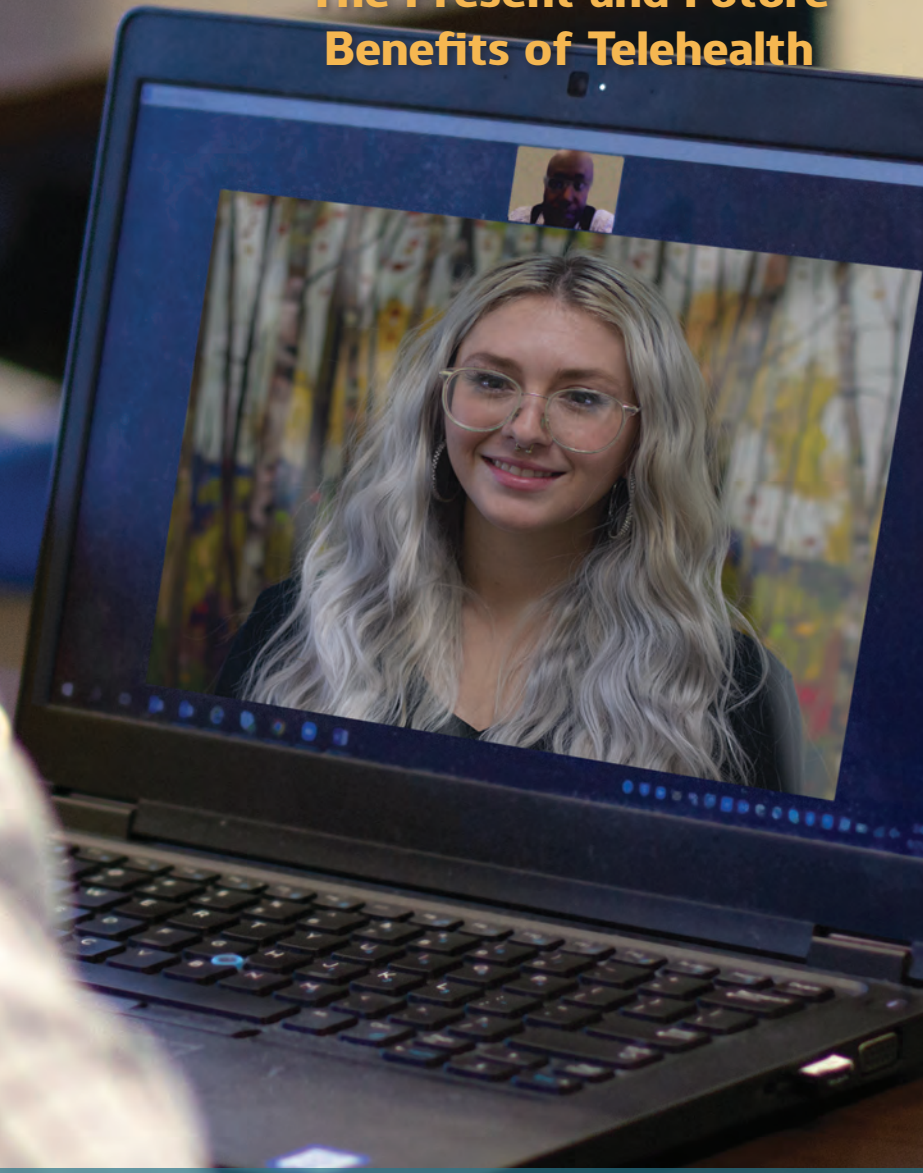


Reclaiming LIVES

A PUBLICATION OF CENTERSTONE

Virtual Reality

The Present and Future
Benefits of Telehealth



Reclaiming LIVES

ISSUE TWENTY-FIVE

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The Present and Future Benefits of Telehealth

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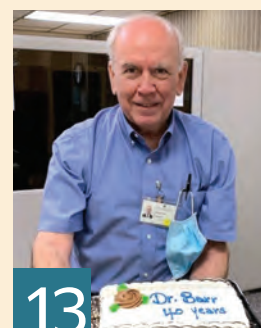
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Reclaiming LIVES

ISSUE TWENTY-FIVE

Editor in Chief Robert N. Vero, EdD

Managing Editor David Schrader

Graphic Design Michael Rivera
Alex Cope

Contributors Robert Lambert
Michael Sostre

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ABOUT CENTERSTONE

Centerstone is a not-for-profit health system providing mental health and substance use disorder treatments. Services are available nationally through the operation of outpatient clinics, residential programs, the use of telehealth and an inpatient hospital. Centerstone also features specialized programs for the military community, therapeutic foster care, children's services and employee assistance programs. Centerstone's Research Institute provides guidance through research and technology, leveraging the best practices for use in all our communities. Centerstone's Foundation secures philanthropic resources to support the work and mission of delivering care that changes people's lives.

From the Editor in Chief



Welcome, and thank you for taking a look at this latest edition of *Reclaiming Lives* magazine.

Speaking to her child clients and their families in one of our YouTube videos, a Centerstone therapist recently said, “Life is full of surprises. We never know what’s going to happen next.”

Indeed, no one had written “global pandemic” on their planning calendars at the start of 2020. Social distancing, contact tracing, and essential workers were not terms in our everyday vocabulary. We didn’t have a growing collection of protective facemasks to wear for any occasion. Centerstone had not planned to deliver more than 1,000,000 behavioral health services via telehealth in less than a year.

But then we did. And although COVID-19 changed so many things about our routines, I’m inspired by what has remained the same. I can see clearly that the people we serve are still intent on improving their mental health, overcoming addiction, and changing their lives. And I can see and feel the commitment among our workplace family to helping our clients achieve those goals.

Thus, we all continue working together, even if the present and future won’t look exactly like the past. Some of us, like Makayla in our cover story, prefer the convenience and flexibility of telehealth. Others will choose or require more traditional in-person services.

Regardless of how we connect—on screen or in person—it’s no surprise that we are always grateful and honored to serve you.

Robert N. Vero, EdD

Regional Chief Executive Officer

VIRTUAL REALITY

The Present and Future Benefits of Telehealth



Makayla Hurley & Robert Jackson IV



Centerstone client Makayla Hurley and her therapist, Robert Jackson IV, are sitting in the same room together for the first time in more than six months. Socially distanced and wearing masks, they have a familiar rapport despite taking all these CDC precautions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's because Makayla—a bright university student overcoming adverse childhood experiences and obsessive-compulsive disorder—has been able to continue her therapy sessions via telehealth. Instead of in-person office visits, she now connects to Robert through a secure video platform at their regularly scheduled times.

“I didn't think I would like it at first,” she admits, “I had already started doing school virtually, and that was kind of rough.”

However, the switch to treatment using tele-video has proven to be a smoother transition. There are conveniences like zero travel time as well as positive new perspectives, including the potential insights a therapist might gain from being able to literally see into a client's everyday world.

“Telehealth is also really great because I can share my screen through the secure software platform,” says Robert. “So we'll talk about something, and I'll have an article to share that we can read together. Or if she has a question about her diagnosis, we can look at it together online, and she can ask questions in real time.”

Makayla has always enjoyed learning. She grew up in a small Alabama town and recalls reading every book in the school library during 5th grade. Later she graduated high school with one of the top grade point averages in her class. She participated in local pageants, winning Miss Wicksburg and competing in the Miss National Peanut Festival, earning college scholarship money

along the way. But those outward successes didn't necessarily reflect Makayla's life behind the scenes.

“My biological mom left soon after I was born,” she says. “My dad had a bad gambling addiction and was in and out of some toxic relationships that also had a negative impact on me. My grandparents would bail us out often. Not a lot of people knew what was going on—I hid it pretty well.”

She remembers first having feelings of depression around eight years old. But she grew up in a setting where “mental health wasn't considered a real issue,” so those emotions were left untended. Not long after Makayla moved to Nashville for higher education, her life began to feel out of control.

“I struggled really hard moving from a small town to a giant city where I didn't have connections with anyone,” she says. “It was very overwhelming, and I was failing classes. I slipped into depression which led to anxiety and turned into an obsessive-compulsive disorder where I just panicked about everything. I got scared that I wasn't going to live through it.”

That series of events led Makayla to outpatient services at Centerstone about two years ago, although she was slow to embrace the therapeutic process.

“Makayla doesn't just come right out and tell you all her problems—it doesn't work like that with her,” says Robert recalling their early discussions. “She had been through a lot, so it was really important to go at her pace.”

In due time, through medication management, talk therapy, learning to work past emotional triggers, and the development of coping skills, Makayla's life became more manageable and forward focused.

continues on page 4



Robert Jackson IV

“I needed someone at that point to tell me, ‘it’s okay to not be okay, and we can work on getting better,’” she says.

Getting better for Makayla means moving closer to graduation with a degree in fashion design and interior merchandising. She has done extensive volunteer work among children with autism and sensory processing disorder and has plans to create a clothing line for their needs. Combining her talents while helping others has proven life affirming.

story. She is doing way better than she thinks she is doing.”

Makayla likes the flexibility of telehealth and how it has managed to help her make progress with talking more directly about certain struggles.

“That’s a big thing—a lot of times I don’t recognize progress as progress. I don’t necessarily look at the full picture, and that’s something Robert reminds me to do a lot: remember where I started.”



Makayla Hurley

“These children are part of why I went to therapy in the first place—because I want to be there for their lives. I had to make a connection on why life is worth living.”



“I want to help this community and do something that I love,” she says. “Sometimes it’s really hard to see myself moving forward, but I’m starting to notice accomplishments. These children are part of why I went to therapy in the first place—because I want to be there for their lives. I had to make a connection on why life is worth living.”

Connectedness. As Makayla continues her virtual work with Robert via telehealth her literal successes mount.

“I can look and see whatever’s on screen, and there are a lot of small victories to celebrate,” says Robert. “She’s absolutely a success

Many people are starting to realize various benefits and conveniences of telehealth. Among clients surveyed by Centerstone, a majority said the telehealth experience exceeded expectations and would prefer to have that option going forward.

Comments include, “I think the doctor gets a more accurate picture of my daughter’s mood and behavior in her usual home environment;” “I’m visually impaired—it’s easier and much safer to video chat;” “Living in a rural area, telehealth services have been a wonderful option;” and similar to Makayla, “I’m more open when I’m not directly face to face with someone.” □

If you'd like to get started with telehealth, call 1-877-HOPE123 (877-467-3123).

Centerstone Responds to Coronavirus Pandemic

From staff to clients to community partners, it's hard to keep count of all the inspiring stories of service and unity happening around Centerstone in response to the challenges of COVID-19. But here are just a few of our favorite ones.



Keeping Things Normal

When the pandemic required staff to begin using telehealth, Centerstone school-based therapist Mary Neubrand didn't miss a beat, quickly setting up shop at home to stay connected with the elementary students she counsels. To keep things normal for clients, she brought along visual learning resources, including their favorite puppet, Professor Wiggle Worm.



Masking Up

A Centerstone-branded safety mask was mailed to each employee working from home. Although not able to be together in person, it was fun to send in mask-wearing selfies to a group web page so we could all touch base! We even had a contest and gave gift cards to ten randomly selected participants.



Giving Back

Samaria does the work as a Centerstone client to manage her anxiety. She's also working to feed children in response to COVID-19. Lockdown meant many kids in her neighborhood were not having a daily lunch that had been provided at school. Using personal resources, Samaria began safely feeding dozens of students through a window in her home. Media reported on the "Window of Love," and the community responded with donations to multiply her efforts. Well done!



Road to Recovery

Centerstone received a grant to provide COVID-19 relief in 21 counties across Tennessee, including free resource connection and short-term supportive counseling to those whose mental health has been impacted by the pandemic. Learn more about the Tennessee Recovery Project by calling 1-888-460-4351. □

Calling 988

Nationwide Three-Digit Number for Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crises Is Coming Soon

Great news! The United States Congress has passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, creating a three-digit number (988) for suicide prevention and mental health crises. The act will set rules requiring all telephone service providers to direct 988 calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2022.

The legislation will also enable states to provide resources to the mental health crisis line, as well as establish specialized services for vulnerable populations, such as LGBTQ youth, minorities, veterans and those in rural areas.

Speaking as chair of the American Association of Suicidology, Centerstone vice president of Crisis and Disaster Management Becky Stoll said, “This has been an unprecedented team effort by so many organizations and hundreds of centers throughout the country coming together to make 988 a reality. This effort will forever transform how consumers access mental health care.”

Suicide has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. since 2008. Additionally, a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a substantial increase in mental health challenges—including thoughts of suicide—which were highest among young people aged 18-24, racial minority groups, caregivers, and essential workers.

Establishing an easily-remembered three-digit telephone number, similar to 911, will make it easier for Americans in crisis to connect with mental health professionals and access the services they need.


Centerstone chief executive officer David C. Guth, Jr. said, “A three-digit dialing code for mental health emergencies and suicide prevention will give our nation much needed tools in the long-haul response of providing access and resources to combat a growing mental health crisis. We applaud House and Senate leadership for their tremendous bipartisan efforts in advancing legislation to ensure 988 is up and running.”

During the transition to 988, those who need mental health help should continue to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling 1-800-273-8255. ▣



Did You Know?

Centerstone also operates crisis lines for the general public in Tennessee (800-681-7444) as well as for military members and their families (866-781-8010).



Centerstone Pharmacy Services Growing, Serving, and Saving

Could you stand to save time and money when managing your medical prescriptions?

Centerstone Pharmacy Services works directly with Centerstone providers to ensure clients receive the best coordinated health care available. Our onsite locations in Clarksville, Madison and Nashville guarantee fast and easy access to prescriptions. Also, FREE mail order services are a convenient option for all Centerstone clients anywhere in Tennessee.

Our pharmacies also offer multiple packaging options, competitive pricing for uninsured persons and hassle-free transfer of any other prescriptions over to Centerstone Pharmacy.

Centerstone chief medical officer Dr. Karen Rhea sums it up well: “First, the personalized service provided by our pharmacists—who are very familiar with the medication treatments we prescribe—can assist in better outcomes. Second, a Centerstone pharmacist will conveniently transfer prescriptions for all of the medications a patient is taking from multiple physicians without major efforts from the patient. Third, we do these things as well as package and mail the medication at no additional charge.”

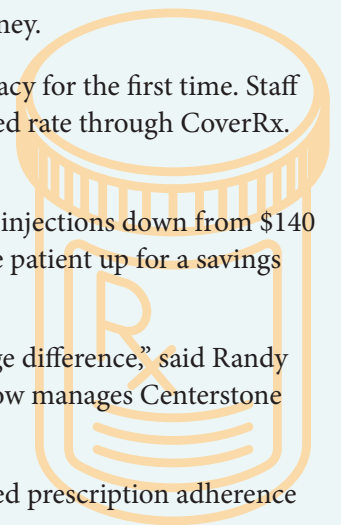
Beyond those aspects, Centerstone Pharmacy Services can also help clients save money.

In Madison, a Centerstone provider directed his patient’s prescription to our pharmacy for the first time. Staff noticed the patient was overpaying by not taking advantage of eligibility for a reduced rate through CoverRx. Now he saves \$12 with each refill!

Also in Tennessee, Centerstone got another patient’s insurance co-pay for recurring injections down from \$140 to just \$10. Pharmacy staff simply went to the manufacturer’s website and signed the patient up for a savings card.

“That’s just one example of how investing a little time in patient care can make a huge difference,” said Randy Beaman, vice president of business development for Blue Ridge Pharmacy, which now manages Centerstone Pharmacy Services in Tennessee.

Research shows such pharmacy standards of excellence can result in greatly improved prescription adherence rates and significantly fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits. ▣



**For more about Centerstone Pharmacy Services,
call (888) 463-6505 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Timely Resources for Tennessee Children's Mental Health

Dr. Bob Vero

Tennesseans weathered literal and figurative storms throughout 2020, from deadly tornadoes to the harrowing COVID-19 pandemic that continues to surge, further taxing our psyche and economic recovery even as promising vaccine news develops. While much is being said of the toll borne by adults—emotional stress, economic uncertainty, and higher physical health risks, etc. especially for older adults with complicated and/or co-morbid health conditions—we must not overlook the impact these events have on child and adolescent wellness.

We teach our children “good sandbox” behavior—to share their toys and play together. Children thrive in stable, predictable environments. COVID-19 turns that world upside down. Now they learn to keep playthings to themselves, to social distance. Schools fluctuate between in-class and at-home virtual learning as infection rates dictate. Extracurricular activities are, at best, disrupted if not altogether canceled. Holidays and birthdays look and feel different. Grandparents and friends aren't seen as often, if at all. How are our children and adolescents making sense of our current world?

TIME magazine recently stated, “If COVID-19 is sparing most kids' bodies, it's not being so kind to their minds. Living in a universe that is already out of their control, they can become especially shaken when the (truths) they count on to give the world order get blown to bits.”

Fortunately, Tennessee lawmakers have tuned in to this rising concern. Legislation was passed requiring health insurers to cover virtual care the same as in-person care into 2022. That has allowed my employer Centerstone, a community behavioral health nonprofit, to provide 400,000 services to Tennesseans via telehealth since March. For example, our school-based therapists, who normally help students with behavioral, emotional or social problems face-to-face on 350 campuses,



are effectively connecting with kids by tele-video to ensure continuity of care.

Further, new 2020 funding from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) has placed a school-based behavioral health liaison in every county across our state. These master's level therapists consult teachers to enhance learning environments for children at-risk for Serious Emotional Disturbance and substance use disorders. They strengthen that vital community connection between our public schools and families.

Finally, Tennessee's Behavioral Health Safety Net program has expanded to include uninsured children. Officials recently appropriated \$7.6 million to directly fund mental health services for ages three to 17. In 2019, Centerstone provided much-needed care to nearly 6,000 adults through Safety Net. The opportunity to serve uninsured children as well—especially in light of rising unemployment—will be truly life-changing to our state's youngest demographic.

I'm truly grateful for these wise investments in the mental health of children and adolescents across Tennessee led by Governor Bill Lee and TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams. Experts report it is crucial to care for the psychosocial and behavioral needs of vulnerable youth during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The research is indisputable—traumas endured in childhood often have impact throughout a person's lifespan, affecting both mental and physical wellbeing. Here in the Volunteer State, it's good to know there are caring policy makers, informed providers and increasing resources to combat the crisis at hand. ▣

Dr. Bob Vero is Regional CEO of Centerstone (centerstone.org), overseeing the not-for-profit healthcare organization's operations in TN and GA.



Paul McGinnis, M.D., is a psychiatrist based at Centerstone's outpatient clinic in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. He graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, then attended the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. Following his residency, McGinnis worked in the Medical Psychiatry unit at Mississippi State Hospital, eventually becoming medical director. He later served as medical director for Region 8 Mental Health Services, a community health system that includes residential substance use facilities. He joined Centerstone in 2017 upon moving to Tennessee.

What is a significant advancement you have witnessed in mental health?

One of the most significant advancements in the delivery of healthcare both physical and mental has been the commercial availability of many standard drugs at a reasonable price. When Walmart dramatically promoted a roster of standard maintenance medicines for a set price it revolutionized access. It forced the entire pharmacy industry to change in response in order to compete. Lately a second wave has come through with the advent of GoodRx and SingleCare, empowering people with knowledge about pricing so that it's no longer a black box. Transparency is always good.

What made you interested in psychiatry?

I enjoy meeting people and being able to talk to them so directly about their life. I don't think that you can ever have a boring day in mental health. There's always someone interesting to meet. A new problem to be solved and in the most elegant manner possible.

What are your insights on the increase of telehealth as a means to provide care due to COVID-19?

Telehealth is particularly well-suited to provide mental health care. If you told me on March 1, 2020 that Centerstone would be able to convert itself to online services in a matter of days, I would not have believed—it's a great accomplishment. The promise of being able to deliver a very personal experience in the client's home is very powerful. Gone are the problems of transportation and any stigma of visiting the mental health clinic. I'm not saying there aren't a few problems—such as the access to high-speed internet—but the potential . . . wow!

What would you have done if you hadn't chosen this line of work?

I actually almost became an anesthesiologist. In fact I was matched upon leaving medical school with an anesthesia program. In the midst of my internship I jumped ship so to speak. Anesthesiology doesn't

have a lot of human contact, but what it does have is an awful lot of neat machines and the withering attention to detail.

What's a piece of advice that you've found useful over the years?

Just make a decision. Don't make the decision so important in your mind that you are frozen into inaction. There is no spot more uncomfortable than being on the fence about something.

Describe your ideal day off.

A clear blue sky, bright green leaves, a cool breeze and warm sunshine to balance it. With nothing on the schedule but to enjoy. ▣



CENTERSTONE NEWS&NOTES

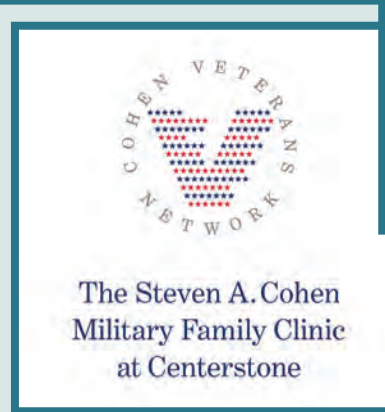
Centerstone's Dr. Bob Vero joins "Tennessee Voices" podcast via Skype.



TAMHO Award winners Charley Jordan, Gino DeSalvatore, and Blake Farmer.



Matt Reed, Dr. Karen Rhea, Dr. Roger McIntyre, and Karl Bates attend Centerstone's annual psychiatric staff meeting.



TAMHO Award winner Joan Sivley

TAMHO Award Winners

Centerstone won several Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) Awards in 2019-20. Charley Jordan, a Cohen Clinic at Centerstone client, was given the Personal Courage Award. Gino DeSalvatore, retired director of Centerstone's Therapeutic Foster Care Services, received the Distinguished Career Award. Centerstone also nominated Blake Farmer of WPLN Nashville Public Radio who won a Media Award for his reporting on Health Link coordinated care services. In 2020, client Samaria Leach (see page 5) was given a Personal Courage Award, and late Centerstone board member and mental health advocate Joan Sivley posthumously received

the Frank G. Clement Community Service Award. Centerstone Regional CEO Dr. Bob Vero was given the TAMHO President's Award.

Third Cohen Clinic at Centerstone Opens

The third Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone has opened in Fayetteville, NC, joining our other locations in Clarksville, TN and Jacksonville, FL. Each clinic provides behavioral healthcare and case management resources for post-9/11 veterans (regardless of discharge status or role), their families and families of active duty military. Learn more at centerstone.org/cohen.

Bob Vero Talks Telehealth

The Tennessean invited Centerstone Regional CEO Dr. Bob Vero to its popular "Tennessee Voices" podcast to discuss mental health matters and the increased use of telehealth due to COVID-19.

"I hope what prevails here is connectedness and love. We're using so much telehealth today that we were not using before. Let's open the doors wide so people are getting the help they need."

Annual Psychiatric Staff Meeting

Centerstone psychiatrists, nurse practitioners and nurses gathered at Nashville's historic Hermitage Hotel (pre-COVID-19) for their annual

Centerstone staff and clients celebrate their "Community Friend of the Year" HAPI Award.



Centerstone's Tennessee Board of Directors Chair Dana Oman

Centerstone Comics are now available in Spanish.



Centerstone Customer Care staff.

meeting. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Karen Rhea welcomed guest speaker Dr. Roger McIntyre, professor of Psychiatry and Pharmacology at the University of Toronto, who spoke to the staff about treatment for bipolar depression.

Centerstone Comics in Spanish

Stories about our superhero Spark are now available in Spanish, including *Chispa y el Interruptor Peligroso* (Spark and the Dangerous Switch), which tells about the dangers of opioids and prescription drug misuse. We also have action-packed educational comics on mental health, bullying, internet safety, and more. Check them out now at centerstonecomics.org!

C'mon Get HAPI!

Healing Arts Project, Inc. (HAPI) held its annual Phoenix Art Gala featuring paintings & drawings from mental health clients & community supporters. HAPI honored our Peer Support Services in Clarksville with its "Community Friend of the Year" award & named Centerstone client Amber HAPI's "Artist of Distinction." Congrats to all!

Tennessee Board Update

Dana Oman has been named chair of Centerstone's Tennessee Board of Directors. She first connected with Centerstone as a teacher when she referred students for counseling. Today she humbly donates her time and resources to support community

mental health. Other newly assigned board roles include Kelly Crockett as Vice Chair, Mark Faulkner as Secretary, and Jim Sweeten as Immediate Past Chair.

Caring for Our Customers

Just a week before coronavirus led to social distancing, our entire Customer Care team gathered in one room on a Saturday for its annual staff meeting. Why Saturday? Because Centerstone simply doesn't run without these awesome front desk, call center, credentialing and facility operations professionals in place during regular business hours. Customer Care is part of delivering care that changes people's lives! ▣

Philanthropy IN ACTION



Gregg and Gary Clarke

Holiday Cheer

Our thanks to brothers Gregg and Gary Clarke from Shipwreck Cove at Elm Hill Marina whose 2019 “Light Up the Lake Christmas Boat Parade and Auction” raised \$14,000 in cash and toy donations for Centerstone. We are grateful and humbled by this generosity, which benefits Centerstone’s Children and Family Services.

Reclaiming Lives After Dark

Centerstone’s second annual Reclaiming Lives After Dark fundraiser at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville featured #1 New York Times bestselling author Ben Nemtin. His remarkable story of battling depression and anxiety—while helping others and meeting folks like Prince Harry and Oprah Winfrey along the way—points audiences to one powerful question: “What do you want to do before you die?” The event was sponsored by Mercedes-Benz of Music City, Integrum Wealth, Montgomery Bell Academy and cityCURRENT. Centerstone’s third annual Reclaiming Lives After Dark will be a very special virtual event in early 2021. Visit centerstone.org/foundation for details!



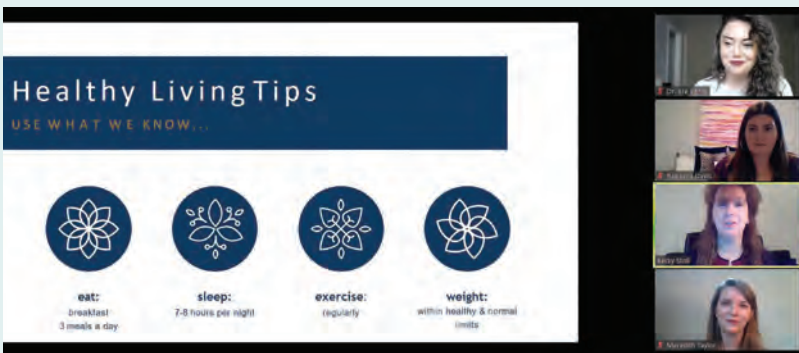
Ben Nemtin speaks at Reclaiming Lives After Dark.



Dr. Bob Vero, Ben Nemtin, Joslyn Hebda



Justin Jackson, Mark Faulkner, Ben Middleton



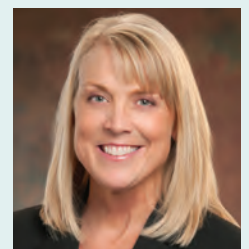
Navigating a New Normal

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, we joined community partner cityCURRENT for its Be Well Webinar: Navigating a New Normal. Centerstone experts Becky Stoll and Dr. Bre Banks discussed telehealth and other ways to help ourselves and loved ones strengthen mental health while adapting to rapidly changing situations.

Welcome, Maria Wolfe!

Maria Wolfe has joined Centerstone as Director of Advancement to lead the annual and major giving efforts in Centerstone’s Tennessee region as well as its U.S. wide Military Services. She has two decades of experience in the nonprofit sector, including roles at YMCA of Middle Tennessee, Jewish Community Association of Greater Phoenix, and TechBridge, Inc.

“I’m honored to join Centerstone at a time when mental healthcare solutions are especially needed across our communities and the entire nation,” said Wolfe, who holds degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MBA) and Auburn University (BFA). ▣



Centerstone Director of Advancement Maria Wolfe



Life-Changing Work: Careers at Centerstone



Dr. Ralph Barr



Debbie Kirk

Are you looking for meaningful and rewarding work?

Centerstone is among the nation's leading nonprofit behavioral health companies with thousands of employees dedicated to delivering care that changes people's lives. We provide mental health care, addiction treatment, and community education to people of all ages in multiple states at more than 200 locations.

Employee benefits at Centerstone include comprehensive health insurance plans, generous time off, great work-life balance (flexible scheduling where available, tuition and wellness reimbursements), and flexible income models including full benefits for staff working 30+ hours and a 403(b) retirement plan.

Two employees recently celebrated 40 and 50 years working at Centerstone!

Dr. Ralph Barr began his employment at the organization in 1980. As a senior regional psychiatrist, he maintains caseloads in Tennessee's Maury County and is clinical supervisor for other medical staff.

"Dr. Barr is a wonderful psychiatrist and the consummate leader. We are so fortunate to have him here," said Dr. Karen Rhea, Centerstone chief medical officer. "The contributions he has made to Centerstone and its patients are incredible both in terms of his direct care and all the clinical guidance he has provided for decades."

Debbie Kirk began her five-decade journey at Centerstone back in 1970, when gasoline cost 36 cents per gallon, and President Richard Nixon was in The White House. From the frontline, this dedicated support staff member has seen a lot of exciting change in mental health care.

"Families and communities are more accepting of mental health issues today than they were 50 years ago," Debbie said. "And who would have believed therapy appointments could be held via telephone and computer back then? It is amazing to see the progress technology has made."

Debbie's colleague, Dr. Allen Craig, added "It has been my distinct pleasure to work closely with Debbie over the past 34 years that I have been part of Centerstone. If anyone exemplifies the concept that 'everyone matters,' it is her." ▣

For more about life-changing workplace opportunities at Centerstone, visit centerstone.org/careers.

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