



Gateway

Moving Lives in the Right Direction

New Technical Academy will offer training in important fields



As part of its work with young people, Gateway Healthcare is constantly monitoring the pulse of local school departments to determine the needs of school districts and the youths and families they serve. This fall marks the opening of a four-year high school that Gateway officials say will fulfill important technical training needs in the areas of carpentry, plumbing and electrical work.

The Gateway Technical Academy, located in Pawtucket, will combine academics and technical training at a time when some students are having difficulty gaining admission to other technical high school options in the community. James DePasquale, Superintendent of [Academy](#) continued on page 2

Batterers Intervention Program teaches new coping skills

For cases involving incidents of domestic abuse or other assaultive behaviors, Gateway Healthcare operates a program that not many agencies have been equipped to take on: a direct intervention seeking to reduce recidivism by abusers.

Gateway's Batterers Intervention Program, to which participants are generally mandated from some stage in the justice system, offers 40

hours of group psychoeducation in an atmosphere that can be confrontational but also instructive for individuals who have traditionally clashed with authority.

"Victims of domestic violence are the most critical part of the problem, but we cannot ignore the abuser either," says David Spencer, Gateway's Vice President of Substance Abuse [Intervention](#) continued on page 6

inside

2
Agency activities offer focus on mitigating suicide risk through new programming

3
Message from Rich... Technical Academy

4
Complex problems of returning veterans require a comprehensive approach

6
Gateway hosts informational overview of two award-winning programs

7
Gateway's Annual Golf Classic raises over \$73,000

7
Valley Day School awarded \$14,000 from the Coastway Cares Charitable Foundation

Academy continued from page 1

Gateway's Valley Community School and Valley Day programs, says Gateway looked at the idea of establishing a technical academy four or five years ago, but now sees this is an ideal time for many reasons.

"Some kids are not getting into Davies," DePasquale says. "They may not always take a kid that we can take; they are more selective right now than they have been in the past."

Balanced curriculum

Gateway expects about 30 students to enroll in the Technical Academy's first year in 2009-2010. Program manager William Geribo, LICSW, explains that the curriculum will combine traditional high school work with technical training, on an alternating-week basis. Students will explore all three training fields in their first year and then choose an area of focus in year two, with internships in that field taking place over the junior and senior years.

"The students will be gaining skills they can utilize, rather than purely an academic focus," Geribo says. The program could expand into other technical areas in future years.

Gateway expects about 30 students to enroll in the first year in 2009-2010.

He says he expects nearly all of the students at the coeducational academy to have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The academy likely will adopt a model along the lines of Gateway's Valley Community School program, an incentive-based approach in which students receive privileges based on meeting requirements at various levels.

The primary referral sources for students will be the special education departments of local school districts in central to northern Rhode Island. DePasquale says Gateway is also initiating talks with state officials to determine whether some youths awaiting early release from the Training School could be sent to the program.

Key partnership

One factor that exists at present but had not surfaced when Gateway first

looked at this idea several years ago is an informal partnership with local company ABC Builders, which teaches vocational skills to young people. ABC Builders had been looking to lease classroom space, so Gateway worked out an arrangement in which the company will have access to space at the Technical Academy's building and Gateway will have access to ABC Builders' labs at the site.

Moreover, DePasquale says, ABC Builders intends to offer some scholarships to academy students. This partnership has allowed Gateway to establish the academy at substantially lower startup costs than would have been the case several years ago, he says.

It is expected that the school's population will range in age from 14 to 21. The staff will include a bachelor's-level clinical case manager and a "school engagement counselor" who will perform the duties of an outreach worker and truancy officer, Geribo says.

The technical school environment is seen as ideal for many young people who might be struggling in the traditional public school setting. "Many of the kids have the skill level and the interest but don't have the support," DePasquale says. ★

Agency activities offer focus on mitigating suicide risk through new programming

The services of any community mental health agency by definition will intersect with the public health problem of suicide. But it has only been in recent years that reducing the incidence of suicide has become clearly defined as a targeted

strategy for many mental health and public health agencies. Gateway Healthcare is involved with several important activities in this area.

Callers to a national suicide prevention hotline from the 401 area code are connected to Gateway for

crisis counseling. The subject of the calls can range from an actual suicide call that requires police intervention to a scenario in which an individual just needs to talk and might require a brief crisis intervention. The toll-free number that con-

nects to Gateway is the National Suicide Prevention Life-line's (800) 273-TALK (8255).

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour confidential telephone service operated nationally by a subsidiary of the Mental Health Association of New York City. The effort receives federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Gateway might receive more than 80 calls in a typical month, with the number tending to increase when the hotline is publicized on talk shows or other broadcasts, explains Kyle Edward, Director of Emergency Services and Screening at Gateway. Also, three Gateway clinicians answer a Spanish-language hotline that operates during business hours on weekdays, says Christine Emond, Pawtucket Emergency Services Supervisor.

Up-front approach

Gateway's approach in addressing the needs of individuals who might be contemplating suicide is based on the training that its staff members have received under the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) program. A program of LivingWorks Education, ASIST is considered the most widely used suicide first aid training program. Among its elements, it emphasizes the ability to discuss suicide in an up-front manner with a person at risk and to identify risk alerts and then develop strategies to address them.

"The ASIST model is an evidence-based training program on suicide intervention that emphasizes on teaching caregivers skills to intervene
continued on next page

Message from Rich



*by Richard Leclerc,
President, Gateway Healthcare*

As children and their families across the state embark on what they hope will be a successful school year, we are excited about offering a new opportunity for some high school students who may be struggling to excel in the traditional system.

It has taken a lot of planning and some patience, but the Gateway Technical Academy in Pawtucket is ready to provide about 30 young men and women with individualized learning that combines regular classroom work with training in an important trade. As the article in this issue of the newsletter explains, the four-year high school will be run along a model similar to that of our successful Valley Community School program.

We're finding that a good number of high school-age students are in danger of falling through the cracks of the traditional school system, for a variety of reasons. Even those who find a better fit in a vocational school environment may be falling short of their potential there, or are having trouble meeting tougher standards for admission to vocational schools in the community. At Gateway we have designed a program that will address each student's individual needs, offering them ongoing counseling and support as they also pursue technical education in carpentry, plumbing or electrical work.

The planning of this new venture, which has been part of our goals for some time, is a lesson in perseverance. But it is also about seeking important partnerships in the community, always an important factor in paving the way for effective services. The presence of ABC Builders, which will share its lab sites with us at the school and will offer informal guidance for our technical curriculum, will allow us to establish this academy in a more cost-effective manner than if we were going it alone. Our students will benefit from ABC Builders' involvement in numerous ways.

Gateway seeks to address the developmental and emotional needs of children in all of its programming, but we also realize that children need sound education that will train them for important roles in the workforce. We believe the Gateway Technical Academy will take a major step in this direction, and will have the potential to grow into other technical areas as these are identified. ★

continued from previous page

until the immediate risk of suicide can be reduced or until additional resources can be found,” Emond says.

The ASIST training is designed to help caregivers become confident in working with individuals at risk of suicide. It emphasizes that asking directly about suicide constitutes an important part of the initial connection established with the individual in need. Identifying the “risk alerts” brought out in the conversation with the individual then can allow for the implementation of strategies to counteract these risks and create safety for the person.

Implementation of these strategies to reduce risk is seen as important because of research showing that the likelihood of future acts of self-harm is increased when previous self-harm experiences have occurred.

Gateway staffers must address multiple needs when fielding the calls that come in. “A lot of calls come not from clients, but from concerned family members seeking information,” Emond says.

Sometimes the staffer answering a call will conclude that the caller needs some specialized services, in which case a referral can be made. On other occasions, it may be that a caller just needs to hear a friendly, empathetic voice. “Some of the callers already have providers, but they just need to vent,” Emond says.

Community training

The ASIST training model applies to all categories of caregivers, from

for Gateway’s many front-line professionals, from emergency services workers to caseworkers to members of mobile treatment teams.

Gateway also would like to extend the training to other institutions in the community. Emond says the agency has been in touch with a number of police departments to explore opportunities to train officers in being able to address suicidality in a proactive, effective way with the public.

“The goal in these efforts is to

“The goal in these efforts is to increase communication, not to wait until there’s a crisis.”

Christine Emond, Pawtucket Emergency Services Supervisor

health care workers to individuals in less formal caregiving relationships. The Gateway staffers who were originally trained under the ASIST program have in turn offered the training to others on staff. The training is ideal

increase communication, not to wait until there’s a crisis,” Emond says. “It’s important always to stay up on what the signs of suicidal behavior are, what to look for. The more awareness we raise, the better.” ★

Complex problems of returning veterans require a comprehensive approach

Several Gateway Healthcare programs offer services that touch on the needs of returning veterans, and those needs appear more complex than at any time in the recent history of military service. Much of Gateway’s activity in veterans’ services is housed in the Tri-Hab division, which focuses on addressing substance abuse disorders.

The nation received a wake-up call in the summer of 2008 when Millennium Cohort Study data published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* indicated significant levels of heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems among service personnel who experienced direct combat exposure in the Iraq or Afghanistan conflicts. Gateway’s

Vice President of Substance Abuse Services, David Spencer, sees today’s generation of veterans as having more complex sets of problems than what he recalls seeing in the past. Cases of serious post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are commonly seen in this population, he says.

“I can remember taking referrals 10 or 15 years ago, and they had nowhere

near the complex issues we're seeing today," Spencer says.

Housing critical

Gateway does not have one specific program dedicated exclusively to veterans services, but several of its efforts meet the needs of veterans among the target populations served. Programs that offer safe and suitable housing options are at the forefront.

Under a contract relationship with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in Providence, Gateway accepts referrals of veterans to both of its residential facilities for men and women, located in Woonsocket. Spencer said some federal requirements for residential centers, such as those covering safety code areas, are more stringent than state regulations, and says to his knowledge Gateway is one of only two residential programs in the state that has been able to meet the VA guidelines.

Some veterans are referred out of state for residential care when the Gateway facilities are full.

Our residential treatment programs might have a population of 15 to 25 percent veterans at any one time, Spencer says. "We've always had a good relationship with the VA," he says. "We will keep a client if clinically indicated even if his or her benefits run out and that's really appreciated by the VA."

Gateway also opened earlier this year a transitional housing facility for men, and a target group for placement there is veterans who do not have a stable living arrangement. A lack of secure transitional housing is seen nationally as a major obstacle for many veterans trying to reintegrate into their communities as they address a host of health concerns. Spencer says about half of the transitional housing facility's 10 beds will be earmarked for veterans.

"We've always had a good relationship with the VA. We will keep a client if clinically indicated even if his or her benefits run out and that's really appreciated by the VA."

**David Spencer,
Gateway Vice President
of Substance Abuse Services**

Treatment approach

Spencer believes a multidisciplinary approach is needed to address the complex needs of returning veterans. The increasing presence of PTSD in individuals who also might be battling other behavioral health issues, such as alcoholism or the growing problem of prescription drug misuse, is "creating very complicated and involved cases for our clinical staff," he says.

For the last several years, treatment groups focusing on the areas of co-occurring disorders and spirituality are showing increased effectiveness in the treatment population including veterans. "Spirituality seems to be a key to recovery for an increasing number of individuals," Spencer says. ★



Intervention continued from page 1

Services. “We’re one of the few non-profit organizations with this type of program.”

The Batterers Intervention Program is managed by Jeff Weisinger, a high-energy staff member who formerly worked in Gateway’s men’s residential program. He clearly thrives on the open, freewheeling nature of the group sessions and his ability to engage participants. “This program has helped me be a better professional,” he says. “I can just be a ‘talking head,’ but I want to relate more on a human level.”

Weisinger explains that because the courts or probation generally order

these sessions, many abusers enter with feelings of hostility or denial, contending that they somehow have been wronged by the system. It usually takes about 6 weeks in the 20-week program for the hard work to begin for most participants, he says, with a true sense of accomplishment not setting in until the last couple of weeks.

About 8 to 12 participants make up each group, and the groups are single-gender, although a facilitator of the other gender might be in charge.

Fee schedule

Although the psychoeducational services (Weisinger emphasizes that

the services are not “therapy” per se) are generally mandated for participants, the state does not have a dedicated payment source for the services. Therefore, Gateway charges participants a per-session fee ranging from \$15 to \$40 based on ability to pay, Weisinger says. Individuals who are unemployed and can demonstrate ongoing efforts to find work can have their session fees waived, he says

Weisinger adds that some participants ask to continue to attend after their mandated number of weeks has been met. For those who continue on, the sessions are free of charge. In general, the fee structure is designed to make this a break-even project for the agency.

Seven other facilitators work with Weisinger in the program; most are master’s-level professionals, he says. An approach that borrows aspects of cognitive-behavioral and motivational strategies appears to be effective with the groups, some of which are batterers groups and others of which are anger management groups for those that continue on with the program.

“We’re restructuring their thought processes,” Weisinger says of participants. “The clients feed off our energy. We are able to hook them.”

The stakes are high in working with this population, about three-quarters of which has experienced physical or sexual abuse in their lives as well. Also, about 5 to 10 percent of the individuals typically encountered in a program such as this will reoffend within 30 days. The numbers make a compelling case for Gateway to commit to achieving good outcomes in a program that many other organizations might prefer to avoid. ★

GATEWAY HEALTHCARE HOSTED AN INFORMATIONAL BREAKFAST

to preview two innovative training programs, *Mental Health First Aid* and *Project ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)*, on Thursday, September 24th at the Providence Marriott.

Moderated by Attorney General Patrick Lynch, the event provided an overview of the two award-winning training programs and the significance of how they can benefit individuals, businesses and the community.

An award was also presented to Lt. Daniel Gannon of the Providence Police Department for his role in peacefully resolving a standoff regarding a citizen with autism who was mentally unstable.



Left to right: Chief Anthony Silva, Director of the Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy; Attorney General Patrick Lynch; Angela Gannon; Lt. Daniel Gannon, Providence Police Department; Richard Leclerc, President of Gateway Healthcare; and Linda H. Newton, Vice President of CSR, Community Relations & Diversity of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

News briefs...

★ Gateway Healthcare held its **Annual Golf Classic** on **Monday, July 27th** at the **Alpine Country Club** in Cranston, Rhode Island. Approximately **129 golfers** enjoyed a beautiful day and 18 holes of golf while raising over **\$73,000** for behavioral health services for children and families served by Gateway. Gateway's special guest, **WPRI/Fox Providence's Sports Director, Patrick Little**, was the event's emcee, which also included a raffle and silent and live auctions.

★ Gateway Healthcare has been awarded **\$14,000** from the **Coastway Cares Charitable Foundation** for its **Valley Day School**, which provides alternative educational program for children ages 5-14 with behavioral and emotional issues. This funding will give the school an opportunity to offer enrichment programming to the students, such as educational and recreational field trips, art therapy and additional enhancements that increase therapeutic recovery. A check presentation took place at Gateway Healthcare's administrative offices on **Friday, September 11th**.



Left to right: Adrienne Desilets, Coastway Cares Committee; Richard Leclerc, Gateway Healthcare; Connie Tu and Kathy Generali, Coastway Cares Committee.



Left to right: Richard Leclerc, President of Gateway Healthcare; Patrick Little, WPRI/Fox Providence's Sports Director; Scott DiChristofero, Vice President of Finance at Gateway Healthcare; and Dr. Stephen Chabot, Medical Director of Gateway Healthcare.

Upcoming events...

★ Gateway's **Annual Appeal** will soon be underway. Your help is needed more than ever!



★ **SAVE THE DATE!** Gateway has secured **July 26, 2010** at the **Alpine Country Club** for its **2010 Annual Golf Tournament**. Mark your calendars!



249 Roosevelt Avenue, Suite 205
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860-2134

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3268
Providence, RI

Have you moved?

Has your address changed or are you going to be moving? Let us know by sending us an e-mail at developmentoffice@gatewayhealth.org or give us a call at **401-724-8400 x236** so we can keep you updated on all of the exciting events and news throughout the year. Are you getting duplicate copies of our mailings? Help us save money on postage and dedicate those resources to other areas.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Development Team

Carolyn Kyle, VP of Marketing & External Relations • 401-724-8400 x212
Leslie DaCruz, Marketing & Communications Specialist • 401-724-8400 x244
Joanne King, Marketing & Development Assistant • 401-724-8400 x236
Lori Meo, Community Relations Coordinator • 401-724-8400 x272

How to contribute...

To make a financial contribution to Gateway Healthcare, please mail your donation to:

Gateway Healthcare
c/o Development Office
249 Roosevelt Avenue, Suite 205
Pawtucket, RI 02860

For more information on monetary or non-monetary gift donations, please call 401-724-8400 x244

Please designate Gateway Healthcare on your United Way pledge sheet

Thank you.