



GILEAD
COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC
Improving Lives, Building Futures

WINTER 2021

ROAD TO RECOVERY

BALM OF GILEAD

GET READY TO MOVE!

GILEAD GEARS UP FOR ITS 6TH ANNUAL “WHO WILL YOU MOVE FOR?” EVENT

It’s that time of year again and Gilead is preparing to lace up our shoes, put on our colorful t-shirt, and capture our activities on “selfie mode” as we move for mental health from April 24-30, 2021. And this year, our eyes are set on the most powerful and effective path in achieving mental health—Community.

As we hit the one year mark since COVID-19 radically changed our routines, we’re reminded of the importance of this event in fostering and supporting community—to bring us together in creative ways when the pandemic has forced us apart, to support our local businesses, and most importantly, to raise awareness around mental health and wellness and raise funds to support its pursuit and achievement.

We may not be able to gather again for the typical 5k, but this movement event is more important now than ever as COVID-19 has seriously impacted mental health and driven up the numbers of those experiencing anxiety and depression. COVID-19 has taken a lot, but we have so much to give. Join us and fuel the movement for mental health! Visit our website for details on how to support the event, your local business, or to sign up!

By Jennifer Bishop,
Grants and Resources Development Specialist



2020's Move for Every 1 participants!

NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR!

GILEAD NAMED THE NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR BY THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE!



The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce announced the winners of its 11th annual Small Business Awards, nominated by fellow chamber members, who all share a commitment to Middlesex County.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is a special business organization that serves as the voice of the business community in Middlesex County as well as many surrounding towns. Chamber President Larry McHugh and his team run one of the strongest and most influential Chambers of Commerce in New England (and beyond!) and are a trusted and valued partner to businesses of all sizes.

We were so excited and proud of this tremendous award and of the amazing work that each and every one of our staff do every day throughout the programs. Every year, and especially this year, staff demonstrate the love and compassion that has made Gilead a place of healing and recovery for thousands of people who have experienced the impact of mental illness and addiction in their lives.

Thank you to the Chamber Team who support our community in so many ways. We are grateful for all of the work they do to help make Middlesex County the greatest place to live and work in Connecticut!

GOOD NEIGHBORS

HELPING TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

GILEAD HAS BEEN PROVIDING COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATION (CRC) SERVICES TO HELP THOSE IMPACTED BY COVID-19. INDIVIDUALS THAT REQUIRE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO SUCCESSFULLY QUARANTINE ARE REFERRED TO GILEAD BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH).

The Department of Aging and Disability (ADS) received cases of care bags containing soup, mittens, face masks and other personal care items. ADS Commissioner Amy Porter reached out to Gilead and other state Community Resource Coordinator host organizations to see if we were interested. Which of course we were! **Thank you to the group who put together and donated these fabulous care packages!**



Linda Bailey, Community Resource Coordination Manager receiving the donations from Glasgow, from the Dept. of Aging and Disability

CRC AT A GLANCE...

315

individuals connected to services and/or currently working with CRC from Feb 1st-March 16th

314

total food boxes delivered to individuals/families

89

total households who have received food boxes

THE BREATHING PROJECT

In August 2018, a group from Gilead's Social Club accompanied me on a field trip. The highlight of our morning was the Cities of Peace Illuminated exhibition at Lyme Arts Academy. The power of the works was immediately experienced. A collective "Wow" and "Oh, how beautiful!" filled the otherwise quiet gallery, as we took in the beauty of the collection of multilayered, gold illuminated paintings replete with cultural symbols, quotes and maps.

Equally beautiful, was the belief in the transformative power of human creativity, to help heal trauma that made the work possible. Artist and visionary, Ellen Frank, directed and collaborated with students, scholars and artists from 33 countries to create a suite of paintings honoring cities imperiled by conflict. The young artists who were trained by and participated in Cities of Peace Illuminated took its mission to heart. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic they reached out to one another to form an international leadership team; collectively they conceived The Breathing Project. I was honored to meet with the team on occasion and was inspired to create a painting for the project dedicated to the staff and volunteers at Gilead whose selfless actions and compassion were exemplified as they worked



Transformation and Healing
by Suzanne Wind Gaskell

to protect our most under served and vulnerable.

By mid-April 2020, the pandemic had rapidly spread in the tri-state region. The staff at Gilead was stretched thin as 20 percent of its caregivers were in quarantine after exposure to colleagues who had contracted the coronavirus from infected clients. Joe Crispino, an ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) team member was quick to offer support. He was also the first Covid positive case to be admitted to Middlesex Hospital. Within days of his admission, Joe's condition worsened. Miraculously, after nearly four weeks on a ventilator Joe was transferred from the hospital to a rehabilitation center where his long recovery continued. As a testament to Joe's indomitable spirit and the culture at Gilead Community Services, he has returned to work on behalf of others.

HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW REALIZED THROUGH COMPASSIONATE ACTION, IS EMBODIED BY THE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AT GILEAD DAILY. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CITIES OF PEACE ILLUMINATED AND THE BREATHING PROJECT 2020 VISIT: [HTTPS://WWW.CITIESOFPEACE.ORG](https://www.citiesofpeace.org)

By Suzanne Gaskell, Gilead Board Member

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

VACCINE UPDATE

AT THE END OF DECEMBER 2020, THE COVID-19 VACCINE ARRIVED IN CONNECTICUT! Gilead was pleased that all Direct Care staff were included in Phase 1a of Connecticut's vaccine distribution plan! Direct care staff included Case Managers, Recovery Assistants, Residential Support Workers, Substance Abuse Residential Counselors and Recovery Care Managers.

As of February, every residential client who wanted a vaccine had received one. Thank you to Justin Salvio, the Clinical Leadership staff and all of our teams who have coordinated this. Tremendous work!

And, thank you to Dr. Haddad and Kasey Harding at Community Health Center who provided two wonderful educational events about the vaccine for us!



Tom H., ACT Engagement Specialist

Deb C., SCAP Senior Case Manager

Joe C., ACT Administrative Specialist

STAYING FIT VIRTUALLY

THROUGH OAK HILL ADAPTIVE SPORTS & FITNESS, GILEAD CLIENTS AND STAFF AT ALL PROGRAMS ARE PARTICIPATING IN BI-WEEKLY VIRTUAL GROUP EXERCISE TRAININGS!

Oak Hill's team of fitness coaches fully customize the sessions and are developed for individuals of all levels. They use equipment that can be found at home to help with the exercises. These sessions will not only aid as a support to clients during the pandemic but will also help prepare them for the upcoming Move for Every 1 event! Pre-COVID, staff and clients would meet up at the Wesleyan track or other locations a few times a week to train for the Road Race and also have the opportunity to socialize with other programs and employees.



Funding for this program was paid for through Gilead's Opening Doors fund, which is supported through donations from Quizine and the Move for Every 1 event. Oak Hill Adaptive Sports & Fitness offers Fitness Coaching Online with customized live personal training and group training options. Contact Paul.Weiland@oakhillct.org for more information.

CONNECT FOR A CAUSE!

LIKE SO MANY EVENTS IN 2020, GILEAD'S ANNUAL QUIZINE FOR A CAUSE EVENT, WHERE 200+ GUESTS SQUEEZE INTO BECKHAM HALL AT WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY WAS NOT TO BE. So, we put our heads together and came up with a fun and safe way to celebrate. On a beautiful October evening, 180 guests gathered outdoors on the grounds of Saint Clements Castle for a picnic box dinner and drive-in movie, featuring WONDER. This was the 15th year of the Quizine event that brings so many members of our community together who are passionate about Gilead's mission.

It may have looked different from years past, but that night we came together to share: meals, laughter, movies,

but most importantly, a mission. To connect for a cause. To tell our clients and all those facing mental illness and other hard battles, that they are seen. They are never alone. We are never alone.

As we looked around that night we were filled with **wonder** at what we saw. Inspiring generosity, genuine compassion, zeal for our mission, and true connection. Together, we raised over \$122,000. Gilead was very fortunate to have a fundraiser of this magnitude during these trying times. Thank you for the powerful witness that we are truly stronger together. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you!



ROAD TO RECOVERY

IN-HOUSE HERO!

TRAINING AND EDUCATION HELPS PREPARE STAFF FOR EMERGENCIES, BUT A CLEAR HEAD AND QUICK THINKING IS ESSENTIAL WHEN FACED WITH A LIFE THREATENING SITUATION.



"I would like to recognize Dimitri Zahariadis, Valor Case Manager, for his quick thinking and act of heroism when a client's life was in danger. On November 16th one of the men at Valor Home started choking and gasping for air. The client was visibly struggling. Dimitri immediately ran to the client, asked him if he could do the Heimlich Maneuver and was able to clear the client's airway. It was Dimitri's quick thinking and acting that ultimately saved this client's life. Witnessing the event, I can say that Dimitri was amazing!"

By Shannon Brewer, Valor Home Residential Program Director

COUNSELOR ADVOCATE

Congratulations to Alexandria for becoming a certified sexual assault crisis counselor/advocate. She received a scholarship to complete the certification training held by the YWCA New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS). The training covered topics such as: the history of the anti-sexual violence movement, mandatory reporting procedures, medical, police and legal procedures, victim rights, empowerment, impact of trauma, and crisis intervention.

"I plan to apply what I learned in both my own personal life, and my volunteer service as an EMT and sexual assault counselor," said Alexandria.

She was awarded the scholarship from the YWCA after submitting an application, which included a 600-word essay where she wrote about her experiences growing up in a multicultural diverse family and the adversity she has faced.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALEXANDRIA WHO IS RECEIVING THE SUPPORT SHE NEEDS THROUGH GILEAD'S VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES (VOCA) WHILE ALSO HELPING OTHERS.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING



The holidays looked a little different in 2020. Even though the annual Social Club Holiday party with the traditional visit from Santa was cancelled, Gilead clients were still able to enjoy the season, thanks to the generosity of our supporters and staff!

We put out a call for help with gifts for our client wish list and without skipping a beat, our supporters went above and beyond. Every program received all the items requested and more! Leslie Hassmann and the Third Congregational Church donated \$500 worth of beautiful gifts. Vox Church donated \$200+ of gift cards plus more packages than we could count! A donor called the Women's Home and asked



for a list. She purchased blankets and gift cards for all five residents to be placed under the tree for opening on Christmas morning.

Sarah and Kristina from Gateway cooked a warm meal and baked cookies to distribute to clients at their homes. Fifty gift bags were distributed to the clients, thanks to the generosity of all who donated along with beautiful holiday cards created by the students from Chester Elementary school.

"This year has been challenging for all of us. It has been especially so for our Social Club members, who have not been able to attend regular activities promoted by the Club since March!



Their primary means of maintaining their friendships, attending therapy groups, cultivating hobbies, getting out of the house and into the community or having a lunch with friends has all been restricted by the pandemic. Clients missed their cherished traditions. Your presents were a familiar and welcomed treat that helped bring the warmth of the holiday season to our clients. Great people are those who think of others before themselves even in difficult times...this makes you all some of the greatest! Thank you, thank you, thank you," Kristina Croteau, Senior Social Rehab Counselor.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

CONGRATULATIONS TO GILEAD'S STAFF MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS INTERNATIONAL FORUM!

In December 2020, Cindy Lee, Outpatient Clinic Therapist, Eileen Hanrahan, ACT Program Nurse, and Maria-Adriana Coler, Program Director at Gateway Community Treatment participated in an *International Colloquium on Health, Education and Social Representations* promoted by Universities from Portugal, Brazil, and Argentina.

There were health professionals from all over the world including Italy, France, Portugal, Spain, Scotland, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Brazil. Cindy, Eileen and Adriana took part in the discussion on the emotional impact provoked by social isolation imposed by the pandemic.

"It was a great opportunity to share how we do our jobs to ensure clients continue to have access to sources of support needed," said Adriana.



HEARTFELT DONATION

WE RECEIVED THE SWEETEST NOTE AND DONATION FROM FRAN LUDWIG, EMERITUS BOARD MEMBER AND HER SON, BEN.

"Recently I came across an envelope that my mother had given to me 10 years ago to give to Ben after her death. I had forgotten about it. She died five years ago.

I gave it to Ben the other day. It was a homemade card that she had made herself, at 92, with a heartbreakingly beautiful and inspiring message for him and a \$20 bill. Ben thought for just a minute, then said, "I'm not going to spend this money. I want to pay it forward. What is the smallest donation you can make to Gilead?" I said one penny. He asked if I would make sure that his Grandma's \$20 went to Gilead. My mom would have loved that."



BEN, POSING WITH HIS GRANDMOTHER'S CARD & GIFT

Thank you Ben for your thoughtful gift to Gilead!

THE FARRELL FAMILY

A PAST CLIENT FROM FARRELL TREATMENT CENTER SHARES WHAT MAKES THEM SO SPECIAL.

When I arrived at Farrell House I was greeted by the administrator and counselor; they didn't treat me as if I was broken, desperate or sad. I was treated as if they had known me my entire life. During my 28 days there I was treated like family — a stern but loving and understanding family; the family I had always needed. They made me understand and see that my damage wasn't my fault. Through the meetings...well they call them meetings but in reality, they are classes on how important you are to yourself and how you have the power to glue the broken pieces together. I say glue because we will always have cracks and scars but now they make us stronger and we shine brighter than we ever thought possible. Actually I never even knew I could shine at all.

My addictions have haunted me for 28 years of my life; 28 years of prescription drug abuse started with anxiety and depression medications. I was always

terrified of going to rehab because I knew it was going to take away what I loved the most, drugs. I had no idea or concept how to constructively live any part of my life without them, I was terrified. To sit here now and actually put this in words makes me quite emotional. The comradery at Farrell is every where in the house: scheduled rise and shine, chores, and great food. I witnessed some clients shut down and rebel. The counselors are beyond aware of everyone as an individual and a group. There a is a lot to say about the down to earth approach that Farrell has. You're not on a vacation, you're in a facility that cares more about you than what the view is from your room.

My great accomplishments in the past five years emotionally, spiritually and socially are deep lessons that Farrell taught me. You truly have to apply what they teach you; you have to want it for you and only you. Farrell taught me to be the person I never knew existed inside of me. Thank you Farrell! Now I exist and I am unstoppable.



L to R: Jeff Davis, Sally Martinez, Michael, Diana Lynch with a painting by Michael, given to Jeff with gratitude.

By Michael Longo



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UPCOMING EVENTS

LEGISLATIVE ZOOM BREAKFAST: MARCH 29

MOVE FOR EVERY 1: APRIL 24-30

Please visit our website to register

MATCHING CAMPAIGN: MONTH OF MAY

FAMILY INVOLVMENT

We consider our friends and supporters to be a part of the Gilead Family, and so we’re expanding our Family Involvement project to include you! If you or someone you know would benefit from receiving a folder of information about Gilead, please reach out to Jennifer Bishop at jbishop@gileadcs.org. The packet includes information about mental illness, our organization, our programs, events, helpful resources, tips for loved ones, and ways to get involved with Gilead.



WISH LIST

Bakeware
Phone cards

**Please contact Denise Gable at 860-343-5303, ext. 3447 or dgable@gileadcs.org if you wish to donate or contribute towards items from the wish list. Per Gilead policy, we cannot accept used clothing donations and mattresses.*

Gilead Community Services is funded in part by



Most of Gilead Community Service programs are CARF-accredited

