



...Because every child deserves a childhood

For further information please contact:
Sonia Barnes-Moorhead
The Astor Home for Children Foundation
(845) 871-1117 smoorhead@astorservices.org

Central Administration
6339 Mill Street
P. O. Box 5005
Rhinebeck, NY 12572-5005
Tel: (845) 871-1000
Fax: (845) 876-2020
Email: astor@astorservices.org
Website: www.astorservices.org

Astor Services For Children & Families Receives Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval and Recognition for Successful Implementation of Efficiency Methodology

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Rhinebeck, N.Y. — For a model to streamline organizational efficiencies during these embattled economic times; non-profits around the country can look to Astor Services For Children & Families. Since 1974, Astor has earned The Joint Commission Gold Seal of approval, and recently underwent a highly successful five-day review. The Joint Commission accredits and certifies health care organizations and programs in the U.S. Astor is one of few community-based behavioral health organizations in the state to achieve this recognition, and voluntarily chooses to go through this rigorous assessment as a way to measure its work against the highest standards in the healthcare industry.

The Joint Commission's September/October 2009 issue of its *Benchmark* newsletter and blog spotlighted Astor as one of the strongest examples of efficiency in the nonprofit arena for its successful implementation of the Lean/Six Sigma (LSS) performance improvement system, and its use in streamlining their hiring process, through a case study. That's a big recognition for an organization that must hire and keep track of employees in an operation that serves thousands of clients at over 30 sites. The LSS process assisted the organization in eliminating waste, increasing speed and improving process quality,

"Using Lean/Six Sigma," notes *Benchmark* about the tool that is primarily used in the business world, "Astor improved the efficiency of its hiring processes and enhanced communication regarding hiring throughout the organization. Staff became more familiar with Lean/Six Sigma methodology and the benefits of using such an approach."

"Astor had numerous cumbersome processes that evolved over time due to the growth in client numbers, complexity and diversity of the services offered," revealed Melinda Weisberg, Astor's Director of Public Policy and Strategic Initiatives who holds a "Black Belt" in LSS, the highest level of LSS qualification. "Simply speaking, Lean/Six Sigma set us on track with a balanced process. It even addressed the very 'human' process of communication and decreased delays in the hiring process dramatically while reducing paperwork."

Astor's myriad programs serve over 6,000 children annually in 30 sites in Dutchess County and the Bronx. They range from early childcare to residential treatment, and community-based behavioral health. Astor has prided itself on providing more than 55 years of high quality, family and community-focused programs in early childhood, special education, behavioral health and residential care. Over the years, those services have expanded.

"The Joint Commission standards represent the best for quality," says James McGuirk, Ph.D., Astor's Executive Director/CEO. "This award affirms our commitment to delivering the best services and hiring the best staff through the most efficient process."

The Astor Services for Children & Families, as it has since 1953, promotes the well-being of children, adolescents and their families through a range of programs that prevent and treat emotional problems and facilitate healthy development. Astor's current range of include: Residential Treatment, Therapeutic Foster Family Care, Early Childhood Programs, and Community Based Mental Health and Educational Services. For more information, contact: Pauline Barfield, Barfield Public Relations, Inc. (212) 735-0404 pb736@aol.com or Sonia Barnes-Moorhead, The Astor Home for Children Foundation (845) 871-1117.

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