



newsnotes

Recruiting for the best team is a team effort



by Bill Mantzoukas, President

Recruiting and retaining the best employees has always been a challenge in the healthcare industry. As many of you know, our facility administrators and management were particularly frustrated with the challenges of recruiting and maintaining rehabilitation staff. This was an industry-wide problem with no quick-fix solution.

In response to the situation, Merrimack Health Group initiated a concentrated effort to expand our recruitment and retention programs throughout our facilities. This initiative was added to our Regional Action Plan and will be ongoing as new advancements in recruitment techniques

are discovered. In this installment of **NewsNotes**, I'd like to recap for you what's been accomplished to date. These efforts have been spearheaded by John Kain, our Chief Operating Officer, Becky Banks and Terri Rock, Regional Rehabilitation Consultants, and Karen Driscoll, Communications Manager. This team met on a regular basis throughout the course of 2007 to establish the current Recruitment Plans to assist MHG facilities in their efforts.

Facility Interviews

In order to start the process, John Kain and members of the Recruitment Committee travelled to each facility to ascertain their recruitment needs and determine best practices. They gathered all the information and came to the realization that the following areas needed to be addressed in the recruitment arena:

Website Enhancements

We added job postings to each of our MHG facility

websites with links back and forth so that applicants can easily navigate from one site to another MHG facility website that may be in their area.

Online employee applications

With the help of our Webmaster, Gary Albanese, we created an on-line application for each facility's website in order to attract the attention of potential applicants and to keep pace with other companies. This application has been submitted hundreds of times by potential applicants and is designed to be a screening tool prior to the interview process.

Participation at Recruitment Fairs

MHG exhibited at more than ten new recruitment fairs across the state and in New Hampshire in 2007. At these fairs, we were able to share the job openings for all our facilities and help direct potential nursing and rehabilitation candidates to a facility in their area. It was also

an excellent way to keep the facilities in the minds of attendees who may not be looking for a position now, but perhaps in the future. The plan for 2008 is to assess last year's recruitment fairs individually, determine the ones we will attend again, and investigate new recruitment fair opportunities.

Recruitment Mailings and Flyers

Our team learned that when recruiting for the best possible staff, particularly in the rehabilitation disciplines, a postcard mailing that is colorful and to the point can catch the eye and (continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Good to Great.....2

Culture Change Corner- Webster Manor.....3

Jo Shaw recognized in publication.....3

Above and Beyond winners.....3,4,5

Rebecca Brennan--the Oxford Receives Hospice Award.....6

Recruitment-

(continued from front) concrete results. Our rehabilitation postcard mailings have helped to recruit staff mainly for the Central Mass facilities, while the MHG North and Metro Boston facilities require other approaches.

Through these combined efforts, along with the hard work and dedication of the staff at every facility, most of the critical openings in our Rehabilitation Departments have been resolved. Facility job postings for all position openings have decreased by thirty percent from the list's inception, and Merrimack Health Group is realizing more visibility in the long-term care market.

For 2008, our agenda is simple--continue to fine tune the practices that have been put into place to support the

recruitment of the best staff members. We recently listened to our facility administrators and have shortened the online application to make it more user-friendly.

In addition, we have asked each facility to create their own internal recruitment committees to continue the momentum. Each facility has its own unique culture, and these committees will know best how to implement the tools that have been established so far.

I welcome any and all suggestions that staff members may have to reach the best potential new employees to work in our facilities, whether it be via mailings, recruitment websites, or publications. I know that our current staff is by far our best recruitment resource.



2007 Facility Above and Beyond Winners Announced!

Congratulations to all the 2007 Above and Beyond Winners listed on the following two pages. Each annual winner was chosen from the facility's group of monthly Above and Beyond winners, and selected for being "the best of

the best" in terms of their commitment to their job, their facility and the people with whom they work every day! Stay tuned for details of the next Above and Beyond Luncheon, to be held in June.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU MAKE, IT'S WHAT YOU STAND FOR

(an article excerpt from Jim Collins, author of Good to Great)

Concentrating on products or services, if that's what you sell-- is a trap. It's not that what a company makes is irrelevant; only that we'll see more and more companies framing their identity in terms of their core purpose rather than in terms of their products and services.

They'll need to. Business cycles of all kinds are getting shorter--some products become obsolete almost as quickly as they're created. It's more important than ever to define yourself in terms of what you stand for rather than what you make, because what you make is going to become outmoded faster than it has at any time in the past.

Then, what do you hang on to? You hang on to the idea of who you are as a company, and you focus not on what you do but on what you could do. By being really clear about what you stand for and why you exist, you can see what you could do with a much more open mind. You enhance your ability to adapt to change.

Compare Zenith and Motorola, two companies that long ago were known for making TVs. Zenith stayed there; Motorola made jump after jump--to microprocessors, integrated circuits, all kinds of things--and became one of the most highly regarded companies in the country. What was the difference? Zenith thought mainly in terms of what it was making. Motorola thought mainly in terms of what it stood for. It defined its core purpose as "applying technology to the benefit of the public," not "making television sets." not even "making world-class, state-of-the-art, market-leading television sets." Motorola, by thinking about what it stood for, could give up what it made. Zenith, which never thought about it that way, couldn't."

Marlborough Hills Richard West



In January 1969, Richard Nixon was being inaugurated for his first term as President. Joe Namath defeated the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III, and **Richard West** started working at Marlborough Hills Healthcare Center. For all of these 39 years, Richard, who does not have a

driver's license, has not missed one day of work, and continues to bring his happy personality every day to the staff and residents he serves.

As a Diet Aide in the Marlborough Hills kitchen, Richard is obviously a very dependable employee. He is one of those dedicated people who make up the the foundation of successful facilities. They are the ones who work hard every day and are positive about their work. Staff members enjoy working with him and whenever people bring his name up, they tend to smile. Thankyou Richard, for making Marlborough Hills a better place to work and live!!

Craneville Place Victoria Sontay



Victoria Sontay was voted as the Craneville Place Above and Beyond Winner for 2007. She was the January winner for the facility. Victoria works in the Housekeeping Department and has

worked at Craneville Place for 3 years. She is from a Mayan Indian town in Guatemala, and speaks both Spanish and English. Victoria works on the locked unit at Craneville and was nominated for her ability to help translate for residents and staff and redirect residents. She is extremely helpful to staff and provides supervision and assistance in addition to housekeeping.

Victoria always combines honesty, integrity and dependability as part of her work ethics at her workplace. She is always making sure that the residents are treated with respect and dignity.

The Oxford Donald Bradshaw



Donald Bradshaw has been employed here at the Oxford as a Certified nurses assistant since September 2003. During his employment here he has worked a variety of shifts on all units in the facility. Donald can best be described a dependable, caring and loyal employee with a quiet demeanor. He is very knowledgeable in his position, which is evident by his job

performance. Donald is a valuable member of the team on the special care unit, he works well with our more aggressive and male residents, and is frequently requested by family members to care for their loved one. It is difficult to point to one or two events that stand out that make Donald the Above and Beyond winner, only to state that since being promoted to the lead CNA position in September 2007, he has shown great initiative and leadership. Donald eagerly takes on added tasks and responsibilities and never hesitates to assist others on the unit when needed. Donald truly cares for those residents in his care, ensuring that their needs are always met with promptness, respect and kindness.

Culture Change Corner Webster Manor--Consistent Staffing

DID YOU KNOW that in the Spring of 2007, Webster Manor Healthcare Center switched to consistent staffing on one of its units? The idea is to have the staff keep the same assignment and not rotate weekly, in order for both staff and resident to become more familiar, increase the bond, and create a greater sense of accountability.

According to **Renata Ucher, DON** at Webster, the program has been running so well that they have expanded it to 2 other units in the facility. Families and residents are very pleased with having the same

caregiver for their loved one, and the CNA is able to know the resident and can sometimes identify subtle changes in their condition quickly.

Changes in assignment are of course necessary due to admissions and discharges and sometimes difficult residents, but the program is generally running quite smoothly! Renata mentioned that at first, staff members were hesitant about the plan, and now have discovered that it can be done, with great results! Renata is happy to share her experiences with the program at any time!

The Lafayette *Puck S. M. Topp*



Puck Topp has been with the Lafayette since August 1965. In her position as Administrative Coordinator, Puck was the employee of the month in May 2007. In reality however, Puck has been the Lafayette employee of the ages.

In May she was specifically identified for going out of her way and to the local pharmacy to get over-the-counter medications needed by residents and not readily available in house. The nomination indicated that Puck is very attentive to new residents and pays careful attention to details.

Over the past 43 years Puck has been recognized more than once for her contributions to the Lafayette. Once again the team here at Lafayette felt it was appropriate that because Puck continues to be the loyal, caring resident-focused employee that she is, she deserves this most recent recognition.

Puck has tremendous energy and strength. She continues to help out wherever and whenever she can. She has great respect for our residents and their families as well as her co-workers.

Puck also has a great sense of humor, she is the first one to laugh and enjoy the humor in a situation. She has been a friend to many. Puck sets the standard high for everyone she works with she also sets it high for herself.

Lanessa Extended Care *Kathleen Woods*



Lanessa Extended Care's Employee of the Year for 2007 is **Kathleen Woods**. Kathy has been at Lanessa since March of 2006. She was hired as a C.N.A. and had a fabulous rapport with the residents, especially with our Alzheimer's / Dementia residents. Kathy worked as a C.N.A. until she had a very unfortunate accident and injured her wrist extensively. Kathy, not wanting to leave her residents, asked if she could continue to work here in another capacity. Kathy became one of our receptionists and has excelled there.

with Kathy on a daily basis. She always has a bright smile and a welcoming response to all who enter Lanessa. Kathy also assisted with Activities and she assists each day with feeding and transporting residents to activities or dining rooms.

Over the past few months Kathy has become an assistant to our Staff Development Coordinator. She assists with employee education tracking, license tracking, and organizing employee records. Again, Kathy has taken this task on with enthusiasm and excitement. She is always willing to learn and to help wherever she can.

Kathy and her husband reside here in Webster. She and her husband are motorcycle enthusiasts and look forward to the warm days to come.

Kathy is truly deserving of the honor of being the Lanessa Extended Care "Employee of the Year".

Families stop and chat

Parsons Hill -- Jamy Skebos



The 2007 Above and Beyond winner for Parsons Hill is **Jamy Skebos**, Staff Scheduler. Jamy is a certified nurse's aide who gives terrific care to residents and knows how tough the job can be at times. That makes her especially well qualified to be our staff scheduler and she performs that role extremely well.

Jamy has been a member of the team at Parsons since December of 2006, and she manages the complexities of appropriate staffing with all the pressure that a fluctuating census can bring!

Jamy lives with her husband Ron in Dudley, MA. She has two teenage children, a boy and a girl, and a dog named Hunter.

The Arbors of Bedford - James Sullivan



James (Jimmy) Sullivan is a Server in the Dietary Department, at the Arbors of Bedford in Bedford, New Hampshire.

Jimmy has been with The Arbors since August of 2005. During his tenure, he has touched the hearts of many of our residents as well as their family members. James has a wonderful infectious smile that makes everyone around him smile, even if he is not having a good day. He takes time to talk to each and every resident he serves and gives

special attention to the ones that need encouragement.

Jimmy, along with working here, has been attending college to become a teacher. Since he began working here he has decided to transition from teaching to becoming a Registered Nurse. He will begin studying in the fall.

Jimmy is dependable and his co-workers feel that they can always count on him. He is hard working and never cuts corners!

We are pleased to have nominated him for Employee of the Year. Monthly the management staff reviews the comment cards left by his peers and family members. There is always a card for James. With all new admissions, one of the most common phrases I hear is: "Who was the young man who serviced your dining areas? What a wonderful person to have taking care of our loved ones."

We believe Jim lives up to our Great Expectations!!

Webster Manor Healthcare Center-Terry Duefield



Terry Duefield started her C.N.A career at our historical Webster House more than twenty years ago. She was one of the first C.N.A's to transition from The House on opening day, to Webster Manor.

Terry is a caring, dedicated and dependable C.N.A on our unit, and also

a great co-worker and friend. Her positive attitude and caring demeanor shines through and she never thinks twice about going well beyond what is asked to make the residents happy.

She is well loved not only by the residents, but by their families and her peers as well. Terry's ongoing support, and encouragement

of teamwork makes her a positive role model for all C.N.A's to follow. Thank you for going Above and Beyond! Great Job!

Fairhaven Healthcare Center-Raymond Gagne



Ray Gagne is the Maintenance Director of Fairhaven Healthcare Center. He has been employed at Fairhaven since February 2005, starting out as the Maintenance Assistant.

Ray was nominated because of his dedication and commitment to making sure the building is running smoothly. One example of this was when he stopped in on his day off to pick up his

paycheck and was told of a problem in the building. He didn't hesitate, he jumped right in and fixed the problem even though he was not dressed for maintenance work and never complained. He is always more than willing to help out in any way he can. If he knows a resident's personal TV isn't working he will make sure he finds the time to check it out, even though he has a large building to maintain.

Ray is very well liked by his fellow employees, residents and their families. Ray is always ready to lend a hand, he is courteous, helpful and accommodating. Fairhaven is proud to nominate him for the Merrimack Health Group Employee of the Year.

"Age is opportunity no less than youth itself, though in another dress, and as the evening twilight fades away, the sky is filled with stars, invisible by day..."
Longfellow

Fairhaven's Administrator Jo Shaw Recognized in Publication

Jo Shaw, Administrator at Fairhaven Healthcare Center in Lowell, was recently recognized for her efforts in the publication *The Massachusetts Administrator* in their regular Professional Spotlight feature. Here is the article as it was printed:

"At last we have someone to inspire us when we're drained of our last ounce of motivation. Joanne Shaw is the mother of seven children ranging in age from 32 to 5 and a grandmother of 3. Balancing career and family, this alone is an accomplishment. For Joanne, however, her family is just the beginning. In 1990, Ms.

Shaw embarked on a career in long-term care and, like many of us, worked her way through the many opportunities presented.

Joanne pursued a Bachelor's degree in Business, unlocking the opportunity to enter the Administrator in Training program in Beverly. In March of 2000, Joanne officially became a licensed nursing home administrator.

Today, we can find Joanne making a difference as the Administrator at Fairhaven Healthcare Center, 169-bed nursing care center in Lowell, MA. Many of us feel sufficiently successful and rewarded working as an

Administrator. Joanne, however, is always driven to new challenges. As a second year student at the Massachusetts College of Law in Andover, MA, she is working on another degree. Joanne wishes to minimize the number of financially victimized elderly and to merge her clinical knowledge and operational experience with law. Joanne envisions that one day she may work as a Compliance Officer or in Risk Management.



NEWSNOTES is published by the Corporate Office of Merrimack Health Group. Please direct all inquiries and news information to:

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Oxford's Rebecca Brennan Honored by Beacon Hospice for Quality Care



Beacon Hospice, Inc. recently honored Rebecca Brennan, LPN, of the Oxford in Haverhill, with the 2007 Excellence in End-of-Life Care Award.

Rebecca was recognized for her superior work as a

caregiver and commitment and delivery of the highest quality end-of-life care services to her patients.

The Excellence in End-of-Life Care Awards is a Beacon Hospice awards program to honor a caregiver who has achieved excellence through his or her dedication and determination to deliver superior end-of-life care.

Each of Beacon Hospice's 20 offices throughout New England is honoring one local caregiver who has demonstrated outstanding compassion, dedication and commitment to quality care for patients at the end of their lives. Beacon Hospice hopes these awards will inspire others to strive to provide every end-of-life

patient with the best quality of care possible to allow them to live the remainder of their lives in comfort and dignity.

Those who nominated Rebecca noted that she will always advocate for the resident, is compassionate and intuitive, and always respectful of the patient and family's needs and wishes. They also stated that she always puts quality of life needs of her residents first and foremost!

Congratulations, Rebecca!