RHD’s C.O.R.E. values

Clients, staff work toward recovery in Pittsburgh

Michael was asked how many other programs he’d tried as he sought to re-integrate into society as a returning citizen, and he said: “Ha! All of them!” But at C.O.R.E., an RHD program for returning citizens in Pittsburgh, Michael is having success for the first time — staying sober, making every meeting, hitting all his goals.

“This has been the best experience,” Michael said. “It’s a blessing to be here. I felt like I lost track of who Michael was. But I found him again, here at C.O.R.E.”

C.O.R.E. stands for Capitalizing On a Recovery Environment. It is a long-term (6-month) community reintegration recovery program for individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues. It’s RHD’s newest program in Pittsburgh, where RHD has been supporting people since 2000.

“In too many recovery models, the focus is rules enforcement and compliance — but when you walk out the door, people who were telling you what to do and enforcing the rules don’t go with you, so you revert back to old behaviors and decision making,” said C.O.R.E. Director Kevin Kordzi. “Here you’ve got to figure things out and make a decision for yourself — why do something, whether it worked or didn’t, whether it supports recovery. We focus on life skills, social skills, really teaching people how to function in community.”

Dan said when he first arrived at C.O.R.E., he thought it was too good to be true: “I was ready to run. I thought it was a trap! People were kind to me. Not patronizing — kind! It freaked me out …”

“This was the end of the line for me,” Dan said. “I’ve gotten nothing but help since I’ve been here, and I’ve been treated with

RHD comes to Iowa

RHD’s R.I.S.T. program supports people with mental health challenges

R esources for Human Development will expand into its 14th state next year with the opening of a new program in Iowa.

“We’re very excited for the opportunity to bring RHD’s caring and person-centered approach to human services to the great state of Iowa,” RHD CEO Dyann Roth said. “We’re proud that our long history of individualized, quality service continues to result in growth and expansion for RHD, enabling us to serve more people.”

RHD’s Iowa RIST (Residential Intensive Support Team) program, located in the Cedar Rapids area, will provide in-home services and supports to participants diagnosed with serious mental illness.

RHD’s RIST model is based on the common belief that responding to the basic good and strength in people creates the best opportunity for maximizing positive individual commitment and responsibility. This approach applies to staff, consumers, and families alike. RIST provides the holistic services needed to maintain independent living with community integration for individuals experiencing homelessness, chemical dependence, and mental illness.

“We’re honored to serve people in Iowa,” Roth said. “In Iowa, we’ll continue RHD’s mission to empower our clients as they build the highest level of independence possible, wherever the need exists.”

RHD serves tens of thousands of people of all abilities every year with effective and innovative programs addressing intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, homelessness, addiction recovery and more.

Founded in Philadelphia in 1970, RHD has grown from one program and $50,000 in revenue to more than 160 programs in 14 states.

At Imagine That!, an innovative creative arts studio for people with intellectual disabilities in Kansas City, people realize their creative potential and define themselves as artists within the studio — and the community. Read about Kevin, JP, Troy, Greg, Joe and more of the people thriving at Imagine That! on page 4.

WHO WE ARE: Resources for Human Development is a national human-services nonprofit with more than 160 programs in 14 states serving those with developmental delays, mental illness, homelessness, and substance abuse and poverty issues. Established in Philadelphia in 1970, RHD is also a pioneer in the development of socially conscious, for-profit enterprises.

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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NONPROFIT RESOURCES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Nancy was a master's level student studying professional counseling at Duquesne University when she began to have mental health challenges that required hospitalization. After years at Mayview State Hospital outside Pittsburgh, Nancy was able to move into RHD's Bridges, which provides specialized supportive housing to individuals with mental illness and/or co-occurring addictions. With services involved in C.H.I.P., she is flexible and focused on the individuals' strengths and goals for their own recovery. Nancy has begun to take steps toward regaining her previous career path. She wants to start volunteering and working to support people with mental health issues.

"To have that realization, where she's coming back to her training, is great for her," said Director David Cummings. "She's getting back to where she's from, where her interests were. Nancy, I think, "I'll do that" and then from there she had the motivation to come back and see Mayview and MyRHD and get to come back and give back to the place where she's from."

How you can help

More than 27,000 people each year gain the support and encouragement they need to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities through RHD's many human-services programs. Their milestones and successes, large and small, are made possible through the generosity of people like you.

Whether it's a child in need of a winter coat, a single mother trying to provide for her family, or a man with autism whose life is about to change, your contribution will help create a brighter future for these men, women, and children who just need a chance to develop their full potential.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send a check or visit us at www.rhd.org to donate online.
Alessia Antinori brought a taste of the oldest family winery in the world to Philadelphia in October. She took back a little piece of RHD. Alessia was the honorary chair of the Main Line Wine Gala, celebrating the world's most innovative winemakers in an event that benefited two of RHD's many innovations in human services. RHD's Endow-A-Home and Center for Creative Works were featured at the event. The Center for Creative Works is an art studio for people with intellectual disabilities, and Alessia toured the program before hosting the gala.

She was taken with a painting by CCW artist Jenny Cox, and purchased two of Jenny's pieces for the Antinori gallery.

"As an art enthusiast and collector, I know the power of art and how it can enrich our lives," Alessia said. "I really enjoyed visiting the Center for Creative Arts; I would love it if this sort of program could also be done in Italy. I would have spent hours seeing all the art pieces in that studio, and I couldn't resist buying a few!"

Jenny operated the paper shredder at her old day program, and would wear head phones to isolate herself and block out everyone else. At the Center for Creative Works, Jenny came out of her shell. She began to engage the staff and the other artists, and one day rose from the chair where she'd been sitting for years and entered the studio space. "It was an amazing act of self-advocacy," CCW director Lori Bartol said. While the improvement in Jenny's social skills is extraordinary, her growth as an artist is truly exceptional. She's now a featured artist at the prestigious Fleisher/Ollman Gallery — and part of the Antinori private collection.

The 2014 Main Line Wine Gala featured "An Evening With Alessia Antinori." Alessia represents 26 generations of elite winemaking. The Antinoris are the oldest family winery in the world and among the most dynamically innovative in history, ushering in the modern era of Italian wines in the 1970s with the introduction of Tignanello and forcing changes in Italy's laws governing the industry to recognize the unprecedented quality of Antinori wines. The many honors and accolades bestowed on Antinori wines in their rich history include the Antinori Cervaro della Sala Chardonnay Umbria, the most decorated wine ever produced in Italy. Today the Antinori family operates vineyards around the world, and each combines a love of tradition and authenticity with an innovative spirit.

The Main Line Wine Gala was sponsored by the Results Companies. Master Chef Georges Perrier joined the event as consulting chef, and spent time in the kitchen. Perrier said, "I enjoyed not only coming up with pairings for these elegant wines, but also getting back in the kitchen to cook on this wonderful night. I’m happy to be a part of the Main Line Wine Gala, benefiting some great RHD programs, and of course I am glad everyone so enjoyed the food!"

"As my father, Marchese Piero Antinori, often says, ‘Ancient roots play an important part in our philosophy but they have never held back our spirit of innovation.’ In this changing world, we constantly need to adapt and innovate in the vineyards and in the cellar. This same commitment to innovation is at work in these two incredibly innovative programs at RHD."

"What are you going to do?" Endow-A-Home encouraged Asha to enroll in cosmetology school, and she now owns her own business, Asha’s Essence in the Fairmount district of Philadelphia.

The Center for Creative Works is one of RHD’s many art programs for people with developmental disabilities, where clients realize their creative potential and explore various means of personal expression.

"As the 26th Generation of a family-owned wine company in Italy, I feel a tremendous responsibility to help preserve our family’s heritage and to continue to grow the business so that it will continue for many more generations," Alessia said. "Part of this responsibility, and part of the pleasure in being in this role, is our desire to support the communities and the local charities where we sell our wines. My family is very fortunate and we view it as our duty to help those who are less fortunate. I am honored to be asked to chair the Main Line Wine Gala, and I was particularly interested in this theme of innovation — as this is at the heart of our family business."

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"Once they put you in a home, they come in and ask: ‘OK, now what are you going to do? What’s your plan?’" says Asha. "We’ll get together for those workshops, and we cried every time we saw each other. Emotions were so raw. But after our little sniffle-fest, it was:"
The hero of Kevin’s story knows he’s different. Kevin draws the images for each panel and writes the dialogue, and at one point the hero says: “I feel like a freak.” But he’s not a freak. He’s just different. In Kevin’s story, it turns out that the hero has super powers. Because he’s different, he can change the world.

Kevin is telling this story in a short film he’s making at Imagine That!, a creative arts program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Kansas City, Missouri. When his hero embraces his powers, he starts calling himself “The Shocking Shockwave.”

“The thing I want to do is make a difference,” Kevin said, as he worked. “I want to put my ideas out there and see how people like it.”

Imagine That! has made a big difference with Kevin.

“This is a good atmosphere where you can be yourself, express how you feel, and share ideas,” Kevin said.

“In my history of working with people with disabilities, I’ve never encountered anyone like Kevin,” Imagine That! Director Misty Kelso said. “The internal struggles he faces, hearing voices that tell him to do things that he really struggles with, it’s like an angel and a devil on his shoulders. If you tell him he’s doing a good job with something, he will feel the need to balance that with something negative. He would self injure, or have so much anxiety that he’d freeze, just be frozen against a wall. He’d do some pretty inappropriate things in public.

“Since he’s been here, Kevin has worked very hard to overcome his challenges — particularly since he’s received residential services through RHD as well. When we first started working with Kevin, those negative behaviors were a ritual with him, but we’ve gotten to a point where they are almost non-existent.”

Imagine That! is an innovative creative arts studio for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that provides individuals who participate with the tools and materials to create art and the supports to define themselves as artists within the studio and in the community. The studio is an example of RHD’s person-centered services that focus on the individual and their strengths, allowing for maximum choice and empowerment.

“We take pride in being a place where everybody can come and be accepted for who they are,” Kelso said. “We recognize that everybody has a choice to come here — even our staff. We respect that. It’s a naturally collaborative environment. We support our artists and, in a variety of ways, our artists support the staff just as much. We all have a lot to learn from each other.”

The studio’s artists are supported by a team of trained artists who strive to integrate the studio into the larger arts community. Artists are encouraged to express themselves through a variety of artistic mediums and are given the opportunity to display and sell their art. Every First Friday of the month, the studio opens its door to showcase its artists to the public, and the place is usually packed.

What people find is a broad array of artists who are uniquely successful.

“Since starting at RHD I feel as though there is more meaning to my life,” said Joe, a client who experiences constant life struggles due to a rare disorder he’s managing. “I am so thankful for the time he is able to spend there. RHD is his kind of place.”

“Greg was the first person approved for funding to attend Imagine That!” and was one of the first artists to attend the studio when it opened in 2012.

“I was working in a workshop, and I got tired of not being heard,” Greg said. “I wanted to try something different. I never knew I had talent until I came here, then I found the gift that I did have. When I’m here, I feel like a person, not a person with a disability. I love my life now!”

“In addition to movies, Kevin writes poetry and music. “Everything he does feels very significant,” Direct Support Professional James Cello said. “Working with him, you’re just helping him reach deep inside and look at what he’s struggling with, good things, bad things. Here
Communication: JP works with Amy at Imagine That, where staff learned his language.

**Person-Centered at ITKC!**

JP is very verbal. He talks all the time. But because he uses a language that is very much his own, he struggled to communicate. Providers who attempted to teach JP to communicate usually frustrated him, because he struggled to learn their language.

When he came to Imagine That, JP’s staff found a way to communicate with him. They learned his language.

“Communication, and being understood, is extremely important to JP,” said Amy Norman, Day Program Manager. “He can become frustrated when he’s not understood. Someone who doesn’t know JP well might not understand JP or his version of sign language. As JP appeared to become more frustrated, the staff at the studio agreed there was a need to collect what we’d learned through interactions with him and use it as a tool.”

When JP was a child, his grandmother wrote down words on pieces of paper that JP would wear on his wrist, so that some basic needs could be communicated. But when JP attempted any more complicated interactions, he’d roll out jumbles of words that sounded to an untrained ear like gibberish.

The staff at Imagine That discovered that it wasn’t gibberish — it was his language. His words were consistent — what he’d call something, what he’d ask for, was not something his staff could recognize, but it was always the same. So the staff started a Learning Log to document what JP was saying and match up his words and phrases with what he wanted. And little by little, they learned his language.

“Each day the staff member working with him would add to the Learning Log something they discovered about JP’s communication — when JP is doing this, we think it means this, and we should do this for him,” Norman said. “Everyone began to realize how important JP’s style of communication is to him, and it was a great tool to build a relationship.”

JP is an example of the Person-Centered Thinking training that staff at RHD Missouri in Kansas City underwent to better serve their clients. All RHD programs emphasize the person in the service, respecting and responding to an individual’s needs.

“Person-Centered Thinking goes along with the Values at RHD,” said Misty Kelso, Program Director at Imagine That. “It starts with where a person is, and what their strengths are. We don’t see people as having a disability, we see them as people with abilities. We look at what’s working and what’s not, and we can better determine what supports a person wants and needs — and what skills are needed from the staff to support that person.”

“Person-Centered Thinking is more of a mentality than a tangible, although when we experience issues we’ll pull out a tool and work through them. But it’s something we’ve incorporated into the environment as a way that we deliver services and supports.”

Residential Team Leader Victoria Smith told the story of a client named Brittany, who communicated one thing verbally but often gave off an entirely different emotion through nonverbal communications like body language. The staff identified possible triggers, successful and unsuccessful responses, and identified 18 behaviors to which they learned to respond.

“Removing some of the uncertainty in the staff’s responses allowed Brittany to trust and genuinely bond with her staff,” Smith said. “We’ve worked to create an atmosphere where she can be happy.”

“We encourage every employee to share their findings with the larger team, which strengthens our support systems.”

Kelso noted the enthusiasm the staff brought to the training — and to implementing it.

“I’ve never been around a team that bought in and got excited about it like this one,” Kelso said. “It’s one of the reasons I love what I do here — the desire of everybody to support people in the best way possible. It is that Value of decentralization of authority, in that everybody has a voice in how we operate and the staff is highly involved in deciding the best methods of support.”

“We don’t want to operate in a crisis culture. This entire organization is a place where every day we just think: What can we do better?”
Each year RHD holds Values Day, where we celebrate the Values that guide us as we work to deliver quality services and supports to people of all abilities wherever the need exists. This year, the day had an awards show theme, which allowed people to dress up for a turn on a red carpet and also allowed us to recognize so many amazing stories happening every day at programs all around RHD.

At RHD, we see so many people who deserve awards for their courage, for pushing through fears and challenges and life struggles that many people will never understand. I think the Values come through every day in the small risks we take with ourselves and each other. That’s true when we’re supporting each other to do something we’ve never done before, whether that’s a person RHD supports in our programs or a staff member. We’re all in this together to learn and grow and to become more fully the people we hope we can be.

Each year RHD presents the Barbara Foust Award to the client in an RHD program who has demonstrated exceptional courage, creativity and spirit and best exemplifies Barbara’s character and heart. This year the award went to David Block, a filmmaker who despite being legally blind and diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome has produced and directed six documentaries highlighting the successes of people with disabilities. David is a client at Lower Merion Counseling Services, and recently entered Temple University’s graduate journalism program with support from RHD.

“People have doubted my abilities, but that fuels my desire to achieve,” David said. “I appreciate the way RHD staff has supported me when I’ve had struggles in my life.”

For tireless dedication to RHD and the people we serve, Maurice Hernandez from RHD’s Tri-County Supportive Housing Program was honored with the Tom Scheuren Award. Since 1995, RHD has presented the Tom Scheuren Award to the employee who best represents Tom’s legacy of dedication and energy.

Maurice’s wife Carmen delivered a speech on her husband’s behalf that neatly summed up why we set aside this day to recognize our clients and our staff.

“Today it seems that when you do bad things, everybody notices, but when you do good things, nobody notices,” Carmen said. “My husband spends his life doing good things, and usually nobody notices. Thank you to RHD, for noticing.”

All over the country, clients and staff at RHD are doing good things. This Values Day, we were proud to recognize amazing work being done at our award-winning arts programs for people with intellectual disabilities, including RHD Rhode Island and Imagine That in Kansas City, Mo., which you can read about in this issue of the MyRHD newsletter. We looked at the work being done at S.T.A.Y. in Memphis, Tenn., which provides permanent supportive housing for individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness with severe disabilities. We honored just some of our terrific direct services professionals, and celebrated RHD clients from programs across the country.

The day ended with a very special story from RHD Missouri, where a staff member named Todd and a client named Brandon have formed a unique relationship in the companion model, where people RHD supports reside in their homes with live-in RHD caregivers chosen by the consumers and their families. As Todd battled a severe illness, he drew strength from his work with Brandon — and while in a tangible way Todd was supporting Brandon, he found that in an intangible way Brandon was supporting him. You’ll read more about that story in these pages very soon.

For years the Values were sort of an oral tradition, until more than 20 years ago we started putting down on paper what we held dear about our culture. But RHD’s Values are an idea that can’t just be on paper. What we actually do, day-to-day, to keep this alive and in front of us — that’s what defines us. Each year it’s always a pleasure to recognize how our Values-based culture still guides us in the work we do.
Imagine That! 1970, Resources for Human Development serves tens of thousands of people of all abilities every year with caring, effective and innovative programs addressing intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, homelessness, addiction recovery and more. In partnership with local governments and those we serve, RHD builds better lives, families and communities.

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About Resources for Human Development

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