

## SERENITY

THIRD QUARTER 2007

### A Note from the Editor's Desk . . .

Linda Baden

Have you thought about the personal gratification rewards of volunteering in your community to make a difference in other people's lives? As a United Way community partner, Serenity House is always looking for volunteers whether it is administrative, medical records, maintenance or tutors at our residential facilities for math, reading, writing, computers, etc. Please feel free to contact Linda Baden in Human Resources at 386-252-4228, extension 11 for more information or to fill out an application.

The holidays are once again approaching. Some of our clients have no family or friends to share the festivities, receive gifts from nor do they have resources to purchase gifts for their children or loved ones. If you would like to help a client, please consider donating stocking stuffers such as women's and men's socks, slippers, perfume, stuffed animals, art supplies, movie videos, books, etc. A gift certificate is always appreciated. Please consider helping make a difference in a person's recovery by making their holidays a little brighter. For more information on making a donation, please call Donna Dooley at 252-4228, ext. 14. Thank you!!

### Message from Randy Croy, Executive Director

Years of planning and advocacy were rewarded on May 24, 2007 when the Volusia County Council voted unanimously to purchase a major treatment facility from Act Corporation for expansion of services for the homeless, veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and individuals suffering from co-existing mental health and substance abuse disorders. The County has pledged to deed this facility, located west of DeLand, to Serenity House in order for us to operate a 76 bed intensive treatment program.

I want to personally thank the Serenity House Board of Directors and our many supporters who never gave up hope and showed incredible perseverance in insuring that this facility became a reality. Without broad community support, we never could have achieved this outcome, especially as a result of the mounting challenges local governments are experiencing as a result of property tax reform.

Summarized below is the presentation that I prepared for the County Council which highlights the background and opportunities that this project represents. I want to also express my gratitude to each member of the County Council for their courage and commitment in supporting this project. We encourage you to express your gratitude to Frank Bruno, Joie Alexander, Art Giles, Andy Kelly, Carl Persis, Jack Hayman, and Pat Northey.

*Here is an excerpt of my presentation to the Council:*

First, on behalf of the Serenity House Board of Directors, staff and

clients that we serve, I want to thank each Council member and members of the Volusia County staff for your interest in this important issue. As a resident of Florida, I am aware of the significant revenue challenges that we face.

#### Solution

In the 29 years that I've lived and worked in this community, it's my experience that we've never had adequate resources to successfully assist highly complex individuals who utilize expensive publicly-funded services but still fail to become productive citizens. Today we have an opportunity to engage these individuals in something other than the revolving door between the streets, incarceration, processing by our criminal justice system and only to return back to the streets.

#### Support

The best representation of the benefit of this project is illustrated in the letters of support that you have reviewed. As you know, the 7th Circuit Prosecutor, the Volusia County Sheriff, law enforcement officials, partner agencies and the judiciary have written on behalf of this project. In addition, such diverse supporters such as Ron Noviske, Senators Jim King and Evelyn Lynn, Representatives Joyce Cusack and Pat Patterson have expressed their support. Ray Salazar of the United Way among many other community partners have gone on record regarding the importance of this project related to our community's well being.

# Ribbon Cutting Held For The New VA Transitional Housing Program At Serenity House West

**Bob Borgren, Team Leader - Serenity House West**

**Wanda Strickland, VA Case Manager – VA Transitional Housing Program**

After overcoming site development and construction challenges, the official ribbon cutting ceremony for our new 16-bed transitional housing program for Homeless Veterans was held on April 27, 2007. Located on the campus of Serenity House West in Deland, this facility was constructed utilizing a grant from the Veterans Administration and will be operated Serenity House.

Dignitaries in attendance at the ribbon-cutting included Congressman John Mica, Joie Alexander (Volusia County Council Vice-Chair), Andy Kelly (Volusia County Council), Mike Knievel (Volusia County Community Development Services), Serenity House Board President Andy Lyon and Don LePore representing the Serenity House Board and the American Legion. Channel 2 and Channel 13 covered the event and had special features on the plight of homeless veterans as a result of this event. News articles regarding the importance of this facility in improving the lives of homeless veterans also appeared in the Orlando Sentinel and Daytona Beach News-Journal.

Executive Director Randy Croy, Board President Andy Lyon, and Chief Operating Officer Sally Ann Groody awarded plaques to Don LePore for his efforts in generating support from veterans' organizations, Vianne Marchese and David Scoates of the regional Veterans Administration for their ongoing support and Jeff Wise of Wise Builders for his supervision and management of the building construction, as well as his significant contribution towards the project.

Presentation of the colors was performed by a color guard from American Legion Post # 6, DeLand. Guests were treated to a tour of the new facility and enjoyed refreshments donated by U.S. Foodservice Corporation of Lakeland, one of the many Serenity House partners on this project.

We all wish the best of luck to the Serenity House case manager, Wanda Strickland, who will coordinate services for the veterans receiving care in this program. New residents of this facility will truly be receiving a "hand up" in their transition from homelessness to productive and satisfying lives. Our community can be proud of the impact that this project will have upon many deserving veterans for years to come.

*Continued from pg 1 (Message from Randy Croy, Executive Director)*

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## Research

Rather than having untreated and unsupervised individuals in our neighborhoods, this project offers a specific solution that addresses the interrelated problems of addiction, mental illness and crime. National studies conducted by independent research institutions prove that projects of this nature reduce crime and save tax payer money by reducing costs related to law enforcement, criminal justice, corrections, and publicly funded medical care. Former Governor Jeb Bush and Jim McDonough, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections have often cited the national research that indicates that there is a cost benefit of \$7 of savings for every \$1 invested in treatment.

Based upon client outcomes for program participants served by Serenity House during the past year, we have documented that:

Over 70% of individuals admitted to treatment successfully complete residential and aftercare services without substance abuse or non-compliance with treatment requirements.

80% of admitted individuals were gainfully employed upon discharge and became tax paying, productive citizens of our community.

85% of clients were discharged into safe, sober, independent living environments after completion of treatment and aftercare.

Importantly, this project has potential impact upon West Volusia's economic base as well. The facility is projected to employ 50 professionals with an annual operating budget of over 1.3 million dollars which will positively impact local vendors of food, office supplies, utilities, equipment etc. But most of all, this project can and will save the lives of some of our community's most vulnerable citizens.

I sincerely thank you for the courage and vision that you've shown in consideration of this program. On behalf of all future individuals who can benefit from this program, accept our heartfelt thanks.

***What better way to remember a loved one than to contribute to a second chance at life for another?***

***Serenity House has agreements with local legal experts who will assist you at no cost in including Serenity House in your estate plan. Tax advantages are abundant. For assistance in accessing a legal estate planning consultant, call Randy Croy @ (386) 258-5050 ext. 16.***

# Welcome to Our New Clinical Administrator, Kim Cudebec

Our agency is proud to welcome Kim Cudebec to the Serenity House team as Clinical Administrator. Kim comes to us most recently from the Allen Group, our organization's Employee Assistance Program. Many staff members are familiar with Kim's skills as a result of the workshops he has presented in the past on Co-Dependency, Family Systems Therapy and Depression in the Workplace.

Prior to working with the Allen Group, Kim was the Clinical Director at a psychiatric hospital in East Tennessee. While there, Mr. Cudebec was recognized as a "Health Care Hero" by *The Business Journal*, Monarch Pharmaceuticals and King Pharmaceuticals.

Before moving to Tennessee, Kim had worked for Circles of Care, a community mental health center located in Brevard County. Kim is retired from the United States Air Force, where he was in charge of Drug/Alcohol Abuse Control, Education, and Rehabilitation programs, as well as Equal Opportunity/ Treatment, and Family Abuse programs. During two tours, Kim and his family were stationed in Europe – one on the island of Crete, Greece, and one in Berlin, Germany. Kim was stationed in Berlin when the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989.

Born in New York State, Kim moved to Orlando, when he was four, BM – Before Mickey – "WAY before Mickey." Kim says, "When I moved to Orlando 'back in the day' the biggest (and only) attraction here was Gatorland. I loved to go there and feed the alligators. Things are a little different in Central Florida today."

Kim is very excited to be working at Serenity House. "What a wonderful time to be working at Serenity House. The acquisition of Hugh West, the chance to expand services to more clients, and to be able to work with so many professional, dedicated people, I am really thrilled to be here. Everyone in the area knows of Serenity House and the great things they do for so many who would have nothing otherwise. It is a privilege to work at this fine organization".

## Stakeholder Satisfaction Results - Donna Dooley, *Quality Assurance Director*

### Stakeholder Satisfaction Results

July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

The Quality Assurance Director for Serenity House, Donna Dooley, recently conducted satisfaction surveys of our clients, family members, staff, and referral sources. We received an excellent response rate from our stakeholders (95%).

#### Survey Highlights:

- Overall, 95% of all respondents expressed satisfaction with services that they were provided by Serenity House.
- 93% of clients rated overall service satisfaction as "favorable".
- 95% of referral agents rated our service satisfaction as "favorable".
- 92% of family members reported "favorable" responses.

#### Survey Comments:

- Staff: "This has been a year of change. The journey has been interesting and helped us in becoming a stronger team. I am looking forward to a future with Serenity House".
- Clients: "Serenity House has saved my life. It is the best treatment center I have ever been in".
- Referral Agents: "Serenity House always works very well with our agency, they respond to our requests in a very timely manner".
- Family Members: "I have never heard a bad comment about Serenity House. Now having experienced your sincere, caring and thoughtful services for my grandson, Serenity deserves all the praises I've heard and witnessed".

Serenity House truly values feedback from our stakeholders and continues to refine our system of care based upon this data. Please feel free to contact Donna Dooley, Director of Quality Assurance, at (386) 252-4228 ext. 14 or Randy Croy, Executive Director at (386) 258-5050 ext 16 if you have comments or suggestions that you would like us to consider.

## DONATION WISH LIST

- Daily Hygiene Toiletries such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, shaving cream, feminine products, disposable shavers, flip flops, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, etc.
- Arts & Crafts Supplies
- Wall calendars, notepaper, envelopes, greeting cards, pens and postage stamps
- Daily motivational planners
- VHS & DVD Movies & Educational Videos
- Free passes to local movies, plays & events

# Serenity House of Volusia, Inc.

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## A Message From Kim Cudebec, *Clinical Administrator*

Serenity House's "First Step" Program at 637 Tanglewood (Level 5) has been awarded the "Best Practice" Award by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA). The Best Practice Program recognizes programs and providers who have significantly improved service outcomes and the quality of life for Florida residents who are affected by the negative effects of alcohol or other drugs. The First Step program was selected for this award in a rigorous, very competitive process by a panel of experts from among many other state-wide programs.

The First Step Program targets homeless, high risk substance abusers. First Step's goals are to meet the treatment needs of individuals who are on our waiting lists, secure timely access to treatment and insure individuals remain engaged in and committed to recovery while awaiting placement in residential treatment.

Upon placement into the First Step program, clients are provided housing, meals, case management services and a therapeutic milieu. The program provides a safe and secure environment which reduces relapse trigger exposure during the initial engagement process. A highly supportive and competent treatment team provides supervision 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The First Step Case Manager meets with clients to access needs and links them with community resources to secure medical care and prescription medication, obtain identification if needed, as well as linkage to other ancillary community services.

Once stabilized and linked with vital community partnerships and services, clients are transported to Serenity House's other treatment programs to help them integrate into the daily therapeutic community while awaiting permanent placement. In this manner, clients are moved into a safe, therapeutic environment, assessed and linked with community services, and provided therapeutic intervention where previously they would have remained on a waiting list without interventions, sometimes for as much as 2 – 4 months.

First Step is highly compatible with the mission of Serenity House and symbolizes the commitment of the Management Team and the Board of Directors to proactively address community challenges. All of us at Serenity House are justifiably proud of the First Step program and the lives it touches; this "Best Practices Award" shows that our pride is justified and stakeholders state-wide recognize the important contribution we are making.