



The GCL Advocate

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College of Direct Support - Another first for GCL

Guardian Community Living was the first provider agency in Tennessee to sign on for the College of Direct Support Pilot Program.

Julie James and Doris Staten, Staff Development Coordinators for Memphis and Jackson offices, respectively, were the first Administrators to be trained in the program.

Memphis and Jackson each have a small computer lab for implementing the training and look forward to increasing the numbers of available computers in the near future. In an attempt to get the program up and running as smoothly as possible, Julie James asked that administrative staff in the office complete their refresher training online. Once that got started, she challenged all of the Home Coordinators to have their State Refresher training done by February 2008. As word got around that the HCs were completing this new training, staff began coming to Julie and asking to be put on the system!

265 staff have completed either Initial or Refresher Training Online

in Memphis and Jackson; 72 have partially completed the Online training and more than 30 are just getting started. This is a great response.

GCL has always looked for new opportunities to prove that we belong on the Quality Tier among providers, and to give our best efforts to the people we serve.

“The State of Tennessee requires all staff working for its service providers to be trained in all core modules”

The College of Direct Support, which is affiliated with the University of Minnesota, will help bring us one step closer to the professionalism we desire among all of our staff.

If you have visited the Memphis offices, you will have seen walls of stars in the Training Room. Jackson has stars adorning their office walls, as well.

These big yellow stars represent each of the staff who have completed their assigned Online Training lessons. Fliers go to all homes every week or two listing everyone who has completed training since the last flier. Certificates with the official CDS logo are being given to all participants.

Doris Staten went on to say “It is our goal to have all Memphis staff complete their assigned training by July 1, 2008, followed by Jackson staff in August and bringing Nashville staff online as soon as possible.”

(Continued on page 6)



Kanika Robinson of GCL Memphis receives an award from Earl Foxx of the Direct Support Professionals Organization (DSPAT) for outstanding Direct Support Professional of the Month.

GCL ATTAINS QUALITY TIER STATUS FOR THE 5TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

ON JUNE 12TH, GCL'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT RECEIVED FORMAL WORD FROM THE FEDERAL COURT MONITOR'S OFFICE THAT WE AGAIN QUALIFIED FOR STANDING IN THE COURT MONITOR'S OFFICE FOR THE REMEDIAL ORDER AS A "QUALITY TIER PROVIDER", THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AVAILABLE TO PROVIDERS IN WEST TENNESSEE.

THIS MARKS THE 5TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR THAT GCL HAS ACHIEVED THIS RECOGNITION.

The Training Benefits Everyone. Kanika Robinson and Brenda Brasell were both honored with awards at the recent DSPAT MEGA Conference held in Nashville. They received the Over and Beyond Award for 2008.

“An Extraordinary Presence of Mind”

At the April Home Coordinator meeting, GCL Nashville staff honored one of their colleagues, RSS Sheena Vigil, *“for the extraordinary presence of mind and determination she exhibited in a recent situation with the mother of one of our service recipients.”*

Every other week, Sheena accompanies Christy D on a visit to Christy’s mother in Columbia. These visits are always carefully planned ahead of time to avoid any mix ups. So when Sheena and Christy arrived at the house on April 7, they were surprised when no one answered the phone. The routine is for Sheena to call the Christy’s mother when they arrive and she comes out of the house to greet her daughter.

A second call was made, and still no answer. Sheena then went to the door and rang and knocked, but still no response. At that point she looked through the window adjacent to the door and saw Mrs. D sitting in her chair, with her head

slumped awkwardly to the side.

After finding that the other doors were also locked, Sheena first reassured Christy, and then headed across the street to alert a neighbor. After she and the neighbor had called 911, they returned to the house to try to get in. Finally, Sheena decided to quit being delicate, and she threw all her weight against the door and it gave way.



Sheena Vigil (above, right) with Nashville District Manager, Lecia McBee, (above, left).

Inside she found that Mrs. D could communicate that she needed to eat something, quick, which Sheena got for her. Sheena then returned to Christy and explained that an ambulance would be coming soon but that everything was all right. She stayed with Christy through the arrival and departure of the EMTs, communicating calmly and giving her reassurance.

After Mrs. D recovered from her low blood sugar scare, Christy had her visit, and Sheena stayed with Mrs. D until a relative arrived to relieve her. Then it was back to Nashville for the rest of her shift.

At the commendation ceremony, Sheena received a gift card as a token of appreciation, and a letter of commendation which ended with this paragraph:

“Your quick thinking in the face of a serious medical situation and your careful attention to Christy through it all reflects positively not only on your own character but on Guardian as well.

On behalf of all of us, I thank you and honor your work.”

*Don Wilson, Regional Director,
GCL Nashville*

HOME OFFICE STAFF RACES TO FITNESS

The Staff of the Brentwood office have been challenged to get fit this summer.

They were invited to enter a “horse” into a “race” that lasts for the whole month of June. The racetrack is 45 miles long, and the horses advance when the owner takes part in some form of exercise.

Participants earn “mileage” for running, walking, jogging and other forms or combinations of exercise and fitness such as running, walking or jogging; swimming, golf and tennis; cycling, aerobics and elliptical trainer.

Provision has even been made for rainy days where climbing stairs counts as well.

Everyone’s a winner!

Everyone who completes the race will win a prize, with special prizes going to the first three horses to finish the race.

*“We have some interesting horses running” said Danielle McDearman, horse whisperer to the field. “Watch out for **Big Brown**, ridden by Joe Owen, *A mile a minute*, sure to be a favorite, and how about *Howdoesmydusttaste*, Ryan Nelson’s thoroughbred stallion .*

*Also running is Ron Moore’s **Mr. Ed**. *Mr Ed* is not expected to do well unless both Ron and Mr Ed stop talking about sport and start playing some instead!*



Joe Owen, CEO, was first out of the gate on Big Brown. The rest of the staff have a lot of catching up to do - Joe managed 19 miles the first week.

This program will shortly be rolled out to all regions .

Get your favorite exercise shoes out of the closet and get down to the starting line!!!

GCL Nashville Achieves Milestone

It's been a year!

In June 2007, Guardian Community Living was asked by the State of Tennessee, with three days notice, to assume responsibility for 39 individuals and 18 homes in Nashville that had previously been supported by a deteriorating provider. Over the past 12 months many people have worked diligently to create a strong GCL presence in Nashville from this challenging starting point. Here are some of the things that have been accomplished.

- In April 2008, GCL-Nashville scored well on its first annual QA survey. Surveyors unanimously cited how far the program had come from its inception and commented generously on the quality of our Nashville Team.
- GCL-Nashville has been "ahead of the curve" in meeting the DMRS mandate to consolidate services, going from five one-person homes to a single one person home. It has, meanwhile, reconfigured other homes to strengthen the financial viability of the operation. So thorough have these efforts been, that a state management consultant recently assigned to review the GCL-Nashville operation was not able to identify any further significant savings or efficiency opportunities.
- After much back and forth with the landlord of 13 Nashville homes, a major renovation program is well under way, with four homes now complete and two

others nearing completion. The homes GCL assumed from the previous provider were in such condition that six of them required that service recipients vacate for three to four weeks each so that reconstruction could occur.

- After several months of high turnover, GCL-Nashville has established a strong and stable leadership team.

State QA Surveyors unanimously cited how far the program had come from its inception and commented generously on the quality of our Nashville Team.

Currently, all Home Coordinator positions are filled, highly effective District Managers are in place and key office personnel are performing well.

Building on this strong foundation, GCL is now poised to take advantage of opportunities for growth and further improvement and to become as important to the Nashville community as GCL has become to Memphis and Jackson.

"It's a pleasure to work with staff who are so motivated, enthusiastic and compassionate," said Harold Sloves, GCL's State Director. **Thank you to each member of the Nashville team.**"



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Guardian Healthcare's Medical Insurance Provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) offers its members a discount program

with savings of up to 50 percent on health related products such as * weight loss programs * gym memberships (discount varies by gym) and * complementary alternative medicine therapies such as acupuncture and massages.

BCBS members can also save on * select prescription drugs using the Discount Drug Card * LASIK laser eye surgery * glasses, contact lenses and vision exams * certain cosmetic surgery procedures and * vitamins, minerals and supplements that may not be covered by your standard insurance policy.

To find out more go to www.bcbst.com and then "Tune your engine not your car's". Click on the link that says "gym discounts", click to AGREE to the terms and then scroll through and read all the options.

Linda Kelley, (left) Payroll Coordinator, Brentwood, recently underwent surgery. Her doctors recommended that, to speed up her recovery, she join a gym and follow a regular exercise program. She was delighted to be told that, as a member of Guardian's Blue Cross Blue Shield medical insurance, she was eligible to receive up to 50% discount of monthly gym fees at her local gym.

Now You Can Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices with Guardian's Health Care Benefits and "Blue Perks"

Guardian's Jackson Service Recipients and staff attended Madison Haywood's Annual Spring Fling



JACKSON REGIONAL OFFICE ROUNDUP

HOME OF THE MONTH - JANUARY

A pizza party was held at Parchman to celebrate being recognized for Community Involvement. "The service recipient has been able to participate in meaningful and productive activities in integrated settings with other community members" said Vanessa Gladney, District Manager. "Staff have provided activities that promote developing relationships and maintain ongoing relationships with her family members. Some of the community involvement includes shopping at Wal-mart, visiting her father in hospital, attending the Circle of Support meeting, and hugging each one of the members before leaving. The improvement in community involvement allows the service recipient to complete activities she was once not able to complete. This is a result of attentive staff following the plans that are in place. The District Manager thanks the Parchman staff for their dedication."

HOME OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY Sundown had their pizza party for Therapy Compliance. Berenice Prado, OT Therapy Team Leader, said "Sundown staff has made an extraordinary implementation of the Therapy Plans. The Therapy Department reports that in all their years working with the client at Sundown they have never seen her more engaged, and more functional than now. Sundown's service recipient improvement reflects the hard work the staff have put into the home. Not to mention the cleanliness of the home and friendly environment."

Mary Stephens, Regional Director, proudly announced three promotions

Debra Partelow (left) was recently promoted from temp employee to Medical Records Specialist. Bridgett Baney (right) was recently promoted from Medical Records Specialist to Quality Enhancement Coordinator/IMC. Shirley Morrow (not pictured) was promoted from Quality Enhancement Coordinator/IMC to District Manager. Mary said "We are so pleased to be able to promote from within the organization and hope to continue this trend in the future. Good luck in your new roles, ladies!!"



A HAPPY CONSERVATOR WRITES ...

"It is such a blessing to know that she is in good hands, and taken care of."

"I have been meaning to sit down and e-mail you to let you know how much I appreciate you and all your staff in Jackson, and the wonderful care you are giving Alicia, and I apologize that I am just now getting a chance to say so.

Alicia was very excited today with the new staff person that she has, and ... I so understand that it takes time to find good folks... I feel you've done

In Memoriam

James "Man" Staten - 1986-2008

James "Man" Staten was a graduate of Jackson Central Merry High School and attended Lane College. His life was an active one, playing many sports and working hard. He worked each summer at Lane College in their youth summer program. Family and friends meant everything to James.

The way he left us seems hard to understand, but we know he is in God's loving hands.

James Staten is beloved family of Doris Staten, Staff Development Coordinator, Linda Graves, Residential Specialist, and DeMarcus Ingram, Residential Specialist



Alicia, left

such a great job of taking care of everything.

I just wanted to say a huge "Thank" you to Sonya, Karen, and everyone else with Guardian... for taking care of everything and getting Alicia settled in. It is such a blessing to know she is in good hands, and taken care of."

GOLF SPONSORSHIP

Guardian Healthcare recently sponsored the hole-in-one contest at the Williamson Medical Foundation Golf Tournament in Franklin, Tennessee. Funds raised through the tournament will benefit the Fay Porter Memorial Medical Scholarship for local students pursuing health care professions.

Ryan Nelson, recently assigned to assist in the Marketing Department, attended part of the occasion to represent Guardian. "Unfortunately nobody got a hole in one at the hole we sponsored," said Ryan. "But it was a great opportunity to meet both existing and potential new clients, and build relationships for the future."

Ryan Nelson representing Guardian Healthcare at a golf tournament.



College of Direct Support (Contd)
Nashville is currently in the process of adding its staff to the College of Direct Support program, headed up by Jennifer Johnson, Staff Development Coordinator. Says Jennifer "Phase One participants will be the administrative staff in the office. They will be asked to complete the Refresher Training Online by July 2008. Phase Two will consist of the Home Coordinators; they will be asked to complete the Refresher Training Online as the facilities are available. Fliers will be sent to all the homes advising the staff of the Online Training and how it will work. GCL Nashville looks forward to joining our West Tennessee offices in being in the forefront and setting the benchmark for staff education at all levels."
"Guardian is being acknowledged across the state as the leader in this endeavor to blaze the way for a higher standard and more consistency in staff education," said Julie James.

Staff Anniversaries - We appreciate your hard work, commitment and loyalty:

Five Years:
Ravi Shankar Prasad

One Year:
Nejuan Adams, Tameka Davis, Kathy Driskell, Olesta Emerson, Letha Hughes, Aaron Lee, Elsie Michael, Latina Miller, Brian Morgan, Jeanette Pankey, Carla Robbins, Tron Sain, Lita Tatum, Mozetta Taylor, Jimmy Williams, James Williamson, Tamika Williamson, Andre Benton, Jernice Bowers, Tomesa Crews, Patricia Dancy, Angela Davis, Clifford Eacholes, Trekina Ervin, Brenda Franklin, Geneva Griffin, Loretta Jackson, Larry Jones, Lisa Lockett, Carolyn Moore, Ruby Owens, Kathy Privett, Shirley Ann Smith Morrow, Ebony Vales, Joyce Washington, Sharon Westbrook, Shateryka Wilkes, Mamie Witherspoon, Jessica Bell, Lourdanie Desir, Patricia Fuller, Tiffany Greer, Norman Jackson, Bertha Montgomery, Willie Morton, Catara Starks, Naisha Tabron



Welcome to the newest member of the Guardian family! His name is Herbert Michael Steward III. He is the son of Mike and Missy Steward. At birth, he weighed 7lbs. 13 oz. and was 20 1/2 inches long. "We are so proud of him!" said Missy, District Manager in Memphis. "He is a real joy to us! And he is gets a ton of attention."

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU! Send your - or your colleagues' - or family's - achievements to The Editor, GCL Advocate at newsletter@guardianhealthcare.com, or hand it to your manager to send in for you.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

You know the saying "There's no second chance to make a good first impression"? Well, making a good impression is a lot more important than just looking good.

According to an article in RN Magazine "Your behavior and appearance create a powerful image that affects how clients, co-workers, management, and even the public, view you as a whole".

When you meet new people, try to take a look at yourself through their eyes. Remember that your attitude, style of dress, speech and body language will project your professionalism - or lack of it.

Think about your image when you're off duty as well. When last did you look at a stranger at the store, amusement park or at the movies, and wonder about that person's occupation. If they are well dressed and confident, with a pleasant manner, you will think they are a professional such as a nurse or direct support professional. On the other hand, an untidy, surly person would not be expected to hold a position of authority.

To polish up your image, experts suggest that you examine your appearance, your communication (both verbal and non-verbal), your posture and demeanor. Watch this column for ways to enhance these abilities and qualities, and how you can improve your confidence.

Great job, Mario!

Mario Butler recently completed the Home Managers Course at Southwest Community College.

Accolades for Patrick Ivy !

Patrick, Home Manager in Memphis' Lakehill Home, received accolades from Dr Nancy Ray, following the recent Court Monitor Survey, for his above and beyond efforts with service recipient JG.

BLESS YOU !!!

Oh Dear! It's allergy season again!

Are you sensitive to pollen? Before reaching for medication, try these tips to help keep your allergies to a minimum this summer.

1. Wash your hair before bedtime.

Reason: You'll remove any pollen and keep it from settling on pillows and bedding. Also avoid irritants such as tobacco smoke, automobile exhaust, hair sprays and perfumes. Wash your hands frequently, and plan outdoor activities when pollen counts are low.

2. Change your clothes when you come inside

Reason: You won't go tracking pollen and other irritants around the house if you launder your clothes right away or even put them in the laundry basket.

3. Clean your carpets.

Dust mites love to nest in area rugs and make you sneeze and itch. Place area rugs outdoors in direct sunlight for a few hours until they become warm and dry. The result? Mites will dry up and die.

4. Already taking an antihistamine?

The best time to take it is **before your symptoms start**. Remember, some medications can cause sleepiness. Never take one when you need to be alert, such as when you are working or driving a vehicle.



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Viewpoint

*"It's not easy taking my problems one at a time when they refuse to get in line."
Ashleigh Brilliant*

For many of us, our work or profession is fraught with challenges. Whether it's "just one of those days" or high gas prices, or the real estate market collapse, we have a choice in how we respond to such adversity. And, if we choose correctly, we can experience relief and a great sense of accomplishment. At GCL, we have successfully persevered through a period of multiple challenges that "refused to get in line".

As we worked our way through the reimbursement cuts that I described in our last issue, major events loomed ahead. To wit:

- * Our GCL-Nashville team had its first state QA survey, one year after our taking over a seriously troubled provider. By any measure, this survey was a resounding success.
- * Within a matter of days, our West Tennessee operations in Shelby County and Jackson were surveyed by two court-related groups - the federal court monitor for the Remedial Order as well as the Quality Review Panel for the Settlement Agreement - both in the same week. Again, the results were resoundingly positive.
- * Success is always gratifying, but to accomplish what we have under these circumstances, is even sweeter. An added "sweetener" was the state's ending the 6.1% reimbursement cuts, effective in May.

All in all, it's been a good year for the GCL team - a very good year, in fact. Thank you to all of you for your contribution.

Adieu

Harold Sloves,
State Director

