing Case Management. We are looking forward to planning for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual MDC prom. We hope to see everyone there next year! RITA HOLT



**Gallaher** (Continued from page 2)

on Saturdays Karen has spent her time bowling with people we support at Tri-Cities Lanes. Individuals from the group homes, as well as folks from the community, would gather every Saturday for bowling. There was often some stiff competition going on within these games, with everyone having a great time with their friends, laughing and enjoying time well-spent. She also routinely volunteers with Special Olympics bowling, attending practices and assisting with tournaments.

Karen is honest, reliable, compassionate, dependable and dedicated to our mission. She is a problem solver, a great mentor to her peers and she always represents MDC in a positive way. Many families have praised her for the supports that she provides to their loved ones. Staff also have many good things to say about Karen. One employee commented, "It takes a special kind of person to do what Karen does. She has a very compassionate heart. She does a phenomenal job!"

We are truly blessed to have Karen working at MDC and honored to present her with the Walk the Talk Award.

Karen, thank you for all your years of services to the people we support and their families and to Michael Dunn Center. You have made a difference in many peoples' lives and we appreciate you very much for that! Keep on Walking the Talk!



# It's nice to have you with us!

## MEET PATTY AND CHRISTIN

Cindy Gregg

*When passing through Work Programs, or seeing them working in the community, please take time to welcome two hard working individuals. Christin and Patty work daily, either in the community or at the training facility located at Michael Dunn Center Work Programs. Both ladies are energetic, excited about working and learning new skills, meeting new people, and making money!*

*Patty is a vibrant woman that is an absolute pleasure to be around. She always has a smile, and brings a smile to the faces of everyone she encounters. Patty comes each day ready to work and see the new friends that she has made. Patty attended Michael Dunn Center for many years and has had the privilege of reconnecting with many old friends.*



*Christin is an energetic young lady that is also eager to learn new skills, make new friends, and earn money for shopping. She is very friendly, loves to laugh and brings laughter to those around her. Christin has made many friends in a very short time since starting at Michael Dunn Center.*



*Back issues of Now You Know can be found at  
[www.michaeldunncenter.org](http://www.michaeldunncenter.org)*

**Phone Numbers:**

**Poison Control.....1-800-222-1222**

**Abuse Investigator....1-800-579-0023**

**MDC Engineering On Call....(865) 335-0549**

## **Mission**

***Empowering individuals living with disabilities and challenges to gain independence***

## **Vision**

***We strive to be a premier agency providing the highest quality of person-centered services with an emphasis on positive communication while inspiring people to open their minds to acceptance and inclusion.***

## **Values**

***We value a person-centered culture by promoting:***

- **High Ethical Standards**

### **Compassion**

*We value honesty and openness, and treat people with dignity, compassion and mutual respect*

### **Integrity**

*We have a positive reputation in the community and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, ethical behavior and personal responsibility*

### **Diversity**

*We value the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual and respect the diversity of opinions, backgrounds and cultures of others*

- **High Quality of Services**

### **Professional Commitment**

*We maintain a disciplined, results-oriented organization reflecting the highest professional standards and ethical behavior*

### **Teamwork**

*We strive to develop positive working relationships based on trust and respect as we work together to achieve our common goals*

### **Responsiveness**

*We believe that our future is based on our current actions and decisions. Remaining open to change will define how we manage the challenges that come our way.*