

BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER'S BULLETIN

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Department of Mental Health announces leadership changes

Boswell Regional Center's

The Boswell Bulletin is published to inform the public, employees, family members and friends on Boswell Regional Center's activities, programs and progress. This publication also seeks to provide information to those interested in the work conducted by Boswell's employees to enrich the lives of those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

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ON THE COVER:

Santa, aka Will Beeson, campus unit administrator, is pictured spending time with a campus individual at her unit's Christmas party in December. To ensure social distancing, each campus unit held separate, socially distanced parties attended only by staff with whom they come in daily contact. Special refreshments, music, games and gifts from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg made each party extra special.



(see more photos of Christmas parties on pgs. 4-5)

Executive Director Diana Mikula retiring, replaced by Wendy Bailey

Department of Mental Health Executive Director Diana Mikula has announced that she will be retiring from the agency on January 31, 2021, and the Board of Mental Health has appointed Deputy Director for Administrative Services Wendy Bailey to fill the position following Ms. Mikula's retirement.



Diana Mikula

Mikula announced her retirement at the Board of Mental Health's regularly scheduled November meeting. She is leaving the agency after having spent more than 25 years with the agency. She was named Executive Director in 2014 and has served in that capacity for the past six years.

"I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to surround myself with the most compassionate, competent, and caring staff who are focused on one united mission to improve the lives of Mississippians, one person at a time," Mikula said.

In addition to her current role as Deputy Director for Administrative Services, Bailey has previously served as Chief of Staff and Director of the Bureau of Outreach and Planning. She has been with the agency for 15 years.



Wendy Bailey

"I look forward to working with the people we serve and their families, our staff, community partners, and state leaders to continue to develop and support innovative services and initiatives that open doors to improving the overall behavioral health of our state," Bailey said. "My primary vision for the agency is to improve access to an evidence-based continuum of care for people with mental illness, substance use addiction, and intellectual and developmental disabilities," she said. "Every person has a voice and a story, and every person should be able to access and participate in the care that will improve their lives."

"Listening to the people we serve and developing evidence-based services and supports that inspire hope and help people obtain their goals are my priorities," she said.

Bailey received her bachelor's degree from Belhaven University and her master's degree from Webster University. She is a graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and is a Licensed Mental Health Administrator and Certified Public Manager.

During her years at the agency, she has focused on strategic planning, performance development, and budget management. She was instrumental in the department's Think Recovery campaign, which partners with Certified Peer Support Specialists to focus on development of a recovery-oriented system of care, and the creation of the state's first comprehensive suicide prevention plan. She has also led efforts in the area of school safety and efforts to dispel the stigma associated with mental health, as well as the coordination of the agency's strategic planning process.

In addition, Bailey has served on the School Safety Task Force established by Gov. Phil Bryant, the Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Advisory Board, the Mississippi Violent Death Reporting System Advisory Board, and Mississippi's Suicide Prevention Workgroup.

She serves as a liaison with national organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute. She has been the recipient of numerous awards for her work during

her years at DMH, including the NAMI Mississippi Visionary Leadership Award in 2019.

Bailey lives in Rankin County with her husband, Charles, and their son, Brandon.



Department of Mental Health announces leadership changes

Jake Hutchins and Craig Kittrell Named Deputy Executive Directors at DMH

Effective January 1, 2021, Jake Hutchins took on the role of Deputy Executive Director of Community Operations and Craig Kittrell took on the role of Deputy Executive Director of State Operated Programs. Both previously served within DMH, with Hutchins overseeing the Bureau of Behavioral Health Services and Kittrell overseeing the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

"I am pleased to share these efforts, which will better position the talented team we have here at DMH," DMH Executive Director Wendy Bailey said. "These changes will help deliver on our overarching goal of improving access to an evidence-based continuum of care for people with mental illness, substance use addiction, and intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Hutchins has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in social work, along with an extensive background in community mental health services. He has been with DMH since 2002, serving in several roles with the agency. As bureau director for community services, has overseen the expansion of community mental health services for adults and children, including the development of Mobile Crisis Response Teams throughout the state, as well as intensive community services such as Programs of Assertive Community Treatment, Intensive Community Outreach and Recovery Teams, and more.

"With his years of experience developing and improving a wide-range of community-based services in our state, I am confident he is the leader we need to continue this expansion and focus on efforts to improve the services and supports currently available," Bailey said.

Kittrell holds a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration and a master's degree in public administration. He began his role as bureau director for intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) services in January 2020, but he has also served in several roles at both mental health and IDD programs that DMH operates. Those positions included overseeing various operations of support services, such as information management, fiscal services, risk management, and more, as well as managing capital improvement projects.

"His experience at both an IDD regional program and a behavioral health program give him the knowledge and skills we need to continue providing quality services as we continue to move our system forward," Bailey said.

As Deputy Executive Director of Community Operations, Hutchins will oversee several areas within the DMH Central Office, including the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, the Bureau of Community Mental Health Services, and the Bureau of Certification and Quality Outcomes. He will also oversee the Chief Clinical Officer.

As Deputy Executive Director of State Operated Programs, Kittrell will oversee DMH's 12 program locations around the state, which includes four psychiatric hospitals, a mental health community living program, a specialized behavioral health program for youth, five IDD regional programs, and a specialized center for adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Jake Hutchins



Craig Kittrell

Christmas time at Boswell was filled with parties, gifts and fun!

The holiday season beginning after Thanksgiving and extending until New Year's is always a festive time at Boswell. Kicked off by the lighting of the campus Christmas tree, the weeks are filled with special trips to view Christmas lights and area parades, holiday treats, parties, gifts and the arrival of even more gifts and a holiday meal on Dec. 25.

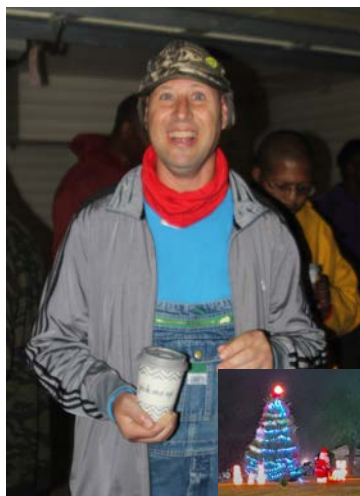
This year, things were a little different due to the pandemic, but individuals still managed to enjoy the season, albeit in a socially distanced manner.

The Christmas season officially began with the tree-lighting on Dec. 3. Individuals enjoyed sipping hot chocolate, eating sugar cookies and singing carols while waiting for the lights of the massive tree stationed near the front of campus to be turned on.

A campus Christmas parade attended by family members and city officials who decorate vehicles and drove by buildings to wave to loved ones and drop off Christmas packages. Boswell staff also decorated cars, trucks and other vehicles and participated in the parade.

Prior to Christmas Day, special parties in the Rainy Day Room were held separately for each campus unit. Organized by Recreation, these fun events included games, Christmas music and a visit from Santa to deliver gifts from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg.

Here are a few photos from a socially distanced, but still enjoyable Christmas at Boswell, 2020-style!



Nathan from Ridgeview waited patiently for the Christmas tree lights to come on while sipping cocoa at the Director's house.



Warm hats, socks and gloves were just some of the gifts delivered by Westminster Church in Hattiesburg and presented to ladies at Oakbrook's party.



Hair care items delighted this lady that resides at Oakbrook.



Games and activities at each unit party were planned by each recreation therapist. Maci Phillips, rec therapist on Oakbrook, planned Bingo with door prizes as part of her party.

Christmas time at Boswell was filled with parties, gifts and fun!

More photos from Christmas at Boswell



Ridgeview's guys looked sharp at their party, dressing up in their dress shirts and ties.



Santa also made an appearance at Fairway's party, much to the delight of the guys.

Generous donations made Christmas special at Boswell, Mississippi Adolescent Center

The Christmas season for Boswell and Mississippi Adolescent Center's individuals was made even brighter through monetary donations for gifts and special events, personalized presents and treats for staff working during the holiday.

For several years, one of the biggest donors for Boswell's Christmas celebrations has been **Westminster Presbyterian Church** in Hattiesburg. Using "wish lists" from individuals, church members purchase gifts for each campus individual to present at individual parties.

This year, the **City of Brookhaven**, led by the Mayor's office, adopted several of the young residents at Mississippi Adolescent Center for Christmas. Huge Christmas bags were filled with several gifts, all of which were tailored to each one's wish list. City officials from several departments donated the gifts and a cookie tray to make MAC's Christmas party even more special. Others that helped make Christmas 2020 special through their donations included:

- Joni & Friends of Ridgeland
- American Legion Post 79 – Wesson
- ARC Pine Belt Region – Laurel
- Fellowship Sunday School – Pelahatchie
- Country MS Homemakers Volunteers – Mize



Rev. Chris Crotwell, left, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, is pictured loading a box of presents along with church volunteer Karen Reidenbach, center, and Cindy Womack, assistant director of Boswell.



The City of Brookhaven adopted several MAC residents for Christmas and purchased everything on their wish lists. Pictured with other city employees, Mayor Joe Cox, above, center, and his assistant Cindy Smith, to his left, organized the drive. Pictured in front is the young daughter of a city employee who donated her stuffed animal to one of the boys after the exact item couldn't be found in stores.



Right photo: Rachel Britt, foreground, picked up the gifts for MAC at City Hall. Also pictured is Mayor Cox, second from right, and other city employees.



Matt Nalker, center, executive director of ARC of Mississippi, donated two iPads to Boswell to be used to enhance client programming. Receiving them are Clint Ashley, left, director, and Cindy Womack, right, assistant director.



Left, Martie Kwasny, pictured on right, director of Joni and Friends of Ridgeland, presented boxes of wrapped blankets, socks and other gifts to Boswell individuals before Christmas. Accepting the gift is Cindy Womack, left, assistant director.

2020 Christmas parade

Boswell's Christmas parade set to become an annual event

Reviving a popular event of the past, a Christmas parade through campus was held the week prior to Christmas. Staff, community supporters and family members participated this year, setting the stage for an annual event.



Recreation organized the parade and then decorated a Starcart so all rec therapists could ride through and wave at individuals in front of their buildings.



Family members decorated their vehicles and drove through campus to wave to their loved ones.



The City of Magee is always supportive of Boswell, including campus events. Mayor Dale Berry, two police cars and a fire department truck participated in this year's Christmas parade.



Boswell's Christmas float won top prizes in area Christmas parades. The float was created by Maintenance, Rhonda McCallum and Community staff.



Spotlight On...

Final Employees of the Quarter honored in December

Four Boswell employees were honored for going beyond the call of duty in the final quarter of 2020. They included:

- * Katina Runnels - Community ICF
- * Rose Lewis – Community Services
- * Belinda Thompson – Support/Professional
- * Schqundria Gray – Campus DSP

Each employee received \$25 from Boswell’s Friends and Family Association, a certificate and coupons to area restaurants.



Pictured second from left are: Belinda Thompson, Rose Lewis and Schqundria Gray. They are pictured with Clint Ashley, left, director, and Cindy Womack, right, assistant director.

Betty turns 80!

It’s always a blessing when our individuals get to celebrate milestone birthdays and even better when they’re in good health to enjoy



the celebration. Betty, a long-time resident of Pinelake recently celebrated her 80th birthday with friends and staff who treated her to a special cake, presents and activities.



Katina Runnels, community ICF winner, received a certificate, \$25 and coupons.