



Recovery Café  
LONGMONT

# NEWS

FALL  
2022

## Our Impact

One big takeaway from last year was the power of being available. When the Café reopened for in-person services in early February 2021, we were concerned that people might not want to return because of the Covid safety restrictions we had in place. While this may have kept some away, what we experienced was that many people were yearning for connection and thrilled to be back. Isolation and loneliness are especially challenging for people in recovery and our community of refuge and healing is a welcome respite.

As membership grew steadily to pre-pandemic levels, we expanded our hours of operation and introduced new School for Recovery classes. Our peer support specialists helped members access services including treatment, housing, employment, education, and benefits. Members set personal goals and reported the Café supported them in the following ways:

- 100% found increased hope
- 100% felt connected and useful
- 100% experienced support and gained skills
- 100% found an increased desire for recovery
- 66% prevented relapse

## What's Ahead for the Café?

The Café's transformative model is based on being together in community where we get to know each other on a deeper level and hold each other accountable to becoming our best selves. A lot of sharing happens in the Café — a home cooked meal, peer-support, hugs, laughter, and sometimes tears — and works best in person.

We were delighted to be able to reopen after closing for Covid and have our sights set on expanding our reach in 2023 and beyond. We are actively seeking a permanent site as our current location in the basement of CENTRALongmont Presbyterian Church has always been intended to be temporary.

The vision for our new location is to be centrally located, handicap accessible, and to include a commercial kitchen and full-service coffee/espresso station to provide job readiness learning opportunities for our members.

Over the past several years, one focus has been to increase engagement to the Spanish-speaking community, and Café staff now includes two bilingual/bicultural peer support specialists with lived experience. With a new and larger location for our Café, our goal is to serve more members, offer dedicated Spanish-language hours, and expand community recovery meetings, volunteer opportunities, School for Recovery classes, and Recovery Circles.

Thank you to our generous donors and volunteers who are helping us realize our vision of being an enlightened community where people in all walks of recovery are empowered to be their best selves.

## 2021 IMPACT REPORT



Total Visitors: 837



Unique Individual Visits: 191



Peer Support Recovery Circles: 136



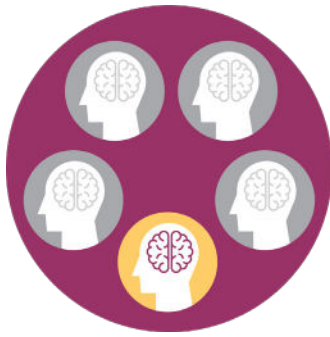
Nutritious Meals Provided: 2,100



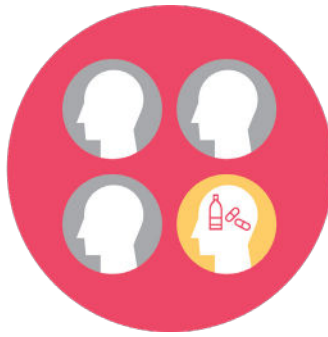
School for Recovery Classes: 83



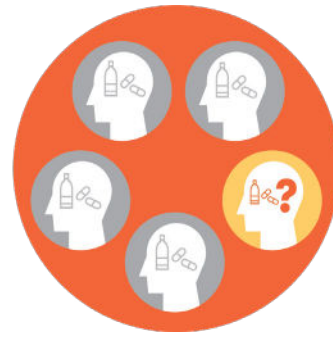
Volunteer Hours: 1,953



1 in 5 people struggle with mental illness



1 in 4 people struggle with a substance use disorder



1 in 5 people who wrestle with a substance use disorder don't know where to turn to for help

## Shame, Stigma, and Recovery

By Becky Milanski, Colorado Peer & Family Specialist/  
Volunteer Coordinator

Stigma and shame over mental health illness and substance use disorder (SUD) keep people from asking for the help they need and can prevent them from ever entering into recovery. Here are some experiences from three people in our community who felt shamed by providers who were supposed to be helping them:

**“One time, my kidneys were failing... they didn't even give me a room...they put me on a gurney out in the hall. I felt so dehumanized... I would rather die than just go there and deal with that.”**

**“I called the police for assault, and they didn't believe me. The policewoman said, ‘When they've actually gotten into your apartment or beating you up, that's when you should call me.’ She was making fun of me and mocking me and not taking my safety for real.”**

**“I rode the ambulance and overall, I think they were rude and unkind, kind of forceful, they strapped me down... I think I had gout in my foot.. but they saw my arms [with track marks] and they strapped me down.”**

Marginalizing folks with mental health or substance use issues stops them from calling emergency services when in crisis, leading to possibly tragic outcomes. And this treatment doesn't only come from first responders.

There are three types of stigma: societal, in which society “others” folks, seeing them as less than human; self-induced, where people carry so much shame about their illness that they are terrified to reach out; and also from recovery groups, where people are shamed for relapsing or not following the “rules.” No matter what type of stigma

people experience, it creates problems in our society and can result in unnecessary pain and suffering, and even death.

So how do we change how we treat people with SUD or mental illness? Education is key. First, we need to acknowledge that addiction and mental illnesses are diseases as classified by the American Medical Association – they are not moral choices. Also, using person-first language is important. Defining someone as a human being and not their illness reduces stigma. Instead of calling someone a “junkie,” refer to them as a person with a substance use disorder. Don't call someone a “schizophrenic,” but as a person who has schizophrenia. The difference can have profound effects on how people see themselves, and reduces shame.

Meeting folks where they are at, without judgment and without shame, greatly increases positive outcomes. If we respect the rights of people suffering from mental illness or SUD with a commitment to scientific evidence and recognize that trauma and oppression affect behavior, folks will be more willing to ask for help without fear.

Practicing harm reduction can also increase positive outcomes. Harm reduction calls for the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people, and the communities in which they live, in order to assist them in safer life choices.

Harm reduction is not the opposite of recovery, but rather a stop-gap that safely prevents imminent and common harms that impact people with mental illness and SUD, and the public at large. By treating all people with dignity and autonomy, we can reduce stigma and shame, and help folks on their journeys where people in all walks of recovery are empowered to be their best selves.

# Member Moments

# Cultivating Purpose and Giving Back



*Matthew (left) and Troy (right), co-facilitators of Crystal Meth Anonymous*

At Recovery Café Longmont, we believe recovery flourishes with a sense of purpose. Self-determination is emboldened by the support and tools necessary to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.

When member Troy first had the idea to bring a Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) meeting to Longmont, he worried people wouldn't take him seriously. When member Mathew introduced Troy to the Café in February, Troy felt welcomed and inspired by the peer support specialists on staff. With Matthew's help, they received approval from staff to host a weekly CMA meeting at the Café.

Troy said facilitating this meeting is one example of how he has grown in sobriety. Not long ago, he was unable to see a way out of addiction. Now he helps others by sharing his story of courage, strength, and hope.

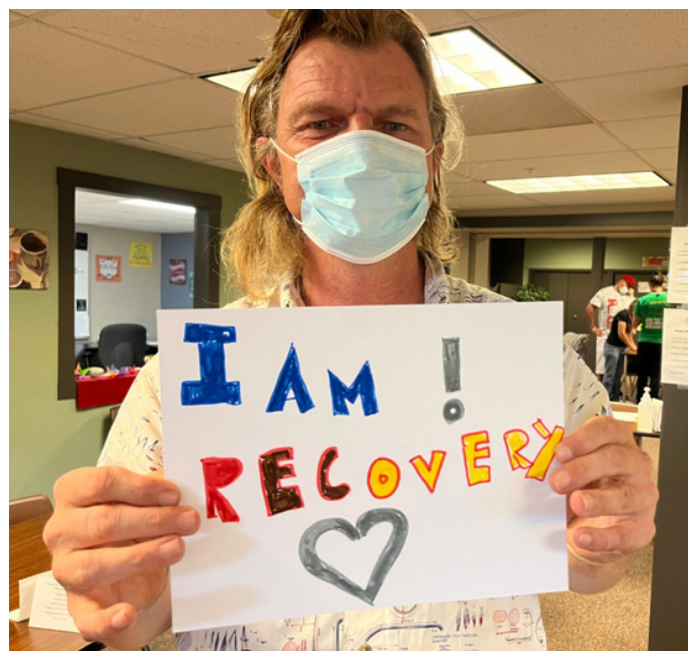
As the co-facilitator, Matthew says the most important part of his recovery is giving back to the community he "ran amok in." He is proud to be a role model to those who once knew him in active addiction. Matthew says, "Helping others succeed in sobriety is something I take to heart. It was the peer support at the Café that really made my recovery take off."

Matthew plans on building a solid foundation for Crystal Meth Anonymous in Longmont and then passing the torch of responsibility to other CMA members. He is now on the path to becoming a certified peer support specialist.

Member leader Andy has a strong sense of belonging at the Café and loves helping others feel welcome. As our longest-standing member, Andy takes it upon himself to show newcomers around the Café, explain how membership works, and publicly acknowledge acts of kindness.

Café staff invited Andy to take on the role as "member leader" to honor his service and create a pathway to personal growth and increased responsibility. Andy continues to increase his knowledge of our operation and available resources and members know they can go to him with questions. When asked what his position means to him, Andy says:

"Leadership gets me out of my own way and encourages me to help others. Giving back to the Café in this way gives me purpose and helps me stay sober."



*Andy, Member Leader*





*Kindra window painting*

Member Kindra jumps at the opportunity to lead community art projects. By getting in touch with her inner artist, she reunites with her true self – a creative and joyous being. She says, “The Café creates a consistent and loving space for me to be myself and not my struggle, reminding me that we are all in recovery from something.”

Kindra’s enjoyment and sense of peace is contagious. Whether it’s window painting, vision boards, or themed projects like her Alcohol Awareness Tree, Kindra keeps members and staff engaged with her thoughtful activities.

“Acts of service is my love language, and serving others is an expression of myself. Shine on, folks!”

“The Café creates a consistent and loving space for me to be myself and not my struggle, reminding me that we are all in recovery from something.”

## 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](http://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: [recoverycafelongmont.org](http://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.



# Volunteer Spotlight

Dale Sherrod



Committed to a lifetime of helping others, Dale Sherrod is known for his contributions of service, philanthropy, and music benefiting Longmont nonprofits and charities. A retired OB/GYN physician, Dale continues to invest in a better society by giving to groups such as Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, and the Longmont Rotary Club.

Recovery Café Longmont first piqued Dale’s interest during a virtual Rotary Club meeting in 2020. Upon learning of the impact a loving community can have for people suffering with addiction and mental health issues, Dale jumped at the opportunity to get involved.

Dale points to one of the Café’s guiding principles, *To connect with divine Love in ourselves and others*, as a driving force in his decision to donate his time as well as monetary gifts to our transformative model. As an Ambassador of Hospitality,

Dale connects with members along their recovery journey, rejoicing in successes and offering consolation and hope in hard times. As a fixture in our community of refuge and healing, Dale continues to find new ways to contribute to the Café.

“Spreading love and joy through music – it’s a good thing to do.”

This November, Dale is delighted to present a piano concert to benefit Recovery Café Longmont. The historically well-attended event, known as Dale’s Piano Playhouse, is his way of “spreading love and joy through music.” Dale has sponsored benefit concerts almost every year since 1997, interrupted only by the pandemic. The concert is free with voluntary donations going to Recovery Café Longmont.

## JOIN US!

### Dale’s Piano Playhouse

Saturday, November 12, 2022, 3-5 pm

Join us at CENTRALongmont Presbyterian Church for an hour of music performed by Dale and accomplished pianists Scott Hamlin, Karen Main, and Paula Muncy. A post-concert reception will be held downstairs in the Café. To reserve your free seats, please email: [virginia@recoverycafelongmont.org](mailto:virginia@recoverycafelongmont.org)

## EVENT SPONSORS



Flatirons Bank



HIGH PLAINS BANK  
Employee Owned • Community Driven



## Recovery Café LONGMONT

402 Kimbark Street  
Longmont, CO 80501  
(720) 815-2885 (OFFICE)  
[www.RecoveryCafeLongmont.org](http://www.RecoveryCafeLongmont.org)

### About Us

Recovery Café Longmont is a community of refuge and healing for people in recovery from addiction, mental health, homelessness, and additional life challenges. The Café was formed in 2018 to address the unmet need for adequate, accessible, long-term recovery services in Boulder County.

### What We Do

We support our members as they learn to manage their mental and physical health, maintain sobriety, build community and reclaim life as a person worthy of giving and receiving love.

### Who We Are

We are individuals who are new to recovery, in long-term recovery, have had relapses, difficult life changes, physical health challenges or mental health transitions.

# SAVE THE DATE!

COMMUNITY FIRST FOUNDATION

COLORADO  
GIVES DAY



Community Partner

[ColoradoGivesDay.org](http://ColoradoGivesDay.org) Dec.6

## Colorado Gives Day Tuesday, Dec 6, 2022

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](http://ColoradoGives.org) on Colorado Gives Day is boosted by a \$1.6 Million Incentive Fund which increases the value of every dollar donated.