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A client thank you



Feedback survey



## We want to hear from you!

For details about the Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) or to contribute your artwork or recovery story to *Life Chat*, call 330-253-9388 and dial 407 for Michelle Mace or 133 for Tina Lanzy.

## Art of Recovery celebrates 10 years

### *Client artists honored during event at new venue*

Art of Recovery celebrated a decade of art, expression, resilience and healing March 25 at House Three Thirty, a new location for the event.

Nearly 60 works of original client-created art were on display and up for bids by nearly 250 attendees, who also met the artists, enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and learned more about CSS' art therapy program. A special art therapy exhibit also shed light on the therapeutic aspects of creating artwork as part of mental health treatment.

The artists' stories were showcased during a video presentation and highlighted in remarks by Expressive Arts Administrator Michelle Morton. Seven artists were presented with awards for their works, which were judged by local mental health counselors Christine Mehen and Hannah Mansell. They were:

- **Zephania Le'Finest Hall**, who won Best of Show for *"The Feminine in Your Mind,"* a thought-provoking acrylic painting that questioned the perception of femininity in culture.
- **John Hunter**, who earned second place for *"The Stained Glass,"* a mixed media collage featuring colorful geometric shapes interspersed with broken mirror pieces.
- **Kimberly Maack**, who took third place for *"Contrast and Contradiction,"* a colorful piece incorporating alcohol inks on ceramic tile bordered by copper foil.

Receiving an honorable mention was **James K.** for his *"Blue Anchor,"* which featured random shapes of red, blue and green outlined in white on a black background.

Mehen's Judge's Pick Award went to **Connie Sparks** for *"The Mascot,"* a printmaking work depicting a groundhog.

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**Left:** Dr. Eileen Schwartz, CSS medical director of psychiatry, and her guest check the auction website during Art of Recovery; **right:** Artist Kimberly Maack takes a look at her Art of Recovery entry, *"Contrast and Contradiction,"* during the event. The piece won third place.

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Mansell presented her Judge's Pick Award to **Samantha McClish** for *"I Can't Stand it Anymore,"* a detailed painting of hands sewing a wounded heart.

Artist **Lewis** was recognized with a special honor - a framed print of his roaring tiger painting was presented to the event's top sponsors.

By the end of the evening, 50 of the 58 works of art had been sold. Seventy-five percent of the art sale proceeds went to the artists while 25% went to the CSS Expressive Arts Therapy program.

It is our honor to celebrate these artists, and we thank them for sharing their art and their stories of hope, resilience and recovery.

See more from the artists at [www.youtube.com/@CommunitySupportServices-fv3dd](https://www.youtube.com/@CommunitySupportServices-fv3dd).



Artists featured in Art of Recovery were presented with certificates and aprons with the event's logo. Photo by Ed Vullo, Foremost Photography.

## Client finds new path in life through sobriety, art therapy

Avoiding substances has been a longtime challenge for Zach, a client at CSS. As a teen, he had easy access to cigarettes through family members and acquaintances. Smoking gave him a buzz and it fit his rebellious nature. Smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol weren't far behind.

As he got older, Zach had conflicts with his family, battled mental health struggles and ended up incarcerated. He was repeatedly hospitalized and was diagnosed with schizoaffective and bipolar disorders. At age 18, he came to CSS after a hospitalization.

Through treatment, he has been able to take better control of his life and his mind. He's taken steps to manage his anger, stay on his medication, channel his energy into art and make better choices. He quit smoking in December and has been alcohol free since January. While it hasn't been easy, it has opened his eyes to the negative effect it had on his life, he said.

"I'm just glad I have an open mind and choose better," he said. "I'm tempted sometimes to go back. I know it's better not to. It's better putting that money toward doing art."

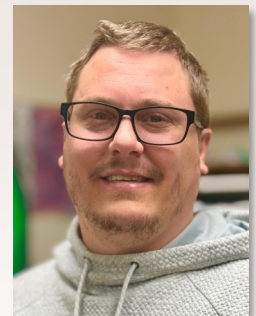
Art therapy at CSS has rekindled Zach's childhood love of art and inspired him. He has participated in Art of Recovery and sold several pieces of his art. It has helped him focus and gain a new perspective.

"I went from not using my talents to using them to the best of my abilities," he said. "Michelle (Morton, CSS's art therapist) has taught me it doesn't have to be perfect."

Zach was joined at this year's Art of Recovery by his mom and grandmother, which was especially important, given how strained his relationships with them had been in the past. "They wanted to tell me how proud they were," he said.

In addition to art therapy, Zach credits counseling and medication with helping him to better his relationships and his life - a welcome new perspective.

"The medication and listening made life a lot easier. Talking about it is better than holding it all in when you're smoking and drinking and stuff. That's what I did, and it made my brain unclear. It changed me from what I was," he said. "(Now) every day I wake up, it's a fresh start."

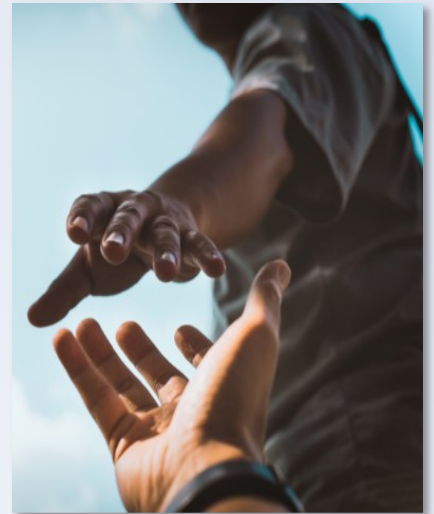


**Zach R.**



# Accepting help leads the way to better life on 'the outside'

*By Chris Wright, CSS client*



February 25, 2015. That was the day I walked out of Belmont Correctional Institution and began my journey of re-entry.

Shortly thereafter, I found myself trying to survive the frigid weather. For more than a week, I found myself hanging out in AA meetings and the Hope Café, just trying to survive the brutal cold weather.

A simple phone call began my journey to freedom and happiness. I was taken to the Oriana House SHARP (Special Housing Adjustment Residential Program) facility, and from there, I learned to allow people to have input in my life, whether I agreed with them or not.

Jamie Messenger (former Oriana House program administrator) had offered me a lot of healthy suggestions that later paved the way to happiness and joy. I trusted her, because she has been part of my life for many years. Though reluctant at first, I listened and took her advice, and I'm grateful for her influence on me and my life.

About a month later, I was meeting with Rochelle Hagloch, my first case manager at Returning Home Ohio, a program for ex-felons returning to Summit County.

I remember how I was struggling at times early in my apartment. I was having difficulty opening up to those who were trying to help me. I thought I could do it myself, so I tried hard not to rely on others. As I found out, no matter how hard I tried, I kept making mistakes.

In spite of my blunders, I was making some headway. But in 2017, I found myself seeing a therapist because of my parole officer. And though reluctant, I'm thankful to those who helped me face my fears and anger issues head on.

In early 2020, I faced two major situations that, had I not listened to those who cared about me, would have taken me down the path of drunkenness and death. I was hospitalized and I truly believe that I was spared to serve a purpose. My mother passed away April 23, 2020. In September 2020, I moved to North Hill, where I still reside. I have a wonderful landlord, a wonderful housekeeper and an awesome case manager.

Today, with help from those mentioned, I am employed at Choices Community Social Center. I'm going to be in a play. I am editor for AA's newsletter. I'm a dog sitter, and I recently turned 50 years old.

Thank you to those who have been very helpful on this wonderful journey: Dawn, Erin, Rochelle, Sara, Patricia, BreAnna, Ashley and Jamie.

*Editor's note: Jamie Messenger currently is a member of the CSS Board of Directors and is executive director of NAMI Summit County. Rochelle Hagloch is a CSS case manager working with HOPE Court.*



## Get some fresh air and exercise with these summer activities!

Exercise and nature are both good for mental health. Why not get some of both and get a double shot of good vibes?

Through June 30, Summit Metro Parks is featuring its annual **Spree for All**, which offers lanyards and commemorative pins for those who complete five designated hikes.

Find the full details at [www.summitmetroparks.org/spree-for-all](http://www.summitmetroparks.org/spree-for-all).

The **Summer Downtown** program features free exercise classes, including yoga, kickboxing, Zumba, line dancing and hip-hop step. Roller skating, cornhole and walking tours also are scheduled. Find details at [www.downtownakron.com/explore/summer-downtown](http://www.downtownakron.com/explore/summer-downtown).

Downtown Akron also will offer outdoor fun, festivals and concerts at Lock 3. A schedule of events is available online at [www.akronohio.gov/departments/lock\\_3/events\\_festivals.php](http://www.akronohio.gov/departments/lock_3/events_festivals.php).

Find more local events – and a list of helpful resources – on the Resource Roundup page on the CSS website, [www.cssbh.org/resource-roundup](http://www.cssbh.org/resource-roundup). Check it out!



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

150 CROSS ST., AKRON, OH 44311

## Help us to improve!

CSS depends on client feedback to find out what we're doing right and where we can improve. You can help us by taking a client survey and sharing your thoughts.

The surveys are anonymous and provide the opportunity to offer suggestions.

If you are a CSS client, please fill out our satisfaction survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/qrcode2024](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/qrcode2024), or scan the QR code with your phone, and you'll be taken to the website where you can fill out the survey.

We appreciate your feedback!



## 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.

