



The Digest

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Carol Novak left a deep and lasting legacy for children and adolescents

Remembering Carol Novak

Carol Novak came to **Sinnissippi Centers** in **January of 1998** as a **Clinical Supervisor** in the family division. From day one Carol started making a positive impact in the lives of the children and adolescents served by Sinnissippi, as well as in the lives of so many others she came in contact with.

Carol lost her extended battle with cancer on November 24, 2017. The entire time she fought the disease, she remained as involved as she could in her life's work.

Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO says, "Carol, the champion of our child welfare and other family programs for the last 17 years, had been battling brain cancer for many months. A tribute to her tenacity, she lived much longer than any of her doctors dreamed she would. To the end, Carol was seen out at community events, maintaining her dedication to our organization and the families she cared so deeply about. Carol shared her love and compassion with her husband Ken, their children and grandchildren, and hundreds of foster children for whom she cared. We will never forget the profound impact she had on our organization and those we serve."

Sinnissippi Centers' Family Resource Specialist **Tamara Wolf** says, "I think of Carol when I hear this quote, 'They say that we rarely remember what someone says to us, but we will always remember how that person made us feel.' Carol always helped me feel valued, safe, and respected. She was a friend and mentor who supported me personally in my grief journey and professionally through trying times. As my supervisor, I knew she was always supporting me and challenging me as needed. I will miss her forever."

Former Sinnissippi Youth Garden Project Manager **Yvonne Jaquet** says, "Carol's commitment was to our youth.

When I first met her at Sinnissippi Centers, I had no idea where this project called 'Youth Garden' would go, and admittedly I had no idea what 'Gardenstock' (*the annual event that provides monetary support to the project*) was all about," says Jaquet.



Carol Novak, pictured here at the 2012 Gardenstock Art & Music Festival. Carol started and supervised the Youth Garden project

"What I did know was that Carol's passion was large," adds Jaquet. "In the years ahead, we moved from a plot of dirt to garden boxes, a fenced pumpkin patch, compost piles, and tie-dye shirts. All these ideas originated from a planting of a seed. She encouraged not only the youth but her staff. Mistakes were lessons, ideas were possibilities, and people were humans first," says Jaquet.

"The tie-dye t-shirt sales at Gardenstock came fondly from one of our youth who had a 'big idea' to sell tie-dyes at the event," says Jaquet. "Without much hesitation, Carol was on it and now it's an event staple. This was Carol. She would not allow the aspirations of a young mind to fade without trying to communicate lessons for life to them, without finding a way to connect with them, and without taking the opportunity to patiently guide them. She always said, 'There are two gardens: One that is cultivated in the ground, the other, cultivated through connections and all we did is plant a seed'. Her legacy lives on through the plethora of people she touched in her 45+ years of working with youth and their families. Also to coworkers who called her friend," says Jaquet.

Former Sinnissippi Garden project staffer **Blake Gilbert** came on board after Jaquet. He says, "Carol's love and care were not reserved for just her clients or family or coworkers, she truly cared for all people. Her true purpose in life was to find a way to better the lives of all people, whether she personally knew them or not.

Remembering-Continued on page 2

Sinnissippi's New Recovery Home

February-March will be an exciting time for Sinnissippi Centers and the local area. "We will open our first Recovery Home during that time period," says Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO **Patrick Phelan**.

"The facility will have 10 beds for adult men facing a substance use disorder who are transitioning from inpatient treatment back into the community," says Phelan. The Recovery Home will be located in Dixon.

"Reentry from residential care back to one's own home can be abrupt and contribute to an increase in the chance for a relapse and a need to go back to residential care," adds Phelan. The Recovery Home seeks to make that transition smoother and increase the success of the recovery process. It offers a healthy recovery environment and support. The length of stay can vary based on the needs of the individual, typically 3 to 9 months on average.

"While the Recovery Home only serves adult males at this point, it is hoped we can expand to serve adult women as well in the future," says Phelan.

Funding, typical of behavioral healthcare, is coming from a variety of sources. In this case, Sinnissippi Centers has support from the local 708 mental health and 553 health boards, the United Way of Lee County, and from state funding sources.

"We are pleased to welcome **Recovery Home Manager, Stephanie Englund** to Sinnissippi Centers," adds Phelan. "Englund has a deep dedication, passion, and commitment to the field of Human Services and behavioral and mental health," says Phelan. She obtained her Bachelors in Applied Behavioral Science from Ashford University, and is currently progressing on a graduate degree in Social Work. Prior to Sinnissippi, Englund was a substance abuse counselor at LSSI for 3 years.



Stephanie Englund, Sinnissippi Centers' new Recovery Home Manager

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SINNISSIPPI CENTERS

Sinnissippi News

Are You a Smarty Pants Too?

Sinnissippi Centers fielded a team for the United Way of Lee County's Smarty Pants Trivia



Night that took place November 3, 2017. Sinnissippi's "League of Extraordinary Guessers" took 5th place out of nearly 20 teams. Pictured above are (left side front to back) Tammy Stewart, Tim Drane, Andy Jackson, Bev Jackson, (right side front to back) Paula Durband, Anne Hermes, and Tom Hermes,

Overdose Prevention Program

Brandice Howell is the new Overdose Prevention Specialist at Sinnissippi Centers. Sinnissippi has started a new drug overdose prevention program to battle the opioid crisis at the local level. Howell will educate individuals on the use of naloxone and dispense free naloxone to first responders, families, and others in the community who would benefit from having the drug on hand in case of an accidental opioid overdose. Howell's service area covers 6 counties including Whiteside, Carroll, JoDavies, Stephenson, Boone, and McHenry.

Welcome New Board Members

Sinnissippi Centers recently welcomed two new board members: **Sharon Law** and **Sherri Miller**. Law is a long-time Carroll County resident and has a background in teaching and education. She is active in other organizations in Carroll County. Miller is a lifelong resident of Carroll County and worked in a variety of fields, including owning a business in Savanna and working in elected office in Carroll County.



SINNISSIPPI FOUNDATION

Foundation News

Annual Holiday Appeal

The Sinnissippi Foundation's annual Holiday Appeal fundraiser has done well so far. Donations can still be made via mail (see back page for address) or online at www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation. The Holiday Appeal is one of four major fundraisers each year for the Foundation. The other three are the Expressions Art Sale & Reception; the Employee, Board, and Alumni Campaign; and the annual Foundation Golf Open.

A new collaboration seeks to reduce the effects of traumatic events

Community Response to Crisis

Sinnissippi Centers is involved in a collaborative effort that will form a new **Community Crisis Response Team**, or CCRT, to serve the local area.

"The CCRT is a collaboration of mental health professionals who respond to critical incidents," says **Cris Mugrage**, Sinnissippi Centers' Associate Director of Adult Services. "A critical incident is any event that is traumatic enough to overwhelm a person's normal ability to cope.

The stress that is triggered by such an incident is referred to as Critical Incident Stress," says Mugrage.

Some examples of such an incident would be a significant weather event like a severe tornado that does damage, a suicide or a homicide, the serious injury or death of a co-worker or a student, or

any other traumatic community event that attracts media attention.

"When one of these events occurs, someone from an organization in the community can call the CCRT. In some cases, and when appropriate, the CCRT will reach out to organizations in the community to offer services to support those impacted by the event," says Mugrage. Some of the services

that will be offered include grief counseling, debriefing, general support, and follow up services.

For more information on the Community Crisis Response Team, contact **Cris Mugrage** at Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon office at 815-284-6611.



Remembering Carol Novak

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Her dedication to children and adolescents was quite special and infectious. Even though I only worked with her for a short period of time, I am confident that my love for working with adolescents was instilled, at least in part, by Carol. I hope to carry on her passion in my work in my career moving forward," says Gilbert.

Her impact working with the garden project wasn't exclusive to Sinnissippi staff. **Bud LeFevre**, co-owner of Distinctive Gardens with **Lisa Higby-LeFevre** and co-coordinator of the Gardenstock Art & Music Festival says, "The first time I met Carol started with a phone call. Carol wanted me to meet with her and Yvonne (Jaquet) and the kids. She told me, 'I want you to be involved because you don't look like the ordinary gardener,' and she's right, I don't. The people that know me know what I am talking about," adds Bud.

"I helped the kids pick out seeds and plants, helped with expanding the garden, and I helped with the greenhouse work," says Bud. "And the kids came out to the shop (Distinctive Gardens) to learn," adds Bud.

"The thing she was involved with her whole life was kids," adds Bud. "Kids who needed her help. Kids are our future and I think that's really important, and that's why I liked being involved in the garden. Carol was a huge advocate for kids. She was a really big influence on so many people, and Lisa and I saw that in many of the youth who worked in the garden and it made all the work in the garden worthwhile," says Bud. "The last time I talked to Carol she asked me to keep doing Gardenstock, she knew the importance of it and so do Lisa and I," adds Bud.

It was around 2010 that Sinnissippi Centers was facing the very real possibility of having to end the Youth Garden Project due to very deep funding cuts from the State of Illinois. It would not be hyperbole to say that Gardenstock saved the Youth Garden Project. Because of Gardenstock, so many more youth will experience the positive impact the garden offers into the foreseeable future.

The Gardenstock Art & Music Festival is held each year on the third Saturday August and draws around 1,500 people who love live music, arts and crafts, and coming together to benefit a great cause: All the net proceeds from the event go to support the Youth Garden Project at Sinnissippi Centers. There is growing amount of tie-dye shirts and other tie-dye apparel that is worn each year at the event, which is very fitting as just one visible symbol of Carol's impact.

Carol's philosophy was probably like a quote inspirational author Shannon L. Alder once said, "Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you." We think Carol would agree and like that quote as a parting thought and as a fitting summary of the life she lived. The legacy she has left is lasting and large.



Pictured from left to right: from Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO, Carol Novak-Garden Project Supervisor, Yvonne Jaquet-Garden Project Coordinator, Bud LeFevre & Lisa Higby-LeFevre of Distinctive Gardens. All were present at the Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden to receive proceeds from the 2013 Gardenstock Art & Music Festival.

14th annual event bringing art and mental wellness together

Expressions Art Sale in April

Preparations have kicked into high gear for the Sinnissippi Foundation's **14th Annual Expressions Art Sale & Reception**.

One of two major fundraising events each year for the Foundation, Expressions is cosponsored by **Sauk Valley Bank**. This is the bank's 10th year as cosponsor of the event. "We are incredibly pleased to have the support of Sauk Valley Bank as our cosponsor for this event," says **Patrick Phelan**, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO.

"It is vital to have the support of local businesses and organizations so the Foundation can continue its mission of helping individuals and families who face chronic illnesses like mental illness and substance use disorder."

Expressions will take place starting **April 3, 2018, at The Next Picture Show** in Dixon. "That's the day all the art and silent auction items can be viewed by the public," says **Andy Jackson**, Sinnissippi's

Marketing Coordinator. "Art is up for sale at any time during the event, and bids can be placed on silent auction items as early as April 3rd. There are bids placed on some of the items very early," says Jackson.

"It's always an incredible experience to see the art that our local artists produce and donate to Expressions,"

says Jackson. "We have an enormous amount of talent here locally, and our artists are also very generous in supporting this event through their donations of art," adds Jackson.

"The silent auction table is equally impressive in the variety and quality of items that local and regional organizations donate to the event. There is something for absolutely everyone at Expressions from Major League Baseball tickets to other sports items to dining, entertainment, home-baked items, and

so much more," says Jackson.

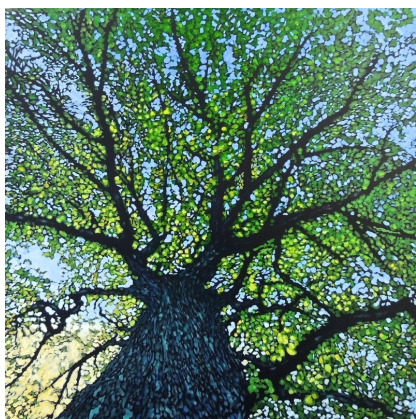
Expressions **concludes on Friday, April 27th** with a reception at **The Next Picture Show**, which is open to the public. At the reception, final bids will be taken on the silent auction items, and the final sales of art will take place.

"It's a natural fit for a behavioral healthcare organization to use art as a fundraiser," says Jackson.

"Creative expression, like painting and

photography, can help individuals express things they can't in words, it can be very therapeutic for anyone."

If you would like more information on Expressions, you can call the Foundation at 815-284-9380, send an e-mail to info@sinnissippi.com, or visit online at www.sinnissippi.org and click on the events link.



"Dominique", oil on canvas, by artist Ken Reif is one of the pieces featured at the Expressions Art Sale & Reception.

Holiday Fun

Donations to the Sinnissippi Foundation support a number of projects and activities that improve the mental wellness of the children, adolescents, adults, and families we serve.

But perhaps the most fun activities happen around the holidays. In mid-December each year Sinnissippi Centers' staff host the Foundation's Client Holiday Party. Around 100 clients attend the half day event and come away with warm holiday feelings and a small gift from the big man, Santa.

Around that same time the Foundation distributes holiday food baskets to client families registered by Sinnissippi clinicians. Thanks this year to board members **Don Lovett**, **Larry Prindaville**, and **Peter Shaw** for helping out with the Holiday Food Basket Project. Prindaville also helps during the Client Holiday Party, calling holiday bingo.

Among other activities are holiday parties hosted for families in the Healthy Families Illinois Program at Sinnissippi. A meal, some small gifts, and a visit from Santa are the favorite features.

All of these activities are supported by donations to the Foundation. You can make a donation directly to the Holiday Food Basket Project or the Client Holiday Party online or via donation envelope by designating your gift to those two funds.



Sinnissippi Centers' Residential Manager Kelly Kazminski was one of many "elves" who helped during the Client Holiday Party



Sinnissippi Centers' board member Don Lovett "hamming it up" during the Sinnissippi Foundation's Holiday Food Basket Project



SINNISSIPPI FOUNDATION

Donations

If you would like to make a donation to the Foundation, send your check to the address on the back page. You may specify if you would like to give your donation in honor or in memory of a family member or loved one.

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Cont'd on back page

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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



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United Way of Lee County
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SINNISSIPPI FOUNDATION

Donations cont'd from page 3

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