



# Mirmont Mirror

Mirmont Mirror | Volume 1, Issue 1 | Fall 2012



Hello, everyone!

I'm happy to present you with the first edition of our newsletter, the *Mirmont Mirror*.



Tom Cain, President

The intent of the *Mirror* is to help keep alumni, family and friends, benefactors, referral sources, and other providers of medical and behavioral health services connected with all of us at Mirmont. We also want to keep you informed about what's happening here...and there's a lot going on!

In this edition we acquaint you with VIPER, our specialty program for first responders which has gained national prominence for clinical excellence in treating the men and women who serve our communities. We also highlight the effective approaches of our Pain Management Program which is helping so many of our opioid dependent patients find relief without narcotics. A new option for healthy eating for our visiting family and friends is offered through Grab n' Go. And in Alumni Corner we ask

continued on page 3 >

## ALUMNI CORNER

### "What's In Your Toolbox?" Building on Your Treatment Experience!



**As you continue on your recovery journey, Mirmont's Alumni Association offers some "tools" for you to consider, which may help you toward long-term sobriety:**

**Mindful breathing:** This is a very effective way of connecting to the present moment, assisting in "self soothing" during a crisis or just quieting your mind so that you are more "aware" of the task at hand.

**Rediscover a hobby/find a new one:** Gardening? Crafts? Cooking? Mechanics? Dancing? It is important to have some healthy activities to look forward to in our "down time". Maybe you lost touch with a favorite hobby while

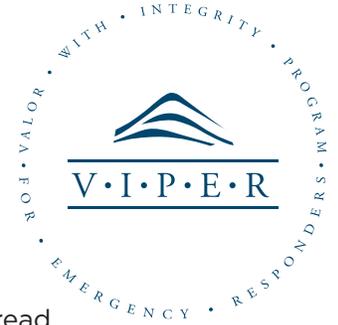
in your addiction and now you can "rediscover" your passion for a good crossword puzzle, rebuild an engine or trip the light fantastic! Have fun!

**Relax:** There is nothing wrong with doing nothing! Recharging your battery is a good thing and an important part of self care.

**Family time:** Consider spending time with your loved ones doing simple things like yard work,

continued on page 3 >

# ROLL CALL WITH V.I.P.E.R.



**D**iscussions with local law enforcement Employee Assistance Professionals helped Mirmont identify the need for a specific treatment option for first responders suffering from alcoholism and chemical dependency. In June 2008, we launched our Valor with Integrity Program for Emergency Responders (VIPER). Since then, Larry Norton and his team, in concert with Mirmont’s inpatient treatment professionals, have treated over 400 police, firefighters, EMTs and combat veterans.

In addition to being a retired police captain from the Philadelphia Police Department, Larry has a PhD in counseling psychology, is a Certified Addictions Counselor, a Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Larry’s

personal experience as a first responder, combined with his professional experience and expertise, makes him highly effective at working with this distinctive group of clients.

VIPER clients thrive at Mirmont and teamwork is the key. Mirmont’s clinical team and the VIPER staff work together by sharing their clinical insights, in order to best treat and support VIPER group members. Oftentimes, first responders have added concerns about job security and how their peers and supervisors will perceive them because they’re off the job seeking help for their addiction. The VIPER staff understands this and helps them work through these issues in a compassionate, accountable and safe environment of care.

## IS VIPER REALLY NECESSARY?

Why is it necessary to offer a specific therapeutic group for emergency responders? Larry responds, “...Everyone in VIPER—military, police, firefighters and paramedics—shares stories from the job

that they have never told anyone before. The common thread throughout the group is the trauma each first responder has been exposed to, the carnage that they have witnessed, and their commitment to each other, to protect and respond when needed and to back each other up as no one else can. With this in mind, Mirmont felt it was imperative to provide an environment where our first responders may share the experiences and stressors that they live with every day...”

## WHAT CAN THE PATIENT EXPECT?

Guided by the VIPER team, participants will have an additional three hours of treatment, three times per week, to focus on issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), family problems, grief and loss, and job stressors, all of which tend to be inherent in these careers. Among the effective treatment modalities used in VIPER are: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), group process and journaling. Some in VIPER will work with one of our primary therapists trained in EMDR, and learn to use the various helpful “self soothing” techniques that are part of EMDR. As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Larry is available to work with the



*Congressman Pat Meehan visits Mirmont and places a badge in our VIPER patch case.*

**TOOLBOX**

continued from page 1

going to a movie, perhaps a day trip on the weekend...just being together.

**12-step meetings:** Attending meetings will help you stay centered and have more stability in your life and interactions.

**Keep in touch:** Engaging in regular contact with others in recovery is helpful not only to you, but to those to whom you reach out. Your phone call might be just what someone else needed to feel “connected”!

**Easy does it:** We all need to remind ourselves to slow down and not bite off more than we can chew. We can’t be all things to all people.

**Yoga/meditation:** Two effective ways to “stay centered” and feel balanced. It is easy to find a few minutes each day to practice, and the results are very beneficial!

As in everything, we recommend you apply moderation when you use these or any other “tools” you choose, as you continue to build your foundation for ongoing recovery. ■

Don't forget to attend Mirmont Alumni Meetings: Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm, and Alumni yoga on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm.

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

continued from page 1

our former patients, “What’s in your Toolbox?” and offer helpful suggestions for lively sobriety.

Future editions of the *Mirror* will inform you about our upcoming \$2.9 million expansion project which will include a state-of-the-art Medical Services Unit and a beautiful Spirituality Center; our fundraising campaign to help with the cost of the project; the Chelsea Campbell Scholarship fund which has helped so many young people enter recovery; Mirmont’s approach to psychological/emotional Trauma Treatment; expansion of outpatient services and much more.

Over the past thirteen years I have had the privilege to work with an outstanding staff at Mirmont, and for the thousands of diverse, good people and their families who struggle with addiction that have come to us for help. It’s a terrific job. Peg Costello, Mirmont’s Clinical Director, and I have often remarked that, it doesn’t get any better than this, when we’ve witnessed what is commonly referred to in recovery circles as “another miracle.” And we always look forward to the next one.

Be well,

Tom

## Mirmont’s Family & Friends Program Adds “Grab n’ Go”!

A typical weekend afternoon at Mirmont will find upwards of 100 relatives of our patients participating in the Family and Friends Program on Saturday and visiting on Sunday. What has been described as “...invaluable time spent with Mirmont staff gaining understanding of my role in my loved one’s recovery”, offers those who attend education, support and fellowship, and now on visiting day...nourishment. Mirmont is now providing Grab n’ Go lunches because a good number of our visitors come from surrounding states and parts of PA that are two to three hours away. So for a nominal fee, visitors can choose light lunch fare prepared by our Chef, Dan Delaney, and his team.

Among the items offered are: a variety of healthy sandwiches; an assortment of garden salads such as chicken caesar, cobb and chef’s salads; and fresh cut fruit and yogurt. Our guests have been generous with their favorable feedback and expressions of appreciation! ■



**V.I.P.E.R.**

continued from page 2

spouses and families of VIPER participants, as well.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER VIPER?

Most members of the VIPER group stay in touch with each other after program completion. They exchange contact information and many attend AA or NA meetings in their communities. Some return to Mirmont to continue treatment in the VIPER Intensive Outpatient Program. VIPER staff and clients use email, phone, Facebook and text messaging to keep in touch and maintain their sober VIPER network. Many VIPER alumni come back to the group to celebrate sober anniversaries, to share their stories of recovery and what it is like to return to the job sober and clean. Throughout their stories one can hear two predominant themes, a deep sense of gratitude and a deep sense of pride to be back on the job protecting and serving the community. ■

100 Yearsley Mill Road, Lima, PA 19063

Admissions: 484.227.1453

Main number: 484.227.1400

Toll free: 1.800.846.4656

mirmont.org

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!!



**Mirmont Treatment Center**

Main Line Health

## New Approaches to Working with Chronic Pain in Recovery

Chronic pain is one of the most daunting issues that a person in early recovery can face. The medications that were prescribed and that brought some relief in the past have now become the problem. The person entering treatment for opioid dependence faces the uncertainty and the fear that, if they give up their pain meds, they may have to live in constant pain. And because severe pain can be a strong relapse trigger, it is crucial that these folks find relief. Mirmont's Holistic Pain Management Services provides these individuals with helpful alternatives for pain management.

Patients with a diagnosis of chronic pain are referred to the Holistic Pain Management Team by Mirmont's nursing and counseling staff. Once a patient is referred into the Holistic Pain Management Services, a member of the team will meet with the patient and provide appropriate forms of treatment, usually a



*Linda Degnan Solomons, BSN, RN, performs reflexology.*

combination of acupressure, Reiki and yoga therapy; reflexology, Alexander work, guided imagery, EFT and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction techniques. Treatment is based wholly on individual needs. Patients will receive handouts and instructions on these treatment modalities to aid in their continued education. Those receiving Holistic Pain Management Services will engage in an individual and weekly group therapy session.

You may be thinking "does this work?" It does. We ask patients to rate their pain on a scale of 1 to 10 before and after each session. Almost all of our patients report a significant reduction in their pain levels after a treatment episode. Ten to twenty percent of our patient community is engaged in our Holistic Pain Management Services at any given time.

Upon discharge, patients will be given the resources to pursue holistic pain management in a variety of ways. They are free to make their own choices according to the services available in their geographic area. Since many of these services are not always covered by insurance, we will suggest ways of accessing these services on a budget. ■

**Susan Wagner, MS**, heads our Holistic Pain Management team. Susan has an MS in Counseling and is a licensed Massage Therapist. She has completed professional training in Shiatsu Acupressure, Therapeutic Massage, Reiki, Tuina Chinese Massage, and Kunye Tibetan Massage. Susan has also completed the professional training in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction under the direction of Jon Kabat-Zinn.

The other team members are: **Linda Degnan Solomons, BSN, RN; Eileen Zelek, BSN, RN; Tina LeMar, MA, RYT; and Marie McMennimen, RN.**