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At the **Heart** of Wellness

**Message from Maria**

Maria Coutant Skinner, **Executive Director**

**The Power of Community**

What does community mean to you? Is it a group of people living in the same place? How about a group of people that care about one another? A sense of belonging? Or is it best defined as people who care about each other enough to create a system of love and support for one another?

What if we focused on creating a Recovery Friendly Community? The Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council defines a recovery friendly community as a place where they “raise awareness of substance use conditions; promote health and recovery by reducing stigma and discrimination; and build or improve the environmental factors necessary for “recoverees” to flourish”. What would that look like and would it really be that different than what we already strive to be part of?

For starters, a Recovery Friendly Community offers a safe environment where people feel like they can be open and honest about their recovery and not feel judged or looked down upon. A place where disclosing that you are in recovery doesn’t end in the loss of a job, a friend or a relationship and instead where you are commended for the courage it takes to be in recovery.

A recovery friendly Community is a place where the focus is on health. Somewhere that puts an emphasis on healthy activities for your mind, body, and soul that don’t include substances, legal or illegal. A community that encourages healthy behaviors and actions and puts an emphasis on healthy relationships.

Many of us have experienced how it feels to live in a place where our neighbors look out for us and our friends and even some strangers will pitch in during times of need. In a Recovery Friendly Community, that sense of support and outreach would extend to those in recovery who have the courage to say, “I’m having a hard day and I could use a friend”.

Dear friends;

New research establishes that after decades of living longer and longer lives, Americans are dying earlier, succumbing to overdoses, cirrhosis, obesity, and suicide. These so-called “Deaths of Despair”, have effectively shortened the lifespans of Americans for the first time in our nation’s history. This troubling trend first popped up on the radar screen in 2014, and, sadly, was not a fluke.
and the trajectory has continued. Public health experts believe, however, that this was a phenomenon years in the making, despite major advances in medicine and safety as well as well-publicized prevention and education efforts. So, what’s going on? And, what’s the solution?

This month we are focusing on building communities where we can all feel as though we belong. Where, in those painful, lonely moments, we know there is an accepting and nurturing person or group who will be that ‘beloved community’ that Dr. King dreamt of. We can all take part in building that community so that in those moments when we or our kids and neighbors are tempted to disconnect as a way of finding relief, they are assured that there is a whole network of people who want us to turn toward them rather than away. It’s possible to build families and communities that effectively build resilient, healthy, connected young people who feel seen – wholly seen.

I’d like to share a story that illustrates this beautifully. My husband Greg works for a local alternative middle and high school housed in Torrington that serves students from throughout Knowledge is another key to a Recovery Friendly Community, learning about addiction and mental health disorders is an invaluable tool. Learning about resources that can help community members and knowing about trauma, stress, anxiety, and depression and familiarizing ourselves with the signs and symptoms may save community member's lives.

Finally standing up for those who are in recovery and battling substance use and mental health disorders is a monumental step in creating a Recovery Friendly Community. Letting members of the community know that they are not alone and that they are not judged or condemned obliterates the stigma attached to this disease.

To learn more about how to build a Recovery Friendly Community please contact our prevention department at 860-496-2139 or visit our website at www.mccallcenterct.org

Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Litchfield County. He texted me last week asking for resources for a student of his who I’ll call “Danny”. Danny and his younger sister were living on their own for a month while their dad served a 30-day prison sentence. Danny was looking for employment so that he could effectively support himself and his sister. He mentioned that they had very little food and were hungry. I phoned Julie Scharnberg at the Northwest CT Community Foundation who reached out to FISH and the Torrington Soup Kitchen. Within minutes our friends offered food, toiletries and whatever else these young people needed. Lisa Hageman loaded my car with easy to prepare, nutritious meals and this young man and his sister were immediately cared for. Greg also arranged for a job interview at Northwest Hills dealership…where Danny was offered the job. After a recent snowstorm, he carried a shovel from driveway to driveway and made a little cash and impressed a neighbor who connected him with another job at a local farm. His school has supported him through consistent, kind relationships including counseling and vocational training. This young man is on track to graduate high school in

The McCall Center for Behavioral Health has earned the highest level of accreditation from CARF International. The following programs were assessed and accredited using the standards set forth by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF):

- Intensive Outpatient Treatment - Integrated: AOD/MH - Adults
- Outpatient Treatment - Integrated: AOD/MH - Adults
- Outpatient Treatment - Integrated: AOD/MH - Children and Adolescents
- Residential Treatment - Psychosocial Rehabilitation - Adults
- Office-Based Opioid Treatment - Addictions Pharmacotherapy - Adults
- Case Management/Services Coordination - Integrated: AOD/MH - Adults
- Prevention - Alcohol and Other Drugs/Addictions - Children and Adolescents
- Diversion/Intervention - Alcohol and Other Drugs/Addictions - Children and Adolescents
- Intensive Family-Based Services - Family Services - Adults
- Governance Standards Applied
the spring, and, perhaps more importantly, he knows that this community sees and celebrates him. That's a beloved community my friend – Danny is despairing no more.

All my very best to you, Maria

**Make a difference in someone's life and support McCall today.**

Our mission is to provide comprehensive integrated substance abuse and mental health treatment to help people lead healthier and more productive lives.

Your donation will directly support our prevention, recovery and community programs and help us provide clients with the support they need regardless of their ability to pay. Click [here to donate](#) today!

This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation attainable and demonstrates the organization’s substantial conformance to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during a three day on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

According to the survey McCall “demonstrates a commitment to person-centered care and recovery/wellness, and this permeates its culture”

“This achievement is the result of a full team of very dedicated staff and volunteers, working together to ensure that people are well cared for” says Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW Executive Director of McCall Center for Behavioral Health. “Person centered care is at the core of our agency’s philosophy and that closely aligns with CARF’s standards, therefore the process was a natural fit and validated that McCall is a place where people can heal and find whole person health.

The McCall Center for Behavioral Health has been offering the highest standard of integrated and comprehensive behavioral health treatment for more than forty years. Our services are fully integrated, evidence-based, trauma-informed, gender-specific, culturally sensitive, and highly individualized.

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of the persons served. Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and now known as CARF International, the accrediting body establishes consumer-focused standards to help organizations measure and improve the quality of their programs and services. For more information about the accreditation process, please visit the CARF website at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org).

For additional information, please phone 860-496-2100 or visit the organization’s website at [www.mccallcenterct.org](http://www.mccallcenterct.org)