



SUNRISE COMMUNITY
 FOR RECOVERY & WELLNESS
 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT



A LETTER FROM SUE

I don't know where I'd be now without Sunrise and the power of peer support. I knew the minute that I learned about it that this was the path I wanted to take with my life- to use my lived experience to meet people where they are and provide hope and healing for my community.

The numbers are staggering, as more than 250 lives are lost EVERY DAY to overdose death -- 11 lives an hour! In fact, Americans are more likely to die of an opioid overdose than they are from a car accident or by a gun.

We recognize that people in rural areas face even more challenges than in metropolitan areas, so we are excited to be launching two new programs impacting people living in the counties surrounding Buncombe—Peers on the Move and the Foothills Recovery and Employment Ecosystem. These programs will provide recovery supports in the high-need and under-resourced rural counties surrounding Buncombe.

We are continuing to partner and innovate to provide the much-needed services we offer!

With your support, Sunrise was able to have twice the number of peer supported interactions in 2022 than we had in our first three years of operation!

It has been a team effort from board members, staff, our community donors and funders. I'm so grateful to be a part of something that literally saves and changes people's lives, including my own.

These numbers not only reflect the increase in need for our free services, resource connection and peer support, but also **the tremendous support we receive from community partners, funders and supporters like YOU. Thank you!**

**-Sue Polston
Sunrise Executive Director**



We believe that we are successful as an organization when one individual takes one step forward on the journey to wellness.



Sunrise founder Kevin Mahoney (far left) and early staff and board members

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.

Today, we celebrate the opening of our largest Recovery Community Center to date. We operate seven programs, partner with more than 75 local and state non-profits, recovery centers and government agencies, employ a staff of 39 (and counting) Certified Peer Support Specialists earning above the Living Wage and create opportunities for numerous volunteers and interns.

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 and envision a community where the power of peer support is utilized to empower others on their pathway to wellness.

LINKAGE-2-CARE RE-ENTRY

Connecting recently incarcerated people to peer support, resources and stability.



300

completed intakes



111

43 active participants engaged for a year or more



92

were housed and maintained housing



131

gained employment, increased pay or hours at job



136

connected to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)



60

connected to a Harm Reduction Services





“I’m a chain breaker.”

-Tyler Grooms, Sunrise Linkage-2-Care Coordinator

Sunrise has provided me with a platform to grow. I had spent over a decade in addiction taking the hard road on every issue that comes with drug use. Sunrise has given me an opportunity to share my insight and experiences with others in similar situations.

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. I am very passionate about this program, I’m helping people who are coming out of prisons or jails get back into society just like what was done for me.

I am a SUCCESS story today thanks to Sunrise Community keeping faith alive, knowing that I wasn’t alone. I’ve got friends and family locked up all over and I continue to inspire and uplift anyone who is in addiction.

Today life is better than I could have ever imagined. I have actual friends that care for me, I’ve repaired all the damage I did to my family. I am no longer a product of my environment, I’m a chain breaker.

-Tyler Grooms, Certified Peer Support Specialist and Sunrise Linkage-2-Care Coordinator

CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM

Resource connection, peer support and job readiness for non-custodial parents.



76

active participants
with more than

400+

peer supported
interactions



26

connected to
recovery housing



24

received payments
that diverted or
provided release from
incarceration, so they
could better support
their families

"I'm a parent who has been involved with the child custody system so I understand what my peers are going through.

I feel honored to help them get them the resources they need to make their family stronger."

*-Lionell Hightower,
Sunrise Child Support
Peer Navigator*



PEER UNIVERSITY

*A pathway to employment as a
Certified Peer Support Specialist.*



70

participants enrolled in
Peer University



22

completed their Peer
Support certification



10

(and counting)
have found stable
employment as a Peer
Support Specialist

**"Peer University has given me all the tools I need to
look within myself, see myself in others and be able to
help make a change in the world."**

- Demetria, Peer University graduate





“This was the right place to start a good chapter in my life.”

-Amanda

“When I first went to Sunrise, everyone was so personal and knowledgeable. Everything about the Center was so inviting. I was going through a rough time living at the shelter, feeling depressed and overwhelmed, but whenever I walked into the Center, I could feel hope coming back to me.

Living at a shelter works for a lot of people, but it wasn't good for my mental wellness. There's something about Sunrise that made me feel like this was going to be the answer, the beginning of the step on where we

wanted to be in our lives. I just had a gut feeling that I was in the right place to start a good chapter in my life.

[Sunrise staff] Mark got us connected to Homeward Bound and helped us fill out the paperwork so we could hopefully get out of the shelter and into our own home. Almost every organization that helps us here in Asheville we got connected to or learned about through Sunrise.

Three months later, we moved into our first housing in two years.”

-Amanda, pictured with husband James, in their new apartment

DROP-IN COMMUNITY CENTER

A safe space for resource connection, peer support and educational trainings.



4,284

visits to the Drop-In Community Center



1,558

one-on-one peer support sessions



11,213

bus passes distributed



12

online groups met
600 times



11,073

people (duplicated)
participated in online support groups



2,239

peer interactions during outreach at partner locations



BLAIR H. CLARK RESPITE HOUSE

A hospital diversion program for those experiencing emotional distress or in need of a break from current circumstances.



125

guests stayed for up to a week at no cost



80%

of 184 responses said they would return to Respite instead of entering the hospital



85

connected to mental health resources



75

connected to food resources



44

connected to housing resources

“This is what I need to keep going. I don’t want to just survive. I want to live.

I’ve been staying at the Respite House every couple of months.

I eat really well, gain weight and get some rest.”

-Kevin



HARM REDUCTION

an evidence-based approach to reduce negative personal & public health impacts of behavior associated with substance use.



5,421

total peer supported interactions



2,108

individuals served



229,104

safe syringes dispensed



62,748

syringes returned for safe disposal



1,983

Narcan kits distributed



450

reported overdoses reversed with the distributed Narcan



MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT

an evidence-based model using medications to treat opioid dependency at the detention center during incarceration and for one year post-release



314

individuals received Medication Assisted Treatment



70

connected to recovery housing



103

connected to employment

SUNRISE PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST AWARDED 2022 DOGWOOD AWARD



Maia Hughes, Sunrise Peer Support Specialist and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Coordinator (*pictured far right*) was one of 38 North Carolinians awarded the 2022 Dogwood Award from Attorney General Josh Stein. This award is given to residents who help make their communities safer, stronger and healthier.

“As a peer support specialist, Maia helps ensure that people know they are not alone at some of the lowest points in their lives,” said

Attorney General Josh Stein. “At a crucial moment in their recovery from addiction, she offers a helping hand and a listening ear, and in the process, helps make their journey to treatment and recovery possible.”

SUNRISE IN THE NEWS

- **Q&A: Justin Shytle on harm reduction, naloxone and recovery**
Mountain Xpress, December 16, 2022
- **Attorney General Josh Stein honors seven Western North Carolinians with 2022 Dogwood Awards**, Mountain Xpress, November 22, 2022
- **County grants bolster grassroots efforts, help provide vital resources for students, adults more**, Mountain Xpress, November 3, 2022
- **Local organizations update Buncombe on opioid response**
Mountain Xpress October 6, 2022
- **Recovery community seeks to stop more overdoses with naloxone**
Mountain Xpress, October 6, 2022
- **Buncombe leaders use community feedback to develop strategies to fight opioid overdose**
WLOS News 13, October 4, 2022
- **Sunrise Community for Wellness and Recovery awarded additional NCDHHS funds**
Mountain Xpress, October 4, 2022
- **Counties begin looking at how to spend millions in opioid settlement allotments**
WLOS News 13, September 22, 2022
- **Peer support specialists offer experience, strength and hope**
Mountain Xpress, September 18, 2022
- **NC attorney general impressed by Buncombe County opioid addiction treatment program**
WLOS News 13, July 25, 2022
- **Substance use & stigma: Why the words we use matter** WLOS News 13 June 21, 2022
- **People's Empowerment & Services Summit comes to WNC Ag Center** June 21-22
Mountain Xpress, June 16, 2022
- **Local nonprofits discuss hiring for leaders** Mountain Xpress, May 16, 2022
- **Opinion: Peer Support Specialists allow others to benefit from lived experiences**
Asheville Citizen-Times
- **Partnership for Substance Free Youth in Buncombe County hosts 1st virtual Narcan training**
April 19, 2022
- **Asheville Airport, jail and prison re-entry program, cybersecurity Get Funding Approval from Board of Commissioners** Mountain XPress, April 6, 2022

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Asheville Drag Brunch

Justin Blackburn

Richard Caro

Ruth Ceesay

Maria Chiang

Bonnie Claxton

Josephine Cole

In Honor of Eva Hartman

Jeff Dektor

Marita Douglas

Ben Fehsenfeld

First Congregational United Church
of Christ Asheville

Marvette Flasher

Courtney Hall

Nina Hall

Joshua Hanson

In Honor of Steve

Margaret Harmon

Eva Hartman

on behalf of Nest Realty

Toni Holcombe

Deborah Holt

In Honor of Jodi Ford

I Heart Media

Devin Lyall

In Honor of Sue Polston

Jerilyn Mae Crowe

Laura Martin

Greg Mayer

on behalf of One Click Fix

Katherine McCarty

David McCoy

In Honor of Matt McCoy

Andrea Morris

Jennifer Nicolaisen

Shaun O'Connor

Toni Odom

Maumi Patakes

Sarah Philbrick

PlumDog Financial

David and Sue Polston

Linda Powderly

In Honor of Kevin Rumley

Christen Rinaldi

Michelle Spiegel

Maiken Stefany

Sally Stein

Natasha Sutton

Amanda Thomas

Town and Mountain Realty

Amy Upham

Tracy Veteto

on behalf of Matt Dubois

Denise Watson

Marcia Whitney

**and
YOU!**

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

ABCCM
Addiction Professionals of
North Carolina
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
Aurora Studio & Gallery
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
City of Asheville
Cricket Wireless
Daya Mental Health &
Wellness
Dogwood Health Trust
Foundation
East Fork Pottery
EBCI Tribal Justice Center
Eleanor Health Foundation
Essential Purpose
Faces and Voices of Recovery
Buncombe County Family
Justice Center
Buncombe County Justice
Resource Center
First Bank of Asheville
First at Blue Ridge Inc.
First Congregational United
Church of Christ of Asheville
Food Connection
Goodwill Industries of
Northwest North Carolina
Haywood Street Congregation
Helpmate
Homeward Bound of Asheville
Include
Julian F. Keith Alcohol and
Drug Abuse Treatment
Center
Kairos West
Community Center
Kathros Sanctuary
Lantern Health
Little Light Psychotherapy,
PLLC
Love & Respect for Recovery
and Wellness
MAHEC
MANNA Food Bank
Mary Benson House
McDowell IMPACT
McDowell Mission Ministries
Mediation and Justice
Restorative Center
NC Department of Health and
Human Services
North Carolina Problem
Gambling
Pisgah Legal Services
Promise Resource Network
PRISM
October Road
Oxford Housing
Q&A Training and Consulting,
Inc.
Real World Transitional
Sadhana Massage
SafePlusMore
SeekHealing
Shining Star Center
Summit Recovery
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
Warren Wilson College
Wilkes Recovery Revolution
WithAll Congregation
WNCAP



SUNRISE COMMUNITY
FOR RECOVERY & WELLNESS

www.sunriseinashville.org

Main Phone: 828-552-3858

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

Physical Address: #46 Westgate Shopping Center
Asheville, NC 28806

Tax I.D. 20-5775122