

THE SOLUTION



Keeping Community Solutions' Employees Connected

Fall 2010

CSI's Top Employee of the Year—Aileen O'Brien



Program Director Elaine Cohen (left) congratulates Aileen O'Brien (right) on her award.

During the recent Annual Program Director Meeting, Aileen O'Brien, Senior Area Director for CSI's Adult Division was surprised when her family along with Bob Pidgeon, CEO, interrupted the meeting to present her with

"Aileen's knowledge of policies and practices of adult residential programs is unparalleled".

—Terri Williams, Vice President

CSI's John Stein Employee of the Year Award.

In presenting the award to Aileen, Bob Pidgeon cited the

many nominations and the numerous accolades received on her behalf from fellow employees.

The purpose of the award is two fold: To recognize outstanding employee contributions towards achieving the mission of Community Solutions and to continue the memory of John Stein, a colleague whose service to CSI and friendship to all should not be forgotten. The selection process is based on the employee's continual efforts to go beyond the daily work of the individual in service and job performance.

O'Brien, who joined CSI in 1990, is currently celebrating 20 years of service with the organization.

"I was stunned and quite humbled," Aileen said, of winning the award.

"I was very glad to receive it. It is quite an honor being recognized by so many people and especially by my own staff. They are a great group of people and I wouldn't be here without them and



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everyone else I worked with over the years. I was truly overwhelmed by the whole experience.”

Aileen began her CSI career as a case manager at Johnson House when it was located on Sargeant Street then moved to its Retreat Avenue location and then over to



Cheyney House when it opened in Hartford. She then elevated through the ranks as Case Manager Supervisor at Watkinson House then Program Director at Hartford House, CSI’s Work Release program for adult women, then proceeded back to Watkinson House as Program Director. Aileen was promoted to Area Di-

rector and currently serves as Senior Area Director for the Adult Division.

When asked for her most memorable moment at CSI, Aileen spoke of a client at Cheyney House who struggled with severe mental health and substance abuse issues and probably would have gone back if it were not for giving him a sense of purpose and focus by allowing him to exercise his artistic talents by painting murals and creating art from whatever he could find. This freedom allowed Mario to gain some self confidence and to go on to a successful life outside prison. Mario honored Aileen by presenting her with a Certificate of Appreciation he made himself out of found items. The certificate still hangs in Aileen’s office to remind her of her greatest success.

Aileen reports to Sherry Albert, Vice President of Adult Services,

who said, “We all come into to this field hoping to change just one life, Aileen has changed hundreds if not thousands including her staff. We all count on her for her knowledge, honest feedback and her discretion.”

Terri Williams, Vice President of Adult Development commented, “Aileen’s knowledge of policies and practices of adult residential programs is unparalleled. She is well respected by CSI staff and clients as well as our funding sources.”



Sherry Albert, Vice President of Adult Services (left) and Aileen O'Brien, Senior Area Director.

Celebrating our Commitment to Community Solutions

20 years

Sheila Loughed, Senior Court Liaison, Danbury AIC – 7/16/90

John Russell, Food Services Mgr., Food Services – 9/24/90

Aileen O’Brien, Senior Area Director, Adult Division – 10/2/90

15 years

Alan Butkus, Information Technology Manager, 7/24/95

10 years

Danielle Valentine, Relief, Cheyney House – 8/21/00

Tina Cioffi, AP Coordinator, Accounting – 9/6/00

Cynthia Cornelio, Admin Asst, NJ CRC – 9/19/00

Theresa Lefebvre, Assistant Program Director, Coventry/Johnston House – 10/17/00

5 years

Cecilia Segura, Substance Abuse Counselor, Watkinson House – 8/2/05

Dana Arnold, Relief, Cheyney House – 8/15/05

Amanda Miller, ICM Case Manager, PA – 8/15/05

Amy Sheffield, Employment Specialist, Drapelick Center and Silliman House – 8/26/05

Amisa Dacey, Clinical Supervisor, PA – 9/26/05

Commentary by Robert Pidgeon



By now most of you have heard that we have opened two new programs in California. This represents a new milestone for CSI. It is an opportunity to enter a new, and very large, market where we can deliver our services to an entirely new group of clients and a new funding source. Aside from the business advantages this presents, it means that our outstanding services will be available to 100 people who can use them to great advantage. We are not in this business simply to expand and enter new areas, but, most importantly, to help people who can again become contribu-

tors to society, improve their lives, and the lives of those people connected to them. Last month I visited both programs for their open houses, and I was very impressed with the staff and the physical facilities in which they work. I was equally impressed with the open and professional manner in which our funding source, Santa Barbara County, approaches the need for these programs; they are progressive and forward-thinking people who are concerned about making a positive difference in people's lives.

Many of us often get wound up in numbers, statistics, and paperwork, to the extent that we occasionally lose sight of why we do the things we do. When we open new programs, or expand existing ones, it reminds us of our central purpose, and sends us back to remembering the basics of our business – helping people help themselves. I see this time and again in all of our locations. Our Board

Chair suggested at the last Board Retreat that we begin something called “connect to purpose”, to remind the Board of our purpose also. Rich and Sherry presented two real cases where our services had a significant impact on our clients to the Board, and the effect was quite powerful; it brought home the real effect we can, and do, have on the individuals and families whose well-being is often reliant on our services. I am proud to say that most of our resources are dedicated to direct service.

A colleague of mine once used an apt analogy to describe the way we should see our business. He said “if you want to see if a bird can fly, you don't count its wing flaps, you see if it can stay in the air”, and that is how we should see what we do. The important effect is the change we can make, not confusing a lot of activity with progress. That change happens in the programs, and we do it well.

Community Solutions' Employee Awards

Michael Warburton, Facilities Manager, was awarded the Great Job Award.

The Food Services Department was awarded the Great Job Award.

Barbara Lazarski, Director of Community Relations, was awarded the Management Award.

Amy Sheffield, Employment Specialist (Drapelick Center & Silliman House) was awarded the Management Award.

Development News

- CSI submitted two separate proposals in response to an RFI to El Paso County Texas to provide MST and FFT Services
- Lafayette LA has requested an expansion of 4 MST teams; exploring a “Center for Excellence” Federal grant with Grambling University to meet fiscal demands.
- Working with Mavens and Moguls of Boston to create an MST Marketing Plan
- Have been requested to collaborate with Rutgers University on an NIH grant to evaluate our New Jersey MST services
- Andrew DeAngelo and Sedgrid Lewis will be attending the Texas Juvenile Justice conference October 24-27, 2010
- MST System Supervisors, Area Directors and Development will be attending the MST Network Partner conference October 20 -22, 2010.
- CSI was re-awarded a contract for the Waterbury Alternative in the Community (AIC) program and the 35-bed Transitional Living program by the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) in September 2010.
- The CSI Training Department was recently re-awarded the CSSD contract for state-wide AIC training. The department has also submitted a proposal to continue to provide Quality Assurance contractual services for CSSD.
- The new Norwich AIC is scheduled to begin accepting clients January 1, 2011.
- CSI has submitted a proposal to operate 24 adult residential beds for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Wilmington, Delaware. There has been ongoing discussion regarding the project with the FBOP and we anticipate a final award decision in the next several weeks.
- Open Houses for the Santa Maria and Santa Barbara Day Reporting Centers were held on 9/21 and 9/22/10. We received a number of positive news articles about the events.

Corporate Updates

The Development Department is working on the FY2010 Annual Report.

The external webpage is being updated monthly. Check out the latest agency-wide happenings at www.csi-online.org.

The CSI Store is officially open. Please check the CSI internal web-site for the order form and pictures or contact spribyson@csimail.org with any questions. We have added a long sleeve polo shirt/\$16.00 and will be adding more items soon. Thank you to the Hartford House for being the first program to order shirts for all of their staff.

The “Solution” is a publication dedicated to keeping CSI employees connected. If you have a story, event, or news you would like to submit for consideration of publication, please contact Barbara Lazarski at blazarski@csimail.org or Susan Pribyson at spribyson@csimail.org. We look forward to your news.

CSI's 6th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

CSI was host to our 6th Annual Charity Golf Tournament on September 10, 2010 at a new venue, Gillette Ridge Golf Course in Bloomfield, CT. The weather was gorgeous bringing a record number of golfers, 146 in total, who participated in the day of golf and camaraderie while supporting the many programs of CSI.

The tournament raised a substantial amount of funds through sponsorships, raffles, and contests despite the current economic downtrends.

As an added bonus, the timing of the Annual Managers meeting allowed staff from programs out of state to participate in the tournament.



LA MST — Whatever it Takes Approach Yields Success

On September 23, Richard Lutz, Vice President, Youth Division presented the following story to CSI's Board of Directors during the annual retreat:

Jimmy, (an alias for this story) was involved with one of the most dangerous gangs in Alexandria, LA according to his Probation Officer Carolyn David. He was also the second in charge of this gang. The prognosis for his future appeared to be very bleak. His sister was also involved with the juvenile justice system and his mother had a drug problem. To say the least, it was a challenging case for Community Solutions' Multisystemic Therapy program. Over the course of a year, two therapists were assigned to the case. Markisha Webb worked with Jimmy and Chandra Hall worked with Jane (also an alias). Jane was involved with juvenile authorities, skipping school, fighting with peers, teachers, school security and the principal. Jane was also constantly running away and prostituting herself.

Chandra Hall was assigned as the therapist and worked with Jane to get her involved in the Church Youth Ministries Church Drill Team and a local modeling agency in Alexandria. She also worked with school officials in developing an Individualized Service Plan to address her aggressive behavior.

The MST team worked together to find a suitable living arrangement for Jane since her mother was addicted to drugs. They were successful in arranging for her to stay with her grandmother. Jane has improved in school, she is not running away or involved in prostitution and her self esteem is improving. At the request of the grandmother the therapists worked with Jimmy and his probation officer to get him into a Youth Challenge Class which is a residential educational, job skills and leadership program spearheaded by the US Army. The prognosis for Jimmy when he completes this program is very good. The MST team is also working to help Jane's mother complete treatment for her drug problem and find suitable housing.

As per the motto of MST, "Whatever it Takes" was performed by a dedicated and caring team of therapists, clinical supervisor and program director, which was successful in helping Jane and Jimmy in improving their lives.

Written and submitted by LA Program Director Monique Little



From Left to Right: Alzena McGrew, Rebekah Varnell, Markisha Webb, Chandra Hall, Monique Tinsley-Little

CSI's Newest Evidence-Based Model



(Left to right) Bert Otts, Program Director, Roblyn Lewter, Program Supervisor, Jaime Rowe, Skills Trainer, Becky Bergeron, Individual Therapist, Kathy Binas, Individual Therapist. Not pictured: Cindy Williams, Foster Home Recruiter.

The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Program (MTFC), a cost effective alternative to residential youth placement, celebrated its first two graduates recently at Community Solution's Towson, MD Office. The Graduates, "Sherry" and "Kiana" were placed in the 6-9 month program for 7 and 8 months respectively.

Sherry has made huge strides since being placed in the MTFC Program on January 29, 2009. Upon entering the MTFC Program, Sherry was failing all of her high school classes, had an extremely dysfunctional relationship with her mother and was participating in a host of anti-social activities. Since placement, Sherry successfully graduated from high school and is currently enrolled in Beauty College. She is also employed with two part-time jobs and has a wonderful relationship with her mother. "This program saved my life", Sherry's mother stated. "Thanks to this program, I am seeing my beautiful little girl that I thought that I had lost again".

Kiana's story is one of a very successful reunification. When Kiana was first referred to the MTFC Program in December 2009, her previous placement informed CSI that reunification was absolutely impossible in this case. Eight months later, Kiana and her mother have a fantastic relationship and her mother is ecstatic about her returning home. Kiana has earned honor roll status in school and is being skipped to the 12th grade for the upcoming school year. Kiana, being college bound, is being mentored by one of her previous teachers.

The evidence of positive outcomes from this unique multi-modal treatment approach is compelling.

Submitted by Bert Otts, Program Director

New Jersey Success



Gerla Sterling, MST Therapist, Hudson County

Anthony, an alias, is a 16 year old African American male, who at the time of referral to the NJ MST program was in detention for drug possession charges. His mother reported a long and frustrating history of her son's criminal mischief, truancy, drug use and numerous court appearances. The MST Therapist, Gerla Sterling, and the youth's probation officer worked closely together to ensure that the youth was released from detention with MST added to the court order. Prior to the youth returning home, Ms. Sterling worked with the mother and extended family on a supervision plan that kept the youth away from his negative peers with whom he had previously committed crimes.

Initially, the family struggled with implementing the supervision plans. In response, Ms. Sterling assessed the barriers and developed new goals and interventions with the family that identified specific roles for each family member as well as alternative ideas of increasing supervision. Family members were very responsive to these interventions that "fit" their family specifically as each focused on mentoring the youth via pro-social activities. This youth was positively discharged from MST in March 2009 without arrest, drug free, attending school daily and compliant with house rules. At the end of treatment, this youth and parent were very thankful that MST never gave up on their family.

They have adopted the MST motto of "Whatever It Takes!" and we praise them for their continuous efforts.

Submitted by Karen Fennell, Clinical Supervisor II

Pennsylvania Probation Officers Send Praise to MST Staff

From: Ann Peischl [annpeischl@lehighcounty.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2010 3:30 PM
To: Julie DePhillips - (PA)
Cc: Kindlyne Vilcant - (PA)
Subject: MST

Julie,

I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the positive experiences I have encountered with Kindlyne Vilcant.

She is a very knowledgeable, dedicated, thorough and evidenced based worker whom has made great strides with two of my cases, which was not easy. Kindlyne's professionalism and excellent use of engagement has benefitted my families greatly and this deserves recognition.

I will definitely keep Kindlyne in mind for future cases; it was truly a pleasure to work with her!!

Ann Peischl, MSW

Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth



From: TVJohnson@countyofberks.com
Sent: Friday, July 09, 2010 3:45 PM
To: Julie DePhillips - (PA)
Subject: Tara Harter

Hi Julie,

I just wanted to email you to let you know how impressed I am with the work of your MST Therapist, Tara Harter.

Though I've known Tara for awhile, I've only recently had the pleasure of working with her in a case that I recently referred for MST services.

Tara is extremely thorough and does a great job with keeping in contact with me. In addition, I like the fact that she's a straight shooter and brings issues to the forefront so they can be dealt with.

Working in an aftercare role, I have a lot of kids who are going to be discharged in the near future from George Junior Republic and MST is being recommended for the majority of them. I know that caseload assignments are notoriously difficult to manage, however if it can be worked out, I'd like to have Tara assigned to my cases.

We work with a lot of service providers and in my humble opinion, many of them are lackluster. It's refreshing to see a therapist like Tara tackle her job with such tenacity and motivation and deliver a top quality service to our kids.

Please feel free to share this email with her and encourage her to continue her great work.

Thanks,

Travis V. Johnson
Berks County Juvenile Probation Officer

MST Sustained Excellent Adherence Award Goes To . . .

CSI Therapists receive the highest praise from MST Services in receipt of the Sustained Excellent Adherence Award. Across the nation thousands of therapists deliver MST services and the top 1%, fourteen, were selected for this award.



Left: Richard Lutz, Youth Division Vice President, presents award to Georgia MST Therapist, Lucretia Andrews.



Rhode Island MST Therapist Angela De Falco receives her award surrounded by her teammates. From left to right, Vonetta Lambert, Program Manager, Nannette La Fosse, Angela De Falco and Jeff Marsalla.

Florida FFT Achieves Best Outcomes Award Again

The CSI Tampa FFT team was #1 in the state for “Overall Category” for the month of July. Tampa and Lakeland are leading the state in successful completion rates. Each member of Linda Newsome’s team, including herself, is listed within the top ten therapists in the state.

The CSI Orlando FFT team had the 2nd best outcomes statewide for the month of August and Supervisor Cesia “Sonali” Gonzalez, was #1 among supervisors in the overall category and #1 in average days between referral and intake.



Rhode Island Youth Win Trip to our Nation’s Capital

Four residents of the CSI Rhode Island youth residential program, Coventry House, were awarded a field trip to Washington DC for their good behavior. The trip entailed tours of the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, the White House and a number of museums and other sites. The youth chosen for this trip had to write an essay concerning the nation’s capital and excel in their school work as well as exhibiting good behavior in the program.

Santa Barbara County Day Reporting Centers Celebrate Opening

Community Solutions, Inc. (CSI) and the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office were host to two Open Houses to celebrate the opening of the Santa Barbara County Day Reporting Centers (DRC).

Beginning July 1, 2010, Community Solutions in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office opened Day Reporting Centers for paroled prison inmates in both Santa Maria and Santa Barbara. The DRC program model provides a community-based alternative to incarceration for former inmates who were arrested in the County and then released back into the region after spending time in custody.

The Santa Maria DRC Open House was held at the program site at 1775 S. McClelland Street in Santa Maria from 3 to 6 PM on September 21, 2010. The Santa Barbara DRC Open House was held at the program site at 127 E. Carrillo Street in Santa Barbara from 3 to 6 PM on September 22, 2010. Special guests included Sheriff Bill Brown and Thomas L. Jenkins from the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office, Rick Roney, Chair of the Santa Barbara Reentry Steering Committee as well as a representative from the office of Secretary Matthew Cate of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Santa Barbara County Supervisor Janet Wolf.

California State Senator Tony Strickland issued a State of California Certificate of Recognition in honor of the Grand Openings.



CSI CEO, Bob Pidgeon presents Santa Barbara County Sheriff, Bill Brown with an award honoring the opening of the Santa Barbara County Day Reporting Centers.

California State Senator Tony Strickland issued a State of California Certificate of Recognition in honor of the Grand Openings.



CSI Area Director Diane Patterson presents Thomas L. Jenkins from the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department (retired) with a plaque establishing the Thomas L. Jenkins Client of the Year Recognition Award to be awarded annually at both of the DRCs.



CEO, Bob Pidgeon poses with Sylvia Barnard, Executive Director of Good Samaritan Shelter Inc. in Santa Maria and Diane Patterson, Area Director for CSI.

Grand Opening of Community Closet at Drapelick/Berman



Pastor Deborah Blood (seated at left) and volunteers for the Community Closet operated by the First Congregational Church of Bloomfield pose with clients from the Drapelick Center and Berman Treatment Center during the open house celebration of the Grand Opening of the Community Closet located within Drapelick/Berman.

Community Solutions, Inc. (CSI) and the First Congregational Church of Bloomfield (FCCB) were host to an Open House to celebrate the opening of their joint venture, the Community Closet.

Beginning in August 2010, Community Solutions in conjunction with the First Congregational Church of Bloomfield opened the Community Closet to fulfill the basic need of clothing for ex-offenders reentering

their communities through CSI programming. The Clothing Closet is located within CSI's Berman Treatment Center and Drapelick Center program facility and is staffed by volunteers from FCCB who gather, sort and display clothing and accessories that are made available to CSI clients at no cost during Closet open hours.

FCCB has also established "Undie Sunday", an annual event when they ask their congregation to contribute men's briefs and socks to the Closet. Clients and staff attended the first annual Undie Sunday held on September 26, 2010 at FCCB.

The Clothing Closet Open House was held at CSI's Berman Treatment Center and Drapelick Center program facility from 2 to 4 PM on September 16, 2010. Guests included staff from CSI, members of FCCB, program clients, the Bloomfield Police Department, and other community members.

Program Director Derek Harrison led the festivities with remarks from Senior Area Director Aileen O'Brien expressing client sentiments of what the Closet meant to them. CSI's Vice President of Adult Services, Sherry Albert, commented on the value of community relationships and presented Pastor Debra Blood with a Certificate of Recognition for FCCB's work with the Clothing Closet in honor of the Grand Opening.



Food Service is Growing Not Just Crops But New Lives

John Russell, CSI's Food Service Manager, created a small but vibrant example of an inner-city garden. Using a vacant piece of land outside of the kitchen, John and the clients at Drapelick/Berman are growing tomatoes, peppers, lettuce and squash. The harvest is used in the food service kitchen to supplement service to CSI's residential programs.

The men appreciate the purposeful work to fill their final days before they reenter the community. For one anonymous client, the garden is a metaphor for the changes he and other clients have tried to make in themselves. "I look at vegetables and fruits like people," he said. "They need to be nurtured, tended to. A garden needs to be weeded just like a person's spirit."

The clients attribute the garden's success to John Russell who is a master gardener in his own right. "It helps the men to do something constructive, after all their setbacks and mistakes," Russell said recently. "It's very creative, because the guys take nothing and make it into something," he said. "It came out beautiful."



John Russell displays the morning harvest from the garden.

Day of Caring at Drapelick/Berman and Watkinson House



On September 3, 2010, volunteers from The Hartford, Travelers and Mass Mutual bet that Hurricane Earl was an idle threat and the United Way Day of Caring went on as planned. Clients, staff and volunteers worked together at the Drapelick and Berman Centers and Watkinson House.

Drapelick/Berman Centers received a landscaping face lift with new bushes and general sprucing while Watkinson House completed various painting projects and did some trimming and mulching. Wojtusik's Nursery in Bristol supplied CSI with plants at a deep discount. Thanks Pete!

Mike Warburton and his crew were on hand to assist and John Russell and his staff supplied all of the workers with breakfast, lunch and drinks.

Alternative in the Community (AIC) News and Highlights



New London AIC renovations are in full swing while the staff of the New London AIC anxiously await the upcoming move to their new location at 55 Bank Street in New London. The new facility will occupy two floors, has its own parking lot, is handicap accessible and has a large storage building.

The anticipated move-in date is some time in December.

New London AIC has a new QA Champion for Motivational Interviewing, Tyler Griffin, Case Manager.

New London AIC received its second consecutive CDCS Audit at level one with no re-audits. Only a few other AICs state-wide have accomplished this same feat.

Terri Williams announced at the latest Manager's meeting that New London AIC obtained the highest completion rate of all of the CSI AIC's, 89 percent.

CSI was re-awarded a contract for the **Waterbury Alternative in the Community (AIC)** program and the 35-bed Transitional Living program by the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) in September 2010.

Debra Hynds and the **Danbury AIC** were recognized in the most recent edition of the Women's Center of Greater Danbury's newsletter for volunteer work during the group's Community United Against Violence Walk held on October 3, 2010.

Bridgeport AIC was recently awarded the 2010 Small Business Employer of the Year award from the Connecticut Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). The award signifies CSI's contributions to the employment of persons who are blind. Sally Guy, Program Director, accepted the award on behalf of CSI at an award luncheon in October.

Emilio Ortiz, Case Manager, has been with Bridgeport AIC since 2006 and is legally blind. CSI adapted to Emilio's needs by supplying him with a special computer monitor and by allowing him a flexible schedule to accommodate his transportation needs. Emilio's rehabilitation counselor at BESB, Wendy Andino, nominated CSI for the award.



Emilio Ortiz and Sally Guy accepting award.

Training and Resource Department News and Highlights

The CSI Training Department was recently re-awarded the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) contract for state-wide AIC training. The department has also submitted a proposal to continue to provide Quality Assurance contractual services for CSSD.

Tiffany Parkhouse has been asked to do Motivational Interview (MI) training for Juvenile Probation in Savannah County, GA. She has also been asked to present at a conference in Georgia on MI.

Cindy Peterson has joined the Training Center. Cindy comes to CSI with expertise in juvenile interventions.

In January the Training Department will begin Phase 2 of the Engagement Project by training Juvenile Parole Officers in Connecticut on family engagement strategies.