

Harborcreek Youth Services was approved this year as an accredited Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, following our approval by the Council on Accreditation. The agency received positive licensing reviews by the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children and Youth, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Medical Assistance Program's Bureau of Program Integrity, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

In 2007, Harborcreek Youth Services completed a series of operational and personnel reductions in order to achieve a balanced budget. Our community education program and administrative staff, located in two outside sites, were returned to the main campus. Our outpatient drug and alcohol program was closed and the office condominium was transferred to another agency. Three residential units were closed and three Director positions were eliminated.

In our residential program, we now are serving only Medical Assistance mental health clients. The agency is credentialed by five managed care companies. Our Psychiatric Residential Treatment Program with accreditation has higher child care counselor staff ratios, master's level/credentialed therapists, increased child psychiatric consultation, more frequent treatment team meetings, and more family involvement.

During this period, the agency has developed several new initiatives aimed at improving the experiential exposure of the residential youth:

1. The National Youth Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM) is a dirt bike riding program that is behaviorally focused. The clients earn riding time through the accomplishment of goals and the completion of safety courses. The agency has 14 dirt bikes participating in this program. There have been very positive outcomes associated with this program in the areas of improving client behavior and school performance.
2. The Therapeutic Riding Equestrian Center (TREC) is a horse-based equivalent to the NYPUM program. This program is run in conjunction with the organization called Therapeutic Riding of Erie County. Through the accomplishment of treatment goals, clients earn the ability to "volunteer" at TREC. The volunteer experience requires the clients to groom and care for the horses at TREC (animal therapy) as well as care for the safety of riders who participate in the program. The riders are physically and mentally challenged children and adults (empathy development). This experience has been a tremendous success, from both the therapeutic and organizational perspectives.
3. Educational electrical classes have been developed to provide vocational and therapeutic experiences. These are team-based educational "how-to" classes run on a weekly basis at the agency. Soon to be developed are plumbing classes.

4. The Model Club has been in existence for four years and is seen as the “seed” to the development of the other above programs. The model classes were seen by the clients as the number one activity, as voiced in a recent client survey. Two model shows are held annually. At these shows, the client’s family and the general public view the client’s efforts at building models. The shows are judged by the Erie Scale Modelers’ Club and trophies are awarded.

Of note is that all the above programs are staffed by volunteers from this agency, as well as the community.

During 2007, Harborcreek Youth Services developed a Community Programs division, which consists of our Multisystemic Therapy (MST) program, established in 2006, and our new Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program, which is in the early stages of implementation. Both MST and MTFC emphasize strict adherence to well-established, evidence-based models, and both serve male and female adolescents and their families. The primary difference between the two programs is that MST treats the adolescent in his or her home, while MTFC treats the child in a foster home. Harborcreek Youth Services’ MTFC program is funded by a four-year grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). We expect to admit our first foster children in late April, 2008.