

South Carolina Department of Mental Health

2016 Louise R. Hassenplug Award

Friday, May 13, 2016 1:00 PM

Luehrs Meeting Hall

610 Faison Drive Columbia, South Carolina

The Louise R. Hassenplug award recognizes annually an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the treatment of people with mental illness. The award was established in honor of Louise R. Hassenplug, who served on the Commission from 1987 to 1994.

The 2016 Hassenplug Award winner is Ms. Joyce L. Kirk.



Commission Chair Alison Evans and State Director John H. Magill present Ms. Joyce Kirk with a check and the 2016 Louise R. Hassenplug Award.

2016 Louise R. Hassenplug Award Nominees



Joyce Kirk
Catawba Mental Health Center

Ms. Joyce Kirk began working with Catawba Mental Health Center in September 1988. As an all-star staff member at the Clover Commons Housing program, Joyce consistently provides superior assistance to individuals who are not able to live independently. Due to budget constraints the Center had to reduce its 24/7 staff at this facility down to one employee, Joyce. Undaunted, she demonstrated unfailing optimism and was instrumental in the seamless implementation for new changes. Confident, that with some support, the clients she serves can live in their own one bedroom apartments at Clover Commons.

Within the past year Joyce willingly took on the challenge of becoming Catawba's first Engagement Specialist but with two conditions; 1) that she be allowed to maintain client contact and 2) she be allowed to continue transporting clients to their appointments. Forging ahead with a win-win arrangement, our appointment no-show rate is decreasing. This is a testament to Joyce's dedicated performance and effective communication with Catawba's clients. Joyce's recommendation to Catawba's leadership to develop specialized services for our 18 to 25 year old clients will greatly enhance our efforts in assisting this group's transition from CAF to adult services and confront the onset of serious mental illness.

Joyce's dedication to our clients knows no limitation. A selfless and loving professional who goes the extra mile as she demonstrated when she became aware that a Clover Commons client was experiencing his first birthday without his parents. Joyce voluntarily stayed after work, baked him a cake and single-handedly pulled off a birthday party to help him celebrate his birthday and this significant milestone. This generous act would have gone unnoted had the Center Director not witnessed it. It is with great pride that we submit Joyce Kirk as the 2016 Hassenplug Award Nominee.



Algie Bryant, RN, MSN
Centralized Services – Division of Inpatient Services

At any time, a nurse plays ‘the’ critical role in the 24/7 care of a patient, but in today’s world the role of a nurse has become even more important in the long term development of patient care service delivery and health care policy. Within the Division of Inpatient Services there is one particular nurse who has played a prominent role in the Division of Inpatient Services’ efforts to build quality health care policy for current and future challenges with specific initiatives toward quality nursing services. This individual is Ms. Algie Bryant, R.N., M.N.; currently a member of the Division of Inpatient Services Executive Leadership Team and currently serving as the Director of Standards, Regulations, and Risk Management for the division. With a career exceeding 40 years, Ms. Bryant has served the SC Department of Mental Health and its Inpatient Services Division in the roles of nurse, manager, chief, and director. Throughout her career, Ms. Bryant has remained committed to building the role of the nurse to meet the challenges of modern health care; extending her leadership to ensuring that all clinical and administrative staff are prepared and committed to the patient, to quality services, and to progressive health care policy. A true patient advocate, she has challenged many across DMH and beyond to reach beyond barriers which may have seemed impossible for the most vulnerable populations across our system. During a 6-year interim as the Chief Nursing Officer for Inpatient Services (a role Ms. Bryant willingly assumed while continuing her role as Director of Performance Improvement), she provided leadership, growth and opportunities for inpatient nurses; encouraging nurses to prepare themselves for an environment which is ever changing, increasingly regulated, performance improvement driven and always patient-centered . She was responsible for developing a significant recruitment and retention plan for nursing; to include a plan for long term care facilities which has served to strengthen the nursing leadership infrastructure. She developed Nurse Extern and Therapeutic Intern Programs which continue to prove successful. Ms. Bryant’s expertise in performance improvement, standards, and policy, has enabled her to countlessly assess and implement corrective action plans, policies, and practice required for successful accreditation and licensing throughout the multiple facilities and nursing homes within the inpatient system. In these efforts, she has trained facility leadership in the development of service delivery supported by continuous improvement and quality goals. Her consistent message is “we can do what we have to do” while realistically communicating that a positive outcome requires a tremendous amount of work to ensure that patients receive quality care.



Mari Bolden
Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center

One can always rely on Mari Bolden to present herself with the highest of professional standards and ethics. She is meticulous about her documentation and timely. At the last review period Mari exceeded her productivity expectation seven out of twelve months and she does an excellent job with Collaborative Documentation (CD). She provided 24 hours above productivity expectations from July 2015-January 2016. In addition, during the first seven months of this fiscal year, she substantially exceeded the CD benchmark with 97% of her clinical service notes written on the same day of service. Mari, for the most part, provides individual therapy services to her students yet she is acutely aware of the importance of family therapy. During the last review period, thirty-three percent (33%) of the services she provided were to the families of her clients. Her Plans of Care are signed by her clients' parents in a timely fashion and she gets Star Recommendations for the excellence of her Progress Summaries. She makes sure that her clients are scheduled for Psychiatric Medical Assessments (PMAs) and she sits in with her clients, their families and the psychiatrist for every PMA. Her clients consistently show progress in working toward accomplishing their Plan of Care objectives and their outcomes improve over time.

Mari goes above and beyond in her position for students, parents, school administrators and teachers, as well as supporting her colleagues in almost every interaction she has with them. Her input and feedback are often solicited by school personnel. She has been asked to be a part of school staffing for students that are other than her assigned clients and she has agreed to participate. She has joined the school PTA and attends meetings and school officials have requested that she become a member of the Employee Wellness Committee – of which she is the only non-school-staff member. She has made presentations about mental health services at open houses, church community meetings, as well as, sorority and fraternity meetings, many of which have inspired people to come for services and resulted in intakes at the CDCMHC.

Mari's peers, co-workers and supervisors hold her in high esteem. She has received several commendations from the Quality Improvement Department, the psychiatrist that works with her clients, and the director of our Education and Training Program. She has been presented with Certificates of Excellence from this supervisor for timely completion of tasks assigned and for her efforts in securing CDCMHC's relationship with her school and enhancing our agency's reputation. She helps to mediate challenging relationships between some of her clients' parents and the school administrators and she expresses that she experiences a profound sense of commitment and fulfillment in her role as a school based therapist. Mari's demeanor is warm, always approachable and her style is one of professional kindness. She has all the qualifications of an OUTSTANDING CLINICIAN.



Theresa Bishop, M.D.
Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital

Dr. Bishop spearheaded the conversion of our two intermediate care lodges to private room settings to improve the therapeutic environment. Patient behaviors have improved due to less crowded conditions and more active treatment space availability. She has also recently undertaken the revision of the treatment plan process for all our patients. The treatment plan process will reflect behavioral terminology related to the goals and objectives identified for each patient. Dr. Bishop takes annual trips (her summer vacation) to the Indian nation reservation in Montana at Fort Belknot and has done so for the last several years. She cares deeply for her patients and provides outstanding medical leadership for Harris Hospital.



Teresa Ratcliff
Morris Village, Division of Inpatient Services

Ms. Teresa Ratcliff is the Resource Nurse at Morris Village Alcohol and Drug Addictions Treatment Center. Teresa is that special employee who goes the extra mile by doing direct service life-skill groups for our most needy patients. Her groups are more geared to those patients with co-occurring disorders which include severe and persistent mental illnesses. As our Resource Nurse, these direct service activities are not in her primary job description.

Our patients like and connect with Ms. Ratcliff for her knowledge and her unconditional positive regard as she makes them feel that they are important to her and that each is an individual that deserves individual care. Patient input information presented in our patient input forums demonstrates that patients recognize her for her selfless attention and for the helpfulness of her interactions. Ms. Ratcliff is highly respected by her peers and by those of all staff disciplines at Morris Village. She is very deserving of this award.



Steven “Shane” Parnell
Beckman Mental Health

Mr. Shane Parnell always exceeds all expectations when it comes to client care. He prefers to work with children and families and is our local expert in work with young children, families and caregivers. He completed the licensure process for LPC Licensure this year. He is a team player stepping up daily to get the work done without hesitation. He works well with all of his coworkers, staffing cases as needed. He handles crisis with skill and expertise.

Mr. Parnell is rostered in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) and has begun the Level I trainer program. He has developed and completed several presentations both locally and at state level, demonstrating PCIT skill levels and therapist intervention, as well as providing education on goals and benefits of PCIT. Mr. Parnell is a PCIT enthusiast. He has worked closely with Laurens Mental Health clinicians to support their PCIT start-up and is currently providing support to clinicians in Abbeville County as they begin the start-up process for PCIT.

Professionally he continues his education, currently working on his PHD. He recently completed a Supervision Course for licensed supervisor status.

Mr. Parnell’s enthusiasm and sense of humor, coupled with his good work ethic, have others wanting to work with him and happy to call him a friend and co-worker. He serves as a positive role model for others. Mr. Parnell’s dedication and compassion are immeasurable. His contributions have made a positive impact on the lives of the children, adolescents and families he serves, as well as coworkers. We are fortunate to have Mr. Parnell as part of Beckman’s team, and it is without reservation that I nominate Mr. Parnell for the Louise R. Hassenplug Award.



Kelly Nance

Sexually Violent Predator Treatment Program, Division of Inpatient Services

Ms. Nance is an extremely hardworking and dedicated employee. She joined the SVPTP in December of 2014 and has truly hit the ground running. She is organized, timely, thorough, and maintains professionalism in all her work duties. Her peers and colleagues have recognized the quality of her work and samples of her work have been used as a model for newer employees. Ms. Nance is clinically savvy and exemplifies her skills on a daily basis. She takes an individualized approach to all her residents, creating target focused treatment plans, data rich summaries of their progress, and pointed objectives geared toward enhancing their self-efficacy, skill deficits, and ability to regain and maintain control over their behaviors. She is frequently found in consultation with others as she seeks to use the interdisciplinary team to further assist her residents' treatment progress and actively involves the residents in treatment goal development. Ms. Nance has also been successful in working with some of our more challenging residents by creating intervention plans, coordinating their care with interdisciplinary staff, and keeping structured therapy sessions aimed at reduction of problematic behaviors. Additionally, she is often asked to help mentor newer employees. Ms. Nance is active in all aspects of the program, willingly volunteers for additional duties, and is quick to offer assistance in aspects of the program under new development. She consistently seeks to enhance her skills and abilities by taking advantage of on and offsite trainings, reading available resource materials, and working on projects to increase her knowledge of a specific topic area. Ms. Nance takes pride in her work and shows care and compassion when working with this difficult population. She is an exemplary employee and one we are delighted to have on our staff.



Lori Pittman
C.M. Tucker Jr., Division of Inpatient Services

Lori Pittman is the Infection Control Nurse for C.M. Tucker, Jr. Nursing Care Center. She is very involved in infection prevention and control through education of staff in both Stone and Roddey. Ms. Pittman is always available to staff for education on any topic remotely related to infection control. Ms. Pittman protects the confidentiality of the staff and as a result is able to obtain information that otherwise might not be shared. Ms. Pittman puts the welfare of the residents first and the safety and welfare of the staff second.

Ms. Pittman goes well beyond what is expected of an infection control practitioner and is the first to become involved in a situation no one else will tackle. She is well respected by both her peers and the medical staff and is relied upon by Tucker leadership for her guidance in tough areas of infection control when there is no clear cut answer and experience and clinical judgment guide the way. Ms. Pittman possesses the qualities that make her a most qualified practitioner for this Hassenplug Award.



Alfare Fields
Coastal Empire Mental Health Center

Alfare Fields has been employed by SCDMH for 44 years. She started in 1972 as a Clerk. She continued to educate herself and advance in her job duties and was promoted to an Administrative Assistant.

In 1975, Ms. Fields completed her Bachelor's Degree and was promoted to Clinical Counselor in 1977. Then next year, she was again promoted to Therapeutic Assistant and continued to display exemplary service.

By the year 1988, Ms. Fields had completed her Master's Degree in Social Work and became an MHC I. Through hard work and diligence, she was promoted to MHC II. Ms. Fields became an MHC III in 1992 and advanced to Chief MHC in 1994.

Ms. Fields continues to have the same love for her clientele as well as her dedication to service that she had 44 years ago. She is, to this day, the first person to come to work and the last one to leave. She is hands down, an outstanding employee.



Megan M. Howard, M.D.
G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital,
William S. Hall Child and Adolescent Services

Dr. Megan Howard has been with SCDMH since September 2, 2008. Since April 2015, she has served as the Medical Director of William S. Hall Child and Adolescent Services. Dr. Howard is very committed to her work and her patients. She is a leader by example to everyone in the facility whether or not she directly supervises them. She truly listens to her employees and gives constructive criticism and positive feedback in a way that spurs her employees on to greatness. She is open to constructive feedback from her employees, and she is constantly looking for ways to improve the quality of patient care and to create a positive work environment; one that encourages teamwork as we all strive towards our common goal of improved patient care.

In addition to her administrative duties, Dr. Howard works diligently to identify and develop aspects of patient care that will improve the treatment patients receive. She works tirelessly to ensure that the patients are receiving the best of care and goes above and beyond the call of duty. During the recent flood, Dr. Howard was at the hospital working with the staff and making sure that all of the patients and staff were safe with their needs being met. As another example, Hall Institute recently received a referral for a child who was confined to a wheelchair. Hall Institute was not able to meet the child's medical needs. However, Dr. Howard was determined to make sure this child received the help he needed. She worked diligently with other DMH disciplines in finding a location that was able to provide him with the medical care he needed.

On top of her duties as William S. Hall Child and Adolescent Services' Medical Director, Dr. Howard also assists with adult patient care at Bryan Psychiatric Hospital's Lodge B. Dr. Howard works with medical students and residents, assists them in developing and enlarging their skill sets, and encourages them to strive to provide optimal patient care.

Dr. Howard's passion to help others is magnified by her caring heart, which shows every day in how she cares for Hall's patients and staff. The Hall Institute staff realizes that Dr. Howard has brought great positivity to our medical staff and to the other disciplines throughout Williams S. Hall Child and Adolescent Services. For these reasons, we believe that Dr. Megan Howard should be awarded the Hassenplug Award.



Kristan Hinson
Lexington County Community Mental Health Center

This time last year, Kristan Hinson was a gifted clinician in the Batesburg Office of Lexington County Community Mental Health, managing a very challenging and diverse caseload. She was known for her beautiful Plans of Care, and for her ability to weave the “Golden Thread” through her treatment with her clients. She was completing her licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor, and was also providing several trainings of Evidenced Based Practices to clinicians. She may have thought she was busy!

Then, this year came! In the past year, Kristan was faced with several huge challenges. She was promoted to Clinic Director for our Batesburg site, and has taken steps to ensure the clinic provides safe, holistic, recovery-oriented and person-centered care. After the clinic moved to a new location, which was a monumental task as you might imagine, she hired two wonderful therapists and now directs a highly successful team that consistently surpasses all the Department of Mental Health’s benchmarks. Kristan’s staff are empowered and supported, leading to high morale at the Batesburg Clinic.

Exceptional client care is Kristan’s top priority. She ensures her therapists utilize Evidenced Based Practices in their treatment with clients. Under her leadership, group therapy is now being offered at the clinic for issues such as building life skills, and improving coping and communication skills. Kristan recognizes that to move forward in therapy, clients’ basic needs must also be met. She and the clinic psychiatrist have started a Care Closet at the clinic that makes clothing and personal hygiene boxes available to clients as needed. Kristan has worked to enhance partnerships with other agencies in the Batesburg Community and never misses an opportunity to increase the public’s awareness of mental health issues, even participating in weekend events. She is currently working to enhance relationships and provide training for both Lexington County Fire Service and local law enforcement. It is important to Kristan to increase their understanding of mental illness as they work with our clients in the community.

Training others is another one of Kristan’s gifts that we all benefit from. She is one of our Center trainers for the DLA 20, and has ensured all the LCCMHC therapists were all credentialed to use this measure. She has also trained LCCMHC therapists in Motivational Interviewing, and has trained both LCCMHC and Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center in Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

Because of her many accomplishments, Kristan received the Outstanding Clinician Award at LCCMHC in 2015 and is very deserving of the Hassenplug Award of Outstanding DMH Clinician.



JoAnn Reaves
Pee Dee Mental Health

Jo Ann Reaves, LPC, LPC/S demonstrates the enthusiasm and dedication of Louise R. Hassenplug every day as an Adult Services lead clinician at the Florence Office of Pee Dee Mental Health. Ms. Reaves works tirelessly to serve clients by providing evidenced-based clinical services including Cognitive-Based Therapy for Depression and Dual-Diagnosis groups. She participates actively in treatment team meetings, sharing her thoughts and raising questions that less experienced clinicians find helpful. For example, a new clinician recently admired Ms. Reaves ability to politely “push back” when the physician suggested a diagnosis that she questioned. Jo Ann role models effective and caring clinical skills for less experienced clinicians. Additionally, she is eager to learn new skills such as the Daily Living Activities Scale (DLA-20) and immediately incorporates them into her case management. In addition to clinical services, Ms. Reaves excels at customer service. She ensures that clients have access to prescribed medications by advocating for samples and following up with the status of pre-authorizations for prescriptions. She volunteers to assist clients with getting their medications and makes home visits to check on their welfare. Often, Jo Ann can be seen leaving the office with a client who needs assistance. She makes time for these duties while managing a large caseload and exceeding productivity expectations. “It has to be done” is Jo Ann’s response when asked why she willingly takes on these burdens in addition to her assigned work. Clients need transportation for other medical appointments and to access other needs, such as government-issued cell phones and housing.

Ms. Reaves is a loyal and friendly employee who greets everyone and makes new clinicians feel at home by introducing herself and offering to help them. Two newly hired staff members have noted her outstanding warmth and professional seriousness. During her 32 years of employment at PDMH, Ms. Reaves has performed a variety of duties including serving as Interim Director of the Florence Adult Services office and she has been a Designated Examiner since 1988. Ms. Reaves’ enthusiasm for clients, co-workers, and counseling are evident in her on-going professional development. She became a Licensed Professional Counselor in 1994 and Counselor Supervisor in 1998. Jo Ann really listens to “what is being said and what is not being said.”

Jo Ann seeks out supervision from co-workers. She welcomes the nursing students and other interns and shares her knowledge. She has worked with dozens of interns over the years who have gone on to become professional counselors. Currently, Jo Ann works with one student each semester in addition to full-time counseling. She attends training regularly to improve her skills.

Ms. Reaves exemplifies the best traits of a professional counselor; she is caring, responsible, and dedicated. Although these are characteristics we all should demonstrate, we often fall short. Jo Ann, however, can be counted on to approach everyone and every assignment with respect and dedication.