

Samaritan NEWS

VOLUME 4 • FALL 2011

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SAMARITAN COUNSELING SERVICES OF THE GULF COAST

UPCOMING EVENTS

Advent Dinner

Harvest United Methodist Church
November 30, 2011
Call Debbie Lewis at 941.907.7333
for information.

Advent Dinner

St. Armands Key Lutheran Church
December 1, 2011
Call Lynn Blackledge at 941.388.1234
for information.

Women Helping Women Luncheon

April 19, 2012

Sixth Annual Golf Tournament & Church Challenge

October 2012

STAFF

Rev. Rick Howell, Th.M

Executive Director, Pastoral Counselor
Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Margaret Boyd

Director of Development

Diane K. Brantley L.C.S.W.

Staff Counselor
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Dennise Lawry, Psy.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Melissa C. Miller, L.C.S.W.

Staff Counselor
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Dave Preston, L.C.S.W.

Staff Counselor
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

James Slocum, M.D.

Psychiatric Consultant

Maria Gallo

Administrative Assistant

ADDRESS

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Sarasota, FL 34239
Phone: 941.926.2959
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From the Desk of Rev. Rick Howell



For seven days celebrate the festival to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

Some time ago, while attending a Baptist seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, I had the fascinating experience of residing in a Jewish Synagogue. I was living there as a student and also was fortunate to have a job as janitor of the pre-school as well as security guard. To be able to observe first-hand their celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot, was a particularly memorable experience in my life. Their annual festival, also referred to by some Jewish sages as the Season of Our Joy, was marked by decorating the sanctuary with fruits and vegetables of all shapes, sizes and hues. This beautiful spiritual ritual occurring in October every year was the result of their response to the admonition in Deuteronomy 16:15 to hold a festival in honor of the LORD their God who will bless all their crops and undertakings.

In my current station, though no Feast of Tabernacles, we are grateful to God who has richly blessed Samaritan's "crops and undertakings." No, we do not have a garden from which we are picking fruits and vegetables. However, we certainly do experience a significant harvest. Throughout the year, generous and faithful people gather together and partner in the Samaritan Mission by sewing seeds of all kinds of gifts. We are taking responsibility and providing loyal support to our fundraising events such as Advent Dinners, Women Helping Women Luncheon, Annual Golf Tournament and Church Challenge. Through generous monetary donations, from individuals, congregations and corporations, seeds are being repeatedly planted with the hopeful expectation that they will come to fruition through the instilling of hope and transforming of lives of others. Samaritan sees the pleasure of a year-round harvest.

This is my opportunity to thank each one of you personally for "choosing to plant" in the Samaritan ministry. Let me celebrate with you how God is blessing our crops and undertakings. Melinda (not her real name) would tell you how God has blessed the counseling that you made possible enabling her to experience transformational healing. She no longer lives in fear and shame, and now lives victoriously. She has become all that God created her to be. When you gave you did not know who would be the specific beneficiary – but God did. I believe this is something worth celebrating. Don't you? ▀

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COUNSELING LOCATIONS

Christ Episcopal Church
4030 Manatee Avenue W.
Bradenton, FL 34205

Church of the Palms
3224 Bee Ridge Road
Sarasota, FL 34239

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
790 Tamiami Trail
Venice, FL 34285

First Baptist Church of Sarasota
1670 Main Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

Harvest United Methodist Church
Lakewood Ranch
14305 Covenant Way
Bradenton, FL 34202

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church
6101 Cortez Road West
Bradenton, FL 34210

"I volunteer for Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast because I believe that the service it provides to its clients is invaluable. Rick Howell and staff devote countless hours guiding individuals and families through some of their toughest challenges. They provide hope where there is despair, encouragement to the broken and faith to help people get up and try again. I am honored to assist this organization in any way I am needed."

– Lynne Truschel

Thank You Foundation for the Church of the Palms...

Samaritan Counseling Services recently received a \$9,000 grant from the Foundation for the Church of the Palms to purchase six laptops/tablets. It allows the clinicians the ability to immediately input their casework notes and information in real time. In addition, the clinicians will be able to complete their documentation electronically (as required by law as of 2012). In 2011, Samaritan counselors will provide more than 5,000 hours of faith-based counseling to low-income, under-insured and uninsured clients. ▶

Women Helping Women 9th Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction

SAVE THE DATE – APRIL 19, 2012

Plans are underway for our 9th Annual Luncheon and Silent Auction. Table and Corporate Sponsorships are available. For more information visit the Samaritan website at www.samaritangulfcoast.com or call Margaret Boyd at 941.926.2959 or Cherie Leetzow at 941.377.2757. ▶

Psychological Testing Assessments Offered For Children

"PAVING THE WAY FOR LEARNING AND SUCCESS IN SCHOOL"



Samaritan offers a variety of tests that can answer questions about a child's academic performance. For example: "Does my child qualify for a gifted program?" "Does my child have a learning disability?" "Does my child have ADHD?" "Is my child's academic performance the result of emotional issues?"

Every child has unique strengths and weaknesses. Psychoeducational testing can assess how your child learns best and identify new ways to help them succeed. At Samaritan, Psychologist Dr. Dennise Lawry can test for the following:

- Gifted and Talented
- Learning Disabilities
- ADD/ADHD
- Depression
- IQ (intelligence)
- Personality Traits
- Emotional/Behavioral Problems ▶



Thank You...

To our wonderful Samaritan Counseling office volunteers from Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Venice. ▶

From left to right: Rev. Rick Howell, Yvonne Pinkerton, Vonnie Heckler, Pastor Bob Schaefer, Dr. Dennise Lawry, Beverly Granger. Seated: Jean Sego, Charlotte Graas. Not pictured: Terry Butner, Rosalie Schockweiler, Judy Verney

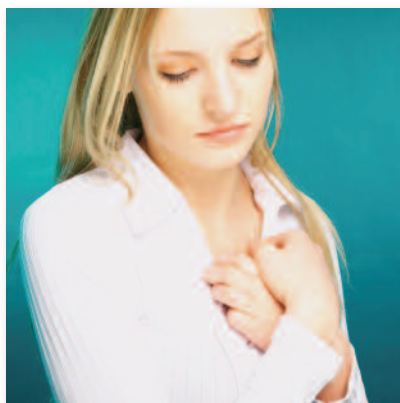
A Special Thank You...

Thank You to the Keith G. Hirst Charitable Trust for the \$25,000 gift which extends and partially funds our position of Development Director for one more year. With a focus on growth, his Trust also provides support for the expansion of Samaritan Counseling Services well into the future. He is a member of Church of the Palms.

Keith grew up with the influence of a strong parental work ethic from his early childhood in Decatur, a small town in southwestern Michigan. Starting as a 5th grader, he and his brothers dreamt a goal, planned and created a successful live bait business that attracted the area's many fishermen. Keith also manned two paper routes and lined up a long list of lawns to mow, which taught him valuable lessons in business management, responsibility and marketing. He earned a BA degree, majoring in advertising and journalism at Michigan State University and attained the rank of captain in the US Army Signal Corps. After working 20 years in various capacities in the newspaper industry, and also a lifelong investor, Keith now devotes his time and energy to assisting nonprofit organizations in the areas of human services, education and healthcare. ▸

Living in the Aftermath

Melissa Miller, LCSW



Often people asked me, "What is the most common reason for a person to seek counseling?" I would answer based on the issues in my caseload at the time – depression, anxiety, communication, marital issues, chronic illness, bereavement, trauma, financial stress...a changing constellation of reasons, all of which are important life challenges.

I began to see that almost everyone was coming to counseling for grief and loss issues. I realized the source of many types of depression, anxiety, marital strife, disappointment, bereavement, trauma, divorce, and so on – are ways in which we organ-

ize our experience of loss. We have lost a hope, dream, loved one, health, home, marriage, reputation, business...and need to discover how to live effectively in the aftermath of the loss. One of the first things we do is grieve; for many that means going through a period of mistakes, depression, anxiety, and adjustment. If it gets "too bad" we may also go through major stress and illness. We often need professional help walking through this sometimes dark valley.

Is this a bleak picture? I don't believe it is. Rather, I understand it be a reflection of the ultimate Good News – we make mistakes, suffer loss, grieve, adjust, and are resurrected into hope for a different outcome in the future. As a Christian pastoral counselor it's not my job to convince my clients of the hypothesis, "Grieve and all will be well;" but it is my job to hold that spot open for them, so if they begin to understand the losses they have suffered, to see the grief they may be masking with depression, anger, anxiety, fear...they can also understand the grace they have been given to heal, make room for the various losses, and live meaningful, effective lives "in the aftermath." ▸

"Working as a Psychologist at Samaritan is more than a career; it is a spiritual calling and a ministry. It is my joy and privilege to take part in God's plan to "heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." (Isaiah 61:1)"

– Dr. Dennise Lawry, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

SAMARITAN COUNSELING SERVICES OF THE GULF COAST WELCOMES

MELANIE DIVIRGILIO

New Board Member



A proud alumna of the University of Florida, Melanie graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Finance. During her time in college, Melanie served as the Women's Ministry Leader for Campus Crusade for Christ coordinating retreats, socials, and service events fostering community for over 700 members. Melanie also was a founding member of the 15th chapter of The Network of Enlightened Women, a conservative women's group focused on redirecting the feminist movement.

Upon graduation, Melanie moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina where she was accepted into a ten-month Leadership Development Program with Branch Banking and Trust (BB&T). As a middle-market relationship manager for BB&T, Melanie was recently placed in her hometown of Sarasota. She is actively involved in her church, The Bridge in Venice, and loves spending time with family and friends.

F. GALE WHITSON-SCHMIDT

New Board Member



F. Gale Whitson-Schmidt is the former Deputy General Secretary and Treasurer of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church where she was employed for 32 years prior to her retirement in 2005. Gale had oversight for the areas of Finance, Human Resources, Communications and Legal. These responsibilities included administration of the \$13 billion socially responsible investment portfolio, involvement in strategic planning and participation in the redesign of the corporate structure of the Board of Directors. Gale holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics from Towson State University and a Masters of Management in Finance from Northwestern University.

Gale and her husband, Don, live in Bradenton, Florida, where they own Katy Rose Olive Oils, a retail store specializing in extra virgin olive oils, balsamic vinegars and other Mediterranean products. She is a member of Harvest United Methodist Church. ▸

Fifth Annual Golf Tournament & Church Challenge

Golf photos courtesy of Margaret Boyd



Ladies Putting Contest Winner: Brigitte Becker



Longest Drive Winner: Jason Ricci



Johns Eastern Team: Charles Lowe, Rodger Davis, Laura Lowe, Paul Richau



Bob Smith, Sarasota Baptist



Best Barefooted Player: Rodney Taylor



Closest to the Pin Winner: Carol Lewis



Lining Up a Straight Shot



H. Michael Garcia



Adam Mrozek

SPECIAL THANKS...

TO OUR EXTRAORDINARY FIFTH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT & CHURCH CHALLENGE COMMITTEE!

- Donna Dudash, Chair
- Margaret Boyd
- Rick Howell
- Ken Johns
- Laura Lowe
- Garrett Moore
- Angela O'Donnell
- Lynne Truschel



Nicki Haun, Donna Dudash, Linda Mansperger, Presbyterian Church of the Covenant



PMSI- Nicole Magan, Donna Dudash



David Wachtel



Donna Dudash, Pastor Steve McConnell, Church of the Palms

Winners...

- Marshmallow Drive – Brian Lacina
- Putting Contest: Men's – Paul Richau / Women's – Brigitte Becker
- First Place Team Sarasota Baptist Team (Dave Nelson, Lee Wagler, Walker Kinne, Bob Smith)
- Second Place Team: Merrill Lynch Team (H. Michael Garcia, Rodney Taylor, Ken Freeman, Jim Beesting)
- Third Place Team: Johns Eastern Team (Brian Harlow, Jason Ricci, Stuart Bayer, Jimmy Milner)
- Longest Drive: Women's – Brigitte Becker / Men's – Jason Ricci

Fifth Annual Golf Tournament & Church Challenge



The Steve Cassell Family – Platinum Sponsor



Pastor Bill Hild, First Baptist Church Sarasota

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*Shining the Healing
Light of God's Love
Into Our Community*

Fifth Annual Golf Tournament & Church Challenge



First Place Team – Sarasota Baptist: Donna Dudash, Dave Nelson, Walker Kinne, Lee Wagler



Second Place Team – Merrill Lynch: H. Michael Garcia, Donna Dudash, Ken Freeman, Rodney Taylor



Third Place Team – Johns Eastern Company: Brian Harlow, Donna Dudash, Jimmy Milner, Jason Ricci



Most Fun Team: Donna Dudash, Dick Petrucci, Will Taylor, Craig Hazelton, Joe Coley