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Straight from the Heart



HEALTH SERVICES

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Amazing Love Health Services

Provides Testimony

Before the Honorable

Vincent Gray

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GEORGES'S CORNER

By Georges W. Ntemi

President/CEO



This month my message centers around the contributions of Social Workers and Nurses.

May 6 – 12 has been set aside to recognize nurses. It gives me great pleasure to show special recognition to the nurses of Amazing Love Health Services (ALHS). The nurses at ALHS are compassionate, caring, devoted and dedicated to the consumers we serve. ALHS' nurses are among the 93% percent of women who are nurses. Florence Nightingale was known as the mother of modern nursing, and she set high standards for the nursing profession.

The nurses at ALHS exceed the standard set by Ms. Nightingale and perform their duties above and beyond what is required of them. At ALHS we proudly salute our nurses and appreciate how diligently they perform their duties.

In March, we celebrated and recognized Social Workers Month, as Amazing Love Health Services joined the Nation in turning the spotlight on this dedicated group of individuals. Social Workers have an extraordinary commitment and compassion for the work they perform and we recognize and appreciate the Social Workers at ALHS who unselfishly extend a hand to assist others.

Each day, ALHS recognizes and appreciates the work of its Nurses and Social Workers. We lift them up and want them to know that they are special. We are pleased to join the Nation in saluting our dedicated, compassionate and committed nurses and social workers. Congratulations to ALHS' Nurses and Social Workers.

At ALHS we proudly salute our nurses and appreciate how diligently they perform their duties.

The District of Columbia City Council Oversight Committee on Health



On February 17th and 23rd, Amazing Love Health Services was afforded the opportunity to provide testimony before the Honorable Chairman Vincent Gray to bring attention and raise concern related to the current five year moratorium placed on the CORE service application process here in the District of Columbia. Amazing Love Health Services's Program Director Michael Martin provided in-depth information regarding the state of mental health in the District of Columbia and the consumers that ALHS has treated in the two years of existence. Increasing ALHS's consumer base from 321 consumers in its first year in operation to 630 in year two of their existence.

Michael Martin expressed ALHS's goal of treating all consumers with respect, dignity and love while focusing on their personal centered best. Mr. Martin focused on the mission of removing the stigma associated with mental illness suggesting that mental fitness is the

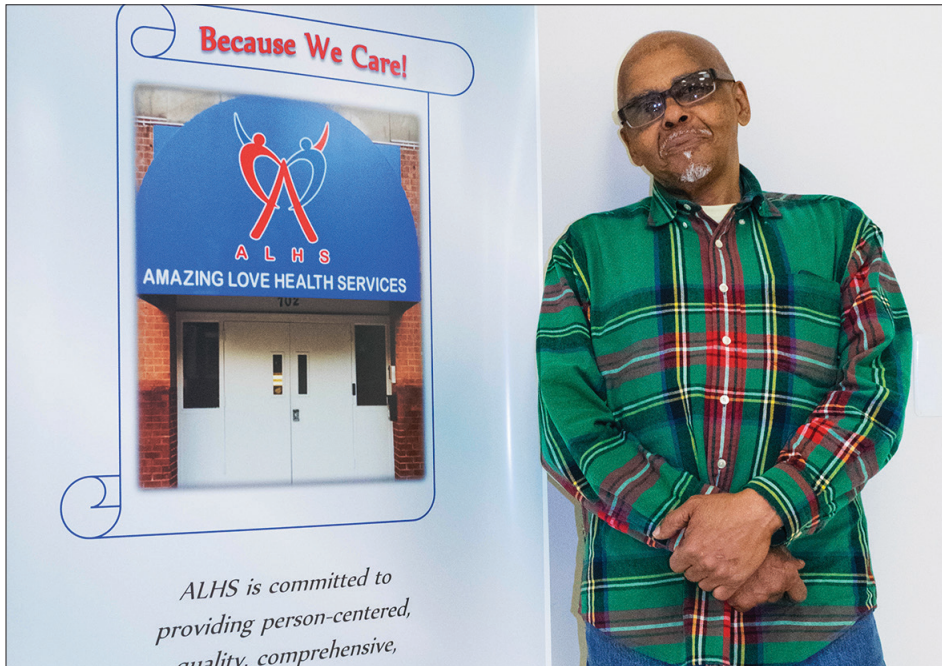
structure of a sound body.

The Testimony also reinforced the need for the Department of Behavioral Services to open the doors of the application process as the statistics from ALHS have shown a 100% increase in their consumer base in its second year of services to residents of the District of Columbia. Chairman Vincent Gray concluded that he too needed to obtain an understanding of the reason for the moratorium and instructed Mr. Martin to have a face to face with DBH Director Dr. Tanya Royster and to report the outcome of that meeting directly to him.

Immediately following that testimony a meeting was scheduled with Dr. Tanya Royster to discuss the CORE Service application process availability in the District of Columbia. ALHS considers this a winning opportunity for District of Columbia residents. ■

By ALHS Newsletter Team

The Inspiring Success Story of Michael Anthony Young



all anxieties and fear to live life like a normal human being. "I have come to terms with my spirituality again because of Amazing Love Health Services," says Mr. Young.

The acceptance of life as it is for Mr. Young to know things he has no power to change and the wisdom to know things he has the power to change has brought calmness and peace of mind to him. To that end, he says, "I have now settled down to organize my life to do things I have to do in an orderly and happy manner. I have learned to accept God's will in my life and to be at peace with myself."

The acceptance of God's will in his life is part of Mr. Young's spiritual discovery, thanks to the program he is enrolled in at ALHS. Prior to his coming to ALHS, Mr. Young was entrenched in an emotional warfare that drained him of the essence of his being. "Before ALHS, I was locked up in a spiritual prison that confiscated my trust and hope, so I became hopeless and couldn't do the things I wanted to do," he says.

He continues, "Between my spiritual life and treatment, now I go out in public and do things that give me purpose in life. But I am still reaching out to God to find out His purpose for me in my life."

Mr. Young's advice to others who seek solace and comfort from drugs is simple: "Don't do it because in the long run, you will become suicidal. If you need help, and you don't know where to go through the system, Amazing Love Health Services is the right place for you. They call you to remind you of your appointments and group sessions. If you miss any appointment, they let you know you missed and reschedule another one for you. It's just the good, old-fashioned way of doing things. It's very effective," said Mr. Young. ■

The power of the soul is so profound that there is no limit to the potentials of human beings. The human experience is littered with many trials, travails, and tragedies, but reality only strikes home when a tragedy involves a love one or a close friend.

As a skilled musician, Mr. Michael Anthony Young has a rich vein of experience playing African percussion. His music has culminated in his involvement with many people and groups, some of whom hurt his feelings with what they said and did. But, no action or inaction on anyone's part disturbed Mr. Young to the point of being traumatized until he lost his wife a couple of years ago.

When Mr. Young lost his wife, the grieving process was difficult for him because he was married to her for 30 years. As a result, he reached a point where he couldn't take it anymore, so he tried drugs to see if he could get some relief and comfort, but that also didn't help him. In the end, he was referred to Dr. Chapman who put him

in his drug rehabilitation program.

While going through the rehabilitation process with Dr. Chapman, he quickly saw that Mr. Young had reached a nadir point in his life where he had become suicidal, so he referred Mr. Young to Amazing Love Health Services; that was almost two years ago, and he has been receiving services since.

"The acceptance you get here at Amazing Love Services is wonderful. They give you good service. The staff

"Between my spiritual life and treatment, now I go out in public and do things that give me purpose in life. But I am still reaching out to God to find out what his purpose for me is in my life."

here don't make you feel like you are in an institution. They have helped to pull me back together. The treatment they give you here helps take away from you

Ray Hamlet Goes from a Walking Time Bomb in Rage to Sanity and Peace of Mind

Before Mr. Ray Hamlet came to Amazing Love Health Services for treatment, he was a man in rage. He was a man engrossed in bitterness because he felt that society was being unfair to him by remaining aloof to his predicament despite what in his view, he saw as a genuine appeal for assistance.

The perceived aloofness and seeming callousness on the part of the system resulted in Mr. Hamlet getting enraged frequently, at the least provocation. The name Hamlet is synonymous with tragedy, and Ray has his fair share of it. In 1999, he was working in construction when he fell off a scaffold, resulting in his getting seriously injured. A year later, his mom died and in 2001, his son was murdered.

This series of tragic mishaps left a bitter taste in Ray's mouth, and he walked around a peeved, bitter, and an angry man. "When my mom and son died, I was stressed a lot. I also had rage in me, and I became depressed. My injury also led to my having occasional seizures and concussions. The combination of the misfortunes led to my experiencing trauma," notes Mr. Hamlet.

Despite all his problems, Mr. Hamlet battled through them. Four years after his son's demise, he decided to go and work in a youth group home called Alternate Solutions for Youth (ASY) to enable him to use his son's death as a useful lesson in teaching other youths to abstain from certain bad habits.

Mr. Hamlet was at ASY from 2005-10. ASY relieved him of his services because in 2010, tragedy struck again. A young boy fell through a window under his watch although, as he put it, the fault was not totally his. "One day, I went to work and did two-eight-hour shifts. After my second shift, I was asked to stay on and help, so I did. But,



probably I was too tired, so I might have blacked out because of my history of concussions. A young boy fell through the window, and I was fired because of that."

After being fired from ASY, it became very difficult for Ray to get another job because employers found it hard to accept him. Stress, trauma, and rage are a lethal mix, so when Ray's disability claims were denied by Social Security Administration, not once, not twice but six times, he naturally became a walking time bomb in rage and fury.

At that juncture, a young lady he met told him about Amazing Love Health Services and asked him to give it a try. Ray is glad he took the young woman's advice. "If it had not been for this program here, I would either be dead or locked up for killing somebody. I have been here for nine months, but I must admit the first three months were tough," said Mr. Hamlet.

He continues: "Since I started

seeing the doctors and the staff here, my whole attitude has changed. I have been able to conquer my rage with the help of the medications. The more I come, the better I get. Initially, I felt defeated and saw only the dark side of me. But after that, I am pleased everything is now falling into place for me."

Mr. Hamlet further noted that one's inability to get things done should not be a barrier to seeking help. "If you have a mental health problem, find a good program like Amazing Love Health Services, where you can get somebody to talk to. At ALHS, they get down deep into your condition, and that's what is needed because sometimes, people don't understand the complexity of mental health," says Mr. Ray Hamlet. ■

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Amazing Love Health Services participated in Council member Allen's, Ward Six and Elissa Silverman's, At-Large, Councilmember Career Fair for the third consecutive time. The Career Fair was held at the Arena Stage, in SW Washington. The Career Fair focused on strategies to directly connect ALHS' consumers with employers with positions in a broad range of employment opportunities. Large numbers of applicants have been hired immediately. It was a great opportunity for ALHS to assist in helping its consumers obtain employment. More than 200 employers participated. The event is sponsored twice a year.

The next Career Fair will be held in **September 2017**. If you are interested in participating, please contact **Gwendolyn Hemphill, Public Relations – 202-388-8500**.

Pamella Davis, yet another Brilliant Addition to Clinicians at ALHS

Ms. Pamella Davis is a social worker and clinician, who has garnered over 30 years of experience in her field.

When asked what she likes best about her new job, Ms. Davis noted, "I like the peaceful atmosphere here at Amazing Love Health Services. The camaraderie is wonderful, and the warmth and support of my colleagues, especially from Mr. Greg Pretlow is excellent."

In addition to being a clinician, Ms. Davis has also worked in administrative and supervisory capacities. She worked at Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) for many years, holding various positions, and until recently, she was clinical director for a CORE Services Agency.

When asked what has driven her over the past 30 years to sustain her passion for her job, despite the many challenges, Ms. Davis responded enthusiastically, "I like helping other people. Assisting the consumer to maximize their skills and to help them resolve their problems for an effective outcome that can lead to their appreciation of their own quality of life is why we do what we do."

Still, Ms. Davis also helps guide, teach, and lead by providing cultural competence practice to community support workers and uncredentialed staff in addition to her supervisory role. Helping, teaching, guiding, and leading others to gain access to their inner psyches to make them better human beings were part of the reasons March was designated as Social Workers Month.

"Social Workers Month is for social workers to have the opportunity at national level to highlight the contributions we have made to society and humanity. Over the years, we have made great contributions by creating situations where we help people in need of our services improve their lives and their potentials," says Ms. Davis.

One of the difficulties social



workers and clinicians have to deal with is "buying-in for consumers to be persistent in participating in their recovery process," notes Ms. Davis. "As a Social worker, our basic tenet is to meet the client where he or she is to help them resolve issues and make them become more independent. The consumer is the leader of their own care, so we help them change their mindsets to appropriate or embrace the fact that a better life is waiting for them, if they would do what we are asking of them."

Therein lies the fundamental challenge for social workers in helping their clients reach their goals. "To be effective in helping our clients reach their goals of independence and acceptable quality of life, we bring a nurturing character to the job, an ability that operates at a natural, instinctive level. The instinct of listening and providing answers from a female or male perspective is key. On the part of women, we can also be strict, but at the same time, we see the total picture by having compassion for our consumers and toward what we do," asserts Ms. Davis. ■

ALHS CONGRATULATES *The Outstanding Employees of the Quarter*

**Gwendolyn Hemphill, Sharisse O'Banion
Gael Deunov Ahoussa**



PROFILES IN THE COMMUNITY

Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, has a rich history of championing the rights of low-income individuals and families. Her passion for influencing and empowering communities propelled her to study Black Politics and International Relations at Howard University. After graduating she began a career as a Social Service Representative for the DC Department of Human Services, Economic Security Administration that would span decades.

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the people of the District of Columbia was recognized in 2013 when she received the Certificate of Excellence from The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Awards for Distinguished DC Government Employees. She was one of 20 nominees selected from 186 candidates. Her community work was acknowledged when the voters of Ward 6 elected her for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, a position she's held since 2011. Additionally, she is serving as president of the Rosedale Grassroots Organization, a community-based, non-profit organization in NE she founded in 2006.

Under the compassionate and dedicated leadership of Ms. Phillips-Gilbert, the Rosedale Grass Roots Organization advocated for a new community center to combat crime and provide a safe haven for the children in her gang embattled neighborhood. This activism led former Mayor Adrian Fenty to set aside 16 million dollars to rebuild the new Rosedale Community Center, Library, and Ballfield. By the time the new Rosedale Community Center opened in May 2012, Ms.

Phillips-Gilbert was lobbying a new administration, that of former Mayor Vincent Gray, to have the Rosedale Ballfield renamed. Her efforts led to the passing of legislation to name the field in honor of Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, the first black female pitcher who was discovered on the Rosedale Field and was one of only three black women who played in the Negro League.

Ms. Phillips-Gilbert's passionate commitment to making a difference in the lives of others began long before she started her career in government service. She has a rich history of activism encouraged by her mother, Civil Rights Activist, Ruby Duncan. Ms. Phillips-Gilbert rallied alongside her mother, during the National Welfare Rights Movement in the 1970s to bring food stamps to the state of Nevada. She can be seen marching between her mother and Jane Fonda on the cover of *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*, by Annelise Orlick.

This book depicts her mother's contribution to civil rights and the anti-poverty movement. It is through

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her work, in DC Government and Ward 6, that Ms. Phillips-Gilbert continues her mother's legacy by empowering a new generation of families and communities. ■



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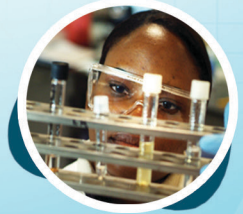
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Visit us at www.alhs-health.com

702 15th Street, NE, Washington DC. 20002

202-388-8500 202-388-8509 1-844-388-8500



AMAZING LOVE HEALTH SERVICES

702 15th Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

(202) 388-8500

www.alhs-health.com

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Newsletter Coordinator / Editor
Gwendolyn Hemphill

Creative Director
Gael Deunov Ahoussa

Proof reader
Derick Mimba

Proof reader
Akondi Mba

Photographer
Frank Hemle

Consultant / Staff Writer
Dr. Samuel O. Doku

