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Partnership Utilizes Preserved Land for Nature-Based Therapy in Harford County

BEL AIR, MD (June XX, 2020)—Harford Land Trust, Nature Worx and Ashley Addiction Treatment (Ashley) formed a new partnership to bring patients recovering from substance use disorder to protected land throughout Harford County for experiential nature-based programs.

Led by professional guides from Nature Worx, groups of 10 patients will learn how to connect with the healing properties of nature to support their physical, mental and spiritual health. During a typical 90-minute session, focused activities enable the patients to explore each of their senses to experience various aspects of nature. Using naturalist interpretation, mindfulness, meditation and forest therapy techniques, the patients learn skills that will support their recovery.

“At Ashley, we remain committed to helping as many people as possible find their own personal path to recovery—whatever that looks like for them,” said James Ryan, director of emerging adult services at Ashley. “We’re honored to partner with Harford Land Trust and Nature Worx on this unique program that bolsters our holistic approach to treatment and improves the overall patient experience.

Harford Land Trust, a local land preservation organization, made available a large heavily wooded property for the partnership’s pilot sessions. The permanently preserved property is ideal for deep nature immersion owing to its seclusion and stream and variety of plant and animal life.

“The Harford Land trust properties are ideal locations for conducting our experiential immersion sessions in nature,” said Phil Hosmer, founder and executive director of Nature Worx, a Bel Air-based not-for-profit organization. “The patients respond extremely well to the opportunity to relax, reflect and connect with nature away from distractions, noise and other people.”

Nature Worx has worked with more than 500 patients from Ashley since 2017 and started conducting sessions at the Harford Land Trust property in May. Surveys of the Ashley patients that participate in Nature Worx show that more than 92 percent report they learn ways that nature can support their recovery.

“Our mission is not only to preserve land, but to connect people to the land,” said Kristin Kirkwood, executive director of the Harford Land Trust. “This partnership provides yet another example of how important it is to protect natural lands for the benefit of the community.”

About Ashley Addiction Treatment

Ashley Addiction Treatment (Ashley) is a nationally recognized leader in the integrated, evidence-based treatment of substance use disorders. Ashley's expert staff implements a comprehensive program for patients that integrates a full spectrum of medical, clinical and holistic treatment methods. Ashley's driving principle – "everything for recovery" – reinforces its timeless mission to heal each individual with respect and dignity, and reflects its ongoing commitment to meet new challenges. Accredited by The Joint Commission and a division of Ashley Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Ashley has treated nearly 45,000 patients since its inception in 1983. Ashley's expansive offerings include inpatient as well as outpatient treatment, sobriety enrichment, community outreach, family and children's education and specialty programs. For more information, please visit www.ashleytreatment.org.

About Nature Worx

Nature Worx is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization that designs and delivers experiential outdoor programs that connect people to the healing properties of nature. Sessions are led by experienced guides with backgrounds in outdoor recreation, natural interpretation and counseling. Clients include teen programs, veteran organizations, substance use treatment facilities, corporations, nature centers and schools. Visit www.natureworx.org for more information.

About Harford Land Trust

The Harford Land Trust works with landowners, private and public, to conserve land and protect its natural resources, scenic beauty, rural character and promote a healthy quality of life in Harford County. The organization has helped preserve over 12,500 acres of farmland, forest and watershed since its founding. Visit www.harfordlandtrust.org for more information.