

# Positive Change

## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Change Makers	4
Dollars and Change	6

A publication of  
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### HelpLine:

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860.747.3434 Central CT  
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Wheeler provides comprehensive solutions that address complex health issues, providing individuals, families and communities with accessible, innovative care that encourages recovery, health and growth at all stages of life. Our integrated approach to primary and behavioral health, education and recovery creates measurable results, positive outcomes and hopeful tomorrows for more than 30,000 individuals across Connecticut each year.



## Wheeler Expands Behavioral Health Services in Bristol Schools

Wheeler and the Bristol Public Schools have partnered to expand access to mental health services for students at Greene-Hills and West Bristol schools. New school-based behavioral health clinics located at these K-8 schools will employ a national cognitive behavioral intervention model to help students address trauma-related issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and behavioral health issues, and provide other evidence-based interventions to address an array of problems, including anxiety, depression, academic and peer challenges, and more.

"Wheeler has collaborated with the Bristol Public Schools for more than 40 years to support student health and development," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. "Our new partnership further expands our ability to deliver nurturing, trauma-informed care to youth and families when and where services are most critically needed."



*Members of Wheeler's School-based Health Center team from left, Bill Kania, LMFT, director, Children's Outpatient Services; Rebecca Ruitto, LMFT, senior clinician assigned to West Bristol School; and Hilary Kasprzak, MA, clinician at Greene-Hills School.*

### School-based Behavioral Health Clinics

Wheeler's school-based behavioral health clinics provide individual behavioral health services as well as linkage to other services in the Bristol community, including connections with primary and dental care, afterschool programming and a broad continuum of outpatient and community-based levels of care. A Wheeler clinician supports each school location one day per week.

*Continued on page 3.*

## Wheeler Offers Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid, Alcohol Abuse

Wheeler offers an array of services to respond to the persistent community addiction crisis, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid and alcohol abuse at four locations in central Connecticut. An initial clinical evaluation is available without an appointment.

MAT also is available to individuals transitioning back to the community following a period of incarceration through an innovative pilot program with the Connecticut Department of Correction.



**Wheeler**  
Center of Excellence

### ADDICTION

"Medication-assisted treatment, when combined with counseling and other forms of support, has been shown to effectively combat many of the challenges associated with drug and alcohol addiction," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. "It's critical

*Continued on page 2.*



# a message of change from the president

[www.wheelerclinic.org](http://www.wheelerclinic.org)



Wheeler is a proactive, innovative organization defining the future of health care in Connecticut and promoting health, recovery and growth at all stages of life.

We know that the right care, delivered in the right place, at the right time, makes a tremendous

difference, and the stories in this issue of *Positive Change* reflect our commitment to meeting community needs. We have launched new services at the Johnson Memorial emergency department in the northeast corner of our state, an innovative therapeutic childcare program with the New Britain YWCA, and opened school-based clinics in Bristol that keep kids safe and well, using the latest therapies, approaches and linkages to the community.

Our commitment to the individuals and families we serve has never been greater, even as the challenges we experience in the face of Connecticut's fiscal crisis continue to unfold. We believe all people will have the opportunity to grow, change and live healthier, productive lives. The support of our friends and donors, including the sponsors and participants of our 31st annual Golf Classic, and outstanding benefactors like Doris Nims, whose \$1.9-million bequest will touch the lives of our patients for generations, help us remain focused on that vision. Thank you for your continued support.

**Susan Walkama, LCSW**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## Medication-Assisted Treatment (cont.)

for individuals and families to know where to turn for help for effective treatment options and to believe that recovery is possible.”

### Extended Release Naltrexone (Vivitrol®)

When combined with counseling, extended-release injectable Naltrexone, prescribed as Vivitrol®, is an effective evidence-based treatment that allows patients to stay abstinent longer, experience fewer cravings, and decrease their chances of relapse. Non-habit-forming, it works by blocking the effects of opioids and the pleasurable feelings produced by drinking.

Extended-release Naltrexone treatment includes monthly administration of the medication by injection and counseling services based on the individual's needs. Treatment is covered by Medicaid for eligible individuals as well as many commercial insurances and is subject to a co-pay or deductible.

This treatment is available at the following Wheeler locations:

- 999 Asylum Avenue, Hartford
- 75 North Mountain Road, New Britain
- 91 Northwest Drive, Plainville
- Wheeler's Health & Wellness Center,  
10 North Main Street, Bristol

### MAT Vivitrol® Treatment for Individuals Returning to the Community

The Connecticut Department of Correction and Wheeler have partnered on a unique pilot program for individuals returning to the New Britain, Bristol and Plainville communities following a period of incarceration. The program includes pre- and post-release engagement, care coordination and immediate access to Vivitrol® medication-assisted treatment, and other services for alcohol and/or heroin addiction.

### Buprenorphine (Suboxone®, Zubsolv® or Bunavail®)

Buprenorphine, most commonly prescribed as Suboxone®, is available by appointment at the Wheeler Health & Wellness Center, 999 Asylum Avenue, Hartford. Combined with counseling, it helps people reduce or quit their use of opioids.

### Naloxone (Narcan®)

Naloxone, commonly referred to as Narcan®, is a medication that saves lives by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose. Behavioral health consumers, friends and family members can receive a prescription for Naloxone as early as the initial evaluation. The medication is administered at the time of the overdose.

## School-based behavioral health clinics (cont.)

### Helping Students Deal with Trauma

Wheeler's Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) program, delivered through the Bristol school-based health centers, is an evidence-based behavioral therapy model that delivers skill-based group interventions. The model, funded by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), serves children in grades 4 through 8 and concentrates on relief from symptoms of PTSD and general anxiety among children and youth who have experienced trauma. The program involves individual, group and parent education sessions focusing on:

- Education about common reactions to trauma
- Relaxation training
- Cognitive therapy (understanding the links between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and identifying and challenging maladaptive thoughts)
- Gradual exposure to trauma reminders
- Exposure to stress and trauma memory through drawing, writing, verbalization and social problem solving

Wheeler provides direct services to more than 2,300 individuals from Bristol each year. For more information, visit [wheelerclinic.org/school-health](http://wheelerclinic.org/school-health).



### Nationally



**1 in 5 youth**

suffers from a diagnosable emotional, mental, or behavioral disorder. Yet the majority of youth who need care do not receive it.



**70% of children**

who receive mental health services access those services at school.



One study found that students served by school-based health centers had fewer discipline problems, course failures and school absences.

Source: School-Based Health Alliance

## Johnson Memorial Hospital and Wheeler Team Up to Expand Access to Behavioral Health Crisis Services

Children, adolescents, adults and families in northeastern Connecticut will have increased access to behavioral health crisis services, thanks to an agreement between Wheeler and Johnson Memorial Hospital.

Under the agreement, Wheeler assumes responsibility for Johnson Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department Crisis Service from 7 AM to 11:30 PM, seven days a week. Wheeler conducts crisis assessment, intervention and stabilization, clinical and case management services to provide immediate intervention and facilitated connections to community services, including primary and behavioral health care, intensive outpatient treatment and outpatient, residential treatment programs, and

wraparound supports. All of these services offer long-term advantages over recurrent emergency department care.

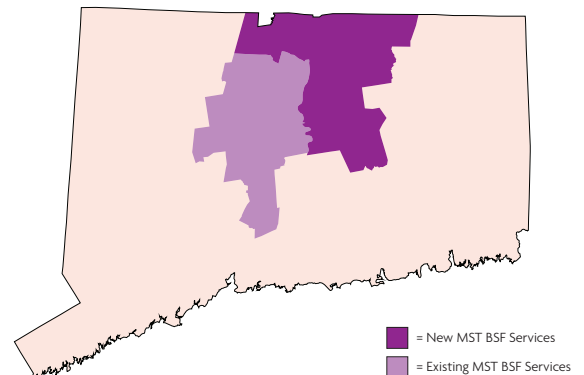
"Wheeler and Johnson Memorial Hospital have a shared goal to promote whole-person health and improve the overall quality of life and care in the region," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer of Wheeler. "This coordinated, collaborative approach to care ensures access to high-quality services and supports, which prevents unnecessary emergency room visits, hospitalizations and re-admissions. The end result for everyone is better health outcomes, an improved care experience, lower costs and the most appropriate linkages to services that help individuals recover."

## MST-BSF Program Expands to Manchester

Wheeler's Multisystemic Therapy - Building Stronger Families (MST-BSF) program, funded by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), has expanded to serve individuals and families in 19 cities and towns in Greater Manchester.

MST-BSF is an intensive, home-based approach for families with children ages 6-17 involved with DCF protective services due to neglect and physical abuse concerns and where there is also concern about the impact of parental substance abuse on the family. A central part of the model is intensive, empirically supported treatment focused on monitoring and treating parental substance abuse.

Wheeler was selected by model developers in 2005 to participate in a pilot study of MST-BSF. The Wheeler MST-BSF team—the only one of its kind at the time—served youth and families in 16 towns in Greater New Britain. Wheeler continued to be instrumental in working with model developers to refine the MST-BSF model, and in 2014 was selected to expand the program to serve Greater Hartford. Since the launch of the first team, Wheeler has partnered with model developers from the Medical University of South Carolina and participated in a federally



funded randomized control trial to expand the evidence base for the model. There are currently six MST-BSF teams in existence, including Wheeler's three teams. All are located in Connecticut.

"Families have demonstrated significant improvements due to Wheeler's MST-BSF services, and the outcomes our teams have achieved have led to further growth and expansion," said Elisabeth Cannata, Ph.D., vice president, Wheeler Community-based Family Services and Practice Innovation. "We're pleased to serve even more families in Connecticut." More here: [www.wheelerclinic.org/mst-bsf](http://www.wheelerclinic.org/mst-bsf).

## Breast Health Patient Navigation Program Launched



Wheeler launched a Breast Health Patient Navigation program in partnership with Susan G. Komen®

Southern New England and Bristol Hospital's Beekley Center for Breast Health and Wellness. The program, funded by a \$76,930 grant from Komen, includes the addition of a patient navigator to significantly increase breast health outreach to residents in the Greater Bristol and New Britain communities. The patient navigation program will help increase patient awareness of breast health and breast cancer services, as well as eliminate barriers and increase access to breast health screening, diagnostics and other services.

"We know that Bristol and New Britain have high breast cancer mortality rates, and Bristol has a high incidence of breast cancer," said Heidi Joseph, RN, MSN, vice president of health



An orientation event for Susan G. Komen Southern New England 2016-2017 Connecticut grantees was held on July 20. Pictured from left to right are Denise Rivera Coladonato, grant and mission coordinator, Susan G. Komen Southern New England; Wheeler staff Terri Martens, RN, program manager, and Elena Villafana, breast health patient navigator; and Elizabeth DiMartino, manager, marketing & communications, Susan G. Komen Southern New England.

center operations, Wheeler. "This grant will help us to address disparities in care by educating and engaging our community's most vulnerable populations and facilitating access to preventive care and/or treatment."

For information, please contact Elena Villafana, 860.920.4122, or visit [www.wheelerclinic.org/komen](http://www.wheelerclinic.org/komen).



## LEAP Childcare Program at New Britain YWCA Serves Young Children Affected by Trauma



Back row, from left, Carlita Elias, Psy.D., LEAP program manager; Olivia Rentas, assistant teacher; Diane Wallen, lead teacher. Front row from left, Tracy Krasinski LCSW, senior clinician; Julio Pabón, associate teacher.

Designed to meet the behavioral health needs of young children (ages 3-5) who have experienced significant abuse or neglect, the Learning Enhancement Attachment-based Pre-school (LEAP) program is under way. This trauma-informed, family-centered therapeutic day care program represents a partnership between

the Department of Children and Families, Wheeler Clinic and the New Britain YWCA. The program serves up to 12 children from New Britain and their families. Wheeler and the YWCA have extensive experience working with pre-school aged children. The primary goals of the program focus on healthy social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, as well as school readiness and parenting skills.

“With appropriate intervention and support at an early age, children in the LEAP program will have a better start in school and in life,” said Melissa Mendez, LCSW, IMH-E, director of Early Childhood Services, Wheeler. “We look forward to working collaboratively with the New Britain YWCA staff to serve young children and their families.”

The therapeutic preschool classroom is located in the YWCA's licensed childcare center in New Britain. Wheeler provides clinical services and program oversight. The YWCA provides classroom staffing. For information, call Carlita Elias, Psy.D., LEAP program manager, 860.225.4681, ext. 297. *The LEAP Childcare Program is funded by the Department of Children and Families.*

## Intimate Partner and Family Violence Programs Expand

Two of Wheeler's intimate partner and family violence programs—Family Violence Education Program (FVEP) and Explore—have expanded to serve the needs of more individuals and families in Connecticut.

“Everyone deserves a relationship that is healthy and free of any form of violence or abuse,” said Sharlene Croteau, LCSW, director of Adult Services, Wheeler. “The FVEP and Explore programs are part of Wheeler's comprehensive continuum of services that address the complex issue of intimate partner and family violence and help individuals work toward behavioral changes that enhance the quality of their lives and promote family safety.”

### Family Violence Education Program Expands to Enfield

Wheeler's Family Violence Education Program (FVEP) has expanded to serve individuals in 12 towns in Greater Enfield. FVEP provides specialized intervention and education to individuals arrested for the first time for family violence offenses. Each group cycle meets for nine weekly group sessions, with separate groups for males and females. The new program, based at 9 Moody Road, Enfield, is accepting referrals from local family relations officers

from the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (CSSD).

Wheeler's FVEP also serves individuals in Greater Bristol, Greater Hartford, Greater Middletown, Greater New Britain and Greater Waterbury. For information, call 860.265.1039.

### Explore Program Now in Middletown

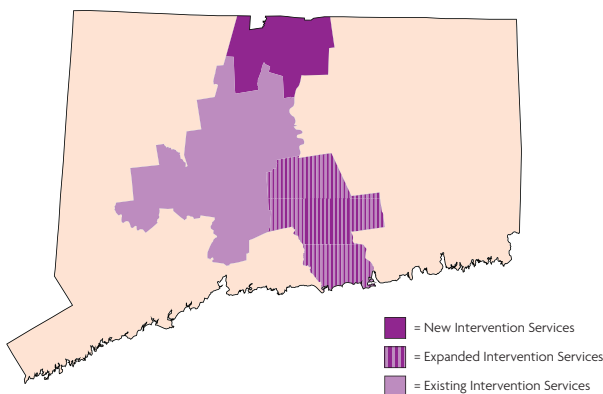
Wheeler's Explore program has expanded to serve adults in 16 towns in Greater Middletown.

The program provides CSSD-referred domestic violence offenders with the information and skills they need to change their behaviors and improve their current and future relationships. The program is a 26-session psycho-educational group intervention aimed at increasing offender accountability and

victim safety, and emphasizes peer confrontation, skills training and education. Wheeler's new Explore program is based at 2 Vance Drive, Middletown. For information, call 860.224.6396.

*FVEP and Explore are funded by the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division.*

For information about Wheeler's Community Justice programs for adults, visit [www.wheelerclinic.org/community-justice](http://www.wheelerclinic.org/community-justice).



# Dollars & Change

## Golf Classic Raises More Than \$1 Million Over 31 Years

This year, Wheeler's 31st Annual Golf Classic raised \$57,000, bringing the total amount raised since inception of the event to more than \$1 million.

Event sponsors such as Yarde Metals of Southington have participated since the tournament's first year, sharing a commitment to improving the health and well-being of families and the community. Other sponsors such as McPhee Electric and Tollman Spring Company have been 30-year sponsors, and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield celebrated their 15th year of support this year.

Wheeler's 31st Annual Golf Classic was made possible by a number of local businesses, including Platinum Dinner Sponsor, Farmington Bank, which has supported the event for more than 20 years; and Platinum Logo Sponsor, Manafort Family Foundation, a Golf Classic supporter for 17 years.



## Wheeler Sponsors NAMI Walk

Wheeler was a Silver Sponsor of the 13th annual NAMI Connecticut Walk in Bushnell Park on Saturday, May 21. More than 30 Wheeler employees and their families and friends joined 700 individuals in raising awareness and breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness.

## A Day of Caring

Wheeler hosted 14 volunteers from Gems Sensors & Controls as a part of the United Way of West Central Connecticut's 25th Annual Day of Caring. The volunteers helped spruce up Wheeler's 91 Northwest Drive, Plainville location by painting, weeding, mulching and planting flowers. Thanks to the volunteers for helping to make Wheeler a welcoming and inviting place to receive services.





## Mrs. Doris Nims Makes Historic Planned Gift

Mrs. Doris Nims, formerly of Cheshire, left a significant legacy gift of approximately \$1.9 million to Wheeler to advance programs and services that support children and adolescents.

Mrs. Nims, who passed away last year at the age of 89, was the daughter of Herman Papenfoth, one of Wheeler's earliest trustees and a leader in the Plainville community.

Mrs. Nims was a woman ahead of her time. She held a degree in preschool education and was an independent, intelligent woman with a good head for business. Her husband, Dr. Robert Nims, was a physician at the VA Medical Center in West Haven.



As an early trustee, Mr. Papenfoth, or "Pap," helped set Wheeler on a solid financial foundation with the strong business orientation he would pass on to his daughter Dorie. He also shared his commitment to Wheeler's mission with her.

"It is an honor to steward Mrs. Nims' legacy," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. "The gift is among the largest ever received by Wheeler and will be invested in our continuing transformation to a community health system."

Wheeler traces its beginnings to a generous bequest in 1960 from prominent Plainville resident Bertha Wheeler. Mrs. Wheeler's gift helped to establish the clinic in 1968 and led to the 1972 construction of the first facility at 91 Northwest Drive in Plainville.

"It is particularly meaningful when local families who were part of Wheeler's five decades of service support us in this way," added Walkama. "I believe they see the value and potential that Wheeler brings to the communities where we live and work."

To learn more about planned giving that supports Wheeler's services and those we serve, visit [plannedgiving.wheelerclinic.org](http://plannedgiving.wheelerclinic.org).

## Six Individuals and Organizations Receive Hands & Hearts Awards



Six organizations and individuals were recognized at Wheeler's sixth annual Hands & Hearts reception on May 19 at The Country Club of Farmington. The event honors individuals and families, corporations, and foundations for their outstanding support of Wheeler's mission to provide equitable access to innovative care that improves health, recovery and growth at all stages of life. This year, Mr. and Mrs. Hall Adams, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, The Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation, Connecticut CPCU Society Chapter, Inc., the Howey Family, and Mrs. Doris Nims joined the 35 philanthropists recognized by Wheeler since the Board of Trustees established the award in 2011.

**Please accept this contribution to help Wheeler Clinic continue to encourage recovery, health and growth at all stages of life in the years ahead.**

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