



MENTAL OUTLOOK

A Publication of Mississippi State Hospital Spring 2011 Volume 20 Number 1

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WRAP COMES TO MSH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mississippi State Hospital got its first introduction to WRAP last year, but the past several weeks have seen the program spread even further as Community Services introduces it to clients in Jackson.

Yazoo resident Beverly Pettigrew braved the weather on an icy February morning to come to Jackson to introduce 10 Community Services clients to WRAP – the Wellness Recovery Action Plan. Developed by a group of people who have lived with mental illnesses themselves, WRAP has been used across the country as a toolset to help people recognize people and things in their lives that aid them in their recovery from mental illnesses.

Over time, the MSH clients who have been introduced to WRAP will be able to introduce it to others and facilitate their own groups.

“Once you get in recovery and stay in recovery, doors just open up for you,” Pettigrew said. “With the right encouragement, everyone can recover to a certain degree and have a successful, independent life.”

Pettigrew was there to share that message with the Community Services clients she introduced to WRAP and its concepts – things like developing a Wellness Toolbox, identifying personal triggers and warning signs, crisis planning, and beyond.

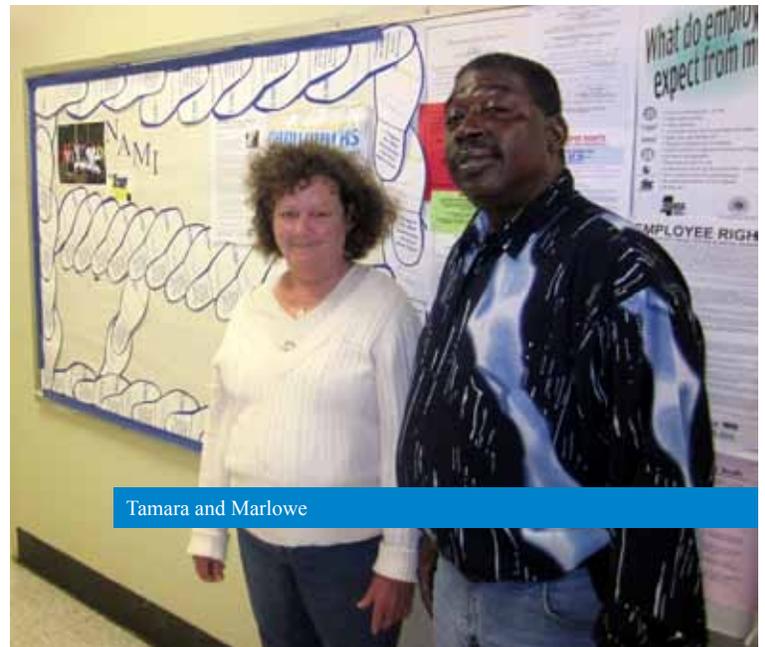
“Certain steps have been basically talking about me, personally,” said Marlowe, one Community Services client who took the WRAP training. “You have to realize a change you need to make, and really make that up in your mind. That can change your lifestyle and your outlook on life.”

Marlowe said he had heard about WRAP because he knew some Community Services employees had been learning about it, but he volunteered to take the WRAP training course because of the potential he saw in it.

“It will help with peer-to-peer specialists, and if that comes across my path, I’ll have awareness of WRAP and will be able to communicate that. These are very good, positive ideas,” he said.

One of the hallmarks of WRAP is that it was developed by people who have faced mental health challenges in their own lives. That’s part of what makes it appealing to so many people.

“It’s something to pursue, and there’s a lot of interest in it,” said Tamara, another client who met with Pettigrew. “I saw the way she’s handled it, and you can tell she’s been involved in some of the things



Tamara and Marlowe

we have.”

That’s true. Pettigrew’s mental health issues began after family members got into drugs. As she put it, dealing with the trauma and chaos of those problems set her off into a deep depression. Looking back on her life, she said she can see how anxiety and depression had affected her before then, but “the drug years, that’s when it really hit me.”

She has come a long way since then, but it wasn’t too long ago that she met Community Services Director Dr. Cynthia Johnson, who asked her if she would be willing to come facilitate a WRAP class.

Marlowe, Tamara, and the others will now be able to introduce WRAP to other clients they know.

“We have some people out in the community who haven’t quite made up their mind to accept recovery,” Marlowe said. “I will be teaching them on all the ideas of recovery and wellness. They go hand in hand.”

All three said they like WRAP for similar reasons; the plans are developed by the clients, for the clients. They take into account anything and everything that one person thinks is applicable to their own situation.

“Even small things, like the routine of getting up in the morning and brushing your teeth,” Pettigrew said. “Because when you get to the

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OUTLOOK

MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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MISSION

Mississippi State Hospital facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines.

VISION

We will be a customer-driven organization.

CORE VALUES

Respect - Teamwork - Trust
Communication - Commitment

MEMBER OF

Mississippi Department of Mental Health
American Hospital Association
Mississippi Hospital Association
Southern States Psychiatric Hospital Association

ACCREDITED BY
The Joint Commission

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Good day, and welcome to the spring issue of Mental Outlook. Spring brings two big events to Mississippi State Hospital, the Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event and MSH Day. For those who don't know, the Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. We have an incredible group of volunteers in Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, and they've been working hard to make sure we have a successful tournament. BankPlus, the title sponsor for the tournament, has been with us all 10 years. Our other corporate sponsors, Valley and Mississippi Hospital Association, have also contributed to the tournament for a number of years. I'd like to take this moment to thank our sponsors and volunteers for their hard work in continuing Farmer Jim's legacy of community service, and to invite everyone to join us on April 15. You're also welcome to join us on Friday, May 6 for the 29th Annual MSH Day. Both of these days are more than just fun events or fundraisers. They help us to reach out and better educate our communities about mental illnesses and those who live with them.

Another thing you'll read about in this issue of Mental Outlook is the Wellness Recovery Action Plan. We introduced it at the hospital last year, and we now have Community Service clients who are finding success through it. You can also read about some touching stories of recovery and success that were shared at February's Annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast by a pair of individuals served through the Department of Mental Health.

I hope you find their stories as inspiring as the rest of us have. Thank you for reading, and please remember to join us for the Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event and MSH Day.

Sincerely,

James Chastain

Friends of MSH, Inc.
would like to say

Thank You

to our

**CORPORATE
SPONSORS.**

The complex block contains three logos. On the left is the BankPlus logo in green. In the center is the Mississippi Hospital Association logo, which is a circular emblem with a building silhouette and the text 'MISSISSIPPI HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION'. On the right is the Valley logo, featuring a sun icon and the text 'Valley' in a script font, with the tagline 'Bringing Fresh Ideas to the Table' below it.

point where you don't want to get up and do that, it could be a sign you're backsliding."

The wellness toolboxes are those things that help a person stay focused on their recovery. For one person it could be meditation; for another it may be listening to music. The important thing is that the clients contribute so much to their WRAPs.

"I know me better than anyone else. That's one of the statements I always make," Pettigrew said.

Just like the MSH clients were able to hear Pettigrew's story, they'll be able to share their own stories and encourage others on the road to recovery. Marlowe said he can look back at his life and see how some things went wrong for him. He's eager to help others avoid some of the mistakes he made and to learn some of the lessons he's already learned.

That personal touch is another one of the great strengths of WRAP, Pettigrew believes.

"When you can share your story, and show others where you came from, it can inspire hope," she said. "I've had people come up to me after hearing my story and tell me that was the first time they'd ever felt hope for themselves.

"You'd be surprised how far someone can go if given the chance."

MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL NAMES 2010 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR



Pictured are (l to r) Amy Whitten, Mississippi State Hospital 2010 Employees of the Year Essie Frazier, Clara Burrell and Wonda McKie, MSH Director James G. Chastain and Friends of MSH President Bill Bobbs.

Mississippi State Hospital recognized all of its 2010 employees of the month in February, but three of them walked away with top honors after being named the 2010 employees of the year.

One employee from each of the hospital's service areas was named Employee of the Year. Clara Burrell of Pearl was named the Direct Care Services Employee of the Year, Essie Frazier of Jackson received the Support Services Employee of the Year and Wonda McKie of Jackson is the Licensed Clinical Services Employee of the Year for 2010.

"This is a very special group of people, and they have distinguished themselves in many different ways," MSH Director James G. Chastain said at the reception on Friday, Feb. 11. "They are optimistic, they are problem solvers and they are folks who go out of their way to be helpful to the people around them. They know their jobs, they do their jobs well, and they're the people we like to see coming in our direction."

Amy Whitten, of The Whitten Group, was the keynote speaker for the event. An attorney, law professor and management consultant, Whitten had some choice remarks for all of the honorees as well.

"What you have done for all of us with your work over the past year is create a living picture on the canvas of this hospital of what really great public service looks like," she said.

"I want to thank you for being so good at the work that you do. Congratulations."

The MSH Employee of the Year program is sponsored by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about mental illness and the needs of the mentally ill.

MS. MARY CROSSMAN IS THE MSH EMPLOYEE OF THE CENTURY



Pictured are (l to r) Kelly Breland, Director of Support Services at Mississippi State Hospital; Dr. Duncan Stone, Chief of Medical Staff at Mississippi State Hospital; Diana Mikula, Director of the Bureau of Mental Health at the Department of Mental Health; James G. Chastain, Director of Mississippi State Hospital; Mary Crossman, Director of Health Information at Mississippi State Hospital; Sen. Dean Kirby; and Dr. Lydia Weisser, Director of Clinical Services at Mississippi State Hospital and Department of Mental Health Clinical Director. Crossman was recognized by the Legislature on Thursday, Jan. 27 for serving 60 years at Mississippi State Hospital.

Three MSH employees may have been named as Employees of the Year in February, but there was one other major award that was given to an employee.

Mary Crossman, Director of Health Information, was honored for her incredible 60 years of service to Mississippi State Hospital. MSH Director James G. Chastain gave her the first – and probably the only – Employee of the Century award.

“When Ms. Crossman came to work here, she began as a typing clerk straight out of college,” Chastain said. “I believe Dr. Jaquith went upstairs one day about six months after she started working here and asked her if she would be director of medical records.

“She’s been doing that ever since.”

Ms. Crossman was recognized in the Mississippi Senate in late January for being the longest-serving state employee, and she was surprised at the Employee of the Year reception on Feb. 11 with a letter from Governor Haley Barbour that commended her for her dedication and service to the state.

“The Senate came to their feet and gave her a standing ovation that must have gone on for five minutes. It went on and on, and then Lt. Governor Phil Bryant gave some remarks of appreciation, and we’re just so happy and so proud to see her honored,” Chastain said.

He noted that at the monthly department directors meeting, it is his pleasure to present to employees pins commemorating their years of

service. While it’s significant to present a 20 or 30-year pin to someone, on this occasion he got to present one for 60 years of service.

He also presented a charm bracelet on behalf of Friends of Mississippi State Hospital. One charm made note of her 60 years here at MSH and the other made note of the actual date itself she began working: January 9, 1951.

While others had plenty to say about her, Ms. Crossman kept her remarks brief and to the point.

“Thank you so very much,” she said. “I’m just so happy and so pleased to have been able to serve here.”



Chastain presents a commemorative charm bracelet to Ms. Crossman.

MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL INTRODUCES THE BAYLOR PLAN



Pictured are Baylor Plan employees (bottom row, l to r) Jamie Evans, Kelvin Langston, Keshion Williams, (top row, l to r) Paula Butler, Quentin Armon, and Terry Hemphill. Recently put in place on campus, the plan hires weekend-only staff on a contract basis, allowing them to work a flexible schedule and ensuring staffing levels stay appropriate on weekends.

A new program at Mississippi State Hospital is bringing new opportunities for new employees and for the hospital itself.

Late this winter, a group of 24 employees was hired under the Baylor Plan. Named for the university where it was first implemented, the Baylor Plan offers new employees a weekend schedule that works around school, other jobs, and any other conflicts in their lives while the hospital's staffing levels remain consistent on weekends.

It's attractive for students who are working and finishing their degrees at the same time because of the flexibility and it allows those with other jobs to supplement their income, but it will hopefully have other impacts on the hospital as well.

"Some of the long-term benefits that will be coming from this program are better community relationships and a reduction in mental health stigma," Inpatient Services Director Paula Kleeb said. "We'll have students and other business people who will be spending time on the campus, working and learning about the issues those living with mental illnesses face, and they will hopefully take that back and share it in their homes, schools, or other jobs."

But the plan also represents a solution to a problem – weekend staffing. While some people are enthusiastic about working overtime on weekends, it is still a challenge to cover absences caused by call-ins. That's where the Baylor Plan comes in.

Baylor Plan employees are contract employees who receive a fixed hourly pay, but do not receive the fringe benefits package that hospital employees receive such as retirement, health insurance, and leave benefits. They are hired on a contractual basis to work weekends only. That doesn't mean MSH employees won't be called upon to work overtime

during the week or on weekends, but the Baylor Plan helps ensure weekend staffing levels are where they need to be.

So far, it's worked out not just good, but great. After advertising the positions, Kleeb said they hoped for about 50 applications. They got 330. Of those, 84 applicants were interviewed, and 26 hired immediately. Another 14 were hired soon after.

The first challenge, though, was going through the mandatory orientation period. What's normally a two-week period had to be done in two weekends, and then there is additional training done on Friday evenings when they report to work. The 12-hour shifts worked by the Baylor Plan employees begin at 7 p.m. Friday night and end at 7 a.m. Monday morning.

"We've gotten a lot of people who have patient care experience, and we also have some people who have worked here before and have the desire to come back part-time," said IPS Staffing Analyst Denorris Skinner. "Once we started getting the applications in, I looked at it and I knew that it would work really well."

Skinner said the new hires are a variety of people who work in the school system, as salesmen, retail employees, and others who have worked in nursing homes. Some are looking for a flexible schedule that can help their income, and others are students working and finishing their degree. So far, everything has been going well for both the hospital and the new hires. Some of the Baylor Plan employees said they've found out that they enjoy coming to the hospital on the weekends more than they do their regular jobs, some have said it's a good supplement to their income, and for others this is a step on a whole new career path.

Jamie Evans of Brandon saw the ad announcing the program last year and knew right away it was something he would be interested in. He couldn't work full-time because of his nursing school schedule, but he doesn't have that problem anymore.

"So far, it's fitting perfectly," he said. "I've loved it. One of the things I like about it is that we never know which building we're going to be on, and we get to do a little bit of everything."

Terry Hemphill of Jackson is a former MSH employee who's kept in touch with staff. When it was mentioned to him, he knew it was an opportunity he wanted to take advantage of, and it worked around his schedule at his other job as a firefighter.

"The schedule is really great and very convenient for me," he said. "I enjoyed working out here, and I had a good camaraderie with my coworkers. I like being involved in patient care, and my final goal is nursing, and I'd like to do that in a psychiatric setting."

The MSH administration that has helped get the Baylor Plan up and running is glad to see it going so well in its first few weeks.

"It has not been just an IPS effort," Kleeb said. "Staff Education has worked to help get orientation set up, Human Resources has done a lot of work, and Business Services has worked on contracts with us, so it's taken a lot to get this endeavor off the ground."

THANKS AND RECOVERY

THE 23RD ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE APPRECIATION BREAKFAST



Mississippi State Hospital employees made their appreciation known to legislators during the 23rd Annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast on February 9, but they weren't the only ones.

Volunteers and mental health advocates also attended to thank legislators for supporting mental health, but special guest speakers Lori Dickerson and Stephanie Butler both brought a personal touch by telling stories of their own personal experiences in Mississippi's public mental health system.

"We believe that their stories can help all of us understand just how crucial the services that we provide are when a person finds themselves in need, whether that's a personal need or the need of one of our children," MSH Director James G. Chastain said.

Dickerson, a Tupelo resident, spoke of the dark days in her life when she was diagnosed as clinically depressed – but also of the help and support she received from DMH and her road to recovery.

She had several inpatient stays at different behavioral health centers before the diagnosis came through. Her worst day, she said, was after her insurance had been exhausted and she was placed in handcuffs, listened as her husband testified before a judge and was committed to a state hospital. She hurled her wedding band at him as he tried to hug her before being led away.

"It felt as if my world had just crumbled beneath my feet," Dickerson said.

While receiving treatment, pride was a stumbling block for her, she said. She didn't think she was anything at all like the other patients – least of all the one who looked like Grizzly Adams, with an unkempt beard, bushy hair and a gruff voice.

"One day, in a patient education class, he asked why they couldn't seem to find the right combination of drugs to treat his symptoms," she said. "And I saw a tear quietly trickle down his cheek. He was ill, he was in pain, and he was asking the same question and wondering the same thoughts as me."

She said she knew then she was exactly where she should be to get the treatment she knew she needed.



Stephanie Butler and Lori Dickerson

"I thank God, literally, that public mental health services such as Region 3, North Mississippi State Hospital and the crisis center were there to help me," she said. "These medical professionals have been caring, concerned, knowledgeable and skilled, and their team effort has allowed me to take back my life from the grip of the fear of clinical depression and overwhelming anxiety."

"The mere fact that I have been able to return to the career I love so much, and successfully function in a very demanding and challenging role as a medical/surgical nurse, working at the bedside, attests to the caliber of treatment given from our local, state-funded mental health programs."

Stephanie Butler, a Jackson resident, wasn't in need of DMH services for herself. Her daughter, born with a severe developmental disability, was. While doctors once told Butler her daughter would never live to see the age of three, she has spent much of her 18 years receiving care from Hudspeth Regional Center in Rankin County.

"Thanks to the outstanding services that we were able to receive, she was able to enlist in the early intervention program, and she is part of the residential program at Hudspeth," Butler said. "She's received the best medical, physical and occupational therapy around."

She said her family was welcomed with open arms as Hudspeth found a place for her daughter, and the service had been nothing less than outstanding. They not only helped Gabby, but their intervention allowed Butler to continue working, so she would be able to provide even more for her daughter.

She asked legislators to continue to support mental health, so that others can find their needs met in the same way she has.

"The services are so rare, but yet so very needed," Butler said. "I'm

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here as a living testimony as to what can happen for one person in this state by using the services of the Department of Mental Health.”

Chastain also spoke, noting that the Legislature’s support of mental health has made great strides over the past decade, with the addition of facilities and services that have lowered waiting times to a fraction of what they were previously.

“We have the Mississippi Legislature to thank for that,” he said. “It’s your vision and it’s your investment in that vision that made that happen. This morning, we just want to make sure you know we recognize that and we appreciate that very much.

“Of course, your continued support is going to be vital to us as we continue to make improvements in the state of Mississippi.”



FARMER JIM NEAL GOLF EVENT CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Friends of Mississippi State Hospital is celebrating the arrival of spring with a milestone – the 10th Annual Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event.

The fundraising event will be celebrating its tenth anniversary on Friday, April 15 at Whisper Lake Country Club in Madison when golfers tee off in support of Friends of MSH, a non-profit group dedicated to educating the public about mental illness, the work of the hospital and enhancing the quality of life for MSH patients and residents.

“BankPlus is proud and excited to sponsor the Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event again this year. This is just another way of giving back to our community and those in it who are working to serve others,” said Joel

C. Ross, president of the Rankin County division of BankPlus, the title sponsor for the Farmer Jim Neal tournament.

“We’re pleased to be a part of this milestone as the Farmer Jim Neal Golf Event celebrates 10 years of helping Mississippi State Hospital care for those in need.”

The charity event is named in honor of popular Jackson personality Farmer Jim Neal. Neal was a popular radio personality in Jackson for decades who dedicated his life to community service, volunteerism and charity.

MAY BRINGS MSH DAY AND MORE TO MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

The warm spring weather is bringing some fun, food, games and other opportunities along with it to Mississippi State Hospital.

The hospital is celebrating its 29th Annual MSH Day on Friday, May 6, offering patients and residents a chance to take in the spring weather, get some grilled food, cold desserts and then enjoy the crafts and entertainment. More than that, it's also chance to take part in National Mental Health Month and let the public visit the campus and learn more about the hospital and mental health issues across the state and the country.

"This is a fun day for everyone, but more importantly, it can introduce people to a lot they don't know about mental health," MSH Public Relations Director Kathy Denton said. "People who live with mental illnesses can lead happy, productive lives. It's important not only for their friends and family to know that, but to show they care and encourage their loved ones as they work to recover from their illness.

"If we work together, we can help people change the way they think about mental illness and those who live with it."

MSH Day is in its 29th year, but organizers are planning to introduce a few new activities for this year. It will still be a community festival atmosphere, but patients and residents will get to have some fun with arcade games, photo booths and putt-putt this year.

Favorites like arts and crafts booths, face painting, a hole-in-one contest and a \$1,000 raffle return. The lip sync contest employees perform for patients has been a hit in recent years, and is being expanded to a full-blown talent show.

MSH Day only kicks off the celebration of National Mental Health Month, which began more than 50 years ago as a tool to educate the American public about the importance of mental health and the reality of mental illness. May is filled with activities and recognitions for health care professionals.

May 1-7 is Children's Mental Health Week, which is of special importance to Mississippi State Hospital, whose Oak Circle Center is a child and adolescent unit that serves children from as young as four to 17-year-olds.

May 6-12 is National Nurses Week, which seeks to raise awareness of the vital role nurses play in health care. May 8-14 is National Hospital Week, the nation's largest healthcare event and a recognition of the history and professionals that have helped make hospitals the trusted institutions they are today.

That same week is also National Nursing Home Week, which always begins on Mother's Day. Jaquith Nursing Home, located on the MSH campus, has events planned throughout National Nursing Home Week.

For more information, about MSH Day, or to reserve booth space for the event, contact MSH Public Relations at (601) 351-8018.





JNH

Jaquith Nursing Home

HAPPENINGS

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December Family Council
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JAQUITH NURSING HOME RESIDENT CELEBRATES A CENTURY



Edward Gray was recognized along with his family in February's Legislative Appreciation Breakfast. Pictured are (seated, l to r) Carl Gray, Edward Gray, (standing, l to r) Jewell Hawthorne, Edwina Brown, Ervin Gray, Rev. Ronnie Brown, Judith Brown, and Larry Brown.

Six generations of family members gathered on Sunday, Jan. 16 to celebrate a milestone that not many people are able to reach.

That milestone was the 100th birthday of Edward Dickens Gray, who reached the century mark on Jan. 17. Friends and family came from all over the state and country to celebrate the occasion, marked by a party that included two different choirs, a little bit of preaching and a lot of memories of the centenarian, a Jefferson Davis County native who now lives at Jaquith Nursing Home.

“For me, it’s been a special journey in this life to think of such a man that God has blessed us with, that we can share 100 years of his life on this earth with him here,” said his grandson, Kevin McGee. “And we can say ‘I love you,’ with him here today.”

His friends and family showed their love by standing to their feet and singing “Happy Birthday” as he made his entrance, followed by a round of applause from the 100-plus crowd.

Mississippi State Hospital Chaplain Jimmy Davis spoke from Psalms, reading, “Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures.”



Great-nephew Kenny Warner brings a round of laughter out of everyone as he gives his uncle \$100 - a dollar for every year.

“So I pause now and say God must have given you strength, sir,” he said.

Two groups formed choirs, with one choir composed of staff from Jaquith Nursing Home’s Madison Inn. They brought tears to eyes with their renditions of classic gospel hymns they sang because they knew how much the guest of honor enjoyed them.

Gray was also presented with a proclamation from the mayor of continues on page 10

Mt. Olive, recognizing him not simply for his age, but for his history of service and community involvement in the area. He had friends and family from not just Mt. Olive there, but nearly half the room stood when anyone from Prentiss, Mt. Olive, Mendenhall and Magee were asked to rise.

Of course, family members had their turn at the podium, standing beside the guest of honor to share their memories of “Uncle E.D.” Their stories brought a lot of laughter to the audience, but also some tears to eyes as they told how Gray had inspired them throughout their lives.

McGee brought laughter to the room when he told a story about how, as a child, Gray taught him the value of hard work on a day his grandfather and the rest of their family were getting ready to go out into the fields to pick crops for their food.

“I decided that maybe I would sleep in,” McGee said. “E.D. Gray, being his calm and usual self, tried to get everybody to hurry up so they could go out in the field so we could get those peas, but I was saying I wasn’t working that day.

He remembers his grandfather saying “Oh, you’re not?” before calmly turning to the rest of the family to announce that he wouldn’t be eating that day either.

“You mean I won’t be getting any of that fried okra, that chicken or cornbread?” McGee remembers thinking. “I think I better go to work.”

Gray’s great-nephew Kenny Warner told of how he had once promised another uncle \$100 if he lived to see his 100th birthday. He ended up paying the money to that uncle, and now said he found himself in a similar situation with Uncle. E.D.

“Uncle E.D., I never dreamed I’d have to pay you,” he said. “But since I’m here, guess what I’ve got in my pocket? One hundred dollars,” he said to a room filled with laughter and clapping.

“I love you Uncle E.D., and I’m going to be back here when you make 110 with some more money.”



This framed certificate was on display at the birthday party, commemorating the fact that E.D. Gray is a veteran.

His great-great-niece Denise Jackson, who has had several firsts in her career as a police officer, was recently featured in a newspaper article that talked about her tradition of making history. Looking at the headline, she said, all she could think of was her Uncle E.D.

She summed up everyone’s feelings with her closing comments.

“We take a lot of things for granted. We take a lot of little things for granted, but the most important thing is the love of family,” she said.

“Uncle E.D., I love you. This is your day, and there are many more to come.”

JAQUITH VOLUNTEERS CONTINUE THEIR LEGACY OF SERVICE

It’s been emphasized before, but the volunteers who come to Jaquith Nursing Home throughout the year make a huge difference in the lives of those residents who call Jaquith home.

Perhaps even more importantly, though, is the fact that many groups take care to involve their children and grandchildren in their visits, instilling a legacy of service and volunteering into the minds of the younger generations.

“We try to use that as a teaching tool for our young children,” said Bernice Jefferson, with Fairview Missionary Baptist Church. “We want to let them know that just because we’re healthy now, we don’t know from one day to the next where we will be. We try and teach them to enjoy themselves as they grow up, but to also make the best and give God their time.”

Jefferson’s church group was last here in December, when many volunteer groups visit the campus to throw parties for patients.

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During that visit, parents, grandparents, and grandchildren all gathered on Adams Inn, Building 31, for a large party.

“We bring them every time we come,” she said. “Parents bring their children or grandchildren, and every time they bring them, we enjoy it and let them be a part of what’s going on.”

Some of the younger volunteers who have been out several times have started getting familiar with some of the residents. They even noticed when one particular resident, known for his singing, didn’t make it to the Christmas party in December.

“They’re noticing things like that, and they’re getting a lot out of it,” Jefferson said. “I think they’re looking forward to it. It means a lot to them and I have heard some more of them saying they want to do it next time.”

Cynthia Barker is a member of Bethel Baptist Church in Rankin County. While her group, Women’s Own Mission, has been coming for around seven years, they just recently brought a younger group to Monroe Inn, Building 40, with them. The Girls in Action group from her church joined them for a Valentine’s party they had last month.

“We had some GA’s with their parents, and they loved it too,” Barker said.

Her group usually visits Monroe Inn, and that’s where they went in December and February. Barker said that in her experience, February was the first time children or youth had been out to volunteer with them in several years.

With a group of younger girls, she expected them to be a little bit shy since they were visiting people they hadn’t had a chance to meet before, but she was surprised. One girl even went upstairs with just a JNH staff member to pass out valentines, which surprised her a little bit, she said.

“I was really blessed by that, because they’re all in sixth grade or below, and we didn’t know how they would react, but they loved it,” Barker said.

They had some food, handed out valentines, and shared some cookies during that visit. The girls also had fun painting fingernails of some of the women there, who enjoyed the opportunity to have their nails painted while not having to do the work themselves.



Fairview Missionary Baptist Church



Bethel Baptist Church

“It’s just nice to know they enjoy what we’re doing,” Barker said. “I’m sure we’ll do it again,” she said.

Jefferson and her group from Fairview Missionary Baptist Church are already planning their next trip. They’ll come during the summer to bring refreshments like cantaloupe, watermelons, cookies, crackers, and punch.

She and her husband, Robert, have been volunteering at Mississippi State Hospital and Jaquith Nursing Home for 31 years without fail. It was they who convinced other members of their church to begin coming, and they’ve been doing it without fail since.

“We enjoy it, and we want to do our Christian duty to help others,” Robert said.

JAQUITH NAMED ONE OF TOP NURSING HOMES



Jaquith Nursing Home has been named one of the best nursing homes in the state by the federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The good news was reported by US News Health Rankings. JNH placed fourth overall in the state. The ratings were decided by health inspections, nurse staffing, and medical care. Many thanks go out to our JNH staff who helped make this possible.

"This is an honor for our staff, and they're to be commended for this recognition," JNH Director Marc Lewis said. "Our staff does an incredible job year-round, and this is a reflection of that."

Pictured are members of Jaquith Nursing Home's leadership team.

DECEMBER FAMILY COUNCIL FOCUSES ON CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Friends and family members who attended the December Jaquith Family Council meeting were able to get a first-hand glance at just what a busy season the holidays are for JNH residents and staff.

While Social Services Supervisor Rena Rideout told everyone about the many activities JNH residents had been up to over the previous months, Mississippi State Hospital Public Relations Director Kathy Denton shared some details about the Christmas House and volunteer programs that take place during November and December.

"In September we had our senior citizens banquet, in October we went to the state fair in Jackson, we had a fall festival, and a pumpkin decorating contest for Halloween, in November we celebrated Thanksgiving, and to kick off Christmas, we had our Christmas parade on Dec. 3," Rideout said.

"We also have a lot of Christmas parties scheduled, Santa Day, the Singing Christmas Tree, and a New Year's celebration at the end of the month."

Since then, residents have also had a Valentine's Day banquet, got to see the Dixie National Wagon Train as it rolled through the campus, and are getting ready to enjoy a celebration in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

But at the last Family Council, the focus was on Christmas, as the holiday season was in full swing. Denton told everyone about how busy the Christmas season is at JNH – there were 20 Christmas parties on campus that day alone – and invited them to tour the Christmas House, where volunteers drop off donations and where staff members prepare gift bags for all JNH residents.

"We'll have boxes of makeup, boxes of table games, boxes of personal care items, wallets, transistor radios, and a little bit of everything you can think of," Denton said.

From there, JNH recreation staff comes over to pick out things they know their residents need and will enjoy. They're passed out on the buildings, along with candy and fruit bags that everyone gets.

"And we try to make sure that every patient and resident gets to enjoy at least one Christmas party during the season," Denton said.

JNH ended up having more than 50 parties during the 2010 Christmas season, with more than 600 volunteers participating and giving their time. In addition to the volunteers and other community leaders who visit, family members and friends are encouraged to visit as often as they can.

"We invite you to come out and participate in your loved ones' lives any time you would like to," Rideout said. "This is their home, and we want you to be able to share it with them."