

## **2014 Best Practices Partners Award**

### **Nominated Program**

**Gibson House/Gaudenzia**

**907 Gibson Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA 17113**

### **Chief Officers**

**Mark Sarneso, Chief Regional Officer**

**Paula Ruane, Chief Regional Officer**

### **Program Narrative**

In 2009, Dauphin County took a hard look at Mental Health (MH) services. It was clear that a small number of consumers were using a large portion of services and monies. These individuals had significant mental illness, substance abuse problems, and became involved in the criminal justice system, typically displaying a high recidivism rate. In order to address the needs of these people, the Mental Health Diversion Program and Mental Health Court were established in Dauphin County. The decision was made to partner with Guadenzia, an addiction treatment and recovery services organization, which was willing to provide services to this population. There is a collaborative effort of Dauphin County Mental Health organizations, Dauphin County Drug & Alcohol, Program Manager of the Diversion Program and the Prison to ensure this population receives much needed treatment.

On February 1, 2010, Gibson House, a residential facility for persons with serious mental illness, was opened. It has a maximum capacity of sixteen residents. At present, there are twelve men and four women who reside at the center. Most of the residents are transferred to the facility directly from Dauphin County Prison. Each week, Prison treatment staff meets with the Program Director and representatives from Keystone, Case Management Unit (CMU), Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol, and the Public Defenders Office to discuss Prison staff referrals. Gibson House stakeholders further review referrals approved at this meeting prior to accepting them into the program following the inmate's release.

Gibson House utilizes a therapeutic community modality to teach residents personal accountability and social responsibility. The program is highly structured, consisting of several 'phases' that allow individuals increasing freedom and greater integration into the community. Residents are encouraged to become involved in support groups, to seek employment, to perform volunteer work, and to further their education. Counselors work with residents to help them to better understand their mental illness, substance abuse issues, and other concerns they may have.

Gibson House provides comprehensive case management services, which include referrals based upon individual needs and assessments. Gibson House Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) employs a multi-interdisciplinary approach to treatment, partnering with local mental health and substance abuse providers for outpatient services. In addition, Gibson House staff provides clinical services utilizing the following current best practice modalities: Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment (IDDT) and Illness Management Recovery (IMR), and several

psychoeducational programs. Once individuals complete the program, staff provides follow-up case management services for a minimum of six months.

Gibson House is unique as a mental health program. They accept individuals that other local community mental health residential facilities have refused. Ninety-two forensic clients have been admitted to the program since it opened. Gibson House has a remarkable 42% completion rate with this challenging population.

Gibson House is a model for the effective partnership between the criminal justice system and the mental health system. It provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, who for various reasons, are denied access to traditional community residential programs. Gibson House has improved Dauphin County corrections by:

- Decreasing the length of time spent in jail for persons with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders;
- Providing highly structured residential housing which facilitates the transition and reintegration to the community;
- Delivering on-site mental health services including psychiatry, therapy, and case management services in the community; and
- Reducing recidivism rates among the high-risk forensic population.

In conclusion, we would like to thank you for your consideration of the Gibson House for the 2014 CCAP Partners Award. This program has been instrumental in providing much needed services to a forensic client population.

Respectfully Submitted by  
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