



The

CONTINUUM

Winter 2022 Exchange

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Look at a tree, a plant. How still they are, how deeply rooted in being. Allow nature to teach you stillness.

Eckhart Tolle

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK all our employees for helping us all make it through these difficult times during this ongoing pandemic. Our staff are vaccinated, and so are most of our clients. We continue to work hard to keep our clients and our colleagues safe. We have missed being together, especially at holiday gatherings and special events. Yet, we continue to find ways to stay connected and support one another.

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, our services continue to expand due to the high demand. Our Veterans services have gotten a boost from the Veterans Administration (VA). John Labieniec, Vice President of Acute & Forensic Services, and his team are developing two exciting and innovative programs in New Haven for Veterans suffering from PTSD and substance use disorders. Thanks to Monica and her Facilities team, a magnificent home is being remodeled to house Veterans and move them forward in their recovery. We have been seeking funds and donations to help with the startup of the programs, and the VA will fund the ongoing operations.

Our Mental Health and Intellectual Disability programs are working hard together to finalize the development of a future medical model home for individuals who need additional medical support to live successfully in the community. This sorely needed residential program will be located in Meriden. Other specially-focused programs are also in an exciting start-up phase.

We continue to endure this pandemic together. **I wish you all a healthy and caring 2022.**

All my best,



President & CEO

“I’m looking forward to giving out maskless hugs again someday, like in this ‘throwback’ photo at our Intellectual Disability Services holiday party.”



“Despite the ... pandemic, our services continue to expand due to the high demand.”



A Little Kindness Goes a Long Way

THINKING ABOUT what we can do on a daily basis to make our own lives and the lives of others better can be difficult. The difficulty lies not in finding something to talk about, but rather in where we start. A very simple way to start to manage our feelings and to make ourselves feel better is to be kind. The author Mark Twain said, "The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else up."

When we think about kindness, often we think about being kind to others; a planned act of kindness, such as a celebration, a gift or a visit when someone is sick. All of these things can be life changing for the person who receives, but it also makes the person who is giving feel good. Recently, a client told me a story of a turning point in her life. After decades of drug use and being critically ill, down to 70 pounds, she was able to heal and turn her life around and is now drug free, healthy and enjoying life, for over the last three years. When I asked what gave her the courage and motivation to make such huge changes, she spoke of her family who visited and gathered by her side. She had once thought that they did not care, but their kind deeds of visits and support saved her life. I can only imagine how the family must have felt to know that their simple visits and expressed love had the power to change this woman's future.

Kindness does not mean that we have to spend a lot of money. **Some ways that we can start today with being kind are:**

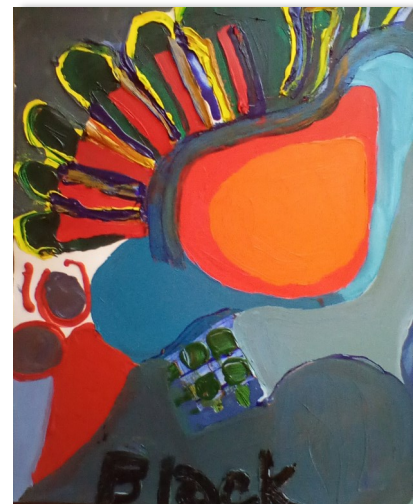
- Smile at a co-worker
- Invite someone to go for a walk
- Offer to share something, a sandwich or a snack
- Hold the door open for someone or offer someone your seat on a bus or train
- Offer a sincere compliment
- Thank someone for their kindness and let them know that you recognize it
- Take the time to listen to someone without judgement



A good way to start is to set a goal for yourself to be kind to someone today, and to try each day to do something simple. You will find that it helps others, and will make you feel better too. It is also very important when we are thinking about kindness to be careful to not be hard on ourselves. Being kind to others is very important, but being kind to ourselves is equally important. Journal or write a list of all of the things that you do that you feel are kind, and then write down the things that you think are your strengths, things that you are good at or things that you enjoy. When we take the time to stop and give ourselves a pat on the back, we are expressing kindness. **Start today, you can do it.**

Creative Corner

Artwork by Nancy
Mental Health Waiver
program



Take Care of Yourself

SOCIAL DISTANCING, mask mandates, and vaccination are our new stressors since we have encountered COVID-19. People in recovery must develop new strategies to combat stressors and maintain their health. This is especially important for people with mental health diagnoses, as the National Institute of Mental Health states this population has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Here are some suggestions for self-care in the pandemic, and beyond:



Outdoor exercise – Now is a great time to get outdoors! An outdoor exercise routine can help us stay socially distanced and physically fit.

Maintain your routines – Working from home and distance learning can upend well-established routines. Maintaining consistent meal times, hygiene practices, and exercise regimens will serve to keep you balanced.

Limit social media – Social media has also been used to spread false information about COVID-19. Connecticut has a website, portal.ct.gov/coronavirus, that provides residents with reliable COVID-19 news.



Reduce or quit smoking – Smoking and vaping can increase your chances of being hospitalized from COVID.

Stay connected – FaceTime, Zoom, and Skype are helping people meet safely and share their experiences!

Employee Spotlight

CONTINUUM'S INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY SERVICES leadership celebrates an outstanding employee, **MARK SERAFIN**.

“Mark has worked at the Marion Avenue home since its opening, and is a vital member of the Marion team. He provides leadership, has extensive knowledge of the program, and is always willing to lend a hand. Mark has been loyal, dependable, and has established positive relationships with all of the residents in the home, as well as with his coworkers. He is a natural leader and others look to him to guide the way through difficult situations. Mark has excellent relationships with his clients’ guardians and parents. In fact, one guardian in particular received the newsletter and thought Mark should be nominated! Gretchen [Vice President of Clinical and Program Operations] and I couldn’t agree more. – Lauren Goldberg, Clinical Director



To submit an Employee Spotlight, email jwilson@continuumct.org

Worth It



IS IT WORTH IT?

This was the question that Jonathan constantly asked himself.

Since age 13, Jonathan has had no family support. He's been homeless and in and out of programs, while managing his Autism Spectrum Disorder and depression. Around age 16 was his darkest time — he was incarcerated for one-and-a-half years.

"At that point, I had probably half given up," Jonathan says. "I didn't really care about anybody or anything." Yet, he always desired a better life in spite of his troubles and self-doubt. He didn't think he would graduate, but he started the GED process on faith.

There were difficulties, like his GED being delayed after moving to a different state for services and his studies being challenging due to his mental illness. He finds it hard to focus and can be forgetful. "There was a lot of help from teachers," he says, giving credit especially to his math teacher whose subject he found the toughest.

Still, as he made progress, surprising himself with each test passed, Jonathan questioned himself. "I'd say, even if I graduate, what would I amount to be? Is it worth it?" Remembering that he was doing this to better his life encouraged him to continue taking steps down the right path.

Finding motivation wasn't easy, he says. Living at Continuum's Young Adult Services (YAS) Program was of significant help. "There's a lot of support here, and I'm not really used to that. I would have long days of internal battling and staff would notice. Or I wasn't able to focus and then I'd talk with staff about it, or I'd talk to my therapist here," Jonathan shares.

The residential program adds structure to his life with daily group meetings and activities. Staff provide assistance within the home, as well as connect residents to the community, educational and job supports, and clinical treatment. Residents also have the ability to pursue their interests and goals.

"I'm just getting as much as I can out of program until I feel like I'm ready to go," says Jonathan about the strides he's made during his year with YAS. This summer, he was beyond proud to achieve his long-sought-after goal of graduating with his GED. In addition, staff assisted him with getting his identification card and setting up a bank account. They also connected Jonathan to the CT Bureau of Rehabilitation Services through which a job coach worked with him on a job site for a trial period. He did so well that he was hired to work full time at the completion of the work program.

Still, the question remains: is it worth it?

"None of it ever goes away," he says, speaking on his mental health challenges. "I think the biggest battle is acknowledging that it's there. That's the first step of healing." Realizing that he's not the only person going through this type of adversity has helped his healing process. Building his self-confidence has also been key. It's difficult, he says, but doing what he loves — going to the gym, listening to music, and hanging out with friends — helps.

Now, when Jonathan wonders if it's worth it, he reflects on his many dreams. He wants to be a mechanic someday, get his CDL license to be a truck driver, or perhaps go into culinary arts. For now, he's looking into either college or a trade school. He keeps himself grounded by staying in the present and reminding himself that for what he cannot accomplish today, there's always tomorrow.

"The only person you're proving a point to is yourself," Jonathan says. **"Work hard. Do it for yourself. No one's going to push you more than you. No one's going to work harder than you do."**

Jonathan's Story



In Need of Relief?

AS WE ENTER YET another pandemic year, you don't have to tell us you're burnt out – we all are! Even the thought of self-care feels a bit exhausting. It's yet another thing to add to the to-do list – a list made more daunting by the fact that *all of this* feels never-ending. So, we found some tools and techniques that will make for **simple, unique additions to your self-care routine.**

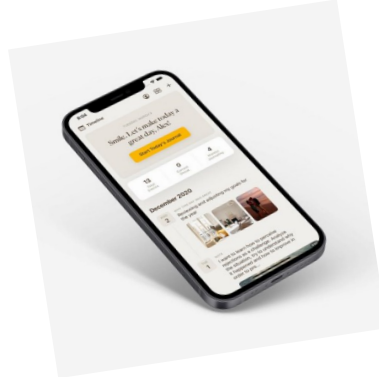


Relax with PMR

The technique for **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** is simple: tense your muscle groups (one at a time) for 5 to 10 seconds, then relax for 10 to 20 seconds, and repeat. First, lay down and take about 5 deep breaths to relax. You can start with your toes and tense and relax each muscle group leading up to your head and neck, or you can start at the top and work your way down. Muscle tension is the body's reaction to anxiety and stress, so PMR offers great relief. It can also help improve your quality of sleep and offers physical benefits, such as, pain relief and lower blood pressure. University of Michigan Health has a great guide here: bit.ly/3qXSjgu.

Easy Journaling

Studies have shown that journaling decreases mental distress. If you think you don't have the time to write about your feelings or list things you're grateful for, try the **Five Minute Journal app**. In just five minutes, you can write about gratitude, set your intentions and affirmation in the morning, and reflect on your day. You can also add photos to all of your entries to make it a digital photo diary. Download on Google Play or the App Store: bit.ly/3HCTVCN.



Pink Noise



Everyone's heard of white noise, but have you heard of its pink sister? **Pink noise** is similar to white but its lower tones are amplified, as well as more soothing and natural sounding. According to clinical psychologist and sleep expert Shelby Harris, PsyD., pink noise masks noise as well as white noise but has the added benefits of memory and deep sleep

enhancement as the tones slow and steady brainwaves. Pink noise is also said to aid with focus. There's still more research to be done, but the pink noise phone apps and YouTube channels are worth checking out. Or you can try this pink noise machine from Sound Oasis: amzn.to/3ztJFKm.

Be a Superhero

SuperBetter is unlike other mental health apps out there. On the platform created by a game designer you get to be a superhero! It gamifies self-care and skill-building, and teaches resilience through superhero-themed missions and challenges. SuperBetter is backed by the Live Gamefully® method, which taps into the psychological strengths you display when playing games, such as, creativity, optimism, and courage. According to them, results have been proven in just 10 minutes of use per day: superbetter.com.



Joy Generator

As life's daily stressors and pandemic anxieties pile up, one must counteract them by hoarding every bit of joy one can find. Studies show that taking small moments for pleasure each day can have a profound impact on one's overall happiness. Try NPR's **Joy Generator** for some relief throughout the day: apps.npr.org/joy-generator. When you click the button "for joy," the visually-appealing website provides you with a smorgasborg of happiness-inducing tools from soothing sounds to drawing prompts, along with background information about the emotional and mental health benefits.



Burnout is Real

THAT EVER-PRESENT ANXIETY or lack of motivation you've been experiencing isn't just in your head. Burnout is a psychological term for an all-consuming apathy, fatigue and loss of professional competence that has typically been applied to work. In 2019, the World Health Organization officially recognized burnout in its International Classification of Diseases. In recent years, however, it's become clear that COVID and all of its stressors have brought on a new kind of fatigue and demotivation.



Paul Nestadt, MD, assistant professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, says that “pandemic fatigue,” which leads to burnout, is the exhaustion we feel from the extra stress brought on by COVID and the lifestyle adjustments we've made to cope, with no real end to the pandemic in sight. **Mental health issues have quadrupled since COVID-19 hit** – 4 in 10 adults have reported symptoms of anxiety and depression, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. **Pandemic burnout is real.**

How to Spot Pandemic Burnout

Gweneth Francis, D.O., a Piedmont Healthcare infectious disease physician, says **signs are:**

- 🗨️ A decline in compliance with mask-wearing and social distancing.
- 🗨️ Having anxiety if you even briefly pass by someone who isn't wearing a mask.
- 🗨️ Feeling tired even after getting enough sleep.
- 🗨️ Lack of motivation or feeling like you don't have a sense of purpose.
- 🗨️ Snapping at loved ones.
- 🗨️ Feeling depressed and isolated.

If you're persistently anxious or depressed, schedule a visit with a therapist or your primary care provider. For urgent needs, other resources include: the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text HOME to the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

See pages 4, 6, and 11 for more self-care and recovery resources.

References

Piedmont Healthcare (2022). *Signs you have pandemic fatigue and COVID burnout*. Retrieved 2022, Jan, from bit.ly/3t8q7u0

Everyday Health (2021). *How to Not Let Pandemic Fatigue Turn Into Pandemic Burnout*. Retrieved 2022, Jan, from bit.ly/3tdFwsl

The Atlantic (2021). *By Now, Burnout Is a Given*. Retrieved 2022, Jan from bit.ly/3teyBzQ

Ways to Relieve Pandemic Burnout

- 👍 **Adjust expectations** – don't put too much pressure on all you want to accomplish – such as learning a new language – if you find yourself in quarantine with “extra time.” Stay active and do hobbies that boost your mood.
- 👍 **Set boundaries** – for example, you can rearrange rooms so members of your household aren't on top of each other, reducing friction when working or attending school from home.
- 👍 **Structure your days** – set a clear distinction between day and evening by having a morning routine, scheduling exercise and breaks, or planning leisure activities with loved ones.
- 👍 **Prioritize self-care** – especially sleep, which gives you energy and lowers stress. Eating well, exercising, socializing and avoiding triggers, such as “doomscrolling” news and social media, are great ways to take care of yourself.
- 👍 **Address burnout at work** – ask for more flexibility and support when needed. Set realistic goals. Place boundaries on your time. Reduce meetings, if possible. Use your employee assistance program.
- 👍 **Be mindful** – practices such as yoga, meditation and other mindful activities help relieve burnout. Try this multisensory meditation practice by Dr. Judson Brewer, director of research and innovation at Brown University's Mindfulness Center for grounding: “*Hold one hand in front of you, fingers spread. Now, slowly trace the outside of your hand with the index finger on your other hand, breathing in when you trace up a finger, and out when you trace down. Move up and down all five fingers. When you've traced your whole hand, reverse direction and do it again.*”
- 👍 **Practice precaution** - whether or not you've been vaccinated, continue to wear a mask when you're around people outside your household, wash your hands often, and practice social distancing.

The New York Times (2021). *'Worry Burnout' Is Real*. Retrieved 2022, Jan from nyti.ms/3zMgLF1

Kaiser Family Foundation (2021). *The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use*. Retrieved 2022, Jan from bit.ly/3zGLbZP



Continuum’s administrative office hosted Halloween trick-or-treating and a Holiday Open House so clients could safely celebrate. Everyone had fun getting in the spirit, dressing up and decorating the building. It was such a joy to witness the outpouring of generosity and kindness as staff gave out treats and gifts to our residents. *Pictured on the left: Batter Terrace residents pose before the Halloween celebration; Pictured below: Gretchen, VP of Clinical and Program Operations, poses with Katrina, resident of the New Haven Halfway House, at the Holiday Open House*



Staying Active



When the CEO needed her plants watered while she was on vacation, Kurt of the Community Integration Program came to Patti’s rescue! Now, he comes to the administrative office every week to water plants throughout the building. He also waters plants at another business. Kurt loves plants, gardening, volunteering and helping the community.



When the Extended Living Expansion program decorated pumpkins for Halloween, they used the opportunity to have gratitude conversations. Residents expressed gratitude for maintaining their health through the pandemic, and for their social workers, who have kept them connected to community resources.



Felicia, from the Norwich Program for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, won a silver medal in sailing at the Special Olympics this year! Felicia grew up on the water and her parents race sailboats, too. She had been taking sailing classes for quite some time in preparation, so it's a win well deserved.



The 2021 Continuum Holiday Bazaar was a great success, and tons of fun! Thank you to our generous sponsors, unique vendors, wonderful volunteers, and the community that came out to support us. A special thanks goes to Jim Benson (pianist) and Ed Lehan (photographer) of Gallagher for donating their time.

Peter, from our Collindale Program, is taking a metal and jewelry making class at Middlesex Community College. Here, Peter is using a blow torch to solder a piece of copper and bronze together. With staff assistance, Peter was making a Christmas ornament.



The Young Adult Services Program (YAS) gave back to the New Haven community last summer by doing a neighborhood clean-up. It was a great team and skill building exercise that gave clients an opportunity to add volunteer work to their resumes. Even more importantly, residents of the neighborhood were so thankful. YAS hopes to continue to collaborate with the city of New Haven to ensure it is safe and clean for all.

Thoughts on Recovery During a Pandemic **A Staff Member's Opinion**

I BELIEVE that isolation is the enemy of recovery – recovery relating to substance use and mental illness. Many of Continuum's residents are pursuing recovery in both of these avenues, but my thoughts today reflect my opinions about recovery from substance use during the current pandemic.

There are several sub-groups we can think about.

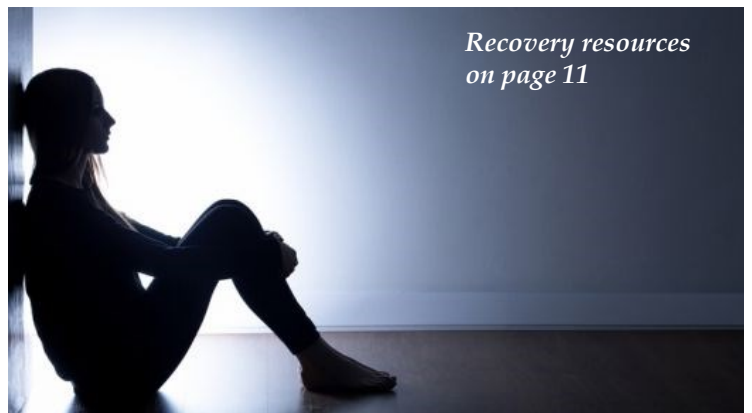
One is the people who were already in recovery when the pandemic began. The pandemic instantly ruined the routines that are healthy for folks in recovery. Twelve-Step meetings were, in many, many cases closed. Getting together with a sponsor, recovery friends or supports became nearly impossible. The only support links available for most in recovery were through the telephone or virtual meetings held on Zoom or the like. Many who were pursuing recovery successfully before the pandemic got their support from attending meetings, and many of them were unaccustomed to using the phone regularly for support. Many were also uncomfortable with the open-to-the-world nature of Zoom meetings. Some felt their anonymity was at risk on Zoom or were uncomfortable sharing in the presence of unknown, unseen strangers. Some attended lots of Zoom meetings during their workday, so they were not inclined to attend yet another Zoom meeting after work. Many "white-knuckled" their recovery until live meetings began to reopen. The involuntary change of routine and the resulting isolation accounted for many casualties in this group, some resulting in a return to unhealthy behaviors, and some resulting in death.

Another sub-group horribly affected by the pandemic were people just starting their recovery journey. Since there were few live meetings, word-of-mouth and internet searching were about the only ways for people new to recovery to get connected. Some people connected with one or more Zoom meetings and, knowing no other way, took their first steps in recovery with only online guidance. This group did remarkably well, I believe, but getting initially connected took a great deal more effort than simply walking into a meeting and beginning by listening. There were many who could not start out this way. Some of them began their recovery months later, when live meetings began to reopen. Others could be counted as casualties, as described above. The good news about this group is that many of those who persevered and entered recovery during the pandemic have had success – possibly because they were willing to go to greater lengths to start their recovery journey.

A third sub-group includes the people who very much need recovery, but are either reluctant or resistant to beginning a recovery journey. The availability of a large variety of twelve-step meetings, which previously looked like a buffet table of recovery options, sank almost to zero before the pandemic was in its second month. Counselors, clinicians and people's support networks suddenly had nowhere to direct people to observe or try out recovery meetings. The "contemplation" stage of the recovery process had no next level of involvement. For decades, many in recovery have described their early days in meetings as having been spent trying to find reasons why they should not be there. During the pandemic, with virtual meetings being the only safe choice, there was no "there" to which anyone could go. There was only a foreign virtual world that might have seemed both daunting and frightening. There was little hope of anonymity and there was little hope of making the connections that would draw one into fellowship in face-to-face gatherings. People who needed recovery but did not want it had a greatly reduced prospect of entering recovery during the pandemic.

The one thing that may have carried people in any of these three groups into recovery during the pandemic is the gift of desperation... a gift, because desperation can cause us to work very hard to improve our desperate circumstances. Once someone gets onto a path of recovery, their desperation can be replaced by determination to grow and achieve the kind of recovery they want.

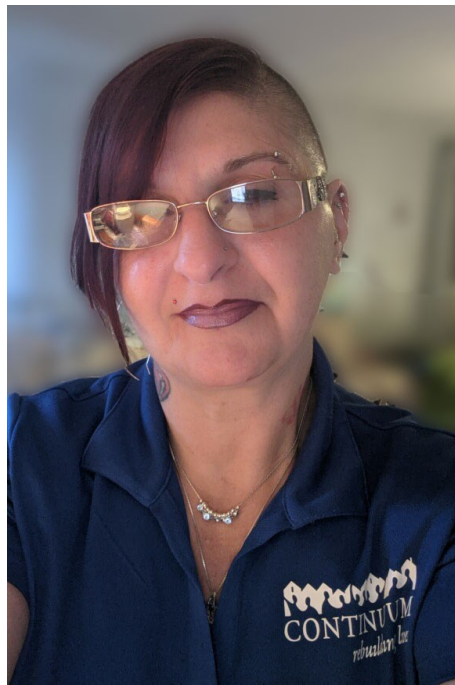
As live meetings have reopened, it is now easier to find and attend face-to-face meetings and participate in the fellowship that binds people together. I'm hopeful the pandemic will wind down and that people who want recovery, who need recovery, and who are already pursuing recovery will find their own healthy road a little easier to travel.



*Recovery resources
on page 11*

“EVERY DAY is a clean start to do something new and different.”

Toni holds on to that belief because without it she would not be on the path she is today: employed, hopeful and sober.



Clean Start

Toni's Story

There was a time she didn't know how to live sober. Toni's trauma hit her at a young age. Growing up with ADHD and a learning disability, her mental health challenges were left untreated and she was alienated at school. Things were even worse at home. Her beloved father passed away when she was 13, and she began to run the streets. She had a child at a

young age, and was only able to sporadically raise him.

Then came her PTSD caused by constant molestation at the hands of a close family member. The nightmares she had from the abuse always led her back to feeding her addiction.

“I knew I needed help when I was living on the street in a van with my husband and dog,” Toni shares. Getting arrested for possession of narcotics is what turned her from a directionless path. She eventually went to rehab and admittedly “fell a couple times” over the years, but she has stayed on the path to sobriety for the past 4 years. **“If I got clean, anybody can get clean,” she says.**

When Toni finally received mental health services, she got a diagnosis of severe depression, bipolar and PTSD. During that time, she also learned she was HIV-positive;

“I'm undetectable, thank God,” she says. For 5 years, she stayed at the Liberty program for people living with HIV and mental health conditions. There, a staff person referred her to Continuum's Employment Apprenticeship Program.

“Continuum has done a lot. It's awesome here,” says Toni. In addition to learning transferrable work skills through the program, she has gained valuable life skills. She's learned how to patiently manage others, from the program director Elsa, as new apprentices shadow her on the Cleaning Crew. Her supervisor Jeanine is also a source of inspiration – “She's a strong person and a good influence.” She taught Toni resilience and the art of not letting things get to her.

The program has also given her a positive perspective on life. “Working in the field and seeing how others live and their challenges makes me think, wow, life could be worse,” Toni shares. “So, I am grateful.”

Now, Toni lives on her own and receives therapy services. She beams as she shares that Continuum helped furnish her whole apartment. Continuum also recently hired her to lead the Agency's Cleaning

“If you want it bad enough, it's possible.”

Crew. Program Director Elsa Ward says, “Toni was hired because she was a dedicated Apprentice who has overcome her barriers to getting competitive employment and has reached all her goals. She has proven herself to be a leader.”

Toni is excited about her future. She dreams of starting her own cleaning business one day ... and buying a Harley.

“What keeps me going is knowing that if you want it bad enough, it's possible,” says Toni. “I was tired of suffering.”

Recovery Resources *Continued from page 10*

12Step.org - comprehensive list of links to meetings for all types of recovery groups - [12step.org/social](https://www.12step.org/social)

Confidant Virtual Groups - groups led by trained facilitators and clinical experts - confidanthealth.com/support-groups

Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) - virtual support meetings - ccar.us

In the Rooms - global recovery community with 130 weekly online meetings - intherooms.com

iStep - 12-step program management and recovery support app - istep.pro

In Loving Memory

SADLY, PEOPLE with serious mental illness are often compromised by chronic medical conditions. They tend to die 25 years younger than the general population due to critical health issues. Serving this vulnerable population means dealing with loss, and for our staff it is as difficult as losing a family member. Continuum's clients who have passed on will forever remain in our minds and hearts.



Roxann Facey

Oct. 2, 1969 - March 13, 2021

ROXANN FACEY, a beloved member of our Continuum family, passed away on March 13, 2021 due to complications from COVID. Roxann moved into the Millbrook home in January 2007. She was a vibrant woman with a passion for life. Roxann loved all things Jamaican and dreamed of going back for a visit one day. She had a deep love for Santa Claus, Whitney Houston, Kenny Rogers, and Bob Marley. Roxann was funny, generous, and loved deeply. She was adored by all who knew her and her death is a loss to all of us. On June 30, 2021 we came together to celebrate and honor Roxann by sharing our favorite stories and memories of her. She will live on in our hearts.

- Lauren Goldberg, Developmental Disability Services



Paul Thorsten Angell

Jan. 7, 1957 - Aug. 24, 2021



Dawn Diaz

Oct. 10, 1966 - Sept. 27, 2021

DAWN was in our program for a short time, but she will always be remembered for her gentle spirit and kind soul. She was a bright light at our program, always willing to participate. She enjoyed staying busy and picked up extra chores to help out the staff here. She hoped others would learn something from her sharing her story. During my interactions with her, Dawn lit up when she shared memories of her children and the fond moments she had being a grandmother. All she wanted to do was have a successful future with her family, and I will never forget her or her dedication to her recovery.

- Hannah Buckley, Bridgeport Crisis & Respite Program



Michelle Carpenter

Dec. 21, 1961 - Feb. 29, 2021

MICHELLE was a very intelligent woman, mom, employee, sibling, and grandmother who fought valiantly and lost her battle with cancer. She was a friendly person who was often misunderstood due to her often abrasive way of advocating for herself. Though she struggled with her family, she was loved just the same, evidenced by how each family member provided some sort of support during her hospice home care. I had the privilege and pleasure of visiting Michelle during her hospice home care, and I remember having our last conversation. Even in her last days she was still able to advocate for herself, only she was no longer loud and boisterous. Instead, she was calm and, with a small still voice, explained that she told her brother, who had just visited, at least 100 times that she does not like mixed nuts and prefers cashews. In that moment I saw that she had no regrets for her life, and that she was dying well because she looked as if she were napping when she closed her eyes, and headed to a next life slumber. - *Ann Taylor, CSP Recovery Program*

SUNAYANA SRIVASTAVA lived at Blake Street for about seven months, but she had been with Continuum since 2013. During that time, she formed some friendships which were very strong. She was always full of energy and rarely moved at anything less than top speed. Those who valued her as a friend were very sad to learn of her passing and continue to miss her still. In addition to her friendships, Sunayana treasured her family very much. She knew she could count on their support and was grateful for the relationships she had with them. Her family, like her friends, were devastated by her sudden passing and our kind thoughts and wishes are with those who most miss her. A loss of anyone in the Continuum family is a loss for us all.

- *Winfield Davis, Blake Street Program*



Sunayana Srivastava

Jan. 1, 1981 - Sept. 5, 2021



Patricia Johnson

Sept. 17, 1968 - March 25, 2021

PATRICIA JOHNSON, 52, of Hamden, CT, passed away peacefully in March 2021. She will be remembered by those that loved her for enjoying everyday life. Patricia was admired for her positive outlook and known to be a great conversationalist. She made a hobby of finding new recipes and creative ways to enjoy healthy meals, and treasured going to the market with her case manager to pick out new and different fruits and vegetables to try. Most of all, she will be remembered for dining out with her longtime companion. TGI Friday's was one of her favorites, and she treasured spending time with him.

- *Tanyce Gambrell, CSP Recovery Program*

MIGUEL RAMOS was always a breath of fresh air. His apprehensive approach to his endeavors made his success all the sweeter. Miguel was truly an inspiration for how he demonstrated that life after incarceration is possible. He went to school to study English, and notoriously won numerous talent shows with his spoken word poetry. He worked a variety of jobs, never wasting any time before finding something better or starting a side business. He maintained a beautiful apartment for over four years and was the best dog dad to Kango! Miguel always kept us on our toes and for that we are forever grateful.

- *Briana Leary, A Common Bond/Brownell Program*



Miguel Ramos

June 19, 1983 - June 6, 2021

Dates of Awareness



Did you know that **January** is **National Get Organized Month**? Psychologist Dr. Sherrie Bourg Carter says, “Messy homes and work spaces leave us feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed. Yet, rarely is clutter recognized as a significant source of stress in our lives.” Try this tip: every hour, clean or declutter for 5 minutes. By the end of the day you will have gotten in an hour of cleaning and organizing. Get more advice on how to simplify your life from *Almost Practical*: bit.ly/3IXjhTP.



The **third week in February** is **Random Acts of Kindness Week**, founded by The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation to make kindness the norm™ in the world. Visit their website for inspiration for acts of kindness and free resources, including social-emotional learning materials for kids: Randomactsofkindness.org. Studies show that kindness enhances our emotional wellbeing and helps to reduce stress. Flip back to page 3 (*A Little Kindness Goes a Long Way*) for more ideas on ways to be kind to others.



March is **National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**. It was established in 1987 to promote understanding and increase awareness of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Barriers to inclusion in their communities is always a major concern. According to the CDC, one in six children, ages 3 through 17, have one or more developmental disabilities, such as, autism, cerebral palsy, ADHD, hearing loss, vision impairment, and other developmental delays.



According to the CDC, about 1% of the world’s population has autism spectrum disorder (ASD) – over 75,000,000 people. **World Autism Awareness Day**, celebrated **April 2**, was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 to bring more awareness to the neurodevelopmental disorder and highlight the supports the autism community requires to lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society.

So Many Ways to Give



WWW.CONTINUUMCT.ORG/DONATE

- One-Time Donation
- Automatic Monthly Giving
- Cryptocurrency
- Planned Giving
- Stock
- Donor-Advised Fund
- Goods
- Amazon Smile

Thank you for helping to rebuild lives!

HELP VETERANS REBUILD THEIR LIVES



BECAUSE...

- * 54% of post-9/11 Veterans who incurred an injury or illness suffer from PTSD
- * 1 in 10 Veterans are diagnosed with substance use disorder
- * Veterans that abuse drugs or alcohol are twice as likely to die by suicide than other Veterans
- * 20 Veterans die by suicide every day
- * They sacrificed for our freedom

THE NEED

After individuals stabilize after a mental health or substance use crisis, they often revert back to old feelings, behaviors and habits that got them to crisis in the first place.

To break that cycle, they need something in addition to therapy. An expertly supported living environment while going through therapy can bridge them firmly to the next step of truly rebuilding their lives.

Because of our experience, expertise, and success, **Veterans Affairs selected Continuum to partner with them.** We will be opening two new Veterans programs: one for Veterans struggling with PTSD, and the other for Veterans struggling with substance use. Our Veterans programs will be tripling our annual capacity so that **we can help more than 450 Veterans recover** from mental illness, PTSD or substance use crisis and move on to a more sustainable lifelong recovery. **It works.**

Your help is needed to make this happen. We must purchase, renovate, and furnish two large, beautiful houses to help Veterans achieve long-term sustainable recovery from chronic PTSD and/or substance use disorder.

WON'T YOU GIVE TODAY?

WWW.CONTINUUMCT.ORG/VETERANS

Your financial support is a Veteran's way forward.

**109 Legion Avenue
New Haven, CT 06519**

www.ContinuumCT.org/Donate

“ They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself. – Andy Warhol

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Anonymous Staff - *Thoughts on Recovery During a Pandemic*
Jim Bissette - *Take Care of Yourself*
Susan Kelly - *A Little Kindness Goes a Long Way*
Lynnell Melendez - *Artist Spotlight*

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Artist Spotlight

Robert came to Continuum’s Bridgeport Crisis and Respite program in November 2021, and immediately appeared motivated, positive and driven. He is a talented artist with a bright future. Robert does amazing artwork and makes sure to incorporate elements of recovery in all of his pieces. His goals and aspirations are to remain clean and sober, and to repair the relationship with his adult daughter. Robert absolutely loves to create artwork pieces that make others smile. Creating masterpieces gives him so much purpose, and makes him realize he has a reason to be on this earth.