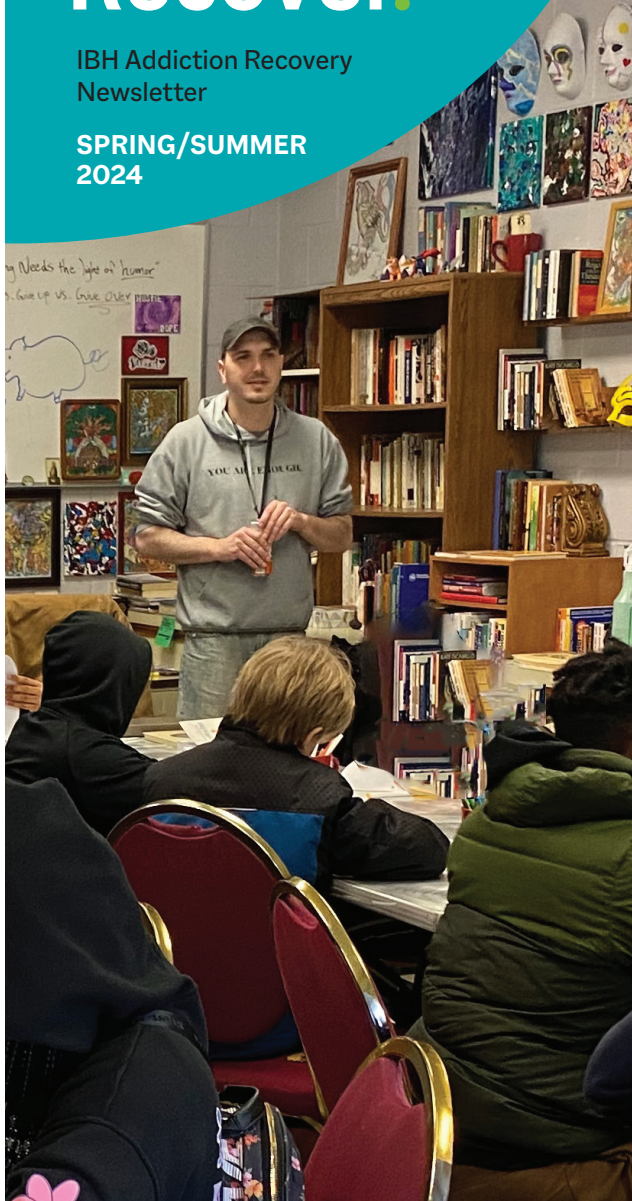


Hope. Heal. Recover.

IBH Addiction Recovery
Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER
2024



“Learners engage in career exploration and volunteer opportunities to feel the power of giving back to our community and empathy for others.”

It Takes a Community

Educational partnerships with an eye on the future of addiction recovery treatment

Through collaboration, synergies can activate a community approach to addressing drug and alcohol addiction. By forming cooperative partnerships with Akron Public Schools, The University of Akron, and Kent State University, IBH Addiction Recovery saw an opportunity to further our mission by working with like-minded individuals and organizations.

FORGING A PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

IBH Addiction Recovery has been partnering with Akron Public Schools National Inventors Hall of Fame® School and Center for STEM Learning (NIHF-STEM Middle School) since 2022. It began as a collaboration with academy teachers to design opportunities for students so they could learn first-hand what working in addiction treatment was like. This year, IBH Addiction Recovery is participating in the Changemaker Challenge, an inquiry-based learning experience where students use what they learned during their interaction with IBH Addiction Recovery to demonstrate how they can be change agents in their communities.

The partnership has mutually benefited IBH Addiction Recovery and the NIHF-STEM Middle School. “We achieve many of our goals through partnerships with nonprofits such as IBH Addiction Recovery. Learners engage in career exploration and volunteer opportunities to feel the power of giving back to our community and empathy for others,” said NIHF-STEM Middle School coach Brenda Leighton.

IBH Addiction Recovery’s initial goals were to support local education initiatives, increase awareness of IBH Addiction Recovery, and encourage students to pursue careers in addiction treatment. The results have far outweighed the expectations. “Our staff have been engaged throughout this program and have enjoyed meeting, collaborating, and working with the learners,” said IBH Addiction Recovery Chief Operating Officer Jess Rist. “It has also been a source of joy for our clients to know they are being loved and supported by students in the community.”

Akron Public Schools Career Academies allow learners to participate in various career pathways. Students inspired by their experience with IBH Addiction Recovery can choose a healthcare, nursing, finance, or business pathway and learn many of the skills needed to succeed in an addiction treatment career.

According to Leighton, NIFH-STEM learners have found working with IBH Addiction Recovery worthwhile. “IBH is a strong partner for our school, whether it is showing what an art therapist does or wrapping gifts and making holiday cards for their residents,” said Leighton. “Our partnership is valuable to us and one I hope continues for many years.”

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER

IBH Addiction Recovery collaborates with the nursing programs at The University of Akron and Kent State University by providing access to clinical and community nursing experiences. This includes client interactions and working alongside staff in health services, clinical, spiritual care, and education.

As with the Akron Public Schools collaboration, growing community partnerships and fostering an appreciation for the field of addiction treatment are the goals.

Taking Action to Encourage Acceptance of All

A commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



“No matter your background, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, or abilities, you are welcome, you are valued, you are appreciated, you belong.”

Since IBH Addiction Recovery’s formation more than 50 years ago, its doors have been open to all, regardless of faith, identity, or race. That is why the organization has adopted a framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

IBH Addiction Recovery is committed to a sustained effort to foster a culture in which it celebrates diversity, prioritizes equity, and values inclusion. Through active listening, education, dialogue, empowerment, and ongoing review of business practices and treatment services, IBH Addiction Recovery will strive to ensure progress toward a sense of belonging for everyone, and opportunities for all employees and clients to thrive.

Over the past several months, IBH Addiction Recovery has implemented various DEI initiatives to increase awareness of unconscious biases, microaggressions, and other DEI-related topics. The organization’s leadership and staff were invited to take a Safe Space Ally Pledge, a commitment to adopt practices promoting an environment where all people can feel safe and supported. DEI training sessions intended to increase awareness of LGBTQ+ communities and the discrimination they face have also been offered. Additionally, several workshops centered on racial equity and understanding structural racism took place in February as part of Black History Month.

During Random Act of Kindness Week, employees were asked to perform random acts of kindness for co-work-

ers and leave behind a “Tag! You’re It!” card encouraging that employee to pay that kindness forward. The effort was so popular that it will continue indefinitely.

These efforts and events will be ongoing as continuous education will keep everyone informed about the importance of diversity and inclusion.

A STAFF THAT REFLECTS OUR VALUES

IBH Addiction Recovery’s quality of service requires hiring candidates who provide its clients with the best care. It is also essential that the IBH Addiction Recovery team reflects the communities it serves. That is why the organization is implementing inclusive hiring practices intended to attract a diverse pool of candidates.

As part of IBH Addiction Recovery’s DEI activities, it will educate team members responsible for hiring on implicit bias and how to combat prejudices while screening and interviewing applicants. IBH Addiction Recovery has also removed barriers to the application process, revised and standardized interview questions, and posted positions through various channels to ensure access.

Additionally, policies, procedures, and the employee handbook have been reviewed to ensure they support a sense of belonging and inclusion for everyone working at IBH Addiction Recovery.

For example, the employee handbook now includes the organization’s DEI commitment. Also, gender expression

and sexual orientation were added as a protected class as a part of the Equal Employment Opportunity policy, and an Anti-Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying policy was created.

CREATING A WELCOMING SPACE

“The work of our committee is focused on raising awareness and consciousness about issues, topics, ways of life, and cultures to understand better, appreciate, and support one another more fully,” said IBH Addiction Recovery DEI Coordinator Sal Ruggeri. “We all know how incredible it feels to be a part of something important; we want all who come to IBH Addiction Recovery to see that they are a part of something important and that we celebrate our differences, that no matter your background, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, or abilities, you are welcome, you are valued, you are appreciated, you belong.”

The work concerning DEI is only just beginning, as IBH Addiction Recovery continues to be inclusive, welcoming, safe, and a healthy space for all.



IBH Addiction Recovery's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion logo.

Spreading Good Will and Kindness in the Community

Men's Recovery House and DEI Committee provide support to the unhoused

As part of IBH Addiction Recovery's Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and the Men's Recovery House residents took part in an outreach effort to assist the unhoused in the Akron area. The committee members and residents collected food, clothing, and toiletry items and then distributed the items on January 15. Items collected included socks, hand warmers, gloves, scarves, hats, drawstring backpacks, toothbrushes, and non-perishable food items.

This effort was a way to honor Dr. King through unity and service. Many of the residents were moved by the experience.

"Doing this was a good opportunity to bring a little warmth to people on a cold day, and to get some back!"

"Your circumstances need to not dictate your behavior (regarding the first person we met who cursed us out, to the last person who was extremely grateful and pleasant)."

"It felt good feeding the homeless... Because that can happen to anyone of us ... anyone's life can change in a heartbeat. Every one of us need to stay humble..."



Men's Recovery House residents prepare collected items for distribution to unhoused individuals in the Akron area as part of MLK Jr. Day celebration.

TAKE NOTE

Connecting Clients to Care Quickly



Quick access to services is critical in treating substance use disorders. IBH Addiction Recovery has made it a priority to reduce the wait time between a referral and connecting a client to an effective treatment program. During the last quarter of 2023, it took just over one day, on average, for staff to match a client with treatment.



Anthony Henderson



Melanie Korman

Say Hello to New Team Members

Please welcome Anthony Henderson and Melanie Korman who have joined the IBH Addiction Recovery administrative staff. As Chief Financial Officer, Henderson is responsible for ensuring that the financial operations of IBH Addiction Recovery are conducted from a place of sound management and a forward-looking perspective.

As Development & Marketing Director, Korman develops and implements fundraising strategies that generate philanthropic contributions to IBH Addiction Recovery. She also oversees marketing efforts that increase awareness of IBH Addiction Recovery.

We are excited to have Henderson and Korman as a part of our team. You can read more about Henderson, Korman and our entire leadership team on our website at ibh.org/team.



Spreading the Word

IBH Addiction Recovery recently completed a campaign to inform the community about our Outpatient Programs that help individuals recover from drug and alcohol addiction while they continue to live independently and work or attend school. As part of the effort, several billboards featuring team members were posted throughout Summit and Portage counties. The billboard above features Human Resources Director Keren Childers.

Join The Conversation

Follow IBH Addiction Recovery on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter



It Takes a Community

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“Collaboration is an important way IBH can partner with entities in the community, such as local nursing programs, to further knowledge and understanding of substance use, addiction, and treatment,” said IBH Addiction Recovery Health Services Director Elizabeth Langford.

The nursing programs benefit by taking part in a community-based clinical facility that gives their students a new perspective on how they can treat individuals with substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health conditions. By sharing IBH Addiction Recovery’s work with the nursing students, the hope is to build an understanding of the continuum of care approach, the disease of addiction, and treatment methods.

“I was able to learn so much while being here,” said Kent State University Nursing Student Katie Seeker. “Thank you so much for this experience! You guys helped me see a whole different side of nursing in a field I barely knew existed!”



Akron Public Schools NIHF-STEM students participate in a Career Exploration activity.

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