

# Inside Advantage



## A True Anchor for Advantage

February 2015

A board of trustees usually has great influence on the company they work for. It's certainly true at Advantage. Over the three-plus years I've been at Advantage, I was fortunate to see one board member, Mary Jo Matthews, devote a good portion of her passion and love to Advantage, the organization to whom she was personally connected. Mary Jo, born in Washington, DC, passed away in Danielsville on December 18. She was 87.

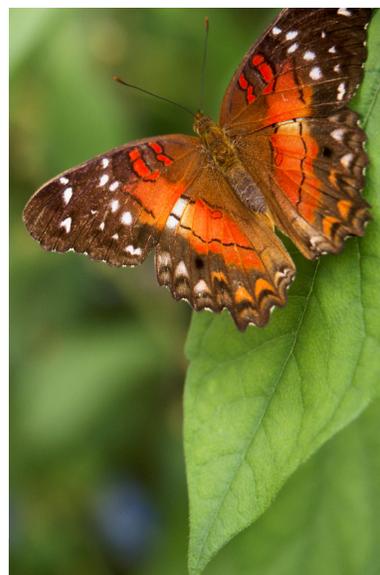


In the 70s and 80s, Mary Jo volunteered with the Augusta Association of Retarded Citizens, where she was recognized for outstanding service in 1982 and served as president from 1983-1984. She moved to Danielsville in 1986, worked at the Athens Banner Herald for 14 years and spent countless hours volunteering in the community. She was on the Advantage Community Service Board for 18 years. She was an active member of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce, was voted as Madison County Volunteer of the year in 1995 as well as Woman of the Year for Madison County in late 1990s. She was always doing for others, and rarely, if ever, asked for anything for herself. Just before she died, Mary Jo wrote her version of a history of Advantage, which is posted in its entirety on the website.

Mary Jo not only brought talent and knowledge of the Madison County community to the board. She brought a passion for the clients we serve. Her daughter Mimi has been a client at Fine Finish for many years.

Even though all organizations push on through loss, we still revere and honor the strength and value that a person like Mary Jo brings to the table. She was an integral part of the history of Advantage, and just as much a part of its backbone as anyone. Mary Jo was a kind, thoughtful and compassionate person and a dedicated Board member. I will miss her enthusiasm, optimism and her inspiring faith in this organization that she loved—Advantage.

With gratitude,



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Distinguished Service Award ..2
Arch Development .....2
CARF Accreditation .....2
The Biggest Loser .....3
Advantage Birthdays .....4
Advantage Anniversaries .....4
Friends of Advantage.....5

### SPECIAL DATES OF INTEREST

#### Monday, February 9

9:00 am - Executive Management Team Meeting

1:00 pm - Management Team Meeting - Greene County

#### Tuesday, February 24

4:00 pm - Community Service Board Meeting - Training Room at North Avenue



## EVAN MILLS RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This year's Distinguished Service Award goes to Evan Mills, Director of Business Development. Evan's work impacts all areas of the agency. Trained as a social worker and experienced in grant writing, implementation, and development, he knows the struggles of those we serve and how to obtain the funding to meet their needs.

Since coming here, we have experienced a wonderful increase in funding as a result of successful grant applications, including a highly competitive SAMHSA grant-the Holy Grail of grants. It has been our dream at Advantage to be awarded one, and this year that dream came true. Many clients will have the resources and supports to change their lives because of it.

Evan doesn't just write the grants, but he also makes sure that we have infrastructure and protocols in place to assure that we implement and manage them well. As a result, in the last year and a half we've had multiple audits with zero findings and zero recommendations.

Evan currently serves as the President of Athens Resource Center for the Homeless and as a board member on Athens Homeless Property Corporation. These two nonprofits are excitedly planning the groundbreaking ceremony to realize another longtime dream-the building of the Athens Resource Center (commonly referred to as the One-stop shop) and the Village (homes and daycare) for Athens individuals and families experiencing

homelessness. There are times when this could be a full-time job, in addition to his other responsibilities.

While it may be argued that Evan does not provide "direct service," because of his work over the last year, our clients:

Have a place to take showers, do their laundry, receive mail, get needed supplies, and access case management when they are experiencing homelessness.

Have access to whole health treatment through community partnerships with Mercy Clinic, Nurses Clinic, Medlink, and Athens Neighborhood Health Center.

Have access to staff who have received specialized training in serving those with Autism

Have expanded services through the Jackson County Drug Court. We've seen firsthand how these courts change families and change lives. People who were creating many risks and costs for our community are now in recovery, working, spending time with their families, raising their children.

Evan works hard to get us these grants. The funds from these grants allow us to create or expand services. These services change lives. For those reasons and many more, Evan Mills is being awarded the 2014 Distinguished Services Award.

*"Change is the essence of life. Be willing to surrender what you are for what you could become." – Reinhold Niebuhr*

## ARCH DEVELOPMENT

You may have noticed some construction happening at 250 North Avenue recently. Well, these are exciting times as the Athens Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) development has finally broken ground! Advantage is one of the original founding member of the ARCH group which came about as a result of the Athens Navy Base Closure in 2006. Advantage was part of a group of local homeless service providers that put together a notice of intent to reuse the base property for the development of 24 units of transitional housing for families, a child day care center for homeless children and a "one stop shop" resource center which will house Advantage's Homeless Day Service Center, the AIDS Athens Clinic, Athens Nurses Clinic, and Athens Homeless Shelter's financial literacy and employment assistance programs. Construction is set for completion in August of this year, and we expect operations to begin shortly thereafter. We plan to give frequent updates as this development continues its course.

## ADVANTAGE IS AWARDED 3 YEAR CARF ACCREDITATION

Advantage Behavioral Health has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for a period of three years for its Assertive Community Treatment Team, Assessment and Referral Services, Case Management/Services Coordination, Community Housing, Community Integration, Crisis

Intervention, Vantage Point, Day Treatment, Detoxification, DUI School, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Outpatient Treatment for adults and youth, Residential Treatment (for adults and those with an addictive disease), Supported Living, Community Employment Services, and Board Governance. This latest accreditation is the third consecutive three-year accreditation that CARF has awarded to Advantage.

This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows substantial conformance to CARF standards. An organization receiving accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process and has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during a three day site visit that its programs and services are of the highest quality, measurable, and accountable.

The surveyors noted many strengths including: "Advantage is highly respected by funding and referral sources. Referrals are promptly attended to, staff members are professional and 'go beyond the call of duty', and referral organizations are continually included in the planning of services and progress of the client".



## **Come one, come all, for the ADVANTAGE BIGGEST LOSER CHALLENGE**

Be inspired to get healthy and win prizes by participating in the Advantage Biggest Loser Challenge 2015!!!!

The contest will run for 12 weeks from Monday January 12<sup>th</sup> till Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> 2015. Contest will be based on percentage of weight loss and not weight per pound.

Each department will need to elect team leader to be responsible for keeping track of registration information, turning in fees, and weigh-ins.

Note: Personal weigh in's and goals are to be handled with discretion.

Participants will need to weigh in every Monday with their team leader and a witness. The team leader will need to submit results by 5:00 pm to [cshort@advantagebhs.org](mailto:cshort@advantagebhs.org).

### **Prizes**

One Grand Prize will be awarded for highest percentage of weight lost over the 12 week period.

The individual within each group at the end of the contest who loses the highest percentage will win a prize.

A Subway Fresh Salad and Sandwich party will be provided for the group with the combined highest percentage of weight lost at the end of the contest.

A \$10 monthly prize will be awarded to the individual with highest percentage lost for the month.

*Monetary value of prizes depend on level of participation and number of sponsors*

Group meetings may be held to exercise or for motivation with supervisors' approval of course. When there are meetings here at 250 North Ave, an invite will be sent for everyone to join in if desired. Incentives in the form of the prizes and or money will be funded by registration fee, Human Resources Wellness funds provided by Friends of Advantage, (FOA), and other sponsors as identified.

Just think how big the pot could get if everyone participates, and **you** could win. If you don't need to lose weight come join in on the fun just to get healthy.

**Show everyone that you are worth it and so are they!!**

### **MAKE SURE YOU'RE GETTING ENOUGH WATER**

Water is the second most popular beverage in the U.S. after sodas. However, sugary soft drinks are a dangerous health hazard, upping the risk of obesity, stroke, and other heart problems. These dangers can be avoided if people choose to drink more water. The benefits of water are nearly endless, and include:

- Fluid balance.
- Calorie restriction.
- Clearer skin.
- Improved kidney function.
- Productivity boost.
- Fatigue buster.
- Smooth digestion.
- Fight illness.

### **Start Drinking More**

The amount of water people need per day is still debated, but studies suggest adults need nine to 16 cups of water. This number will vary depending on your age, how active your lifestyle is, and how much water you are consuming in other beverages, veggies and fruit.

Try to begin each day by drinking a glass of water as soon as you wake up, and 30 minutes before eating any big meal. Get in the habit of keeping a water bottle nearby. If you get bored of the taste, you can squeeze a bit of citrus into the bottle to keep things fresh.

## Health Benefits of Relaxation

### Relaxing protects your heart.

You've probably heard that stress can seriously up your risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks and other heart problems. There are studies to show that stress is comparable to other risk factors that we traditionally think of as major, like hypertension, poor diet and lack of exercise.

### Relaxing boosts your memory.

A number of studies have found that stress increases the amount of certain proteins in the brain that have been linked to Alzheimer's, possibly accelerating the development of the disease.

### Relaxing keeps you safe from depression

Studies have shown that chronic stress can kill brain cells, and even prevent the creation of new ones. Stress is also likely to exacerbate mood problems in people with a history of depression or bipolar disorder, and could trigger relapse.

### Relaxing helps you make better decisions.

Stress seems to actually change how we weigh risks and rewards, and can cloud our judgment when we are faced with important decisions. This may also help explain why alcoholics crave a drink more when they're under pressure. The compulsion to get that reward comes stronger and they're less able to resist it.

### Relaxing could slow breast cancer.

While research on the effects of stress on cancer growth is largely inconclusive, there is some evidence pointing toward a link between stress and breast cancer aggressiveness. Relaxing not only seems to delay the progression of the disease, but may also speed recovery.



# celebration time!

## ADVANTAGE February Birthdays!

<b>1st</b>	Linda Chambers Carol Dillard	<b>19th</b>	Minnie Blount Jennifer Burgess Debbie Clark Cynthia Pope Kizzy Reed
<b>2nd</b>	Shawn Barnett Abdul Niazi Lorraine Terrell	<b>20th</b>	Kristen Daniel Kelley Hamilton Timothy Meadows Mary Ovinio
<b>3rd</b>	Jocelyn Lang	<b>22nd</b>	Helen Kabat Rico Mack Dianne Parker
<b>7th</b>	Kathy Nowell	<b>25th</b>	Lucie Hussey
<b>9th</b>	Nicole Armistead Denise Stewart	<b>26th</b>	Cheryl Simpson
<b>10th</b>	Shantina Shealey Terri Weimorts	<b>28th</b>	Lisa Greene Latasha Harris
<b>12th</b>	Tara Jones	<b>30th</b>	Cora Berry
<b>16th</b>	Patricia Hatcher Denise Kistner		
<b>17th</b>	Illya Berry		
<b>18th</b>	Mary Ferguson		

Happy Anniversary

## ADVANTAGE Staff!

### February 1st

Anasthasia Dempsey - 16 years  
Lisa Greene - 10 years  
Keith Mines - 3 years  
Annette Redd - 13 years  
Terri Weimorts - 4 years

### February 3rd

Theresa Davis - 1 year

### February 10th

Donna Kane - 1 year

### February 16th

Paula Andrew - 15 years

Patricia Bowen - 20 years

Sandra Grimes - 16 years

Lori Tedder - 6 years

Elisa Zarate - 3 years

### February 17th

Shelia Smith - 12 years

Patricia Tomlin - 1 year

### February 18th

Patsy Standridge - 7 years

### February 25th

Linda Chambers - 30 years

# adDRESS a Need SALE

March 6 –22, 2015  
Georgia Square Mall

Monday – Friday 1-9 pm  
Saturday 10 am – 9 pm  
Sunday 12-6 pm

All proceeds to benefit Advantage Behavioral Health Systems  
Crisis Stabilization Unit

Opportunity to purchase new and gently used dresses, shoes, purses,  
and jewelry for proms, pageants, weddings and other formal events  
for children and adults from \$20-\$150 each!

We are in need of volunteers. If you would be willing to volunteer for the  
sale, please contact [tdalton@advantagebhs.org](mailto:tdalton@advantagebhs.org) or call 706-296-8086.



## **Brittany Faircloth, Audrey Robinson, and Lynna Vallier on being named Advantage CARES Customer Service GEMS!**

“**Brittany Faircloth** of the Jackson County Mental Health Clinic interned at Advantage and became an employee in June. “She is an integral part of the Jackson MH team. She is always upbeat, and always willing to fit a client into her schedule to meet their needs. Brittany is one of the top billers. Brittany runs Mental Health 101, helps with picking paint colors, planning parties, and takes notes at High Risk meetings. She is willing to do anything outside of her job description that will help the clinic and her colleagues.”

**Audrey Robinson** of the Jackson County Mental Health Clinic is the only full time Operations clerk. “Additionally she serves as the Safety Coordinator for the clinic. She has exhibited excellent customer service and professionalism during MTM roll out. Audrey Is always willing to help out whether it is decorating bulletin

boards, decorating for special occasions, or helping to plan a celebration for the office. She is always willing to work extra hours when needed. Audrey is willing to do anything outside of her job description for the betterment of the clinic. She has an excellent attitude.”

**Lynna Vallier** of the Walton Mental Health PSR1 team started in November. “Lynna has juggled her clients around so that she was freed up one day a week to go to Greene County and covered their PSR1 caseload while the hiring process for took place for that position. Taking on an additional workload with a positive outlook is exceptional customer service.”

Don’t forget to take the time to submit your nominations for those Advantage GEMS around you. If someone is Going the Extra Mile (above their assigned job duties) with customer service, please submit a G.E.M. Nomination Form for them to [tdalton@advantagebhs.org](mailto:tdalton@advantagebhs.org) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. The nomination forms are located on the Advantage website at [www.advantagebhs.org](http://www.advantagebhs.org).