



GILEAD
COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC
Improving Lives, Building Futures

WINTER 2024

BALM OF GILEAD

ROAD TO RECOVERY

A DAY AT THE ROAD RACE

Join Team Gilead on Sunday, April 7th for the annual Road Race in Middletown. Thank you Jessica for sharing a glimpse of the excitement!

It is race day and I am anticipating the starting gun. I look around me and see so many familiar faces. We have all just walked up to the starting line after taking the group photo. The feeling of camaraderie and working towards a common goal is palpable. The gun goes off and soon I am caught up in the excitement. Before too long, I see the water station at the one-mile mark. I am running alongside a family with young children, all wearing Team Gilead t-shirts. Up ahead, I see a group of enthusiastic Gilead supporters cheering us on. **Every year, that encouragement really makes a difference.**

Just a glimpse of race day, which I look forward to every year. I love the fact that I am a part of raising awareness about mental health and substance use, while aiding in the fight to end stigma. Just like in the past, I will be raising money for this important cause. Not only am I passionate about ending stigma, but I am also a huge fan of Gilead Community Services and what they do. I have been helped immeasurably by all the staff at Gilead that I have encountered over the years. I feel Gilead played a huge role in my growth and success in my life goals.

Without the support and encouragement I received since 2011, I do not think I would be where I am today.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EVENT, REGISTER FOR THE RACE, DONATE, OR SPONSOR A CLIENT AT WWW.GILEADCS.ORG



Team Gilead 2023 gathers for the signature group photo.



Celebrating Jessica's birthday - same day as Road Race 2023!



GOOD NEIGHBORS

GILEAD STAFF GETS TOGETHER - AGAIN

After the pandemic, Gilead's all agency meetings make an in-person return!

Gilead's quarterly all agency meetings met virtually to maintain staff safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2023, these meetings finally returned in-person. Since then, Gilead has hosted three in-person all agency meetings!

In September, Gilead partnered with the Middletown South Fire District to host the all agency meeting at the fire station. There, staff participated in three fire safety sessions where they learned how to safely evacuate a building on fire, what to do in a medical emergency, and how to properly use a fire extinguisher.

In November, Gilead returned to CT State Community College Middlesex, where all agency meetings took place before the pandemic, for a taste of food from a local restaurant. The Racial Equity Committee supplied a sampling of foods from La Casita Del Sabor in Middletown. This is part of the committee's DEI Plan to engage more with our community – including sharing some delicious cuisine from locally represented cultures!

In January, Gilead's all agency focused on self-care. Facilitators from Toivo, a holistic healing center in Hartford, joined us for an afternoon of relaxation exercises. Staff experienced chair yoga, breathing exercises, sound healing, and group reiki. This was a well-deserved treat for our hard-working staff.



Staff learn about fire safety with help from our friends at the South Fire District!

THANK YOU TO THE CIGNA GROUP FOUNDATION

The Cigna Group Foundation, a global foundation supporting nonprofits that share their commitment to enhancing health and vitality, has recently awarded Gilead with a **\$50,000 grant to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for staff members in assistance of the community.**

MHFA is a program that teaches individuals without a clinical background how to identify, de-escalate, and triage a mental health emergency. Like CPR training for a nonmedical professional, MHFA prepares participants to interact with a person in crisis and connect them with help. First Aiders do not diagnose or provide counseling or therapy; they are given concrete tools and answers to common questions, like "What do I do?" and "Where can someone find help?"

For almost a decade, Gilead has been invested in providing training in MHFA to its staff, local businesses, and local municipal employees. MHFA is an internationally recognized 8-hour certification course that educates the public about mental health and substance abuse issues. With this funding, Gilead's Mental Health Resource Center (MHRC) will be able to train five additional Gilead staff members to become certified MHFA trainers and, with the help of our partnerships with First Church of Middletown and the Ministerial Health Fellowship, expand our program's reach to 250 community members.

MHFA is offered through Gilead's Mental Health Resource Center at 175 E Main St. For information on MHFA, service navigation or other offerings, please call (860) 530 - HELP or email mhrc@gileadcs.org

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

HONORING LOCAL NONPROFITS

Gilead was one of two local nonprofits chosen by Mayor Florsheim as beneficiaries of funds raised by the annual Mayor's Ball.

Gilead Community Services and the Q Foundation were the two organizations to benefit from the 17th Annual Middletown Mayor's Ball. Every year, the Mayor's Ball benefits "an essential foundation in the city." Mayor Florsheim chose to benefit Gilead because of the work that the Mental Health Resource Center is doing in the community.

"The reason that Gilead is special is because of the people," said Dan Osborne, Chief Executive Officer of Gilead, during his speech at the ball. "The people who we serve, who are courageous in their recovery, and the people who serve them."

To celebrate this honor, Gilead purchased tickets for a handful of staff members to attend the ball and enjoy a well-deserved evening of dancing and fun.

Thanks to the Middletown Mayor's Office, Gilead received a \$10,000 donation from this event to help support our high-quality mental health and substance use services.

By Marcella Micillo
Development Coordinator



Gilead staff having fun at the Mayor's Ball together!



Thank you to the Middletown Mayor's Office for supporting Gilead and the Mental Health Resource Center.

OUR HEALTH MATTERS

Gilead's Middletown Social Rehabilitation Center is prioritizing health with help from our neighbors.

This year, two groups of professionals visited Gilead to share health care tips! Students from the Goodwin University dental program visit Gilead every year to educate staff and clients about healthy dental routines. The students covered dental and gum disease, oral health, and provided suggestions for clients' own routines and habits. Clients asked thoughtful questions and learned some new facts about taking care of their teeth and gums.



The Community Health Center, a Middletown-based health center, also presented to Gilead clients. Their health education session covered basic health care information like patient rights, tips for reading medicine labels, and nutrition.

Presentations like these are important for clients. Living with a mental health or substance use challenge can be stressful, and sometimes hygiene and physical health can become hard to maintain. These presentations can give clients a chance to learn about healthy habits and ask professionals health-related questions. Thank you to

Goodwin University and the Community Health Center for sharing your expertise!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION & GRATITUDE

There was so much to celebrate at Gilead's 18th annual Quizine for a Cause!

Because of the boundless generosity of our supporters, we surpassed our fundraising goal and raised \$147,000! But even more impressive is that our endowment reached \$1 million dollars - THREE YEARS EARLIER than planned! Together, we didn't just create ripples of change, we caused waves of support!

After a three-year hiatus, we returned to Wesleyan's Beckham Hall, the venue that we all know and love. We were moved by Mike and Amol, two former Farrell clients who shared their powerful and inspirational experiences. There wasn't a dry eye in the room. These two men are testaments to how lives touch lives and create ripples of change that spread positivity within and beyond our communities. We are all still inspired by their stories and their work today!

By Denise Gable
Director of Development



Amol shares his story with guests at Quizine.



Mike and his Farrell family.



Standing ovation - reaching \$1million!

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Two case managers brought TV to life for a client.

D.B. loves gossip and drama shows – don't we all! D.B. and Briana, a case manager at the Gilead I program, would talk about how much they both enjoy these TV shows. Briana shared that she had been to a few tapings and D.B. thought that was the greatest thing ever! Briana informed him that a new show, the "Karamo" show started taping in Stamford. He did a lot of research, watched a bunch of episodes, and thought that it was just as interesting as some of his other favorites. He was seen often watching in the common area and laughing hysterically at the show. Briana and case manager, Erin, made a plan to bring him to the filming network in Stamford and he was completely on board. D.B. had a great time, talks about the experience to this day, and wants to plan to go back.

"He did extremely well being in a small, social setting and even spoke with some of the other audience members as we waited," said Briana. "I think I speak for Erin as well when I say it was awesome seeing him light up and truly enjoy himself that day. Another plan to see the "Karamo" show is definitely in the works!"



Erin & D.B. snap a photo by the stage.



Briana, D.B. and Erin in the audience at the "Karamo" show!

ROAD TO RECOVERY

CAMP HARKNESS: A TIME TO RELAX

Gilead's annual Camp Harkness trip is an opportunity for clients to relax, socialize, and have fun.

T.C. came to Gilead in January, 2023. Staff at her program were unsure if she would enjoy the camping trip, but she took a chance and had an amazing time. T.C. said, "I don't want to go home. I like it here!" At Camp Harkness, Gilead staff plan a few days of fun-filled camp activities including crafts, nature walks, and campfires. T.C. enjoyed making tie dye shirts, eating some delicious food, and having access to the beach. T.C. had never been on a vacation before, and to her, being at Camp Harkness and near the beach made her feel "free."

"To have this experience, to have this escape is something many of us take for granted," said Telia, program manager at Magnolia Home and Juniper Home. "This truly explains Gilead's detail to honoring the clients and providing a safe and immersive experience."

T.C. is already looking forward to the next trip!



Gilead staff Barbie-fy Camp Harkness



Nathan Wise, Residential Support Worker at Anchorage Home, leads the campfire songs.



Tie dye is a camp favorite!

A GILEAD TRADITION

Since 2002, Gilead staff have taken clients on an annual camping trip to Camp Harkness. It's fun to look back on years past!

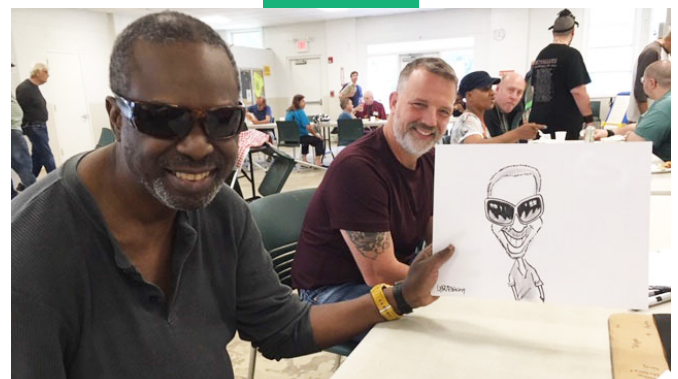
Activities are always changing. "One year we paid an artist to draw caricatures of clients and staff," said Patty, Service Navigation therapist at the MHRC and long-time camping trip planner. There have been softball games, talent shows, and crafts galore, but ultimately it's up to clients what they want to do and when. "Sometimes a client doesn't want to make a birdhouse and they say they just want to sit and enjoy the sunshine and that's okay too." The annual trip is an opportunity for clients to take a vacation their own way.

Some things stay the same year after year. The beach is always a good idea - but it's the food that brings everyone together. It's been a tradition at Camp Harkness for the Thursday night dinner, the last dinner at camp, to be steak and shrimp.

This trip is a real highlight for staff and clients. We are so thankful to have Camp Harkness in our backyard!



A group photo from Gilead's first ever Camp Harkness trip! We fondly remember our friends who are no longer with us.



The caricatures brought smiles to everyone's faces!



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222 Main Street Extension
P.O. Box 1000
Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 343-5300
gileadcs@gileadcs.org
www.gileadcs.org



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Move for Every 1 Road Race
April 7, 2024

Gratitude Gathering
June 7, 2024



WISH LIST

- Plates, cups & cutlery
- Craft supplies
- Tie dye supplies & shirts
- Tickets to local activities
- Boombox & meditation CDs
- Clock radios
- Garden supplies (pots, seeds & soil)
- Essential oil diffuser
- Coloring books
- Puzzles

Please note that according to Gilead policy, we cannot accept used clothing, upholstered furniture, bedding, or mattresses. Thank you for understanding!

**Please contact Marcella Micillo at 475-321-2735 or mmicillo@gileadcs.org if you wish to donate an item from the wish list.*

Gilead Community Services is funded in part by



Most of Gilead Community Service programs are CARF-accredited

