

From the Courtroom to the Café: How Peer Support Is Bridging the Gap

Three years ago, with nothing more than a grant and a bold vision, Boulder County's treatment court team began building a peer support program from the ground up. They started small, training women on probation who were doing well, or who had graduated, to become certified Peer Support Specialists. Their vision came to life through partnership with Recovery Café Longmont.

With the Café's help, peers began co-facilitating therapy groups and showing up where it mattered most: in the courtroom. "Their presence offers immediate connection practical resources, and a sense of hope, helping individuals feel less alone and guiding them towards the next steps in their recovery journey," said Monica Sellers, a probation officer. Today, peers like Morgan, Kristina, and Sabrina are in courtrooms in both Boulder and Longmont three days a week, offering what many systems can't: a warm invitation to something more than services – true belonging.

Recently retired Judge Ingrid Bakke of the 20th Judicial District shared, "The connection with clients has been invaluable... it provides people in need of a sober community a place to visit, and hopefully become a member, in order to continue on their path of sobriety with people who truly want to be there for them."

Now, the Café isn't just a referral – it's a bridge between justice and healing. **That's the power of peer support** – and the power of community.



Kristina, Amanda, and Sabrina at Boulder County Court



Morgan leading a Women's Empowerment Group



Joanie (left) and Morgan (right).

"SHE'S DOING AMAZING."

Joanie first connected with Recovery Café through Peer Support Specialist Morgan in probation court. What drew her in was Morgan's energy – someone who made the idea of recovery feel real and possible. At first, Joanie kept her guard up, but their relationship grew into a steady source of support. "Now she listens, shows up, and takes things to heart," Morgan shared. "She's working, housed, involved. She's seriously killing it."



Meet Lisa

For six years, Lisa has poured her heart into RCL, even helping launch the Café in 2019. With loved ones in recovery, she wanted to give back and understand. "The strength and resilience of our members blows me away," she says. Inspired by the peer team's compassion and Jen's infectious energy, Lisa sees RCL as more than a meal—it's resources, hope, and a place to witness life-changing journeys.

"You Don't Have to Do It Alone"

Once a member finding his footing, Jeff now helps others through the same safe space that supported him.

When a peer support specialist from Recovery Café Longmont found Jeff on the streets in October 2024, he was ready for change. "I wanted to get sober," he says. That moment set everything in motion – detox, Tribe Recovery Homes, then the Ready to Work program at Boulder Bridge House.

The Café became Jeff's safe place to re-learn how to be social, surrounded by people with similar struggles but different stories. "No one looks down on you here," he says.

Today, Jeff facilitates Recovery Circles and plays a key role in supporting RCL staff at the Boulder pilot program. He's working toward peer support certification and building a future he once thought was impossible.

Life looks different now – steady, connected, and full of possibility. Jeff says the people at the Café "took the time to help" and gave him the space to grow. "It makes all the difference knowing you don't have to do it alone."



Jeff with Boulder pilot program participants.

Fall 2025 Hours

Tuesday - Friday

11 AM - 7 PM

Please note that outside groups will continue to meet at the Café on their scheduled days/times.

A Change is Coming

Starting in September, RCL will expand from 22 to 32 open hours weekly, offering more recovery circles and School for Recovery classes. The transition will be gradual, with new offerings like music, nutrition, exercise, and another Yerba Mate circle rolling out throughout the fall, for members and the community alike. Stay tuned with our social media and e-newsletter for updates coming soon!

A New Frontier

This summer, Recovery Café Longmont launched a ten-week pilot program at Community United Church of Christ in Boulder. In spite of the heat and evening storms, a steady group of around fifteen attended weekly. As our Boulder presence grows, we hope to be part of even more recovery journeys across the county, continuing to create community and a space where everybody belongs.



"It's great to work with the same people weekly and become familiar with everyone. The generosity of this group is so special."
Erica, Pilot Program Participant



"This has become the highlight of my week - I look forward to catching up and seeing everyone."
Jason, Pilot Program Participant



"Our building sits empty most of the week - I'm happy to see it used as a space to offer valuable services and create community."
Becky, Congregation Member at CUCC

"What I love about the Café is that there's no barrier. We ask that you're sober when you're here, but otherwise, just come." Nicole LaMarche, Pastor at CUCC

September is National Recovery Month

90% of our members report a stronger desire to be in recovery since becoming a part of our community.

Loving accountability and radical hospitality may not be a cure, but when someone laughs a little louder, smiles a little bigger - healing is happening in real time.

If you're looking to support a growing need in the Boulder County community, now is the time! **In honor of National Recovery month, the Board of Recovery Café has generously agreed to match every dollar donated to the Café in the month of September, up to \$10,000.**

Unlock the Match

Our generous board has agreed to match donations made in the month of September **up to \$10,000** in honor of National Recovery Month.

Help us unlock the match!



As we roll into fall, I reflect on an incredible year so far. We expanded services to Boulder and watched our peer support specialists walk alongside folks in the judicial system during one of the hardest phases of their recovery journey. At Recovery Café Longmont, **our work is rooted in collaboration and the belief that all people deserve love.**

We've been fortunate with generous support, but like many organizations, we now face dwindling funding for recovery and behavioral health. This year, over 90% of members said they feel they belong here. Providing radical hospitality and loving accountability comes naturally to our team – **but without resources, it's a challenge.**

This September, in honor of National Recovery Month, our Board has committed to a \$10,000 match. Every dollar you give will be doubled, making your impact go twice as far when it matters most.

As you read this newsletter, I invite you to reflect on the barriers our community faces. **Your generosity fuels this work – whether through dollars, a meal, or time with our members.**

We are all in this together. Thank you for being a vital partner!



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