



# The Digest

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- May is Mental Health Month May 2023
- Sinnissippi Centers Golf Open August 2023

## The Journey I Don't Remember

Ten years ago, a traumatic injury at work forever changed the life of **James Shover** and set him on a journey that eventually led him to Sinnissippi Centers, to writing a book, and on a mission to help others.

James was at work in August 2013, when he was hit in the head with a 15-pound piece of steel. Initially he was diagnosed with a contusion, a few months later a concussion, and eventually was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

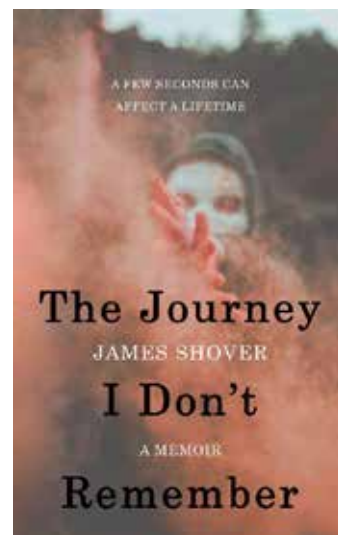
James says, "After the accident happened, I was off for a little bit, they demoted me from my management position. So I was dealing with a lot of things, not just my injury." We asked him if he thought anything was wrong with his mental wellness immediately following his accident. He says, "Yes and no. Part of it was wondering if it was just temporary and I was just upset with the way things were moving between workers' compensation and my job."

James had a number of symptoms following the accident including light sensitivity and frequent bad headaches, but also anger and resentment. He sought medical help in 2014 and was referred to a specialist in Chicago who was part of an interdisciplinary team including a psychologist. It was there he was diagnosed with PTSD.

While it's not unusual for a mental health diagnosis to take time, James says it felt like a very long time, especially under the pressure of trying to complete the worker's compensation claim. There was a lot of stress associated with that, a lot of stress associated with his doctor taking him back off of work, a lot of stress over losing his construction job, just a lot of stress in general.

He spent the next four years dealing with a number of symptoms and eventually, on the advice of his medical team, sought out treatment for PTSD at Sinnissippi Centers. At first, he wasn't sure about the process, and it took some time to adjust to the therapeutic process and to get a rapport going with his therapist. But as time went on, he got more used to it. Unfortunately, his therapist left Sinnissippi for another job, which is not uncommon in behavioral health. His next clinician didn't work out as well, also something that can happen, but his next therapist worked out very well.

*The Journey - continued on page 2*



## Freeport Office Ribbon Cutting

The **Greater Freeport Partnership** and Sinnissippi Centers held a ribbon cutting at **Sinnissippi's Freeport office** December 2, 2022. The Freeport office, located on the 3rd floor at 524 West Stephenson Street, opened in October 2021.

Approximately nine staff work out of the office at the present time including a full-time office supervisor, full-time clerical support, a full-time DCFS Child Welfare Team, and two full-time outpatient behavioral health clinicians. Hours at the Freeport office are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday-Friday.

Services offered include treatment and support for all ages, crisis stabilization, psychiatric services, mental health and substance use treatment and support, individual and family counseling, and many other services.



*Those present at the ribbon cutting included Sinnissippi Centers' Freeport Office Supervisor Tiffany Chander, President/CEO Patrick Phelan, and Director of Outpatient Services Connie Davis, and the Greater Freeport Partnership's Executive Director Mark Williams and Business Engagement Director Bill Clow, Freeport City Manager Randy Bukas, and ambassadors, and other representatives from the community.*

## What's New?

### Holiday Food Baskets

Donations to Sinnissippi Centers support several programs that benefit clients and their mental wellness. One program is the Holiday Food Basket Project. This year there were 105 baskets distributed just before Christmas benefiting approximately 385 clients and their family members. A \$25.00 donation to Sinnissippi's Food Basket Project provides one family with a food basket.



Food and boxes waiting to be packed on December 19th to serve almost 400 individuals during the Holiday Food Basket Project.

### School Services in Fulton

Sinnissippi Centers' School-Based staff began offering services in **Fulton Public Schools** in November 2022. Sinnissippi Centers' school-based clinician **Cathy Overbeck** is providing the services. At the time of this writing, Sinnissippi offers services in 40 schools in five counties.

### 988 Impact

On July 16, 2022, the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline began operations nationwide replacing the previous 10-digit number. The 988 Lifeline serves as a universal entry point to free, confidential service which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The lifeline saw a 45% increase in the overall volume of calls, texts, and chats in August 2022, compared to August 2021.

### The Journey - Continued from page 1

"I don't want to say this isn't hard, because it was hard, it is still hard, and there were some very dark and low moments, it was just my life. But after I wrote my book, and a lot of the feedback I got from it, like, I have had people just come up to me and hug me, say things like, 'I am so sorry, how did you deal with this'. I am a little taken aback by that because it's all I've known. And I asked my wife if it was really that bad, and she said, 'Babe, it was horrible', but I am still here. So, it proves to people that no matter what you go through, it's not the end."

"I don't look at PTSD as a thing that brings me down. I look at PTSD as something beautiful in my life that has changed me, and has changed me for the better, believe it or not."

For James, his PTSD causes fear and anxiety to be a constant in his life with everything he does, a constant fear that anything and everything could go wrong, fear that things could happen to loved ones. Talking about our interview for this article he says, "Even walking in here, walking down the halls, wondering what's around the corner, because your life can change just like that [he snaps his fingers to emphasize the point]. You don't know what's going to happen next."

"But on the complete other end of the spectrum, I just don't care, because what's going to happen, is going to happen, and me worrying about it isn't going to change anything." James will go back and forth between those two about everything. It probably shows the trauma he's been through, and at the same time

the impact of his healing and recovery process.

"It was kind of like this writing my book", James says, "I would type, erase, type, erase, just trying to get one sentence out because I couldn't articulate what I wanted to say. It was hell writing the book but I got through it, through the migraines, the anxiety attacks. Sometimes you gotta go through hell to get where you're going. If I wanted to get those thoughts out to help other people, I didn't have a choice."

*"I don't look at PTSD as a thing that brings me down. I look at PTSD as something beautiful in my life that has changed me, and has changed for the better believe it or not"*

"I want people to know that it takes time and it's a process for someone to get where they are to need help, so it's going to take time and take a process to help them recover. In therapy I feel you can grow as a person and you heal as a person, and that can help people around you too and help them to grow." James says, "Don't be afraid to jump in the damn pool, you're just gonna get wet," he quips.

"I almost feel I have been reborn, I am a completely different person, and a better one. I appreciate the little things like, and this may sound cheesy and corny, but when it's snowing and it's quiet-you appreciate that, or the when the spring comes and I just watch the birds outside of our bay window, or listening to jazz on the couch with my dogs. I am thankful for another day, even if it's a bad day, I still lived through it."

James is a member of Sinnissippi Centers' Consumer Advisory Council and a proud husband and father. His book, *The Journey I Don't Remember*, is available on Amazon. He is in the process of writing a second book on his experiences.

## Take a Chance on Youth Fundraiser

The 2nd Annual **Take a Chance on Youth 50/50 raffle fundraiser** will take place during the month of February with a March 17th drawing for the winner. Last year nearly 500 tickets were sold and the winner received a prize of nearly \$5,000.

Proceeds benefit Sinnissippi Centers' youth services. To encourage healthier, happier futures for as many kids as possible, Sinnissippi provides socialization and adventure therapy experiences while exploring local parks and recreational areas. As one youth said, "this was the best day ever."

Depending on the year there are other activities planned like the Running Group, Creative Expressions Group, Self-Esteem Group, and others.

Sinnissippi Centers' employees will have tickets for purchase and we will try to reach out to as many as last year's ticket buyers as possible to offer them an opportunity for this year's raffle.

## Veteran Services at Sinnissippi

Sinnissippi now offers veteran services. Sinnissippi's Veteran Services Coordinator **Travis Mowery** came on board in September 2022.

He is now working with the veterans' systems across our area to design better services for those with military experience and to assist individual veterans in navigating Sinnissippi services.

According to the **Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration**, every year, approximately 200,000 men and women transition out of active-duty service and return to civilian life.

At the same time Studies indicate that 44 percent to 72 percent



*Sinnissippi Centers' Veteran Services Coordinator Travis Mowery*

experience high levels of stress during transition from military to civilian life.

Data also suggests that approximately half of those who recently separated from military service may not immediately connect with available resources, benefits, or services. Without support, more complex behavioral health concerns might emerge. In 2020, approximately 5.2 million Veterans experienced a behavioral health condition. More than half with a mental illness did not seek or receive treatment, and over 90 percent with a substance use disorder did not seek or receive treatment.

## More News

### Holiday Gifts

Thanks to your generosity, Sinnissippi Centers' Holiday Appeal has gotten an amazing response. Emails and letters were sent out in November and we received the second highest amount of donations ever for this fundraiser. Thank you to everyone who has donated and supported Sinnissippi Centers through your holiday gifts.

### Community Fundraising

Several businesses hosted fundraising nights or events for Sinnissippi Centers over the past few months. Our thanks to **Triple P BBQ** in Rock Falls and Dixon, **Pizza Ranch** in Sterling, and **Voodoo Sport Karate** in Dixon for their generous and amazing support.

## Gloria Martin Honored for Service

**Gloria Martin**, Sinnissippi Centers' Director of Child and Adolescent Services, was presented with the **Ellen T. Quinn Memorial Award** at the **Illinois Community Behavioral Health Associations (CBHA) 2022 Winter Conference**.

This award is named after a former member of CBHA who passed away while serving as President of the CBHA Board of Directors. Ellen T. Quinn, and the honorees who have received the award, have been recognized by peers for their outstanding support and commitment in the delivery of quality community behavioral health services to individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in Illinois.

In the nomination form Sinnissippi's leadership team said, "While her tenure and work history is impressive, Gloria would say that she is most proud of the work that she has done building a comprehensive support system for children and their families."

Martin began her employment with Sinnissippi Centers on September 4th, 1972. Other than a brief hiatus during which she was a stay-at-home mom, Gloria has been employed with Sinnissippi for over 48 years.



*Left to right: CBHA CEO Blanca Campos, Sinnissippi Director of Child and Adolescent Services Gloria Martin, and Sinnissippi President/CEO Patrick Phelan at the Community Behavioral Health Association's 2022 Winter Conference.*



*Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Service staff accept the donation from Pizza Ranch's Community Impact Night in Sterling on September 26, 2022.*



*Pictured here: Front row, left to right, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO Patrick Phelan, Voodoo Sport Karate's Evan and Jen Payne, and Sinnissippi Centers' Marketing Coordinator Andy Jackson, along with Voodoo Sport Karate students, present a donation from their Kick-A-Thon fundraiser.*

## The Digest Newsletter Winter 2022-23

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**SINNISSIPPI CENTERS**  
 Together we inspire wellness

## Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

Administrative office  
325 Illinois Route 2  
Dixon, IL 61021

### 24-hour Emergency Phone Number

**800-242-7642**

[www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org)

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  - Illinois Route 2
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- Freeport
- Mt. Carroll
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- Rochelle
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*The Digest is a publication of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.*



**SINNISSIPPI CENTERS**  
*Together we inspire wellness*

## Donations

Donations can be mailed to Sinnissippi Centers, 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021.

You can also donate online, visit:

[www.sinnissippi.org/donate](http://www.sinnissippi.org/donate)

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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Boss Carpet One Floor & Home  
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Voodoo Sport Karate  
Hal & Rose Wendler  
DeAnne & Jeff White  
Bud & Pat Wiener  
Connie Zuck

### In Honor of

...Kay Fisher  
William Reigle

...Larry Prindaville's 75th  
Birthday  
Gloria Martin

### In Memory of

...Margaret Berge  
Jeff & Phyllis Berge  
Larry & Ann Prindaville  
DeAnne & Jeff White  
Wendy & Mike Wiersema

...Michael Delp  
Pam Delp

...Lee Fisher  
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...Former Sinnissippi patients  
of Singer Mental Health  
Center  
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