

Summer 2017

Bright Horizons

“Don’t be ashamed
of who you are.”

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A Message from Roberta



We recently celebrated Mental Health Awareness Month with activities and events to help increase the awareness of mental health issues, reduce stigma and most importantly, demonstrate that recovery is possible.

Without you, we wouldn't be able to celebrate the possibility of recovery. Without you, we wouldn't be able to effectively reach thousands of youth, adults, and families throughout our communities that are affected by mental illness.

Your support helps us provide effective treatment and supports - all the essentials necessary for our clients to live, work, learn and fully participate in our communities and live happy, healthy lives.

Because of you, Keith and Debbie have found love, acceptance and a place where they feel like family. Because of you, Carl is looking forward to his future as a Recovery Support Specialist. Because of you, Lisa has regained her sense of purpose and is happy. Because of you, Rebecca and her family are enjoying a calmer and safer home environment.

Your generosity is providing life-changing, and life-saving mental health and addiction services, domestic violence services, and education and prevention for more than 17,000 individuals and families in your community, thank you for your continued support.

Roberta J. Cook
President/CEO

Don't Be Ashamed of Who You Are



Because of you, thousands of individuals like Keith and Debbie have found hope, health and recovery at BHcare.

Debbie: I met Keith at summer camp when I was about six or seven years old. We started dating when I was 18 and got married in 1997. We lived together in New York for a few years but moved back to CT in 1997. I had a lot of anxiety and trust issues so my counselor in NY referred me to Branford Counseling Center. I became very isolated and didn't want to leave my house. Keith came with me to my counseling sessions for moral support.

Keith: I started attending with Debbie and soon realized I also had trust issues. I was hanging out with the wrong crowd and putting myself in harmful situations. I was drinking too much and doing things that were not good for my mental health.

Debbie: My counselor referred us to OPTIONS (BHcare's social club) in 2001.

Keith: I didn't think I would fit in. I dress differently and have a disability. Debbie and I not only have our mental health issues, but we also deal with blindness. One of the first things I learned about OPTIONS is no one judges you. Everyone at the club makes you feel important and special. They are there to encourage each other to better themselves. We all have each other's back.

Debbie: OPTIONS helps us in our recovery. It has brought us closer together as a couple, too.

Keith: We made a promise to stick by each other's side and we have learned ways to work through any problems together. OPTIONS offers many self-help programs and fun activities that help us grow together. We love to have lunch at the club, go on outings and attend events throughout the year.

Debbie: We have found a family at OPTIONS that we love and trust. It has helped us in so many ways.

Keith: Mental health issues have gotten a bad rap but you don't have to be ashamed of who you are. Everyone who walks through the door of OPTIONS is accepted and loved. All are welcome. It is our home away from home but with better benefits.

Life is Good

I have Asperger's syndrome and suffer with social anxiety. I was having a tough time socially and emotionally. It was hard for me to make friends. I felt depressed and started drinking. I would sit at home and get drunk. Then I started going to bars and clubs to drink. Eventually, that led to other drugs. I went on a binge and started spending all my money on alcohol and drugs. I fell into a deep depression and ended up in the hospital four times for suicide attempts.

I was tired of living this way and prayed for help. I pleaded to God to please get me through this. I started seeing a clinician at BHcare five years ago. She recommended that I join the Young Adult Services (YAS).

YAS has been great for me. They have a drop-in service so I could go anytime. I started going on trips with the group and got comfortable talking to others. I'm not afraid to start a conversation now and find it easier to make friends. I learned how to cope with my issues and stopped using drugs.

BHcare has made a huge impact on my life. Before BHcare, I was going nowhere and did not know what I wanted to do with my life. I know now that I want to support others and help them in their recovery. I enrolled in the Recovery Coach Training Program and completed the 10-week course. I will be attending Recovery University in the near future and hope to get my state certification as a Recovery Support Specialist.

I'm very happy I found BHcare. ~ Carl

Your donations helped young adults like Carl find the help and support needed to become successful members of your community.



Putting my Life Back Together



I had been hospitalized several times, once I even attempted suicide. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, panic disorder, clinical depression and avoidant personality disorder. I saw a psychiatrist for a few years but he did not know what more he could do for me.

My behavior was very reckless. I would do things like drive my car at 100 mph and had to relinquish my keys. I would rapid cycle with intense highs and lows.

My nephew referred me to BHcare about 11 years ago. I meet with a case manager and received psychotherapy. Over time, I learned how to live with my emotions. I now think before I act. I know what my triggers are and how to control them. I deal with my symptoms and don't let them take over my life.

When my mom died two years ago, BHcare helped me with life skills. I did not know how to live alone. I did everything with my mom. I learned how to budget my limited income, adjust my lifestyle and how to organize. I practice mindful meditation daily.

Before my illness, I worked as a reading specialist. My Community Support Specialist suggested that I start a literacy group at BHcare. My group meets at BHcare once a week. I also write a bimonthly newsletter for my neighborhood complex. Running the literacy group gives me a sense of purpose and brings me great joy, both of which have been missing from my life for many years. ~ Lisa

Thanks to donors like you, Lisa can now live a happy, independent life.

Making Changes

My boys' behavior was out of control. Ricky put himself and my other son at risk with his irrational behavior. We were referred to PCRC after Ricky completed IICAPS (intensive in-home child and adolescent psychiatric service). Ricky started treatment at PCRC and we enrolled in the Triple P Parenting Program.

My husband and I were still overwhelmed with our boys' bad behavior. I kept an eye on them constantly and was always the one who would discipline them. The Parenting Program helped us get on the same page when dealing with the boys. I learned not to hover and my husband became more firm and learned how to back me up.

The boys had family rules to follow and stuck to them. Ricky and Joey both started to do better in school. My husband and I did need to remind them to be kind and respectful to others. Ricky has stepped down from individual therapy and now attends a social group at PCRC. Over the 10 week parenting program, our home became a safer and calmer place to live.

We wanted to celebrate the hard work of our family so we took our first family vacation to Great Wolf Lodge. It was great to be able to enjoy a fun-filled family time with our boys. ~ Rebecca

Each year, your support provides hope and help for thousands of children and families struggling with emotional and behavioral issues.



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