

Mirmont

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Play ball! Now, I'm not talking about opening day of the Phillies season. Here at Mirmont we are heralding in a new season of Alumni vs. Patient Softball



Tom Cain, President

games. On Wednesday evenings from the first blooms of spring until the last leaves fall from the trees, our former patients and our current patients participate in Mirmont's version of America's pastime. There's plenty of good natured ribbing during the games, lots of laughs and just a wee bit of competitiveness. It's sober fun at its best...and always followed by the ever-popular Alumni AA meeting.

Yet, there's much more happening than baseball this spring. In this issue of the *Mirror* you'll read about our \$3 million expansion for which we're slated to break ground in mid-May. There are also articles on emotional and psychological trauma and substance abuse, and on our new Pet-Assisted Therapy Program. And let's not forget that the Memorial Day Picnic is right around the corner. With all that is happening, remember to take a few mindful breaths and enjoy the springtime!

Be well,

Tom

Mirmont Set to Launch Major Expansion



Above: architectural rendering of the future 900-square-foot Meditation Hall at Mirmont.

Icoholism and drug dependency affect individuals and families regardless of income, educational level, geographic location, nationality, race or religion. Approximately 23 million Americans struggle with addiction, yet fewer than 10 percent are receiving treatment.

In fiscal year 2012, Mirmont admitted 2,080 patients—a 25 percent increase from the previous year. In order to continue providing treatment for a growing patient community well into the future, we are launching an expansion campaign to create a new, state-of-the-art facility.

Construction is scheduled to begin this spring on Mirmont's new Health Services Unit, which will greatly enhance our ability to provide excellent care:

- 30 semi-private patient rooms.
- A 900-square-foot Meditation Hall, complete with vaulted ceilings, that will complement Mirmont's 'mindfulness' approach to treatment. The Meditation Hall is a sacred space for people of all faiths and those who simply want a quiet place for reflection.

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Hand in Hand: Treatment of Trauma and Substance Abuse

he correlation between emotional and psychological trauma and substance abuse is 80-90%. Yet people in treatment for substance abuse suffering with symptoms of traumatic stress were almost always encouraged to contain their traumatic history until they accumulated at least one year of sobriety. Currently, the recognition that use of drugs and alcohol can be the result of unresolved trauma has led to an increase in determining ways that trauma can be treated in early recovery. These approaches have been informed by an increasing understanding of the neuroscience behind both trauma and addiction. According to psychiatrist and trauma expert, Bessel van der Kolk:

Trauma is about immobilization and disconnection. You want to move and you want to fight; but you can't. It's about being betrayed and hurt; screaming out for help, but nobody comes. ...So (in treatment) anything that helps people move purposefully where they were helpless before and anything that helps people to feel connected, where they were disconnected before is helpful. ... The clinical challenge is how to keep people safe and quiet enough so their bodies can tolerate what they feel. and their minds can tolerate what they know.

Some of you readers may be well aware that you have been traumatized, while others can't see it. Those who can't see it may be thinking, "I wasn't in a war, didn't survive a holocaust, or anything even close." "It was so long ago. How could it still affect me?" "I didn't even really get hurt." These

responses usually reflect a lack of understanding of what is traumatic.

In trauma, it's not what happened; it is how the event was experienced. What makes an event traumatic are the feelings of being trapped and powerless, along with a sense of overwhelm that accompanies those feelings.

Was it traumatic or not?

Choose a difficult memory for you (perhaps an accident, being lost as a kid, an incident of emotional, sexual or physical abuse, a great loss, etc.)

Answer these simple questions:

1. When you remember the incident, does the memory come up exactly the same every time?

- 2. Does the incident feel emotionally charged?
- 3. If you let the memory completely play out, do you experience similar emotions and bodily sensations as you did at the time of the incident?
- 4. Does it ever feel like it is happening in the present?
- 5. Does it feel as though all or some part of the memory remain(s) unfinished?

If you answered yes to one or more of the questions, then the memory is likely a traumatic one. Although one traumatic memory does not necessarily constitute a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

-Maya Angelou



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MIRMONT EXPANSION CAMPAIGN

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- A large patient lounge, designed with the warmth of a family room, where patients currently in treatment for detoxification can relax and socialize between scheduled activities.
- A state-of-the-art nurse workstation, with four assessment and treatment bays to ensure the safety and confidentiality of our patients. The new station will allow for better patient interaction and help facilitate medical documentation with the addition of a new Electronic Medical Record system.
- Additional medical space and new exam rooms where our patients' medical needs will be assessed and treated by physicians and nurse practitioners.
- A new medication room where nurses will administer the appropriate medication protocols for a safe detox.
- Expanded counselor offices and treatment space which will be used for individual and group therapy sessions.

Right: architectural rendering of new nurses' station.



How To Support Mirmont's Expansion Campaign

If you would like to support A Place for Healing, Mirmont's expansion campaign, please consider making a charitable contribution or pledge by calling 484.580.4189 or by using the reply envelope found inside this newsletter. Contributions and pledges up to \$5,000 will be recognized on Mirmont's website and in the quarterly Mirmont Mirror newsletter, unless anonymity is requested. Special naming opportunities are available for recognizing the generosity of individuals and organizations who support our campaign with a gift of \$5,000 or more. Designated areas of our facility may be named for the donor, in memory of a loved one or family member, or for a special Mirmont caregiver. We thank you for your support.

ALUMNI CORNER

Mirmont hosted a variety of alumni activities during the recent winter months

Thanksgiving Day

A "Speaker Jam" was held in Mirmont's McCutcheon Hall. At this event, three Mirmont alumni with a year or more of continuous sobriety shared their experience, strength and hope with the patient community, alumni and staff. The group enjoyed getting to know one another after the presentations.

Christmas Day

Our Alumni Association donated Christmas gifts to the patients. Each patient awoke on Christmas morning to find gifts left by Santa and his elves! Patients had decorated their lounge areas for the holidays and enjoyed a visit by Santa Claus (Robert Bull).

New Year's Speaker Jam

A great social event with food, beverages and motivational stories of sobriety by alumni.

Mark your calendar for upcoming annual events:



Annual Memorial Day Picnic

Upwards of 400 people will participate in a full day of family friendly games, great food, and entertainment supplied by a local DJ. Organized by alumni members and Mirmont staff, with the help and support of Mirmont's patient community, this wonderful event culminates with two speakers sharing their inspirational stories. The picnic is open to alumni, the patient community, Mirmont staff,

friends and families. Tentative date: Sunday, May 26, 2013.

Alumni vs. Patients Softball Game

Where: Alumni Field When: Every Wednesday evening, 6 pm, spring through fall Alumni AA Meeting in McCutcheon Hall following the game.

To join Mirmont's Alumni Association or for more information on how you can get involved, please call or email Robert Bull, Evening Clinical Supervisor/Alumni Liaison, 484.227.1459, bullr@mlhs.org



TRAUMA

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(PTSD), it does indicate that the brain has failed to adequately process or properly store the event, and therefore it continues to cause you distress.

Mirmont Treatment Center has taken the lead in the field of substance abuse treatment by distinguishing itself as traumacompetent facility. Mirmont's therapists have been trained in the physiology, neuroscience and diagnosis of traumatic stress, as well as state-of-the-art trauma treatment modalities designed specifically for working with the underlying trauma that not only coexists with substance abuse, but often fuels it. Both the inpatient and outpatient programs are designed to work with men and women who have been traumatized so that they may obtain the help they need, experience hope and begin healing.

If you or someone you know is suffering from alcohol or drug dependency and trauma, please let us help. For more information, visit mirmont.org or call 484.227.1400 (main number) or 484.227.1453 (Admissions). ■

100 Yearsley Mill Road, Lima, PA 19063

Admissions: 484.227.1453 Main number: 484.227.1400 Toll free: 1.800.846.4656

mirmont.org

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Patients and Families Benefit from Mirmont's Pet-Assisted Therapy Program

Recently, Mirmont entered into a partnership with PAWS for People™ (Pet-Assisted Visitation Volunteer Service) to make pet-assisted therapy a vital part of our program. PAWS complements Mirmont's holistic treatment approach with effective non-verbal therapy. The emotions our patients experience can include fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, and isolation. Many patients also have dogs or other pets of their own and miss those loving, daily interactions. Pet-assisted therapy offers a non-threatening outlet to help them work with these emotions. The dogs in our program offer unconditional love and have an uncanny ability to look directly into the souls of the patients they interact with to let them know they care.

Zoe—Jessica Cirillo, Mirmont's Relapse Prevention Specialist, works with Susan Sotiropoulos of PAWS and her miniature Aussie, Zoe, during her Relapse Prevention

Group. Those diagnosed with Relapse Syndrome may experience fear of rejection and abandonment from trying repeatedly to achieve long-term sobriety. When the group is allowed to engage with Zoe, they report feeling more at ease, comforted and relieved. Zoe enjoys the attention (as well as her post-session treats), making this a "win-win" situation for all. Ms. Cirillo believes this has been a very positive experience for her group and is looking at additional ways to incorporate Zoe into the group process.

Abra—On any given Sunday, visitors and patients will find that things have gotten a little more "warm and fuzzy" in McCutcheon Hall, thanks to



Zoe with (from left) handler Susan and Jessica Cirillo.

Dave and his golden retriever, Abra, who have been providing therapy services for eight



Abra with (from left) Dave Hargarten and Barb Catania.

months. Abra's role is to put patients and visitors at ease during what can sometimes be a difficult, tense or awkward situation. Dave and Abra also spend time with those who are not expecting visitors, which may help lessen any disappointment. So far, virtually all of the feedback has been extremely positive. Many patients, visitors and staff are genuinely happy to see Abra and usually remember her name week-to-week. Dave has heard patients with very little to say tell Abra, "I love you" within moments after meeting her. Other

comments overheard are: "I miss my dogs so much!" "You just made my day," "I look forward to her visit every week," "We talk about her during small group all the time," and "Can she stay with me?" But it's what they don't say with words that speaks the loudest—the instant smiles, noticeably relaxed body language, even tears.

Mirmont is grateful for our partnership with PAWS for People and we look forward to a continued relationship with Zoe and Abra, and their humans, Sue and Dave.

PAWS for People is a non-profit organization committed to providing therapeutic visits to any person in the community who would benefit from interaction with a well-trained, loving pet. Find out more at pawsforpeople.org