

WISHING MARY WELL AS SHE PREPARES FOR RETIREMENT!



"Over the past 20 years, Mary Shahbazian has not only led Allendale through challenging times, but built a very strong team that is in place to continue the good work of the organization. The Board and the employees of Allendale will miss Mary and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement!"

Bob Lee, Chairman, Allendale Board of Trustees



LET KIDS BE KIDS *Recreational Therapy is Fun!*

-- Photos courtesy of the Therapeutic Recreation Team



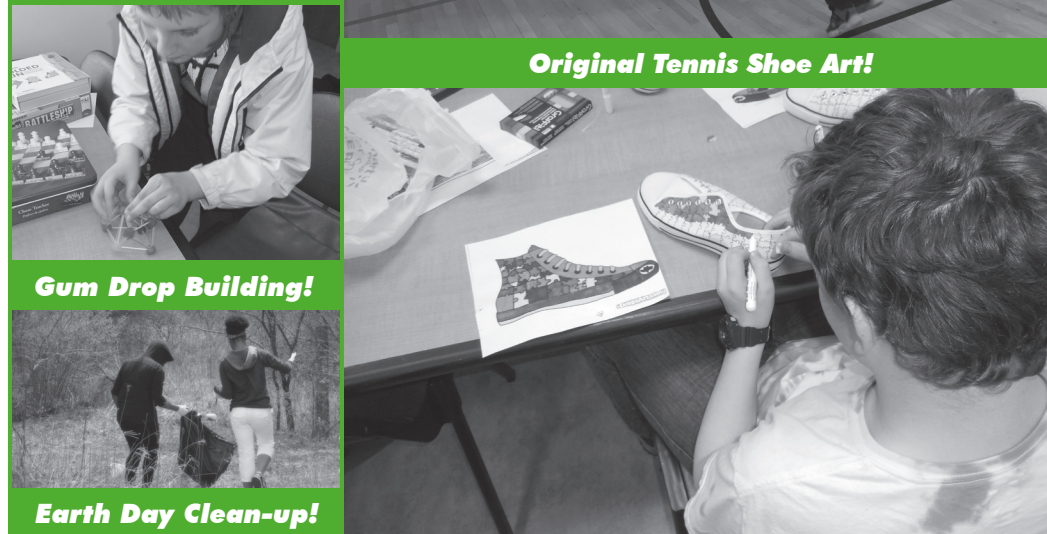
Inside Fun! Games...Games...and more Games!!!



Artwork!



Pet Therapy!



Gum Drop Building!

Earth Day Clean-up!

THE RAIN DOESN'T STOP OUR FUN!



Original Tennis Shoe Art!

ALLENDALE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1088

Grand Avenue & Offield Drive

Lake Villa, IL 60046



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ALLENDALE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE:

ACCREDITED BY:

The Council on Accreditation of Services for Families & Children, Inc.; The Joint Commission; The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement; and The Commission on Accreditation for American Psychological Association--Pre-Doctoral Internship Program

LICENSED/APPROVED BY:

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services; Illinois Department of Human Services; Illinois State Board of Education; Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

APPROVED TRAINING SITE FOR:

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SPRING 2017 NEWS BRIEF:

is a publication of the Allendale Association. Allendale does not trade, rent or sell its mailing list to any organizations. All information provided is strictly confidential.

Visit our website:
Allendale4kids.org

MEET JASON KEELER New President at Allendale

My first days at Allendale were...**compelling**. I hadn't started a new job in over 8 years so like that feeling on the very first day at a new school, I approached this adventure a little nervous as well as excited (a.k.a.: "nervited"). Some of my early thoughts were:

**WILL I FIT IN? ...AM I READY FOR THIS? ...
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? ...WHERE DO I PARK?**

What was tremendously helpful was that I had some opportunities to attend meetings and be on the Lake Villa campus a few times before my first day which helped me get to know the leadership staff a little before I started. Then, I got to see this team as well as all the staff jump into action over the next few days. There's no avoiding crises in the work we do, but it is in **HOW** we respond to them that shows our true character. I saw the strength and commitment that lies at the heart of Allendale.

In spite of the activity throughout my first few days, I could not have felt more welcome. Everywhere I visited, meetings I joined or simply walking around campus, staff readily came up to me to introduce themselves. Being fully aware what this organization has been through this last year and recognizing that more healing is still needed, I couldn't help think about the **RESILIENCY** of this agency and its staff.

Resilience is defined as, "...the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens." As I met more and more staff over the course of my first days here at Allendale, I was reminded of the resiliency permeating all around me—from the staff here at Allendale, but moreover the resiliency of all the children and adolescents who are here combating their own trauma...every single day.

A NEW BEGINNING... FOR ALL OF US. HOW AWESOME.



RESA-T

Our **RESA-T TREATMENT MODEL** is a chapter in a recently published book **"Family Therapy with Adolescents in Residential Treatment - Intervention and Research"**
Edited by: Jacob D. Christenson and Ashley N. Merriitts.

Relational Re-Enactment Systems Approach to Treatment

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW PRESIDENT, JASON KEELER...

What impressed you the most about Allendale?

First and foremost--the staff. I have known about Allendale through my professional career and having previously collaborated from time to time, I learned to expect professionalism, dedication and a commitment to serving some of the most challenging youth during potentially the most difficult periods in their young lives. From a program perspective, Allendale has held a long-standing reputation for providing excellent service. Beyond that, I was impressed by the expansive continuum of clinical and community-based programs that also comprises of special education services, the extensive vocational training programs, the **REStart** Clinical Model and other services provided throughout Lake and McHenry Counties and Wisconsin.

ALLENDALE STUDENT, GABBI ASKS: WHY DID YOU COME TO ALLENDALE?

"Hi Gabbi! I have always worked with kids my entire career but in my last job I wasn't able to be around them as much and I missed it. I also chose to come to Allendale because as I learned about all the diverse programs that are here like the school, the training programs (i.e. auto-shop, woodworking, silk screening, horticulture/greenhouse, job placement, etc.) counseling services and the fun activities and trips you get to do, I decided I really wanted to be a part of it! I know at times things can get hard, but I believe it is good to be challenged now and then--it helps us to grow."

What past professional experiences can you draw from that will serve you here at Allendale?

I have over 25 years of experience in working with children and families across mental and behavioral health as well as the child welfare fields that has encompassed direct clinical service including individual, family and group counseling, crisis intervention, intensive case management, therapeutic mentoring and have served in several program development, administrative and leadership capacities in county government, not-for-profit and the corporate sector. Throughout my various roles, I have been blessed by having phenomenal teachers, supervisors and mentors that have instilled in me the value of true collaboration tempered by a penetrating understanding of how to work within a system that often times feels rather broken. I have come to appreciate that there are **three essential aspects** that must simultaneously be addressed in any strong human service organization—**Clinical/Service Excellence, Program and Staff Development, and Responsible and Efficient Financial Performance**. All three must be attended to concurrently for an organization to be successful. I hope this principle-centered perspective will benefit all of us.

As you look ahead in the next several years—what do you see as your first priorities?

Well, to begin I really intend for the focus of my first 3-6 months is to LISTEN. I want to meet with as many staff and clients as possible, visit all of our programs and locations across different shifts to really immerse myself in Allendale. I want to hear what is working, what needs to be improved, what types of things that perhaps we used to do and stopped doing but could again re-visit. I have already heard some great ideas from some of you who have been a part of Allendale for decades. I think it is absolutely imperative to preserve Allendale's rich history and established legacy of helping children and families.

I also have begun meeting with our local community partners from law enforcement, schools and other private agencies to hear from them as well. Finally, I have

been engaging with our state system partners as well as legislators to help them develop a deeper and more personal understanding of the impact our state budget impasse and acrimonious political climate has on the work we all do and upon the families we serve.

ALLENDALE STUDENT, NOAH ASKS: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO AS A KID?

"Great question, Noah! Believe it or not, when I was a kid we didn't have iPhones or iPads and there was NO INTERNET. So we watched TV but had only 7-8 channels to choose from. My two favorite shows were 'The Six Million Dollar Man' and 'Batman and Robin.' In the summer we would ride our bikes and play 'capture the flag' until dark. If you are unsure about what some of these things are--you can google 'em!" 😊

What are your goals for the next 3-5 years?

I see our shared priorities consisting of the following:

1. Increase the number of kids we are able to return to the community through significantly increasing our clinical and community-based programs to further our capacity to help transition the youth we serve back to their homes and communities where possible. The more children we can successfully discharge will allow us to continue to help others who need us...just as Allendale has done for 120 years.

2. Develop and implement a strategy that will enable us to further enhance our capability to recruit and retain the best staff out there and to help create an environment that will promote the successful integration of both our work and personal lives. I see this as essential so that we remain fully staffed to better ensure the safety, well-being of everyone so that the children and families we serve are able to successfully complete their treatment.

3. **Re-gain** Allendale's prominence as a premiere provider in Illinois and Southeast Wisconsin through its continuum of high end and state of the art clinical services.

4. Leveraging resources to acquire the tools (i.e. technology, training, electronic health record, etc.) necessary to remain at the forefront of serving children and families.

What do you see as our biggest challenges?

The first challenge is our state's financial situation. Illinois is in the midst of an unprecedented 2 ½ years without an approved state budget adding to an already staggering \$5.3 billion deficit and a \$12.15 billion backlog of unpaid bills. Fortunately, many of the clients we serve are protected under various consent

decrees in which the courts have ordered that services continue and providers be paid. However not all social services are protected this way resulting in ever decreasing community resources that our families depend upon. Allendale has always been and continues to be very involved in advocacy efforts on local, state and national levels and I have already had meetings with some of our State Senators as well as the Director of DCFS and will soon be meeting with the leadership of HFS. Beyond advocacy, our Senior Leadership and the Board of Trustees continue to develop financial strategies that will sustain us until our government leaders eventually find a compromise.

The second challenge is continuing to successfully recruit and retain the caliber of staff who are committed to serving some of the most high-needs children and adolescents in the state. This workforce challenge is one that all social service agencies are facing, not just Allendale. However I also see this as an opportunity for us to showcase the quality of the treatment we provide and highlight our expansive array of programs and services that few other organizations can offer. The opportunities for professional development and diverse training experiences that we can offer are highly attractive aspects in this field.

ALLENDALE STUDENT, ANDREW ASKS: WHERE IS YOUR OFFICE? CAN I MEET YOU?

"Hi Andrew! I am located in the Bradley Administration Building on the 2nd floor. I get to look out my window and see the playground or look out over the lake and hear you all laughing and having fun. You absolutely can meet me and I will soon be out to visit all of you. When I do, you be sure to introduce yourself so I know you asked these great questions."

For now, we shall remain squarely focused on the **WHY** we are all here—to provide exemplary care and services to our clients and their families that will help them achieve their highest potential. If we focus on serving our families and continuously strive to become better in our work, we will overcome the political and financial challenges.



"One of my first experiences at Allendale was meeting and touring campus with our newest Board Members, Joe & Sharon Kemper (pictured to the left of Mary Shahbazian & myself). It was truly a distinct pleasure to meet these long time donors and friends of Allendale! A student in Rob's Woodshop class gave an impressive tour around all the areas of our Career & Technical Education Program. We were all impressed with his knowledge and manners!"



What excites you the most about Allendale's rich traditions and 120 year history?

I am most excited ABOUT Allendale's rich traditions and 120 year history. Just outside my office is Captain Bradley's original desk and on top, handwritten minutes of Board meetings from 1903! To have the privilege to work at an organization that for over 120 years has been dedicated to serving children is humbling. Every day I am reminded of those that came before and consider it a tremendous responsibility to preserve the very ideals upon which Allendale was founded. I also feel an obligation to celebrate them as well! What is perhaps most significant for me is the **"spirit"** of Allendale, which has sustained for 120 years and through the most tested of times. It is this **"spirit of resiliency"** that I see reflected in the staff I meet every day and parallels the very resiliency of the children we serve.

ALLENDALE NAMED A 2017 ASCEND MATH GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENT

The Gold Medal Award was established in 2010 to honor the schools or districts that best demonstrate a dedication to ensuring that all students become successful at math. The strategies employed by this year's Gold Medal honorees made use of Ascend Math, an intensive online math intervention program, to assist struggling students.

Allendale teachers assigned Ascend Math to any K-6 student who failed a math class for any grading period or who scored below grade level on formal assessments. Students in 6th grade or lower are expected to maintain grade level math or increase their level by a minimum of 50 quantile points when completing formal assessments.

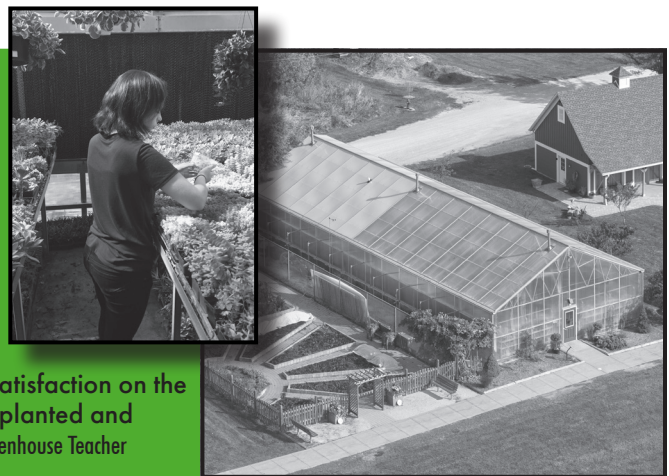
Tonya Henley, Allendale School Administrator wrote, "With Ascend Math teachers were able to give students a direct route to improve their math performance by combining continuous assessment, targeted instruction, prescriptive tutorials, and progress monitoring tools."

"Congratulations to Allendale students for the perseverance and hard work that led to their exceptional results," said Kevin Briley, CEO of Ascend Education. "Educators at Allendale are clearly doing an incredible job."

Another Successful Spring Plant Sale at our Bernard B. Rinella Jr. Greenhouse & Mazza Gardens!

We are so grateful to the local community for your support of our Spring Plant Sale!

"It's amazing to see the look of satisfaction on the kid's faces when something they planted and nurtured is sold!" -Nanci Lunsford, Greenhouse Teacher



OUR SHARED VISION AT ALLENDALE IS TO HELP KIDS & THEIR FAMILIES *learn. grow. heal.*