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WIA

GT PHARMACY

AGING & SR. ENRICHMENT

GTPDD Anniversaries



The GTPDD office is centrally located in Oktibbeha County in the Starkville Industrial Park.

From the Director...



Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson
Executive Director

Every now and then a person passes through life who makes you a better person. The latest that has been sent our way is "Byron". The WIOA staff at Golden Triangle Planning & Development District works with youth 16 to 24 years of age who are out of school and needing assistance in either continuing their education or finding employment.

In August, Byron came to our office to apply to the WIOA Counseling to Career Program. Byron was 24 years of age, dropped out of school in the 9th grade, and readily admitted that he had made some bad choices that led to bad circumstances. He was currently living with his brother and had come to realize that he needed to get focused and start moving in a positive direction. After talking with Byron, we felt that he was a perfect fit for our program but there was one major problem. Byron did not have a birth certificate or picture ID; both are required for WIOA program participation. With staff assistance and personal determination, Byron applied for his birth certificate, got his picture ID, and enrolled in the C2C program.

The C2C program consists of personal counseling, 8 sessions of work ethics training, on the job



Pictured above from left to right, Monica Cummings-C2C Instructor, Byron, & Mitzi Lawrence-WIOA Programs Director.

work experience, and follow-up support. The first day of work ethics training brought concern. Class started at 8:30 a.m. and everyone was there, except Byron. About 20 minutes into class Byron arrived. See, Byron's problem was that he had NO means of transportation. He had tried to ride the city bus but the route did not bring him to our building, so he had walked the rest of the way. At that time we realized that Byron was serious about this opportunity and several times throughout the training he stated, "I can't mess up this opportunity!" The staff worked with him to resolve his transportation issues. Byron became such a positive, motivational force in the classroom. He attended all sessions, actively participated in class discussions, and always kept a smile on his face. He successfully completed work ethics training September 24th and began his paid work experience Monday, October 4th. There was only one problem; a problem that Byron could not solve on his own. He still had no reliable source of transportation. He assured the staff that he did have transportation---his feet. Even though he lived about 2 ½ miles from his worksite he said, "That's no problem. I can walk to get to work."



Rudy Johnson, Executive Director of Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, (pictured on left with Byron), had noticed Byron during the course of the program. He had observed his walking to class, noticed his positive attitude, recognized his self-determination, and realized that the lack of transportation

was Byron's biggest barrier to success. As a result, Rudy counseled with him about his job opportunity, commended him on program accomplishments, and,

more importantly, lessened his transportation barrier by purchasing him a bike, helmet and security lock.

While others may make excuses for not attending class or doing what is expected of them, Byron finds a way. Hard work and determination do not go unnoticed! Congratulations, Byron, on your new job! The WIOA staff and Rudy are watching you with great expectations.

Aging...

PRESCRIPTION DRUG, MEDICARE PART D OPEN ENROLLMENT 2015

Medicare Prescription Drug enrollment ended on December 7, 2015. During this 53-day period, the SHIP (State Health Insurance Program) served 1444 clients in (1) assisting with drug plan costs/benefits comparison for 2016, and (2) enrollment into Part D drug benefits.

Although 2015 Open Enrollment is over, many individuals still qualify to enroll in Medicare Part D during the year. These include:

- Those who are aging into Medicare eligibility;
- Anyone losing employer sponsored insurance coverage; and
- Those qualifying for any type of financial assistance, such as Medicaid or Social Security Extra Help.

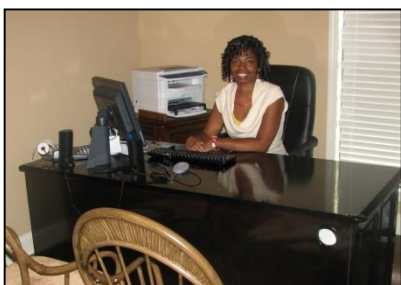
Additionally, those who are moving in or out of a long term or rehab facility also qualify to (1) make changes in Part D benefits, or (2) enroll in coverage for the first time.

Loans. . .

Featured Business.

As an elementary child growing up in the projects, I never envisioned myself as an owner of my own business, but I knew that my life had to accomplish more than my surroundings. I began working as a young child by babysitting, as many young girls do. Even though the compensation was meager, it taught me work ethics, responsibility, and dependability. I remember on many occasions when I had promised my aunt that I would babysit and then changed my mind, she would come and find me, pull me away from my much enjoyed activity, and make me commit to my obligation. I disliked it, yet respected her authority. At that time I did not realize that she was teaching me a valued lesson of being responsible and dependable. I hope my aunt reads this article, because as of today I have never thanked her properly. Years passed from my babysitting adventures and I landed my first summer job at Columbus Parks and Recreations, a desk job where responsibilities were filing papers and answering the telephone. This job allowed me to dress-up for work and I learned proper telephone etiquette, and patience and tolerance when dealing with the public. This life experience has helped me to acquire clients today. I have to thank my math teacher, Mrs. Boyd, who taught me love and appreciation for numbers and basic math. The math competitive games we played led to my ability to understand the principles of money and banking; I became good with numbers, another skill learned in my youth, which has helped me become a productive adult.

My secondary schooling went by unremarkably. I went through high school participating in community service works and I was a member of a high school youth group. I worked my share of jobs at the various fast food restaurants and landed a job at the cash register quickly and was trusted to close frequently at nights. During a particular summer youth job, one of my co-workers of equal age as I began to talk to me about savings and checking accounts. I saw that she always saved a portion of her check and did not spend all of her earnings as I had begun to do. I began to emulate her and soon I was learning to save and allowing my money to grow, with the interest earned. From my savings and many weekends of working, I purchased my first car as a senior in high school!



Post high school graduation, I had learned many lessons in life but I knew that my lessons needed validation; therefore, I entered EMCC and received an Associates of Science degree in Banking and Finance, then attended MS University for Women in 1997. This landed my first grownup job at First Columbus National Bank in 1999. Employed as a teller for two years, I then was promoted to Head Teller. First Columbus was bought by AmSouth and absorbed by Regions and I was down-sized out the door. It was 2007 and little did I realize that it would be tough finding a job with benefits.

I knew three things about myself: I knew money, hard work, and that I loved to help people. I prayed. I then cashed out my 401K and received a financial blessing from the aunt who taught me to be dependable and responsible, and hit the floor running! I have never looked back! Yes, there were tears, restless nights and many hours of prayers, yet I believed in myself and my ability to succeed because at that time failure was not an option.

I have purchased my own building in Columbus and I have a business in Macon. I have three employees and many clients. I know that those early life lessons have helped prepare me for my business. If I could start over again, I would not change anything. All my past experiences, the good and the bad, developed me into the person I am today, a business owner!

Submitted by Kegdra C. Gray



**Tax Season
Is Starting Again**

Let us prepare your 2015 taxes.

Bring family or friend for a referral bonus!

Macon: 662-726-9333

Columbus: 662-240-9888

307 South Jefferson St

1510 Gardner Blvd

Medicaid Waiver...

The Medicaid Waiver Case Managers Celebrate Christmas!



To celebrate this joyous time of year, the GTPDD sponsors the provision of Christmas gifts to Medicaid Waiver clients. Food, warm clothes, blankets, toiletries, and household items are among the gifts purchased, wrapped and boxed for delivery to the clients. As many recipients do not have family or friends to share with them, Case Managers are their only Santa Claus.

The general consensus among the Case Manager Christmas elves is "Words hardly describe the rewarding feelings of joy we experience looking into the faces of the clients when we deliver their gifts.

Seeing the eyes sparkle, the tears of joy, the words of appreciation - this is what Christmas is all about! WE are the ones who receive a gift, from them!"

The Medicaid Waiver Program continues to serve over 1,400 clients in the Golden Triangle area. This program includes: personal care services, in-home respite services, adult daycare, expanded home health visits, and home-delivered meals. All costs for services are reimbursable to an approved provider and all services must be approved by the Division of Medicaid. If you know of anyone who may need this service, please call 662-324-7860, option 3.



Michelle Harris is the RN Supervisor for the Medicaid Waiver Program. Current Case Management team members are:

Choctaw

Tina Gill, RN
Rachel Embry, LSW

Clay

Mitzi Phelps, RN
Stephanie Cannon, LSW

Lowndes #1

Brandy Clark, RN
Audie Strain, LSW

Lowndes #2

Cindy Reese, RN
Angelia Sansing, LSW

Lowndes #3

Lindsey Marsh, RN
Lynn Herndon, LSW

Lowndes #4

Christy Massey, RN

Noxubee #1

Jana Peterson, RN
Jessica Spears, LSW

Noxubee #2

Tammy Castle, RN
Jennifer Bridges, LSW

Oktibbeha #1

Tina McWhorter, RN
Suzy Winstead, LSW

Oktibbeha #2

Stacy Elkins, RN
Jennifer Grantham, LSW

Oktibbeha #3

Helen Smith, RN
Beverly Baker, LSW

Oktibbeha #4

Amanda McCrary, RN
Leah Hill, LSW

Webster

Lynette Hunt, RN
Lesa Wilson, LSW

Winston

Kim Mills, RN
Lauren Smith, LSW

Planning. . .

Housing Update.....

The Oktibbeha County Board of Supervisors recently completed its 2012 HOME Project. The grant provided an opportunity for four homeowners in Oktibbeha County to receive a new home. The homes replaced dilapidated residences that were unsafe for the families that were residing in them. With the completion of this project, Oktibbeha County will be eligible to apply for future funding, as it becomes available.

Before & After.....



Looks can be deceiving! The shelf in the picture is not broken; foundation problems caused the furniture to tilt.



District 3 Supervisor, Marvell Howard, passes the keys to Ms. Alberta Turner, Homeowner.

Planning cont'...

Before & After.....

Home #2



Home #3



Home #4



Planning cont'...

HOME Program News

The Mississippi Home Corporation (MHC) will hold a 2nd Public Meeting to obtain input on Amendments to the Five Year Consolidated Plan and 2015 One Year Action Plan relative to only the following HUD funded programs: HOME, ESG and HOPWA. The amendments can be found on the MHC website <https://www.mshomecorp.com/amendments>.

The Public Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 29, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at Mississippi Home Corporation, 735 Riverside Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39202. Citizens, local officials, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, developers, and community groups are invited to attend. The location for this hearing is an accessible facility. If a translator is needed for non-English speaking or hearing impaired persons, please contact Dana Jones at 601-718-4642 by December 22, 2015 in an effort to accommodate the request.

The comment period has been extended to January 29, 2016. All comments are welcome and must be submitted in writing to: Mississippi Home Corporation, Attn: Dana Jones, 735 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS 39202 or by email to amendments@mshc.com.

Mississippi Development Authority Approves CDBG Public Facility Applications

Governor Phil Bryant recently announced that the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) has approved FY2015 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Facilities projects. The following applications prepared by Golden Triangle Planning and Development District staff received funding:

	CDBG	Other	TOTAL
Town of Shuqualak Sewer Improvements	\$449,968	\$ -----	\$449,968
City of West Point ADA Improvements	\$100,000	\$79,000	\$179,000
TOTAL	\$549,968	\$79,000	\$628,968

MDA received 30 applications in the Regular Public Facilities competition requesting \$11,863,943 from an allocation of \$5,000,000. The Small Government category received 97 applications, with a total request of \$37,484,216 from an allocation of \$6,291,271. It is not too early to begin planning for 2016 ARC and CDBG Public Facilities applications. Please contact Phylis Benson, George Crawford or Spencer Brooks at (662) 324-7860.

Planning cont' . . . Need a new public building?

Did you know that Golden Triangle Planning & Development District can help you? Golden Triangle Public Building Leasing Corporation was created as a way for local units of government to construct new public buildings, without having to issue bonds. This program will build, and hold title to, a public building, and allow the governmental unit to lease the building back over a certain number of years. Once the lease is up, the local unit of government owns the facility. This option does not require the issuance of bonds by the governing board; as a result, the bonded indebtedness of the City or County does not increase. This public-private partnership is a way to make dreams become reality.....Just ask the City of Starkville!



Community Development Block Grant to Benefit Mississippi Steel Processing in the Golden Triangle Industrial Park has been Completed



The Mississippi Steel Processing (MSP) facility was the beneficiary of Economic Development CDBG funding. Phase Two of the construction of a concrete loading pad has been completed as seen above. With the completion of the loading pad, the \$1,200,000 CDBG project is finished and is in use. Along with the completion of the construction, Mississippi Steel Processing invested over \$6,000,000 in corporate funding and will create a total of forty (40) new jobs for the area. The total project consisted of the construction of a new access road, rail extension to the facility and the loading pad. Mississippi Steel Processing, LLC is in the Golden Triangle Industrial Park in Lowndes County

and occupies a site that is just east of Airport Road and adjacent to the current site of the Steel Dynamics, Inc. steel mill.



WIA

(Workforce Investment Act) . . .

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT NEWS

Most readers are familiar with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program but the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Program may be new to some. Beginning July, the old Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program ceased to be and the Workforce Investment & Opportunity Act came into existence. The program continues to serve youth in Choctaw, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston counties and provides funding for the already existing Counseling to Career Program.

Many of the eligibility rules and regulations remain the same, but there were several changes that will make the program accessible to more young people. Some of the major changes are:

- Out-of-school youth ages 16 – 24 years of age may be served;
- Youth who are pregnant or parenting, a high school drop-out, homeless or a run away, foster child, disabled, or subject to the juvenile or adult justice system automatically qualify for program participation no matter their income level;
- Participating youth will be given the WorkKeys test, which normally cost \$50 at an educational institution, for free; and
- CPR training/certification has been added.

The Golden Triangle WIOA staff have been busy recruiting new participants who, once proved WIOA eligible, receive approximately twenty-four (24) hours of work ethics training prior to being placed on a job site. On the worksite they are given the opportunity to practice the skills learned in training and to prove themselves viable employees. During work experience, salaries and workers' comp insurance are paid through federal WIOA funds. Upon completion of WIOA work hours, either the participant is hired by the interning company or the WIOA staff will help with an individual job search.

As mentioned above, participants are also given the opportunity to take the WorkKeys test at no charge. The WorkKeys test is a pre-requisite for being considered for hire in many local industries or for entering technical training at the community colleges. The test normally costs \$50 but it is free for WIOA participants who complete the 24 hours of work ethics training.

WIOA staff report the participation of 49 youth at the end of December, 47 of whom have completed the required 24 hours of Work Ethics Training. Twenty-two (22) of these have completed their work site assignments; 2 secured jobs on their own using skills taught in training; and 1 enrolled in the Job Corps. The remaining twenty-four (24) are scheduled to start their job assignments in early January.

Monies are available for 34 motivated, energetic, dedicated-to succeed youth to participate in this innovative opportunity. Remember, they must be 24 years of age or younger, not attending school, and living in Choctaw, Oktibbeha, Webster or Winston counties.

If you know youth residing in one of these counties who needs job skills training, work experience or assistance to continue education, tell them about the WIOA Counseling to Career Program. They may call:

Choctaw & Winston: Teresa Shumaker 662-324-7860 Ext. 1125
Oktibbeha & Webster: Monica Cummings 662-324-7860 Ext. 1115
WIOA Programs Director: Mitzi Lawrence 662-324-7860 Ext. 1128



GT Pharmacy...

Dear to the GTPDD are the programs for senior citizens in our area—nutritious meals, **prescription delivery**, personal care services, housekeeping chores, **prescription delivery**, transportation, insurance counseling, case management, and did I mention **prescription delivery**?

I am thinking I need to remind the GTPDD community about our Pharmacy program and medication delivery right to your door!

ANYONE residing in our 7-County service area is eligible for this service; it is available to **any age group**.

“Yes, we deliver.” I’ll bet you have not heard that from a druggist in the past 50 years, but you are hearing it from me.

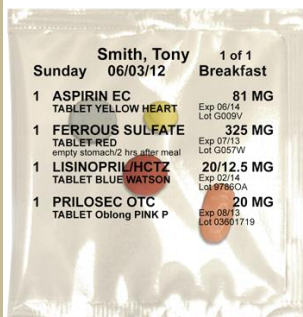
****Our in-house, closed door (meaning ‘delivery only’) Pharmacy is set up to fill your prescriptions and deliver them to your home every 28 days. Medication is contained in cellophane strips, one strip for each day’s dosage.**

****To get on this 28-day rotation, a Technician will need to discuss with you (at your home) a list of your medications, doctors, other health professionals, and insurance providers.**

****After your initial interview, the Technician will confer with your doctors and then will leave a week’s supply of medication for you in a pillbox. The remainder of the prescription will be prepackaged in daily doses for delivery on the 28-day schedule.**

****Co-pays are accepted in the form of cash, personal check, money order, or most credit cards; payment is due at the time of delivery.**

Readers, please spread the word about our Pharmacy and delivery of prescriptions. For more information about the Pharmacy, you may call 662-320-2011, or email at pharmhit@gtpdd.com. Santa needs all the help he can get from you!



On behalf of the people we serve, thank you all for supporting our endeavors to allow senior citizens to remain in their homes where they are happier and healthier.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

RLI



Pictured: Tiffany Gilliland, Technician
Anna Lancaster, Pharmacist
Andrea Scott, Technician



**GOLDEN TRIANGLE
Planning and
Development District, Inc.**

Aging & Sr. Enrichment...

The staff of the Golden Triangle Area Agency on Aging conducted a public meeting at the senior enrichment center in Columbus. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the services that the AAA provides to senior adults to assist them in leading independent lives in their own homes and communities, and to get input from seniors as to the services that are needed the most.

The seniors in attendance completed a survey, ranking services according to their importance, and also listed other services that are needed. Many of the seniors expressed concern about the numbers on the waiting lists for services and wondered when they might expect to be served. They expressed appreciation for the opportunity to make their concerns known and hoped that additional funding could be made available so that more people could be served, especially those on the waiting lists.



Wikipedia defines *New Year's Resolution* as a tradition, most common in the Western Hemisphere but also found in the Eastern Hemisphere, in which a person makes a promise to do an act of self-improvement or something slightly nice, such as opening doors for people beginning from New Year's Day.



Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc.

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OCTOBER

Dave Alexander	07 years
Melody Bensend	17 years
Cindy Brown	06 years
Nora Carroll	17 years
Linda Crumble	06 years
Lisa Doane	06 years
Lula Eiland	17 years
Martie Gibson	16 years
Willer Glenn	10 years
Janie Harris	17 years
Minnie Hodge	05 years
Betty Hunt	17 years
Aldean Ivy	17 years
Charlene Jones	10 years
Hardie Jordan	17 years
Joyce Lampkin	17 years
Joanne Peterson	22 years
Annie Sanders	17 years
Sharon Seals	05 years
Lauren Smith	15 years

NOVEMBER

Beverly Baker	12 years
Alicia Barry	14 years
Mary Byron	14 years
Glenda Fason	08 years
Shirley Forrester	06 years
Jessica Foxx	15 years
Beatrice Logan	14 years
Michelle Milner	11 years
Elberta Phillips	23 years

DECEMBER

Jackie Byas	08 years
Hazel Cunningham	07 years
Rachel Embrey	07 years
Tonga Gillespie	14 years

Staff Anniversaries

Staff members that have served
at least 5 years at the GTPDD.

Golden Triangle Planning & Development District, Inc.

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