

CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE



**SUNRISE
COMMUNITY**
FOR RECOVERY AND WELLNESS

2022-2023 IMPACT REPORT

A LETTER FROM SUE



One thing that we learn in our wellness journey is that obstacles can often be turned into opportunities. As I reflect on this past year, this has never been more true. We began last year celebrating the opening of our new Drop-In Community Center but before the year was up, we decided it was best for our staff and peers to relocate. We are excited

to announce that we have signed the lease for a new space and have high expectations that this space will serve as the hub and heart of Sunrise for many years to come!

But even with the transition and changes, we didn't miss a beat in providing the vital peer support, resource connection and education that our peers depend on. We even increased our annual budget from \$2.7 million to \$4.2 million, which enables us to expand our services and make a greater impact in our community.

I often tell people that we know what is needed by our peers because we've been where they are. It's with this clarity that we continue to create new and innovative programs that serve the specific needs of our community, and we were excited to launch multiple programs in 2023.

Our mobile recovery center, **Peers on the Move**, has supported more than 1,000 peers living in rural areas outside of Asheville since its launch in March 2023.

Our Cherokee re-entry program, **Siquo Danvhna**, completed its first year and continues to be a valuable asset for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians involved in the tribal justice system. We are thrilled to report that 64% of participants have not had any involvement with the justice system after release.

Knowing the challenges in finding affordable and safe housing, this year we launched a **Housing Program** that provides peers with both financial support and peer support to ensure success as they move into transition/sober-living housing.

Our **Foothills Recovery and Employment Ecosystem Program** has moved from the planning stage to the implementation stage. This innovative program focuses on building a recovery ecosystem in Polk, Rutherford, McDowell, and Cleveland counties, and will impact tens of thousands of people living in rural WNC to have greater access to treatment options, basic need resources and recovery-friendly workplaces.

While there has been a lot of transitions this year, the one unchanging constant is your support! I am so grateful knowing that we are not doing this work alone.

Thank you for supporting Sunrise through your gifts of time and talent, for letting your networks know about us and for being a part of the caring community!

-Sue Polston
Sunrise Executive Director

Some of our founding board members with Sunrise founder and first Executive Director, Kevin Mahoney, (holding drawing of founding board member, Blair H. Clark) at our 2022 staff and board holiday party!



STORY OF SUNRISE

Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness became a formal nonprofit in 2015, following several years of recovery advocacy and organizing work done by the organization’s founding members who recognized the value of peer support and lived experience in supporting individuals navigating their personal recoveries.

In July 2016, Sunrise’s founder and first Executive Director, Kevin Mahoney, officially opened its first Recovery Community Center on Louisiana Avenue in a one-room, 800 square-foot space with two full-time staff members. One of those staff members is current Executive Director, Sue Polston.

We are recognized by SAMHSA & NC Department of Health and Human Services as a regional Recovery Community Organization (RCO) for the central to west region, spanning from Charlotte to Cherokee. We envision a world where wellness is accessible and everyone can achieve their full potential.

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COMING FULL CIRCLE

Sunrise staff members who moved from program participants to employment as Sunrise Peer Support Specialists

I am a full circle staff member, one who had received services when I was at my lowest point in life and now I get to return the favor to the next person.

-Tyler Grooms, participant in Peer University, Linkage-2 -Care Re-entry Program and is now the Sunrise Peers on the Move Coordinator

To me it was finding a place where I was loved unconditionally. Something I never had before. When I finally made a choice to change and give back it was like coming home.

-Josh Morrow, participant in SSP/Harm Reduction, Linkage-2-Care Re-entry Program and is now the Sunrise Team Lead for Compass Point Village RCC (interview on pg.14/15)

“One of the most important gifts I received while I was incarcerated was with a peer support specialist who truly saw me, listened to me, and shared their own story. This experience truly humbled me. Today, I am incredibly fortunate to have the same opportunity to pay forward this kindness and inspiration to others.”

- Lauren Garvie, participant at Sunrise Drop-In Center and is now a PRN for Sunrise's Blair H. Clark Respite House

I'm being the change I wish to see in the world.

- Destiny Morrow, participant at Sunrise's SSP/Harm Reduction, Linkage-2-Care Re-entry, Ramada shelter, Medication Assisted Treatment Program and is now a Peers on the Move peer support specialist (interview on pg.14/15)



Sunrise Full Circle Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Top row: Ty Grooms, Josh Hampton, David Harris, Kenneth Adams, Kate Promer, Marko Rodriguez, Hope Bishop, Erica Powers.

Bottom row: Chelsea Brown, Josh Morrow, Lauren Garvie, Shauna Moran, Sherea Geddings, Alisa Carlisle, Kaylee Halstead, Destiny Morrow

Utilizing peer University and learning to be a peer support specialist through Sunrise has changed my life. I respect the man I am today because of the opportunities sunrise has given me and able to live a productive life I am proud of.

- David Harris, Peer University participant and current Sunrise Drop-In Center peer support specialist

I remember getting connected with Sunrise when I left inpatient treatment a couple years back. I had a couple trash bags full of clothes, no rent money, no phone.

I was told that a Peer Support would help me get a phone, a couple weeks of rent at the sober living home, hygiene products, food items, support with transportation to 12-step and

SeekHealing meetings and that's **exactly** what happened, they even gave me rides to work some days.

I saw that they were offering the Peer University class and I was told I would be an asset to Peer Support , this was the right move !

Now I work with a Recovery Friendly Organization who does incredible work with the community and it's the most rewarding job I've ever had!

- Kenneth Adams, participant in Sunrise's Peer University and Drop-In Center and is now a peer support specialist at Sunrise's Drop-In Center



“Sunrise was there for me when noone else was” - Daniel M.

Daniel M. (left) and Sunrise Peer Support Specialist Matt McCoy

Two years ago I was sitting in jail on pending charges and possession of methamphetamine. I realized that I needed to find new people and a new way of life. So I went hard to work looking for resources to rebuild my life from the ground up.

I reached out to several organizations by mail from jail asking about programs and what help they could provide, because I knew I would be homeless when I was released.

[Sunrise Peer Support Specialist] Matt [McCoy] was the only response I got from over 100 letters. This letter and my connection to Sunrise changed my life. He shared that he had also been down a hard road and is now in recovery and he wanted to help me.

Matt was there for me throughout my incarceration, which kept me going through one of the darkest times of my life.

With help and support from Sunrise and Matt, I was able to get out of jail and relocate to Asheville. It was not easy, but within months, I was able to find housing and employment.

Matt was always there for me with information, advice and help. He met me where I was in my recovery journey.

He encouraged me and helped me see my potential. He showed me what recovery looks like and inspired me to stay on my path. One addict helping another addict is without parallel.

I take this to heart today. I have completed the training to be a Certified Peer Support Specialist and am an intern at Sunrise.

I am able to give back to others what was given to me when I needed it most.

PEER EDUCATION

Providing continuing education for current Peer Support Specialists and a pathway to employment as a Certified Peer Support Specialist

56

participants graduated Peer University

21

Peer University graduates earned paid internships at Sunrise

946

people received trainings that increased their skills

166

trainings provided



Peer Education Peer Support Specialists (l to r)
Matt McCoy, Kevin Mahoney, Hale Higgenbotham and Kate Promer

BLAIR H. CLARK RESPITE HOUSE

A hospital diversion program where guests stay voluntarily at no-cost in a house equipped with all the amenities of home

For 8 years I lived on the street.
It's not easy. Folks looked down on me, yet I don't mind. I don't blame anyone.

I picked myself from homelessness and got my own apartment after eight years.

Sunrise really helped me.
They believed in me, and I now live on my own with independence and love.

-Sal, a peer who stayed at Sunrise Respite House four times for a total of four weeks.

202

guests stayed
for up to a week
at no cost

126

connected
to food
resources

103

connected to
mental health
resources

85

connected
to housing
resources



Respite Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Top row: Shauna Moran, Marko Rodriquez, Lane Doyle
Bottom row: Sherea Geddings, Jennifer Mangham, Chris Coppedge, Chelsea Brown (not pictured: Marvette Flasher, Sam Howell)

HARM REDUCTION

An evidence-based approach to reducing negative personal and public health impacts of behavior associated with substance use



Harm Reduction Peer Support Specialists (l to r)
Pazi Harbin, Justin Shytle, Jessie Thomas

2,277
individuals
served

57,618
syringes returned
for safe disposal.
(more than 25% above
national average)

2,543
Over-dose reversal
kits (Narcan)
distributed

304
Lives were
saved with the
distributed
Narcan

The work that the [Sunrise's] Harm Reduction program does has been integral for me and the community at large. First and foremost, for helping us feel less like animals and more like humans.

Addiction is never anything any of us had in mind for our lives, but once it has a grip on us, it is truly a sickness, and this program has allowed us to feel human and less like morally deficient miscreants.

I truly believe I wouldn't be alive without this program. I'm coming up on 8 months clean and never felt better.

-A.M., a peer who utilized our Harm Reduction program.

DROP-IN COMMUNITY CENTER

The hub and heart of Sunrise where individuals receive authentic peer support, resource connection and educational trainings.

5,022

visits to the
Drop-In
Center

2,630

one-on-one
peer support
sessions

15,477

bus passes
distributed

17

support groups met

746

times

11,059

people (duplicated)
participated in
support groups

3,088

peer interactions
during community
outreach



Drop-In Center Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Kenneth Adams, David Harris, Josh Morrow, Hope Bishop, Molly Jones, Brooke Shackleton, David Beudet, Steven Sainsbury, Karen Russell (with Hope, the Therapy dog)

HOUSING NAVIGATION

Financial support and peer support for individuals who have entered into transitional/sober living housing and permanent supportive housing



Housing Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Kaylee Halstead and Kelsey Moore

119

received housing
and other
basic needs

68%

are still residing in
housing due
to continued
support

61

gained
employment
or increase
in hours

“Sunrise has been very helpful providing continued support throughout my recovery, including help with funding for housing, transportation options, help navigating insurance and other fundamental “adult” responsibilities that I was not able to do on my own.

They are great at checking in to see how I am doing with my recovery and if there is anything that has arisen that they may assist me with. -TF

MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT

An evidence-based model using medications to treat opioid dependency at the Buncombe County Detention Center and for one year post-release



MAT Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Brittany West, Amy Roberts and Johnna Brock



A participant recently got out of Buncombe County Detention Facility and went to First at Blue Ridge, a residential therapeutic community for individuals with chronic substance use disorders.

She finished the 30-day program at First at Blue Ridge and moved into transitional housing. She is so excited that she was able to get a job and told us that she never thought it was possible with her background. She is moving into her own place soon.

PEERS ON THE MOVE

Providing peer support and resource connection for peers living in rural areas and surrounding counties outside Asheville.

1,032

participants since program launch in May 2023

748

Participants had their basic needs met.

205

were connected to treatment providers

131

received transportation services

"Peers on the Move has been a wonderful asset in many ways. I had a hard time finding resources until I stumbled upon Sunrise.

Peers On the Move helped me find a new life at transitional housing and helped me move all of my belongings and get settled into my new arrangement.

I have utilized Peers on the Move to help me with food resources and they have also helped me get connected to a new community oftentimes taking me to recovery meetings and showing me places and tools around town to help me on my new journey into recovery.

I have celebrated 60 days and am back into contact with my son again. Thank you Sunrise for being so kind sending love and gratitude"

-JS



Peers on the Move Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Destiny Morrow, Ty Grooms and Mik Kenny



“Without Sunrise’s peer support, I don’t know if I’d be here today.”

Josh and Destiny are an amazing couple who have been through tough times that included addiction, homelessness and incarceration but with hard work and hope, they made it to the other side. They share how they first got connected to Sunrise during those difficult years, and how they have come full circle to becoming Certified Peer Support Specialists and joining Sunrise as staff.

“I’m Josh Morrow. I have three kids. I’m married to my wife, Destiny. I enjoy sports and the outdoors. I am Sunrise’s Recovery Center Coordinator and a Certified Peer Support Specialist.

My name is Destiny Morrow. I’m a wife. I have three children. I love being a peer support specialist with Sunrise’s Peers on the Move. And I love being with my family. That’s my hobby.”

How did you first get connected to Sunrise?

Destiny

Back in 2018, I went to their Safe Syringe Program (SSP). Tanasia [Boyd, Sunrise peer support specialist] worked there and she became my peer support, and so did Courtney [Lytle, Sunrise peer support specialist]. They were amazing. They inspired me so much, and they were always there for me.

If I needed somebody to talk to, if I needed support they were there.

If Courtney and Tanasia weren’t the ones at the SSP, I probably would have never stopped using.

They were women and they both had children and families. I saw that they could do it, so I felt like I could do it too.

Josh

The first time I ran into Sunrise was early 2018. I was in ADOPT and Tanasia was coming in to discuss WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) I remember it was Tanasia because she’s been a part of our life ever since then. I wasn’t ready to stop the life then, but I had made a connection with Sunrise and I’d see



A photo of Josh during the time that he was living on the streets. He asked his social worker to take it, so he could use it as his “before” picture. He knew there was going to be a better “after”.

them around town. I was able to continue getting support from them for where I was at. **There was never any pressure, just love.**

A few years later I needed to get to Keystone Laboratories to take drug test for DSS. I didn’t have any way to get there. I ran into Tanasia and she sent a van to pick me up.

Because of that, my DSS caseworker was able to get me into detox at Neal Dobbins and that started the path for where I am today.

While I was in Neal Dobbins I had a warrant for my arrest, so I turned myself in at Buncombe County Detention Center and completed my time.

When I got out of jail, I was trying to figure out where to go and what to do because I was homeless. But there was something different in me. **I knew I was ready to change because I wanted my kids and my family back.**

I walked up to A-Hope [Day Shelter] and Tanasia was standing there at a table of clothes! I told her that I had just come out of jail and I didn’t know what to do.

She called Sunrise’s Linkage-2-Care Re-entry program and by the end of the day I was in a halfway house. Sunrise even paid for the first month. That’s what led to where I’m at today with my family back together!

Destiny

Josh and I weren’t together, and I was homeless and on the streets for a long time. In 2020, me and some other people were camping under a bridge and Sunrise came by and talked to us about moving into a new shelter at the Ramada Inn that they were running [through a partnership with City of Asheville]. I was there for awhile then I got turned in to my probation officer and served time in jail.

The first three months were the worst. I had to come off of everything on my own, without any medication. I was mad at first, but now I am thankful.

While I was in jail, I started attending support groups. I took anger management. I took a parenting class. I took an RHA group and got certificates. I worked with my DSS worker to get linked up with Transformation Village.

When I got released, Josh and I got back together and our family was whole again.

When did you consider becoming a Peer Support Specialist?

Destiny

I knew what peer support was through Courtney and Tanasia, and I was still in contact with them. I asked them to write me a reference letter to get into a peer support class and they were so excited they brought their letters to where I was working.

I saw an ad for a job at Sunrise and I got an interview and knocked it out of the park. So I’ve been with Sunrise since March of 2023.



Destiny’s mug shot from the difficult years. During her final jail-term, she made a conscious decision to turn her life around by taking classes and making moves towards a better future.

Josh

I had been drug free for a couple of years and so many people told me that I should be a peer support. I was working on my self-confidence, but I went ahead and applied for the Peer Support class and really enjoyed it.

Destiny was already working at Sunrise. She told me about a job opening and I felt like I was coming home.

I get to meet people where they’re at. I get to be with the peers, it’s about where they’re at, what’s going on. That’s how it was for me when I was out on the streets, you know? There’s no judgment. And I really, really enjoy it. It’s not a job, it’s a calling.

Destiny

If it hadn’t been for Courtney and Tanasia, I don’t know if I’d be here today.

I want to be that for somebody else. But being a peer support also keeps me humble and grateful and to know that I don’t have to live that life anymore.

SIQUO DANVHNA (THEY ARE LIVING AGAIN)

In partnership with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, providing supportive services to individuals returning from incarceration in and/ or involvement in the tribal justice system.

64% of program participants have not been re-arrested post release.

Our team connects with peers while they are incarcerated, laying the groundwork for a secure plan upon release that includes housing placement, employment options, resource connection, transportation needs and continued peer support.

172

total number of participants

48

connected to supportive housing

105

connected to transportation

25

assisted with paying bills to support basic needs



Siquo Danvha Cherokee Re-entry Peer Support Specialists (l to r) Harold (Bumper) Smith, Marissa Jade, Samantha Bradley

FOOTHILLS RECOVERY EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEM



FREE Coordinator Mindy Wright

Through an ARC Inspire grant, Sunrise was able to plan and implement The Foothills Recovery and Employment Ecosystem (FREE) initiative. This initiative is a response to the pressing challenges posed by Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in the rural counties of Rutherford, Polk, McDowell, and Cleveland in Western North Carolina.

The primary objective of the FREE initiative is to establish a comprehensive, community-driven recovery-to-work ecosystem. This ecosystem aims to bridge the gap between recovery from Substance Use Disorder and sustainable employment and providing individuals with the support, skills, and resources necessary for lasting success in the workforce.



REGIONAL RECOVERY COMMUNITY CENTER TEAM



RCC Team (l to r) Lance Karner, Samantha Bradley, Lionell Hightower

Sunrise was designated by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to provide pass-through funding to open or expand Recovery Community Centers (RCC) throughout the region from Western North Carolina to Charlotte, NC.

Through an application process, each RCC awardee receives \$50,000 to start or expand a Recovery Community Center to provide peer support and resource connection that will increase access to recovery assets and reduce isolation. Along with the pass-through funding, Sunrise's Regional RCC team also provides technical assistance and support to help ensure success for the launch of RCC's throughout the region.

Since the inception of the Regional RCC team in 2022, eight RCC's have opened or expanded to better serve their communities. They include:



of Haywood
County



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Maureen Armata
Karen Arrowood
in memory of Valerie Spencer
Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
Asheville Drag Brunch
Asheville Dispensary
Donna Ball
Blunt Pretzels
Mollie Bolick
Tanasia Boyd
Charlyne Boyette
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Rachel Brock
Jolene Brookshire
Barbara Brown
Stephen Canner
*in honor of Jesse Hyder Suicide
Awareness Challenge*
Caring for Children
Richard Caro
in honor of Jodi Ford
Teresa Cole-Smith
Nancy Cosner
Crumb Cookies
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Kali Holland
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Jesse Hyder Coaching
Katherine Kellar
Michael Kelly
Julie and Rich Kepple
in honor of Sierra Morris
Serena King
David and Susan Leader
M. Leifert
Todd Lester
Anita Lossiah
Kelly Lytle
*in honor of Jesse Hyder Suicide
Awareness Challenge*
Daniel Manasse
Kay Mantipty Clark
Alice and Ron Martin-Adkins
Greg Mayer
Matthew McCoy
David McCoy
in honor of Matt McCoy
Rhonda McCoy
Susan McDowell
*on behalf of MAHEC Family
Medicine in honor of
Kevin Mahoney*
Tom McMillan
*in memory of my son,
Adam McMillan*
Karen Miller
Cindy Mosley
Jennifer Mullendore
Andrew Mustafa

Jennifer Nicolaisen
Melissa Orr
Sue Polston
Ronald Powell
in honor of Maia Hughes
Kelly Redfern
in honor of Steven Henry
Brook Reynolds
*in honor of Jesse Hyder Suicide
Awareness Challenge*
Marko Rodriguez
Bonnie Schell
*in honor of MHCAN of
Santa Cruz, CA*
Peggy Scott
Self-Help Credit Union South
Kimberly Skelton
Antony Sluder
Lowell Smith
Daymian Snowden
Wendy Spainhour
Michelle Spiegel
Sally Stein
Jeanne Stillson
The Fresh Market
Amanda Thomas
in honor of the ones we lost
Larry Thompson
Shealy Thompson
Matt Tobia
Winslow Tuttle
Greg & Susanne Walker Wilson
Karalyn Warren
Denise Watson
Lisa Watters
Howard Waxman
Vicy Wilkinson
Jarrod Wise
Woodbury Foundation

and YOU!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

ABCCM
Addiction Professionals
of North Carolina
Allied Comprehensive Recovery
Network
Analenisgi
Appalachian Mountain
Community Health Centers
Asheville Homeless Network
for Code Purple Cold Weather
Shelter
Asheville Poverty Initiative
Asheville Reiki Connection
ASI Ed Services, LLC
Big Ivey Community Center
Bounty and Soul
Buncombe County
Emergency Medical Team
Buncombe County FUSE
Buncombe County Government
Buncombe County Health
and Human Services
Buncombe County Post Overdose
Response Team (P.O.R.T.)
Buncombe County
Sheriff's Office
Buncombe County
Reentry Council
Buncombe County
Treatment Courts
Buncombe County Family Justice
Center
Buncombe County Justice
Resource Center
CareReach/Impact RCC
City of Asheville
Cleveland Crisis & Recovery
Services/Phoenix Counseling
Center
Cleveland County Public Health
Center
Community Kitchen
Cricket Wireless
Daya Mental Health & Wellness
Dogwood Health Trust
Foundation
East Fork Pottery
EBCI Tribal Justice Center
Eleanor Health Foundation
Essential Purpose
Equal Plates
Faces and Voices of Recovery
Freedom Life Ministries
First Bank of Asheville
First at Blue Ridge Inc.
First Congregational United
Church of Christ of Asheville
Food Connection
Foothills Workforce Development
Board
Goodwill Industries of Northwest
North Carolina
Haywood Street Congregation
Helpmate
Homeward Bound of Asheville
Impact Peer Support Services
INclude
Julian F. Keith Alcohol and Drug
Abuse Treatment Center
Kairos West
Community Center
Kathros Sanctuary
Lantern Health
Little Light Psychotherapy, PLLC
Liberty Missionary Church
Love & Respect for Recovery and
Wellness
MAHEC
MANNA Food Bank
Mary Benson House
McDowell Access to Care & Health
(MATCH)
McDowell IMPACT
McDowell Mission Ministries
Mediation and Justice Restorative
Center
Mission Ministries
NC Department of Health and
Human Services
NCWorks (Cleveland)
Neighbors In Need
No Wrong Door
North Carolina Problem
Gambling
Pavillon
Pisgah Legal Services
Promise Resource Network
PRISM
October Road
Oxford Housing
Polk County Health & Human
Services Agency
Q&A Training and Consulting,
Inc.
Real World Transitional
Restoration House
Rutherford Housing Partnership
Sadhana Massage
SafePlusMore
SeekHealing
Shining Star Center
Summit Recovery
The Fresh Market
The Giving Spoon
The Nexus
The Period Project
The Recovery Home
The SHARE Project
Thrive Transitional
Umoja Health, Wellness, and
Justice Collective
United Way of Rutherford
Vaya Health
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services of Buncombe County
Vocational Rehab (McDowell)
Warren Wilson College
Wilkes Recovery Revolution
WNCAP



Main Phone: 828-552-3858

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 845 Asheville, NC 28802

Physical Address: 210 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805

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