

2019



Spring Newsletter

A Light In The Storm



There are still a few tickets left to hear Christopher Poulos at our second annual celebration of recovery, **A Light In The Storm**, on Tuesday, May 21, 2019.

Christopher Poulos is an attorney and the Executive Director of the Washington Statewide Reentry Council. Prior to his appointment, he served as Executive Director of Life of Purpose Treatment at the University of North Texas, where he was also an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice. During law school, he served at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and The Sentencing Project.

Prior to law school, he overcame many obstacles, including tragic family losses, addiction, homelessness, and a federal incarceration. He now dedicates his life to helping others overcome or avoid similar challenges and he supports a public health-based approach to addiction. His work promotes equal access to the law and seeks to end mass incarceration.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to learn about two exciting new programs at Lifeline Connections: Connections Café & Catering, a social enterprise business venture for people new in recovery, and Camp Mariposa, a camping experience for 9-12 year-olds affected by a family member's substance use.

Tickets are available on our [website](#) or for more information call Chelsea House at 360-397-8246 x 30546.

Gender Specific Residential Programs



Beginning May 6, Lifeline Connections has added gender-specific Residential Treatment Services at the Women's Recovery Center. All women seeking residential treatment at Lifeline Connections will now be housed at the Women's Recovery Center, a facility opened by Lifeline Connections in the fall of 2018 to serve pregnant and parenting women. Additional space in the building has since been renovated and is now ready to accept 15 new women.

Substance use affects all segments of the population, and yet every person's situation is unique. Similarities can be found within certain groups, however, including gender or culture. Men and women are inherently different, of course, and their bodies process substances differently. They also use drugs for different reasons and find different challenges in their journey to recovery. Gender-specific treatment programs can offer a feeling of safety not found in a mixed gender environment.

The residential program located in the Center for Community Health Building now houses all men, providing each gender with the opportunity for more customized treatment and care. Since 2015, Lifeline Connections has increased its inpatient bed capacity by 35%. With the Women's Recovery Center at full capacity, the agency now offers 117 inpatient beds to treat those working to overcome the disease of addiction. These include sixteen beds in our acute medical detox unit, sixteen in the sobering unit, sixteen in the pregnant & parenting women unit, fifteen in the women's residential unit and 44 in the men's residential unit.

Mt. Vernon Office Now Open



Adults and youth living and working in Skagit County now have another resource to get treatment for behavioral health disorders. Earlier this year, Lifeline Connections opened an office in Mt. Vernon providing a full range of counseling services.

Treatment for youth and adults with substance use disorders is currently available. The office provides initial assessments (including DUI assessments) to determine the best treatment option, intensive outpatient and regular outpatient treatment. Counseling for problem gambling is also currently available, and the office expects to offer mental health counseling beginning in July. Medication assisted treatment (Suboxone® and Vivitrol®) may also be arranged for people needing support for an opioid use or alcohol use disorder. Treatment may include both individual and group counseling, and counselors will also refer to other community organizations for additional support.

The office is located at 2105 Continental Place, Suite A, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273. People interested in learning more should visit www.lifelineconnections.org, or call 360.399.6900. Walk-in appointments are available for a substance use assessment Monday through Wednesday from noon to 3:30pm. Lifeline Connections accepts all major insurance as well as Washington Apple Health.

Volunteer Rock Star: AmeriCorps Clifford Ellis



Clifford Ellis, Lifeline Connections' AmeriCorps Mental Health First Aid Trainer, has committed one year of full-time volunteerism to make sure every-day people in Clark County understand how to intervene and help when a friend, loved one, or stranger is experiencing a mental health crisis. But even on his day off on MLK Day, Cliff continues to serve his community! In February, Cliff volunteered with SOLVE Keep the Rose City Pretty. The well-established program serves "to bring Oregonians together to improve the environment and build a legacy of stewardship".

Before heading out, Cliff made sure to secure his AmeriCorp logo pin onto his stocking cap and vest. After signing in at Irvine Park in NE Portland, Cliff and other volunteers listened to a speech from Portland City Mayor Ted Wheeler. He received a safety vest, trash tongs, a bag, work gloves, and a map designating his assignment, and Cliff went to work for about 3

hours. He returned with a heavy bag of trash and a greater awareness of the waste produced by disposable cups, lids, and straws. Cliff stated: "I considered the day a success; it was a really nice change of pace and a pleasure to be outside on such a nice day. I really enjoyed how strangers on the street were thanking us and how appreciative they were. Sometimes the intrinsic reward that comes with teaching Mental Health First Aid can be slim, delayed, or not very present. So it was very nice to see an observable, instant change due to the result of my helping."

Thank you, Cliff, for your volunteer spirit! Your work at Lifeline Connections as an AmeriCorps Mental Health First Aid Trainer has impacted many lives in the community, and we appreciate all your hard work and diligence. To find out more about Mental Health First Aid, email Cliff at cellis@lifelineconnections.org.

WE ♥ OUR COMMUNITY

Substance Use Treatment Support



Building on the success of the agency's new mental health engagement specialist, Lifeline Connections was recently awarded a grant to hire a second outreach and engagement specialist. Engagement specialists meet people early in their treatment, link them with all the services that may be appropriate, and stay engaged with them so they don't miss appointments or fall through the cracks.

"Our engagement specialists make sure people know they have one more person on their side as they navigate the labyrinth of treatment options, someone who can help open doors and clear up confusion," said Jared Sanford, chief executive officer. "We're already seeing treatment outcomes improve in just the first year of having this resource available."

Funding from Beacon Health Options will add a second full-time engagement specialist, this one focusing on people seeking help for their substance use disorders.

Beacon's award also increases support for the Recovery Resource Center and ensures core treatment remains in place for people without private or public health insurance. "Beacon is a strong partner in this community helping people with substance use disorders get back on their feet," said Sanford.

Therapeutic Specialty Courts

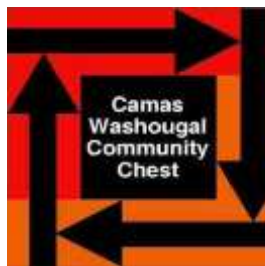


In 1999, Lifeline Connections was invited to sit down with Clark County District & Superior Courts and create a Therapeutic Specialty Court diversion program. The new courts would help participants address behavioral health disorders while under the supervision of the court, giving people an alternative to jail time or criminal records. Earlier this year the Courts renewed their partnership with Lifeline Connections by awarding contracts for four court diversion programs.

"The court programs help people stay in the community while they get treatment," said Pat Upshaw, program director. "They get to stay with their jobs, rebuild their families and improve their self-sufficiency, and all of this helps reduce the cycles of addiction and crime. The participants benefit, of course, but so does our whole community."

Therapeutic Specialty Courts are an opt-in program, meaning participants have to want to engage in the year-long program, and not everyone is eligible based on the nature of their court involvement. "When it's the right fit," says Upshaw, "people's lives really do change!"

Art Therapy In Camas



The Camas-Washougal Community Chest recently awarded Lifeline Connections a \$650 grant to purchase art supplies for use with mental health counseling in the Camas office. Two clinicians in the Camas office describe how art therapy has helped people give expression to the deep thoughts and emotions they may not be able to find the words to describe.

"I asked one of my patients to draw a bridge and place herself on it, showing where she was in her journey," says Trista Wolles. "She also drew in a barge full of trash below the bridge and said, 'That's the load of garbage I'm carrying around.' A few weeks later I asked what her barge looked like now, and remembering the image helped her see the progress she'd made. It was powerful for her."

Meredith McMackin asked a patient to find an image in a magazine that represented her anger, and the woman found a picture of a vacuum cleaner. "That's it," she said. "My anger sucks the life out of me." Later the woman remembered that vacuum cleaners have dials allowing the user to control their power—a wonderful metaphor for learning to control anger.

One man from a Native American background felt isolated in his treatment group until he started learning traditional beadwork. Next, he taught it to several people in his group, and connections and emotional healing began.

The Camas-Washougal Community Chest funds programs that serve residents of their two communities in east Clark County. Thank you, Community Chest!

Lifeline Employee Receives Recognition



Mark Holan, one of Lifeline's own employees in Jail Transition Services, was recently honored by Clark County Mental Health Court, a division of District and Superior Courts. In recognition for his dedicated service as a champion of participants in Mental Health Court, he was presented a certificate of appreciation. Mark loves the work he does and was completely surprised and deeply honored to receive such acknowledgement. Keep up the good work Mark! Thank you for the positive impact you are having in our community!

NW Natural Grant



Northwest Natural believes in supporting the community where its employees live, work and play. This generous corporate spirit recently resulted in a \$2500 donation to Lifeline Connections to support our general operating programs.

The Portland-based company has provided natural gas for much of Western Oregon and Vancouver, Washington for more than 160 years. NW Natural's corporate philanthropy focuses on empowering organizations that address critical needs in the areas they serve, and they especially welcome the opportunity to help vulnerable and at-risk children and families.

Thank you for helping people build lives of recovery and hope, NW Natural!

Substance Use Treatment Support



Lifeline Connections works closely with Molina Healthcare to provide the best possible behavioral health services to residents of Washington State. Molina recently expanded member access to health food and health-related products with fast and free delivery right to the door through Amazon Prime, reducing transportation and cost barriers.

All adult Apple Health members receive 90 days of Amazon Prime, which includes access to everyday essentials like baby food and diapers, movies and TV shows including education shows for children, as well as fitness and health videos for all ages.

Soon, Molina Apple Health members will be rewarded with Amazon gift cards for completing selected preventative health activities. This collaboration is a first-time outreach of its kind to Medicaid beneficiaries.

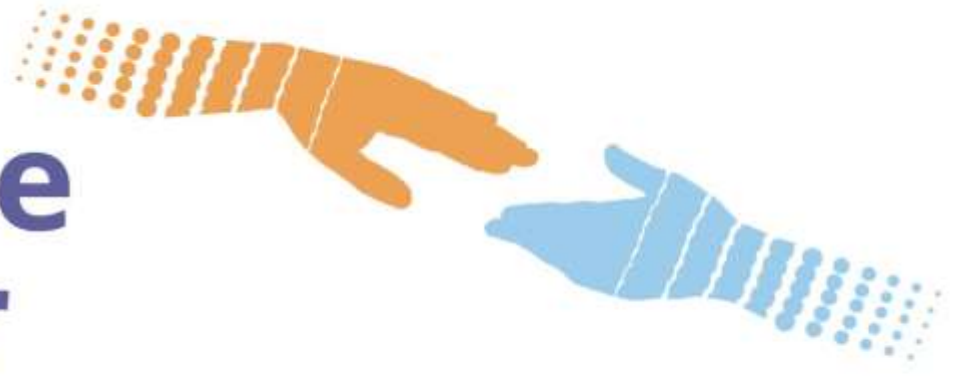
myStrength™



When crisis strikes, sometimes the behavioral health services people need are closed or unavailable. To help overcome this barrier, Lifeline Connections has partnered with myStrength™ to provide free, unlimited support 24/7. The myStrength™ eLearning activities supplement and support Lifeline Connections services.

The service offers a safe and secure way for individuals to build resiliency, manage stress or anxiety, improve mood and sleep, manage chronic pain, prevent relapse, or provide daily inspiration. All Lifeline Connections patients, employees, and families are encouraged to sign up for this service.

Recovery Resource Center



BOOKS & MEDALLIONS

Recovery Resource Center Expands

The Lifeline Connections Recovery Resource Center Books and Medallions, 9317 NE Hwy 99, Suite M, Vancouver, WA, continues to expand and grow, becoming a valuable resource for the Vancouver community. New class offerings include:

- First-time home-owners seminar offered by RE/MAX Realty
- CPS Women's Workshop (for women looking to start or improve relationships with their children) offered by Child Protective Services

In the year since opening in May 2018, the Resource Center has become a distribution point for Narcan®, the opioid overdose reversal drug, and has become partners with Clark College ACES Club, for community Narcan® training classes, and Clark County Recovery Coalition's Recovery Café.

The center has witnessed exponential growth in the number of individuals accessing the facility, and the services being offered have also grown to best accommodate them all.

We are grateful for all of our volunteers and community leaders that have helped make the center such a viable resource for the recovery community!

RRC Classes Coming Soon!

Look for these new classes on the horizon at the RRC:

- A Legal Education Class will be offered by the Northwest Justice Project
- PALS (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones)
- ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics)
- LGBTQ support groups

To receive the monthly newsletter and calendar contact kwells@lifelineconnections.org.

Open House Bellingham/Mt. Vernon

In celebration of the opening of the Mt. Vernon office, Lifeline Connections is holding an open house **Friday, May 17th** at our Mt. Vernon location from 10:30am – noon, and then later in the afternoon at our Bellingham location from 2:00-4:00pm.

Stop by and take a tour, meet staff, learn of the many services we bring to these communities, and share in refreshments. Please plan to join us at either or both locations!

Please Join Us For
OPENHOUSE
MT. VERNON LOCATION 10:30AM-12:00PM
BELLINGHAM LOCATION 2:00PM-4:00PM

MT. VERNON LOCATION
2105 Continental Place, Suite A.
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
360.399.6900

BELLINGHAM LOCATION
4120 Meridian Street, Suite #220
Bellingham, WA 98273
360.922.3030



As a nonprofit organization Lifeline Connections relies on donations to help accomplish its mission to inspire hope and support life saving changes for people affected by substance use and mental health conditions.

Visit the link to donate:

www.lifelineconnections.org/how-you-can-help/