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Transform A Child’s Life and Become a Foster Parent

By Nancy Kennedy

IMAGINE HOW IT FEELS TO BE A CHILD WITHOUT A FAMILY OR A HOME. IMAGINE FEELING UNWANTED, ABANDONED AND ALONE, OF WORRYING ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE AND FEELING AFRAID OF THE FUTURE.

Imagine the vulnerability of feeling like you don’t belong anywhere. In Pennsylvania, many children have never known the sanctuary of belonging to a loving family. They are children in the foster care system, placed there for a multitude of reasons, none of their own making. These children need the loving, healing care and thoughtful attention that every child deserves.

Every Child Inc., a remarkable Pittsburgh-based human services agency, addresses this enormous need with a mission to help children find permanency: safe, stable, loving and lasting homes. A loving family is the foundation for physical and emotional health and for becoming successful adults, say the staff of Every Child. Permanency also means a long term commitment to a child, and if you are an adult with a desire to make a substantial and even transformative difference in the life of a child, you should consider becoming an Every Child foster parent.

Every day at Every Child, a team of committed and knowledgeable professionals strive to help vulnerable children who need families. They recruit, train and support foster parents and match them with children whose needs fit their strengths. Every Child was founded in 1997 and has evolved in the ensuing two decades, now offering a range of services that establish, develop and support relationships among children, birth, foster and adoptive families. Every Child provides children with loving homes in order to help them thrive. To achieve this, Every Child needs community involvement, and one of the most critical needs is for foster parents.

At Every Child, foster parents are working people, retired people, single people, married couples and same sex couples. They have one thing in common: a desire to help children, to give of themselves to change the life of a child. “There is no ideal foster parent,” says Emily Welte, Foster Care Program Coordinator. “We look for adults who are motivated, committed, flexible and willing to work with birth families.”

The process of becoming a foster parent begins with a telephone call to Kim Mohler, Matching and Recruitment Specialist. This is followed by attendance at a series of informational meetings which cover the basics of foster parenting. After that, prospective foster parents attend eight training sessions and undergo three home visits and personal interviews.

The process of matching a child with a family is completed with great care, says Welte. “This process can be frightening for the child, and we ease them slowly into the foster family. We start with short ‘practice’ visits, like going out for ice cream, then gradually lengthen the visits; eventually we arrange an overnight stay, and then a weekend.”

“We encourage families to give us pictures of themselves, their pets, and their home to show the child,” explains Palma Bennie, Director of Child and Family Services. “This gives the child some idea of what to expect.”

Some children have special behavioral or medical needs; some have been traumatized. “We consider what the foster parent is willing to do, and what is best for the child,” Welte says. “A foster parent does not need medical credentials to care for a child with medical needs.”

Bennie says that older children and teens also need foster parents. “A child is never too old to be adopted,” she says. “Even an 18 year old needs a parent and a home, and an emotional connection to a family.”

Foster care is not necessarily forever, although the positive impact is lasting. Children in foster care are reunited with birth families in 60% of cases, explains Bennie, while the remaining 40% go on to be adopted. It is in the child’s best interest to have a relationship with the birth family, and often, foster families become mentors to birth families.

Foster parents receive strong support, says Bennie. “We provide many services and resources, and for those who are uncertain about foster parenting, this is reassuring. Anyone with an open heart who is willing to support a child should consider becoming a foster parent; the rewards are tremendous.”

To learn more about becoming a foster parent, or about other ways to help a child in foster care, visit www.everychildinc.org or call Kim Mohler at Every Child at (412) 665-0600.
By Daniel Casciato

According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, nearly one-third of American adults are using health care methods outside traditional western. Highlands Hospital is one regional health facility that is on the forefront of using this holistic approach to wellness.

The Integrative Medicine Department at Highlands Hospital combines evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with traditional or Western medicine. Integrative medicine is the synergistic blending of these two distinct types of care providing a more holistic approach to healing.

Integrative Medicine therapies are based on the body’s innate ability to heal itself. The focus is on the whole person—physical, emotional, social and spiritual. The main focus of any Integrative Medicine therapy is to bring your body to a state of rest, relax and repair, explains Jeanne Brinker, an Integrative Medicine Healing Arts Practitioner and Registered Nurse with the Integrative Medicine Department.

Brinker has been in the nursing field for over 40 years, the last 20 years in holistic nursing. She’s a member of the American Holistic Nurses Association, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals, National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, American Bowen Academy, Yoga Alliance, Connected Natural Therapies and the A.R.E.

She was the former director of Integrative Medicine at Windber Medical Center. In that capacity, she has worked to bring CAM to diverse patient populations from prenatal care, newborns and their families, pre and post-surgical care, critical and cardiac care, cancer survivors, hospice and palliative care, grief and loss support for families, incarcerated young adults and healthy teens, adults and seniors.

Since she is certified in a number of holistic modalities, Brinker is able to use her diverse background to offer a unique blend of therapies that is a custom fit for each patient.

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine breaks down Integrative Medicine practices into three broad categories:

- **Mind-Body Medicine** - These are practices that focus on the interactions among the brain, mind, body and behavior, with the intent to use the mind to affect physical functioning and promote health. The practices include: breathing techniques, mediation, progressive relaxation, guided imagery, prayer, art, music/sound techniques such as drumming and tuning forks, yoga and movement therapies.

- **Biologically Based Practices** - such as nutrition, herbal, botanicals and aromatherapy.

- **Energy Therapies** - such as Bowenwork, Reiki, The Radiance Technique, Healing Touch and White Light Healing. These practices acknowledge the energy of a living organism and the intent is to balance the body’s energy system and allow it to heal the physical body.

“Many of these modalities are available to our patients, staff and clients,” says Brinker.

Brinker most enjoys being able to teach a person how to use these techniques to affect healing for themselves. “I teach them to take back their power over their minds and bodies and heal themselves. I teach people to be a participant in their health care. I teach them to breathe.”

The challenge is that all of these techniques take time, notes Brinker. That’s why she emphasizes that it is essential to set aside twenty minutes or more each day to practice breathing and relaxation techniques, because it takes the body twenty minutes to unwind and reach a deep state of relaxation.

“We all want a quick-fix with as little effort as possible,” she says. “In today’s fast-paced world, we have become an over-scheduled, over-worked society with stress-induced chronic diseases. The body responds with slow, gentle, consistent and compassionate care. There is no quick and easy fix.”

For Brinker, the greatest reward is when someone who insists they have no time is able to feel the peace and relief that being in a state of rest/relax/repair brings and begins a practice of self-care.

“They have taken back their personal power,” she says. “A great example happened recently with a patient exhibiting the flash-backs of PTSD. This person was open to the idea of self-care.”

Brinker taught the individual the relaxation breathing technique, did a progressive relaxation and guided imagery technique and bio-energy work. The patient fell asleep and when she checked in with the person the next morning, the patient told her, “I no longer feel compelled to think those thoughts anymore. Things are falling into place for me now.”

“This was extremely rewarding for me,” Brinker recalls. “One challenging issue emerging in the healthcare field is the opioid epidemic. Through the Integrative Medicine Department at Highlands Hospital, patients can receive the help they need.

“Drugs may be taken to alleviate chronic physical pain and over time, a person can become addicted to them,” says Brinker. “Drugs are also used as an escape from emotional pain and trauma and sometimes life itself.”

Highlands Hospital has recently been named one of the Governor’s Centers of Excellence for Opioid Abuse. That means it is and will continue to form its network of care providers that will assist them in helping everyone coming through its doors.

Whether it’s PTSD or opioid abuse, Brinker says a compassionate support system is needed to help a person identify the source of the pain, acknowledge it and deal with it.

“An essential element in healing is learning how to forgive,” she says. “Unprocessed anger, guilt or grief interferes with optimal health. Forgiveness allows a feeling of peace that emerges as you take responsibility for how you feel and become a hero instead of a victim in the story of your life.”

For more information, visit the website http://www.highlandshospital.org/services/integrative-medicine.
ESSENTIAL OILS. IF YOU ARE LIKE MANY PEOPLE THESE DAYS YOU ASK YOURSELF, “WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DO I USE THEM SAFELY?”

Why are so many people going crazy for them? If they actually work, why haven't I heard about them before?” Or maybe you know someone who is very enthusiastic about them and you’re just not quite sure there’s actual evidence to support these “magical” oils.

Essential oils come from aromatic plants. The practice of using them for therapeutic purposes or aromatherapy dates back at least 5,000 years. They were used so successfully to promote wellness and combat health issues that they were often treasured more than gold.

During recent days, there has been a renewed interest from our society for holistic and natural wellness solutions. People are becoming more interested in learning about the ingredients in the foods they eat and drink. They are also trying to minimize the chemicals and synthetic products to which they are exposed. Long term exposure has been shown to result in a loss of energy and vitality with potential disease and ultimately, a diminished quality of life.

Essential oils are a natural addition to your holistic wellness lifestyle to make your efforts even more effective. For example, using Lavender essential oil in a diffuser during the night can support a restful sleep, which is vital for optimal immune system function.

Applying Frankincense and/or Wild Orange essential oil throughout the day can help you stay calm and focused which helps your immune system function as designed, since too much stress leads to an impaired immune system.

Many essential oils also pass through the blood-brain barrier affecting our memory, hormones and emotions, which ultimately affect our physical responses. There are even specialty blends of essential oils, like doTERRA On Guard, which is a blend of several essential oils that have powerful antiseptic and cleansing properties that naturally boosts a person’s immunity.

For many, they love the idea of incorporating essential oils but they feel overwhelmed on where to start and are unsure of a legitimate and trustworthy reference. To help the novice begin, we offer classes at local wellness centers, community venues and colleges, as well as online webinars. We are experienced essential oil and herb users dedicated to bridging the gap between eastern and western medicine.

To learn more about essential oil and herb blends customized specifically for you or to schedule a one-on-one personal wellness consult or attend a workshop, call (724) 797-5886 or visit the website www.ezekielsgarden.net.
‘Painting With A Twist’ Offers Therapeutic Benefits and Fun for All

by Judy Ridilla, Owner, Painting With A Twist

Painting With A Twist was founded in 2007 with over 324 franchise locations around the country. It is the #1 franchise in the Paint & Sip industry. The concept pairs instructional art with friends and a lively instructor to produce individual works of art. Our Greensburg location opened in 2015 offering jobs to talented artists in the area. Some of the artists have their Bachelors Degrees in Art Therapy, while others are working on their Masters Degrees. We offer artwork ranging from landscapes, abstracts and cityscapes, to creative renderings of seafood, animals, iconic buildings and florals.

Painting With A Twist provides a unique experience that encourages our customers to relax, have fun, and to forget about daily stresses. It is a lively environment full of positive and happy energy. Individuals are encouraged to try painting, even though they may be brand new at it, and to realize with a little bit of guidance, that they can end up with an amazing painting. As a result, the painting experience has a therapeutic effect on our customers. Individuals experience the relaxing effects that the creative process and painting can have on them. Our guests get a self-esteem boost when their paintings turn out wonderful, and they continue to visit our studio often.

We also offer an outlet to our customers who have, or are currently experiencing, trauma, illness, or a disability. In addition to providing them with a creative outlet, they are given an opportunity to reduce stress and improve motor function. Being with a group of people also allows individuals to be surrounded by different people and creates a positive use of community connection. Couples who may be experiencing an emotional detachment from one another or just need a new place to hang out and share an experience, can come and paint one of our couples sets. One person paints the left side of the painting onto one canvas, and their partner paints the right side of the painting on another canvas. When you hang it on the wall, the two paintings become one.

We have seen emotional improvement in stroke victims who were originally reluctant to even leave their house. Once they start coming to the studio, not only do they feel more independent, they also improve their motor skills. Individuals or veterans with depression find our art to be fun and uplifting. Mentally challenged individuals find relaxation throughout art. Personal Care Homes and Nursing Homes provide their residents with day out events at our studio. Even autistic and cancer patients benefit from art.

One of our favorite classes is Paint Your Pet. At first the painting doesn't appear to be similar to their photo, but then you add the eyes and the mouth, and the personality comes alive. Painting gives them a sense of accomplishment, reduces stress, improves motors skills, and gives them personal peace. In keeping with the foundation of Painting With A Twist and to help people with disabilities and cancer patients, we have hosted fundraisers for the Cancer Society, Autism Society, Arthritis Foundation, and Genies Kids. We also host an annual Vera Bradley fundraiser for cancer research. We give back 50% of the seat costs per event.

We are very passionate about our business and realized that Greensburg needed a place like this. We want to be involved in the community and make art accessible to everyone. One of our favorite classes is Paint Your Pet. At first the painting doesn't appear to be similar to their photo, but then you add the eyes and the mouth, and the personality comes alive. Painting gives them a sense of accomplishment, reduces stress, improves motors skills, and gives them personal peace. In keeping with the foundation of Painting With A Twist and to help people with disabilities and cancer patients, we have hosted fundraisers for the Cancer Society, Autism Society, Arthritis Foundation, and Genies Kids. We also host an annual Vera Bradley fundraiser for cancer research. We give back 50% of the seat costs per event.

We are very passionate about our business and realized that Greensburg needed a place like this. We want to be involved in the community and make art accessible to everyone.

Our Clubhouse - Westmoreland

Important for Those Diagnosed with Cancer

Although there have been remarkable advances in biomedical care for cancer, 39% of Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Southwestern Pennsylvania is fortunate to have top-notch medical centers. Yet even the best medical facilities do not always have the time or resources to address the psychological and social challenges associated with cancer.

The importance of psychosocial support for people touched by cancer is widely accepted by the medical community. According to the Institute of Medicine (2008), the failure to provide psychosocial support “can compromise the effectiveness of health care and adversely affect the health of cancer patients.”

Fortunately, those in Southwestern Pennsylvania do not have to face cancer alone.

Our Clubhouse is a non-profit organization that provides free psychosocial support for those living with cancer at any age, as well as the family and friends who care for them. Our Clubhouse is there at every stage: from diagnosis, through treatment, and in transition to life beyond the disease. Programming is provided in our Allegheny and Westmoreland County locations.

In addition to the cancer diagnosis itself and the medical treatment that follows, there are many emotional issues one faces. These include, but are not limited to anxiety, guilt, anger, fear, isolation, frustration and sadness. There are also social challenges one may experience such as: feeling disappointed by family/friends who are not supportive; loss of social life; spending less time with family; difficulty dating and awkward interactions with others.

To help manage these, it’s important to take control of things that you can.

Activities to try:

- **Exercise** – light exercise such as yoga, Pilates and stretching help reduce depression and fatigue.
- **Nutrition** – appetites are altered especially during chemo. Certain foods can help maintain energy;
- **Support** - seek support from a support group where others are going through similar experiences, from a therapist or from family and friends;
- **Expression** – Express your feelings through outlets such as art, music, dance or writing;
- **Complementary approaches** – meditation, acupuncture and massage help manage stress as well as side effects of treatment.

Our Clubhouse Westmoreland offers exercise classes like yoga and stretching, art workshops, cooking demonstrations and support groups for anyone touched by cancer including the family and friends of a loved one with a cancer diagnosis.

To learn more about Our Clubhouse and ways to manage these difficult emotions, visit www.ourclubhouse.org or call (724) 221-6182.
People should have greater expectations for what they can do with their bodies as they age. An increase in awareness of the numerous options available - not only in restoring physical ailments, but preventing them in the first place - is paramount in this realization. We need to understand that we do not have to age that way if we adopt a proactive approach to one’s health. And posture is where it can all begin!

Posture is much more important than people believe. When your head, shoulders and hips are in the correct position, years disappear from your appearance. Proper alignment of your head, spine and hips will lessen the amount of strain on your muscles and ligaments. Standing, walking and even athletic abilities are improved significantly when posture is corrected.

State of the art computer analysis, available at Diamond Physical Therapy, provides a detailed postural assessment. This analysis not only reveals in great detail the postural issues that exist, but also calculates the extra strain on the neck and lower back. The severity of the postural changes the client has undergone is able to be calculated, as well as demonstrate the long-term effects their posture will have if not addressed.

Physical therapists are able to utilize many treatments and modalities to achieve these goals. However, with the newest revelations regarding the importance of posture, only a few physical therapists in the region have the technology and knowledge to most effectively address these issues.

Utilizing the area’s only Meilus Muscular Therapy Robot, flexibility and movement is restored of the body. This robot is used by professional sports teams around the country and is very much in demand in states, such as California and Florida, where doctors utilize its capabilities to assist in loosening and lengthening muscles.

Diamond Physical Therapy also has the experience and training to address the issues affecting you by creating and implementing an individually tailored program. In conjunction with exercises to address your postural problems, we implement technologically advanced treatments, such as H-Wave, Inter-X, laser, and ST5 to address both acute and chronic pain. These treatments, along with special tools like Hawks Grips (an Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization tool), allow us to break up scar tissue, loosen muscles and fascia, improve movement and further decrease pain.

YOUR healthcare IS YOUR CHOICE! Do not let anyone dictate your care. And with direct access, in most cases you do not need to have a prescription to see a direct access licensed physical therapist.

Jerry DeRiso, MPT, is a physical therapist at Diamond Physical Therapy. For more information or to make an appointment, visit diamond-pt.com or call (724) 238-9185 or (724) 853-6800.
10 REASONS Why Spinal Care Should Be an Integral Part of Your Life

By Dr. Tim Strittmatter, DC

1. Increased Energy
As Dr. Roger Sperry, a Nobel Prize winner for brain research once said, “Better than 90% of the energy output of the brain is used in relating to the physical body in its gravitational field. The more mechanically distorted a person is, the less energy available for thinking, metabolism, and healing.” The nerves that connect the brain to the body travel at 220 mph, and a spinal misalignment diminishes the transmission speed by 70%, or to a mere 66 mph. How can the cells in the body, that are dependent on nerve transmission, be expected to stay healthy and well with a spinal misalignment? They can’t. That is why monthly spinal check-ups are really nervous system check-ups to keep this system running at 100% and improving your energy efficiency.

2. Stronger Immune System
In 1975, Ronald Pero, Ph.D., chief of cancer prevention research at New York’s Preventive Medicine Institute and professor in Environmental Health at New York University, began researching the most scientifically valid ways to estimate individual susceptibility to various chronic diseases. The chiropractic patients were shown to have a 200% greater immune competence than people who had not received chiropractic care, and a 400% greater immune competence than people with cancer or serious diseases. Pero concluded, ‘Chiropractic may optimize whatever genetic abilities you have so that you can fully resist serious disease.’

3. Increased Overall Health
Coulter and researchers at the RAND Corporation performed an analysis of an insurance database, comparing persons receiving chiropractic care with non-chiropractic patients. The study consisted of senior citizens over 73. Recipients of chiropractic care reported better overall health, spent fewer days in hospitals and nursing homes, used fewer prescription drugs, and were more active than the non-chiropractic patients.

4. Maximized Athletic Performance
From improving your golf game to professional athletes’ feats, spinal/body balance is the key to preventing injuries and maximizing performance. One of the biggest causes of injuries in athletes is asymmetry throughout the body. Chiropractic adjustments allow the body to move freely and balanced. When your spine is out of alignment, your muscles tighten causing decreases in ranges of joint motion, leading to pain and injury. Relieving misalignments throughout the spine frees up areas of tension throughout the body, reducing pain and improving mobility. A balanced spine can even improve your exercise form – especially during overhead lifts.

5. Decreased Healing Time
Misalignments throughout the body slow down healing. When a person is injured, his or her body tries to protect itself with muscle guarding or spasms and inflammation. This increases the time it takes for the person to heal. Spinal alignments speed up the recovery process of your muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints because they increase circulation to normalize stress within the injured tissue, increase immune response, and improve brain to body communication.

6. Improved Sleep Quality
A common experience after a spinal alignment is having a deeper and more restful sleep. Once the body is in a state of balance, the muscles are more relaxed, you’re able to breathe more effortlessly, and staying in one position in bed becomes easier.

7. Preventing Joint Degeneration
A misaligned spine/body causes excess wear and tear on all joints of the body – especially the spine, hips, knees, and ankles – leading to pain and degeneration. This degeneration leads to hip and knee replacements at a cost of $40,264 per joint. It is way less expensive and eliminates much suffering when you stay well-aligned through the course of your life.

8. Posture Balance
When you have forward head carriage, it diminishes your ability to expand your lungs fully, resulting in a 15+% decrease in oxygen utilization in the body. Over time, this leads to general fatigue and lack of stamina. In addition, forward head carriage can lead to the development of TMJ pain, tight neck, migraines, headaches, seizures, disc and joint degeneration, thoracic outlet syndrome, carpal tunnel, facial twitching, neck pain, and pain between the shoulders.

9. Lower Blood Pressure
A special chiropractic adjustment (NUCCA) can significantly lower high blood pressure, a placebo-controlled study suggests. “This procedure has the effect of not one, but two blood-pressure medications given in combination,” study leader George Bakris, MD, tells WebMD. It is easier to maintain normal blood pressure than fix it once it is elevated, so stay well aligned.

10. Less Disability
A study found that you are less likely to end up disabled if you get your care from a doctor of chiropractic(DC). (Occupational and Environmental Medicine 2011 (Apr).

For more information or to make an appointment, you can reach Dr. Tim Strittmatter, DC at Keystone Spinal Care and Wellness Center at (724) 216-9000 or keystonespinal@gmail.com, or log on to Keystonespinal.com.

Dr. Tim also offers Upper Cervical Care and Nutrition Counseling.

“IT IS EASIER AND MORE ECONOMICAL TO STAY WELL THAN WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE FORCED TO TREAT THE DISEASE.”
**Ask The Expert: Murrysville Acupuncture**

**Brandy Maupin L.Ac., Dipl.Ac (NCCAOM)**

**Q:** My knee pain has also put stress on my low back causing tightness and discomfort. Will I need different treatments to address both issues?

**A:** Not necessarily. Pain anywhere in the body creates tension elsewhere in the system. Because acupuncture naturally treats the whole body, it can help alleviate your knee pain and it will also relax and calm the body/mind so you are more able to heal faster with less overall stress.

**Q:** I recently started having trouble sleeping at night due to more stress at work. Can acupuncture help?

**A:** Yes, there is a good chance it can. When the body and mind are under stress, there is often an internal conflict that causes restlessness. Acupuncture works very well at bringing balance back to the body, so that it can better deal with the stressors in life. Acupuncture can help you maintain a more relaxed healthy outlook on life and all it brings your way.

For more information on acupuncture, you can reach Brandy Maupin at Murrysville Acupuncture at (724) 212-6594 or visit the website www.murrysvilleacupuncture.com

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**Why would people travel to see Dr. Tim?**

**To Experience NUCCA and FEEL BETTER!**

Experience a unique health procedure in Western PA that is **unlocking the grips of pain and suffering** in many people’s lives, giving them hope of living a life free of drugs, and excessive doctor visits.

Many health conditions that are puzzling MDs, PTs, and other health professionals have been successfully cared for with the NUCCA procedure. The NUCCA procedure influences one of the highest control centers over body balance, the brain stem and central nervous system.

**NUCCA**, a specialty in the Spinal Care Field, is a procedure that involves a **gentle touch and controlled contact** on the first vertebrae in the neck known as the C-1 vertebrae or Atlas. Through precise mathematical calculations, physics, and biomechanics, minute spinal corrections are made. These corrections affect the nerves in the body that regulate and control all vital functions including circulation, breathing, digestion, reproduction, and muscle movement.

Many of the aches, pains, and dysfunctions that people live with every day can be reduced or even eliminated through this procedure.

**Here’s what some of Dr. Strittmatter’s patients have said:**

“I was surprised how gentle the correction was...I was having Migraines a few times a week. Over the last 3 months I have had one mild headache with only 4 spinal corrections.”

- Vanessa

“As an active runner I developed hip, knee, and ankle pain. Dr. Tim told me I was misaligned similar to how cars misalign. Since the NUCCA alignment I am pain free and feeling great!”

- Joe

**CALL TODAY**

**724-216-9000**

to schedule your appointment

**Keystone Spinal Care & Wellness Center**

4000 Hempfield Plaza Blvd, Suite 981

Greensburg, PA 15601

Imagine having just gone through the trauma of a mastectomy, then having to go to a store that provides wheelchairs, oxygen, and other durable medical equipment to get your breast form and bra. And then further imagine being taken into a back room by a gentleman where you have just two breast forms and four types of bras to choose from.

That’s exactly what Kathy Garrison had to do in the 1980s following her surgery, and it was from that experience that K & J’s Complete Woman Mastectomy & Wig Boutique was born.

Kathy’s daughter, Kristin Garrison-Smithal, a cancer survivor herself, is also employed at K & J’s. Kristin explained, “My mother was 36 at the time, so she was pretty young, and that (experience) was traumatic. I remember her saying, ‘There has to be a better way for women who are going through this.’

So she called the number on the box of breast forms and said, ‘I don’t like how I got this breast form, what can I do?’ And that’s how it started.”

Kathy added, “Back then, the mission (of K & J) was to provide a beautiful bra and a prosthesis so women could look and feel good again.” Since then, however, the boutique has grown. As Kristin commented, “We try to follow the needs of our patients, and as they come in and identify needs that aren’t being met elsewhere, we’ve taken them on.”

That includes expanding the company’s compression and wig business. Women who are experiencing hair loss will find a large selection of wigs from which to choose. “The thing that’s helpful for our patients is that it’s private, we have separate rooms in both of our stores (Bethel Park and Monroeville) for wig fittings. Plus, we make sure that it’s personalized by scheduling each client a private appointment with one of our wig-fitting specialists.”

Additionally, compression garments can treat a variety of women’s health conditions. Kathy herself has struggled for years with lymphedema, a side effect of her cancer treatments. K & J’s staff is trained to provide women with the appropriate and correctly sized compression garments they need.

Kristin further commented on the rising number of women who had lumpectomies or breast reconstruction in the past, and because of aging and other factors, have changes in the size and shape of their breasts. “These patients are no longer seeing their oncologists or surgeons, and are out of balance and stuffing their bras because they don’t know we have products covered by their insurance. We’re trying to get the word out, because we want to help these women to be healthy, and to look and feel good.”

For more information, call (412) 835-5093 or visit www.kandjscompletwoman.com.

Kristin said that K & J’s Complete Woman Mastectomy & Wig Boutique being family owned and employing local people is very important to her mother. “I went to school with one of our newest employees. We had lost touch, but her mother was diagnosed with lymphoma, receiving chemotherapy, and came into my mom’s shop for a wig. I got in touch with her and she’s now working here. She’s not family, but our families have known each other for more than 35 years. So we’re expanding, but we’re keeping it close-knit.”
Women’s Health
Physical Therapy for Female Incontinence

By Amy Cline

Female incontinence can be a very stressful and embarrassing condition, but it helps to know that you are not alone. Approximately 25 to 45 percent of women nationwide suffer from this condition, which affects women of all ages and races.

“One of the main causes of incontinence is weakened pelvic floor muscles, which support the internal organs of the pelvis and prevent urine or stool leakage,” explains Andrea Shafran, MPT, WCS, CLT-LANA, assistant director of women’s rehab and men’s health for UPMC Centers for Rehab Services’ Delmont location. “Pelvic floor muscles in spasm can contribute to this condition and can cause pain in the rectal or pelvic region.”

TYPES OF INCONTINENCE INCLUDE:
- Stress urinary incontinence: the involuntary loss of small amounts of urine while coughing, laughing, or participating in a physical activity. Weakened pelvic floor muscles may be ineffective in preventing leakage.
- Urge urinary incontinence: the involuntary loss of large amounts of urine associated with an abrupt and strong desire to urinate often due to an oversensitive bladder.
- Fecal incontinence: may result from weakened external anal sphincter and pelvic floor muscles. This is often seen in women during the postpartum period, and in the elderly.

Physical therapy is available to treat female incontinence and help improve your overall quality of life and happiness.

“During your initial evaluation, your physical therapist will determine the type and extent of incontinence you are suffering from, the strength of your pelvic floor muscles, and if you have other musculoskeletal issues affecting your pelvis,” says Andrea, who’s a board certified specialist in women’s health. “Your therapist then works with you to develop an individualized exercise treatment program. By following this program, many patients are able to avoid medication or surgery.”

“The good news is that incontinence is treatable and generally does not require surgery.”

- Andrea Shafran, MPT, WCS, CLT-LANA, assistant director of women’s rehab and men’s health for UPMC Centers for Rehab Services’ Delmont location

Some methods of treating female incontinence through physical therapy include:
- Pelvic floor exercises, sometimes called Kegel exercises, which tighten and tone the pelvic floor muscles. Learning to use these muscles during activities that cause your leakage is key to success.
- Bladder training, with the help of your therapist, will teach you to extend the time between voiding, develop a schedule to use the bathroom, and manage overwhelming urges to urinate.
- Biofeedback involves becoming attuned to your body’s functions in order to gain control over your muscles and suppress urges.

“The good news is that incontinence is treatable and generally does not require surgery,” says Andrea. “Through physical therapy treatment, you can learn how to effectively use these muscles to address incontinence, urgency, and resolve muscle spasms.”

UPMC Centers for Rehab Services’ women’s rehabilitation program provides specialized physical therapy for women. To make an appointment at our Delmont location, please call (724) 468-4541 or visit UPMC.com/4CRS.

32 LAPS NAILED.
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Sometimes when you’re recovering from an injury, it seems like you’ll never get back to doing what you love. But we have customized physical, occupational, and speech therapy programs to help you reach your goals—along with some of the region’s most experienced therapists. And with more than 70 locations and flexible hours, we are very convenient.

To make an appointment, call 1-888-723-4277 or visit UPMC.com/4CRS.
Understanding Varicose Veins

There are three main categories of veins in your legs. Deep veins, found at the bone and muscle level, carry most of the blood back to the heart. Superficial veins, closer to the skin surface, carry the blood to the deep veins. Perforator veins join the deep and superficial systems. Along the blood's pathway are many one-way, cup-like valves that open as blood travels upward, then snapping shut to keep the blood from flowing backward.

When the valves do not close properly, blood escapes and collects in the vein. The excess blood weakens the vein walls and causes the vein to bulge and twist, often seen through the skin's surface. This condition, known as venous insufficiency, can lead to complications such as varicose veins.

Common causes of varicose veins include genetics, aging, pregnancy, standing or sitting for long periods, obesity, chronic constipation, and a sedentary lifestyle. Legs that swell, throb, burn, cramp, itch, feel tired or heavy can also be warning signs of varicose veins. Left untreated, they can progress to more severe complications such as phlebitis (inflammation of the veins), skin ulcers, and blood clots.

A qualified physician can accurately diagnose venous insufficiency by utilizing an ultrasound exam that charts the blood flow in the veins, and rules out other leg disorders. Endovenous Laser Treatment (EVLT) or Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA), nonsurgical treatments for varicose veins, are extremely successful, in-office, minimally invasive procedures that are completed in less than an hour and are covered by most insurance carriers. Following an EVLT or RFA procedure, patients are able to walk out of the office and return to their daily routines.

Treatment is also available if prior surgery has left you with varicose vein recurrence, or if unsightly spider veins are making you feel self-conscious.

From severe vein complications to cosmetic spider veins, Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates is your solution to pain-free beautiful legs.

Call today to schedule an evaluation with Dr. Geskin at our Jeannette or Jefferson Hills location.

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For more information or to schedule an evaluation, call Dr. Gennady Geskin, Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates (A Division of Jefferson Cardiology Association), at (412) 469-1500 or visit the website www.greaterpittsburghvascular.com.

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Living with Bulging, Aching Varicose Veins?

Do your legs burn, throb, swell, suffer muscle cramps or feel heavy? Have you put off seeking treatment because you didn’t want surgery or thought it was something you just had to live with?

Varicose veins are not just a cosmetic problem. Left untreated, they can lead to skin changes, bleeding and ulcers. Endovenous Laser Treatment (EVLT) or Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) are extremely successful, in-office, minimally invasive procedures that takes less than an hour and is covered by most insurance carriers. Following an EVLT or RFA procedure, patients are able to walk out of the office and return to their daily routines.

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www.greaterpittsburghvascular.com
Westmoreland County is one of western Pennsylvania’s premier locations, rich with assets: a bounty of natural resources, pleasant communities, popular historical attractions, plenty of recreational activities, a collection of highly regarded colleges and universities and some of the region’s cultural gems. Westmoreland County has a proud past, having played a significant role in American early history, and it is thriving today, with a growing population of 365,000 people.

But, Westmoreland County is also a county with a public health crisis. Drug abuse and drug overdoses have reached epidemic proportions in the region and are taking a tremendous toll, impacting not only individuals and families but also the community as a whole. Overdose from illegal and prescription drugs has been the leading cause of death among accidental deaths in the County for seven of the last eight years. Last year, there were 126 overdose deaths in Westmoreland County, compared to 57 in 2010 – an astonishing number, but so much more than a number - behind every statistic, there is a personal story of tragedy, deep grief and ruined lives.

As in many counties across the nation, substance use disorder is a major public health problem in Westmoreland County, where it is taking a toll on the local economy, public services, business and public safety, affecting every resident, whether they recognize it or not. The problem is complex, massive and daunting, but the good news is that it is more than matched by the expertise, energy and determination of those who seek to bring it to an end. Two of those warriors are Tim Phillips, Director, Drug Overdose Task Force, and Chuck Chappell, Coordinator of Community Prevention Services for Westmoreland Community Action.

The Drug Overdose Task Force is striving to engage the community in addressing substance use by offering public education through community events, coalition building, and a colorful, informative, user-friendly web site (www.GETINwestmoreland.info). “The mission of the task force is to support and facilitate community efforts to decrease the number of overdose deaths in our county,” Phillips explains. “The incidence of overdose has been climbing dramatically since 2002; it has risen by 290% and is continuing to rise. Two of those warriors are Tim Phillips, Director, Drug Overdose Task Force, and Chuck Chappell, Coordinator of Community Prevention Services for Westmoreland Community Action.

One of the most innovative elements of the task force’s prevention efforts is a set of “tool kits” – resources, customized for various sectors of the community: business and industry / community and faith leaders / educators / parents / educators / youth / educators / teachers / community / public service / law enforcement / others. These “toolkits” contain programs and initiatives that offer solutions. They can be explored at www.GETINwestmoreland.info and downloaded for use.

Throughout the Commonwealth, and nationally, treatment options for those seeking long-term recovery has not kept up with the demand as the crisis has escalated, but here in Westmoreland there are plans to develop additional treatment resources. “Ideally, we’d like to offer treatment on demand,” Phillips says. “But sometimes there is a delay because our resources are limited.”

In 2019, Westmoreland Community Action launched a substance use Helpline with generous funding from the Allegheny Foundation (1-844-897-8927, 3:30-11 pm). Chappell says that all members of the Helpline staff are certified recovery specialists. “We work with people in addiction and those who are new to recovery. We can guide them to the support services and resources that will help them.” Phillips describes that as a “warm handoff” – sending a client on to the right services, in a caring and supportive way.

Chappell is pleased with the positive feedback their endeavors are generating. “We’re seeing an increase in calls to the hotline,” says Chappell. “Our outreach efforts are making connections. We’ll go anywhere – health fairs, churches, social events – to spread the word.”

“Drug abuse is an equal opportunity destroyer; it affects people of all ages, from all social backgrounds. There are common factors, and one of them is a history of unresolved trauma, which can affect anyone. If you need help, don’t be afraid or ashamed. You can private-message us on Facebook or call the hotline,” says Chappell.

Phillips, Chappell and countless others in our region are committed to educating the public about substance use, and their message is one of hope. “We want people to understand that addiction is treatable,” says Phillips. “It is NOT a death sentence. Many people get clean and remain clean, and go on to live healthy, productive lives. Unfortunately, there is a persistent stigma that says those who abuse drugs are doomed. It’s simply not true. Treatment is available and recovery is possible.”

To schedule a community education event or Naloxone training, call (724) 884-9000, ext. 4450. Additional resources can be found at www.PASTOP.org. To contact the Drug Overdose Task Force, visit www.GETINwestmoreland.info.
Experts believe the opioid epidemic, fueled by a combination of prescription pain relievers and illegal opioids like fentanyl and heroin, is one of the worst public health crises in this country’s history. Nearly 2 million Americans abused or were dependent on prescription opioids in 2014—more than any year on record—and six out of 10 drug overdose deaths that year involved an opioid. 2

Across the country, community pharmacists are engaging in the fight against the prescription opioid epidemic. Using resources from the Generation Rx initiative—a partnership between the Cardinal Health Foundation and The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy—they are educating their patients and communities about safe medication practices and the dangers of prescription drug misuse among people of all ages.

**Betsy Walker**, Director, Community Relations; and co-director of Generation Rx, spoke with **Edward L. Christofano, R.Ph.,** President / CEO of Hayden’s Pharmacy, for a projected total of 130 deaths with an additional 42 pending toxicology, for a projected total of 130.

As in most other parts of the country, the epidemic affects people of all ages, from grade school students to the elderly. There are so many people who don’t know how dangerous some of the drugs they have in their medicine cabinets are. There’s a tremendous need for education and understanding of drug misuse and addiction.

At The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy, we learned that knowledge is power. Providing knowledge to the public about prescription drug medications and their abuse potential gives everyone in a community the power to fight this epidemic. I have authored a community presentation titled “The NEW Backyard – do you know?” to bring the abuse and misuse of prescription medications to the community. This presentation is allows participants to understand how medications work in the body, how to protect medications in the home setting from pilferage, how medication can be dangerous and have addictive properties, and explain exactly how to handle opioid overdoses with the safe administration of Narcan (Naloxone.)

**WALKER:** You’ve focused so much of your community work on fighting prescription medication misuse. What inspires that work?

**CHRISTOFANO:** The opioid epidemic is a particularly big problem in Westmoreland County. We have the highest rate of opioid overdoses in the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Already this year as of November 2016, there have been 88 overdose-related deaths with an additional 42 pending toxicology, for a projected total of 130.

As in most other parts of the country, the epidemic affects people of all ages, from grade school students to the elderly. There are so many people who don’t know how dangerous some of the drugs they have in their medicine cabinets are. There’s a tremendous need for education and understanding of drug misuse and addiction.

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**WALKER:** Can you share some of the highlights of the education you do around prescription drug misuse?

**CHRISTOFANO:** My focus is simple: America’s biggest drug abuse problem is not on the streets: It’s in our medicine cabinets. According to leading national studies, about 25 percent of teens report abusing prescription medicines. I quote that statistic all the time, and it still amazes me. For the most part, these teens are getting the drugs from medicine cabinets of family and friends.

Even now, with the opioid epidemic in the news so frequently, a lot of people don’t realize how dangerous some of these medicine cabinets can be. From opioid based medications to medications used to regulate disease states, it is the temptation factor which entices our youth to experiment with prescription medications. It is the new “thrill seeker” among our youth with prescription medications that has the potential properties to alter normal bodily function or cease of life.

**WALKER:** Through Generation Rx, we often quote the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, which tells us that nearly 70 percent of those who misuse prescription drugs get them from family members or friends, and often from the medicine cabinet.

**CHRISTOFANO:** Prescription medications in the home are so tempting. Anybody who wants to begin abusing prescription drugs knows that medicine cabinets are the best place to get them. So let’s get rid of the temptation. Go through medicine cabinets and pull out every unused or expired prescription medication and get rid of it. The medications that are residual from a previous procedure, surgery, or prior medication therapy need to be removed from temptation. It’s also important to dispose of these unused or expired medications properly.

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is national event that makes it easy to dispose of medications. You don’t even have to get out of your car. A lot of communities also have a permanent drug drop box where you can get rid of medications any time of year. If you live in Western Pennsylvania, you can drop off your medications to any of the Hayden’s Pharmacy locations, anytime.

All current medications you use should be kept in a locked cabinet or in a drug lock box. Whenever we dispense a narcotic, we give the patient a small, virtually indestructible lock box to keep it in. In fact, we give a lock box to anyone who asks for it. Preventing the temptation is absolute key in this battle at our homes.
WALKER: Generation Rx was born within the pharmacy community. It makes sense that a program intended to educate people about the dangers of prescription drug misuse came from the pharmacy community: A community-based pharmacist is the most accessible health-care provider in a community. I believe the position comes with responsibility to reach beyond the pharmacy counter.

CHRISTOFANO: We have so many opportunities to engage with and join forces with other community leaders—from law enforcement to school superintendents to faith-based leaders—to improve the health of a community.

That said, building an audience willing to hear about the problem of prescription drug abuse took a good bit of groundwork. I started with high schools: I reached out to school boards, to school superintendents, to school teachers, to school nurses. I just wanted to have the conversation about the epidemic. And once these school leaders learned some of the statistics, they wanted to engage.

After I made my first presentation to a school board, I posted some highlights on our pharmacy’s Facebook page. Suddenly, I started getting lots of invitations to talk to other school groups.

I’m also a member of the Westmoreland County Drug and Alcohol Commission and a board member of the Council for Substance Abuse and Youth. Both these organizations are doing great work in fighting prescription drug abuse, and I’m really proud to partner with them. They also help connect me with lots of new audiences. Before this year is over, I hope to have presented in 17 school districts in Western Pennsylvania. And I find I’m no longer just talking with school groups: I have been invited to speak with treatment providers in Youngwood, Greensburg, Mount Pleasant, and Donegal servicing neighborhoods since 1992. If you are interested in the “The New Backyard – Do You Know?”, feel free to email Ed Christofano at edc@haydenspharmacy.com. For more information, visit the website www.haydenspharmacy.com.

CHRISTOFANO: I talk about naloxone in every one of my presentations. Many people are not aware of what it is. Some are afraid to use it, and some people think that distributing naloxone might encourage more drug use. But there isn’t evidence to support that fear.

About 28,000 people in the U.S. died from opioid overdose in 2014; about 2,500 of them were Pennsylvanians. Many overdose deaths could have been avoided with immediate access to naloxone.

I’ve been working with the Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission and the Council for Substance Abuse and Youth to get naloxone rescue kits into area high schools. I’m helping to write policy and procedures for the administration and storage of the kits, and my staff and I train first responders, teachers and parents to administer naloxone.

We can save lives with naloxone, and then we can help get people into treatment. That’s got to be a big part of the fight to end the opioid epidemic.

Please visit the Generation Rx site http://www.generationrx.org/ to access free, ready-to-download resources to help educate people of all ages about safe medication practices.
By Nancy Kennedy

Traditionally, the New Year is a time for new beginnings and many people embark on self-improvement projects. Whether you actually make resolutions or simply decide to make better choices, the post-holiday period is an ideal time to improve one's health and well-being. We have assembled a compendium of excellent advice from regional healthcare and wellness experts about the best ways to make this your healthiest year ever.

Weight Management on YOUR Terms

“For many the New Year means starting a new weight loss program. Key to successful weight loss is accountability and awareness of how much you eat and what you eat, while making it livable. To make the lifestyle livable all programs should be designed around YOUR foods on YOUR terms, with no magic pills, no special foods and no dieting otherwise. Additionally, if you are post-rehab, following cardiac rehab or physical therapy, it’s important to keep active and not return to a sedentary lifestyle. At My Fitness Kitchen, we can help people make that essential transition safely and effectively.”

-Gregory Habib, M.D., orthopedic surgeon

Exercise and Prevent Health Complications

“Life is all about being active. Immobility leads to all sorts of health complications and eventually to organ failure. To me, exercise is like religion and I practice what I preach. I want to get people moving. You can’t enjoy life if you’re stuck at home with arthritic joints that limit your activity. I believe that my job is to get you mobile and keep you mobile. That’s how you prevent complications of aging, like diabetes and heart disease.”

-Gregory Habib, M.D., orthopedic surgeon

Get the Flu Shot for Yourself AND Your Children

“When you get the flu vaccine for yourself and your children, you may be saving lives: your own, theirs, and maybe mine and my kids’ lives. You’re protecting your loved ones and the loved ones of your neighbors, co-workers and people you’ve never met. It’s a small act that has enormous benefits: the flu vaccine saves lives.”

-Robert Ketyer, M.D., Pediatric Alliance

Prepare to Quit Smoking For Good

“It’s easy to quit smoking, it’s much harder to stay quit. This is why it is so important to prepare and plan to quit. It’s not as easy as just putting down the cigarettes. What are you going to do now that you aren’t going out for a cigarette break? What is going to keep your commute smoke-free? Research shows that people who prepare to quit are more likely to stay quit. Smokers that use both professional help and pharmacotherapy (patches, nicotine gum) are twice as successful.”

-Tobacco Free Allegheny (1 800-QUIT NOW)

It’s OK to ask for Help

“Learn to ask for and accept help. Our goal at All Abilities is to help people maintain themselves in the community, with independence and safety, and to keep them out of institutional care. Many of the clients served by All Abilities have been trying to manage on their own, despite the often severe obstacles posed by their disabilities. Some get scattered support from family, friends and neighbors but that is likely to be inconsistent. Small things become big things, when they are impossible to complete. It’s okay to ask for help – that’s what we are here for.”

-Tina Jackson-Heacox, All Abilities

Outdoor Fun and Exercise

“Find an enjoyable activity to do in every season of the year. In winter, get outdoors. You can make a snowman, have a snowball fight, go cross country skiing or just explore. Westmoreland County has many state parks and the Laurel Highlands hiking trail. Try to do these activities several times each week, in every season. You are more likely to exercise if you’re having fun outside while you’re doing it.”

-Janell Esmery-Smith, PT, MS, NSCA Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, Excela Health

Email your health tips to goodhealthmag@aol.com.
By Chris Baratz

As we embark on a new year, we are all thinking… how can I make 2017 more enjoyable, fulfilling, and a little more about me.

I personally came across this same dilemma in the summer of 2013 due to a back injury from shoveling dirt and mulch when I realized I am not immortal. I luckily was able to make an appointment at a Massage Envy in Pittsburgh and after starting regular monthly massages and facials from Massage Envy, I realized how much of a difference it has made in my life.

After a massage or facial, I am 100% more relaxed and stress free. I have more energy and focus for work and exercise. My anxiety goes away, my facial complexion looks great, and I feel happier, healthier and more confident. So what did I do? I opened a Massage Envy in Greensburg, PA and Morgantown, WV in March of 2014.

Benefits of Massage

Regular massages have been proven for decades to:
• Reduce stress, headaches, sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, muscle tension and pain.
• Encourages relaxation. From the minute you walk into a Massage Envy you are encouraged to relax from gentle spa music, a beautiful entrance and tranquility room, and a warm smile from our professional Licensed Massage Therapists and Estheticians.
• Improves posture for those of us who are always driving or work on computers regularly.
• Lowers blood pressure
• Improves flexibility and range of motion
• Strengthens the immune system by boosting white blood cell counts.

Benefits of Regular Facials – for Men and Women
• Anti-Aging – getting a facial once a month will reduce fine lines and wrinkles, brighten your skin, increase collagen where you need it most, and help tighten the skin around your eyes.
• Deep and relaxing cleaning to rejuvenate your skin.
• Gentle extraction of clogged pores allows your skin to breathe better and look healthier.
• Masks, serums, and exfoliators help calm and hydrate your skin, and decongest your skin to look its best.
• Best of All: all of our facials are customized for your particular skin care concerns and needs and are implemented by our professional and estheticians.

Give yourself the gift of a healthier and happier 2017 by scheduling a massage and facial at Massage Envy in Greensburg.

Chris Baratz is the owner of the Massage Envy location in Greensburg, PA. If you would like to make an appointment or purchase a gift card, call (724) 832-8383 (1420 Greengate Centre, Greensburg).
Good Advice for Parents of Children with Special Needs

By Nancy Kennedy

Experienced professionals and parents from throughout the Westmoreland County region have graciously shared with the Guide to Good Health their best advice and wisdom for parents of special needs children.

Become your child’s advocate

“Your child may receive services from many professionals, but they will come and go, while you are the one constant in your child’s life. Parents often tell me that they need an advocate, but what they really need is to become their own advocate. Part of what we do at PEAL is empower parents to act as advocates and communicate assertively with professionals, because no one knows your child like you do. Professionals have a lot of knowledge, but parents do too – plus, parents have vision for the child.”

- Cindy Duch, Director of Parent Advising, PEAL Center

Set boundaries with your professional team

“When you have services involved in your life, it is important for both the provider and client to set boundaries during the initiation of services. For this to take place, open lines of communication are essential. This is extremely important. Going forward both parties know what to expect from each other and what is acceptable or not.”

-Shacoya Bates, SWAN Permanency Caseworker/ Caregiver Family Support Coordinator, Every Child

Resolving conflicts with professionals

As a teacher myself, I often come across conflict with parents regarding their children. It is important for both sides to keep some things in mind. From a teacher’s point of view, most teachers are using evidenced based programming and are attempting to mold the student into the best version of themselves, though sometimes it may appear that they are being extra hard. Teachers are trained to see a child’s potential and push it as far as they can. However, from a parental perspective, there is a lot more emotion involved. There might be issues within the home or things that have been tried in the past that weren’t successful.

There can be a battle between maintaining privacy and disclosing necessary information, but I believe open communication solves all conflict. Once a parent understands that the professional is doing everything in their power to help their individual be successful it often helps break down those walls. In the same respect, once a professional understands that the parents are going to be equal partners regarding their children, it can work wonders.

- Melissa Fligger, president, Autism Society of America, Westmoreland Chapter

Develop a personal peer support system

“My best advice is to develop a good support system. When you are going through things, you can feel very alone, but when you have a peer who understands and supports you, it resets that. You may not be comfortable talking with professionals about all the things you are feeling, but a personal support system gives you a safe outlet, enabling you to rant, to laugh, and to talk about anything. I also recommend having a professional support system – a group that includes your medical team and your school team.”

- Debbie Leggens, Disability Advocate, Achieva/ARC of Westmoreland County

Focus on the positive

"I read a touching story from a mother who have given birth to a child with Down’s Syndrome. Shortly after the child was born, she was approached by friends and relatives expressing their sympathy over the fact that her child was born with a genetic disorder. However, she had one visitor who took one look at the child and exclaimed, “my what beautiful eyes!”. The mother was moved beyond words that someone had focused on a positive trait of her baby. We as parents, professionals, friends and family members need to always focus on the positives and strengths of each individual.”

- Rebecca Faulk, Agency Director, Ligonier Valley Learning Center, Inc.

Keep pushing forward

“Developing coping skills can be a daunting task. It takes practice and patience and it’s important to remember that setbacks might occur, but it is most important to not get down on yourself and keep pushing forward!” When trying to find resources and services that can help, I start with places like United Way, Community Centers, and schools. Most have a running list of organizations in your area that can assist you. Be prepared with questions to make sure you are choosing the program that is best for your family.

Google is also a good source, but you have to be specific.

- Shacoya Bates, SWAN Permanency Caseworker

Siblings

Siblings often feel left out because their other siblings require a lot of extra time and attention due to therapies and appointments and concerning behaviors. It’s important that parents try to give siblings their own “special time.” Parents need to create a safe place where all the siblings feel they’re able to communicate their feelings. Sibling support groups are very successful in helping them deal with and their own often confused feelings.

- Melissa Fligger, president, ASA-WCC

Plan for the future/Ask for Help

“Plan for your child’s future. It’s so easy to get caught up in the present, but you must keep your eyes open and have goals for the future, plus a plan to get there. Make plans so that you will have peace of mind, knowing that you set things up for when your child is out of the school system, when it is much harder to get what you need.”

“One of the hardest but most important things is to be able to reach out and ask for help. Once you get past that first step, it will get easier. Reach out to a friend, a therapist or a counselor.

- Sue Klaus, ACHIEVA/ The Arc of Westmoreland County, parent advocate

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Integrating School and Community Support through the Individualized Education Plan Process

by M. Ryan Growden, MA, LBS, BCBA

For many families of school-age children with special needs, the development and revision of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can be a difficult and even overwhelming experience. Despite the many challenges associated with navigating the special education system, the IEP process presents a unique opportunity for parents, school personnel, and community service providers to collaborate and share ideas and information to promote student success. By taking the appropriate steps before, during, and after the IEP meeting, parent(s)/guardian(s) can play an active role in the coordination of therapeutic services across settings and providers.

One of the most important steps a parent/guardian can take to ensure continuity of care is preparation. Prior to your child’s annual IEP meeting, take some time to review his/her treatment plans from outpatient service providers. Look for your child’s needs and strengths, as well as the specific interventions identified. If the treatment plans have not been recently updated, have a conversation with his/her therapist to help discuss progress and potential next steps. The IEP team can use this information to guide intervention in the school. Remember that many therapists are willing to collaborate directly with school based service providers with parental consent.

During the IEP meeting, parent(s)/guardian(s) should be active participants in discussions related to the student’s progress, goals, and intervention plans. Be certain to share the information that was provided by community based therapists as well. If your child receives multiple therapies, consider asking his/her Behavioral Specialist Consultant or Case Manager to attend the IEP meeting. Remember to also ask school personnel about their willingness to collaborate with community based professionals. Active and consistent collaboration is the key to successful coordination of care. Above all, never be afraid to ask questions!

Following the IEP meeting it is important to review the information discussed with community service providers. Some families find it helpful to share a copy of the IEP document or Positive Behavior Support Plan with therapists, while others prefer to provide only a summary of the student’s progress, goals, and supports. Throughout the year, keep in touch with the IEP team and ask questions about your child’s progress and response to intervention, then share this information with community therapists.

By maintaining open communication and sharing information with both school and community based professionals, family members can take an active role in the education and treatment of their student.

In supporting students with special needs, consistency often makes the difference between an intervention being successful or unsuccessful. Through the IEP process, parent(s)/guardian(s) have the opportunity to gather and share information from both school-based and outpatient service providers in an effort to coordinate goals, intervention strategies, and generalization techniques. By maintaining active and consistent communication among school personnel, family members, and outpatient service providers, parent(s)/guardian(s) will increase the likelihood of a positive response to all supportive services.

M. Ryan Growden, MA, LBS, BCBA, is the Clinical Director at the New Story School in Monroeville - a licensed, private school which offers a special education academic learning environment and therapeutic services to help children achieve success while coping with emotional and behavioral challenges. For more information, visit www.newstory.com
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, IT WAS IDENTIFIED THROUGH A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT THAT FAYETTE COUNTY WAS IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH AUTISM. RESEARCH SHOWED THAT OUT OF THE 41,742 CHILDREN AGES 5 TO 24 IN FAYETTE COUNTY, APPROXIMATELY 444 WILL HAVE SOME FORM OF AUTISM BASED ON CURRENT MEDICAL STATISTICS.

As a result, Highlands Hospital created the Regional Center for Autism (HHRCA) with the goal of serving those in the region with effective, ongoing treatment and hope.

At that time, Highlands Hospital CEO, Michelle Cunningham began researching the programs that were available and searching for organizations that the hospital could partner with to add the resource the area needed. She reached out to the Autism Development Solutions office at Cleveland Clinic.

“We then partnered with them as an affiliate site to begin the planning stages of what would become HHRCA,” says Jordan Morran, Director of Autism Services for the HHRCA. “Through the affiliation with the Cleveland Clinic, we would be able to offer a state of the art program to children in our area.”

The school opened its doors on September 1, 2011 with four students and today it provides quality education to sixteen students, ages 5 to 17, from five school districts.

“We offer a year round, licensed, private school for children ages 5-21,” says Morran. “Each student received individualized programming and ABA—applied behavior analysis—therapy in a 1 to 1.4 therapist to student ratio. Each classroom is supervised by a licensed PA teacher.”

What makes HHRCA unique compared to other centers for autism is its affiliation with Cleveland Clinic. According to Morran, this affiliation has provided the center with a wealth of research-based practices and curriculum.

“We run a true ABA Program with skilled staff implementing the programming,” she says. “Students work one-to-one or one-to-two with a Classroom Behavior Therapist. These therapists must have a degree in education, psychology or a related field and undergo a strict training process provided by Cleveland Clinic.”

Highlands Hospital offers intensive treatment through the exclusive use of applied behavioral analysis (ABA) to provide children on the spectrum with the highest likelihood of success. The evidence-based, data-driven methodology of ABA has been proven effective through extensive research, showing great benefit to individuals on the autism spectrum and their families.

“At HHRCA, we understand that your children are a most treasured gift,” adds Morran. “We strive to provide the best overall care for your child, addressing both academic and functional needs. We strive to help the family as a whole by providing monthly observations, home visits as well as additional conferences and collaboration with home based teams.”

“Looking ahead, Morran is very excited to see all that the center can do to help students and their families in the future.”

“We have experienced steady growth in our five years of operation and have been able to provide assistance to children and families across the region of varying ability levels,” she says.

Because of this growth, Highlands Hospital has recently purchased a former school building in Connellsville so it can open a new, larger location before the 2017-18 school year. Morran says that they are currently in the process of fundraising to renovate it in the near future and expand the program. “At this new facility we hope to provide more opportunities for current students as well as provide placement to other students in the area.”

For more information, visit www.highlandshospital.org/services/autism-center.
Aquinas Academy is the Elementary Catholic Education choice in Greensburg. The three basic concepts that establish the focus of the school ensure this. Faith, Academics, and Service provide the framework for a world class education in the Diocese of Greensburg.

**Faith**

Faith is integrated into everything we do. Teaching in Christ’s light is how we do it. Our Catholic faith is a part of us and our students. Religion is not just a class offered, but rather a way of living. We teach our students to be Disciples of Christ. Just like the first Apostles, our students are given the mission of evangelization. This begins in action. Any visitor, should be able to see that we are a Catholic school and not just by seeing our uniforms, but by seeing our students and warm light that emanates from them.

**Academics**

A world class education is rooted in strong Academics as well as Faith. Our Catholic education includes highly qualified teachers, an updated curriculum, and state of the art technologies. In order to shine a light on our world, our teachers stay current with best practices and modern pedagogy based in research. Our administration, with the cooperative efforts of the faculty, ensure the curriculum is as up to date as the methodology for teaching it. Understanding that our students are in a world of highly advanced technologies, we employ and teach those technologies daily. Each student who passes through Aquinas Academy will be well versed in tradition, basic facts, problem solving skills, and the most up-to-date technologies available. This process allows Christ’s light to shine in high academic standards.

**Service**

Our students are taught service through action as they care for those around them as they see Christ in all of humanity. We teach our students that we have been blessed and God now calls us to share those blessings with others. Service is modeled and practiced by all stakeholders at Aquinas Academy. Our goal is to show the greater community the way by leading with light in darkness. Our students learn and lead in this regard.

Aquinas Academy is the Elementary Catholic Education choice in Greensburg, PA. We hope that you will join us and help us to continue to be the light on the hill as we move into the future.

Personal tours are available. Like us on Facebook, and be sure to find us on the web.

Aquinas Academy
724.834.7940
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Greensburg Care Center Launches $1.2 Million Expansion to Enhance Services for Residents and Their Families

The Greensburg Care Center has announced a major expansion project that will enable it to better meet the diverse and complex needs of Westmoreland County's rapidly growing elderly population.

The $1.2 million project began this fall and will expand the skilled nursing center by more than 4,000 square feet. Once the expansion is completed in the summer of 2017 the Greensburg Care Center will be increasing the number of private rooms, add a special stimulation room, update office space, and enhance its courtyard.

According to Laurie Tamasy, administrator of the Greensburg Care Center, emerging health-care trends and changing family dynamics drove the need for this expansion.

“Today, there is a greater demand in the community for patient-centric services that better meet the needs of residents who live in skilled nursing centers,” said Tamasy. “As families become more empowered, they are asking for services that are more accessible and afford their loved ones with a better quality of life. For instance, families are requesting more specialized care for their loved ones in a setting that provides greater privacy and better multi-sensory stimulation. To better serve our residents and their families, we will be expanding the Center for the Memory Impaired, increasing the number of private rooms, and enhancing customer service.”

**Center for the Memory Impaired (MIU) Expansion**

In order to meet the growing needs of the community, the Greensburg Care Center will be adding up to 30 beds to the Center for the Memory Impaired. The MIU will also feature more common space, an expanded lounge and dining room, and a state-of-the-art Snoezelen Room, a relaxing space.

“Studies have proven that Snoezelen Rooms help to calm individuals who are exhibiting behaviors such as agitation and anxiety,” said Tamasy. “What’s more, Snoezelen Rooms are highly effective in managing multi-sensory reactions and encouraging communications.”

Tamasy added that the expanded MIU, that is being designed by Frank Lloyd Wright trained architect, Richard Manns, will feature an enhanced courtyard with full-length glass windows in the foyer. “This will allow more natural light to illuminate the MIU and enable the residents to relate better to the gardens in the courtyard,” she said. “A well-designed setting not only offers a more relaxed living and dining environment, but it also helps the residents to reconnect with the world they once knew.”

**Addition of more private rooms**

In response to family preferences for more privacy, the Greensburg Care Center will be increasing the number of private rooms for both the Memory Impaired Unit and the Skilled Nursing Unit. According to research, individualized space promotes greater comfort, which improves the quality of life for skilled nursing residents.

Tamasy pointed out that private rooms are also essential for isolating residents who are recovering from a drug-resistant infection. “Skilled nursing facilities are increasingly providing care for residents who have acute care needs and who may be experiencing an infection such as C. difficile or MRSA,” she said. “By adding more private rooms to our facility, we will be safeguarding the health of all our residents, just as a hospital would.”

**Enhanced customer service**

Other enhancements will feature increased classroom size for community education and training, updated office space, increased computerization, and expanded parking. “All of these enhancements will improve customer service by making our facility even more accessible for family members, staff and the community,” said Tamasy. “In addition, the expanded training area will help us to be able in increase our training capacity of nurse’s aides so we can continue to offer more jobs for local residents.”

As the Greensburg Care Center expands, it will also increase the size of its care team. The MIU will be hiring additional staff who are specially trained to care for memory impaired residents and will add dedicated activity staff. The center already has a psychiatrist who monitors all residents, a nurse practitioner, and staff members who are specially trained in Alzheimer’s disease and dementia care. Staff also are trained to match each resident’s lifestyle with various therapeutic activities.

“We are excited about the expansion of the Greensburg Care Center and look forward to providing our residents with an even higher level of care,” said Tamasy. “This expansion will make care more accessible for communities such as Greensburg, Latrobe, Jeannette, Scottsdale, Irwin, and Mt. Pleasant.”

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*For more information about the Greensburg Care Center, call Laurie Tamasy at (724) 836-2480 or visit its website at [www.mygreensburgcarecenter.com](http://www.mygreensburgcarecenter.com)*

*To receive your own FREE copy of the Guide to Good Health, fill out subscription form on page 35.*
DECIDING TO PURSUE HOME CARE OR HOME HEALTHCARE FOR A LOVED ONE IS NOT A DECISION TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE COVERING YOUR BASES AND CHOOSING A REPUTABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY AGENCY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE. CONSIDER THESE HELPFUL TIPS TO SELECT THE BEST!

1. Always be sure to select an agency that is licensed through the state. This ensures that the agency is meeting state standards to protect clients and their families.

2. Verify that the caregivers are trained, qualified, and have passed their background checks. The best agencies will provide training and continuing education checks for their employees, as well as perform extensive background checks ensuring they are qualified to care for your loved ones.

3. Know that the agency’s caregivers are bonded and insured. This should include professional and general liability, Worker’s Compensation, and bonding.

4. Ask how the agency evaluates what type of care your loved one needs. Become familiar with the agency’s divisions or programs and what specific services they are able to provide for your loved one.

5. Find out which caregivers will be in your home. Understand the agency’s process for assigning a caregiver or caregivers to your loved one, so that you know who and what to expect.

6. Know the agency’s emergency care policy. Inquire how the agency and its caregivers are trained and prepared to handle any emergency situations that may arise.

7. Know how the agency handles issues and concerns. The best agency will have detailed procedures for dealing with any complaints or concerns in order to resolve them in a timely manner.

Harmony’s trustworthy caregivers are ready to lend a helping hand to your mother, father, children, and loved ones in twelve counties throughout the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. Contact us and one of our patient advocates will be happy to discuss how Harmony’s programs can help your family today.

This article was submitted by Harmony Home Healthcare. For more information please call 1-888-772-8959 or visit www.homewithharmony.com
By Liz Zemba

Telehealth is transforming patient care, saving some Westmoreland County residents the drive to Pittsburgh to see their doctors.

“Telehealth is just so much more convenient for the patient,” said Rebecca Titchner, facility telehealth coordinator for VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. “They don’t have to deal with city traffic and parking, and yet still receive high quality care.”

Telehealth provides patients with access to virtual doctor’s office visits. VA Pittsburgh is not the only medical provider to offer telehealth, but the Department of Veterans Affairs traditionally has led the way utilizing it.

Some telehealth services are home based, such as scales that electronically transmit a patient’s weight daily to a physician. Others are available through doctors’ offices or clinics. VA Pittsburgh offers both, Titchner said, with most of Westmoreland’s telehealth services provided through the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) on Route 30, near Greensburg.

Telehealth services vary by provider. At the Westmoreland CBOC, veterans can see physicians, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists and other specialists in any one of 23 different telehealth programs, Titchner said. Veterans can also speak with chaplains or attend real-time classes on weight management, diabetes and other health-related topics.

VA Pittsburgh’s telehealth patients consult with their doctors either through Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) or Store and Forward services. CVT allows patients to speak with their providers through real-time video conferencing. In Store and Forward, clinicians gather health data, including images, to be forwarded electronically for specialists’ opinions.

Rita January, a registered nurse and telehealth coordinator at the Westmoreland CBOC, said tele-rehab is one of the clinic’s most-used telehealth services. Through it, Pittsburgh-based physical therapists give real-time instruction on the use of canes and wheelchairs while January assists on site.

“Veterans are just so happy with how simple the process is,” January said.

Titchner said the number of services available through telehealth is constantly growing.

“We can’t do everything yet through telehealth, but even if it’s not something we have now, we encourage feedback so we can provide services veterans not only need, but want,” Titchner said.

For more information on services available at VA Pittsburgh, please visit www.pittsburgh.va.gov/
Nursing Home Transition Program Allows Individuals to Return Home Safely

When a loved one is admitted to a nursing home, this can often be a stressful and emotional time. The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging has a program that can help. Nursing Home Transition (NHT) is a program designed to assist individuals to return home safely. Our trained coordinators provide early education on long-term living services and guidance on making informed choices.

NHT will provide information about community living options, identify and obtain housing choices, assist with moving, connect to in-home care, and offer financial counseling. The NHT goal is to coordinate a safe discharge plan and decrease the risk of re-hospitalization. If you or your loved one wants to talk to someone about the possibility of returning to the community, call (724) 830-4444 or toll free 1-800-442-8000.

Receive Care in YOUR Home With Aging Waiver Program

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging provides service coordination services aimed at the older adult population who desire to receive care in their home. Through the Aging Waiver program, necessary services can be provided in the home setting to medically and financially eligible participants. These services could include: personal care services, home delivered meals, medical supplies, and home modifications, among others.

As part of service coordination, a trained care manager/service coordinator will visit you to develop a plan that will capitalize on the older adult’s strengths and goals in order to empower them to stay in their home in the community of their choice. By coordinating Aging Waiver services along with other resources, success can be achieved.

When choosing a service coordination agency, please remember the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging’s 17+ years of experience with and dedication to the Aging Waiver program.

Interested individuals should contact the Area Agency on Aging at (724) 830-4444 or toll free 1-800-442-8000 for additional information.

Caregiver Support Programs Offer Assistance for Caregivers AND Grandparents

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging currently offers two programs to support the efforts of the family caregiver. Both are under the name “Caregiver Support Program”. One program identifies the needs of an individual age 60 and over being cared for by a friend or relative age 18 and over. The other program focuses on the needs of a person age 55 and over who has taken on the custody and care of their grandchild, age 18 and under. Individuals in need of care are assessed for these programs by aging care managers in the consumer’s home.

Eligibility is based on physical, cognitive and financial need. If approved, the caregivers can be awarded a financial reimbursement for expenses associated with caregiving, including, but not limited to, respite, personal care, and home support.

Those seeking Grandparenting support may receive reimbursement for child care, child social activities like camp, scouts or sports, and counseling services. In addition, with both programs, families are offered on-going support by a trained care manager.

As with these and other programs, the Area Agency on Aging takes great pride in helping to keep families together and supporting their changing needs.
Most people cherish the comfort of familiar surroundings, being close to family and friends, and the feeling of being in charge of their own lives. Often seniors and caregivers think that aging and declining health conditions mean that a move to a nursing home is inevitable. However, seniors do have options, and this includes seniors with low and limited income. The LIFE program in Pennsylvania is designed to provide medical and supportive services for people 55 years and older so that they can remain living in their home and avoid nursing home placement. There are no costs for the program for those who are eligible for long-term care Medicaid. Many people qualify for this program but are unaware.

The program, funded by Medicare and Medicaid, provides participants with a wide variety of coordinated health and personal care services to address physical, emotional, and social needs both in the LIFE Center, located in Greensburg behind Aldi, and in the participants’ home. These critical support services allow eligible seniors to remain independent and live at home, more safely, and more comfortably.

LIFE participants must be 55 years of age or older and live in an area served by a LIFE Program. Senior LIFE serves several Pennsylvania counties, including Westmoreland. Participants must also be determined as medically eligible based on health conditions and financially eligible based on income and assets. For those who are not financially eligible, there is an option to pay privately for the services. Ninety-nine percent of all Senior LIFE members qualify for all services at no cost.

Senior LIFE provides door-through-door transportation services from the participants’ homes to the Senior LIFE Center as well as to doctors’ appointments. At the LIFE Center, members see their doctor, nurse, social worker and other healthcare professionals as designed by their personalized care plan. In addition to medical services, members participate in recreational activities and enjoy hot meals and snacks.

Mary, who has been a member of Senior LIFE for two years, appreciates having all of her medical services coordinated by one team at the same location. “I have my own medical team that works together and with me to keep me as healthy as possible. When my health changes, they all know about it and are all involved in my care plan.”

Sarah, who has been a member for three years, appreciates her medical care but loves the social aspect of Senior LIFE. “Coming to the Center gives me the chance to be around other people and there’s always something to do. I was so isolated before. Coming here gives me a routine and a purpose on those days.”

The LIFE program has demonstrated that in the elderly population, a combination of team care, managed health care services and care coordination can lead to improved health outcomes for participants.

Significant outcomes across LIFE Programs include:
- Fewer hospitalizations
- Fewer nursing home admissions
- Longer survival rates
- Increased number of days in the community
- Better health and quality of life
- Greater satisfaction
- Overall better functional status
- Greater adult day health care use
- Lower skilled home health visits

For more information visit SeniorLIFEGreensburg.com or call (724) 838-8300.
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Casey Ball Supports Coordination, LLC (CBSC) was started in April 2013. The owner and CEO, Casey Ball, was a service coordinator for another agency prior to starting CBSC. However, she knew that it could be done better!

**What Sets Us Apart**

Casey had a vision of a service model that would benefit the clients and ultimately give them a better quality of life. Many other agencies over burden their service coordinators with a high caseload which does not allow for the individual, quality service that the clients need and deserve. At CBSC, our service coordinators have a maximum caseload of 40 clients.

Another thing that sets us apart from other agencies is that we are able to serve clients in all of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties. Being a locally owned and operated company, it is important to us that we are able to serve our fellow Pennsylvanians. At CBSC, we support our clients to exercise self-determination and to be independent, productive, and integrated in all facets of community life. Our clients live, learn, work, and enjoy life in the community by having access to supports, resources, and services.

We provide service coordination for clients under the Medicaid waiver programs. We are currently accepting clients under the Aging, Act 150/Attendant Care, COMMCARE, OBRA, Independence and HIV/AIDS waivers. These programs are designed to help people with disabilities and senior citizens live independently in their homes, rather than in a nursing facility.

We are now also able to provide service coordination for families of all income levels through our affordable private pay options. It is our hope to be able to enhance the quality of life of not only our clients, but their families and loved ones. We coordinate such things as (PAS) personal assistance services, home delivered meals, (PERS) personal emergency response systems, (DME) durable medical equipment, medical supplies, assistive technology, home modifications, as well as other services and resources.

For the Medicaid waiver programs, there is an enrollment process. Financial and medical qualifications must be met.

### How to start the process

The first step in this process is to call Pennsylvania’s independent enrollment broker Maximus at 1-877-550-4227. Casey Ball Supports Coordination, LLC supports the Independent living movement and is able to provide assistance with Maximus and the application process.

For more information, call Casey Ball Supports Coordination at 1-877-CallCasey or (412) 793-0200 or visit their website at www.callcasey.org. Remember to like them on Facebook!
Whether a person is undergoing rehab while recovering from a fall or surgery, or needs to stay in long-term care for the treatment of more complex medical issues, one of the most important aspects of their care is being able to recover in a positive healing environment.

“We believe that quality of life is important, so we strive to make it feel more like home here than a skilled nursing facility,” explained Jes Delancey, marketing director at Transitions Healthcare North Huntingdon. “We want our short-term patients to be able to make the most of their time here, and we want our long-term residents to be able to pursue activities that they used to enjoy.”

The Transitions Healthcare activities team arranges numerous opportunities for people to get out of their rooms and socialize, including pet therapy a few times a week, and games like bingo and pakeno. “We recently had a Boy Scout Troop come in for caroling, and we also have a student who has played trumpet here,” said Delancey.

A homelike setting helps encourage interaction between residents, whether they meet in the huge dining room, sofa sitting areas or at the pavilion areas outside. “When our residents can get outside, it helps them feel like happier,” said Delancey. “We recently added a new putting green, which seems to really appeal to the younger clientele that we’re getting; it’s helping them experience a better quality of life with us.”

The putting green is used as part of patients’ therapies, and can be utilized by those who are ambulatory as well as residents in wheelchairs. “You don’t have to be able to walk to play,” said Delancey, adding that the activities team sets up friendly competitions and other events on the professional putting green.

In addition to providing activities, the Transitions Healthcare team also works to create a positive atmosphere for residents. “I believe that our customer service sets us apart; we follow the old adage, ‘the customer is always right,’” said Delancey. “All of our new hires take a customer service training course and also wear a button that says, ‘Smile.’ This reminds them to smile, which puts everyone in a better mood, and creates a better environment.

“If there’s an issue, we work to resolve it as quickly as possible; everyone from the janitor to the administrative staff is here to help,” she added.

Transitions Healthcare serves as a stepping stone for patients who need rehab after accidents or following surgery. It also partners with local hospital systems, including UPMC, Allegheny Health Network and Excela Health, to address more specific health problems from cardiac and pulmonary conditions to UTIs and wound care.

Through its Transitions Home program, staff follows patients after discharge for a year to make sure that they are receiving the services they need, including home health care, prescriptions and equipment, and more. “Once they go home, we stay in contact to make sure that they’re receiving continuity of care,” said Delancey of this innovative program designed to help people recover faster and return to the hospital less often.

To learn more about Transitions Healthcare, visit www.transitionshealthcarellc.com or call (724) 864-7190.

Transitions Healthcare serves as a stepping stone for patients who need rehab after accidents or following surgery. It also partners with local hospital systems, including UPMC, Allegheny Health Network and Excela Health, to address more specific health problems from cardiac and pulmonary conditions to UTIs and wound care.

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www.transitionshealthcarellc.com
8850 Barnes Lake Road
North Huntingdon, PA 15642
By Daniel Casciato

ACCORDING TO U.S. CENSUS FIGURES, WESTMORELAND COUNTY HAS A LARGER POPULATION AGE OF 65 AND OLDER THAN ANY OTHER COUNTY IN THE STATE, AND THE NUMBERS ARE INCREASING IN THE COUNTY.

In 2012, 19.6 percent of the county’s estimated 363,000 residents—or about 72,000 people—were age 65 or older, while statewide that year, 16 percent were in that age bracket, according to census figures. In 2000, about 18 percent of residents in Westmoreland County were age 65 or older.

Meanwhile, the median annual household income for county residents in that age bracket was $31,300, according to the most recent community survey by the U.S. Census, for years 2008-2012. That put the county in the middle ranking for counties in the state.

As a result, there’s been a great demand for senior housing in the county. To meet that demand, Westmoreland County Housing Authority (WCHA) provides both elderly and disabled residents with a safe and affordable place to live. WCHA owns and manages over 1,600 senior apartments at 21 locations scattered throughout the county.

Additionally, most sites have a service coordinator on staff. The service coordinators assist residents with obtaining needed services, as well as scheduling monthly educational speakers and activities.

“Our senior housing programs allow our elderly and disabled residents to readily access services that they need to age in place, and in some cases improve their health outcomes and happiness,” says Michael L. Washowich, WCHA Executive Director.

One of WCHA’s newest facilities is South Greengate Commons, a beautiful 45-unit “all senior” building, located on South Greengate Road in Hempfield Township. This building has bus service right at the front door where residents can take advantage of all the amenities of the nearby Route 30 corridor. WCHA has also launched a Wellness Program for its residents.

Other amenities at South Greengate Commons include: air conditioned, fully accessible units, laundry facilities, activities and special programs, outdoor covered patio, pull cord call system; cable and high speed Internet, and activities and special programs.

Washowich notes that the ability to receive needed services in their own home can avoid or delay the need for a senior to move into a personal care or nursing home.

“Needless to say, in most cases, staying in their own home makes the elderly/disabled person very happy,” he says. “WCHA’s senior support staff works toward making this happen. In addition, WCHA partners with a number of local agencies to better serve the needs of our clients.”

There are several common concerns or questions seniors typically have when looking to move into a housing unit like the ones WCHA provides. Washowich says that most are interested in having a safe and nice place to live.

“Security is a major concern for our residents,” he says. “In our buildings, all entrances require a special electronic key to gain access to the building. They are also interested in on-site laundry, ease of one-floor living, and social activities that occur in the building. WCHA has committed resources to creating a safe living environment for all residents.”

In many cases, applicants are moving from their own home (sometimes of 30 to 50 years) to an apartment. Some have never lived in an apartment. Washowich acknowledges that it is a transition.

“They certainly have to downsize their belongings, which can be an emotional experience,” he explains. “But, we have found that once it is done, they are so happy that they made the change. They have fewer items to worry about, clean and manage. Our apartments are spacious enough to accommodate most meaningful mementos, as well as special furniture and belongings.”

Also, WCHA prepares them for the change of going from a single family home to having neighbors on all sides. Many of seniors are losing the ability to get around to visit with extended family and friends, so they become isolated in their own homes.

“Our apartment buildings can be a lovely place for residents to meet new people and build new relationships,” adds Washowich. “In addition, they all watch out for one another.”

For more information, visit www.wchaonline.com.
ELIZABETH SETON MEMORY CARE CENTER:
Meeting Women’s Needs in the 21st Century

AS A CONGREGATION OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS, THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SETON HILL RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING WORLD.

"Today, many families have a need for a safe and compassionate environment to be a home for a loved one with a memory impairment," explained Sister Catherine Meinert, Provincial Superior/President of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, United States Province. For that reason, in 2015 the Sisters of Charity established the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center, a licensed personal care home specializing in memory care for women, in a first-floor wing of Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity. The staff of the Center provides compassionate care and maximizes the personal potential and quality of life of each resident.

The wing housing the living area and 12 bedrooms of Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center was designed specifically to serve the needs of women with memory loss. A spacious well-lit common area accommodates dining, recreation, family visits, and activities including exercise, music, art, games, pet therapy, and more. Residents enjoy an enclosed outdoor garden and patio environment on the beautiful setting of the Sisters of Charity Complex. In addition, residents have opportunities to attend worship services in the Chapel of the Assumption and other activities in the Sisters of Charity motherhouse. There is also a small chapel area in the Center for private reflection.

"Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center is a secure place to call home," said Caritas Christi Administrator Ron Berlingo, citing among other amenities the uniquely designed private bedrooms featuring half baths and easy access to showers and a whirlpool tub. Nurses provide medications as needed and cover all three shifts with the assistance of other direct care staff. Residents are free to have personal furnishings and wall hangings in their bedrooms that are fully equipped with adjustable beds, lift chairs, and flat-screen TVs. There is a single fee which covers services such as bathing, laundry, and incontinence care. Beauty salon services are offered at a modest cost if needed, and hospice care services are available.

The Sisters of Charity have a strong history of ministry in healthcare and service to specialized populations. The sisters and staff together offer a compassionate environment at the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center as part of their mission to serve others. They are a strong support to families coping with changes associated with their loved one with memory care needs. The staff receives special training in living out the caring spirit of the sisters’ founders, Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, and Elizabeth Ann Seton, and in the Gospel-based tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Families enjoy peace of mind knowing their loved ones are safe and enjoying daily life in their new home.

Visitors are welcome at the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center, where they can experience the personalized attention and welcoming environment provided to the residents. Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center promotes and supports the public charitable, educational and religious mission of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill by facilitating a compassionate environment where the aged, infirm and disabled can receive care that preserves their dignity and maintains the highest level of independence possible. Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center fulfills its purpose in accordance with the Vincentian-Setonian tradition of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. (Mission Statement)

Services to women are offered without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency) or age.

Employment is offered without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, sex, ancestry, national origin, or age.

For more information or to schedule a tour of the Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center, please call (724) 853-7948 to arrange your visit with Mr. Berlingo, Administrator at Caritas Christi (ext. 1111), or Ms. Melissa Elliott, RN, Resident Care Director (ext. 1175).
As a continuing care retirement community, William Penn Care Center in Jeannette, and its sister campus, Loyalhanna Continuing Care Campus in Latrobe, are guiding residents in achieving the highest degree of independence by providing excellent care in a healthy, safe, and comfortable environment. Together, they offer skilled and long term care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, hospice, respite and short-term care.

A continuing care retirement community allows seniors the ability to enjoy all levels of care and age in place from independent living to skilled nursing care. When a resident is in need of medical care, they can rehabilitate or stay long term at our skilled nursing facility. If they are able to progress to a higher functioning level the option exists for them to age in place at the independent/personal care suites. The facilities’ most important underlying philosophy is to provide residents with compassionate and quality care in a home like environment.

William Penn Continuing Care Campus is a certified Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) as certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance. This designation simply means that it provides multiple levels of care in one campus, allowing residents to move between levels of care as their needs change.

The campus differs from a traditional CCRC by not requiring large down payments or what is referred to as a “life care contract.” It simply provides the varying levels of service with a more traditional monthly rental rate structure. Movement between levels is offered as preferred placement within the campus. Independent living apartments or short-term medical services can be obtained by moving less than 200 feet to the next building.

Loyalhanna Continuing Care Campus is a skilled nursing facility located in Latrobe, PA. The facility offers a wide variety of therapies and services and is licensed by the Department of Health for the approval of both Medicare and Medical Assistance. The goal of the facility is to assist each resident to achieve the highest degree of independence through the provision of quality resident care, in a healthy, safe and comfortable environment.

The most important aspect of a continuing care facility such as William Penn Care Center and Loyalhanna Continuing Care Campus is that it allows residents to age in place.

Both William Penn Care Campus and Loyalhanna Care Campus were honored this year by the Tribune Review readers for the fourth year in a row as the #1 and #2 Nursing Home in Westmoreland County, respectively. William Penn Personal Care and Senior Suites was honored as the #3 Personal Care Home in Westmoreland County.

Both William Penn Care Campus and Loyalhanna Care Campus were honored this year by the Tribune Review readers for the fourth year in a row as the #1 and #2 Nursing Home in Westmoreland County, respectively. William Penn Personal Care and Senior Suites was honored as the #3 Personal Care Home in Westmoreland County.
Senior Living

(Continued from previous page)

and Loyalhanna Care Campus were honored this year by the Tribune Review readers. William Penn Care Center was voted the ‘Quest for the Best’ Gold winner as the #1 nursing home for the fourth consecutive year while William Penn Senior Suites & Personal Care won the gold for ‘Quest for the Best’ for the first time this year. Loyalhanna Care was voted Quest for the Best Silver Winner, while Loyalhanna Care Senior Suites and Personal Care was voted Quest for the Best Bronze Winner.

In addition to these accolades, another way that William Penn Care Center distinguishes itself from other continuing care retirement communities is respiratory therapists are available 24/7 in the state-of-the-art pulmonary/ventilator unit.

If you are just starting your search for a continuing care facility for a loved one, the staff recommends touring both facilities. While it may be difficult for families to move a loved one to a continuing care community, the facilities strive to make this transition easier for families and their loved ones.

Senior management from William Penn Care Center and Loyalhanna Continuing Care Campus contributed to this article.

For more information, visit www.williampenncc.com and www.loyalhannacc.com.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority

is accepting applications from eligible senior residents for one-bedroom apartments at SOUTH GREENGATE COMMONS

WCHA

164 SOUTH GREENGATE ROAD, HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP

For more information, contact Lynn at 724-952-2249

A Secure Place to Call Home

Compassionate Residential Care
For the Memory Impaired
Maximizing personal potential and quality of life

For more information or to schedule a visit contact:
Elizabeth Seton Memory Care Center
129 DePaul Center Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601
Ron Berlingo, MS, MHA, NHA
Administrator
724-853-7948, ext. 1111
Melissa Elliott, RN
Resident Care Director
724-853-7948, ext. 1175

Independent Living for Seniors

Gilbert Straub Plaza, South Greensburg

Applications for one bedroom apartments are now being accepted.
To apply, you must be 62 years or older and have a very low income.

Residents enjoy weekly activities in the community room, plus onsite laundry, a large screened-in porch, 24 hour security, and seasonal activities.

For more information, visit www.williampenncc.com and www.loyalhannacc.com.

(Continued from previous page)
ne of the most frustrating things about having prolonged or even chronic respiratory problems is that it’s often very difficult to find out what’s causing your symptoms and preventing you from getting better. A lot of people stay indoors, fearing that allergies or some kind of environmental factors are making them sick—when what they really should fear is inside their homes.

Sick Building Syndrome, or SBS, can cause symptoms ranging from headaches, dizziness and nausea, to ear, nose and throat irritation, dry or itchy skin, asthma, breathing and respiratory problems and even equilibrium issues. These conditions may be the result of mold and mold spores in the home that can develop in every room of the house as a result of leaky window seals, inadequate chimney ventilation, mold spores in the HVAC system, delaminated kitchen countertops, older bathroom fixtures and more.

Surprisingly, even new construction can suffer from SBS, as the materials used to put the homes together might have sat uncovered outside for months, developing mold that remains bioactive long after the roof has been put on.

“People think that bleach will kill live organisms like C. Diff, MRSA, salmonella or influenza, but it doesn’t do anything if you just spray it on a surface and wipe it up; the surface needs to remain wet for 12 minutes or more, which can be dangerous to children and pets,” explained Joseph P. Kleynjans, president and CEO of Bactronix Corp. “‘Viruses and molds have gotten much stronger over the past 100 years, and they have developed immunities to these toxic chemicals.’

So how do you fight these ‘superbugs’ in the home—or for that fact, in schools, hospitals, assisted living facilities or any other private or public space? After spending years studying the problem, researchers for Bactronix Corp. came up with a non-toxic, long-lasting, scientifically developed antimicrobial solution whose success is backed by empirical evidence.

BactroKill™

The company’s BactroKill™ is formulated to destroy dangerous biofilm that microbes make to protect themselves from poison-based disinfectants.

“There are a lot of companies out there using a poisoning process to fight contamination, and we very quickly realized that we didn’t want to go in that direction,” explained Bactronix Corp. Vice President A.J. Powell. “Instead, we used nanotechnology to develop a liquid formula that uses chlorine dioxide gas that only becomes active when it comes in contact with a live organism. This type of technology had never been done before, and the controlled delivery system—creating a physical instead of a chemical kill—makes it highly effective and safe.”

The nontoxic disinfectant and odor eliminator kills more than 140 different bacteria and viruses. BactroKill™ also eliminates bad odors from smoke, urine, vomit, bodily fluids, ammonia and other sources, making it perfect for use in hospitals and nursing home settings, as well as anywhere children, the elderly and individuals with health issues congregate.

BactroBlock™

Realizing that surfaces needed to not only be made clean, but kept clean, Bactronix took the process a step further by formulating a product that would provide residual antimicrobial value, based on similar technologies used in the textile industry. BactroBlock™ permanently bonds to treated surfaces, inhibiting the growth of mold, mildew, algae and bacteria and providing residual protection to prevent recontamination.

“Depending on the level of contamination that exists, our products can provide residual value from between a month and a year,” explained Bactronix Corp. Vice President Vincent J. Valicenti.

While homeowners can take advantage of this technology in spray bottle form, larger institutions need a more efficient way to distribute the products, so Bactronix created an electrostatic spraying process that provides 100 percent coverage on all surfaces, coating difficult and hard-to-reach areas. The company even custom-designed battery-operated sprayers to work where power and accessibility are limited, such as on commercial aircrafts.

The Proof

Of course, when you’re fighting an invisible enemy, it’s hard to know whether you’ve won the battle. “How do you determine when you’re in a sick room; whether you’re dealing with a contaminated surface or not?” asked Kleynjans. “What you cannot measure, you cannot manage.”

To this end, Bactronix researchers looked to USDA-approved testing methods, and adapted ATP (adenosine tri-phosphate) testing that allows them to swab an area, place the swab in a BactroMeter, and get a reading of the bio-level that is present. A written report, called a Bionomic Assessment Report (BAR) is then provided to the client to determine the type and extent of treatment needed.

“If the level is under 100, it is considered safe,” said Kleynjans. “If it is in excess of 100, it is contaminated. We’ve gone into homes, offices and medical facilities, and come out with readings of 5,000 or 6,000—that’s 50 to 60 times what is considered safe.”

“This is not hocus pocus—it’s science. We look at homes and facilities from an unbiased perspective, create a report, and treat the site if necessary,” said Powell, adding that not all facilities require treatment.

As for where the products should be used, Valicenti believes the answer is obvious. “There isn’t a place where they shouldn’t be used,” he explained. “Our products are safe, nontoxic and help to protect your environment—when we finish and walk out, you can walk right in.”

Who can benefit from using Bactronix products?

• Homeowners
• Healthcare facilities
• Office buildings and hotels
• Schools, universities
• Daycare
• Gym, pools and sports facilities
• Car and carriages
• Military installations
• Cruise liners and confined entry vehicles
• Zoos and aquariums
• Law enforcement entities
• Agricultural industries

People think that bleach will kill live organisms like C. Diff, MRSA, salmonella or influenza, but it doesn’t do anything if you just spray it on a surface and wipe it up; the surface needs to remain wet for 12 minutes or more...”

Joseph P. Kleynjans

For more information about the Bactronix Process and products, visit www.bactronix.com or call (412) 375-7886. Franchises are also available.
| DIRECTORY |

In order to choose a health professional who is right for you, you need information. The following guide is a good place to start.

**ACUPUNCTURE**
- Murrysville Acupuncture
  - (724) 212-6594
  - www.murrysvilleacupuncture.com

**ART CLASSES/PRIVATE EVENTS**
- Painting With A Twist
  - 724-221-6527 - Greensburg

**CHIROPRACTIC/SPINAL CARE**
- Keystone Spinal Care & Wellness Center
  - (724) 216-9000
  - www.keystonespinal.com

**CHILDREN, SPECIAL NEEDS**
- Achieva
  - (412) 995-5000 Allegheny County
  - (724) 837-8159 Arc of Westmoreland
  - (724) 775-1602 Beaver County

**CHIROPRACTIC/SPINAL CARE**
- Keystone Spinal Care & Wellness Center
  - (724) 216-9000
  - www.keystonespinal.com

**HOME CARE**
- Harmony Home Care, Home Healthcare and Pediatrics
  - (412) 573-7338 or (412) 283-4354
  - www.homewithharmony.com

**HOSPITALS**
- Highlands Hospital
  - (724) 628-1300

**INDEPENDENT LIVING**
- Casey Ball Supports Coordination, LLC
  - (412) 793-0200 • (724) 856-3078
  - (215) 661-0110 • (844) 793-0200
  - www.cbldc.org

**INSURANCE SERVICES**
- Fedele Insurance Services
  - Judy Badilla, (412) 244-1000
  - judy@fedeleinsurance.com
  - www.fedeleinsurance.com

**MASSAGE THERAPY/FACIALS**
- Massage Envy
  - (724) 852-8385 • www.massageenvy.com

**MEDICAL SUPPLIES & DIABETIC SHOES**
- Ponsi Shoes
  - 1 (888) 708-3825 • www.ponsishoes.com

**MEMORY CARE CENTER**
- Elizabeth Seton
  - Memory Care Center
  - (724) 853-7948 ext. 1111
  - The Sisters of Charity and staff offer a compassionate environment for the memory impaired as part of their mission to serve others.
  - A secure place to call home. Call to arrange tour of the center

**MOLD REMOVAL & SANITIZING SERVICES**
- Bactronix
  - (412) 375-7886
  - www.bactronix.com
  - Revolutionary new sanitation products and services for residential and commercial.

**PARTY RENTALS**
- The Jumpy Co. Party Rentals
  - (412) 944-9440 • www.thejumpyco.com
  - Bounce Houses and Inflatable Specialties

**PHARMACY**
- Hayden’s Pharmacy
  - Youngwood: (724) 925-1400
  - Greensburg: (724) 856-2400
  - Mount Pleasant: (724) 547-3400
  - Donegal: (724) 593-4400
  - www.haydenspharmacy.com
  - Free prescription delivery.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**
- Carey Busatto Photography
  - (724) 309-6091
  - careybusatto@comcast.net
  - (724) 309-6091
  - www.careybusatto.com

**PHYSICAL THERAPY/REHAB**
- UPMC Centers for Rehab Services
  - 1-888-723-4CRS (4277)
  - UPMC.com/4CRS

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Westmoreland County Housing Authority

There’s no place like a HOME

The Westmoreland County Housing Authority is committed to providing, preserving, managing and maintaining quality, affordable housing that is decent and safe, to eligible individuals and families throughout Westmoreland County. We strive to make the best use of all available resources so that our residents may live in an environment that is clean, well-maintained and attractive, and one that they are proud to call home.

WCHA Communities

Hi Rise Buildings/Apartments
- Arnold Manor
- Central Tower
- Duff Manor
- Hempfield Towers
- Jeannette Manor
- Lower Burrell Manor
- McMurtry Towers
- Parnassus Manor
- Trafford Manor
- Troutman Building
- Westgate Manor

Arnold Tower
Derry Garden Apartments
Eastgate Manor
Irwin Manor
Loyalhanna Apartments
Monessen House
Scottdale Manor
South Greengate Commons
Valley Manor

Family Housing
- Arnold Townhouses
- Latrobe Townhouses
- Marley Court
- Kensington Manor
- New Florence Manor
- Penn Manor
- East Ken Manor
- Vandalgrift Townhouses
- Derry Townhouses
- Highland Manor
- St. Clair Manor

Eastmont Estates
Greensburg Townhouses
Mt. Pleasant – Broad Street
New Stanton Manor
Pleasant Manor
W. Hempfield Townhouses
Park Manor
Jeannette Townhouses
Lower Burrell Townhouses
Walnut Avenue Apartments

For more information, call 1-800-WCHA-NOW
or visit our website at www.wchaonline.com