

## **Recovery Center for Newport and the Northeast Kingdom:**

### **The Journey to Recovery Community Center**

There are eleven Recovery Center sites throughout Vermont that make up the Vermont Recovery Network. Each county is represented, excluding Orleans and northern Essex County in which a Recovery Center is achingly absent.

The community forum that was generated out of the Governor's summit gave momentum to a long seated desire to establish a recovery center in the greater Newport area. It was clear that to help break the cycle of acuity and debilitating chronicity surrounding substance abuse we must embrace our community's commitment to recovery. Contemplating it, embarking on it, supporting people in practicing a life based in recovery versus addiction- this became our community's aspiration. The moving stories that we heard through the summit galvanized our commitment.

The community forum helped build a steering committee of 30 members. They set out to meet other Recovery Centers listening to their stories and to study their operations. The Recovery Centers welcomed us with an open door and open hearts. They shared freely, invited us to their board development retreat (even though we were still but an idea), and affirmed by their actions a partnership in our quest.

We were buoyed by inquiries from the governor asking when we will finally open a Recovery Center in the Newport area. The opening of a Recovery Center in the greater Newport area would be in fulfillment of a noble and courageous dream to have a network of recovery centers in service throughout our beloved state. This is an inspired vision.

In a few short months, we moved from conceptualization to the onset of a realization. From the steering committee we elected an Executive Board, by-laws were drafted, mission statement endorsed, a PO Box secured and an EIN number assigned. We have named ourselves THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY COMMUNITY CENTER. The Vermont Recovery Network agreed to act as our fiscal agent, and shared of their limited precious resources so that we would have some funds to secure filing of a 501c3. We have identified a site that would be suitable and a landlord that would like to work with us.

Sadly, in the midst of all this inspired momentum we were stunned to realize that we were not included in the 2016 budget. We need state support in order to take the next steps. We are asking for just enough to establish core operations, secure a roof over our heads and to place a welcome sign on the door. We want to be part of recovery network that reaches into this last frontier of the Kingdom.

For those that may question whether a recovery center is worth the investment, look at what we have learned from the Vermonters that have experienced the Vermont Recovery Center network:

91% of participants report improvement in their overall health

69% reported increased physical exercise since coming to a recovery center

58% of the visitors who found work since coming to a recovery center credit the center with helping them find work

50% of visitors finding housing since visiting a recovery center credit the recovery center with helping them find housing

Recovery center visitors also report an increase in mental health stability, an increase in family relationships, a decrease in criminal activity, and a decrease in drug use.\*

Having the state support a Recovery Center in this part of the Northeast Kingdom is a statement and a choice. It is in service to a mission. It is the fulfillment of a vision.

It makes sense, and it is the right thing to do.

We, in the Northeast Kingdom, have been working hard to establish a recovery center in the Newport area. With the help of our brothers and sisters in the Vermont Recovery Network our community is prepared to open the 12<sup>th</sup> Recovery Center to fill the missing gap in Orleans and Essex County.

Now we are at the critical juncture where we need essential state support in order to open and maintain a recovery center in Newport, VT.

Let us work together in service to this noble vision.

Brandon Malshuk

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\*Data and surveys collected by The Vermont Recovery Network and analyzed by Evidence Based Solutions between 2007 and 2014 proves the efficacy of the recovery centers throughout Vermont.