The Blossom Bulletin

May & June 2023

You make a difference

In celebration of Nurses Week

Saturday, May 6 through Friday, May 12,

we are highlighting our nurses and all their hard work!

I have been a Nurse for 17 years and worked for Blossom for 12 years. Working with the older population has been great - they have so much knowledge and so many stories to share. The clients I work with are always teaching me something new. They have great stories to tell if we just listen.

Elaine Gebhardt



I started working as an RN with Blossom 4 months ago, at the beginning of 2023, but I have been in this field for over 20 years. My career in medicine began in 2000, when I worked at the University of Rochester as a Medical Technician and Phlebotomist. I earned my LPN and RN both while working at the University of Rochester in the Emergency and Cardiac Step Down. In 2010, I ventured off to experience Clinical Women's Health and started working as a Nurse Manager in Long-term Care, eventually returning to work in a hospital setting. For the past 6 years, I have been working in the community with Medicaid Waiver and Managed Long Term Care clients, assisting with what I do best. I was born a Nurse, and I can't see myself doing anything else. I hold all my experiences as a Nurse close to me. Blossom, by far, has been one of the most welcoming and warm environments I have encountered in my many years in health care, and for that I am very thankful.

Kristina Bergeron

This month I am celebrating 19 years of nursing and 25 years working in healthcare. I worked for Blossom from 2010 - 2016 and returned to work here in the fall of 2022. I have so many remarkable stories of being a Nurse, it is difficult to narrow it down to just one! Recently, I was working as a Hospital Supervisor when a trauma came in the middle of the night. The patient had fallen down the stairs resulting in multiple critical injuries and was covered in so much blood that he was unrecognizable! As we worked to stabilize his injuries, I was washing the blood from his face, and I started to recognize him. It turned out he worked at the local liquor store, and as I announced his name and who he was, everyone working on him knew him from there! The patient ended up going to another hospital for a higher level of care and multiple surgeries. He later came back to our hospital for rehab and told me what a comfort is was the night he came in to look up and see familiar faces. I have always loved working in the same community that I live in. It's an awesome feeling to take care of the people in your community and see them recover and run into them out somewhere and hear how glad they were that you were working the day they were in the emergency room.

Suzanne Russo



I have been a Nurse since 1991 and have worked at Blossom since 2018. I have enjoyed working with a diverse population over the many years that I have been a Nurse.

Alison Hall



Blossom Bulletin Board

Welcome to Blossom!

Danielle Palermo-Jimenez, Health Homes Care Manager Supervisor

Congratulations on your New Position!

Molly Dillon, Chief Operating Officer
Dan Oonk, Compliance Officer

Holiday Closures



Blossom offices will be closed:
Monday, May 29 for Memorial Day
Monday, June 19 for Juneteenth

Welcome, New Blossom Field Staff!

Guerda Z, Startajah B, Nicole N, Katrina G, Breonia C, Mikhaila C, Abigail B, Kendra D, Bethany F, Teresa W, Maria B



Blossom is participating in BCCR's **Pink** and **Teal** **Challenge!** Join or donate to the team using the QR code. The event will be **Saturday May 13 at 9:45am** at **Monroe Community College.**

Donate for Denim

What's YOUR favorite charity?

Email your suggestions to bfindlay@blossommhcs.com.

Donate for Denim Recap:

In March we raised money for **Brain Injury Association of NYS (BIANYS).** BIANYS provides community support resources for those impacted by traumatic brain injuries.

In April we supported **Happy Birthday Cha Cha Cha.** The organization goes to a child's classroom on their special day and gives them a memorable birthday celebration.

Denim Down the Line:

In May we'll be raising money for the **Dimitri House.** Located in Rochester, the Dimitri House serves those in need by offering a range of programs including food, shelter, and services.

In June we'll be supporting the **National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI).** NAMI provides support, education and advocacy to individuals impacted by mental illness.

Blossom's Wellbeing Committee

Financial Security
Learning
Family
Security
Social Participation
Health
Leisure
Freedom
Growth
Work
Mental Tranquility
Environment
Housing
Spiritual
Economic Stability

Interested in more information?
Contact: rshillington@blossommhcs.com

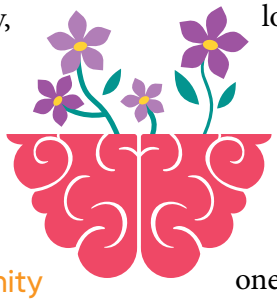
SUPPORT and Mental Health

By Krista Jenkins, *VP of Development and Community Partnerships at* ***NAMI Rochester***

In celebration of Mental Health Awareness Month, we sat down with one of our friends over at NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) to learn more about community support and the impact it has on our mental health:

Happy May, Mental Health Awareness Month! May is a perfect time to pause and reflect on how you are doing, on the progress you've made, and opportunities for continued growth and flourishing.

Wherever you are on your journey, we hope you have a robust mental health toolkit. Therapy, medication, and other clinical treatments are vital for many people (and we fully support talking with your care team if you think you'd benefit from them!). But like other physical health conditions, we can nourish and support our mental health in non-clinical ways, too!



At NAMI Rochester, we love community support – spending time and connecting with a network of people who have a similar experience as you. While you can only spend so many hours receiving direct care from a clinician, you can maximize time spent with a supportive community to keep moving forward on your mental health journey.

So, what are some examples of community support? At NAMI Rochester, we offer many support groups based on experience, including groups for peers who live with mental illness, groups for families and parents, and groups for people who have experienced loss.

Being part of a support group can provide a safe space for you to share your experiences without worrying about being judged. Mental illness is often stigmatized, and it can feel tough to talk about your experiences with people who don't get it, but in a supportive community, you can open up and feel heard and validated. Finding people who've experienced the same things as you can help you feel less isolated. You'll realize that you're not alone.

We also host community programs like yoga, meditation, journaling workshops, and more at NAMI Rochester. Our hope is that we offer tangible tools for self-care while also providing a space for community members to gather and get to know one another. Some folks come to NAMI Rochester for the first time to attend a free yoga class. When they hear conversations about mental health and illness, they might pick up a community resource card. Should they need further care and support, they now have more information on how to move forward.

Mental health can be complicated, and it can be tough to know where to turn for help. In a community of people who've been there, you can find information and resources to help you take the next step on your journey. An encouraging word from a support group friend or a helpful resource card from NAMI Rochester can go a long way.

The best part about community support is we can all play a role. "Community" might be a group gathered at NAMI Rochester, but it can also be your workplace, school, place of worship, family, or friends. If each person experiencing a mental health challenge had just one person they felt they could lean on, the results would be revolutionary.

We know that our impact is greatest when we work together. Your sphere of influence is unique and important. For your family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones, YOU are the mental health support they need. You share community resources, create safe spaces for connection, and extend messages of hope. This is both a gift and a responsibility. And if you're reading this today, chances are you provide that loving support to the communities you are part of.

One of my favorites moments of community is the 1,000+ gathered at the annual NAMI Rochester Walk for Mental Health, taking place this year on Saturday May 20th. At the NAMI Rochester Walk, we move together in celebration of community, hope, and recovery. We remember loved ones we've lost. We boldly declare that mental health is health. We show one another that we are not alone.

Register for free and invite your friends, family or colleagues to walk in solidarity for the Mental Health Revolution! Will you join us? It would be an honor to welcome you into the NAMI family! Use the link below to join:

givesignup.org/Race/NY/Rochester/NAMIRochesterWalk

Celebrating all Moms!

In honor of Mother's Day coming up, we asked all the moms of Blossom what has being a mom taught you and what advice would you give to other mothers?





Being a mom has taught me to give myself and others more grace. We are all trying our best even if that looks different for everyone!
Molly Dillon, Chief Operating Officer



Things I have learned, my house will never be clean, be extra patient and to cherish every moment no matter how little or big. They grow up to quick. **Emily Briggs, Director of CDPAP**



Being a mom has taught me so many valuable life lessons, but most importantly pride and unconditional love. A family friend once told me "Little kids, little problems....Big kids, big problems". There were no truer words ever spoken. The worry never ends, and the problems just get bigger and more expensive!
Angela Gioia, Assistant Director of CDPAP

I would say that being a mom has taught me to appreciate the little things in life- being able to see things through my daughter's eyes has given me a new appreciation for so many of the little things we take for granted. And for advice, I would say: it's ok not to have it all together! Don't compare yourself to all the other moms who seem like they never make a mistake- there's no such thing as a perfect mom, but you can be the best mom for your child.
Megan Griffin-Adams, Director of Health Homes



Being a mom has taught me that it is like watching your heart walk outside your body. The best advice I can give another mom is each phase shall pass. When we are in a certain phase it can feel like forever but when it passes there is a relief and a realization that it only lasted a short time.
Jennifer Pritchard, CDPAP Care Coordinator



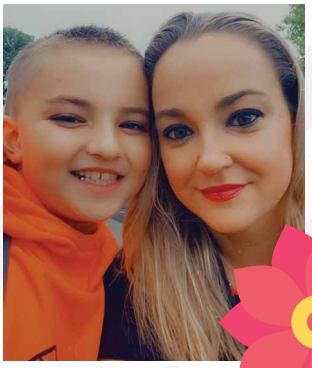
Being a mother has been the most fulfilling job of my life. It has been done with love, sacrifice and pride. I have found that no two children are the same. They all have different personalities and needs and all learn differently. We have to be open to different ways of educating and loving each individual child. My advice to other mothers is to give yourself grace as it is a learning experience. Just because our children are grown and out of the house doesn't mean our job is done. Our grown-up children ask for and need our help and advice only in different and just as important ways.
Laura Zanino, LHCSA Administrative Manager

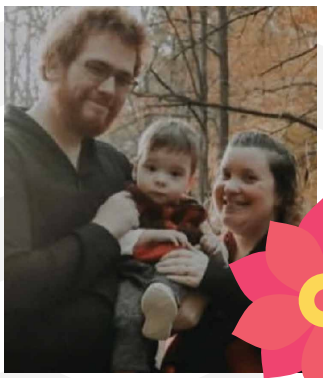


Being a mom is the greatest thing, until you become a Gigi!! That's even better. Best advice to other moms, When your kids are young, they need a parent, not a friend. They will have other friends in their life, You are there to shape them into good people. Sometimes it's hard. But the hard stuff is worth it! When they become adults, that's when the friendship starts.
Suzanne Russo, Director of Clinical Services



Being a mother has taught me how to be patient, the advice that I would recommend to all mothers would be to enjoy every single bit of your children's presence and always listen to what they have to say first that is how they will trust you.
Yomarie Morales, Recruiting Assistant





Being a mom has taught me love and responsibility it also taught me to be humble and respectful. You have to give a little in order to receive a little (respect). **Voncile Seawright, Personal Care Aide**

Being a mom has taught me patience, a whole new kind of love and to be grateful and cherish every moment. My advice for other mothers or expecting mothers is to cherish every moment and not let the day go by where you don't capture a memory because it can go by so fast. You can learn so much from your child everyday too that gives you a whole new perspective on things.
Cynthia O'Neill, Health Homes Care Manager

Being a mom has taught me that my actions matter. Everything I do, everything I say, how I treat people, how I let people treat me shape the person that my son will become. The best advice I can give to other mothers is to stop trying to be perfect. Social media has increased pressure to become the perfect mom. The reality is you're setting yourself up for failure because there is no such thing as a perfect mom. Work hard and try your best and you will be perfect in the eyes of your kids which is all that matters!
Aileen Calderon, Director of Human Resources

aide of the MONTH



March 2023

Andrea Love

Above and Beyond

Here at Blossom, we celebrate the hard work and commitment of our Aide Staff. One of the countless ways we honor the diligence of our employees is through our Aide of the Month program. Each month, Aides are nominated for exhibiting our core values and/or their outstanding dedication to their client's well-being. In the month of March, the achievement was awarded to the considerate, kind, and helpful Andrea Love. Andrea had three separate nominations all emphasizing her willingness to go above and beyond for her clients.

> "I just try to *help people* when I can or however I can."

Andrea Love was born and raised in Rochester, New York. She has worked for Blossom for almost five years. Before working in home care, Andrea worked in the cleaning field. She has two wonderful daughters who she loves and cherishes.

Andrea's favorite part of working for Blossom is her clients. Her clients inspire her to work hard and give it her all. Andrea is always ready to help them do whatever needs to be done, "I just try to help people when I can, or however I can." Understanding the value of being heard, especially for older generations, Andrea is always willing to be a listening ear for her clients and engage in meaningful, stimulating conversations. She also performs tasks her clients may have trouble doing on their own, such as cleaning, running errands, and doing laundry. Andrea also invokes her client's creative side, "I listen to music with them, and you know, get them to sing and stuff like that." Above all, Andrea is someone everyone needs in life, a friend, "I'll be the friend they need, if they need a friend."

When she is not at work being an exceptional caretaker, Andrea enjoys relaxing and decompressing at home. She also enjoys being physically active and going to the gym. One of her daughters is in a dance group so Andrea is a proud dance mom. Overall, Andrea lives her life to the fullest, "This life is too short so, you never know."

> "I'll be the *friend* they need if they need a *friend*."

This line of work can present some challenges, but the reward of making people happy makes all the difficulties worth it, "It gets better after a while… don't give up." Here at Blossom, we are grateful to Andrea for never giving up and always going above and beyond for her clients. Thank you for an amazing five years and we look forward to you blossoming with us in the future! ■



Aide of the Month

April 2023

Betty Jo Francis

All About Family

Our April Aide of the Month, Betty Jo Francis, is both diligent and compassionate. Betty Jo lives in Rochester, NY, and has been in the caregiving field for over 25 years. During her many years in the field, Betty Jo has done almost everything; including scheduling, quality assurance, and compliance. However, after a recent life-changing experience, Betty Jo decided to return to working hands-on as a Personal Care Aide, where her true passion lies, "When my life got altered last April, I figured that I might as well be happy my remaining years that I'm working."

> "When my life got altered last April, I figure that I might as well *be happy* my remaining years that I'm working."

Betty Jo is not only passionate about home care, she also has a very personal connection to the field. Betty Jo's grandmother lived to be 104 and was able to stay at home in her final years. Her grandmother passed away during the height of the pandemic (not because of COVID-19) and Betty Jo's family did not want her to be in a nursing home where COVID-19 was rampant. Thanks to Betty Jo, her family, and an in-home nurse who came once a week, Betty Jo's grandmother was able to stay in the comfort of her home.

Betty Jo currently works with a client she adores. The two do a wide variety of engaging activities together. Last December, the two made beautiful hand-crafted gifts for the holiday season. One of Betty Jo's favorite activities to do with her client is cooking. They enjoy cooking a vast array of meals from delicious Italian meatloaf to mouth-watering scallops. Her client's friend is having her 83rd birthday and the two plan on making her a scrumptious carrot cake.

Outside of work, Betty Jo enjoys spending time with her family including her cat. She has a loving husband, three children, and nine grandchildren. Her children and grandchildren live across the country, giving Betty Jo and her husband plenty of fun places to travel for vacation. Betty Jo has a unique connection with one of her granddaughters. When Betty Jo was younger, she had an imaginary friend. "My pretend friend just happened to come to life in form of my granddaughter, name and everything, and my daughter had no idea." Without knowing the story of her mother's imaginary friend, Betty Jo's daughter was planning to give her baby the same name. Betty Jo's granddaughter grew to look exactly like her imaginary friend. "I had the pleasure of telling my granddaughter the story and she cried and gave me a hug."

> "You've gotta be that type of person that it's not about you, that it's about somebody else and, you know, trying to *make their life better.*"

Betty Jo is a loving and passionate individual, and she believes these qualities are important to have as an Aide. "You've gotta be that type of person that it's not about you, that it's about somebody else and, you know, trying to make their life better." Thank you, Betty Jo, for sharing your story and for all your hard work! ■

Bits & Bytes

Social Media Dos and Don'ts by Zak Wallace

Social media can a powerful tool that has the potential to connect people from all over the world, help us share information, and express our opinions, however, it is important to recognize the negatives of social media as well. Social media can have negative consequences if not used wisely. Below are some dos and don'ts of social media that you should keep in mind:

DOs:

- Be respectful: When posting on social media, be careful of the language you use and the tone of your posts. We should always treat others with respect, like we do in real life. Just because we are behind a screen, doesn't give us permission to act inappropriately.

- Use social media to connect: Social media is a great way to stay in touch with family and friends who you may not see as much as you'd like. During the height of the pandemic, social media was an excellent tool to stay connected, and still is today!

- Use social media to showcase your skills: Social media is a great way to showcase your skills and expertise. Share your work, experiences, achievements, projects, etc. with your followers. It's a great and easy way to show off your talents!

- Stay informed: Social media is a powerful tool for staying informed about news and current events. It's important however, to follow reputable news sources, to make sure you are not consuming false information.

DON'Ts:

- Don't overshare: Avoid oversharing personal information on social media. This can lead to some scary things as we don't always know who is looking at our publicly shared content.

- Don't post inappropriate content: Avoid posting inappropriate content such as violence, hate speech, etc. It's important not to be offensive to others online.

- Don't engage in cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is a serious problem on social media. Avoid engaging in or supporting cyberbullying in any form. This includes posting negative comments or messages, sharing private information without permission, or making hurtful jokes.

- Don't fall for scams: Social media is often used by scammers to trick people into giving away personal information or money. Avoid commenting on pages of companies or people you've never heard of, simply because it's going viral.

- Don't use social media as a substitute for real-life interactions: While social media is a great tool for staying connected with others, in person contact will always be more valuable! Don't forget to stay connected offline as well.

In conclusion, social media is a powerful tool that like anything else, has its positives and negatives. It's important to be safe and smart when using social media. We hope you'll keep these **DOs and DON'Ts** in mind next time you're online!



Stay up to date on all of our latest news, events, and more! Visit BlossomMHCS.com, and follow us on social media!

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HIPAA violations & *fraud* must be reported.



Our Compliance Officer is Dan Oonk: 844.546.1600 x1119

Anonymous Hotline: 585.546.1219