

alta Highlighter

Welcome to our new community newsletter – the *Alta Highlighter*. For convenience of use and efficiency, we have changed to an emailed, electronic format. While future editions will be shorter, the frequency will be increased from twice yearly to every two months.

There are many exciting changes at Alta, and we want to keep our community partners, supporters and fellow agencies well-informed. We encourage you to share our newsletter with others, and forward to us the email address of anyone interested in being our mailing list. We hope you like our new format – let us know what you think. You can reach us at info@AltaCareGroup.org

AN UPDATE FROM CEO JOE SHOROKEY

As I make my rounds in the community, a frequently asked question is “Why did you change your name from D&E Counseling Center to **Alta Care Group**, and what does *Alta* mean?”



I answer by pointing out that, although counseling is a major component of what we do, it is by no means the only service we offer. We now operate the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Mahoning County, which has greatly enhanced the services provided to area children and their families.

We had been known as D&E for 45 years, and it’s a heritage we’re very proud of. It has given us the foundation to propel us forward into the future. However, we wanted a name that better represented the diversity of our services and our values. *Alta*, derived from a word in other languages meaning “elevated” or “high,” was selected to represent: **Our High Values** – to earn and keep the trust of the people we serve and our community partners...**Our High Quality** – to deliver excellence in the quality of care we provide, and...**Our High Expectations** – for Helping Children and Healing Families! After much consideration the Board of Directors and I agreed that **Alta Care Group** captured the ideas and values that we wish to convey about our services and organization. The name was officially changed on March 17th, 2016 and rolled-out to the public at the beginning of April. Our official name is now **The Alta Care Group**, which encompasses two subdivisions: **Alta Behavioral Healthcare and Alta Head Start**.

We’re excited to announce the recent awarding of several grants totaling \$46,500 to support the work we do with our young children from preschool through second grade. The funds will be used to support nutrition education and healthy snacks for our Head Start children, development of literacy and social-emotional skills in early learners, and remediation of behavioral issues. We wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to: **The William Swanston Charitable Fund** (\$31,200), **The United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley** (\$10,350) and **The PNC Foundation** (\$5,000) for their generous support.

In addition, we have received \$374,603 through the **Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services’ “Whole Child Matters Grant”** to ensure that Early Childhood professionals within our tri-county collaborative provide “the right care to the right children at the right time.” This grant will support a tri-county collaborative between **Alta Behavioral Healthcare**, **The Counseling Center of Columbiana County**, and **The Trumbull County Mental Health and Recovery Board**. *The goals are to:*

- 1) retain our youngest Ohioans in their preschool and early learning settings
- 2) improve access to early childhood mental health consultation, prevention and early intervention services that increase social, emotional and behavioral development.

A Master Trainer, **Marci Masters**, is also provided through **Alta** to provide training to community agencies, preschools, day cares, schools and individuals. She emphasizes the social, emotional and behavioral aspects of young children to help retain them in preschools. Marci was also selected as a presenter at this year’s annual meeting of the Ohio Program of Wellness and Recovery Conference (OPEC).



Supporters of Alta’s efforts to help young children from preschool through second grade gathered for a recent grant announcement. They included (L–R): **Ted Schmidt**, PNC Bank; **Leah Merritt**, YWCA; **Bob Hannon**, United Way of Youngstown & Mahoning Valley; **Tim Nelson**, Easter Seals and Youngstown Hearing & Speech; **Mary Jane Gingher**, Mill Creek Children’s Center; **Suzanne Barbati**, Oh Wow!; **Joseph Shorokey**, **Alta Behavioral Healthcare**; and **JoAnn Stock**, Akron Children’s Hospital Mahoning Valley.

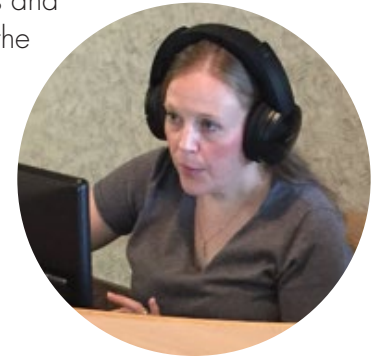
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidence-based therapy we have begun using within the past year. Alta Behavioral Healthcare was presented with an opportunity by the *Ohio Department of Health* to have several staff trained in this intervention.

This approach uses a specially equipped treatment room at our Belmont Avenue office and involves an earpiece that is worn by the parent. The parent and child are in a room where they have tasks to complete and can interact or can just play with one another. The therapist is monitoring them remotely through a TV monitor and has a microphone that is connected to the parent's earpiece. The therapist will give suggestions and share observations with the parent in real time.

This approach has met with great success. The therapists have stated that it is one of the most effective approaches they employ because they can observe real-time interaction and have the opportunity to intervene immediately and help the parents to gain new skills and confidence. In addition, the children are being directed by their parent without the therapist in the room, and their parent is an authority figure who can interact, direct and encourage them.



Therapist Kristen Hartz monitors a Parent-Child Interaction Therapy session.

Head Start

In the upcoming year, Alta Head Start will operate at **18 locations throughout the City and County**. Ten of these locations are solely Alta operated, and four will be provided



Jim Loboy of WYTV's Daybreak program recently visited a Head Start classroom.

in partnership with other organizations (Potential Development, Easter Seals, Mahoning County Educational Service Center and Youngstown City Schools).

As of now, six of our seven solely Alta operated sites have received the prestigious **5-Star, Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) awards** from the Ohio Department of Education and The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This signifies that the programs not only meet, but exceed licensing, health and safety standards. We will be pursuing the same 5-Star Ratings through our new partnerships with Youngstown State University, the Mahoning County Educational Services Center and the Youngstown City Schools.

Finally, a brand-new **specialized classroom for preschool children** with challenging behaviors will open at our Camp Challenge facility this fall. Renovations have been completed and a new playground has been added to make this location even more special.

Linkages

This program provides education to students and staff related to recognizing the signs and **symptoms of depression in students**, and also screens for suicide risk to thousands of students throughout Mahoning County.

Funded by the Mahoning County Mental Health & Recovery Board, the Linkages Program staffs four Master-prepared screeners: Angela Kerns, Kathleen Zimmerman, Sarah

Babiyak and Sarah Graham. Last year, the Linkages staff **provided educational programming in 22 schools** in Mahoning County to 3,170 students and screened 625 students for suicidal ideations.

Follow-up services are provided to any student who screens positive, and parental contacts are made to refer those students who are at-risk for further assessment.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS FOUNDATION

The Children's Mental Health Circle of Friends Foundation has been a major supporter of Alta Behavioral Healthcare for over 30 years. Their annual Sports Celebrity Golf Tournament and Night at the Races fundraisers have not only supported our programs, but have provided a lot of fun and entertainment to Valley residents who attend them.

The COF Foundation's **31st annual golf event** was held at the Lake Club and raised a little over \$58,000, which the Foundation uses to help support programs and services of Alta Behavioral Healthcare. Major sponsors of the golf event are John and Cathy Pelusi.

On July 12th the Foundation presented **Ed Degregorio** its *2016 Crystal Heart Award*. The award is given by the Foundation annually during its Sunday evening dinner sponsored by Ed Muransky and takes place the day before the Foundation's Annual Golf Charity Scramble. The award is given to an individual in the Mahoning Valley who was determined by the Foundation to have contributed through their professional career, volunteerism or philanthropy to the enrichment and development of positive mental health in children and young adults. Mr. Degregorio was recognized for his 58 years as a teacher, principal and coach.



Ed DeGregorio (L) is presented the Crystal Heart Award by Gregory Cvetkovic (R), Foundation Board President.

This fall on October 20, the COF Foundation will introduce a new activity, *The World Series of Homemade Wine*. Guests and wine experts will be choosing the "Best Home Made Wine" from the wines submitted by home wine makers of the area. Home wine makers wishing to enter or those wanting to reserve a seat should contact **Katelyn McQuiston** at katelynn@altacaregroup.org. There will be awards in several categories for best wines. Further details will be available as we move closer to the event. Check out our social media sites and watch for an announcement in the newspaper.



WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

You can Like, Share or Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We also post blogs about children's behavioral health issues on our website: www.AltaCareGroup.org. From our website, you can visit both our Behavioral Health and Head Start sites, or go directly to them at www.altabehavioralhealthcare.org and www.altaheadstart.org.



EMPLOYMENT

Alta Care Group is always interested in talking with highly motivated, talented people who are passionate about children and who strive for excellence, and are interested in working at Alta. If you like to work with children and their families in a progressive, supportive environment, contact either our Behavioral Health Division or Head Start Division.

Behavioral Health Division:

Jamie Miller, Clinical Director—jamie@altacaregroup.org

Head Start Division:

Dave Tharp, HR Manager – dtharp@altaheadstart.org

See our video about why Alta is a great place to work at altabehavioralhealthcare.org/about-alta/employment

