



The Digest

The “West Wing” of The Recovery Home

Sinnissippi Centers’ Women’s Recovery Home Has Expanded

Latest News

- The West Wing p.p. 1-2
- Recovery and Hope p. 1 and p.p. 3
- Under Construction p. 2
- What’s New? P. 2
- News From Our Mt. Carroll Office p. 4
- Longevity of Staff p. 4
- Coming Events p. 4
- Meet Our Providers p. 4
- Recent Donations p. 5

Events

- Non-Event Gala April 24-30
- Sinnissippi Golf Open August 5, 2021

Things certainly didn’t go quite as planned with the opening and subsequent expansion of Sinnissippi Centers’ Women’s Recovery Home. Nothing in the past 12 months has, of course, thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic.

However, the Women’s Recovery Home did open in the summer of 2020, during the pandemic. The opening was nearly on schedule, but delayed due to preparations for keeping residents and staff safe from the virus. The eventual adding of more residents also was delayed for a time as staff wanted to make sure everyone would be safe when capacity was increased.

The new year allowed us to expand our facility which supports 15 women. While half the home was remodeled and opened in July, the “West Wing” was completed in November. This second phase expands the capacity from 8 residents to 15.

What is a recovery home and what does it do? In short, it’s a therapeutic environment to support individuals in their recovery. They are in recovery because they want to maintain their sobriety.

The individuals in a recovery home are facing a substance use disorder and benefit from a more structured environment that offers extended support with staying clean and sober. Residents of the Recovery Homes are supported and coached to overcome barriers, implement problem solving and critical thinking skills, develop employment readiness skills and goals, including job placement with our Sauk Valley second chance employers, transportation assistance, making lifestyle changes such as physical fitness, nutritional changes, money management and budgeting. They are linked to community resources and encouraged to attend 12-step and other meetings. The homes are supervised 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and overseen by a Recovery Home Manager.

If you know someone who faces a substance use disorder you may know a couple of key features of this disease. One; substance use is a chronic disease that requires extended treatment and support just like diabetes or heart disease that requires



Sinnissippi Centers’ Women’s Recovery Home in Amboy

Recovery Home - continued on page 2

Recovery and Hope

Recovery is a process for wellness, not a cure, for a substance use disorder or mental illness. These are chronic conditions just like diabetes or heart disease. You live with them for the rest of your life, you treat the symptoms. You modify things in your life to not aggravate your condition.

It might be hard to understand for people who haven’t gone through it or don’t have loved ones who have. That’s why it’s so important to share these recovery stories from time to time. We are so grateful that clients honor us with their trust in letting us tell you their stories. Here’s one person’s recovery story. It is edited to fit this space, but we are posting the entire story online at www.sinnissippi.org/stories-of-recovery.

I attempted suicide after getting my first apartment after my divorce. I had just stayed with some friends for about a year and had stayed sober and clean during that time. But I relapsed about a week after getting in the apartment and took a large amount of pills and ended up in the emergency room. My psychiatrist who had known me from previous incidents with alcoholism and mental illness had talked to me and I told him I would like to go into long-term treatment.

So I went into a nursing home. But I relapsed there too. I went to a gas station to buy alcohol and got picked up by a nursing home staff member and the police got involved as I had hit a monitor at the nursing home they brought me back to. To make a long story short, the nursing homes weren’t able to help me, so I decided to leave, with



West Wing - continued on page 3

What's New?

More MAT Options

Sinnissippi Centers will begin offering more options for Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) soon. MAT is the use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a "whole-patient" approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. Sinnissippi had already offered MAT by offering Vivitrol for alcohol and opioid use disorders. We will be adding Suboxone for Opioid Use Disorder in the very near future.

Staff Advancements

A shout out to both Katie Mitchell and Amber Duitsman on passing their Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) exams recently. An LCSW requires a Masters level degree in the appropriate course of study, taking one or more exams, getting supervised experience, and one or more application processes with the state of Illinois.

Returning to "Normal" Slowly

Sinnissippi Centers has started the process of slowly returning to in-person services. This will be a gradual process as we continue to watch the local data on COVID cases, but the current trend is encouraging.

Coronavirus Vaccinations

As of this writing, Sinnissippi Centers has 126 employees who have received both vaccines and 21 more in the process of being vaccinated. The first staff member received the first of the two vaccination shots on January 4, 2021.



The "West Wing" of the Recovery Home

continued from page 1

ongoing treatment, lifestyle modification, and support. Two; that almost anything can trigger a relapse, and each individual can be different in this respect. Individuals can relapse and use substances even after years of sobriety. More intensive support services and longer periods of sobriety help prevent these relapses, or lessen their frequency. Some of the more common triggers to relapse are the same things that can affect anyone's mental wellness, emotional distress like anger, anxiety, depression, loneliness.



Sinnissippi Centers' Men's Recovery Home in Dixon

Stressful situations can trigger a relapse like loss of job/lack of employment, money problems, marriage/relationship troubles, loss of a loved one, or any significant life changes.

Currently there is space for 15 women to receive support at the Amboy Recovery Home.

Sinnissippi Centers' very first recovery home was opened for men in Dixon in May of 2018. It has capacity for 10 men.

For more information on Men's or Women's Recovery

Homes visit Sinnissippi's web page at www.sinnissippi.org/recovery-home.

Under Construction

Sinnissippi began a new construction project on January 20, 2021. Our current "Training Center" (*the lower level meeting rooms used for staff and other meetings*) is being remodeled as a secure waiting room and reception area.

This will help us move to a single secure entrance to the building. As the agency has grown through the past 50+ years, the Route 2 office has expanded several times and entrances were added along the way. This new single entry point will make access more convenient for clients and visitors.

Additional offices adjacent to the new reception area will provide space for providers working with kids and families. The Psychiatric Nursing offices are being relocated here to be more near the clinicians' offices.

The current south entrance will see other improvements such as a drive-up canopy to provide safety in inclement weather and to aid in pickups and drop-offs. A new set of bathrooms are also being added to this space.

The space used as the Skill Mill (as some may be familiar with) is being expanded to allow for a new Training Center space. We are also adding parking to the south of the newly remodeled entrance. This will allow for more capacity during our busiest times. Construction will continue into the spring with a completion date still to be determined.



Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon office has a temporary entrance during construction on the side that faces Illinois Route 2.



Construction is being done on the lower level, inside, with some exterior changes to follow.



The south entrance is a construction entrance and will soon be the site of exterior construction.

Recovery

continued from page 1

my girlfriend at the time, and got a hotel room. I decided to go off my anti-psychotic medications, another poor decision, and I ended up relapsing on alcohol again, and got into heavy street drugs for a time. Police were involved again. And, once more, to make a long story short, I spent approximately two years back in another nursing home.

"I started realizing I had a choice & I can either lay down & die or get up and fight. I chose fighting because I knew my life was worth saving"

But it all changed when I was introduced to the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) at Sinnissippi Centers and to Sinnissippi's Kevin Buss and Kelly Burrow. That was around 2016. Kevin suggested I check out Sinnissippi Centers' apartments, and I didn't know they existed. So I moved in. I was welcomed there very well. I have had very few issues and I have had really good success here.

I admit, I started off a bit lazy, I didn't want to participate, I didn't want to have anything to do with people because I had been burnt so many times in my life.

But I started realizing I had a choice and I can either lay down and die or get up and fight. I chose fighting because I knew my life was worth saving, and I knew my parents would want me to keep going even though I had been through such a hell in life.

I have been here close to 3 years now, I have made family out of the people here, even the staff is like family now.

That's why I wanted to do my story. To tell people I have had brief encounters with sobriety, but it never stuck like it has now, I have been a part of AA, been in rehab three prior times before staying with my friends in Ottawa, they were great people, they let me live with them for a year with their family. And I never knew what a family was like, because my mother was very mentally ill, my father of course was since he committed suicide, but my mom was also diagnosed with Schizophrenia, she used to believe people were coming into our home and doing stuff, and I never thought that was

wrong, I was thought that just was the way life was, and how people were, you know, I thought people were very evil, and would hurt you if they could instead of help you, and it was a false belief of course, so I inherited the mental illness part from them.

At 20 I was diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia, at 19 I had my first DUI crash. I was flown to Rockford with a cerebral hemorrhage, I beat the odds just to be able to survive. They thought I would be a vegetable in a nursing home but I had a hell of a good recovery, a lot of support there, but I ended up going back to the same environment I had been in before. I got 2 more DUI's, trying to work jobs off and on, I always bounced around from place to place, didn't really care about anything at that time.

IOP was a big part of my recovery, because it taught me how screwed up addictions and alcohol really are. It's a vicious cycle, that a person who is living with that gets into. They punish themselves, beat themselves up, they want to feel good because they are so down in the dumps about things or they're bored and just want to do something different and that involves drugs or alcohol.

But yeah, I would say IOP was a game changer, because once I realize that there were people who cared and wanted to help me and weren't just trying to feed me a line of bull I realized I could do this, and I realized my life could be a lot better

"I wanted to be productive in my life, I wanted it to mean something to people, I wanted to care about people"

than what it had been. It broke that cycle.

Because, I will tell you right now, you go through this phase of addiction and alcoholism, and it's kicking your ass, and you just want something to relieve it. It doesn't care about you, it doesn't give a damn about your family, it doesn't give a damn about your friends, it will destroy you. And if you let it keep doing that, if you let it keep kicking your butt, sooner or later you are going to do one of two things, you are either going to end your life, or you're going to fight for it, you know what I mean? That's straight up how I looked at it, and I had a choice to continue self-destructing, or to try and make something out of myself.

I grabbed onto the thought that my father had given up and I didn't want to be like him. I wanted to be productive in my life, I wanted it to mean something to people, I wanted to care about people, I wanted to help other people, I didn't want to be a statistic in someone's book, saying oh my gosh he will never change, he will always be the same, and I got a hell of a sense of humor out of the deal anyway. You know what I mean? I learned to laugh at those things that used to piss me off the worst, and I turn them around as jokes now. Laughter is the best damn medicine.

The future is bright, I am looking forward to one day having my own apartment, they are helping me get to the level of self-care where I can do that, I can accomplish those dreams. I can

"I would like to tell the people out there to never give up hope. I think that's the best thing. If you don't have hope what are you living for?"

live on my own one day and not have to worry that I can't trust myself.

I would like to go back to school, I took a little bit of college but it got messed up. I want to accomplish what I set off to do. I want to be a welder someday. I love what it does, how it joins pieces of metal together that are very hard to do. It's virtually indestructible stuff, and you're welding it together piece by piece, that's kind of cool to me.

I have been reading the bible with a friend, she's got me involved in a bible study. I am enjoying that, I am learning stuff I didn't even know was in there. It's something personal, to keep me going.

The last thing I would like to tell people is to never give up hope. I think that's the best thing. If you don't have hope what are you living for? You have to have hope. If people have hope in life, even through COVID, we can survive it, we'll get through this, and it's the same way with alcohol and addiction, if you have a little bit of hope, you can make it, you really can.

Our sincerest and deepest appreciation to the individual for telling us their story.

To read this and more recovery stories on our website visit: www.sinnissippi.org/stories-of-recovery

News From our Mt. Carroll Office

Sinnissippi Centers' Mt. Carroll Office was awarded two \$500 grants from the Mt. Carroll Community Fund to purchase supplies and mail out coping skills packets.

The packets included focused activities and arts and crafts projects that clients worked on at home and then discussed in a follow up with their clinician. The Mt. Carroll office sent an average of 16 packets to clients' homes every 2-3 weeks for the last 10 months.

We identified kids to send the packets to that normally would have attended summer groups that Sinnissippi could not hold in-person due to the pandemic.

I had one adoptive grandmother comment that her granddaughter

would get the mail everyday to see if she got any mail. Some kids like snail mail!

Also I have been meeting with clients and cooking with them over Duo (Google's video chat application for computer and android devices).

I have a client who lost her mother last year and we

were able to review her recipe, get supplies and cook together. I have another gentleman that wants to eat healthier so we have been planning meals that he can put in the crock pot or in the oven for supper. And sometimes I may even have my own supper ready by the end of the day! WIN WIN.

By Laura Smith, Sinnissippi Centers' Family Care Coordinator.



Sinnissippi Centers' Mt. Carroll Office, 1122 Healthcare Drive serves clients in Carroll County.

More News

Longevity at Sinnissippi

Sinnissippi Centers has a tradition of longevity for many of our employees. One of our longest tenured employees is Gloria Martin.

Martin has spent more than 46 years with Sinnissippi Centers. She originally started in 1972, left for a short time, but returned in 1978 and has been focused primarily on

Sinnissippi services that impact the lives of children and their families. Gloria has been serving in the role of Director of Child and Adolescent Services since 2013 and would say that one of her biggest accomplishments is the expansion of Sinnissippi services into 40+ schools in our four-county area.



Coming Events

We have spent the better part of 12-13 months battling COVID-19 and one result of the pandemic has been the near elimination of all in-person fundraising events.

Without knowing about the pandemic at the time of our new event's inception, Sinnissippi planned our first "virtual event" that took place in February 2020 and was a success.

This year the Sinnissippi Non-Event Gala will be during April, Alcohol Abuse Awareness Month and just prior to Mental Health Month. It will remain, as designed, a virtual event. More details can be found on our website under the events section at www.sinnissippi.org. There is a link there to donate online to the Non-Event Gala.

Also, while the 2020 Golf Open was "in-person" it was heavily modified to fit within COVID-19 guidelines and was not held on a single day-it was over 10 days.

This year signs are looking good for having a "normal" or pretty close to normal golf open. So the 29th Sinnissippi Golf Open will be held on Thursday, August 5, 2021, at Rock River GAP in Rock Falls. It will be an 18-hole scramble. We will have the awards banquet and dinner per usual provided it fits within COVID-19 guidelines in place at the time. We hope to have all other features of the event as in past years. More information on our events page on our website.



Meet our Providers

Sinnissippi has a feature on our website. When you visit www.sinnissippi.org click on the "About" tab and three rows down you will find the "Meet Our Provider" drop down. Click on it and see a page of our clinicians and other behavioral healthcare providers. You can search by last name to find the clinician you're interested in and be able to read more about their education, specialization, treatment philosophy, and some information of personal interest.



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Editor: Andrew Jackson
 Writers: Andrew Jackson, Patrick, Phelan, Laura Smith, DeAnne White
 Contributors: Phyllis Berge, Stephanie Englund, Brandice Howell, Patrick Phelan, DeAnne White





**SINNISSIPPI
FOUNDATION**

Donations

Can be mailed to:

The Sinnissippi Foundation,
325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL
61021.

You can also donate online,
visit: [www.sinnissippi.org/
donate-foundation](http://www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation)

You can 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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Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

Administrative office
325 Illinois Route 2
Dixon, IL 61021

24-hour Emergency Phone Number

800-242-7642

www.sinnissippi.org



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Office Locations

- Dixon
 - Illinois Route 2
 - Town Square Centre
- Mt. Carroll
- Oregon
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Apartment Sites

- Dixon
- Mt. Carroll
- Rochelle
- Sterling

Recovery Homes

- Dixon
- Amboy