Greater Lakes Cares
Annual Backpack Giveaway Helps Kids Succeed!

Most children look forward to starting school in the fall. But for families who struggle financially, the new year can mean added expense and stress. So this summer, staff member Kathy Sweeney and volunteer Joan Eisenhardt once again spearheaded their annual “Greater Lakes Cares School Supply Drive,” to ensure that all of Greater Lakes’ young clients start the new year right.

“Many schools can help with supplies after school starts, when they see who needs help,” explained one therapist. “But kids want to show up on the first day with a new backpack and new supplies — like the other kids. This helps them start the year already fitting in. And that’s huge!”

Each year, Kathy and Joan collect donations, shop sales, and recruit help. Child & Family therapists submit names and ages of children who need supplies, and the backpacks are custom-filled with notebooks, pens, markers, tissues… everything required for the new year. Then, in mid-August, volunteers gather to fill the packs and deliver them to the therapists. This year, more than 400 children received essential supplies.

“It really gives kids a boost of confidence,” explained Deb Lopez, Director of Child & Family Services. “It’s not just the supplies. It also lets kids know that there are people who care, people who are rooting for them. And sometimes that message is as important as what is in the backpacks.”

From our clients:

“This place does so much good and they have brought so much change into my life. Thank you so much.”

“I was nervous to come here, but right away I felt more refreshed after meeting with the counselor. It was a positive experience, and everyone was very welcoming.”

“All the receptionists are pleasant, helpful, and kind. Further, every staff member I have encountered has been approachable, friendly, and professional. Thank you for creating such an amazing and safe mental health service”

Brianna was grateful for her backpack of school supplies, which helped her start the school year with confidence.
CARF Certification

After years of preparation, Greater Lakes was pleased to receive a three-year CARF International accreditation, the highest level awarded by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Surveyors visited Greater Lakes’ facilities, reviewed policies and procedures, audited clinical charts and personnel files, and interviewed clients and staff. In the initial report, the surveyors noted “well-maintained, clean facilities that reflect a commitment to the safety and well-being of clients,” and “the infectious enthusiasm and dedication of staff, who are clearly passionate about the work they do.” They also quoted clients, who told them “Without Greater Lakes I would be back in the hospital or worse,” “Greater Lakes is a blessing” and “I would not be alive if not for Greater Lakes.” The board of directors, staff and volunteers were honored to receive this “seal of approval,” which reflects the agency’s dedication to high-quality services and programs that focus on customer service and client satisfaction.

OUR MISSION

Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare:

• Empowers hope through compassion, engagement and connection with those we serve.
• Empowers relief through effective evidence based practices that promote skills and resilience.
• Empowers recovery by building upon strengths and supporting individuals in their goals.

OUR VALUES

• Do the right things for the right reasons.
• Provide great customer service with high quality outcomes.
• Communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
• Problem solve collaboratively with clients, staff, and the community.
• Promote healthy options for clients and staff.
• Be nimble and responsive in creating solutions.

Adopted July 23, 2015

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THANK YOU to our amazing volunteers who helped assemble hundreds of backpacks filled with school supplies for Greater Lakes clients in need!
Books Needed for Little Free Library!

Our Little Free Library in the lobby has been such a success, we are running low on books. Since it started eight months ago, hundreds of children have found books to love, and countless parents have enjoyed reading to their children. If you have gently used books your children or grandchildren have outgrown, or if you find favorite classics at a garage sale, please consider donating them to Greater Lakes. You can drop them off at Lobby One or call Marguerite Richmond at 253-620-5184 to arrange a pick-up.

“To Boldly Go…”

Dressed in Star Trek uniforms and determined to win the Golden Bedpan award, two employees from Greater Lakes joined with MultiCare staff to compete in a Bed Race Rally in late August. This year’s theme was “TV Show Families,” and the Behavioral Health Star Trek Team was joined by the Partridge Family, the Jetsons, MASH characters, and a dozen other teams from departments across MultiCare. Each group raced their decorated gurney through various obstacles, stopping to complete tasks along the way. They sorted laundry, matched socks, folded fitted sheets and recreated family photos — all in record time! Everyone had fun, and even though the Behavioral Health team didn’t win, they came close. And they showed everyone what real teamwork looks like!

Reaching Out With Pride

Greater Lakes made a debut appearance at Tacoma Pride in July, and staff were especially pleased to hear from people who stopped to share their experiences: “I had counseling through Greater Lakes at my school and it really helped me.” “I had counseling at the 72nd street clinic and the counselor I had was amazing. She really made me feel empowered.” “I went to Greater Lakes years ago, and my own recovery journey helped me decide to be a Peer Counselor myself. I’m in training now!” It was a fun and inspiring day for staff who participated, and they are looking forward to attending next year.

Greater Lakes therapist Astrik Price
Finding Hope

Riye’s struggle with mental health issues began with she was just 13, and she has battled severe anxiety, PTSD, addiction and other challenges her entire adult life. She tried various treatments, but nothing seemed to help and she almost gave up. But then she came to Greater Lakes and found a place where she was accepted for who she was. For the first time, she found hope:

“At Greater Lakes, I found the best mental health treatment I’ve ever received, and I’ve been to quite a few places! People really care about you here. You can tell they love what they do. Here, I’m not just a number. I’m not just an appointment. They treat me like a whole person. With the help I’ve had here, and the Peer support, I’m doing really well. It’s been a long road, but I feel better than I ever have. I’m going to be graduating soon, and I’m really grateful for all the help I’ve found here!”