


InTouch

WOODS SERVICES Winter 2024

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 Woods Healthcare Caring for the Community
Woods now offers dental, medical, and behavioral services to the community at large.

Woods Services and the entire Woods System of Care are dedicated to offering seamless access to all of the services that people with intellectual disabilities and complex emotional, behavioral, and medical needs require to thrive at every stage of their lives. A growing body of data proves that we're on the right path.

That's why Woods is so protective of the idea of "integrated care" a phrase that is being used carelessly by other providers. Offering a couple of linked services is better than siloed care, to be sure, but they're not coming anywhere near the level of coordination that Woods is so proud to offer. Woods doesn't just link behavioral and medical services: We address all of the social determinants of health, like housing, education, and vocational training.

This year, we expanded our reach even more. Woods now offers outpatient medical and dental services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and outpatient behavioral healthcare to anyone needing support living in the region. Read more on page 3.

We're just getting started. Along with RWJ Barnabas and Rutgers University, in early 2025, we will be opening an outpatient center in Hamilton, New Jersey (see page 15). Partnering with industry leaders like these strengthens our efforts and expands our reach. Woods is proud to partner with the Beck Institute, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Temple University School of Medicine, Keystone First, and many more. Our dental center is the result of an exciting partnership between Woods and The University of Pennsylvania's School of Dental Medicine, one of the leading dental schools in the care of people with disabilities.

These partners join us because they see that Woods is onto something innovative and exciting. When Bucks County and Magellan Health couldn't solve the problem of finding suitable care for people who were languishing for years in hospitals, they came to Woods for help. And help we did—by developing Woods Community Services, a program that provides community housing with full support for people with significant complex needs.

Solving problems is part of our DNA. When the first Woods School opened its doors over a century ago, it was transformative. When most children with disabilities were institutionalized, with little chance of learning or growing, Mollie Woods developed a scientific basis to help individuals reach their full potential, and Woods has only grown from there. To this day, Woods Services and our Woods System of Care looks for every opportunity to find new ways to better serve our clients, their families, and the community. Thank you for your support as we fulfill this important mission.

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Tine".

Tine Hansen-Turton, MGA, JD, FCPP, FAAN
President and CEO, Woods Services

Caring for the Community

Outpatient
Services

Woods now offers dental, medical, and behavioral services to the community at large.

From well visits to dental work, the kind of care that most people take for granted can be nearly impossible to access for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or autism. Few healthcare providers are trained to serve this population and those who do may be located far from where families live.

The opening of Woods Healthcare, the newest addition to the Woods System of Care, has changed that for anyone within driving distance of Langhorne, Pa. Woods Healthcare offers three new services: the Penn Dental Medicine at Woods Mikey Faulkner Dental Care Center, the Center for Behavioral Health at Woods, and the Medical Center at Woods. This expansion means the Woods System of Care, a network of providers that supports people with disabilities across their entire lifespan, can now extend a helping hand to the wider community.

Penn Dental Medicine at Woods

The revamped dental center is the result of an exciting partnership between Woods and the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. It features five examination and treatment rooms with state-of-the-art equipment. Postgraduate students within Penn Dental Medicine's Advanced Education in General Dentistry program will provide clinical care under close faculty supervision.

"Penn's dentists are now able to perform procedures at our on-campus dental clinic that in the past would have required a visit to a specialist for treatment," said Tine Hansen-Turton, president and CEO of Woods Services. "This expansion of services will be less disruptive for our clients, further enhancing their quality of life."

The services aren't limited to Woods' clients: Beginning in March, the center began welcoming members of the surrounding disability community, too.

"There is an immense need in the community, and now people can get care right here," Hansen-Turton noted at the center's ribbon-cutting ceremony. Woods' employees will have access to the center, too.

"We promise the people who visit us will get care that is delivered with compassion and delivered with the latest science and capability to prevent disease," said Dr. Mark Wolff, Morton Amsterdam Dean of Penn Dental Medicine, and longtime advocate of dental care for people with disabilities.



The Medical Center at Woods

The medical center has traditionally served Woods' clients, but will now be open to the surrounding community of people with disabilities, too. Care runs the gamut from treating allergies and asthma to managing chronic conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease.

This year, it was awarded recognition by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Patient-Centered Medical Home Program (PCMH). A PCMH is a model that provides coordinated and comprehensive care that meets the majority of an individual's physical and mental health care needs. Woods serves people with some of the most medically fragile and complex healthcare conditions that are often coupled with behavioral and emotional challenges. This complexity requires a high level of coordination and care that is best served by the PCMH model, which improves care coordination, reduces disruptive emergency room visits, and increases access to more advanced medical services.

"Our model has shown that providing integrated primary care and behavioral healthcare can increase both access to and quality of care and, at the same time, lower overall Medicaid and Medicare cost of care by at least 20% by decreasing emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalization," Hansen-Turton said. "We are eager to open a second integrated primary care and behavioral healthcare center in partnership with RWJBarnabas and Rutgers Behavioral Health located in Hamilton, New Jersey in early 2024."

The Center for Behavioral Health

The Center for Behavioral Health at Woods offers specialized care for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, and emotional or

behavioral challenges. The Center also offers quick access to autism assessments for children ages 12 months and up, a service that is urgently needed. The current wait time in the region can be as long as a year or longer, but CBHW is currently booking appointments within a week. Early access to diagnosis can significantly improve treatment outcomes. Services are available to community members, Woods employees, and clients throughout the Woods System of Care.

CBHW psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, psychologists, nurse navigators, counselors, and family therapists perform an array of services, including IQ testing, assessments to identify the individual needs of people with mental health and behavioral health issues, medication review and coordination, complex condition nurse navigation, individual, group, and family therapies, and more.

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Medical Center Earned Coveted NCQA Recognition

A four-year-long quest to develop a top-of-the-line patient-centered medical home has earned the Medical Center at Woods recognition by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) program. PCMH is a model that puts patients at the forefront of care. It builds better relationships between patients and their clinical care teams, improves quality and the patient experience, and increase staff satisfaction – while reducing healthcare costs. NCQA's PCMH Recognition program is the most widely adopted PCMH evaluation program in the United States. Practices who earn recognition have made a commitment to quality improvement and a patient-centered approach to care.

"NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition raises the bar in defining high-quality care by emphasizing access, health information technology, and coordinated care focused on patients," said NCQA President Margaret E. O'Kane. "Recognition shows that Woods Services has the tools, systems, and resources to provide its patients with the right care, at the right time."

High-Tech Help

Technology is helping students across the Woods System of Care exceed all expectations.



At 18 years old, Elijah rarely speaks. But when he is with Milo, he's engaged, smiling, and laughing. Elijah greets Milo, repeats after him, mimics his motions, and even enjoys the occasional dance party. Elijah's personality shines when he is in Milo's company, and he is always eager to spend time with his new friend. Milo isn't a teacher or another student: He's a robot that was designed to help nonverbal autistic children learn social and emotional skills.

Sophisticated technology

On the outside, Milo is a playful, friendly, child-like robot with expressive eyes, the ability to replicate most human expressions, and a fun, movable body. But under the surface, he's a sophisticated tool that has been programmed to use the principles of speech-language pathology, occupational

therapy, and applied behavioral analysis to help children with autism improve their communication, social skills, and self-soothing behaviors. Milo is one of four robot models being used at the Gardner and Crestwood Schools in Langhorne, Pa.: There are two male and two female robots with light and dark skin tones.

"Woods is one of the first organizations like ours to be using these robots," explains Stephanie Geider, the transition coordinator who collaborates with manufacturer Robokind to bring these robots to Woods.

Woods purchased three robots in November and is awaiting delivery of a fourth. Currently, three therapists, a music teacher, and four classroom teachers are fully trained on their technology. The teachers and kids love them so much that they compete for time with them.

The robots, which come with a full curriculum as well as customizable board games that teachers can use to generalize skills in the classroom, were specifically designed for nonverbal, elementary-aged kids, and they're a powerful tool to improve communication and encourage speech. But Geider wanted to see what else they could do.

As more students work with them, even more benefits are unfolding. Students in the 14- to 21-year old transitional age range are enjoying them just as much as their younger counterparts. And the robots are dramatically boosting student engagement.

Better learning through tech

"Robokind's studies show that if a direct staff member is giving a lesson, you will get around a 2% engagement rate," Geider explains. "When the same lesson is taught by a robot, there's upwards of an 87% engagement rate."

That's because people with autism "interact more effectively with robots than humans to practice life-skills," researchers reported in the journal *PLoS One*. Robots use simplified facial expressions and can provide valuable repetition without growing frustrated. They are more predictable than humans,

which can make interactions less stressful and more comfortable for people who need help understanding social cues.

Further, most of the students who are working with Milo and his robot pals are drawn to technology. "When I look



Elijah's personality shines when he is in Milo's company, and he is always eager to spend time with his new friend.

at the kids I work with, the majority of them love engaging with technology. Introducing new and exciting technological advances provide our students with unique and engaging educational experiences," Geider says.

A solid foundation of success

While Woods is just getting started with the robots, experiences at other schools show what's in store over time. At McCarthy-Teszler, a specialty school in South Carolina, the robots helped students more rapidly reach their IEP goals—even when they'd made little progress in the past. Teachers reported that the robots helped students recognize, regulate, and communicate their emotions; use skills to calm down; maintain eye contact with

Woods System of Care

These robots are also an example of the kind of innovation that pervades the Woods System of Care (WSOC), from the schools to the community-based services, all the way through to the development of an integrated health and behavioral care model. The system of care itself is an example of life-changing innovation. The vast majority of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, genetic disorders, and complex emotional and behavioral challenges are fragmented, difficult to navigate, and pitted with barriers that prevent individuals from thriving. But the WSOC has re-envisioned these services and created a path where people can seamlessly receive all of the care and supports they need throughout their lives, whether those needs are educational, behavioral, medical, dental, or more. This logical approach to whole-person care is sorely lacking across the sector, leaving far too many people fighting for—and not always receiving—the services they deserve.

other people; and engage in appropriate, two-sided conversation. As a result, several students were able to return to their general education classes.

The changes aren't just in behaviors: A study that used brain imaging to map the cognitive function of patients' brainwaves showed increased activity in up to five functional areas of the brain.

By using the robots, "we started making advances in three or four months that we were not seeing in years of regular therapy,"

Woods will be adding another one soon and training more teachers on how best to use it.

Virtual reality brings learning to life

At the Mary Dobbins School in Mt. Holly, N.J., new technology comes in the form of virtual reality (VR). Students can now fly to the moon, float through a blood vessel, or time travel to meet dinosaurs with the adoption of VR instruction. Teachers and students have access to a library with thousands of virtual, augmented, and other curricula aligned across

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said lead researcher Shelley Margow, OTR, owner and clinical director of Children's Therapy Works. "We were even showing improvement in more severe cases that usually show very slow progression of skills."

Importantly, the newfound skills weren't limited to interactions with the robots alone. In a three-year study, the South Carolina Department of Education found that 90% of students were able to transfer the skills to real-world interactions.

The robots have been so successful that

all subjects and age ranges. Teachers can deliver a fully immersive experience with the use of 360-degree photos, 360-degree videos, and 3D models that provide fully immersive, exciting, and engaging lessons to students. The program even comes with VR lessons and experiences to help students with social-emotional regulation. Virtual reality helps teachers break out of traditional classroom limitations and provide innovative experiences that help students meet their learning goals. Learning through experience can boost knowledge retention by up to 75%. ■

Woods Services Welcomes Dinetta Armstrong, MBA



Woods has brought on board a key new senior leader, Dinetta Armstrong, MBA, as Senior Vice President of Woods Healthcare and Executive Director of The Medical Center at Woods. Armstrong is responsible for advancing Woods' growth in managed care and value-based reimbursement. She will further the integration of Woods Health Services—the NCQA-certified Medical Center at Woods, Penn Dental at Woods, and the Center for Behavioral Health—along with the development of an integrated medical and behavioral health center at RWJBarnabas in Hamilton, New Jersey. She will work with Sailaja Musunuri, MD, Woods' executive vice president of integrative medicine and chief of

psychiatry, and Stephen Kolesk, MD, Woods' vice president for medical affairs and managed care/chief medical officer, to lay the groundwork to replicate the integrated care model in strategic locations of high need. Armstrong will also use her expertise to help the Medical Center at Woods' satellite location at Brian's House in Exton, Pa., expand to serve more people in Chester County and incorporate new behavioral health services there.

Armstrong has more than 25 years of experience working in healthcare administration, including hospitals, managed care, and Federally Qualified Health Centers that provided integrated primary and behavioral healthcare, including wraparound services, to the underserved community in Philadelphia. She has a wealth of experience cultivating new business opportunities to ensure growth, progress, and expansion, as well as working to improve standards of care and quality of service.

Armstrong received her B.S. in health policy and administration from Penn State University, and her M.B.A. in health care administration from Temple University. ■

Caring for the Community

continued from page 3

"Emotional health is as important as physical health," Sailaja Musunuri, MD, executive vice president of integrative medicine and chief of psychiatry, told the assembled crowd, noting that they often go hand-in-hand. "Health conditions can precipitate emotional health issues and emotional health concerns can exacerbate medical conditions and make treatment more complicated."

This interplay is why Woods embraces an integrated health model, which is part of an overall population health management approach that focuses on whole-person care and recognizes the importance of addressing all of a person's needs to attain the best possible health and behavioral outcomes. That includes acknowledging the social determinants of health (socioeconomic factors, education, geographic location, membership in an under-represented group, access to transportation, etc.), which play deep and meaningful roles in a person's health and well-being. In the integrated care model, healthcare and other service providers work together seamlessly to eliminate gaps in care.

These centers are unique in that every staff member has been trained to serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, and emotional/behavioral challenges, as well as their families. Furthermore, all three work with local universities and hospitals to help train the next generations of caregivers through residencies, internships, and other opportunities.

Learn more about Woods Healthcare at WoodsHealthcare.org. ■

Tine Hansen-Turton Recognized as Titan 100 Honoree

We are proud to share that Woods CEO Tine Hansen-Turton was recognized as a Philadelphia Titan 100 honoree. Tine was recognized for her extraordinary leadership and being a catalyst for change to transform care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, she has championed change management principles to engage staff and prioritize their well-being by implementing innovative benefits such as educational opportunities and onsite healthcare. Tine's accomplishments are broad and deep. The lives of countless people have been significantly improved thanks to her work on their behalf. She is a Titan indeed!

Nehemiah: A Story of Transformation

When Nehemiah's family and friends see how he's thriving at Woods, they can't believe that the thoughtful, considerate teenager is the same person who went through a decade of aggressive and destructive behaviors, psychiatric stays, and countless elopements.

Two years ago, Nehemiah and his family appeared to be out of options. His behavioral issues were too severe for him to remain in residential care, and the sterile psychiatric facilities he was sent to offered no quality of life or potential for growth. Everything changed when the New York Department of Education referred Nehemiah to Woods Services.

When Nehemiah first arrived at Woods' Langhorne, Pa., campus, he fell back on the same behaviors he'd always used—aggression, destruction, and elopement—with the same predictable results. Until one clinician had a radical idea: She wanted to give Nehemiah more independence.

Higher expectations

"I believed that we needed to start expecting more," Kim Schreffler explains. "The staff got together and started to believe in him. That's what changed him and helped him live up to his potential."

That potential is impressive. In just a few short years, Nehemiah has become an almost entirely different person. He now works at Common Grounds and in the recreation department, uses his earnings to pay his own bills, and spends up to 90 minutes of independent time in the community each week, where he visits favorite businesses, goes to the gym, and does his own banking.

"I like to ride my bike off campus," Nehemiah explains. "I usually go to the Chinese store and order a whole bunch of sushi. There's something about that Chinese place that I love. Then I have to stop and think and look at my budget. So that's why now I just walk up there to get air or go to the dollar store or the 7-11 and get something small instead of always ordering out and buying junk food."

Nehemiah enjoys participating in the My 25 nutrition program, where he can choose recipes, prepare a menu, order food, and cook dishes like shrimp, tilapia, couscous, and Caesar salad. "I love to cook!" he says. "I want to experience making different things instead of just one thing."

Whole-person care

A major key to Nehemiah's success is Woods' whole-person approach. "We're not just looking at a behavior; we're looking at how we can help a person be the best person



photo courtesy Liam McKenna

they can be," Schreffler explains. As staff got to know Nehemiah, they realized that he wasn't an aggressive or destructive person, he just needed to be heard, understood, and respected. They listened to his needs and interests, observed his strengths, and took note of where he needed support to grow more independent.

"Nehemiah has amazing computational skills," Schreffler shares, which allows him to more independently manage his bank account. His reading abilities make using an ATM challenging, though, so Schreffler is working with him on rounding out his skills.

"I'm really focused on learning how to read," Nehemiah says of his current goals.

Meanwhile, in therapy, he's making great strides in developing coping skills and replacement behaviors. Schreffler has been teaching him alternative strategies, such as meditation and yoga, which he practices weekly. Nehemiah explains that in the past when faced with frustrations, "the old Nehemiah would have cursed them out or eloped. Now, when I'm upset, I either call my mom or my sister if I have a problem, and I explain it to them. Or I just go in my room and play my music or ride my bike. I feel like when I blast my music, it calms me."

Honoring individuality

What works for Nehemiah isn't the same thing that's going to work for another Woods client, which is why it's so important to take what Woods calls a person-centered and strength-based approach. "Our clients work on different things depending on what they need," Schreffler explains. At 19 years old, Nehemiah is actively working toward preparing for life in a group home, so the Woods team is working on increasing his exposure to a variety of life skills.

"Nehemiah is very outspoken and has a big personality, and now he uses it appropriately. That's because we built a relationship with him, believed in him, and respected him," Schreffler concludes. ■

Q What do you like to do?

A "I like to clean, ride my bike, and blast my music. I like country, hip hop, R&B, and some Jamaican music. In the morning, I play gospel music. But then, when I'm on chill time, I play R&B, violin, instrumental."

Q What was your life like before Woods?

A "I've been in placement since I was seven or eight years old. I've been in and out since I was little, and I regret it, I really regret it. I'm happy here. I have stuff to do. I'm always busy, always active, always doing something, if not recreation, then riding my bike. Trying to stay out of trouble."

Q What are your plans for the future?

A "I'm going to look into going to an independent group home, but if I have the opportunity to live with my brother, I want to take that. When I'm with him, he has always kept me busy. He's always about, riding 4-wheelers, going on the trail with the bikes. I like that."

*Nehemiah:
In His Own
Words*



“Fore” the Love of Woods...We Golfed!

An amazing day was shared by all at the 2023 www.woodsgolfclassic.org, hosted by Johnson Kendall Johnson at the beautiful Union League Golf Club At Torresdale. Many sponsors such as Homestead Smart Health Plans, and Synergy Pharmacy Services joined community partners, affiliates, and friends of Woods to raise more than \$150k for those served by Woods.

More than 100 golfers gathered for event registration, sponsored gifts, brunch, cigars, and Bloody Marys all under sunny skies and 80 degree temps. The golfers anxiously awaited the shotgun start while enjoying these great amenities courtesy of generous sponsors such as Workplace Central, Razor Technology, Selective Insurance, Parx Casino, PFM Asset Management, Baylinks Golf, and Conner Strong. After a warmup on the McBrick Builders and FSA Bucks County-sponsored putting green, the golfers teed off.

Between holes, golfer foursomes had plenty of opportunities to spice up the day with a variety of games and special events: On hole 11, they sampled Yardley Distillery's offerings and competed for the title of top Cornhole player. Ryan Moylan of Farotech took the honors and won a \$250 gift card to the pro shop. Thank you to sponsors Angelo's Carpet One and Workplace Central.

On the other side of the course, players of all levels lined up to see who could *Beat the Pro* on hole #9. A *Closest to the Pin* game was extra challenging on hole #4, as Chris Tsigounis of A&E Construction walked away the winner with 6' 11" in distance. Johnson, Kendall & Johnson's Kevin Dougher had a great day representing the event sponsor while also taking home the day's *Longest Drive* winning prize.

For golfers who weren't quite ready to challenge the pro, The Golf Clinic offered an afternoon of learning and fun as golfers of all levels learned game basics and got hands-on help with their club selection and swings. For additional guests aspiring to sharpen their golf game, a 90-minute *Pro-Clinic* provided an afternoon of golf education and personal instruction. Over 20 participants of all skill levels received hands-on tips from three pros, gained confidence in their game, and certainly laughed and had FUN!

As the game drew to a close, golfers gathered for a cocktail hour filled with live music, butler-passed hors d'oeuvres, and a delicious antipasto spread sponsored by Synergy Pharmacy Services. The view from the patio provided a beautiful setting for the much-anticipated *Helicopter Ball Drop Event*, sponsored by Professional Control Solutions. More than 150 numbered golf balls rained from the sky as a helicopter flew over the course dropping a winning ball into or closest to the desired hole onto the course below. Ball # 96, purchased by Doug McLaughlin of Crown Holdings, earned him a \$1,000 prize, that he so generously donated back to Woods.

As the outing commenced over a delicious buffet dinner sponsored by Synergy Pharmacy Services, all participants and friends gathered to network and share their enthusiasm from the day. Woods President and CEO, Tine Hansen-Turton graciously thanked the crowd for their support while celebrating the \$150,000 in funds raised. The generous donations from this event will benefit Woods Greatest Need.

Coming in first place and earning a prize of \$300 each to the club pro shop was Team JKJ, composed of Kevin Dougher, Joe Dougher, Matt Skinner, and Tom Maahs. Second place went to Team Elliott Lewis, with players Brian Haley, Tyler Bradley, Bryan Pearson, and Steve Casciano. Parx Casino's foursome came in third, with Mark Oppenheimer, Jonathan Michaels, Brian Romani, and Dan Clark leaving as winners. Team Bridgway took home the honors of being the Most Honest Team (coming in last place, lol) and winning another donated golf game courtesy of Union League Torresdale. Members of the foursome include Mark Williams, Peter Pogany, Jim O'Connor, and Joe Perez.

Mark your calendars now Save the Date for Sept. 23, 2024, to return to the Union League Golf Club at Torresdale for the best outing in town! ■





Woods for

The Run for Woods 2023 ev

Close to 1,000 people gathered on a beautiful Sunday morning for the 2023 Run for Woods, presented by Faulkner-Ciocca Dealerships. Participants walked, ran, and rolled through a brand-new course that wound entirely through the Woods campus. Blessed with beautiful weather, participants and spectators enjoyed the serenity of the Nature Trail and enjoyed the antics of Woods resident barnyard animals.

The Eagles drumline provide a heart-thumping soundtrack to the day's festivities, while Eagles mascot Swoop and Eagles cheerleaders kept the energy high. SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star provided plenty of cheer, hugs, and photo ops.

More than 50 community partners and sponsors and 100 volunteers made this magical event possible—and helped raise almost \$270,000!

Attendees included Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick, State Senator Frank Farry, Pa. State Rep Joe Hogan, and Langhorne Borough president Paul Murdock; representatives from all of the Woods System of Care affiliates; and Woods Board members Alice Devoe, Heather Fehn, Trip McMahon, Richard Leshner, Barry Sharer, and Carolyn Reichenbach.

Tine Hansen-Turton, Woods president and CEO thanked attendees and sponsors alike, noting that they all play an integral role in helping Woods care for clients and the community with services such as the brand new outpatient medical, dental, and behavioral health centers. "The support you're giving us today allows us to do these kinds of services," she said.

Hansen-Turton presented the Woods



the Win!

event was a smashing success.

Services Humanitarian Aware to Middletown police officer, Melissa Robeson. Every year, Woods presents the award to a person who impacts Woods, the surrounding community, and the region at large. Robeson serves as a community outreach officer who works closely with the Woods community.

"Not only is she a phenomenal female leader who inspires all of us, but she's also an Army veteran," Hansen-Turton noted. You can meet Robeson at one of her regularly scheduled Coffee with a Cop events at Common Grounds Café, Woods social enterprise breakfast and lunch café located on campus.

After the race, cash prizes were awarded to 16 finishers in 15 categories. Attendees proudly wore this year's gorgeous participation medals while they enjoyed Rita's Italian Water Ice (a perfect treat for the sunny day) and soft pretzels, recovered from the run with chair massages, and played a variety of yard games with family and friends.

"What an amazing day of love and fun," said Deb Taub McGowan, parent to a Woods client. Cecilia Yip agreed. "Such a fun day! We loved it!"

Now that our runners, walkers and rollers have rested up, we are excited to invite you to lace up your shoes and get ready for our 10th anniversary run on Sunday, May 5th. We have plenty of fun surprises planned. Be sure to join us for the best year yet! If you haven't yet tried the 5k course, remember the words of Janine Davidovitch, a Woods client who spoke during opening remarks, "No matter what age you are, you can still do it. So go do it!" ■



We Wrote the Book

Woods shares the story of its transformation in a new book.

Few organizations have undergone the kind of radical transformation that helped Woods Services comprehensively re-envision its structure, services, and future. Now Woods is sharing its story and providing a roadmap to help other organizations in the newly released book, “Thriving Through Transformation: A Practical Guide to Creating Organizational Change in the Social Sector.”

Today, the Woods System of Care is a dynamic and thriving nonprofit population health management and advocacy network that provides innovative, comprehensive, and integrated healthcare, behavioral health treatment, housing, education, work, and support services to more than 23,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex medical and behavioral health conditions. But the path from the opening of the first Woods school in 1913 to the System of Care as it exists today was far from linear. Changing societal beliefs, services, and objectives led Woods to the brink, but a spirit of innovation and a dedicated adherence to the founding principles of the Woods School brought it back.

A Brief History

When Mollie Woods opened the Woods School, her vision to “teach the exceptional child—the slow child, the child with behavior problems, the child with reading or speech difficulties and the like—to meet problems of everyday life; to make normal adjustments, to acquire sources of satisfaction for the present as well as for later years, and to know the joy of achievement,” was revolutionary. At the time, most children with intellectual disabilities were institutionalized, with little chance of learning or growing. Their joy and life satisfaction weren’t even considered.

Mollie Woods was a pioneer who worked tirelessly to end the often inhumane practice of institutionalization, and she helped usher in a new era of support and care for people with I/DD and other challenges. In 1934, she established the Child Research Clinic and, for the first time in the nation, introduced a scientific basis for supporting

and advancing the capabilities of children she called exceptional. Woods became an international leader in the field, sponsoring conferences and publishing journals that featured the best minds. In 1957, Woods established The Child Study, Treatment, and Research Center to provide comprehensive evaluations, diagnoses, and analyses on the needs of exceptional children to parents and professionals. This all-encompassing facility was the first of its kind in the United States.

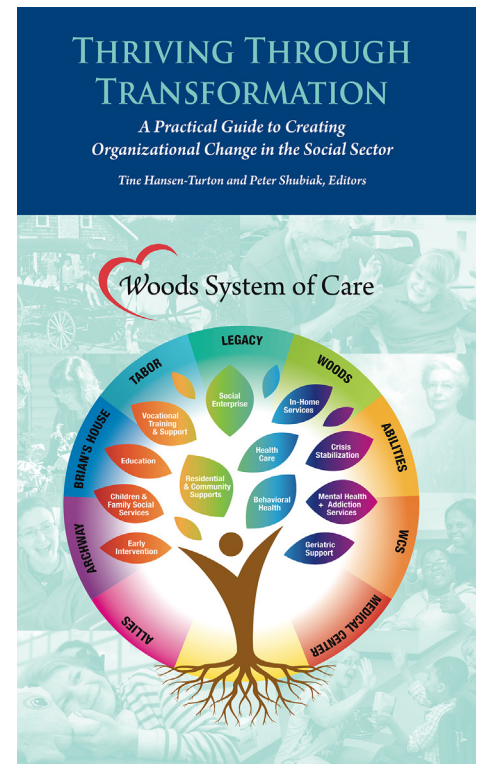
As the civil rights movement took hold in the 1960s, more people became aware of the injustice of institutionalization, and Mollie’s vision of dignity and support for people with disabilities spread far and wide. Many states began to close the institutions they had previously relied on in favor of community-based models where people with disabilities could receive more care and support.

Shifting to the Community

By the 1980s and 1990s, changes in public policy and funding further shifted the locus of services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from institutions to the community. While this was good news for many people with disabilities, Woods wasn’t prepared for the change. As its campus-based service model became outdated, admissions and funding plummeted, and Woods faced the possibility of bankruptcy.

Woods was about to undergo its first transformation. Woods’ board of trustees and management saw that the push toward community services, while positive, was leaving people behind. People with I/DD who also had severe emotional and behavioral challenges or complex medical conditions weren’t thriving in community settings. Woods’ leadership decided to specialize in caring for that population and opened the Woodlands Center for Challenging Behaviors and the Crestwood Center for Children with Emotional Challenges. Woods established an excellent reputation for providing services that were otherwise lacking or inadequate. Nearly 200 school districts from more than 20 states referred students to Woods.

By 2010, community-based services were widely available. As a result, several states stopped making referrals to Woods and



launched intensive and targeted initiatives to bring their residents home—and stopped referring people to Woods. In response to the declining census and the irrefutable trend towards community-based services, the board of trustees and management team adopted an aggressive growth strategy by acquiring community-based service providers with expertise in community housing, social enterprises, special education, early intervention, child welfare, and outpatient behavioral health treatment. Woods dramatically expanded the scope and scale of its community-based services in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

New Leadership, New Vision

As Woods shifted its focus to community-based services, its campus-based programs, which were no longer the focus, began to fall behind. By 2016, the organization faced immense challenges: programs that were 10 to 20 years behind those of other organizations, non-existent or inadequate information systems, a burgeoning personal-injury legal field competing for clients, and a business model that was not sustainable.

The Board recognized, for Woods to survive, major change was needed. They

“Thriving Through Transformation” is available for free electronically on www.woods.org/thriving. Hard copies are also available on Amazon.

started the process by bringing in a visionary new president and CEO, Tine Hansen-Turton, who would lead the long-overdue organizational changes and infrastructure investments that Woods needed.

In “Thriving Through Transformation: A Practical Guide to Creating Organizational Change in the Social Sector,” Hansen-Turton and Peter Shubiak, MS, former chief operating officer for Woods, tell the story of how, despite significant existential threats and challenges, Woods repositioned itself to become one of the country’s most prominent intellectual and developmental disabilities organizations.

The book details how Hansen-Turton built her leadership dream team and ushered in the principles and practices of population health management as a strategy to enhance care, improve individual and organizational outcomes, and develop new revenue streams. Recognizing that healthcare was the key to the new model of care, Woods launched a state-of-the-art onsite medical center in 2018 that became a core component of the strategic transformation into a population health management organization.

In 2023, the Medical Center opened its doors to the wider community (see article on pg 3) and earned certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance, making it the nation’s first recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home for people with intellectual disabilities.

Fighting a One-Size-Fits-All Approach

Dedicated to the idea that all people should be cared for in the least restrictive environments possible, Woods began refuting the extreme idea that all people and their needs can be served safely and effectively in community settings. Woods promoted residential treatment facilities as serving a critical and valuable purpose.

The leadership team also stressed the importance of building a continuum of care that would meet each person’s needs for over their lifespan. This vision became a guiding strategic principle that aligned Woods’ operations and growth strategies with its goal of developing a system of care that addresses the social determinants of health, including education, housing, work, social and leisure activities, behavioral health support, medical care, and other quality-of-life indicators.

Addressing the whole person and their physical and behavioral health reduces costs, enhances the quality of services, and saves lives.

Leading the Way

Since Mollie Woods founded the Woods School, a guiding principle has been to improve the care of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, no matter where they live or who serves them. “Thriving Through Transformation” does just that

providing a detailed roadmap to help other organizations take on their own transformation journeys.

Chapters explore developing strategic directions and planning; managing change; engaging employees; cultivating a culture of innovation and care; embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion; planning for mission-driven growth; improving infrastructure and enterprise shared services; and developing strategic positioning, policy, and thought leadership. ■

“All organizations must embrace change to best serve their clients, but it can be difficult to know where to start,” said Hansen-Turton. “We hope our success story will inspire others to start the journey and serve as a roadmap to plan their own transformative journeys.”

Woods System of Care and Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services to Affiliate

Woods Services Inc. and Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services are pleased to announce their intent to affiliate. The proposed affiliation has been approved by the organizations’ boards and is subject to approval by New Jersey regulatory agencies. Bridgeway, headquartered in Union, New Jersey, serves more than 4,000 people each year in crisis intervention programs and psychiatric screening in 10 counties in northern New Jersey. Upon approval of the affiliation, Bridgeway will join Woods’ three other New Jersey affiliates — Legacy Treatment Services, Allies, Inc., and Archway Programs — in plans to enhance and expand behavioral health services in northern New Jersey, adding to the coverage Legacy provides in central and southern New Jersey.

Through this affiliation, the organizations will be able to serve thousands of additional people. It will allow both organizations to create new programs and expand existing ones. Bridgeway will benefit from the back-office and shared services capacity of Woods System of Care as well as Woods’ strategic, operational, legal, and programmatic guidance. Woods, in turn, will expand its footprint across all of New Jersey, grow its behavioral health and IDD/A programs, and gain expertise from Bridgeway’s staff and leadership.

“The skills and expertise of Bridgeway’s leadership complement Woods’ leadership, which will greatly enhance the capacity of the system as a whole,” said Bridgeway’s board chairperson and treasurer, Joseph Perez. There is enormous potential for growth.

“Our organizations and organizational cultures are aligned, which strengthens our ability to provide much-needed, person-centered care to an underserved population,” said Barry Sharer, Woods Services board chair.

The organizations anticipate receiving regulatory approval within the next several months and will quickly formalize the affiliation afterward. ■

Advanced Abilities Day Program Opens its Doors



Marissa Guidos, Advanced Abilities Assistant Supervisor (left); Michelina Patetta, Director of DD Services; Shawn Gibson, Archway Programs COO (behind); George Richards, Archway Programs CEO/CFO; and Ora Reed, Advanced Abilities Day Program Supervisor, prepare to cut the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony.

Cloudy skies and misty rain did not dampen the spirits or quell the excitement of the long-awaited grand opening of the Advanced Abilities Day Program (AADP). Located in Sewell, N.J., the new program will offer services to adults with developmental or physical disabilities transitioning from a school environment or those needing daily socialization, life skill development, job training, or one of the many services and activities offered.

George Richards, Archway Programs CEO/CFO; Michelina Patetta, Director of DD Services; Ora Reed, Advanced Abilities Day Program Supervisor; and Marissa Guidos, Advanced Abilities Assistant Supervisor, shared in the ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the official opening of the program. Numerous staff members and colleagues from across all Archway Programs were present, showing their support and sharing in the day's excitement. Staff was on hand, offering tours of the location and answering questions about the available services within the program. Visitors were treated to delicious food and music while the staff passed out tickets for gift-basket raffles held throughout the day. Five lucky winners went home with baskets filled with goodies and gadgets.

Opportunities to Collaborate

Ora Reed, excited by the sizeable turnout and the prospect of joining forces with

local programs and community members, remarked, "Our grand opening event opened doors for us to attract potential participants and their families. It allowed us to connect with the community and establish relationships with local businesses."

Janet D. Garraty, Executive Director of the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce, is one such connection and ally. Janet joined the festivities to offer her support and to learn more about the program. While taking a tour of the facility, she remarked on its potential to provide much-needed services that are often taken for granted and overlooked.

Linda Koch-Wood, Outreach Coordinator for SPWA Services, LLC, also attended the celebration and has been an advocate for the program and potential participants. Seated near the entrance, she provided relevant resource material and offered her expertise in navigating the often-confusing process of obtaining services for loved ones and family members.

After concluding the day's events with a final tour, Michelina Patetta shared her thoughts on the new program.

"They are why we are here," she said of the departing family. "George Richards and I have been developing this program for some time now. After years of working with consumers in a group home environment and through our respite program, we saw first-hand the strain that a system burdened with shortcomings and long waiting lists put

on consumers and their families. Our goal is to bridge that gap in services and smooth the often-tenuous transition adults with disabilities and their families face every day."

Giving Thanks

Archway Programs and the entire staff of AADP would like to offer their sincere thanks to Wawa for their donation of 240 soft pretzels, Zallies Community Foundation for their generous donation of three fresh rainbow fruit trays and six large cookie trays, to Heritage Dairy Stores for their contribution of a delicious sub tray, and to Angelo's Pizzeria in Turnersville for their donation of five delicious large pizzas.

Thank you, Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts, for the lovely floral arrangements that graced our tables; SPWA, LLC, for their ongoing support; Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce for joining us and for your continued assistance; BGP, Inc. for their help with our vegetable garden, and Meals on Wheels for being an AADP advocate and partner.

If you would like more information about the Advanced Abilities Day Program, please visit our website: <https://archwayprograms.org/adult-services/advanced-abilities/>, or contact Ora Reed via phone at 856.582.3900 ext. 234 or email at ora.reed@archwayprograms.org. ■

Archway Programs is part of the Woods System of Care. To learn more, visit www.archwayprograms.org for more information.



Allies' New Medical Group Home to Provide Customized Residential Supports and Medical Care for Those with I/DD

Across
the System
of Care

On May 17, Allies welcomed the public, Support Coordinators, its affiliates, and members of the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities to tour their new state-of-the-art, six-bedroom medical group home in Wharton, N.J.

This newly constructed home will provide holistic, customized residential supports and medical care for men and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and complex healthcare needs. Medical homes allow individuals to age in place and receive essential care within the comfort of their own home and community. Dawn King, Vice President of Integrated Health Services at Allies, remarked, "Medical group homes are focused on individuals' personalized care needs. They are staffed by teams that are highly skilled and trained in medical and behavioral crisis management. The team approach promotes person-centered, collaborative care that is geared towards meeting the unique physical, emotional, and social needs of each resident in the home."

Another way that medical group homes provide optimal care for people with I/DD is through their natural, home-like environment. By remaining in a familiar environment, rather than being admitted to a hospital or other facility, individuals thrive because they are surrounded by the comforts of home, familiar faces, and the care and support of those around them. Staff place a strong emphasis on protecting the rights of each individual, promoting their independence and dignity, and ensuring their safety. Dawn said, "The result of specialized medical care, a home-like environment, and compassionate staff is that individuals have the opportunity to stay healthier, live longer, and engage in their community."



Allies' new medical group home in Wharton, N.J., will provide holistic, customized residential supports and medical care for men and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities and complex healthcare needs.

Highlights of the Wharton Medical Group Home include:

- An open concept, hardwood floors, and many windows to allow natural light
- ADA compliant rooms throughout
- Ceiling track transfer lifts for nonambulatory individuals
- Egress doors in each bedroom to ensure safe departure from the home should an emergency situation arise
- Two and a half bathrooms featuring adaptive equipment to provide optimal support for bathing and hygiene

Kim Witkowski, Director of Housing and Development at Allies, said, "In addition to various supports to meet the unique medical needs of each resident in the home, the home also includes six bedrooms, a large kitchen, two living rooms, and an office. The décor is warm and inviting. It was a pleasure giving everyone a tour and sharing more about how the program will benefit the health and quality of life for its new residents."

The Wharton home is one of 15 medical group homes that Allies currently offers within the state of New Jersey. ■

Allies is part of the Woods System of Care. To learn more, visit www.AlliesNJ.org.



Kristen Farry Honored in Power 100 List

Kristen Farry, Woods' first VP of Policy and Government Relations, was named as one of *City & State Pennsylvania's* 2023 Government Relations Power 100. Kristen has achieved numerous federal and regional policy and legislative wins for Woods and the individuals we serve. She was recently selected to represent Woods and serve on Governor Josh Shapiro's Transition Team.

"Collaborating with government officials helps Woods' ensure that our clients' needs are known, understood, and considered in policy decisions," she says. "It's vital to improving access to services and supports that help people reach their fullest potential."

Lifelong Learning

By supporting education, the Woods System of Care helps employees grow and thrive.

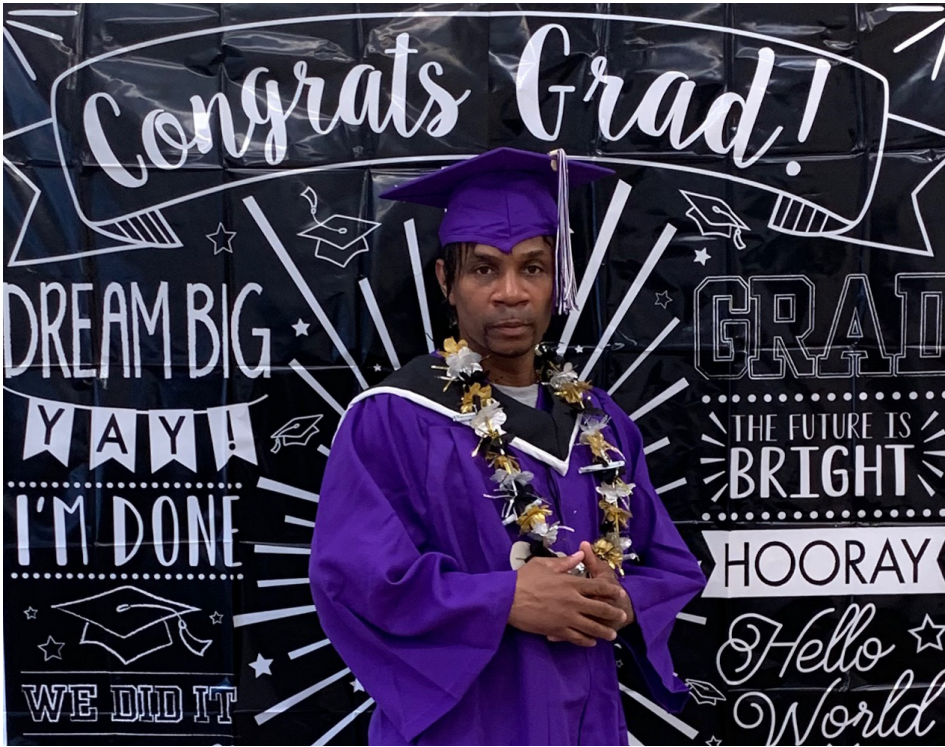


photo courtesy Valerie Durden

Troye Johnson, a Woods employee since 1991, never expected to be plotting his course to a PhD. A father of five, he was laser-focused on providing for his family and sending his children to private schools so they could reach their highest potential. But he never considered that his own education was about to open a whole new world.

Four years ago, Dawn Diamond and Valerie Durden encouraged Johnson to enroll in the Harcum College program that lets employees earn a deeply discounted associate's degree in Human Services & Behavioral Health Science by taking classes right on the Woods campus.

Johnson was skeptical. "I wasn't sure I could do it," he says, "My responsibilities came first."

But while he was busy working at Woods, running his own cleaning business from home, and raising a family, he saw an opportunity. Durden showed him that it was attainable and that she'd be there to help every step of the way.

Going into the program, Johnson was interested in learning to write better contracts for his small business, but he soon found that he would learn so much more.

"It changed my whole life," he says. "It allowed me to keep promises I made to

my family." Johnson explains that he had promised his mother he would go to college, but she passed away before seeing him reach his goal. He thinks she would have been particularly proud to see that his daughter followed in his footsteps and also enrolled at Harcum. They were even able to take some classes together.

Not only did Johnson go on to graduate from the Harcum program with honors, but in May, he completed his bachelor's degree at Lincoln University. And this fall, he began his graduate studies at Temple University. And after that, he'll be pursuing his doctorate.

Johnson now encourages other Woods employees to pursue their education.

"I push people to come to Harcum," he says. "I tell them that you have to have a say-so in your destiny. You want to be more than an employee. Where will you be at 60? I know that I'll have a PhD."

Johnson doesn't just encourage employees to pursue higher education: He supports them along the way. He helps students set up their technology and tutors them in statistics. He strives to live by an axiom shared by one of his professors: "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

"Every time I left class, I was taking information. I understood something I didn't

understand before," he says. "Now I feel obligated to help. I want to contribute back."

Johnson expresses deep gratitude for Woods' support and notes that tuition reimbursement is just the start. Valerie Durden "goes out of her way to make sure every one of us is OK," he says. He also credits Dawn Diamond and his academic advisor at Lincoln, Solomon Caudle, EdD, for helping him believe in himself and his potential, and stresses that he couldn't have done it without his close friend, Roma Smith.

"It truly changed my life," he says. "Work, career, the ability to inspire my kids ... The way I think today is totally different from when I came in."

Helping Nurses Grow

The Harcum program is just one example of how Woods supports employees' educational pursuits. Through its tuition support program, Woods helped Tiffany Adams, PMHNP, attain her dream of working in psychiatry.

"I had always wanted to work in psychiatry and had been thinking about furthering my education," she says. "Tine [Hansen-Turton, President and CEO of Woods Services] strongly suggested I go for my psych NP (psychiatric nurse practitioner certification) so I decided to take her advice."

In the fall of 2019, Adams began the Wilkes University's Passan School of Nursing Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) program. She completed her

"In the first class I took in the program, we learned about how social determinants have a major impact on health outcomes, especially for our most vulnerable populations," Moser says. "Education and income disparities are the two biggest sectors and the program bridges the gap for all of us."

preceptorship right at Woods and earned her MSN in November 2021.

After completing her board exam, Adams joined RL Health, the medical practice that operates The Medical Center at Woods, where her education and advanced skills help her provide the world-class care that Woods Services has come to be known for.

The Masters Program

Another innovative collaboration has helped dozens employees earn a Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership and Population Health Management. The cohort-based learning experience offered a multitude of benefits: It boosts employees' skills—and career potential—and helps them better serve both the organization and its clients.

Matt Wiechnik, director of operations, Woods Services, New Jersey Division, said, "the program helped me understand how executives' decisions help Woods fulfill its mission," he says. "The more educated we are, the better we can serve our clients."

Monica Moser, Woods Community Services executive director, and another graduate credits the program with giving her "real-life practical experience as it related to overseeing a non-profit organization: how a board of directors operates, creating a budget, managing differing personalities, nonprofit laws, and collaboration amongst other professionals seeking common goals."

Both Wiechnik and Moser experienced impressive career growth from their participation in the program. Upon earning

their degrees, Wiechnik, who had been serving as assistant director of residential supports at Woods' affiliate Allies Inc., took on the role of director of operations, Woods Services, New Jersey Division, and Moser, who had been serving as a residential director of the Mollie Woods program, took on a new role as the CEO of Woods Community Services.

By generously subsidizing half of the cost of the program, Woods makes the program accessible to all Woods employees. This isn't just an employee benefit; it's a nod to the importance of the social determinants of health—factors such as socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood, and access to health care. ■

Woods, RWJBarnabas Health, and Rutgers University Bring Integrated Primary Care and Behavioral Health Care Center to New Jersey

RWJBarnabas Health, Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, and Woods Services, are joining forces to establish the very first integrated primary and behavioral health care center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and autism in New Jersey.

The Governor and the New Jersey Legislature recognized the critical need for I/DD services by supporting a grant of \$800,000 toward the startup costs for the initiative. The world-class center is expected to open to families and individuals in 2025 at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton in Hamilton, Mercer County, New Jersey. The Center will serve individuals who live in the central New Jersey region, with future plans to expand services to other areas of the state.

By providing equitable access to primary, specialty, and behavioral health services, this Center will improve health outcomes and reduce the overall costs of care for children and adults with I/DD and autism, and related behavioral and medical conditions, many of whom currently face a severe lack of services.

Improving Outcomes

Individuals with intellectual disabilities traditionally have poor health outcomes and a life expectancy that is nearly 20 years below that of the general population. Many have multiple severe conditions that require highly specialized services and careful care coordination across medical, social, and community services. Communication barriers, mobility issues, and severe mental or behavior concerns make care needs complex and difficult to access, creating significant health inequities. Furthermore, there is an extreme shortage of providers who can or will work with this complex population of largely Medicaid recipients, in part because of the need for longer office visits and specialized skills, lack of accessible medical offices, and low reimbursement rates. As a result, gaps

in care are common and people in this population experience significant disparities in access to care and health outcomes.

This Center will address and overcome these barriers by providing innovative, comprehensive, and coordinated care across primary, specialty, and behavioral health settings. Patients of the center may receive comprehensive medical and behavioral services onsite or through outpatient telehealth and in-home visits. The addition of telehealth will extend the program's reach and remove barriers to care that are unique to the I/DD and autistic populations.

A Proven Model

"We are excited to partner with RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care to bring Woods' highly successful and leading edge Patient-Centered Primary Care Model to New Jersey," said Tine Hansen-Turton, Woods President and CEO. "Through the Medical Center at Woods, our model has shown that providing integrated primary care and behavioral healthcare can increase both access to and quality of care and, at the same time, lower overall Medicaid and Medicare cost of care by at least 20% by decreasing emergency room visits and inpatient hospitalization."

"This new partnership highlights our shared commitment to increasing the capacity of existing primary care and behavioral health providers serving individuals with I/DD, ensuring that these patients receive the attention and specialized care they deserve," said Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP, Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health and Addictions services at RWJBarnabas Health and President and CEO of Rutgers University Behavioral Health. "Building a robust program of experts and a network of providers dedicated to caring for the I/DD population is a major step forward in addressing the gaps in care that these patients face all too often." ■

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LEGACY
TREATMENT SERVICES
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Making News at the Mary A. Dobbins School

Teaching Coordinator Ashley Rodriguez launched an innovative Student Newsroom right on campus.

When Ashley Rodriguez joined Legacy Treatment Services' Mary A. Dobbins School in Mt. Holly, N.J., in October of 2022, she was inspired by how staff members use an individualized approach to cater to each student's specific needs. She also saw an opportunity to enhance students' skills in a creative new way—by establishing a Student Newsroom. Through this program, students have the opportunity to introduce their own ideas for segments; write scripts; learn camera, lighting, and sound work; edit; and produce.

Filming its inaugural episode in April 2023, the Newsroom has been a popular activity amongst the students, especially John. John serves as co-anchor for the school's broadcast, and notes that he is "the best anchorman in the school." He demonstrates a clear talent for being on screen.

The Student Newsroom and similar programs are great preparation for the future, Ashley notes. They give students tangible opportunities



to build the skills they need to succeed and forge their own paths.

The Newsroom is just one of the ways that Ashley, who has 12 years of experience in special education, is making the Mary A. Dobbins School a positive environment for students. She also oversees and mentors educators and spearheads many more of the school's vocational programs that seek to build job skills.

The Mary A. Dobbins School is an approved, licensed private school that has a longstanding tradition of educating students so they can thrive upon graduation.

When school districts cannot meet the needs of their students with intellectual and developmental disabilities or behavioral disorders, they refer them to Mary Dobbins. The school serves 80 students, ages 12 to 21, every year.

We can't wait to see everything else that Ashley will bring to the Mary A. Dobbins community, and we thank all of the staff for their hard work and devotion! ■

Legacy Treatment Services is part of the Woods System of Care. To learn more, visit <https://www.legacytreatment.org/>

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please send us your email to communications@woods.org.