



# Mental Health Matters

THE GUIDANCE CENTER

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## Serving with Heart, Hope, and Help:

Keith Rickard, MS, LCP, MBA

The Guidance Center is celebrating 70 years of service to our communities this year! We want to thank our many stakeholders and constituents who have made it possible for us to have the opportunity to bring hope and healing to individuals and families with mental health and substance abuse related problems.

Few service agencies or small businesses can boast of a 70 year history. It is something to be proud of, and we certainly are. The Center's history and its growth is detailed inside this issue.

In honor of our anniversary and in celebration of May as Mental Health Month, we are kicking off our annual fund drive campaign entitled, "Serving with Heart, Hope, and Help...for 70 Years." We have set a goal of \$21,000. This year's campaign donations will be used to match a grant from the Courtney Turner Foundation that will enable us to purchase a van to safely transport children and youth to and from treatment activities. Transportation can be a major barrier in getting treatment to children and families who desperately need them.

I'm pleased to share that Mrs. Virginia Berney offered the first gift to the annual campaign. During the Center's early development, Mrs. Berney was a University of Kansas sociology student doing volunteer work at the Atchison welfare office. In the 1970's, Mrs. Berney served on the Center's board and worked as a social worker in the Atchison community.

It was inspiring that she was still willing to financially support the vision and work that she helped to maintain those many years ago. As she recalled her participation in the late 30's and again in the early 70's she stated, "When the center was first organized, I remember thinking there were so many people who really needed it. That is still true today."



Mrs. Berney was joined in this photo by current Board President Dr. Chuck Van Petten. Chuck also led out in the campaign by making one of the first donations to the annual fund drive. Dr. Van Petten has served on the Board of Directors for four years and says, "I believe in the work of The Guidance Center and want to do my part to ensure that it is here when my friends and neighbors need our services."

I want to encourage our readers to consider a gift to this year's campaign. We are here for you and we need your help to make certain we are here for another 70 years! Thank you for your support.

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# Celebrating 70 Years in 2007

**M**ay is Mental Health Month and, as in years past, also serves as the kick-off of our Annual Fund Drive. This year is a particularly special one for us, as we celebrate **Serving with Heart, Hope and Help... for 70 Years.**

In 1937, school administrators, teachers, clergymen, and welfare workers met to discuss the need for psychiatric consultation for children experiencing challenges at home and in school. The local chapter of the American Red Cross responded to their plea by allocating \$55 per month of Red Cross funds for payment to a psychiatrist and appointed a committee to explore the possibility of securing services.

This meeting by a group of forward-thinking community members resulted in the creation of the Atchison Child Guidance Clinic. Now one of the oldest mental health providers in the State of Kansas, the center was the first in the state to be supported entirely by community funds.

Multiple agencies began organizing professionals and other volunteers to establish the clinic. Teachers and school administrators from private and public schools met with representatives of the clergy, welfare and health departments, and other citizens in order to screen requests for service and determine priority of referral.

The local school district provided space in the recently completed Central Grade School free of charge, physicians from the Atchison Medical Society provided complete free physical examinations for youth prior to appointments, and psychological services and testing was obtained through the school and staff psychologist of the Kansas Children's Receiving Home.

The Atchison County Welfare Department volunteered clerical staff, as well as a child welfare worker to prepare social background information on each child, and a Red Cross volunteer served as a receptionist at the monthly clinic. Various volunteers from the community provided transportation to the clinic, if needed.

Evening lectures were organized for the public in Central School's auditorium, attracting school personnel, clergy, and concerned citizens. The Atchison Child Guidance Clinic officially began providing services in 1938, under the direction of Dr. G. Leonard Harrington of Kansas City, Missouri. During the first three years of operation, 24 clinics were held and 43 individuals (one of whom was an adult) received services.

Over the years, the clinic grew steadily. In the 1940's, services were expanded to include adults and the name was changed to The Atchison County Guidance Clinic. As late as 1949, the Atchison County Guidance Clinic was one of only three Kansas communities to have a mental health clinic. In late 1963, Atchison joined forces with Leavenworth County and renamed the clinic the Northeast Kansas Guidance Clinic, governed by a 14-member board. By the early 1970's, Jefferson County was added and the Center became Northeast Kansas Mental Health and Guidance Center.

Over time, treatment for individuals with mental illness advanced as such illnesses were better-understood and psychotropic medications were more widely available. Many individuals once confined to institutions no longer needed such restrictive services. As a result, in 1984, community-based services for adults with more serious mental illness became available for the first time. By 1992, similar services for children and adolescents were offered. These services are now known as Community Support Services (for adults with severe and persistent mental illness) and Community Based Services (for youth with serious emotional disturbance.)

Today, known simply as The Guidance Center, the agency has grown from a progressive and "imaginative" monthly project staffed by volunteers to a three-county community-mental health center employing over 100 individuals and serving 3,500 clients annually.

Services provided by the Center change lives, enhance personal relationships, and improve our community. The Center is proud of its long history in northeast Kansas and looks forward to continuing our mission of promoting healthy communities.

**Receive an electronic version of "Mental Health Matters," sent directly to your email address! Send your request to [awerring@theguidance-ctr.org](mailto:awerring@theguidance-ctr.org).**

# 10 Tips for Improving Family Mental Health

By Mental Health America

**C**reating a mentally-healthy environment for you and your family is easy. Regardless of who or how many members make up your family, there are endless ways to achieve mental wellness while relieving stress and spending time with the people you love. Here's a quick list of ideas. Feel free to make your own—the key words are fun and easy!

- **Eat dinner together** - As so many families know, finding time to sit down for a family meal can be a challenge. But doing so once a week or even every other week is a prime opportunity to talk, listen and enjoy a good meal together.
- **Get some exercise** - We all know exercise can be hard work, but it can also be lots of fun for the family and help you feel great. So get together with loved ones to shoot some hoops, go swimming or play a favorite sport.
- **Go to the zoo or a museum** - Choose a free day and take a trip to the local zoo or museum to learn and explore. Afterwards, treat yourselves to lunch or a healthy snack.
- **Watch a movie** - Pick up a good family film, make some popcorn and stay inside for the night.
- **Get enough rest** - Mental and physical health go hand in hand and you can only be at the top of your game when you've gotten plenty of rest. Make sure you and your family members get a full seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- **Pack a healthy lunch** - Encourage healthy eating habits of your family by packing a healthy lunch. Substitute chips and a soda with healthier snacks like carrots, raisins and fresh juice or water.
- **Read a book together** - Reading a good book can be one of the simple pleasures of life and a great way to exercise your mind. Select something the whole family can enjoy and read a portion of it aloud each night.

- **Plan a picnic** - Choose a sunny day, pack a nice lunch and head to the park. Bring tennis rackets or a soccer ball and challenge your family members to a game of one-on-one.
- **Take a vacation** - Getting away from home and work for a couple days or more is always a treat. Plan a fun and affordable getaway where you and your family can rest, relax and escape your busy schedules.

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## How Can I Repay Them?

*Written as a tribute to community mental health centers by Debby Buchanan, former Atchison County board member who retired after 9 years of service to the Guidance Center*

There came a time when all the pain took my life away,  
When I didn't want to live, even one more day,  
When the loneliness and confusion, I just couldn't tame,  
When there were days I didn't know my address or my name,  
I didn't have a friend, my family didn't know,  
And I was too afraid to let my feelings show,  
For what was there in me worthy of anyone's care,  
What was there in my life worth the effort to repair?  
I didn't know what to do with all the guilt and shame,  
Until these warriors took me in and engulfed me with their flame,  
They shared with me their wisdom, taught me all I needed to know,  
I learned to trust, to feel their care, to let my feelings show,  
They treated me in a way I know came from their hearts,  
They helped me put together all the pieces that were apart,  
Now because of them I can stand before you today,  
I can tell you from my heart there's no way I can repay,  
For how do I repay them for all they've done for me,  
They are always there to guide me and to help me see?  
And how do I repay them they gave me all they had to give,  
So I might have a better life; one I would want to live?  
How do I repay them for showing me I'm not the enemy,  
They took me by the hand and set my wounded soul free?  
I stand here today because they are always there,  
I stand here today to prove to you just how much they care,  
When there was nothing left for me but more of the same,  
They cared for me; they changed my life;  
They made me proud of my name.

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Promoting healthy communities.

## THE GUIDANCE CENTER

500 Limit Street  
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Phone: (913) 682-5118  
Fax: (913) 682-4664

Anne Werring  
Corporate Compliance &  
Critical Projects Director

E-mail: [awerring@theguidance-ctr.org](mailto:awerring@theguidance-ctr.org)  
[www.theguidance-ctr.org](http://www.theguidance-ctr.org)

The Guidance Center, Inc., founded in 1937, provides mental health services to the citizens of Atchison, Jefferson, and Leavenworth Counties. Originating in Atchison as the Child Guidance Clinic, the center joined forces with Leavenworth County in 1964 and became a two-county agency. A clinic in Jefferson County was added in 1975.

Today the administrative activities, as well as community support and community based services, are based in Leavenworth. The Guidance Center has outpatient clinics in the cities of Atchison, Leavenworth, and Oskaloosa. Throughout the Center's 70 years of providing comprehensive mental health services in northeast Kansas, more than 30,000 individuals and families have been supported in their journeys toward a healthier and more satisfying life.

### OUR MISSION:

The Guidance Center promotes healthy communities by delivering comprehensive behavioral health services to individuals, families, and communities of Atchison, Jefferson, and Leavenworth Counties.