

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE      CONTACT: KATHY T. HEUSTESS   843-448-4820**

## **COASTAL SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER RECEIVES ACCREDITATION**

**MYRTLE BEACH, SC – May 7, 2012** – The Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center has been awarded **Full Accreditation** for **April 2012 to April 2016**, *The Samaritan Institute*, located in Denver, Colorado, announced today.

“Accreditation is a major accomplishment and demonstrates a Center’s commitment to excellence,” according to the Rev. Dr. Paul Bretz, Executive Vice President of the Institute, which is the headquarters for an international network of Samaritan Centers. “The accreditation process indicates that Centers offer professional services within a framework of quality organizational, administrative, and financial practices.” Bretz said.

The **Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center** was established in **1980** by an independent board representing a cross-section of the community and is supported by **26** area congregations. Other key community supporters of the Center include **The United Way, The Chapin Foundation, and True Blue/Caledonia Golf Courses**. The Center provides a wide range of outpatient counseling services, including counseling for individuals, couples, and families; educational programs; and consultation for professionals and organizations, including Clergy & Congregation Care programs that promote team building, strategic planning, conflict mediation, and effective communication.

The Samaritan Ministry advocates the concept of interfaith, team-oriented, and cost-efficient counseling, emphasizing the inter-relatedness of mind, body, spirit, and community.

The Executive Director is **The Reverend Kathy T. Heustess, MSW**. The Center is staffed by **Bedelia Murray, Lee Gravely, Jan Filipow, Jane Osment, Lisa Smith, and Michael Stewart**. The Center is governed by an eighteen member Board of Directors.

To assure accessibility to community residents, counseling services are offered in the following locations: **Myrtle Beach, Conway, Carolina Forest, Little River, North Myrtle Beach, Longs, Loris, and Litchfield**.

Through its affiliation with the Samaritan Institute, the **Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center** is part of an international network of 89 Samaritan Centers with 481 offices in 30 states and Japan.

"This has been an exceptional year for the Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center," notes Board President Dr. Sara Sanders. "Receiving the ICE Award in 2011 was affirmation of the "Incredible Customer Experience" of the Center's clients. Successful completion of our accreditation review confirms that the Center is providing clients professional, licensed, and accredited counseling services which lead to their incredible experience. The Center provides support for the positive life changes clients are seeking regardless of their ability to pay. The Center's eight locations help clients to access services in the local communities in which they live. In the past year, the Center donated more than \$180,000 worth of subsidized counseling services back to the community," continued Dr. Sanders.

The Center is open **Monday through Thursday 9 am to 7 pm and Fridays 9 am to 1 pm** to serve the needs of individuals, families, and organizations. For more information, call 843-448-4820 or visit the website at [www.coastalsamaritan.org](http://www.coastalsamaritan.org).