



# The Digest

Winter 2016-17 Volume 36, Issue 3

A publication of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. and Alliance, Inc.

Sinnissippi Centers' Residential Services Program Offers Help and Hope

## 616 Was The Beginning

Sinnissippi Centers continues to celebrate our 50th anniversary year this year. It was May 31, 1966, that the Sinnissippi Mental Health Center was incorporated.

From the beginning, the agency has served a four county area (Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside), initially from two offices; Dixon and Sterling. Through five decades, Sinnissippi expanded to five main offices, in all four counties, and established four supervised living apartment sites for individuals with a serious mental illness, also in each of those same four counties.

The very first apartment site was established in 1989 and was located at 616 6th Avenue in Sterling. It was known simply as "616". In 2005, 616 was replaced with a new building at a different location; Sterling Apartments.

**Jamie Cox** is a Mental Health Professional and currently a member of the Sterling Apartment support staff. He is one of few current Sinnissippi staff members who worked at the original 616 building. We asked Jamie to offer his thoughts on the history of Sinnissippi's residential services program.

*I lived with my mother behind the building that would become Sinnissippi's first apartment site. I wasn't working at the agency yet at that point. I remember when Sinnissippi's President/CEO Jim Sarver knocked on our door. He asked my mother how she would feel about a facility for the mentally ill and I remember her not being enthusiastic at all. Back then, there was a lot less understanding of mental illness and the stigma was a lot worse.*

*I started to work for Sinnissippi at 616 in April of 1998. It was then I saw my mother's transformation from seeing the residents in a negative light to seeing them as true neighbors. Later she really became a mother figure to them. In fact, many of the residents called her "Mom Cox".*

*Mom soon realized, "Wow these people are just like everyone else; they just have some things they're trying to overcome and move on with their lives." Because of this my mother became a big*

*advocate for the residential program.*

*When my mother lost her battle with cancer in 2007, the tenants were devastated. They had lost Mom Cox, their neighbor, their advocate.*

*I saw a big transformation too, from my own perspective. Before 616, individuals would have to go to Rockford or Chicago for residential services. Families visiting them would have to travel as much as two or three hours one way. That didn't give them much time with their loved ones. Some families did not have transportation to go see their loved ones at all.*



Sinnissippi Centers' "616" Apartment

*When Sinnissippi opened its first residential site at 616, it opened all sorts of new doors. Now individuals could be in the community they currently lived, or not far away if they weren't from Sterling. Visiting family members would have, at most, a 20 to 30 minute trip. Individuals in the apartments had the opportunity to work in the same community or nearby.*

*That closeness made it much easier for family members to be more involved with not only the lives of their loved ones but with their treatment and recovery, and they were able to learn more about the program. With mental illness, support in treatment and recovery is so vital. This was a huge improvement.*

*And it's not just 616 anymore. Sinnissippi Centers now has four residential apartment sites: Parks Place in Dixon, Sullivan Apartments in Mt. Carroll, Fairview Apartments in Rochelle, and Sterling Apartments, where I work.*

*I think there can still be a greater awareness about mental illness and a reduction in stigma, kind of like the process my mom went through with 616. I'd like people to know that the residential program is a learning program for those with a serious mental illness. In my almost 20 years I have seen a lot of successes; individuals who have come to us in serious need, and who later successfully left the program to live independently in their own homes. They get jobs and do all the things they couldn't have done without the program. I'm really proud of that.*

## Supportive Living

Sinnissippi Centers established a residential services program with the opening of 616 Apartments in 1989 (see story at left). The program has grown to four apartment sites, one in each county Sinnissippi Centers serves.

While there have been changes, the core of the program has remained the same: To provide those with a serious mental illness an opportunity to live in a supportive environment, to improve independent living skills, and to ultimately transition back into their own apartment or home in their own community.

To achieve these goals, apartment staff work with tenants on various areas including medication compliance, symptoms management, social and community integration skills, cooking, and budgeting.

The apartments are operated according to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development rules and regulations. There is a Sinnissippi Centers staff member on site at all times.

Each one bedroom apartment has a kitchen/dining area, living room, bedroom, and a bathroom. Each of the apartments also features a community room for gatherings or just hanging out. Laundry facilities are on site.



Community room at Sterling Apartments

Sinnissippi staff provide some transportation for things like medical appointments, shopping, and tenant activities.

The monthly subsidized rent is based on income and basic utilities are included. Before admission to the program, applicants are required to complete an application. Priority is given to applicants who live within Sinnissippi's four county service area: Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties.

There are various criteria for the program which include being at least 18 years old with a diagnosis of serious and persistent mental illness. Applicants can have no history of violence or sex offenses. Pets are not allowed. There is no smoking in the buildings.

For more information about Sinnissippi Centers Residential Services Program, call program manager **Tammy Stewart** at 815-622-0939. You can also visit Sinnissippi's website at [www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org) and click on Services, and select Residential from the drop down menu.

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SINNISSIPPI CENTERS

## Sinnissippi News

### Fun Run Raised Funds

Sinnissippi Centers' SASS program (*Screening Assessment and Support Services for children and adolescents*) was the beneficiary of a fund raising event organized by a local parent, **Olyvia McCombs**. The August event in Sterling featured a motorcycle/car fun run, silent auction, bake sale, carnival games, and more fun. The event raised over \$1,800.00 for the SASS Program. "We can't thank Olyvia enough for the amazing hard work she did to put this event together to help our SASS kids," says **Shannon Dean**, Sinnissippi's Associate Director of Child and Adolescent Services.

### Warm Fuzzies for SASS

Another organization reached out to Sinnissippi to help children and adolescents served by the SASS program.

**Shannon Dean** says, "Faith Christian School (FCS) in Dixon contacted us offering to collect mittens and hats for our SASS kids. We want to thank FCS Principal Linda Foster and FCS Librarian Nicci Kirby for their help with this project," Dean adds. A photo of some of the items donated are pictured here (*above right*).



### Pay Now Illinois Lawsuit Dismissed

A Cook County judge dismissed a lawsuit in September brought by the Pay Now Illinois Coalition, a collection of nearly one hundred social service agencies. The coalition, which included Sinnissippi Centers, Inc., filed suit against Governor Rauner and several other state department directors, in their official capacities, over breach of contract. The suit charged that the state contracted with service providers in good faith, but never paid for contracted services rendered. In all, the group claimed it was owed over \$160 million. Sinnissippi Centers portion of that totalled nearly \$1.2 million, which the state did ultimately reimburse Sinnissippi for.

### Legislators Still Not in a Hurry

The Illinois legislature and the Governor's office don't appear to be in a hurry to resolve the state's continuing budget crisis. The current partial FY17 spending plan had a December 31st expiration date. At this writing, there is no budget plan for the remaining six months of the fiscal year. Lawmakers left Springfield December 1st without passing a budget for that remaining period. Once again human service agencies face uncertainty as to what budgetary impacts they may face in the current ongoing fiscal year.

## Six Individuals Have Recently Joined Two of Sinnissippi's Boards

# Meet Sinnissippi's Newest

There were several new faces at Sinnissippi Centers' and the Sinnissippi Foundation's November Board meetings.

"We have six new members on two of our boards of directors," says **Patrick Phelan**, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO. "We are happy to welcome **David Bingaman**, **Michael Brooks**, **Kate Hansen**, **Jane Law**, and **Don Lovett** to the Sinnissippi Centers Board, and **Peter Shaw** to the Sinnissippi Foundation Board," adds Phelan.

"We seek to have good representation from all four counties of our main service area on the Sinnissippi Centers' Board," says Phelan. Those four counties are Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside.

"The Sinnissippi board meets monthly and the meeting locations rotate among our five main offices," says Phelan.

The new Sinnissippi board members are a diverse group with many talents and interests. Following is a little bit about them, with the county they represent on the board in parentheses.

**David Bingaman** (Lee County) retired from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. He's an accomplished photographer with an interest in nature, and is active in his community including The Next Picture Show in Dixon. David continues to do consulting work and works part time at the Whiteside County Health Department.

**Michael "Mic" Brooks** (Ogle County) is an advisor with First National Bank of Rochelle. Mic and his wife Tracy have a son diagnosed with a mental illness and are involved in NAMI, the National Alliance on the Mentally Ill. Tracy is a member of the Ogle County Board.

**Kate Hansen** (Carroll County) returned to the area three years ago. She is a Career Advisor for BEST. She is active in her community and has previous collaborations with Sinnissippi and our community partners.

**Jane Law** (Carroll County) has worked for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services as well as other similar agencies in other states. She has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the health and wellness of children and families.

**Don Lovett** (Lee County) is Market President at Sauk Valley Bank Dixon. He is active in the community and a parton of the arts and has been a friend of Sinnissippi Centers and the Sinnissippi Foundation for many years. He's an avid motorcycle rider with colorful stories of his many long distance trips, and an avid traveler.

**Peter Shaw** is the new member on the Sinnissippi Foundation Board and has worked for Shaw Media for many years. He is a former employee of Sinnissippi Centers, having worked as a prevention specialist in ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug prevention), and brings that unique perspective as a board member. His biggest pride and joy is being a father.



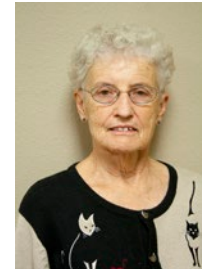
David Bingaman



Michael Brooks



Kate Hansen



Jane Law



Don Lovett



Peter Shaw

## Celebrating Fifty Years

Sinnissippi Centers celebrated fifty years of service during an October 13th gala event at Sauk Valley Community College. Of those in attendance, one of the most notable was **Phil Jorgensen** and his wife Shirley. Jorgensen served as Sinnissippi's first Executive Director from 1966 through 1970. Many other current and former employees, board members, and other supporters also enjoyed the event.

"The agency incorporated on May 31, 1966, under its original name, Sinnissippi Mental Health Center," Says Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO **Patrick Phelan**. "The name was changed to Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. in 1988. From the beginning the agency has served the same four county area, Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties," adds Phelan.

"We enjoyed seeing so many people who joined us to celebrate our rich history as a behavioral healthcare agency," says Phelan. "We eagerly look forward to the next half century of service to individuals and families affected by behavioral health diseases and disorders."



Shirley (left) & Phil (right) Jorgensen were honored guests at Sinnissippi's 50th



Larry Prindaville gives his keynote presentation at Sinnissippi's 50th

13th Annual Foundation Fundraiser April 4, 2017 - April 21, 2017

# Expressions Art Sale & Reception

The Sinnissippi Foundation's **Expressions Art Sale & Reception** will return to The Next Picture Show in Dixon from **Tuesday, April 4, through Friday, April 21, 2017.**

Expressions is a unique event, offering art for sale donated by local artists and a silent auction of a wide variety of items.

"I am always amazed to see the quality of the art we are fortunate to receive from our donating artists," says **Andy Jackson**, Sinnissippi Centers' Marketing Coordinator.

"Expressions is a fundraiser for the Sinnissippi Foundation, but I think the next best part of the event is enjoying and showcasing the works of our incredible local artists," adds Jackson.

"**Here's how Expressions works,**" says Jackson. "On April 4, 2017, we open the event to the public and what they will see is all the art on display and all the silent auction items for preview. Art can be any medium including oil, watercolor, and other paintings, photography, mixed media, art glass, or any other art medium really," says Jackson.

"If you want to purchase a piece of art that first day you can. If you want to put down a bid on an auction item on day one, you can," says Jackson. You can see the Expressions Art Sale by visiting the gallery any day during gallery hours from April 4th through April 21st. Then at 5:00 pm on April 21st the reception begins. The silent auction bidding

concludes at 8:00 pm, and all art sales conclude at 9:00 pm. on the 21st.

"You will have several opportunities to preview the art and silent auction items if you can't get to the gallery," adds Jackson. "Art will be featured on Sinnissippi's website about a month prior to the April 4th event start. Also during a similar period, we will post photos of art and silent auction items in albums on the Foundation Facebook page.

"Funds raised will directly assist individuals and families that Sinnissippi Centers serves," says Jackson.

"These are individuals who have chronic illnesses like depression, Bipolar Disorder,

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia, an addiction or other substance use disorder, or they might be struggling with a family issue, or have a child in need of early intervention/treatment services."

Even with the Affordable Care Act, and the Mental Health Parity laws, individuals still fall through the cracks in the system and just need a little help here and there to improve their mental wellness. The Foundation can step in and plug that gap.

**For information** about Expressions, contact Andy Jackson, Sinnissippi's Marketing Coordinator, at **815-284-9380** or email [info@sinnissippi.com](mailto:info@sinnissippi.com). You can also check Sinnissippi's website closer to the event date for more details at [www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org).



*Wonderful art from talented local artists is a feature of the Expressions Art Sale & Reception, a major fundraiser for the Sinnissippi Foundation*

## Bringing Good Cheer to Many

Sinnissippi Centers and the Sinnissippi Foundation held their **annual Client Holiday Celebration** on Friday, December 9th.

"It is a much anticipated event by clients and staff alike," says **Jennifer Thomason**, Sinnissippi's Director of Adult Services. "It helps bring a bit of holiday cheer into their lives and it reinforces the message that there are people who care about them," adds Thomason.

Nearly 100 clients benefit from the celebration, plus there are usually around a dozen Sinnissippi Centers staff members who volunteer to provide the entertainment, serve a warm holiday meal and provide other support.

Part of the entertainment each year is a skit performed by staff members (also called Elves) which is always a big hit. Many characters have also visited during the skit in the past: Santa, of course; Elvis, Superman, the Tooth Fairy, Little Red Riding Hood, famed reality TV star, Uncle Si, from the TV show Duck Dynasty, and others.

Monetary support for the Holiday Celebration comes from donations to the Foundation either through the General Fund or through the Client Holiday Celebration Fund. You always have the option of making your donation to the Foundation online at [www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation](http://www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation).



*Sinnissippi's "Elves" provided entertainment to clients at the Client Holiday Party*



## Foundation News

### A Resounding Success

The Sinnissippi Foundation's annual holiday appeal has been a great success. The mailing went out just prior to Thanksgiving to supporters of the Foundation. At this writing, nearly \$13,000 has been raised, which is a record amount. Proceeds benefit all programs of the Sinnissippi Foundation.

### It Turned to Mud and It Was Great

The 8th Annual Gardenstock Art and Music Festival had one feature this year it has never had before - lots and lots of mud. Over ten inches of rain fell in the area in the three weeks prior to the August 20, 2016, event, with two major storms just days before. However, the mud didn't deter anyone; the event raised over \$6,000 to support Sinnissippi's Youth Garden Project. Gardenstock is organized by Bud LeFevre and Lisa Higby LeFevre, owners of Distinctive Gardens, and is held on the grounds of their aforementioned landscaping business. The first year of Gardenstock, Sinnissippi was being forced to look at cutting the program, but now its future looks secure thanks to the annual event.

### Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open

The 24th Annual Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open was held Thursday, August 4, 2016, at Timber Creek Golf Course in Dixon. The Golf Open is the second major fundraising event each year for the Foundation.

Expressions comes first on the calendar in April (see story, left). Over 100 came to golf 18 holes and enjoy the awards banquet that followed. Sponsor of the Year Award was awarded to **Olson Insurance and Financial Services.**

**Adam Olson and Dawn Billings are shown** accepting the award in the photo (above).



*Adam Olson (left) and Dawn Billings (right) receive the Sinnissippi Foundation's Sponsor of the Year Award from Sinnissippi's DeAnne White (middle).*

## The Digest Newsletter

**Editor:** Andy Jackson  
**Writers:** Andy Jackson, Jamie Cox  
**Contributors:** Phyllis Berge, Shannon Dean, Patrick Phelan, Jennifer Thomason, DeAnne White

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# Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

www.sinnissippi.org

## Dixon

325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021  
(815) 284-6611

## Mt. Carroll

1122 Healthcare Drive, Mt. Carroll, IL 61053  
(815) 244-1376

## Oregon

100 Jefferson Street, Oregon, IL 61061  
(815) 732-3157

## Rochelle

1321 North 7th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068  
(815) 562-3801

## Sterling

2611 Woodlawn Road, Sterling, IL 61081  
(815) 625-0013

## Additional Locations by Appointment

Dixon-Town Square Centre

## 24-hour Emergency Phone Number

**800-242-7642**



Sinnissippi Centers is accredited by  
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the Gold Seal of Approval.



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If you would like to make a donation to the Foundation send your check to the address above.

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Arlene Arduini

...Mary Bornemeier  
Harold & Mary Scuffham

...Rosanne Edwards  
Dr. Don Edwards

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