



# The Digest

## Seeing the Brightness of Life

Substance use, trauma, and recovery

### Latest News

- Seeing the Brightness of Life pp1-2
- Byron Office Update p1
- What's New With our President/CEO p2
- 988 Calls Get Localized p2
- Gathering for Good, Sinnissippi's newest event p3

### Events

- Red Cross Blood Drive at Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon office April 22, 2025
- Culver's Share Night for Sinnissippi Centers May 13, 2025, at the Rock Falls Culvers
- Gathering for Good May 15, 2025, Dixon Elks Club
- Sinnissippi Centers Golf Open August 14, 2025, Deer Valley Golf Club

Let me start by saying that I have come to terms with the fact that I am an alcoholic. Alcohol has never ended well for me on many levels. I know that according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [a handbook used by mental health professionals to help in determining diagnoses], I am an alcoholic. I prefer the term drinker. I know that they throw around the term of being "labeled." I prefer to use the term "brandished" because [that label] it is a hot poker that hurts the worst.

My relationship with alcohol has been one wild ride! It started out as a casual courtship that involved meeting up every now and then for a relaxing, enjoyable time together. Maybe a nice dinner with merlot being a beautiful pairing with a delicious steak or a great lasagna. I never drank much, so this was "do-able" from my standpoint. After all, the workday was over, laundry was done, and everyone had all of their needs met! So why not?

I was in a marriage that was going well [at the time], happy, healthy children, and I met my own needs by going to the gym on a regular basis that made me very happy. I can honestly say that I can count on one hand how many times I was "tipsy" before age 35.

Around the age of 34, there was a change in my relationship with my husband. He admitted some things he had done. I mean, he had been verbally abusive throughout our marriage making negative comments about me, but for a long time I just let it [his put downs] roll off my shoulders.

But, after that, things sort of fell apart in what I thought was a wonderful life of loyalty, love, and respect. I live by the "do unto others" rule and this was clearly not being reciprocated. It crushed my soul to the core. I ended up being very depressed for a couple of months. Things were really never the same for me in our relationship and within a span of about 4 years, vodka became my life partner instead of my husband.

I started distancing myself from our marriage by getting all of the things done I needed to accomplish at home BEFORE he arrived home from work. And believe me when I say that the family's needs/wants were ALL met before I headed to the gym in the evening. The mere thought of being in the same room as him made me stressed. The gym was my stress relief, my "space," my comfort zone. I really could not think of anything that I



*Seeing the Brightness - continued on page 2*

## Sinnissippi's New Byron Office

The opening of Sinnissippi Centers' newest office is very close. In fact, by the time you read this, it is likely Sinnissippi's Byron office will have opened. The office will be located at 212 W. Blackhawk Drive in Byron. It will be located in the previously unoccupied space next to Athletico, shown in the photo at right. It's our third office in Ogle County.

Sinnissippi Centers' Byron office will be a full-service location offering outpatient treatment for substance use and mental illness. Sinnissippi Centers is a provider of comprehensive behavioral health care services and serves a five-county area. Sinnissippi has one office in each of those five counties with the exception of Ogle County, which will now have three. We have two other offices in Ogle County; Oregon and Rochelle.

Lynnsey Worrell, LPC will be the Byron office's Area Office Supervisor and will oversee all clinical operations there.



*Location of Sinnissippi Centers' new Byron office, 212 W Blackhawk Drive*



*Area Office Supervisor  
Lynnsey Worrell, LPC*

## What's New?

### From Pres/CEO Stacie Kemp

Community Support Team services have been one of our biggest areas of growth in recent years. It's a critical service, meeting clients where they are—both physically and emotionally. The days when everyone was expected to come into the office for traditional outpatient therapy are in the past. That approach remains successful for many, but it is simply not feasible for many individuals in our communities.



### Annual Scholarship Program

Sinnissippi Centers will offer up to four \$1,000 college scholarships for individuals seeking a career in the human services field. Information was shared with high school staff in Bureau, Carroll, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties. The scholarship program recognizes and rewards high school seniors on the path to higher education with a \$1,000 scholarship to use toward a full-time or part-time course of study. Winners will be chosen and announced soon.

### Alcohol Awareness Month

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. This is a good time to raise awareness and increase understanding of alcohol misuse. It is also a good time to talk to teens about drinking and help educate them on how to handle situations involving alcohol. Each year, there are roughly 175,000 alcohol-related deaths in the U.S., making it the leading preventable cause of death in the country.

## Wireless Calls to 988 Get Localized

The process of routing cell phone calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline based on the caller's approximate location—known as geo-routing—has begun. This is in contrast to previously using the caller's area code.

Many cell phone users have numbers with area codes that don't correspond to where they live. Geo-routing allows 988 calls to be routed in a more localized way no matter where the caller is currently located; in their home area, traveling, etc. It's a much better system for connecting people with the help they need.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) passed a rule in October 2024 requiring all U.S. carriers to implement geo-routing.

"There's a real benefit to connecting with resources available in your own backyard and speaking with those within your own community," FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said. She was referring to agencies like Sinnissippi Centers that can take 988 calls and

provide the necessary resources and services.

The goal of 988 is to give people in a mental health or substance use crisis 24/7 access to compassionate, nonjudgmental help.

More than 200 contact centers across the country provide support through the 988 Lifeline network. Geo-routing connects cell phone callers to the closest 988 contact

center to their actual location. However, geo-routing does not provide a precise location to protect caller privacy.

Anyone struggling with mental health or substance use issues, or concerned about a loved one, can call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org to receive support from trained, compassionate counselors 24/7.

Since the launch of 988 in July 2022, trained counselors have answered more than 10 million calls, texts, and chats from people seeking help for suicidal thoughts and mental health or substance use-related crises.



## Seeing the Brightness of Life

*Continued from page 1*

enjoyed doing as a couple anymore. And, I might add, that the opposite of love is NOT hate; It's Indifference. I was the Webster dictionary definition of "indifference."

Fast forward 15 years of drinking to numb myself and to escape uncomfortable emotions. Isolating because I wanted to avoid the shame/guilt (two of the worst invented by the way), loss of family and friends who couldn't stand being around me anymore, and being 'brandished' with the label of alcoholic,

However, because of my treatment at Sinnissippi I am now sober and seeing the brightness of life. I feel stronger. I feel like I found myself again and I want to keep the sobriety train chuggin' along! I realized that I had to take responsibility and accountability in my pattern of drinking.

This is very difficult, but let's face it; Nobody poured liquor down my throat. I was the only person who did that, and it was a choice that I made knowing full well that it was not the right thing to do. After all, I used to work out as stress relief; I used to find enjoyment in self-care such as reading, cooking, playing the piano, singing for choir at church. Quite frankly, I lost my voice both figuratively and literally, I stopped singing; I also lost my voice in my relationships with others. I lost the things in life that brought me great joy and it was time to get that back.

I started focusing on the things that brought me joy in my life. I followed the protocol by starting monthly vivitrol injections, I attend meetings, I am more regular and active with my church family. I find elation in being back at the gym. I am still working on making amends with family and friends and I feel very at peace with that even though it is a work in progress. It will come but it will take time. I am well aware that everyone around me is perhaps expecting the other shoe to fall and are tentative in forgiveness. I can do it. I am positive in my thinking and I know that I can prove to myself and others that I can do it, day-by-day. I am determined. I am proud of myself.

## Gathering for Good

Sinnissippi Centers' staff and guests will "party like our mental health depends on it" at the first annual Gathering for Good fundraiser on May 15, 2025, at the Dixon Elks Lodge.

The event will feature music by Howl2GO. Howl2GO brings the world-famous Howl at the Moon dueling pianos show to the event. It's a high-energy, all-request-driven show performed by incredibly talented musicians and singers. Howl2GO plays across the country from several bases in large cities like Chicago.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the event runs from 6 to 9 p.m. with music, light hors d'oeuvres, a dessert auction, and a silent auction.

Advance-purchase admission is \$30 per individual or \$50 per couple. Tables of eight are available, as are sponsorship opportunities.

We have sent information to our postal and email lists and have posted details online, under events, where you can purchase admissions. Visit [www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org) and look for the Gathering for Good event on our website for a link to register and pay online.

Proceeds from Gathering for Good benefit unmet needs of Sinnissippi Centers' clients through a variety of programs.

For more information, contact Marketing Manager

Andrew Jackson at 815-284-6611 or email [info@sinnissippi.com](mailto:info@sinnissippi.com).



## Sinnissippi Hosts Blood Drive

Sinnissippi Centers will host an American Red Cross blood drive on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at our Dixon office Conference Center. The Dixon office is located at 325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021.

The blood drive will be from noon to 4 p.m. To make an appointment, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or you can visit online at [www.RedCrossBlood.org](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org). Appointments are preferred. More information is available on our website at [www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org) under events.



## Save the Date - August 14, 2025

The 33rd annual Sinnissippi Centers Golf Open will be held on Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025, at Deer Valley Golf Club in Deer Grove. Tee-off will be at noon, followed by a dinner and awards banquet after 18 holes of scramble-format golf.

"Our staff who work on the course that day strive to make the event fun and exciting for our golfers," said Sinnissippi Centers Marketing Manager Andrew Jackson. "They really go out of their way to focus on the golfers' experience."

Registration information is now available on our website under events. You can also email us at [info@sinnissippi.com](mailto:info@sinnissippi.com) to request a registration form for golf or sponsorship.



## More News

### Join Our Team!



Sinnissippi Centers is continuing to grow, and we have a variety of positions available. We are an agency dedicated not only to providing our clients with the highest quality behavioral health care services but also to maintaining a challenging, rewarding, and diverse workplace for our employees. We promote a trauma-informed environment in client services and reinforce those same trauma-informed principles in our employment practices. One of our largest areas of growth recently has been peer services. If you are interested in joining our team, visit our available positions page at [www.sinnissippi.org/available-positions](http://www.sinnissippi.org/available-positions).

### Staff News

Congratulations to Sinnissippi Centers' staff members who have recently earned their new credentials. Behavioral Health Clinician Alexis Pfeiffer and Crisis Services Clinician Kia Bluhm recently received their Licensed Social Worker credentials. Behavioral Health Clinician Diana Holland received her Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credentials. Congratulations also to Director of Quality Assurance and Corporate Compliance Cris Mugrage who was appointed to the Illinois Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Administrative Burden Task Force. The Task Force was created to review policies and regulations affecting the behavioral health industry to identify inefficiencies, duplicate or unnecessary requirements, unduly burdensome restrictions, and other administrative barriers that prevent behavioral health professionals from providing services.

## The Digest Newsletter Spring 2025

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

#### Office Locations

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

#### Apartment Sites

- Dixon
- Mt. Carroll
- Rochelle
- Sterling

#### Recovery Homes

- Dixon
- Amboy



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## 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.

Lawrence Allen  
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Darlene Butterbaugh  
CGH Medical Center  
Connie & Larry Clayton  
Louise Corken  
Laura and Edward Ford  
Stanley R. Fritz Living Trust  
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Schmitt Plumbing & Heating  
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US Bank Foundation on behalf of Mary Kaufman  
Connie Zuck

#### In Honor of

...Jim & Inger Sarver  
William Reigle  
  
... Former patients of Singer Mental Health Center  
Dennis & Monica Hendricks

#### In Memory of

....Darlene Butterbaugh  
Jeff & Phyllis Berge  
Brenda & Ray Humphrey  
Jeffrey & Julie Hussey  
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...My sister and brother  
Charles & Susan Winterton

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