

New Horizons manager earns Can We Help award

LISA RYMER

YOURNEWS CONTRIBUTOR

STUART — Michele Topnick, New Horizons recovery team program manager, has been honored Can We Help with the Public Sector award for helping the homeless and profoundly impoverished in this area.

Over the past 26 years, Topnick has been working directly with a marginalized sector of the population in Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties: mentally ill clients who are either homeless or on the brink of homelessness.

More than half of the clients served by New Horizons are indigent, with no insurance or source of income. They are most commonly referred to the nonprofit agency by law enforcement officials or emergency room staff.

Although many of the homeless clients are leery of receiving medical assistance, Topnick is dedicated to developing relationships based on trust so they are receptive to getting the help available. She trains and manages caseworkers that link individuals to the appropriate agencies for appropriate benefits, advocating on their behalf when obstacles arise and managing their safe journey through a system that ultimately can provide community housing, supplemental income



LISA RYMER

Michele Topnick of New Horizons receives a Can We Help award from Can We Help board members Robert Durst, left, and Chuck Pacifico.

and ongoing therapy.

Since New Horizons has implemented the recovery team approach, there have been significantly higher positive outcomes in serving the needs of the homeless population struggling with mental illness.

New Horizons is the largest mental health provider in the region, with seven facilities — including a 104-bed medical campus in Fort Pierce — serving 13,000 children and adults annually, regardless of ability to pay.

In addition to outpatient therapy, other programs at New Horizons include: children and adult crisis stabilization; 24-hour mobile emergency

unit; a primary care clinic; detox inpatient program; 28-day substance abuse inpatient treatment; substance abuse and anti-violence educations in schools; substance abuse and mental health services in jails; partnerships with the mental health courts; learning centers offering dynamic curricula; and two group homes.

Learn more or donate at NHTCInc.org or call 772-672-8333.

Photo credit 1:

Photo caption 1: Michele Topnick of New Horizons receives a Can We Help award from Can We Help board members Robert Durst (left) and Chuck Pacifico.