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FRIENDS OF MSH NAMES BOARD, PRESENTS AWARDS, PULLS A SURPRISE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



The Friends Board of Directors (left to right): Sheila Shows (Secretary), Kathy Denton (Liaison), Bridget Lowery (President), Marilyn Garth, Bobby Stephens, Miriam Hollens, James Chastain (MSH Director), Jeannie Pittman, Jessie Buckley, Dee Payne (Treasurer), Steve Roark, Ray Wallace, Bradley Sanders, Larry Anderson, Gale Martin (Vice President). Not pictured: Joel Ross, Michael Kimbrel, Larry Swearingen, Larry Taylor, Bill Bobbs, Mary Crossman, Steve Lesley, Betty Harpe, Jerald Ball, Kristi Finehout.

Friends of Mississippi State Hospital named new board members, honored long-time supporters with its traditional awards and added a very special “special recognition” at its annual meeting on Aug. 26.

Betty Harpe and Steve Roark were added to the volunteer organization’s Board of Directors. Awards were given to Daniel and Carter “Elf Crusty” Elliot; New Prospect Baptist Church of Brookhaven; and Sherrye Thompson and the Rankin County Frontiers Afterschool Program.

And the special recognition went to Phillip Cothorn, a registered nurse at the hospital who serves as disc jockey – a.k.a. DJ 51-50 -- at many hospital events.

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MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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VISION
Mental wellness in every life, in every home,
and in every community.

MISSION
To help the individuals we serve achieve mental wellness by encouraging hope, promoting safety and supporting recovery while utilizing resources efficiently.

OUR GOALS

1. Accelerate the implementation of person-centered and recovery-oriented treatment and care.
2. Improve clinical, physical, and environmental safety and quality for patients and residents.
3. Minimize waste of resources and cost.

CORE VALUES
Respect - Relationships - Accountability -
Teamwork - Diversity

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Cothorn was surprised by the honor and doubly surprised when members of his family burst into the conference room just after the announcement by MSH Director James Chastain.

“I thought I knew everything that was going on at Mississippi State Hospital,” Cothorn said. “Ya’ll pulled this off. Ya’ll slipped this one past me.”

He received a plaque emblazoned with “You Rock!”

“In recognition of the many, many hours over numerous years he has used personal equipment and time to entertain our patients, residents, and staff at special events, I’d like to recognize Mr. Phillip Cothorn,” Chastain said. “No event is the same without him. He is the single-most important activity at any major event.”

Harpe and Roark were approved as members of the Friends executive board, which also includes Bridget Lowery, Gale Martin, Dee Payne, Sheila Shows, Kathy Denton, Larry Taylor, Larry Anderson, Joel Ross, Jessie Buckley, Larry Swearingen and Kristi Finehout.

The Elliots, Daniel and son Carter, received the Nancy B. Foreman Award, given each year to an individual or group who has demonstrated through their service, their commitment to enhancing the quality of life for persons with mental illness.

Daniel Elliot, vice president of Bancorp South, first became involved with MSH through the Rankin County Chamber Leadership Program.

“When initially asked about serving as Santa he asked if he could bring his son,” Chastain said. “It was im-

portant to him that Carter knew what it meant to give to others. On his first Santa Day, young Carter signed in on the escort sheet as ‘Elf Crusty,’ and a legend was born. He joined the entertainment during the reception and simply dazzled all the guests.

“Since that day, the entire Elliot family (including mom Katie and sister Addie) have made several volunteer appearances. However, it is the father/son duo that keeps people talking, Daniel through his continuous recruitment and support of Santa Day, along with his care and compassion during his Santa stops, and Elf Crusty through his musical talent and humor.”

New Prospect Baptist Church, which had several members in attendance at the meeting, was given the Vivian Shivers Award. Formerly known as the Helping Hands Award, it was established in 2006 to honor an individual or group who represents the volunteer spirit and sets the standard for future generations. Members of the church have been volunteering at MSH for more than 26 years, making four visits the first year, Chastain said.

Their first Christmas party for the Chemical Dependency Unit in 1988 was spearheaded by their pastor, Randall Walker. The WMU handled refreshments and the church budget covered expenses for patient gifts. A few days later, the group worked in the Christmas House on stockings and gift bags for Santa to deliver.

The church, now pastored by Willie Welch, has been doing parties for Jaquith Nursing Home residents for many years.

“They faithfully travel here from Brookhaven each December,” Chastain said. “The distance alone sets them apart from the more than a



Friends President Bridget Lowery (left) and MSH Director James Chastain (right) present the "Together We Make A Difference Award" to JoDee Walley, assistant director, and Sherrye Thompson, director, of the Rankin County Frontiers Afterschool Program.

hundred party groups who visit each year – 60-plus miles one way. Only a faithful few travel that distance year after year for our patients and residents. Their dedication, love, and compassion is evident in their ministry and all the residents and staff look forward to their visit."

The "Together We Make A Difference Award" recognizes a business or organization in the community which has given exemplary service to MSH, and this year it was presented to the Rankin County Frontiers Afterschool Program.

Thompson, Frontiers director, and assistant director JoDee Walley accepted the award.

"For several years students with the Rankin County Frontiers Afterschool Program have created handmade cards to be delivered to the residents of Jaquith Nursing Home,"

Chastain said. "The cards have come for many major holidays (Valentine's, Halloween, Easter and Christmas, to name a few), and enough every time for all 379 residents to receive one. Each card is unique and contains a special message from the student.

"Ms. Thompson always checks the cards to make sure the message is appropriate. Although heartfelt, some messages you just don't want to receive. One card I remember read, 'Happy Thanksgiving, I hope you don't die.'

"The impact these cards make for the residents of Jaquith Nursing Home is immeasurable and we want you to know how very much it is appreciated."

Also given special recognition was Harpe, a dedicated volunteer for the Friends of MSH and the Friends

Shoppe who has been named the Mississippi Hospital Association Volunteer of the Year for Mississippi State Hospital.

She was a teacher in the Rankin County School District for more than 30 years and now teaches GED classes for the district. She is vice-president of the Florentine Club, a Federated Women's Club of Mississippi, and ushers at New Stage Theatre, Mississippi Coliseum functions and Thalia Mara Hall for the International Ballet. She has been married to E.C. Harpe for 45 years, and they have two children and a grandchild. Harpe is an active member of First Baptist Church of Richland.

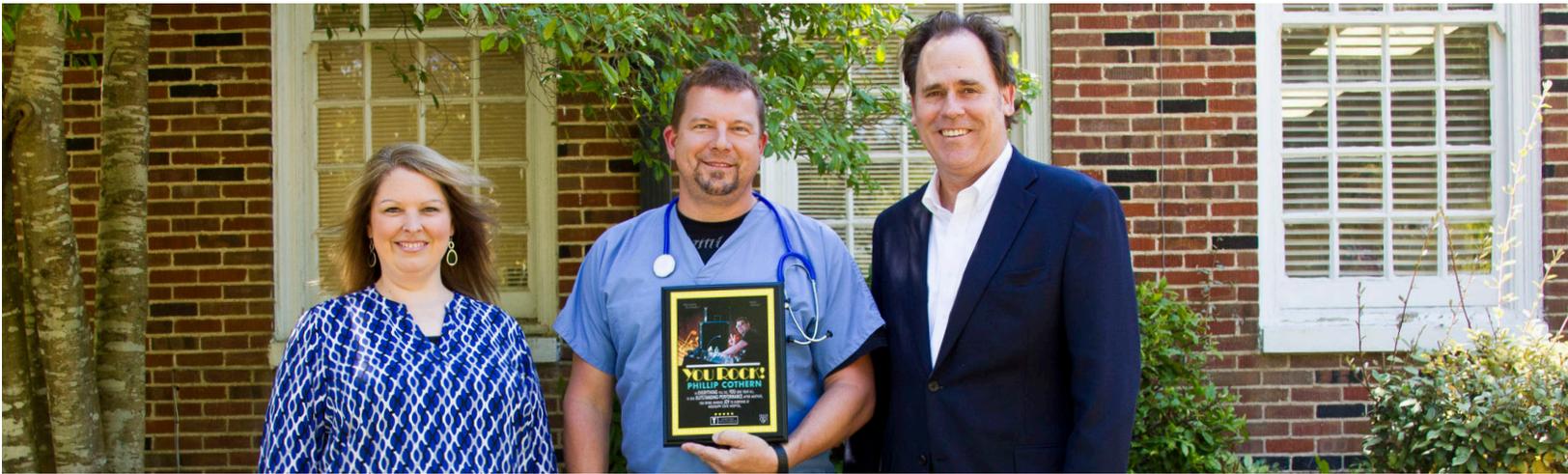
As the Mississippi Hospital Association MSH Volunteer of the Year, Harpe will be honored with a special pin at the MHA Hospital Auxillians and Volunteer Society Luncheon on Oct. 9.

Friends of MSH, Inc. would like to say

Thank You to our **CORPORATE SPONSORS.**





Friends President Bridget Lowery (left) and MSH Director James Chastain (right) present an award of special recognition to Phillip Cothorn, a registered nurse who serves as disc jockey for many MSH events.



Friends President Bridget Lowery (left) and MSH Director James Chastain (right) present the Nancy B. Foreman Award to Carter "Elf Crusty" and Daniel Elliot.



Pastor Willie Welch (left) and the New Prospect Baptist Church of Brookhaven received the Vivian Shivers Award from the Friends of MSH. Second from the left is Friends President Bridget Lowery and at far right is MSH Director James Chastain.

MSH HONORED AS HEALTHY WORKPLACE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



Ann White (far left) of MSH and Thaddeus Williams (second from left) of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health display the plaques they received at the 1st Annual Healthiest Workplace Awards ceremony.

Mississippi State Hospital has been recognized as one of Mississippi's healthiest places to work.

On July 31, the Mississippi State Department of Health in partnership with the Mississippi Business Journal and the Mississippi Business Group on Health hosted the 1st Annual Healthiest Workplace Awards, honoring both private and public sector organizations and their commitment to implement evidence-based worksite wellness practices.

An awards committee representing the founding organizations along with several industry partners reviewed the applications to identify organizations that met the minimum qualifications, and winners were then selected.

MSH received an honorable mention.

"I am very passionate about everyday health and wellness," said Ann White, Employee Health Director at MSH. "We're always here to answer questions and provide guidance."

Among the many programs White and her staff have initiated or promoted over the last few years are building-by-building weight challenges; an MSH "Biggest Loser" contest; diabetes and hypertension classes; an influenza program; nutrition classes and walks; wellness seminars through Blue Cross/Blue Shield's Active Health Coach; "Fit Pick" vending choices in machines on campus; MEA wellness clinics;

Safe Heart health screens; and several fitness walks.

"I applaud your organization's leadership in these efforts, especially the zeal and commitment set forth by Wellness Champion Ann White and the Wellness Committee. Thank you for your dedication to creating a work environment that encourages your colleagues to live healthier lifestyles," said Claude Courtney II, Division Director-Worksite Wellness, MDH Office of Preventive Health.

GORDON EARNS DOCTORATE FROM MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Michael Gordon of Mississippi State Hospital's Psychology Department took on a new title as of Aug. 1: Doctor of Professional Counseling.

Gordon, a 12-year veteran on Building 84, the Chemical Dependency Unit, has completed a two-year doctoral program at Mississippi College.

"I wanted to provide more autonomy for myself and provide better for my family," Gordon said, "as well as use my skill set as it relates to global counseling and possibly spiritual evangelism."

A Jackson native, Gordon received a bachelor's degree in psychology

from Jackson State in 2001 and a master's in rehabilitation counseling from JSU in 2003.

"I like the flexibility here," he said. "I like the client population, and I like that the population we have here gives you the opportunity to learn anything you need to learn in the field. You experience a lot of things here."

Gordon and wife Dominique have been married 10 years and have two children, a daughter and a son.

Gordon is a gym enthusiast who also plays the drums in his spare time.



LAUNDRY GETS NEW MANAGER

BY TIM DURR

Jean-Sebastien Rene is the new laundry manager at Mississippi State Hospital (MSH). Rene, a native of Haiti, moved to the United States with his family when he was 16. He lived in several cities around the country before moving to New Orleans to pursue a degree in International Business at Dillard University. After graduating in 2001, Rene remained in New Orleans where he began working for United Healthcare.

As Hurricane Katrina approached New Orleans in 2005, Rene made the decision to ride out the storm. However, a persistent younger sister persuaded him to evacuate, and reflecting on the devastation to his home, he is now grateful that his sister persuaded him to leave.

Rene ended up in central Mississippi

where he was able to continue working at a satellite office for United Healthcare. He decided to make the area his new home, and worked in sales and marketing for several companies before joining the MSH staff.

Rene said the laundry was without a manager for a while, and therefore he has had to spend some time addressing issues that were not being taken care of while there was no manager. As he continues to address those issues, Rene said he intends to meet with staff on the buildings to share his plans and ideas on how to make the laundry run more smoothly and efficient.

"I plan to meet with staff very soon so that we can work together to make things better and perhaps even save the hospital some money," he said.



Rene said the laundry serves all MSH patient buildings, Jaquith Nursing Home buildings, and Hudspeith Regional Center.

"We also do individual patient laundry," he said.

Rene and his wife LaShaunda have three daughters, Maxine, Anastasia, and Vivianne, and one son, Guillaume.

When he is not working, Rene likes traveling, fishing, playing sports, and going swimming with his children. In addition, he serves as a Girl Scout Troop Dad, and a volunteer at

Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital fundraising events. He is fluent in French, Spanish, and Creole.

KITTRELL NAMED DIRECTOR OF SUPPORT SERVICES AT MSH

BY TIM DURR

Craig Kittrell has been named Director of Support Services at Mississippi State Hospital (MSH). A native of Raleigh, Miss., Kittrell comes to MSH from Boswell Regional Center in Magee where he served as Director of Support Services for that facility.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to work for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) for the past 17 years, and to serve the citizens of Mississippi," Kittrell said. "I look forward to joining the Mississippi State Hospital team in carrying out the mission of Hope, Safety and Recovery in the most efficient way with the resources provided to the hospital."

Kittrell earned a bachelor's degree in Health Care Administration and a master's degree in Public Administration from Belhaven University. In addition, he is a graduate of the State Executive Development Institute of Mississippi at the Stennis Institute, the DMH Accelerated Leadership Program, and Leadership Simpson County. He is also a Certified Public Manager, Licensed DMH Administrator, and is currently completing requirements to become a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator.

Kittrell, a Magee resident, is married to Sonjia Kittrell, and they have two daughters, Carrie and Hannah.



LEMMON CERTIFIED AS LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Lindsey Lemmon, a Behavioral Health Specialist at Mississippi State Hospital's Oak Circle Center, recently was certified as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Lemmon, who will celebrate her two-year anniversary at MSH in October, completed the State Board of Examiners' 2½-year certification program in July.

Lemmon is a Brandon High School and Mississippi State University graduate. She got her master's degree in counseling at MSU. She previously worked at Community

Counseling Services in Starkville.

The job at MSH offered an opportunity to come home, she said.

"I really like it here," she said. "Working at Oak Circle, they keep me pretty busy."

Lemmon and her husband, Andy, live in Brandon and are members of Pine Lake Baptist Church, where they serve in the youth ministry. They also enjoy traveling and made a trip to Alaska in May.



KATRINA'S LEGACY TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY AND CAPABILITY

BY MEMA



As we mark the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina striking Mississippi, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency wants to share the two most important principles used in the disaster and continued to this day: accountability and capability.

Accountability

The unprecedented destruction left behind in the wake of Katrina was of such magnitude that it overwhelmed the local, state and federal resources. Despite the challenges, Mississippi, from day one worked to ensure accountability, efficiency and transparency in the entire recovery process.

MEMA was tasked with oversight of \$3.2 billion dollars in FEMA public assistance funds covering all 82

counties and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. To date, more than \$2.8 billion has been disbursed with an estimate of potential deobligations at less than one percent. There were more than 11,000 projects approved for public assistance in the state.

“I am extremely proud of the work done by our MEMA staff, other state agencies and all the local governments as they have worked through what seemed, at times, to be an insurmountable task,” said MEMA Executive Director Robert Latham. “We work diligently to educate all of our elected officials around the state on the necessary accountability of documentation and contract regulations before and after disasters to reduce the possibility of having to return funds.”

MEMA is currently managing 15 open federal disasters in the state, 13 of which have occurred since Katrina.

Examples of steps taken to ensure financial accountability:

- Brief elected officials and potential applicants of the state and federal regulations of disaster contracting before and after incidents.
- MEMA Recovery Specialists are assigned to work alongside every designated city, county state agency and eligible non-profit organization throughout the recovery process.
- Created an online database to track all projects and payments that has been recognized nation-

ally by the federal General Accounting Office as a best practice.

- No funds are disbursed without proper documentation.
- Funds are only provided to applicants for costs deemed eligible and reasonable.

Capability

Increased capability levels of preparedness, response and mitigation efforts have also been a top priority for Mississippi. MEMA supports emergency management programs in all 82 counties and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

A few of the notable advancements in capability include:

- MEMA has trained more than 10,000 first responders in the fundamentals of the incident command system.
- The Mississippi Statewide Wireless Interoperable Network: A fully operational system that allows first responders to communicate with one another on mobile radios anywhere in the state.
- Wireless Emergency Alerts: MEMA, as well as the National Weather Service and Mississippi Department of Public Safety, have the ability to send emergency messages to all cell phones in any area of the state.
- The local, state and federal governments have invested more than \$159 million in 85 community safe rooms in Mississippi, built to withstand winds in excess of 200 mph and can hold more than 53,000 people.
- All critical facilities, including hospitals and nursing

homes, have onsite generator backup power and there are more than 200 additional portable generators for other facilities throughout the state.

- MEMA has a warehouse stocked with commodities to provide an initial push of essentials like water, meals, cots and tarps to disaster areas.
- MEMA has pre-disaster contracts in place for key services like fuel, transportation, ice, water and personnel services.
- Local, state and federal governments invested more than \$12 million to floodplain acquisition projects which allowed residents to relocate away from high risk flood areas.
- MEMA restructured the state's search and rescue teams to ensure efficient deployment to an affected area to expedite saving lives. The Mississippi Statewide Technical Advance Rescue Teams are positioned regionally throughout the state and are comprised of a wide array of first responders.

For more information, visit the MEMA website at www.msema.org, and follow us on our social media outlets Facebook and Twitter.



HUMPHREY NAMED DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Milton Humphrey, a longtime Mississippi State Hospital employee, became the new Director of Environmental Services on Aug. 1.

Humphrey has worked at MSH since 1993. He previously served as Coordinator of Unit Operations.

He replaces Phillip Walker in his new job and oversees the laundry, house-keeping and dormitory services and a staff of 20-plus.

“Mississippi State Hospital is great place to work,” Humphrey said. “I wouldn’t want to work anywhere else. I enjoy the camaraderie with the staff. Taking care of patients is the bottom line. You want to make a difference in

people’s lives.”

Humphrey is a native of Shelby, a small Delta town that also produced former Mississippi State and NFL player Dorsett Davis and bluesman Mississippi Slim.

Humphrey, who now lives in Ridgeland, graduated from Jackson State and Mississippi College, where he received a master’s degree in health science in 1998. He is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, in which he has served 28 years.

He has two teenage daughters, Makayla and Madison.



SPANN EARNS MASTER’S DEGREE IN COUNSELING

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Xavier Spann, a Behavioral Health Technician at Mississippi State Hospital, recently received a master’s degree in Mental Health Counseling from Mississippi College.

Spann, who has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Jackson State, said he decided to pursue his master’s so he could do more in his chosen field. “With just a bachelor’s degree, I was limited in the scope of what I could do in mental health,” he said.

Spann, who works mainly on Building 43, Forensic Services, said he enjoys his work at MSH and prides himself on his rapport with patients.

A Pearl native who now lives in Ridgeland, Spann first came to work at MSH in 2009 as a Mental Health

Technician. He transferred to Community Services, where he served as a counselor and director of Psychosocial Rehab until that office closed. He came back to MSH in May of 2014.

He counts travelling and reading among his hobbies and is also a college sports fan, following in particular the Big Ten, Ole Miss and Iowa State, where he did a college internship.



HOSPITAL HAPPENINGS HAVE BEEN DULY CHRONICLED OVER THE YEARS

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Printed publications are an indelible part of Mississippi State Hospital history.

Take Note, Aspire, Excellence in Action and JNH Happenings are among the current products that aim to keep MSH patients, residents, staff and others informed and entertained.

Forerunners to these publications trace back to the hospital's early days on the Whitfield grounds.

Back in the 1930s, spreading the news on campus was the mission of the "Progress Sheet," a monthly newsletter launched just after the hospital moved to Whitfield in 1935. That was a time when the hospital was essentially a self-sufficient community, and the scope of the newsletter was a bit different.

Flipping through the February 1940 issue of the "Progress Sheet" is like taking a stroll back in time.

This particular cover features a drawing of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, a nod to the former presidents whose birthdays are celebrated in the second month of the year.

A personal news section includes such items as "The Barber Shop is now in charge of Messrs. Grady and Britt" and "Jim B., a tireless patient helper in the store, has been sick this month."

There are general news items about a 12-inch snowfall in the area on Jan. 23; a visit from a class of nurses who "made a tour of State Hospital this month, not from curiosity but to gain information;" and the release of a



new book by Carl Jung, the famous clinical psychiatrist.

There are ads in the newsletter, from such places as Kaybee Store in Jackson, Seale-Lily ice cream and Jackson Steam Laundry.

There is an opinion page and an illustrated poem, a list of doctors' schedules and a jokes page in the very back. An example: "Joe: Gosh, how I hate to let this 10-spot go. Jack: Don't worry, won't go far."

That joke has stood the test of time; the "Progress Sheet" did not.

"The Whit" was another monthly magazine produced and published by hospital patients(?) that started in the late 1940s.

The September 1952 issue, which has a hand-drawn cover illustration of Independence Hall, is 20 typed pages

on 8½-by-14 inch sheets.

The content includes news about the hospital library's need for books and magazines and an upcoming speaking engagement for "Director Dr. W.L. Jaquith." There is an editorial about Helen Keller, poetry written by patients and "ward news" that reads like the society pages of newspapers from the period. The short story of the month is "The Battle at Medicine Bow" by Ben C., presumably a patient.

There are sermons from both Catholic and Protestant chaplains and a list of patient birthdays for the month using first name and last initial: Mrs. Gertrude C., for example.

Another publication came along in the '40s called "The Grapevine," which was published every two weeks and included the same type of material that now runs in Take Note

and Aspire.

The main article in the Aug. 27, 1981, issue is on the Homemaker Clubs of Rankin County and their summer party held on the MSH campus at the “Ball Park.” The retirement of a long-time employee, Christine Sims from

the Medical Records Department, also is featured, along with a poem written about the woman affectionately known as “Mommee.”

B.C. Smith, a retiring Admissions Security Officer, is the lead story in the Sept. 10, 1981, issue, which also in-

cludes features on a Book Fair at the Medical Library, staff service award winners, employees of the month and the Transportation Department (predictably entitled “They’re on the Move”).

SERENDIPITY 2015

BY TIM DURR



Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) celebrated its 26th annual Serendipity art show and silent auction on Thursday, Sept. 3, and employees and visitors walked away with more than 200 pieces of art that were on display.

All of the pieces in the show were created by MSH patients and Jaquith Nursing Home (JNH) residents who participate in the hospital’s Art Services program. The pieces included ceramics, pencil drawings, paintings in various styles and formats, scratchboard, and mixed media.

“As always, I am very proud of the accomplishments of the patients and residents,” MSH Art Services Supervisor Evelyn Bates said. “In addition, I appreciate the efforts of the other art services staff – Ron Lindsey, Francine Sutton and Ceci Whitehurst – and we are always thankful for the hospitality of the Public Relations Department.”

Local artist Marla Harbor of Ridge-land came to view the artwork.

“It’s a wonderful show,” Harbor said. “I’m enjoying it very much. I started painting a few years ago and I enjoy

looking at art. I think they’ve done a great job.”

Joan Brown of Flowood said she is a painter and loves to view other artists’ work.

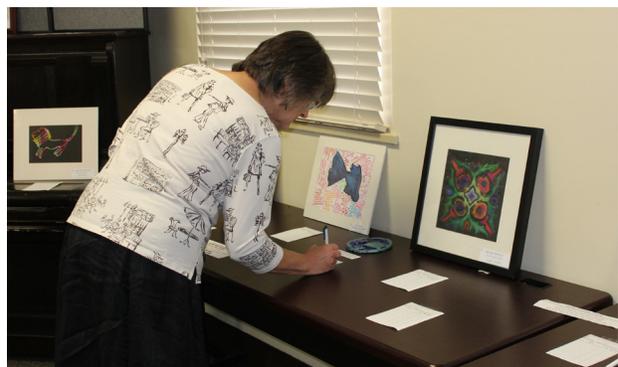
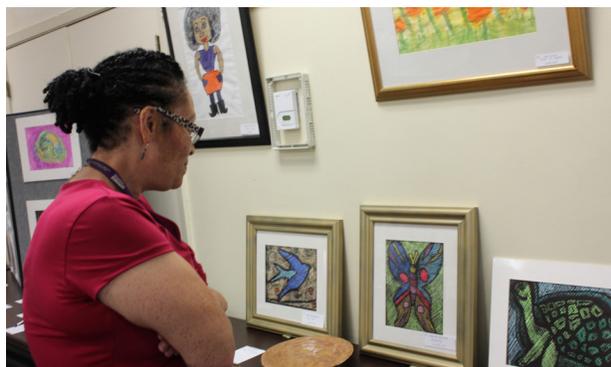
“I love this show,” Brown said. “I am a painter, and I like to see good paintings. I always enjoy an art show. This is a great way for the patients and residents to express themselves.”

Ceramics instructor Francine Sutton said she is proud of the patients and residents.

“I’m really proud that the patients and residents worked so hard to produce this phenomenal show,” Sutton said.

Carrie Chatham, a nurse on Building 29, said she comes to the show each year.

“I love Serendipity,” Chatham said. “I’ve got a collection of the pottery and some paintings that I have acquired over the years, and I’m looking to add to it.”



TWO MSH OFFICERS GRADUATE FROM MLEOTA

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Mississippi State Hospital police officers Garyeth Roberts and Cordaryll White recently graduated from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy in Pearl.

White, who has been on the MSH security staff since September of 2014, and Roberts, at MSH since October 2014, completed the 12-week, 500-hour certification process at MLEOTA on July 30.

White, 22, is a graduate of Jackson's Provine High School and Holmes Community College in Goodman, where he received a degree in criminal justice with the goal of becoming

a police officer.

He worked for a security company before he was hired at MSH.

Roberts, 50, attended Florence High School and got a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Southern Mississippi, graduating with honors in 1993.

He previously worked for 30 years as a salesman before deciding to get into law enforcement.

"I can make a difference in people's lives here," Roberts said. "That means a lot to me."



Garyeth Roberts (top) and Cordaryll White (bottom) have completed police officer certification.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH RECOGNIZES NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

BY DMH

The Department of Mental Health is joining thousands of others across the country in recognizing September as National Recovery Month, a reminder that people can and do recover from mental illness.

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) has embraced the concept of recovery through its programs and services statewide as it transitions to a person-centered and recovery-oriented system of care. As mental health professionals and individuals in recovery throughout the nation celebrate this month's recognition, DMH urges everyone to remember that though mental illness may affect an estimated one in five people, they can recover to lead healthy, productive and happy lives.

"Though seldom talked about as openly as many other physical health issues, mental illnesses are common and, more importantly, they are treatable," said DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula. "Often, individuals who experience a mental and/or substance use disorder feel isolated and alone. Yet, every year thousands of Mississippians experience these conditions.

"It's imperative that we offer support to people facing mental and/or substance use disorders. In fact, we need to create environments and relationships that promote acceptance. Support from peers is essential to recovery, so it's important that people in the community get involved by starting conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery."



Over the past several years, the public mental health system in Mississippi has been in transition to a person-centered and recovery-oriented system of care, taking into account a holistic view of the lives of the individuals in need of mental health services. Services are designed not just to reduce symptoms an individual may be experiencing, but to examine the factors in their lives that contribute to symptoms and provide them with the supports and resources they need to stay in long-term recovery.

One valuable resource has been the development of a network of Certified Peer Support Specialists, individuals or family members of individuals who are living with mental illness who provide mutual support groups and peer-run services in addition to the traditional mental health services. First supported through DMH, in June 2015 the network was incorporated with the state as the Association of Mississippi Peer Support Specialists and is now a peer-led organization. Their vision is to be a source of inspiration, empowerment, and encouragement to peer supporters of all

mental health conditions throughout the state.

The message of recovery is essential to promote. The first behavioral health symptoms usually precede a mental illness or substance use disorder by up to four years, providing an opportunity for intervention that can be effective. Identifying when someone has a problem and connecting that person to treatment resources as soon as possible can make a lasting difference in someone's life. Family supports also play a significant role in treating or preventing mental health

or substance use issues.

For peer supporters, studies have shown that helping others helps improve one's own chances at long-term recovery. Sharing personal experiences also brings additional hope to other peers in recovery. Mississippi's peer supporters have been sharing their stories of recovery in printed and in video testimonials. They can be viewed on the DMH web site on the Recovery page www.dmh.ms.gov/think-recovery/.

CONGRATULATIONS AUGUST EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



James Everett of Brandon was named MSH's August Employee of the Month for Support Services. Everett is a Housekeeper on Female Receiving (Building 63). He has worked at MSH for nearly seven years.

Elizabeth Jackson, mental health tech on Female Receiving, nominated Everett because of his strong work ethics and his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done.

"Mr. Everett is a respectable young man," Jackson said. "He is reliable and a team player."

Jackson said Everett is not one to say "that is now within my job duties."

"He goes beyond his duties to get the job done," Jackson said. "He is always willing to help others."

Other characteristics that Jackson noted are that Everett takes responsibility for his actions, and he does his work with pride.



Jacqueline Smith of D'Lo was named MSH's August Employee of the Month for Direct Care. Smith is a Mental Health Technician on B-36, and has been employed at MSH for 23 years.

Smith was nominated by Missy Magee, a registered nurse on B-63.

"Ms. Jackie", as the patients call her, practices of MSH core values every time she walks through the door on Building 36," Magee said. "She treats our patients and her coworkers with respect. She works well with others and is a role model among her peers."

Magee said Smith often goes the extra mile.

"She frequently is observed going above and beyond her assignment to ensure our building is clean, and she always makes sure our patients are well cared for."



Latarshia Harris of Pearl was named MSH's August Employee of the Month for Clinical Services. Harris is a registered nurse at JNH's Jaquith Inn (Building 69). She has been employed at Jaquith for eight years.

Harris was nominated by Jamie Green, medical records clerk, who said Harris embodies the MSH core values of respect, relationship, accountability, teamwork and diversity.

"Latarshia respects not only her residents on B-69, but also her coworkers and visitors who come to the unit," Green said. "She is trustworthy as evidenced by her dedication to coming to work and accomplishing her job duties over and beyond the call."

"Latarshia exhibits excellent skills as a team player as evidenced by her willingness to help out where help is needed," Green said. "She is constantly helping other staff when needs are identified."

CONGRATULATIONS SEPTEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Angelina Billingsley of Harrisville was named MSH's September Employee of the Month for Support Services. Billingsley works in the Pantry at Jaquith Nursing Home's Jaquith Inn (Building 69). She has worked at Jaquith for 13 years.

"Angelina embodies the core values of respect, relationships, accountability, teamwork and diversity," said Latarshia Harris, a registered nurse for Jaquith Inn. "She is an exceptional worker."

Harris said Billingsley is very respectful.

"That is evident in the manner by which she treats the residents, residents' families, building visitors and her coworkers," Harris said. "She communicates well with others in a manner which is respectful, informative and non-threatening."

Harris said Billingsley is very efficient and helpful.

"She proves her accountability daily in the way she gets her work done in a timely manner," she said. "She is a team player as evidenced by her willingness to be where she is needed. She does not mind taking the residents outside for a while, and she also helps with one on one observation as well as with laundry duties when needed."



Shamekia Williams of Jackson was named MSH's September Employee of the Month for Direct Care. Williams is a CNA for Jaquith Nursing Home's Jaquith Inn (Building 69). She has been employed at Jaquith for four years.

Smith was nominated by Latarshia Harris, a registered nurse for Jaquith Inn.

"Shamekia is well respected by her peers and by the nursing staff," Harris said. "She is a hard worker and is always willing to help when the need arises."

Harris said Williams loves working with the residents.

"She enjoys and cares for the residents immensely," she said. "They enjoy her company and look forward to seeing her every night."

Harris said Williams is a true team player.

"You never have to ask her but once and it is done without hesitation," she said. "She goes over and beyond her routine duties on Building 69 to ensure the residents have everything that they need."



Esther Jiles of Jackson was named MSH's September Employee of the Month for Clinical Services. Jiles is a recreation therapist for Jaquith Nursing Home's Jefferson Inn (Buildings 29 and 33). She has been employed at Jaquith for 20 years.

"Esther represents all that Mississippi State Hospital stands for," said Holly Haralson, recreation supervisor for Jaquith. "She is a very diligent worker and she enjoys working with the residents. She always exhibits enthusiasm for her job."

Haralson said Jiles is a person who thinks outside the box.

"She is continuously trying to find new activities for the residents on Buildings 29 and 33," she said. "When asked to try something new, she smiles and does her best to accomplish the goal."

Haralson said Jiles has had a positive effect on the residents of Jefferson Inn.

"She has gone to great lengths to involve her residents in as much as they will allow her," she said. "Since Esther has been a recreation therapist on Buildings 29 and 33, resident participation has increased tremendously."

"Esther's positive attitude is reflected daily on the faces of her residents," Haralson said. "She is a great asset to Jaquith Nursing Home and Mississippi State Hospital."