

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) Partnerships in Clark County

Clark Cowlitz Fire and Rescue: Lifeline Connections has partnered with the Clark Cowlitz Fire and Rescue Community Assistance Referral and Education Services (CARES) Team to bridge services for Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR). Individuals who are assisted by emergency personnel and present with substances in their system are connected to the Lifeline Connections MAR team for ongoing support.

The goal of the CARES program ensures that individuals get the ongoing care they need while reducing dependency on emergency services for non-emergency needs. Paramedics and social workers can help access additional services as needed.

ScalaNW: Lifeline Connections Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) program has contracted with ScalaNW, a program created by the Washington State Healthcare Authority (HCA), in collaboration with healthcare organizations across Washington State.

ScalaNW connects local emergency departments and acute care hospitals with opioid use disorder (OUD) clinics, such as Lifeline Connections, to facilitate ongoing treatment of substance use disorder. ScalaNW aims to increase treatment access, improve care through evidence-based information and practice guidelines, and reduce mortality rates.

Thank You for 23 Years of Service!

Brandy Branch worked for Lifeline Connections for 23 years. Her unwavering support and commitment have been instrumental in shaping our organization and positively impacted countless lives across Vancouver and the North Sound region. We are immensely grateful for her service, leadership, and dedication over the years.

Brandy began her career at Lifeline Connection in our residential program as floor staff. She later became a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and a Substance Use Disorder Professional (SUDP). She also became fluent in American Sign Language to add to her list of accomplishments. Over the years, Brandy has held many leadership roles, including Vice President of Outpatient and Community-Based Services, Chief Clinical Officer, and Interim Chief Executive Officer.

Brandy, thank you for your leadership, commitment, and dedication to Lifeline Connections, our patients, and our community!



EMDR Offered in Children and Youth Programs

According to a [KFF analysis](#) of a federal survey of teen health, about 1 in 5 adolescents report symptoms of anxiety or depression. Lifeline Connections' Children and Youth Program in Clark County and Youth Program in the North Sound Region work diligently to support the needs of adolescents. One of the treatment modalities used in the N. Sound Region is Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). This is a psychotherapy technique that helps process and heal from traumatic memories and other distressing life experiences. Our Mental Health Counselor, Juan Miranda, shares the following success story:

I started working with a 16-year-old young man in February 2024 with anxiety, depression, and anger. These issues arose from the passing of a beloved family member. The client used fentanyl to cope with his emotional suffering. He had grown up in a tumultuous household, with both parents being incarcerated, and had lived in foster care. He was finding it difficult to stay motivated in school, remain sober, and feel hopeful about the future. During the assessment, I introduced him to the concept of EMDR. Although he was initially skeptical, he was very intrigued and expressed a strong interest in making this the primary intervention, as he had not had positive experiences with talk therapy. As we progressed through the stabilization phases, he reported significant improvements in his daily life at each session and felt that the interventions were effective.

When he felt ready to address deeper reprocessing of traumatic events, I guided him through EMDR's Standard Protocol, focusing on the devastating loss of a beloved family member that he identified as the root cause of his emotional despair. After just one session, he no longer reported experiencing the emotional devastation that had plagued him for years. Instead, he expressed feelings of strength, gratitude, resilience, and hope for the future. As we continued to reprocess life events, he grew stronger and more empowered each week. His school grades and attendance improved, he stayed sober, his relationships with friends and family improved, and he is excited about the future.

Celebrating the Life and Service of Robert (Bob) Poole

Lifeline Connections recently lost a dear friend and Board Member, Robert (Bob) Poole. Bob was a dedicated supporter of Lifeline Connections and served on the Board of Directors for several years, passionately contributing to various committees. His expertise as a PhD in Psychology brought valuable insight and passion to Lifeline Connections' mission.

Bob had a love for baseball (he was a Dodgers fan), enjoyed international travel and fishing, and was committed to helping others. After retiring from his career in psychology, he served as a crisis counselor with the Red Cross, and as a board member of Lifeline Connections and Columbia Presbyterian Church. We are immensely grateful for and will continue to cherish Bob's service, dedication, commitment, and the warmth of his smile.

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A Lifeline to Wellbeing Luncheon

Lifeline Connections' Annual Fundraising Luncheon, *A Lifeline to Wellbeing*, was held September 12th, 2024, at Royal Oaks Country Club with over 160 community partners, donors, and elected officials in the room. Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle shared her passion for the importance of life-saving behavioral health services in our community and the incredible dedication the City of Vancouver has for Lifeline Connections. Jeff Hatch, a man in long-term recovery, an Ivy League graduate, and a retired NFL player, shared his unbelievably courageous and impactful story of recovery while overcoming unthinkable obstacles.



The event had 21 unique sponsors and more than 50 individual donors! We are grateful for the many community members who joined us for the first time, excited to learn more about Lifeline Connections. Many thanks to our Planning Team, Board of Directors, Executive Team, and Volunteers for collectively making this luncheon a great success!

Donate Today and be A Part of Our Community's Healing

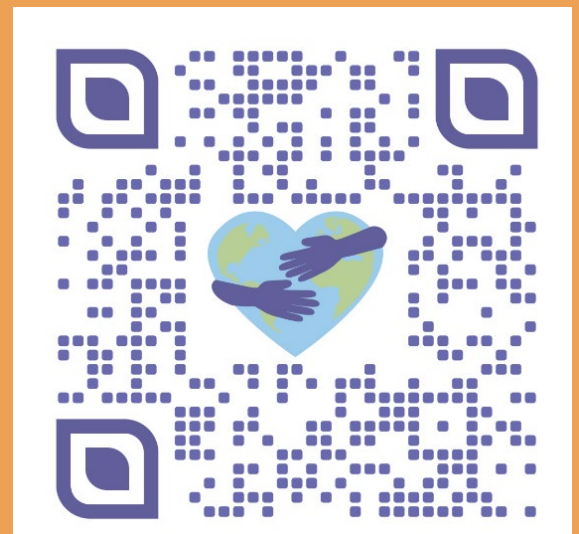
The holidays have arrived, and Lifeline Connections is reflecting on a year of accomplishments. We are thankful to our wonderful partners in the community for their support. Our community's strength lies within our ability to join hands when needed to help individuals experiencing behavioral health conditions.

We ask you to kindly consider making or renewing your commitment to those in need by supporting the many lifesaving programs Lifeline Connections offers. **Consider making a gift today as we close out the year, it is the support from people like you** that helps us provide a way to facilitate life-altering changes. It is not easy and for some, the struggle is not over. Together, we can help our friends and neighbors achieve recovery and wellbeing.

Some of our accomplishments this year include:

- Providing services to more than 5,000 individuals and families
- Primary Care Screening opened to the public
- Expanded outpatient mental health services to include children 5-11 years of age
- Provided substance use disorder assessments in Klickitat County

Your gift of support **today** will truly make a difference in the lives of those we serve.



Lifeline Connections' Client Spotlight: Stephanie Eddy

I come from a good family, at least in the traditional sense. I went to a good school, my family loved me and always ensured I had what I needed. I knew they loved me, and we shared a lot of good times. But from a very young age, I always knew I was different.

I wasn't very good at dealing with feelings of sadness or anger. I remember having outbursts as a young child, and later not remembering why I got so mad. I coped with my feelings by eating. My family tried therapy and different medications. Some things helped, but I never really developed coping skills for difficult feelings.

I had opportunities to go to college after high school, but partying and experimenting with drugs began to take over. As I grew further apart from my family, I felt lonely but also free. I thought I was on a journey, at least in the beginning.

When I was 21, I got pregnant. I was so excited to be a mom that I stopped partying and moved back in with my mother, trying to rebuild our relationship. I gave birth at 6 months. My baby did not survive. I remember not wanting to live. My boyfriend left me, and I couldn't cope with the trauma, so I turned to the only escape I knew. I began using heroin. I was an IV user and had little regard for my safety or health. There were sometimes years would go by without me speaking to my family.

Ten years went by in a blur. I met someone I truly loved, and I became pregnant again. I was so deep in my addiction that I could not see my way out during the pregnancy, and after my beautiful daughter was born, she was taken into CPS custody. I was homeless, addicted, and broken. When my daughter was three months old, I remember sitting in my tent, wondering what she was doing, and I asked myself, is this how you want to die? Or do you want to give living one more chance?

A few weeks after I asked myself that question, I entered Lifeline Connections' Pregnant and Parenting Women's (PPW) Program. Over the next six months, everything changed. The staff made sure that I got to court dates, encouraged me to sign up for Family Treatment Court, made sure I got to visit with my daughter and helped me finally develop the coping skills I would need to live a sober and successful life as a mother. When I graduated PPW, I was six months substance-free and had full custody of my daughter. None of that would have been possible without Lifeline Connections and the wonderful people in the PPW program.

Today I live a life I only could have dreamed of then. I'm a certified peer counselor at a local shelter, and I get to help others every day. My girls' father and I have made a family together like we always dreamed of. We welcomed a new baby girl this past March, and her big sister was so excited.

I am filled with gratitude every day, for my 5 years of recovery, my restored relationships, and for this life I almost missed!



Men's Low-Intensity Residential (MLIR) Grant Award

Our Men's Low-Intensity Residential was gifted a van from the Whatcom Transportation Authority! The van will be used to provide transportation for clients to attend mental health, medication, and housing appointments, along with employment opportunities, and more.

"The Sky's the Limit" – Skye the Therapy Horse

We want to express our sincere gratitude to the [Evergreen Council](#) on Problem Gambling (ECPG) for their support of Lifeline Connections' [Healing Animal Partners](#) (HAP) program. Please visit [HealingAnimalAdoptions.org](#), to adopt a plush therapy horse. The proceeds from these plush horse adoptions are donated by ECPG to the HAP program.

Skye, the plush therapy horse, provides comfort and connections to those in need. When you symbolically adopt Skye, you're not just bringing home an 8" plush; you're supporting ECPG in their mission to assist Lifeline Connections' Healing Animal Partners program, which uses equine-assisted therapy to help veterans and individuals navigate their healing journey.



Bring Skye home today and make a tangible impact on the lives of those who benefit from this unique equine therapy. Adopt one today for yourself or as a [gift](#) and support two great organizations!

Savior Socks Donates 500 Bombas Socks to HOST



Our Homeless Outreach, Stabilization, and Transition (HOST) program received a generous donation of 500 Bombas socks from Savior Sock. The HOST Team is a multi-disciplinary team of health, substance use disorder, and medical professionals. The team provides critical survival services and engagement to adults who are experiencing severe and persistent behavioral health and co-occurring conditions in addition to homelessness.

HOST team members go to where their clients are, such as camps, shelters, hospitals, etc. They develop trusting relationships with their clients to encourage them to seek assistance. The HOST team also prioritizes services for those who are highly vulnerable and lack service connections or other support, including those unwilling or unable to engage in traditional service models.

Bombas, with the help of their customers and giving partners, offer new, clean clothes to those in need. For every clothing item purchased, a clothing item of the same kind is donated to those experiencing homelessness.

Thank you, Bombas, for your commitment to the community! ***Please consider helping those in need this holiday season!***

November Sock Drive – Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) Department

Socks can be dropped off Monday to Thursday from 8:00 AM-5:00 PM and Fridays from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM at our Orchards location: 11719 NE 95th Street, Ste D, Vancouver, WA 98682. For questions, please contact the MAR team at MATOutreach@lifelineconnections.org or call (360) 295-1439.

Embedded Counselors & Peers into Community Partners Programs – Whatcom & Skagit Counties

Lifeline Connections now has a substance use disorder counselor/peer embedded in Peace Health's Bellingham location and soon, the Skagit County Jail. Our Behavioral Health and Reentry Team began providing services in Whatcom County Jail in 2021 with only two staff members. Due to the success of the program in helping incarcerated individuals diagnosed with behavioral health conditions transition back into the community, the staff has grown into a multidisciplinary team comprised of Substance Use and Mental Health Disorder Counselors, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), and Reentry Specialists.

Are You Looking for a New Career?

Make a difference in your local community and consider a career in behavioral health!

We have a generous benefits package that includes tuition reimbursement, paid time off, medical coverage and many positions even include a hiring bonus.

Internal candidates please submit an internal application to the Recruiting team, while external candidates need to apply using our [website](#). You may also visit our [website](#) to view a complete list of openings.

- Clinical Program Director (Vancouver, WA)
- Medical Director (Vancouver, WA)
- Nursing Administrator (Vancouver, WA) - \$10,000 hiring bonus!
- Clinical Supervisor (Bellingham, WA)
- SUDPT (Vancouver, WA and Bellingham, WA)
- Admissions Specialist (Vancouver, WA)
- Facilities Specialist (Vancouver, WA)
- Mental Health Professional (Vancouver, WA and Bellingham, WA) - \$5000 hiring bonus!
- Registered Nurse (Vancouver, WA)
- Licensed Practical Nurse (Vancouver, WA)