



Ohio Guidestone
WHERE NEW PATHS BEGIN



SEEDS of Hope

Agency Newsletter | Summer 2023

Where a New Path Began, A Miracle of Survival and Recovery

"I gave them every reason to give up on me, but they didn't."

Kerri Kostic's voice breaks when she reaches for the right words to express her gratitude to her Ohio Guidestone therapists.

"I relapsed, was kicked out of rehab, and spent time in prison, but these women saw something in me that was worth saving," she said.

Kerri is working on a college degree that she hopes will lead to a career in counseling and social advocacy. She is on a path that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago when substances controlled her mind and body.

She had her first drink at age 14, and never looked back—drinking well into her adulthood, alienating loved ones along the way. Kerri knew she needed help but didn't know where to get it. She prayed that

God would give her some sort of a sign to point her in the right direction.

"God's response was as subtle as a sledgehammer," Kerri said. "A month later a train slammed into my car as I was crossing the tracks."

Kerri doesn't remember much about the accident, but she knows she had been drinking. The only thing left of the car was Kerri and the driver's seat she was sitting in. Her survival was a miracle.

Recovery from the accident was painful and slow, but Kerri was finally able to quit drinking, keeping alcohol out of her body and out of her life. She still has a scar on her hand, shaped like a cross. She calls it a reminder of God's miracle, saving her from an accident that should have been fatal, and from the alcohol use that almost took her life.

Kerri said God saved her again through

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message

FROM THE CEO

As kids head into the summer months, they get a chance to take a much-needed break, loosen the grip on strict schedules and take in the sunshine.

As the state's leader in community behavioral health, we know this remedy has many benefits. We work in over 327 schools throughout Ohio offering crucial behavioral health services. We have the honor of being available to 150,000 students. This summer we are offering expanded services to students through day treatment programming in collaboration with our school partners. These efforts are a part of our commitment to expand access to care, like we have done with our psychiatry services.

Our new Medical Front Door services make psychiatry appointments for those with mental health and substance use concerns more readily available, meaning faster appointments when people need help.

Access is everything as we noted in our recent White Paper, which we prepared at the request of U.S. Representative Bill Johnson. In the paper, we identified crucial revisions needed in federal funding policies to support access to behavioral health care, including school services and integrated care.

As we slow down this summer and take stock of our lives, take a moment to recognize the value of your mental health and know that when you pick up the phone, OhioGuidestone will be there to help.



Brant Russell,
President and CEO

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OhioGuidestone and by throwing another obstacle in her path. The pain medication that helped her recover from the accident created a new, but familiar problem. Like the alcohol when she was 14, Kerri's body responded to the pain medicine the way many people describe the genesis of their substance use.

"I felt immediate relief," she said. "The pain was gone but a light switch in my body flipped on, and that pain medicine became all I could think about."

Kerri sought help through SUD treatment but didn't find success until her OhioGuidestone team helped her discover behavioral health challenges underneath the substance use disorder.

"Kerri was struggling with multiple traumas and took part in our DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) program," said Catherine Crawford, Clinical Manager in OhioGuidestone's Northwest region. "She used DBT as a motivator to complete her residential treatment, showing phenomenal resiliency by bravely acknowledging what led her into ineffective behaviors, and used her strong spirituality to access to her wisdom."

Kerri's spirituality is also what is guiding her to help others find a path to wellness and recovery, and pass along what OhioGuidestone gave her.

Kami Garcia, an OhioGuidestone Registered Nurse said Kerri has already given back just by getting well.

"We often hear 'Thank You' from patients for being a part of their journey and aiding in their recovery," Kami said. "But I also feel thankful and privileged to be a part of their lives and treatment. I am so proud of Kerri and the accomplishments that she has made and will continue to make."



Catherine added, "Kerri is one of the most beautiful-hearted individuals I have ever met and I'm so grateful that we were able to be part of her journey."

Kerri hopes to someday join OhioGuidestone as a Recovery Specialist, DBT counselor, or any specialist where she can use her lived experience to help someone begin a new path.

Guardians knock it out of the park with support for OhioGuidestone

OhioGuidestone is honored to have so many valued partners who are committed to community mental health. The Cleveland Guardians is one of them and they continue to show up in a big way, leaving a lasting impact on our young clients and our campus.

Recently, Guardians team players and staff made impressive efforts in leveraging their influence to advocate for positive change. Cal Quantrill and his wife, Eastin, exemplify this dedication through engagement with OhioGuidestone kids in our residential care. They hosted an Easter Egg Hunt and a Build-a-Bear event for our residential kids and Cal recorded a message during Mental Health Awareness Month, emphasizing the importance of seeking help.

"We're honored to partner and support OhioGuidestone in our efforts to impact the community," said Curtis Danburg, Guardians Vice President of Communications and Community Impact and OhioGuidestone Board Member. "Our Cleveland Guardians charitable mission is to prepare youth for success, which aligns well with OhioGuidestone's focus to help people across their lifespan to navigate the most difficult times of their lives."



The Guardians' commitment extends beyond the players, as front office volunteers planted 12 trees at OhioGuidestone's residential campus, creating a greener space with mental health benefits.

The Cleveland Guardians have become an integral part of fostering a healthier and happier community, and their invaluable support is greatly appreciated.

White Paper — OhioGuidestone Presents Federal Policy Solutions

OhioGuidestone is continually working with policy makers at the local, state, and regional levels. So, when U.S. Congressman Bill Johnson (R-OH 6th District) asked for OhioGuidestone's expertise in community behavioral health care, we put together a 17-page, comprehensive white paper detailing federal solutions to challenges in community behavioral health. Congressman Johnson serves on a subcommittee that oversees health care, under the House Energy & Commerce Committee.

The white paper outlines solutions in six strategic areas that are in crucial need of revisions: (1) school based behavioral health services; (2) integrated care; (3) federal funding restrictions and limitations; (4) commercial insurance and parity; (5) telemedicine for substance use treatment; and (6) social determinants of health.

As the state's leader in community behavioral health, OhioGuidestone is an ideal source for solutions. Our research, innovative best practices, and standard of care are shared outside the state lines to improve access to high quality person-centered behavioral health care.

If you would like to read the full whitepaper Congressman Johnson presented to the committee, we have it posted on OhioGuidestone.org under News and Blogs, "The Future of Behavioral Health Care."



Richard R. Frank Counseling Center is Official



Richard Frank's legacy as CEO continues, not just in the Center, but in our hearts, minds, and mission.

OhioGuidestone's retired President and CEO has been honored with the dedication of 434 Eastland Road in Berea, the Richard R. Frank Counseling Center. Rich was honored for his 43 years of leadership at OhioGuidestone, and more importantly his immense contribution to making us the state's leader in behavioral healthcare.

Current CEO Brant Russell thanked Rich for making the transition of leadership at OhioGuidestone go as smoothly as possible. Chief Program Officer Donna Keegan detailed the incredible growth of OhioGuidestone she witnessed during her many years working with Rich, including the founding of Stepstone Academy, the addition of

the IFCI research arm, and multiple other programs. The Richard R. Frank counseling center will offer outpatient treatment and therapy for clients in the areas surrounding Berea. Rich said he hopes the Richard R. Frank Counseling center brings joy and healing for generations to come.

OhioGuidestone knows how to PREP!

OhioGuidestone was recently awarded a new contract to expand into 20 new counties in its PREP training portfolio to teach the important work of sex education. The Ohio Personal Responsibility Education Program PREP is a statewide initiative aimed at decreasing teen pregnancy rates and the spread of sexually transmitted infections among youth in foster care and the juvenile justice systems.

"Youth are often misinformed through social media, friends and lack of parental/guardian involvement and this evidence-based curriculum provides statistical information and hard facts about behaviors. This education is crucial, and it works," says Sue Lagina, Director of Workforce Programs at OhioGuidestone.

In total, OhioGuidestone is training agencies in 34 counties, partnering with Richland Public Health in District 1 (Northwest region) and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health in District 2 (Northeast region).



Ribbon-Cutting Opens Youth Resiliency and Counseling Center

A ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opened OhioGuidestone's one-of-a-kind Youth Resiliency and Counseling Center in Medina. The Medina County ADAMH (Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health) board provided the funds to build the center and chose OhioGuidestone to provide services and assist in the design.

The center is unique because it is designed specifically for youth counseling and person-centered care that includes the whole family. The center has rooms dedicated to multiple types of counseling including play therapy.

Love and an Open Mind Help Foster Children Thrive

To hear Theresa and Jerome Howard describe their bubbly, energetic family, nothing seems extraordinary at first. Theresa says they all love to travel, go boating and swimming, and play games. "We have dinosaur lovers, Lego masters, puzzle makers, artists, singers, and gamers," she says.

"Extraordinary" comes to mind when you hear how many children the couple has, and details about each that the couple matter-of-factly describes.

"We are parents of 11 children," Theresa says. The first six are biological and we have fostered to adopt five, plus we are foster parents to two new placements, a one-year-old boy, and a five-year-old girl."

Theresa and Jerome are part of OhioGuidestone's Foster Care Program, specifically for children considered medically fragile, where the need for parents is greatest.



Without labeling her children directly, Theresa collectively lists their diagnoses just as she describes the family list of interests. "We have Spinal Bifida, Hydrocephalus with a VP shunt, Tetralogy of Fallot (multiple heart defects), Bilateral Foot Amputations, Neurogenic Bladder, Autism, ADHD, Depression, Anxiety, Transplant recipient, Epilepsy, Premature Birth, Idiopathic, Bradycardia, and Global Delay."

Despite the extra needs that come with a medically fragile child, Jerome and Theresa give their family a 10-out-of-10 on a happiness scale, saying each one of



The Howards enjoy a day at the park.

their children is kind, loving and empathetic.

"Our day begins like many other families," Theresa says. "At 5:45 am, we are up and getting ready for school, dressed, with breakfast and meds, then any special care that needs to be done, and on the first bus by 7." The last bus picks up at 8:05 am leaving the couple enough time to clean up, run errands, attend meetings, and doctor visits, then get ready for in-home physical therapy, snacks, dinner, and the nighttime routine of baths, treatments, meds, and bed.

The couple credits OhioGuidestone foster support for the training, resources, and community necessary to create a home where children can become the best version of themselves.

"The greatest reward is watching each child surpass the expected physical, medical and or psychological goals that were set for them," Theresa says. Jerome adds "We have learned to never underestimate these kiddos. When placed in a safe nurturing environment, miracles happen. We have seen them."

The Howards say love and an open mind are the only skills you need to be a foster parent, OhioGuidestone will help with the rest.

National Praise for OhioGuidestone SUD Prevention Expert

Substance use prevention isn't one-size-fits-all. That's the message Jodi Salvo wants government leaders to know. The director of OhioGuidestone's SUD (substance use disorder) Prevention Services has twice testified before state legislative committees , and more recently, federal legislators about real solutions to prevent substance use among Ohio's youth.

Salvo advocates for community coalitions as one of those solutions, and the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) has recognized her latest work in their Spring/Summer 2023 newsletter.

Jodi took students and other members of the coalition "Empower Tusc." to Washington D.C. for Capitol Hill Day, a conference where 4,000 visitors and legislators heard from advocates across the country. The CADCA newsletter shows photos of Jodi and her team, with the message they brought to capitol hill: Community Coalitions are an effective means of SUD Prevention.

Acknowledging that ideally prevention comes from parents, Jodi points to the reality that some parents are struggling with their own substance use and may be separated from their children.

"Young people are being raised by grandparents, other family, or the foster care system," She said, "We must



look to prevention science to guide us on how we can best protect our youth."

Salvo said investment in Community Coalitions has been proven to decrease substance use among high school-aged youth, and that "perception of harm"

is related to a young person's first use of a substance.

She emphasizes, "if our young people see alcohol in most all areas of their lived environment, it has the potential to reduce their perception of harm around alcohol."

To demonstrate the positive outcome of a community coalition, teenagers from "Empower Tusc." testified about the coalition's impact on their own lives, and how they plan to become prevention advocates themselves.

A link to the CADCA Spring/Summer Newsletter can be found at OhioGuidestone.org under the blog section.



Speaker Series at OSU

Our Pathways Program was the topic of our Summer Speaker Series at The Ohio State University in Columbus.

The Pathways Program enables our employees' personal growth and career advancement through licensure success.

Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB), Ryan Clopton-Zymler delivered a powerful presentation titled Equity in Action—removing barriers to licensure, particularly for those who are historically disenfranchised.

Thank you to Kichler Lighting for sponsoring the event and supporting our Pathways Program.

OhioGuidestone Named One of "Cleveland's Own"

Any time we're able to talk about the impactful programs we offer, we take it. Long time supporter, Matt Kaulig, and FOX 8 chose OhioGuidestone for one of their "Cleveland's Own" segments, a segment that spotlights Northeast Ohio's most influential nonprofit agencies. Kaulig, a philanthropist, and founder of Kaulig Companies is the host and he and his crew recently traveled to the Snow School on our residential campus in Berea to interview key members of our OhioGuidestone staff.

CEO Brant Russell, Community Counseling Director Tiffany Banks, and Assistant Community Counseling Director, Mindy Kaminski, explained OhioGuidestone's history, our programs, and our success of helping children through our robust School Services programs throughout the state.

The story can be found at OhioGuidestone.org in our news section. Thank you Kaulig Companies and thank you Fox 8 for sharing our story of empowering people to take steps towards a healthier future.

Medical Front Door is open!

Medication is a key treatment in certain areas of behavioral health including for substance use disorders. Long waits for a psychiatry appointment to get a prescription can be discouraging. OhioGuidestone's new Medical Front Door services eliminate long wait times.

Now, a physician can assess, diagnose, and start medication treatment faster. Medication along with our multiple support services help patients and clients take steps toward a healthier future.

Medical Front Door services are available at 17 OhioGuidestone locations.

Stepstone Academy Celebrates 10 Years of Success

One hundred guests and supporters gathered in downtown Cleveland to celebrate Stepstone Academy's 10th birthday. OhioGuidestone founded Stepstone Academy to offer a high-quality education for an underserved population, while supporting and enriching the community around it.

Cleveland's popular TV and radio personality, Mark Nolan emceed the June 10th birthday celebration and led a lively auction with proceeds going to the tuition free, K-7 school in central Cleveland.

Stepstone Academy opened the 2012-2013 school year with one class of students, adding an additional grade each year. This fall will mark the achievement of the original 10-year goal, to offer a free K-8 education that is on par with the best schools in Cleveland.

Foster News

OhioGuidestone's Foster Care Services have been making news in Northeast Ohio with stories in print and broadcast TV.

Northeast Ohio Parent Magazine interviewed one of our new foster parents, while WKYC-TV focused on one of our longtime foster caregivers and the children she has raised.

Both stories referred to the growing need for foster parents, especially for older children and children with special needs, which OhioGuidestone Foster Care Services Director Debora Gault called "critical."

Gault reminded television viewers that OhioGuidestone provides 24/7 support and training for foster caregivers, and that anyone interested should contact us.

One of the latest recruitment tools is a video of our first Foster Forum where experienced foster parents shared their stories and their advice to potential foster caregivers.

Moderated by one of our foster care experts, Brittany Edelbrock, the forum discussion was only constrained by time. Edelbrock said "the beautiful stories and funny anecdotes could have gone on for days."

The videos of the Foster Forum, WKYC story and the Parent Magazine article can all be found at OhioGuidestone.org in our news section.





OhioGuidestone

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Our Mission

To provide pathways for growth, achievement and lifelong success.

Our Vision

We are the state's leader in community behavioral health.

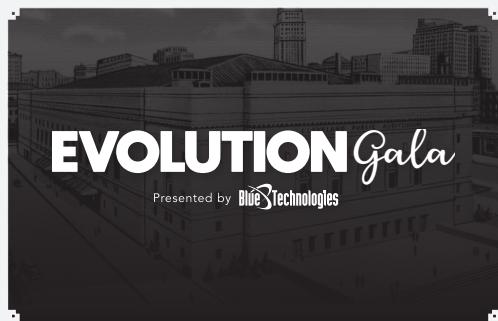


Our Motto

We heal the heart, soothe the soul, engage the spirit, and expand the mind.



EVENTS and fundraising



Save the Date!

Our OhioGuidestone Evolution Gala is coming up, **Saturday, September 23rd from 6pm to 11pm** at Cleveland Public Auditorium. Blue Technologies is the Presenting Sponsor with Paul Hanna as our Corporate Honoree. We are also honoring Kristin Warzocha of the Greater Cleveland Foodbank. Once again Betsy Kling of WKYC will be our Celebrity Emcee, and Monica Robins & the Whiskey Kings will provide the entertainment.



For more information on tickets or sponsorship opportunities,
scan the QR code or visit us online at OhioGuidestone.org/evolution-gala

Licenses and Certifications

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services | Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Approved Health & Welfare Organization of the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church

