



**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES**

# LIFE CHAT

A publication spotlighting CSS clients

January 2022

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## We want to hear from you!

Contact Danya Bailey at 330-253-9388, ext. 238, or Narkeetah Brazil, at ext. 165, for the next Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) meeting or to contribute your artwork or recovery story to Life Chat.

(See back page for RAC information.)



## Life's journeys: Looking back, moving forward

Making New Year's resolutions is a convenient attempt to start afresh or set goals, but how realistic is it for most? You don't just press a "pause" or "play" button on your life's journey at the top of the year. You more likely keep it on "play" as you assess which path to take.

You may ask: "Do I want to return to a pleasurable time of the past?" "Am I content with where I am?" "Am I reaching for the future?"

These questions were posed to Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) participants. Despite the interruptions, lockdowns and detours of the past two years, their focus was not taken off their life journeys. They thought about their interests, and the good and bad influences of people surrounding them. They assessed their growth and the contentment of where they find themselves now.

Enjoy their reflections as we move into 2022 and more of life's journeys.

## Achieving a state of contentment

**Joan Ahlstrom**, who reflected on 64 years of life experiences, is content - satisfied - with herself. She really likes herself! "I've had enough experiences in life that prepares me for the future. I've experienced so many successes and problems that it makes my decision making easier. You're not so weary. Contentment comes with achievements — from failures and success."



Despite health complications and a family loss she says God brought her through, **C.S.** still recognizes her personal growth and appreciates day-to-day activities.

She is content with her life and what she will accomplish. "I'm an early riser. I like the quietness and peacefulness before I hear car engines outside. I have my appointments. I have my aide, who takes me shopping or anywhere I want to go."

## New treatment readiness group invites members

By Emily Bryan and Stephanie Cull, ITS Dual Diagnosis Services

Have you ever wondered, "What would life be like if I cut back on my drinking? Why is 'so and so' hassling me about my drug use? Where would I even start, if I did want to change my lifestyle?"

If you're asking yourself questions like these, Intensive Treatment Services (ITS) has a new group just for you! We know change can be difficult, so we're here to offer help with determining what changes, if any, you might make in your substance use.

Treatment Readiness is a dual-diagnosis group, meaning it offers support to clients who have a mental health diagnosis and a substance use disorder. The group will allow members to explore their overall lifestyle and the connections between their mental health symptoms and substance use, and determine what behaviors are and are not working for them.

Treatment Readiness is a place to share experiences and relate to others while addressing recovery concerns. The group features open discussion and planned topics. It is designed to meet individuals where they are. Another benefit is that members who also want individual counseling may schedule individual sessions with Emily or Stephanie, as long as they are also consistently attending the group.

This group will be held on Mondays and Fridays from 1 to 2 p.m., beginning on Monday, Jan. 24. If in-person group is possible by Jan. 24, it will likely consist of a hybrid format and be held in person at the 640 building as well as on Zoom. If group can be held in person, coffee will be served, and every Friday there will be a small prize for members who attended both sessions that week.

Due to the ever-evolving pandemic conditions, group may need to be held entirely on Zoom. For the latest information about ways group will be offered, contact Stephanie or Emily. A referral is required for this group. If you're interested in joining or would like more details, please contact Emily Bryan at 330-253-9388, ext. 487, or Stephanie Cull at 330-253-9388, ext. 237.



## Finding 'home' among the homeless

I've been homeless on and off my whole life so in the spring of 2020 as I was at the end of my financial rope, I chose to be prepared this time for the inevitable. I put my belongings in storage, bought a cargo van and a cot for a bed and, with my canine companions, moved into the streets. It has been an eye-opening experience as I deliberately navigate houseless living, and I am learning to be content with the simple life. I've come to know many other houseless folks and many compassionate individuals that spend

hours each week looking after this community. I feel as if I've finally met my tribe and have more support than I've ever sensed before, outside of professional services.

I will be starting this year off working with Summit County Continuum of Care in hopes to begin building bridges between the houseless community and the city. I will focus on peer support and continuing to work with my peers to determine what the basic needs are to best prepare them to reenter housing, if they choose, and how caregivers and agencies can best meet these requests. Then, working with those who have formerly been houseless for input on how they've been able to move in and sustain housing, and the SCCOC, we will prepare to build the necessary infrastructure to fill potholes in the system that have left many souls living unsheltered on our streets.

I am grateful today to have such an opportunity to know that there are many kind people in our area willing to truly meet houseless peoples on the street where they are and have a desire to assist not just with a handout but a warm embrace, love and hope. I am even more appreciative that I have found a circle of friends that see my heart and my intrinsic value and are willing to support and embrace my efforts to help my fellow peers.

– Angie Fawn

## Supported Employment Services Success Story

By Joel Voorman, SE Recovery Specialist

Community Support Services' Supported Employment client Brad Rankin is a prime example of what someone can achieve with hard work and a positive attitude.

The employment department always encourages clients to work in a partnership with staff to achieve their goals. Brad was motivated to find employment, as demonstrated by his compliance and follow-through. Staff helped Brad create a resume, learn appropriate job interview techniques, search for job leads, and complete applications for different positions. Brad pondered, "Maybe if I go to work full-time, some of my symptoms won't bother me as much."

Brad started out at his employer, TRM Manufacturing, as a janitor. He approached the owner and asked if there was another position in the company he could try. Brad advocated for himself, noting his positive attitude and painting skills, which led to him being offered a position as an industrial painter, where he paints attachments for heavy equipment, such as Bobcats and tow motors.



**Brad Rankin**

"You think it's going to be great, barely working or not working at all, but eventually you think you have to do something with your life," Brad said. "I don't think I could have ever worked full time without the help of CSS."

Brad is one of the department's most successful clients. He no longer needs cash assistance from Social Security. He worked with CSS benefits planner Michell Montgomery to learn how to keep his important health benefits and have a safety net for as long as possible in case work did not go the way he planned.

He has since moved into his own residence and purchased a vehicle. He successfully graduated from CSS Day Treatment groups. Brad is excited to celebrate his fifth anniversary of being employed at TRM in March of 2022.

Outside of work, Brad is a seasoned artist. He is an award winner in CSS' Art of Recovery show and has sold paintings in coffee shops and consignment outlets. He credits his grandmother for teaching him the craft.

Brad hopes to continue to climb the ladder with his current employer and has hopes of learning how to become a welder and cross train in other areas with his employer. His 2022 goals also include expanding his art abilities by learning pottery and taking a much-needed vacation.

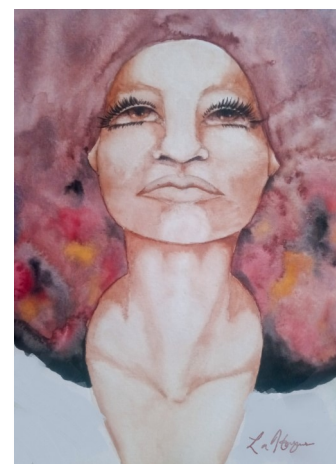
## For some, creating art helps to get through life's journeys



**Miranda Taylor** loves life and lives it with her focus on the present. Her life is like her Zentangle art. "When I do a pattern, I push through, because stopping is absolutely not an option. It is spontaneous and free flowing. You can focus on each stroke and not worry about the result. There is no right or wrong way to Zentangle. I'm able to enjoy creating, allowing

myself to be still in the moment. Zentangling calms my spirit and gives me something positive and uplifting to do with my time."

**La. Haynes** is in a steady motion of rising - mentally, emotionally, and physically. "I'm introverted and don't share too much of myself. With my artwork, I can rise out of my shell. Going to CSS is helping me." Instead of being around negative influences, she is going to treatment and working on her mental health. Living independently and having the freedom to make her own choices has led to less depression and a sense of contentment. Instead of asking, "How long is this going to last?" I'm capable of having hope for a brighter future for myself."







# COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

150 CROSS ST., AKRON, OH 44311

## RAC-recommended resources

- **Meals & clothing giveaway**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Thursday at 47 N. Arlington St., Akron. From The Homeless Charity ([thehomelesscharity.org](http://thehomelesscharity.org)).
- **Meals**, Tuesdays, 5:15 p.m., Grace Park, off Perkins Street in downtown Akron. From Soup Wagon Relief ([www.soupwagonrelief.com](http://www.soupwagonrelief.com)).
- **Services for trafficked women & children**. Rahab Ministries ([www.rahab-ministries.org](http://www.rahab-ministries.org))
- **Various services**. Salvation Army, Summit County area. (<https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org>)
- **Warming centers**. Akron community centers serve as warming centers when temperatures hit mid-teens with lows in single digits for a sustained time. Visit [www.akronohio.gov](http://www.akronohio.gov) and search for "[warming centers](#)."

## Mission Statement

Community Support Services: Helping you achieve a healthy mind and body while supporting you to live and work in your community.

## Recovery Definition

Recovery is the continuous process of empowering an individual so he or she may live a satisfying and contributing life. It is a shared responsibility among the individual, the treatment staff, family, friends, and the community to:

- Discover or rediscover strengths and abilities
- Pursue personal goals
- Develop a sense of self-identity that allows the person to grow beyond his or her diagnosis

The Recovery Advisory Council is a collaborative effort with clients & family members to continuously improve the satisfaction of services for all Community Support Services clients.

