



Recovery Café
LONGMONT

NEWS

OCTOBER
2021

Member Moment

Laughter spills from the kitchen as member, Mary, and peer support specialist, Felicia, wash dishes after lunch. In classic Mary style, she is telling jokes and sharing stories all with the hopes of making the people around her feel joy. When asked what is her favorite thing in the Café - her immediate response is "to laugh, and make people laugh." And Mary is an expert at putting smiles on everyone's face.

Mary came to the Café on a recommendation from a former case worker. She needed a place that would respect her recovery story, as well as help her complete volunteer hours required by probation. Her first day, she was nervous to even come inside. It wasn't until she connected with Felicia outside that she was able to make her way down the stairs and into the Café.

Now, Mary is a regular. She comes at least twice a week, and most weeks far more than



With Mary

that. When her partner asked her if she will continue even after her probation is completed, she laughed and said, "This place is like 'Cheers' everybody is happier there, and that is how I feel here. Of course I will keep coming back!"

Taking the first step into the Café is often the hardest part for our members. Many of them have never experienced anything like the Recovery Café, and that can be intimidating at first. Because every recovery journey is unique, everyone needs a welcoming and supportive community. That is what Mary has found here. "The Café feels like a family. I have somewhere to be, people like me and notice when I am gone."

For Mary, it was her immediate connection to Felicia that made her comfortable enough to come in. Now, she has a circle of people

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that support her. "Before, it was just Felicia because she caught my attention first. Now I feel like I could talk to any of you."

Much like Mary, many of our members came to the Café to have a place that will meet them wherever they are. Recovery Café was founded on the principle of radical hospitality and with the understanding that every person — no matter their past — is worthy of giving and receiving love. Each day in the Café our members, staff and volunteers welcome all people who want to work on their recovery.

When people have a welcoming and supportive community that provides loving accountability, their recovery journey becomes less challenging. Everyone deserves a place to celebrate wins, find support for the losses, to be known, and to be loved.

Letter from the Executive Director

To date, 2021 has been a year of milestones and growth: the Café reopened for continual in-person services in early February, May marked our two-year anniversary, planning for a permanent location is underway, and the search for a director of philanthropy to lead our fundraising efforts has just begun.

After more than a year of pandemic-induced restrictions and two mandated Café closures, our members are thrilled to be back, and we welcome newcomers each day we are open. Being together in community is the backbone of our service model and a lifeline for people struggling with mental health, addiction and other trauma. As of this writing, masks are required once again and no one complains.

Last year marked a record number of overdose deaths nationwide and local emergency room visits for suicide and overdose more than doubled. Sadly, 2021 will likely set new records. Loneliness, addiction, and mental illness were already at epidemic levels before the pandemic and the past 18 months have exposed a frayed system that struggles to treat addiction and mental health.

While we don't know how much longer COVID-19 will impact our lives, more than ever we see how important it is for Recovery Café Longmont to be open and available as a place of refuge and healing for our community. We strive to show each person who comes through our door that we care. That they are someone worthy of love and acceptance. That we would notice if they were gone.

To meet the growing demand in our community, the Café needs to find a permanent home. We are deeply grateful for the support of CENTRALongmont Presbyterian Church and for our temporary location in their basement, but we expected to outgrow the space within a few years. That time is now and our board of directors formed a Facilities Committee earlier this year to direct the process. Whether we lease, buy or build, we will need tremendous community support to help us transform the future of Recovery Café Longmont. If you are interested in being a part of this transformation we would love for you to join our team—as a member of the Facilities Committee, a board member, a volunteer or a donor—we always welcome new stakeholders to join our dedicated team.

Reflecting on the past year, I am deeply humbled by the strength and resiliency of the people we serve. For many of them, the fear and uncertainty of COVID-19 pales in comparison to the trauma they have experienced in their lives. Our members inspire us to work toward a better future and we remain committed to providing the supportive community they so deserve.

Thank you for having a place for Recovery Café Longmont in your heart,



Lisa Searchinger
Executive Director



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. Please visit our website to make a tax-deductible donation and learn more about additional ways to support our work: recoverycafelongmont.org

Program Update

Recovery Café Longmont is much more than a physical space. It is a thriving and vibrant community of people all looking for the same thing— a place to be known and loved. Despite being back in masks since the beginning of August, the challenges of reduced transportation services, and the fears that many still have about the pandemic, our community is growing. In the month of August alone, we added 10 new members, and three of our early members have returned. To accommodate our growing membership, we are now open Tuesday through Saturday from 12-3 p.m.

Every day in the Café has the feeling of a family reunion, with jokes shared over full plates during lunch, and friendly rivalries over who put the most work into the puzzle that week. Our long standing members have taken the newcomers under their wings, sharing their knowledge of the resources available, offering advice, and consistently reminding them that they are not alone in their recovery. Despite all that has happened in the past 18 months, our members have risen to the challenge and helped each other as best they can.

With the expiration of the rent moratorium, unemployment benefits ending, and the rise of new mutations of COVID-19, our community is facing significant challenges to our social safety net. As we move into what is likely going to be another difficult winter for many people in our community, we are always looking for ways to proactively support our members.

The Café survived the shift to a virtual world, and returned stronger and more dedicated to our cause than ever. Being together again has put into keen perspective the need for spaces such as this one — where people, no matter their background, past or present struggles, no matter their current circumstances, can just be themselves.

If there is one word to describe the feeling that the members have upon returning to the Café in person, it is hope. Hope that this moment in time will pass; hope that we will be together with our friends again; and hope in knowing that they are not alone in their experiences.

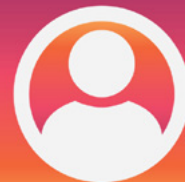
Our hope is that we can continue to support our members however and wherever they need. The past year has exposed how desperately our community needs spaces to come together, and as long as that need exists, we will be here.

OUR IMPACT

MAY 2019 - SEPT 2021



Total Guests: 450



Unique Members: 121



Recovery Circles: 234



Meals Served: 3,645



School for Recovery Classes: 149



Cups of Coffee Served: 7,673



Donor Corner

Kent Nelson



“Love,” he says. “That’s what people need. We can do a lot of things that probably don’t help at all. But if we have a little compassion and love, that goes a long way towards recovery.”

For Longmont native Kent Nelson, there’s something particularly meaningful about giving to a local nonprofit organization as well as asking others in the community to support it philanthropically. “I really like the idea that we can do fundraising within the city where we live and watch the benefits that come from it,” he says. “It’s easier than sending a check to an outside organization and never really knowing if it got to the right place. This way, you get to be a part of the unity of being involved.”

Although initially unsure if Recovery Café Longmont would be a good fit for him, he agreed to talk with a board member about the organization. It didn’t take more than five minutes for the conversation to hit what he calls a “heart spot” in him. He was struck by the realization that almost all families have had to navigate a loved one’s addiction. Although his family members have been successful in recovery, he knows not everyone has been so lucky.

Since that conversation, he’s been a donor and an active member of Recovery Café Longmont’s Philanthropy Committee. He says his connection to the mission of the Café has been helpful in this role, reflecting, “It’s a lot easier to fundraise when you’re enthusiastic about what you’re doing it for.”

Kent’s philosophy on life is to get along with people and to help people, something which shows in his commitment to making his community a better place. Kent was involved with the YMCA for years, including as a president of the Boulder branch. He was also on the Longmont United Hospital’s board of directors for 10 years. In the last few years, he’s focused his efforts on CENTRALongmont Presbyterian Church, which is how he initially learned about Recovery Café Longmont.

A lifelong resident of Longmont, Kent grew up on a farm to the east of the city, which he is still involved in managing. Although the area has changed a great deal over the years, starting with the arrival of IBM in the 1960s, he still feels a strong connection to his hometown. He’s been married for over 50 years and has three adult children.

Reflecting on what his time with Recovery Café Longmont has taught him, he shares something that could just as easily apply to the way he has chosen to live his life. “Love,” he says. “That’s what people need. We can do a lot of things that probably don’t help at all. But if we have a little compassion and love, that goes a long way towards recovery.”



The Drinkards Make a Commitment to the Café's Future

Suzanne and Lawson Drinkard believe in giving back – to their family, friends and community. They also know that you can't take it with you when you go. So what is it they are giving and leaving? Their legacy – in the form of a bequest to Recovery Café Longmont (RCL).

Natives of Virginia, the Drinkards have lived in Niwot for the last eight years, moving there after some time in Montana. Suzanne is a retired high school physical education teacher and a master gardener, and Lawson is currently on his third career where he is working as an organizational development consultant, having previously directed a fundraising foundation at the University of Virginia and practicing architecture. They recently celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary.

Lawson said having a will is one of the most important things you can do for your family and that he and Suzanne have had one since their now adult daughter was born. "Not having a will puts a burden on your family," he said. "If you don't have one, get one."

He and Suzanne also strongly advocate thinking beyond family members when creating your will. "In our experience, financial advisors focus on getting you to leave your money to your children," Lawson said. "While we want to support our daughter in the future, we also want nonprofit organizations like Recovery Café Longmont to go on doing the good work they are currently doing."

The Drinkards want others to know about their bequest to RCL in the hopes it will inspire others to do the same. Lawson and Suzanne both volunteer as Ambassadors of Hospitality at the Café; they interact personally with members of the Café with the goal of achieving the organization's mission of being a place of refuge and healing for people in recovery. Lawson is also the vice president of the board of directors and chair of the Philanthropy Committee.

Bequests are just one type of "planned gift" (a gift that will be distributed sometime in the future) that can be made to the organization(s) you value. For more information about making a bequest or other type of planned gift to Recovery Café Longmont, contact the executive director, Lisa Searchinger, by email at lisa@recoverycafelongmont.org or by phone, 720-815-2885.



Recovery Café LONGMONT

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SAVE THE DATE!

Colorado Gives Day
Tuesday, December 7, 2021



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 on Colorado Gives Day is boosted by a \$1 Million Incentive Fund which increases the value of every dollar.

