

Hope. Heal. Recover.

A Quarterly Newsletter for
IBH Addiction Recovery

SPRING 2022



A Renewed Purpose

Job Readiness Program helps women in recovery find employment

Finding employment is an important part of a long-term recovery plan for individuals in recovery. Meaningful and lasting employment helps build self-esteem and work ethic, support sustained sobriety, and transform negative stereotypes of people in recovery.

However, the road to employment isn't always easy for individuals after treatment. Between traditional barriers, such as transportation and childcare, and distinct barriers associated with addiction, such as stigma, it's often challenging to find and maintain employment. "The reintegration back into the workforce after some time away can be full of challenges: transportation issues, employment necessities such as steel toe boots or uniform requirements, interview-appropriate clothing, and more," explains IBH REACH Program Associate Tamara Lutz.

Thanks to a grant from the Women's Endowment Fund of Akron Community Foundation, however, IBH Addiction Recovery has been able to help female clients within the IBH REACH Program with their job search and employment. Initially launched in 2019, the Women's Endowment Fund: Women's Job Readiness Program was temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Restarted after the quarantine period, the program recently resumed to benefit 20 female REACH members.

Through the Women's Job Readiness Program, designated funds provide interview-appropriate clothing and work uniforms, driver's license reinstatements, transportation assistance such as bus passes

and gas cards, and other workforce essentials. It also provides the necessary resources to assist clients in finding and obtaining - or maintaining - employment and safe and stable housing with their children.

Throughout the grant cycle, 13 women applied for positions with various companies such as Perfect Melody Home Health Care, Akron-Summit County Public Library, Summa

“Paying off my license reinstatement fee will open up opportunities for me in the workforce. Now I can work towards getting a car to have reliable transportation to and from work.”

Hailey H., IBH REACH Program

Health, Poorman Property Management, The Lockview Restaurant, Battered Women's Shelter, and Chipotle. In addition, seven other program participants maintained their current employment while gaining greater access to reliable transportation and proper workwear.

With the success of the Women's Job Readiness Program, IBH Addiction Recovery is looking to expand workforce development opportunities to IBH REACH Program participants. "It's a perfect next step in helping to maintain their recovery out in the community," shares IBH Addiction Recovery Chief Development and Communications Officer Jess Rist.

"This grant, and my role within the IBH REACH Program, has afforded me the opportunity to help those women that are helping themselves," says Lutz. "I am thrilled about being able to lighten their constraints, and I am honored to walk beside these women on their recovery journey."

Physical Health

A vital piece of the recovery process



“This is a great opportunity for us to continue our ‘whole person’ approach to drug and alcohol addiction treatment.”

Many recovery programs include support groups, spiritual development, and counseling. While these are effective interventions in dealing with the mind and the spirit, what about the body? The mind, body, and spirit are unquestionably interconnected.

IBH Addiction Recovery utilizes a highly individualized, whole-person approach to recovery that includes a significant emphasis on feeding the body as well as the heart, mind, and spirit. One recent program features a partnership with the Akron YMCA to offer a Y membership to outpatient clients.

IBH Addiction Recovery is piloting a program with the Akron Area YMCA to offer select IBH REACH Program members a three-month family membership. The membership includes full access to any of the eight Akron-area YMCA facilities conveniently located in Akron, Green, Macedonia, Wadsworth, and Cuyahoga Falls.

This initiative is part of the Akron Area YMCA’s Y-Strong program. Y-Strong provides a Y family membership for participants who have achieved a period of successful sobriety. The Y membership gives them an outlet to work on their own health and the health of their family unit.

The Akron Area YMCA works with Turning Point Court, Family

Reunification Court, Hope Court, Valor Court, Akron Recovery Court, and Barberton Municipal Drug Court, to offer the Y-Strong program to those individuals who have reached a certain level of success, as determined by the various judges within those courts.

Physical activity is an effective way to reduce stress, improve sleep habits and mood changes, increase energy, and strengthen the immune system. The cumulative effect can help to prevent a relapse. Some studies suggest that exercise can help manage certain contributing factors of drug and alcohol addiction, such as depression and anxiety.

Within IBH Addiction Recovery, the program is led by Peer Supporter Eslie “Ace” Johnson in close collaboration with Brian Bidlingmyer, Akron Area YMCA chief development officer.

According to Johnson, the YMCA membership offers REACH participants far more than just a place to work out physically. For those who have recently completed the IBH Addiction Recovery residential program, it provides a safe place to go by themselves, with peer supporters and/or to meet with their family. “There’s a lot that can happen for clients going back into the community, from day 90 to six months. It’s actually a very vital time. It’s when clients really need something like this.

This type of support can make a world of difference,” says Johnson.

After the initial three-month membership, participating IBH REACH Program members have the potential to earn a three-month extension, as well as further opportunities through a YMCA scholarship program. “I would say it’s one of the proudest things I’ve done at IBH,” says Johnson. “And I’ve been at IBH for almost seven years now.”

In cultivating a lifestyle that supports physical wellness, IBH Addiction Recovery is helping to create an environment that mitigates relapse triggers while giving the body the nurturing it needs.



Studies show that regular exercise can lessen anxiety, depression, and stress.

I Belong Here

IBH Addiction Recovery staff are the heart of our recovery community

If not for the expertise, dedication, and care that the IBH Addiction Recovery staff offers our clients every single day, recovery would not be possible.

Occasionally we will save this spot to introduce you to these amazingly talented and selfless individuals. In this issue we introduce you to Melody Ruffin Ward, Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Care, and Rick Bechter, Housing Director.

Melody Ruffin Ward



“Everyday I learn something new about myself. As much as I think I am giving to our community they’re giving back double.”

As Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Care, Melody Ruffin Ward oversees holistic programming and is responsible for developing, organizing, and providing compassionate and effective spiritual care and counseling services. After two decades as a professor of dance Ruffin Ward completed a Master of Divinity at Andover Newton Graduate Theological School with a focus in Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counseling.

Ruffin Ward cherishes working with “the clients and staff” at IBH Addiction Recovery. When not at work, she enjoys a good book, daily walks and “a fabulous salad filled with vegetables and really good greens.”

Rick Bechter



“Many of our employees are former clients themselves. So this is a great opportunity for us to lead by example and help those who are still suffering.”

Rick Bechter’s favorite part of working at IBH Addiction Recovery is that it provides him with the chance to give back. “For me, the most rewarding part of working at IBH is knowing that by sharing my experience, strength, hope, and a little knowledge, that I might have played a small part in helping the residents get started on the path to turning their lives around, says Bechter.

During his nearly 40 years with IBH Addiction Recovery, Bechter has held various positions, including residential supervisor, men’s house manager, education coordinator, residential life coordinator, chairman of our Safety Committee and safety officer.

TAKE NOTE

At the Movies

IBH Addiction Recovery partnered with the **Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF)** for their 46th annual event by sponsoring a film. CIFF matched the annual festival’s films with nonprofit organizations whose mission aligned with the content of a film. IBH Addiction Recovery was matched with the film *Anonymous Sister* a documentary about the revelatory look into an all-too-familiar struggle that has plagued families for decades: opioid addiction.



Computer Lab Supports Recovery

The **Firestone Park Outpatient and Aftercare Facility computer lab** provides computers and internet access to outpatient and aftercare clients to work on job applications, build resumes, or search for reliable housing.

IBH REACH Program staff and/or Peer Supporters, like Tamara Lutz (pictured above), are available to help in the process.



On the Airwaves

IBH Addiction Recovery board member, Cheryl Wear, recently was a guest on **The Summit’s Rock and Recovery** podcast hosted by Marc Lee Shannon. Cheryl said, “My hope is that in being vulnerable I can help someone else who is struggling and doesn’t think it’s possible to get better.”

Thank you Cheryl for sharing your story and for your leadership on the board. To listen, visit: <https://apple.co/3ImEwNY>

Correction

In the Winter 2022 newsletter, Residential Treatment Director Richard Rice’s credentials were incorrect. The correct credential held by Rice is LPCC-S.

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