



DEDICATED TO BUILDING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



shorelines

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH SHORE CENTER • ISSUE 2010/2

VISION

Our vision is to be recognized for creating opportunity for wellness and recovery through innovation and the pursuit of excellence.

MISSION

South Shore Center, a behavioral health organization, is dedicated to serving individuals suffering from mental, brain, emotional and addictive disorders. We are further dedicated to providing support and/or treatment to their families through a full range of mental health and addiction services.

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

Child and Adolescent Intensive Treatment Services (CAITS)

Community Support Services

Emergency Services

Outpatient and Home-Based Services

Psychiatry and Psychopharmacology

Rehabilitation Services

Residential Services

Substance Abuse/Co-Occurring Services

Vocational Services (Statewide)

401-364-7705, 401-789-1367
www.ssmhc.org

Vocational Services offers transitional job opportunities for low-income families

South Shore Vocational Services is playing an important role in offering much-needed work opportunities to individuals ranging from those with little work history to those whose careers have stagnated in a difficult economy.

Under an initiative expanded in March through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services with federal funding support, South Shore Vocational Services is one of two contractors offering statewide assistance in the Transitional Jobs program. Positions of up to six months in duration are available to members of families with incomes at or below 225 percent of the federal poverty level; the family member must have a child in the home under age 18 (or under 19 if the child is a high school student).

“The family does not have to be receiving mental health services from South Shore, as this effort is separate from South Shore’s clinical services operation,” says Melissa Boss, a benefits

specialist with South Shore who is program manager of the vocational program.

South Shore has extensive experience in vocational services, having been under contract for six years to perform supported employment services.

Any for-profit or nonprofit employer across the state is eligible to participate in the program, which covers the wages of the hired workers at no cost to the employer. Boss explains that participating companies must confirm that the transitional positions are not replacing slots that have been lost to layoffs, and the employers must be willing to train, monitor and report on the progress of the workers they bring on.

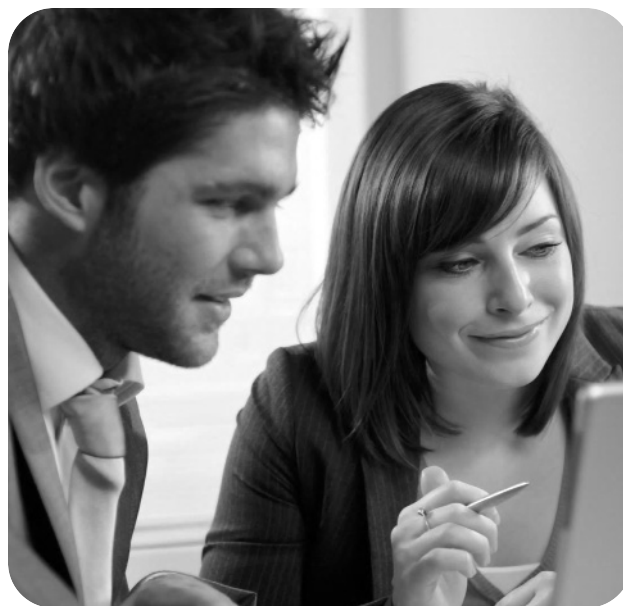
Diverse opportunities

South Shore already has been successful in placing individuals in jobs ranging from landscaping to hotel staffing to telephone support

to administrative assistant work. In one instance, Boss explains, a company that has hired individuals for housekeeping work in a nursing home has plans to train these individuals for certified nursing assistant duties.

South Shore generally has found e-mail blasts to be its most effective method for getting the word out about the program. Over 100 individuals have been placed through the agency as of mid-August, and more money is available in the program under the current contract.

“We’re teaching people
See *VOCATIONAL* page 3



Substance abuse treatment an integral part of our mission

It is often said when discussing the treatment of individuals with serious mental illness that the presence of co-occurring substance use problems should be viewed as the expectation, not the exception. With around 60 percent of South Shore's mental health client population having substance abuse treatment needs as well, the organization increasingly sees itself as a full-service behavioral health center.

"Our history's been dealing more in a mental health template, but now we're looking more at a co-occurring disorders template," says David Lacey, program manager of adult outpatient and substance abuse services.

Lacey, who formerly worked at a number of addiction-focused facilities over the years, says South Shore is examining substance abuse service expansions on several fronts. "Current efforts include new policy development around substance abuse services."

"The challenging times in public funding of services do not make expansion efforts particularly easy," Lacey says, "but South Shore sees a service population in need of comprehensive, integrated care. There's a shortage of [substance abuse] services in every corner of the state," he says.

"Already about half of South Shore's



clinical staff either is cross-trained in providing both mental health and addiction treatment or is in the process of being trained," Lacey says.

Cutting-edge opiate treatment

As South Shore expands its substance abuse treatment offerings, it plans to incorporate use of an opiate addiction treatment that has gained wide acceptance as a practical and less stigmatizing alternative to methadone treatment. South Shore intends to open a Suboxone (buprenorphine) treatment clinic in the coming months.

Andrew Morris, M.D., South Shore's Medical Director, says that both he and another psychiatrist in the program will prescribe the partial opioid agonist medication to patients, most likely starting with a few South Shore patients referred internally to the program, and to quickly expand to the general public. Planners intend to have a pharmacy services provider at the site where the clinic will be housed, to ease patient access to the medication.

Suboxone has been seen by many experts as a preferable alternative to methadone, which is dispensed through daily patient visits to specialty clinic sites. Buprenorphine can be prescribed from a doctor's office or clinic, and stable patients can administer their doses at home. The Suboxone formulation of buprenorphine is designed to decrease the potential for diversion and abuse of the medication.

Morris says good candidates for Suboxone are those who demonstrate a high motivation for treatment and who are relatively stable psychiatrically. "They have no major medical issues, and they can follow a treatment plan," he says of this group. "If they're not far in their recovery, it's not going to work."

"The Suboxone clinic also should be seen as less stigmatizing for a higher-functioning patient group than a typical methadone clinic might be perceived," he adds.

Morris's experience with Suboxone has shown him that patients report feeling more comfortable and normal while taking the medication. "Their energy is better and their mood is better, vis-à-vis how patients feel on methadone," he says.

As with most medication treatments, it will be important to convey that medication alone will not sustain recovery. "It is important that there be other [therapeutic] services, at least at the beginning of treatment," Morris said. "We will want to see them on some psychosocial treatment. Over time, if they're stable, it may turn out that they will not need further psychosocial support." ❖

Children's services clinicians are making a difference in families' lives

Peter Seuffert is one of three South Shore clinicians to whom a child will be assigned when in-home services are considered appropriate under any of four home-based program models. A licensed family therapist, Seuffert sees his work in much broader terms than simply involving one child's case record.

"I get the greatest satisfaction when I see a family realign to allow the child to function appropriately," says Seuffert. "When I see the parents take over and have the skills to address their child's behavior, and they do it, that's when I've worked myself out of a job."

About 30 to 40 children and their families are receiving home-based services from South Shore at any one time, under one of four programs depending on insurance status: Child and Family Intensive

Treatment (CFIT); Child and Adolescent Treatment Services (CAITS); Enhanced Outpatient Services (EOS); and Intensive Home-Based Outpatient (IHOP). Insurance restrictions have made home-based care more time-limited in recent years, with families generally able to access this benefit only once a year. This means South Shore clinicians such as Seuffert have to be effective in reaching out to families and maximizing what might be a relatively brief presence in their lives.

"We have to schedule our time carefully to get the most bang for the buck," Seuffert says.

Typical progression

Here is how a typical contact with a family might unfold. When a family in [See CHILDREN next page](#)

A message from Dorothy



A great deal has been happening since publication of our most recent newsletter. Many of the latest developments speak to the full range of services we now provide, as an organization that remains focused on our mission of assisting individuals and families in need.

One change that you've probably noticed in our recent communications is that we are now South Shore Center. Our old name of South Shore Mental Health Center did not reflect the diversity of services and initiatives under our watch. Our name change and our affiliation with Gateway Healthcare position us to meet our local community's needs wherever they arise. We have begun to make the needed changes to our website, letterhead and marketing materials, and you will see our new name gradually become prominent throughout the community we serve.

Our Transitional Jobs program offers a prime example of South Shore Center's broad vision. This state and federally funded program is helping the unemployed and underemployed to gain important skills in a difficult job market. Importantly, its reach is not limited to individuals receiving assistance in other South Shore programs. Participating businesses are receiving the opportunity to create short-term positions at no cost, and ongoing contact with our Vocational Services staff seeks to make the work experience productive for both employer and employee.

Likewise, our efforts in substance abuse treatment indicate the importance of being a full-service behavioral health organization. Much of our clinical staff has been cross-trained in meeting both mental health and substance abuse treatment needs in a population that often confronts both challenges. One of our latest efforts in substance abuse treatment involves plans to open a Suboxone (buprenorphine) treatment clinic, taking advantage of a breakthrough medication that offers convenient and compassionate care for opiate addiction. We have many exciting events to come. Please save the date for our Annual Autumn Gala, to be held on Friday, October 15 at the Historic Towers on Ocean Road in Narragansett. Proceeds from the event, which will include a silent and live auction, will support services that we provide for uninsured children and families at South Shore. For information about event tickets or donations of auction items, contact Kathy Cournoyer at 364-7705, ext. 3301.

We could not continue to expand our reach and meet emerging needs in our community without your invaluable support. I offer my sincere thanks for all your efforts. And I urge you to come along with us as we identify new ways to enhance our presence in the lives of the individuals who rely on us.

Dorothy A. Yeamen, Chief Operating Officer

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crisis is identified through referral sources, ranging from emergency services to the school system, our team will determine an ideal level of services. If in-home services are considered appropriate for the family, Seuffert will schedule a first visit, where the goal is "to engage everyone to come up with a strategy," he says.

Seuffert explains that the therapeutic services he offers are focused and goal-oriented. "I tend to engage the parents heavily," he says. "Many parents believe they have tried everything with their child up to this point, but some have never received any formal guidance in parenting," he says.

Seuffert, who has worked with children as young as 4 and as old as those who are about to age out of the children's services system, tries to get families thinking in terms of easily measurable goals for their children. "I personally try to make things as concrete as possible," he says. "Improving school attendance can be readily measured, as can the frequency of hospital visits or threats of suicide."

The home visits also give Seuffert an opportunity to assess other service needs in the family. Through South Shore's participation in the DCYF Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP) Initiative and other community contacts, it can coordinate efforts when the family could benefit from additional support.

Pressures on families

Seuffert sees many stressors challenging families in today's times. "Economic pressure can cause discord in families, but social stressors have multiplied as well, partly because of children's access to technology."

"They can get on the Internet, they're using their Game Boys; they see a lot of violence," Seuffert says.

Yet he sees a great many successes in his work with children and families, and believes those families that stay engaged in a goal-oriented process will inevitably see improvements in child and family functioning. "Parents and children who work through the process will be able to communicate better, and behavioral expectations and consequences for the child will be more clearly spelled out." ❖

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new skills that they otherwise couldn't get," Boss says. "This couldn't have come at a better time."

The program relies on close contact between Vocational Services and the participating employers. An agreement is signed with the employer at an initial meeting; the employer pledges to evaluate the worker every two weeks as part of the payroll process. South Shore is available for troubleshooting in instances where the employee might be having problems in the new workplace. "They all have my direct line," Boss says of the participating companies.

So far the program has helped people with a wide range of backgrounds, from those who have been on public assistance for some time to those who have college degrees and have been unable to find steady employment. Jobs can be created for three to six months, and South Shore Vocational Services is the employer of record.

"I think this has been the best thing the state has offered — it's a sound program," Boss says. About the only uncertainty at this point is whether there will be government funding support to keep the effort going past September.

For more information about the Transitional Jobs program, contact Melissa Boss at (401) 789-1367, ext. 3328, or mb1065@ssmhc.org. ❖



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It's official...

We are now South Shore Center!

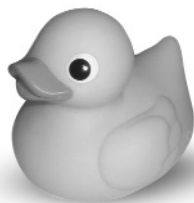
The South Shore Board of Directors; Chief Executive Officer, Richard Leclerc; and Chief Operating Officer, Dorothy Yeaman are pleased to announce that South Shore Mental Health Center has officially changed its name to South Shore Center. We are no longer just a mental health center and have not been for quite some time now. We believe the new name more aptly reflects the full range of our services as well as the diversity and variety of individuals and families that we serve.

Rally for Recovery in September

The Rhode Island Rally for Recovery will be held Saturday, September 11, from 2-7 p.m. at Roger Williams Memorial National Park, Providence. This year the Rally is being held in honor of the 21st Annual National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month. The Rally features live music, food, guest speakers, information tables, children's craft table, face painting, a WaterFire Procession and Dedication Candle Lighting, and much more. Stop by our booth. For more information, contact RICARES at 521-5759 or iknowles@dataofri.org, or visit rally4recovery.com.

Lucky ducks

Who could resist a cute rubber ducky? South Shore supporters purchased 131 of the ducks for the 12th Annual Pawcatuck River Duck Race. Melissa Boss, Manager of Vocational Services, spearheaded the effort to raise funds for South Shore Center in conjunction with the Westerly Chamber of Commerce. For each \$5 duck purchased, South Shore received \$2.85. South Shore received a total of \$373.35 and the Westerly Chamber, \$281.65.



Save the date...

South Shore Autumn Gala

South Shore Center is holding its *Annual Autumn Gala: An Evening at the Historic Towers, Ocean Road, Narragansett* on Friday, October 15. The Gala will feature a silent and live auction, the proceeds of which will be used for the services provided to uninsured children and families at South Shore. Dr. and Mrs. Barry Wepman are honorary co-chairs of the Gala. The planning committee of the Autumn Gala is seeking donations from the community to auction at the event. Tickets are \$75 per person and include dinner in a historic setting with a stunning view of Narragansett Bay. To make a donation, purchase tickets and more information, contact Kathy Cournoyer at 364-7705 ext. 3301.

Annual food drive

As the winter months approach, South Shore will be having its 5th annual food drive to benefit those in need. The food drive effort is organized by Kathy Plante, an Intake Specialist. Items needed this year include non-perishable food items and paper products, as well as gift cards and monetary donations. The Welcome House in Peace Dale and The Warm Shelter in Westerly were the beneficiaries of South Shore's generosity last year.

