

CASE MANAGERS: DAILY SUPPORT, DAILY CARE FOR EACH CHILD

Each student at Benedictine is a picture made up of many different puzzle pieces. Collecting the pieces and putting together the whole picture of each child is an essential role of Benedictine's Case Management Team. Their expertise helps Benedictine's teachers, direct support professionals, parents and other providers see all facets of each child, while encouraging each young person to achieve his or her greatest potential—which is Benedictine's mission for all of its individuals.

Team Leader Nancy Morris, LGSW, who has been with Benedictine nearly 22 years, comments "Each day involves gathering information to help us see the whole picture of each child."

The five Case Management Team members, who are responsible for checking in on 13 to 15 students, ages 5 through 21, each day, deal with a variety of student needs. As more than 75 percent of Benedictine's student population has some form of autism, the

special services and skills of the Case Management team are utilized every day. While some Benedictine students receive direct counseling services, many more need daily support with behavioral issues. Thus, team members work Mondays through Fridays and are available to assist with any crisis situation as needed.

Karen McCall, MSW, also a Case Management team member, adds, "We provide support in the classrooms as students begin their school days, checking with the infirmary about students' health status and sharing information with teachers to help them be more effective with students."

According to Morris, "It is a juggling act. We have to prioritize each day with the circumstances we encounter.

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Picture left to right are Benedictine's Case Management Team members John Rutkowski, BS; Nancy Morris, LGSW, Team Leader; Karen McCall, MSW; Malcom Frazer, LCSW-C; and Amanda Leins, LGSW



**"WE TREAT THE WHOLE CHILD HERE.
It is so rewarding to see our students
expand their lives..."**

I have faith and confidence in our teachers, one-on-one staff, residential and special services staff that our students get what they need each and every day. It takes comradery and teamwork in this intense environment.”

In addition to working with Benedictine staff, team members coordinate visits between the students and other in-house staff, family members and outside agencies (including service coordinators, governmental agency representatives, and legal professionals).

Malcom Frazer, LCSW-C, who has worked at Benedictine for nearly 30 years, adds, “We maintain close contact with parents, especially before and after home visits, to handle the transitions that can be challenging for students between home and school.”

Frazer notes that because so many of today’s residential and day students have some form of autism, there is a greater need for planning and an increasing need to help them master auxiliary communication techniques through iPads and other voice output devices in order to communicate with Benedictine staff and their family members.

“Communication approaches need to be individualized since students can be anywhere on the autism spectrum. No case is the same.” He clarifies, adding, “When you meet one person with autism, you have met one person with autism.”

Because behavior is often the communication tool utilized by students on the autism spectrum, team members also coordinate meetings with staff behavior specialists to develop and modify behavior plans and crisis plans as needs arise. Plans are individualized and child-focused. The benefits of the team approach with social work is that team members turn to each other for support and to share ideas that can be implemented program wide, while staying in compliance with licensing agencies.

Team member Amanda Leins, LGSW, the newest member of the Case Management team, adds, “I am connected to my team members and feel as if I have known them for years.” Leins also runs Benedictine’s Individual Girls Group, a weekly social skills group, helping Benedictine’s higher functioning female students learn how to support each other and develop appropriate ways to interact with each other. The group strives to help students with communication skills that will ultimately help them with employment and life in the community at large.

Other extracurricular activities that team members participate in include sports, such as basketball and soccer. Team member John Rutkowski, BS, Case Manager, comments, “Seeing the students make progress is what is rewarding to me in my job.”

Morris concludes, “By working as a team, we can offer support to other Benedictine staff, as well as to one another, as we treat the whole child here. It is so rewarding to see our students expand their lives. As the community has exposure to Benedictine’s students, they will see that our students are just trying to live the best life they can live—just like each of us. Our job is to help them do that.”

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For more information or to learn how to partner with Benedictine’s Hospitality and Retail Training Program, call Candy Jordan at 410-634-2212, ext. 1234.

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OPENING DOORS TO THE



When Abby, age 20, needed to gain valuable job skills after graduating from high school, she turned to Benedictine's Supported Employment Hospitality Training Program to help her transition into her new job with Marriott's Fairfield Inn & Suites in Easton, Maryland.

Through a referral from Maryland's Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Abby was able to participate in Benedictine's highly successful eight-week program. The hospitality training program is designed to assist qualified students with disabilities, ages 14 to 21, who are in high school or who have graduated from high school; who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for their disabilities; and who are living with parents or in the community.

According to Candy Jordan, Supported Employment/Community Services director at Benedictine, "It is essential that we introduce transitioning students at an early age to the idea of community employment. This jump starts employment

Pictured left to right are Renee Rishel, assistant general manager, Marriott's Fairfield Inn & Suites in Easton; Hospitality Program Graduate Abby; Tara Crutchley of Benedictine's Supported Employment Hospitality and Retail Training Program; and Waitman Vandorsdale, general manager of Marriott's Fairfield Inn & Suites, Easton.

options and career planning, which are invaluable to securing and retaining a competitive wage job as an adult.

"Our local business community has offered numerous opportunities for transitional students, who are referred to us by DORS, to gain hands-on experience in the hotel and restaurant industry. We have created wonderful partnerships within our community that offer our students a quality work experience."

Gaffney Shepherd, Benedictine's program lead for DORS-funded programs, adds, "Initially parents are often nervous to have their children training out in the community, but when they see what the students have accomplished, it gives them hope for their futures."

Since the program began over five years ago, Benedictine has been able to partner with a number of hospitality and retail businesses in communities across the Mid Shore. The Hospitality Training Program partners with the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake in Cambridge, the Masthead in Oxford, Denny's

BUSINESS WORLD

in Easton, Knoxville's Table at the Inn at Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville, and Marriott's Fairfield Inn & Suites, among others. Through two-hour visits with their job coaches to these sites, students explore the employment skills needed for a career in the hotel and restaurant industry.

At the Fairfield Inn & Suites, the students enjoy a very interactive experience. Because of the students' performances, they have been invited back to the hotel time and time again—several gaining employment with the Inn. According to Dr. David Hill, owner of Hill Hospitality, which manages the Fairfield Inn & Suites, "I have always had great admiration for the Benedictine School going way back in time. Sister Jeannette did an amazing job and the facility continues to uphold the highest standards. I feel very privileged to work with members of the Benedictine community."

Waitman Vandorsdale, general manager of the Fairfield Inn & Suites, comments about Benedictine student Abby,

"She is a wonderful person and a great asset to our team. Abby has been well received since she arrived and continues to be a dependable employee and always has a smile on her face."

Tara Crutchley, Abby's job coach and a Benedictine employee who serves as a DORS associate, helps her students settle into their jobs and figure out their transportation to and from work. She comments, "Abby showed independence at the hotel right away. I believe this is because of the Hospitality Training Program at Benedictine."

At Knoxville's Table at the Inn at Chesapeake Bay Beach Club, Executive Chef Paul Shiley took an intimate role in the hospitality training for Benedictine students, sharing his state-of-the-art kitchen and tips about in-house baking, prep work in the kitchen, and how to get the dining room ready for customers.



Benedictine's Retail Training Program, has also successfully introduced students to employment opportunities partnering with such businesses as the Dollar General, Kent Island; Treasure Cove Thrift Shop, St. Michaels; and the Tilghman Island Country Store, among others. At Rommel's ACE Hardware in Chester students learn how to operate the cash register; size, fold and stock merchandise; check merchandise for expiration dates, and properly display merchandise in stores.

Both programs are offered alternately throughout the year, giving students the opportunity to explore their interests and gain important job skills.

At the conclusion of their eight-weeks in the program, students participate in a graduation ceremony receiving a certificate and the knowledge of best job skills. DORS then continues support providing the students with work readiness skills and assistance with resume writing and job applications. The result – many Benedictine students with developmental disabilities are hired in the community.

Fairfield General Manager Waitman Vandorsdale was one of the many on hand for a recent hospitality training program graduation ceremony presenting the students with Fairfield Inn & Suites charter member pins. When Abby was offered her pin that day, she was also offered her first job with the hotel.

She recently remarked, with a big smile on her face, "I enjoy having a job and working here. After a month, they have already offered to add another day to my work schedule."

*"I FEEL PRIVILEGED
to work with members of the
Benedictine community."* — Dr. David Hill

REV YOUR ENGINES!

ANNAPOLIS DONOR SHARES HIS STORY

Gordon Schaaf, 82 of Annapolis, says his middle name is “Tenacious.” A retired Navy pilot and Benedictine donor, Schaaf has embraced the aging process, learning to snow ski at age 45; scuba diving at age 66, and riding a motorcycle at age 72.

He comments, “I start late, but I don’t give up.”

After graduating from the United States Naval Academy in 1958, Schaaf became a Navy pilot, flying reconnaissance in the Atlantic looking for Russian ships and submarines during the Cold War. After retiring from the Navy, Schaaf held careers in engineering, real estate and property management.

Unlike the fictional character Walter Mitty, who merely imagined his adventures, Schaaf has experienced real adventures that have taken him around the globe. While he and his wife, Ginny, have taken what he calls “more civilized trips,” he has traveled to more remote and exotic locations on his own. He has visited 120 countries and his adventures have included hiking and parasailing in the Himalayas, camping in the Sahara Desert, and scuba diving in Vietnam.

He quips, “Once I started, I wanted to do the next thing. My wife and I are fairly healthy for our ages and very mobile. We have led a very interesting life.”

When asked what he enjoys doing most, riding his motorcycle is at the top of his list. It took a while for his wife to agree to this new found hobby. She felt his years as a Navy pilot put him enough in harm’s way. He never forgot, however, that he wanted a motorcycle and eventually Ginny agreed.

Today, he is the oldest member of the Annapolis Harley Owners Group (Annapolis HOG). The first ride he participated in 10 years ago with the HOG chapter was Benedictine’s Chrome City Ride. He recalls, “I thought it sounded like a neat ride over to the Eastern Shore, but I didn’t know anything about the charity.” He adds, “I remember that Sister Jeanette told us that when we got to the gates of the school, we were supposed to rev our engines

so the kids could hear us coming. When our group of 100 bikers got to the gates, we couldn’t believe how excited the kids were to see us. It was really touching.”

Over the years, Schaaf has continued to participate in the Chrome City Ride and learned more about the school. He states, “I was so impressed at how Benedictine takes care of the children with such personal care. My wife and I understand that being a caregiver is one of the toughest jobs in life. We are currently caring for one of our five children—our 46-year-old son who has leukemia.”



Gordon Schaaf of Annapolis, age 82, was at Benedictine in July for the 15th Annual Chrome City Ride, an event he has supported since 2005.

The couple’s philanthropy extends to other charities—he rides his motorcycle in other charity rides including rides for widows of police officers and firemen, as well as wounded warriors. He and his wife, who is a breast cancer survivor, support the Wellness House of Annapolis—a gathering place where cancer patients and their loved ones can learn healthy coping skills.

In addition to supporting Benedictine through the Chrome City Ride each year, Schaaf is an annual donor to the school. He has also donated a Pennsylvania resort vacation package to the school’s Spring Benefit auction. He says, “Last year, I arranged for one of my sons to escort my wife to the Spring Benefit. It was the year Cal Ripkin, Jr. spoke. She was so

excited because she went to school with Cal Ripkin, Sr., and she was able to talk to Cal about his dad.”

While Schaaf’s wife doesn’t ride a motorcycle, they visited Benedictine in October so she could see the campus and meet some of the staff. He states,

“The Benedictine School is a special place. I hope my sons, who also ride motorcycles, can one day ride in the Chrome City Ride and support the school themselves.”



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