

Fall 2020 Newsletter



Give More 24! – Thank You, Supporters!

Clark County residents stepped up and donated almost \$2,400 to make sure Lifeline Connections' patients can have a safe way to store their medications. "Locking bags keep essential medicine out of the hands of small children," said Kaylee Collins, Program Director for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). "We're SO excited to have so many more we can give out to our folks!"

The MAT program serves more than 500 patients a year. Some patients are living on the streets, and having a safe place for medications is critical for them, too.

We had a fun partnership with Columbia Sportswear, who generously donated a portion of sales back to the agency from supporters who shopped at their Employee Store. With prices anywhere from 30% - 70% off retail, shoppers got a lot of holiday gifts taken care of while compiling almost \$470 in donations to the agency as part of our Give More campaign.

Thanks to the many folks who donated and shopped on our behalf!

Recovery Corps of Washington



Lifeline Connections will add new recovery supports in Southwest Washington through a partnership with Washington Service Corps. The "Recovery Corps of Washington" provides AmeriCorps members to expand the reach and impact of substance use disorder education, prevention and recovery efforts across the state.

Two AmeriCorps members will work to ensure people of all ages are connected with prevention, treatment and aftercare support to mitigate the continuing impact of the opioid epidemic in this region. The Recovery Support Specialist will be located at our drop-in Recovery Resource Center in Vancouver and will help up to 100 adults and youth who have completed treatment stay on the path of recovery by offering compassion, guidance and access to specific recovery support services. The Opioid Education Specialist will engage with youth and children through school-based, court-based, and camp programs to provide education and awareness aimed at preventing their use of opioids and other substances.

Applications for serving in either position will be available soon.

Medication Assisted Treatment Has Moved from the VA Campus to Orchards Location

Address: Our Orchards Location
11719 NE 95th St. Ste. D
Vancouver WA 98682
(360) 397-8246 ext. 30467

Hours will not change:

- **Walk-in Rapid Response:**
Monday – Thursday
10:30am-11:30am
- **Appointments:** Monday –
Thursday 8am-5pm

Why? We will have more room to better serve you!

**MAT has moved
to Orchards!**



A Supported Employment Story from a Former Patient

Prior to becoming employed in June 2020, Cheryl had been seeking work for a little over two years. She disclosed that before deciding to engage in the Supported Employment program, "I was feeling really directionless and like I didn't have much structure to my days. I was having a really hard time finding available jobs on my own. I needed help with my resume. And, I was consistently relapsing without any structure. Cheryl actively engaged in Supported Employment Services with the motivation to gain competitive employment right away. She was hired by Lifeline Connections as a Janitorial Team Member, providing specialized cleaning services in multiple facilities around Clark County, WA.

Supported Employment Supervisor, Debbie Peabody assisted her with pre-vocational skills, "Cheryl focused on the task of achieving her career goal and I am impressed with what she has accomplished this year. "During the job search phase," Cheryl said, "I was able to get help with re-writing my resume and making it more polished. You found a number of jobs for me to apply for. And I feel like you've been really supportive. You followed up with Chris [hiring authority] a number of times to see where I was at in the process of getting a job, and you were keeping me hopeful and patient, because it did take a while."

Cheryl's polite persistence and patience helped her obtain a part-time career in a peer recovery environment, where her own personal success continues to evolve. Since becoming employed, she disclosed, "I have a lot more self-respect and independence. I like that I can pay my own bills. I've gotten my longest stretch of sobriety by being employed. I've made a really great friend; a co-worker. Employment can be enjoyable," she described, "I like having autonomy, and that I feel like I'm giving back to the community; both the recovery community and Clark County. I like that Chris [supervisor] has been really understanding and supportive of some of my challenges. I really like my schedule and that it's consistent. I like that I have a lot of responsibility here. I like being part of the team here."

When asked what her friends and family think of her obtaining this job, Cheryl said, "I feel like they're proud of me for working again, and finding some more success. [Mom] She'd been telling me that she's proud of me." The first job a person accepts is an important step in one's own career goal. Her future career goal, she said, "is eventually I want to get back into full-time work, either in a kitchen or I would be open to doing even more janitorial stuff again. I think I would like to keep this job for as long as possible."

Cheryl would like others to know, "I feel like Supported Employment is a really good tool. I think it really helped me overcome a lot of barriers to employment, because I was really feeling stuck with what to do with my resume, and how to broach finding a job while being in recovery, and in a COVID-19 challenged job market."

Camp Mariposa Update

Camp Mariposa staff is working hard to create the magic of coming to camp through virtual sessions and hand-delivered care packages. The "camp in a box" focuses on the nurturing power of nature, while partnering with the local wildlife refuge to incorporate at-home activities, such as easy to assemble bird feeders. To help campers deal with being restless, dance instruction, specifically hip-hop fusion, has been a popular activity at virtual camp.

This creative outreach was recognized by the Eluna Network and Program Supervisor, Trista Wolles was asked to present at their Director's meeting specifically about these virtual camps.



An Employee with Passion and Purpose ~ Sherwin Phillips



"Sherwin is a hardworking individual and truly cares about the individuals we serve. He has contributed many ideas to address patient's needs in the Grays Harbor area."

~Kaylee Collins, MAR Program Director

Born in Portland, OR of a military family, Sherwin moved to Guam at an early age and stayed through high school graduation. It wasn't long after that he decided to pave his own path and began playing basketball at Sacramento City College. But after an unfortunate knee injury, he had to pave a new path and ended up moving back to Washington, and calling Aberdeen his home.

While working at the Coastal Community Action Program he found his passion for helping people and decided to pursue a career in counseling; completing a Bachelor's degree in Sociology & Communication. He also co-founded a podcast called All City Sounds in Seattle while completing a Problem Gambling internship with Christian Counseling.

It's through Sherwin's ability to connect with people and his grass-roots outreach that the MAT program in Aberdeen has grown to over 150 patients. He was also instrumental in obtaining a grant for cell phones for community members in need. His passion for helping people makes him an ideal MAT Care Navigator. Lifeline Connections has been lucky to have him the past (almost) two years and we look forward to many more.

And the Beat Goes On



Last issue we talked about how donations and contributions from foundations helped Lifeline keep serving vulnerable people with behavioral health disorders in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. As everyone knows, we're still living with the impact of this new virus - which means how you and your friends support us may look different, too.

WINTER COATS: From November 16 to January 4, Burlington Coat Factory will hold its Winter Coat Drive, and Lifeline Connections will again be the grateful recipient of donated new and gently used winter coats. "The folks who visit our sobering and withdrawal management units are often living on the streets," said Amber Martin, Program Director, "and when we can give them a fresh, warm, clean coat it can be a life-saver." Last year the agency gave 147 people a new-to-them coat because of this project. If you're planning on purchasing a new coat this winter at Burlington Coat Factory, please consider taking along a gently used one from your closet. Our folks will thank you!

MONTHLY GIVING: Want to make a difference with a big impact? Consider making a monthly contribution to Lifeline Connections. Just \$10 a month adds up to more than \$100 over a year, and \$50 a month turns into \$600! These recurring gifts mean patients who need a bus pass, or work clothes, or a credit check fee to allow them to rent an apartment can make those important steps toward health and recovery. If your circumstances permit and your heart wants to do something meaningful, click on the [Donate](#) button on our website for easy, secure signup.

EVENTS: Miss those gala dinners where everyone has a good time learning about and raising funds to help folks in the local community? We miss seeing you, too! On December 1, you're invited to a thank-you event for your support this year. **Breakfast With The CEO** is going to look a little different - like so much else, we'll be gathering safely online as Jared Sanford shares the successes of 2020 and the plans and projects on the table for 2021. We have a gift for those who've supported us that we hope will let you enjoy the spirit of breakfast together, even if we have to do it apart.

Meanwhile, save the date: **Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 9:00 am** for our annual thank you event! More details about how to link up will be coming via email and Facebook soon.

Medication Assisted Treatment Available in North Sound

Island County is now offering Medication Assisted Treatment again in Oak Harbor after entering Phase 3 of the "Safe Start" re-opening plan. Treatment is by appointment only, by calling (360) 399-6900.

Medication Assisted Treatment is also available in Mt. Vernon and Bellingham, with additional safety measures in place as Whatcom and Skagit Counties remain in Phase 2. Please call (360) 922-3030 for information about treatment in Bellingham and (360) 399-6900 for information about Mt. Vernon. Appointments can be made for in-person care at both sites.

"We're pleased by the number of people who remained engaged with treatment during the upheaval," said Carolyn Mason, Regional Program Director in North Sound, "and want to encourage anyone who may have an opioid use disorder to give us a call."



Resilience & the Road to Recovery during COVID-19



Recovery happens best in community. Being with trusted others helps people manage anxiety and vulnerability. It connects people with others traveling the same road. So how do you build community while social/physical distancing?

Clinicians at Lifeline Connections say clients are doing well in the new remote environment. One person, when asked how they felt participating in group via the internet, said, "It works great. I thought it was better than the old way." Group members helped each other with connectivity issues and got creative in solving tech problems: one person who attended from their car (for privacy) ran an orange extension cord from the house so the cell phone battery wouldn't die.

"All six of my group members wanted me to pass on the big THANK YOU for being open," said another clinician. "They see we care about them by giving them support in their recovery when other doors are closing. They were grateful we still held group for them."

Clinicians and patients both have had to quickly learn how to use Zoom, something that doesn't come easily for everyone. Early in April, one clinician said, "I did a Zoom meeting yesterday for the first time with an individual, and he was pleased. He said he liked it, that when we can't be around people it is nice to still see people's faces." A patient in the program for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing simply said, "I don't feel left out now."

To our wonderful, resilient and strong patients—thank you for showing flexibility and for supporting each other. Together we are each stronger, and you make it a joy for us to be part of your recovery!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Lifeline Connections

Behavioral health disorders do not discriminate between people based on their racial, ethnic, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status or any other "grouping" sometimes used to categorize people. Neither does Lifeline Connections, but in the past six months we've recognized that simply not discriminating isn't enough.

"Lifeline Connections must be a place that is safe for everyone. Everyone," said Jared Sanford, Chief Executive Officer. "There are no options. If you need help managing your mental health or substance use disorder, our promise is that you will be treated with dignity and respect at Lifeline Connections." It's a bold statement, and we acknowledge that all of us are learning and growing as we discern the best ways to serve people, no matter what cultural or historic background they bring.

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee has been charged with making sure that our clients and our employees find safety inside our walls. This means working with programs and committees across the agency to review and evaluate policies and practices to ensure they are equitable. It means employees may, at times, be faced with discomfort as they identify words they've used or actions they've taken that haven't been inclusive. It means we're committed to making sure our staff and leadership truly reflect the people we serve - that they understand from within their own lived experiences.

On June 5, we boldly stated, "Lifeline Connections does not tolerate racism, prejudice, hatred, abuse or violence in any form." We committed ourselves to active engagement in changing what hasn't been equitable or inclusive, to being anti-racist, and to rejecting oppressive systems that should never have existed, and can certainly no longer be tolerated.

Five months later, we are as committed to that vision as we were on June 5. Please ask how we're doing. Hold us accountable to transforming the culture of our organization. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our communities, and we are determined to behave with all the integrity and respect our patients are due.

We are all travelers on this journey; we all need each other.



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