



## Member Moment | Recovery in the Time of the Coronavirus

Chris Poma leads our men's Recovery Circles and recently sat down with us to discuss our members, recovery, and the COVID crisis.

*Tell us a little about yourself and how you came to the Café.*

I found out about Recovery Café Longmont when it was first opening. My grandmother works in the church and knew about the opening. The more I read about Recovery Café, the more I heard about it, the more I really identified with it. I've had my own struggles through my life with addiction, and if I could help with that in any way... it totally spoke to me. I got to meet the members and really had a connection with them.

Honestly, I get so much from the Recovery Circles. It's a total two-way street. They're just really great people. It helps me with my recovery, too. You've got to talk about it. It really makes it a lot easier. You learn you're not alone.

I love how the Café supports anyone that comes through the door. I just see that unconditional love you give to the members. That really spoke to me and made me want to be a part of that.

*Before COVID, what was it like running the Recovery Circles?*

The circles were —and still are—amazing. We had a lot bigger circles, and the word was really getting out there. Then COVID hit. We had to go to Zoom, which was tough because not everyone's in that place where they have a phone or they can even operate Zoom. Before COVID, this was a bustling spot. And it's starting to get back to that, which makes me so happy.

*What's it been like now that we're open again?*

It's been great. The groups are growing, and people are connecting. I know the friendships that have been made in the groups in the beginning are still going strong to this day, and will probably keep on going. Now that we meet in person, it's just so much easier to connect. When you know you have to be someplace at a certain time, and people are counting on you to be there--as a leader or as a member--you feel a responsibility to be there. And I feel like that is really helping the group grow.

Members tell other people in the community, and then they come. If you come that first time, then you're hooked. You're going to want to be here. That's a hard thing to do, to say, 'OK I'm going to come to this group for my recovery.' But then when people do, it really helps. It really does.

*Have some members opened up about their struggles while we were closed?*

Yes, definitely. Loneliness, that was a hard thing for a lot of people. Especially in the recovery community, you get so much strength from being face-to-face with your brothers and sisters. I know that a lot of members talked about the struggle of not being able to see anybody or their friends, so yeah, that definitely was a struggle.

And we definitely did lose some members and some of our members relapsed. It's just really hard. It's hard enough when things are going good, and then you throw COVID on top.

I'm really proud of our members' resilience, even if they did relapse. They came back, and they're working on it. They never give up.

*What are your hopes now that we're back up and running? What would you like to see?*

I'd like to see us continue to grow and I'd like to see new members coming in. There's nothing more important than the new member. Maybe that's not fair. Even the guy who's been there from the beginning, and he's got like 20 years in recovery, you get so much from both. I'd like to see both types of people come in. I've seen members come in, and they're fresh and this is all new. And then they get established here, and then they can be an inspiration for the next new member. I'd like to continue seeing that. Because we help each other. That's what we're all about.



Chris

"LONELINESS, THAT  
WAS A HARD THING  
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PEOPLE."

# From the Board President

At Recovery Café Longmont, we talk a lot about the importance of community.

It's in our Mission Statement: *We are a **community** of refuge and healing for people in recovery.* And it's in our Vision Statement: *To be an enlightened **community** where people in all walks of recovery are empowered to be their best selves.* And, perhaps most importantly, it's one of our Core Values: **Inclusive Community...** *Individuals from all backgrounds are valued and embraced with compassion, mutual respect and dignity.*

Community *must* be important at Recovery Café Longmont—critically important. After all, community—not sobriety—is the opposite of addiction. It is both the path to and the goal of recovery.

But there's community, and then there's *community*. We, like so many, have been reminded again and again these past months that community is not really community if it isn't fully inclusive. We've been cognizant of that from the earliest days of the Café: it's not for nothing that

our Core Value is *inclusive* community. But as we've also been reminded these past months, inclusive community doesn't just happen. It must be pursued with humility, intention, and diligence.

And so it is that we have renewed our commitment to doing all we can to ensure that the Recovery Café Longmont community reflects the diversity of the Longmont community as a whole:

- We have expanded the Café Board, welcoming three new individuals to serve with us: Martha Fierro, Ari Umoja, and Rourke Weaver. They bring with them not only a diversity of background and life experiences but skill sets and expertise.
- Felicia Perez-Wright has joined the Café staff as our new bilingual/bicultural peer support specialist.
- The Café board and staff will participate in annual diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings.

We take our responsibility to nurture inclusive community at the Café very



seriously. But it's a responsibility which extends beyond the Café itself. Killian Noe, founder of the first Recovery Café, reminds us that we are all in recovery from something. Which means we all need an inclusive community no matter who or where we are. We invite you to join us in helping to make Longmont an inclusive community for all.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David".

David Barker  
Board President



## Happy Birthday to Us!

Recovery Café founder Killian Noe joined virtual participants at our one-year anniversary celebration to offer inspiration and challenge. She encouraged everyone to view this time of hardship during the pandemic as an opportunity to work on individual compassion and a system of reforms for all.

“The story has not all been written,” she said. “This can be a time of healing, transformation and resistance.”

Killian reiterated that we are all in recovery from something, and that we all need purpose beyond ourselves which can come from valuing everyone and offering each other unconditional love.

In addition to Killian's personal reflection, one of the original members of RCL, Andy, offered a celebratory “dry” toast noting that one of the most important lessons he learned while at the Café was to see everyone as unique—

with something valuable to offer from their individual life experiences.



*Killian*



## Join one of our new Giving Groups

The consistent generosity of Recovery Café Longmont donors is what makes our life-changing recovery community possible. To recognize and honor those individuals who wish to make a more significant commitment to help people in recovery, we are announcing three new giving groups.

We invite you to help ensure there will always be a community of refuge and healing for individuals in recovery in Longmont by becoming a member of one of the groups.

Your commitment will help provide:

- Endless cups of coffee
- One-on-one personal coaching with caring staff and volunteers
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- A loving and supportive community through regular Recovery Circles
- School for Recovery classes
- Referrals to other needed services

### CAFÉ G.E.M.S (GIVE EVERY MONTH)

Individuals who make a monthly gift totaling less than \$1,000 per year qualify for membership as a Café G.E.M. Monthly giving is easy to set up using a credit card or an electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank. The G.E.M.s will receive an RCL bookmark and public recognition of their support.

### CAFÉ CHAMPIONS

Individuals who pledge to give \$1,000 or more in a calendar year qualify for membership in the Café Champions. Champions will receive a copy of *Descent Into Love*, written by Killian Noe, founder of Recovery Café; an RCL bookmark; an invitation to regular “state-of-the-state” presentations with the executive director and board members of RCL; and public recognition of their support.

### LEGACY CIRCLE

Individuals who include RCL in their will or estate plans and notify RCL of that gift qualify for membership in the Legacy Circle. Legacy Circle members not only help support RCL’s mission well into the future but also reflect their personal commitment to helping our members build long-term mental and physical health as well as maintain their sobriety. Legacy Circle members will receive a copy of *Descent Into Love*, written by Killian Noe, founder of Recovery Café; an RCL bookmark; an invitation to regular “state-of-the-state” presentations with the executive director and board members of RCL; and public recognition of their support.

### CARES ACT

The CARES Act allows for a new charitable deduction for up to \$300 per individual (\$600 for a married couple), even if you don’t itemize your taxes. This is an above-the-line contribution that is deducted from the individual taxpayer’s income prior to the calculation of their adjusted gross income. Additionally, individuals can elect to deduct cash contributions up to 100% (increased from 60%) of their 2020 adjusted gross income on itemized 2020 tax returns. Please consult your tax advisor and the CARES Act for complete details.

**TO GET MORE INFORMATION AND/OR JOIN ONE OF OUR NEW GIVING GROUPS,  
PLEASE CONTACT LISA SEARCHINGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AT  
720-815-2885 OR LISA@RECOVERYCAFELONGMONT.ORG**

# Volunteer Spotlight

Roz Weller is used to preparing large quantities of food. During her years as a professor, she'd cook meals for her entire week on Sunday. When she started looking for volunteer opportunities after retiring, using these cooking skills seemed like a good fit. She already had great recipes. It would just be a matter of increasing the quantity.

Roz first found out about Recovery Café Longmont when she was volunteering at HOPE (Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement), serving meals and doing mending projects for people experiencing homelessness.

**“I saw that some of the reasons people ended up homeless were addiction and mental illness,” she says. “I liked that Recovery Café specialized in that.”**

In recent years, this connection has become more personal. One of her relatives struggles with mental illness, addiction, and homelessness, and she wishes he lived in a place with a Recovery Café.

**“For me, the big picture is: what are the root causes of homelessness and what are the things that are not being addressed,” she says. For her, Recovery Café addresses some of the factors that are difficult to target.**

As a Café Cook, Roz plays a pivotal role in Recovery Café Longmont's services. Café Cooks prepare meals for our members, complete with an entree, side, and healthy dessert. Access to good food can be a challenge for people experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and addiction. A homemade meal is a tangible act of care.



With her time-intensive dishes and thoughtful touches, Roz is sending a clear message to our members: you matter.

Some of her favorite meals to make include: turkey and sweet potato chili with cornbread or coleslaw, meatloaf with mashed potatoes or green beans, chicken pot pie with fried green tomatoes and remoulade sauce, and spinach calzones. For dessert, she likes creating healthful carrot cake muffins or just bringing fresh fruit. Reflecting on how volunteering has changed during COVID, Roz says one of the biggest challenges is finding ways to get creative with sack lunches. She (like us) is looking forward to being able to offer hot meals to our members again sometime soon.

In addition to being a fabulous cook, Roz is also a dedicated musician. She currently plays the upright bass in a band and goes to two bluegrass jams a week. We've been lucky enough to host her band at the Café, and can't wait to have them back once it's safe to do so.

Whether filling our members' bellies or filling the Café with music, one thing is clear: Roz is a gift to Recovery Café Longmont!

## DONATE!

Everything we do at Recovery Café Longmont is because of generous and compassionate supporters like you. YOU make our programs and services possible. Please visit our website to make a tax-deductible donation and learn more about additional ways to support our work: [recoverycafelongmont.org](https://recoverycafelongmont.org). THANK YOU for supporting this transformative work!

## VOLUNTEER!

Volunteers help hold the spirit of Recovery Café Longmont by nurturing a sense of loving community and a culture of recovery for everyone who comes through our doors.

Please visit our website to learn more about volunteering in the time of COVID: [recoverycafelongmont.org](https://recoverycafelongmont.org).

## SIGN-UP FOR E-NEWS!

Join our email community to receive news, announcements, and updates. We only use your information to keep you connected with us — we don't share with, or sell to, anyone. Please visit our website and click on the SUBSCRIBE tab. You can also add your name and email on the envelope inserted into this newsletter and mail it back to us.

# Program Update

Faire Holliday, Program Manager

*Busy.* That's the word that comes to me as I look at our lunch crowd on a September afternoon. The thought makes me smile. Like so many other things during this pandemic, my understanding of what it means for a place to be busy has changed drastically. If you'd asked me in January, I'd have said those words meant "Constant activity" or "Every chair taken." Now, after our closure and a few slower months of reopening, this is what busy looks like: 12 people and one therapy dog, sitting and standing around the makeshift patio outside Recovery Café Longmont, sharing a meal and enjoying the late-summer sunshine.



That's enough people to have several conversations going at once. There's laughter from one group and energized talking from another. A few people sit in companionable silence. A volunteer stops by with a donation of supplies and offers to do a quick storytelling session. As his voice rises and falls, I look around and think about how nice it feels to be a part of a community where everyone can be who they want to be: a listener, a talker, a thinker, a joker, a storyteller. There's a place for everyone at the Café.

## FEELING GRATEFUL

It's great to see our numbers rising again, but there's also an unexpected sense of bittersweetness. As much as I wished for busier days in July and August, I also enjoyed the slow, quiet ones where Becky, our manager of hospitality, and I were able to have one-on-one conversations with our

members. Undivided attention is a gift that is both wonderful and rare. It's the thing I'll miss the most as we begin returning to our pre-pandemic membership levels.

More than that, though, there's a sense of excitement and gratitude. While the uncertainty of the times continues, there's a steadiness to our services that we haven't seen since we closed in March, a feeling that we are finally meeting our mission again. New members are joining and old members are returning. Felicia, our new bilingual/bicultural peer support specialist, has come on board and hit the ground running. The vitality of the Recovery Circles seems to increase with every meeting. Even during this time of sadness and anxiety, we are finding ways to grow, change, and celebrate small successes.

## VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED AGAIN

Speaking of change, there are two important ones to note. First, we've had the opportunity to start working with our volunteers again. Our amazing Café Cooks and Ambassadors of Hospitality have adapted graciously to our service changes and continue to bring a huge amount of joy to our organization. Second, we've added an evening shift to better meet the needs of our community. Starting in October, our hours of service will be Tuesdays and Saturdays from 12-3:00pm and Thursdays from 5-7:00pm.

As always, change brings a time for reflection about where we've been and where we're going. In the words of Soren Kierkegaard, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." We may not know what the next year brings, but we know that there's only one direction to move from here: forwards. And that's exactly where we're headed.



## Meet Felicia

Things have come full circle for Felicia Perez-Wright, Recovery Café Longmont's new bilingual/bicultural peer support specialist. While a client at FITC (Family Integrated Treatment Court), a program designed to help those struggling with substance use be reunited with their children and families, she worked with a peer support specialist who had a big impact on her recovery.

"I was inspired by her," Felicia says. "Not only was she brave, resilient, and strong, having been through so much herself as well as facing the obstacles of her own addictions daily, she still managed to have enough kindness, patience, and compassion to deal with some very difficult individuals during some of the most difficult times."

This powerful experience inspired Felicia to seek a position where she could have a positive impact on other people's recovery from substance use, mental health, and trauma.

"As a bilingual peer support specialist, I intend to spread hope and encouragement to my peers through my own lived experiences, and to provide support, understanding, and communication in a way that is culturally accommodating, allowing me to effectively reach and connect with my Latinx community," she says.

Felicia's Chicana roots give her a window into the difficulties of accessing recovery services for those in the Latinx community. Although she is bilingual in English and Spanish, she is well aware of the language and cultural barriers monolingual Spanish-speakers face. One of her goals in this position is to be a bridge between the Latinx community and resources they may not be aware they have access to. In order to expand her knowledge and expertise, she is currently working towards certifications as a Colorado Peer and Family Support Specialist and Recovery Coach.

In her first few weeks on staff, Felicia has filled the Café with laughter and energy. She has already begun forming compassionate connections with our members, and we have no doubt that she'll easily meet her goal of spreading hope and encouragement to others in the community. We are so delighted to have her on staff and look forward to growing as an organization with her onboard.



Recovery Café  
LONGMONT

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# SAVE THE DATE!

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020

## COLORADO GIVES DAY.

It's more than just a day. It's a movement that inspires and unites thousands of donors to give where they live. Every donation made through [ColoradoGives.org](https://coloradogives.org) on Colorado Gives Day is boosted by a \$1 Million Incentive Fund which increases the value of every dollar.



“We, like so many, have been reminded again and again these past months that community is not really community if it isn't fully inclusive.” - David Barker