



# PEER *connections*

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## FEELING SAFE IMPROVES RECOVERY

### Meet Andy!

**F**eeling safe is fundamental to a person's health and wellbeing. Andy finds feeling safe is part of why he participates at the Thomas M. Wernert Center (TMWC).

"For a long time my anger, anxiety, and depression made things like getting out of bed or staying connected with others extremely difficult," says Andy. Since becoming a member in 2018, the feeling of safety has provided Andy with opportunities for healing, finding community, and much more. By attending TMWC, Andy has been able to begin to enjoy socialization again.

"My favorite thing about TMWC is the ability to socialize with like-minded individuals," Andy says. "Members arrive to give or receive support, to work through the tough stuff, and to form community."

Specifically, Andy says he feels "safe to be my most authentic self" when attending

the SafeZone support group. SafeZone is designed to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for LGBTQIA members and their allies. Peers who attend learn about the long history of oppression toward the LGBTQIA community, discuss their own experiences, participate in community activities, and show support for peers. "It is an inclusive, and respectful group, and participating in community events is the icing on the cake," he explains. Most recently Andy participated in Toledo PRIDE by helping to create TMWC's float and participating in the parade.

Since finding a supportive place to be himself, Andy has gotten more involved with other TMWC programs. He credits his involvement with the SafeZone group for encouraging him to branch out. "I feel supported here, which has given me the confidence to try new things," he explains. Andy has recently started creating projects in Expressive Arts, has found an outlet for relaxation while planting flowers or harvesting produce in TMWC's garden,



and describes an increased feeling of self-respect from the appreciation he receives while volunteering in the kitchen and in other areas.

Andy hopes that anyone who is struggling with both their mental health and loneliness will look for available resources, and keep searching for a community that encourages them to grow.

## MEMBER WORKSHOP **CIVILITY AMONG PEERS** MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

Join TMWC and peers for a workshop on creating a beneficial environment to successful recovery for all members.



Two sessions will be held for members at **9:30 a.m. OR 1:30 p.m. on Monday, October 9**. The workshop will be led by Sheila Eason of Elevate People Solutions.

Members will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on discussion and learn tools of mutual respect and understanding. These sessions are designed

to build community, gain respect for peers, improve trust among staff and members, increase tolerance of others despite differences, and provide an understanding of social, cultural, and religious beliefs.

**Please RSVP to Sara at the Front Desk or by calling 419-242-3000.**

## PEER SUPPORT, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY:

# TMWC RECEIVES FUNDING

from  The David and Lura Lovell Foundation

A \$50,000 grant from the David C. and Lura M. Lovell Foundation Fund will provide much needed funding for the Thomas M. Wernert Center (TMWC) to continue its outreach and community engagement efforts, provide a nutritious breakfast for members, and provide opportunities for members to experience the arts in northwest Ohio. The

Lovell Foundation Fund is administered by the Greater Toledo Community Foundation.

“It’s important that the community learn about TMWC and all we have to offer,” says Patricia Robb, TMWC Executive Director. “Funding from the Lovell Foundation is critical to our efforts to educate the community about mental illness, reduce stigma associated

with mental illness, and encourage people to seek help for themselves or someone they know who may be struggling.”

In addition, the funding will also enable TMWC to expand its offering of a nutritious breakfast, ensuring that no member begins their day hungry, and offer expanded opportunities through the Expressive Arts program. “The more members who participate in programming at TMWC, the less isolated and lonely they become, and the better they can manage their mental health recovery,” adds Patti.

## H.O.P.E. FOOD PANTRY TMWC is Launching a Food Pantry!

With the recent decrease in SNAP benefit funds and the elimination of pandemic-related SNAP Emergency Allotments, many people across the nation are at risk of experiencing food insecurity. To help assist our members, TMWC has established the HOPE Food Pantry.

**Helping Other People Eat (HOPE)** is established to ensure all who attend TMWC are fed – whether it’s the start of your day, the end of your day, or on days you do not attend the center. HOPE Pantry will be stocked with healthy foods to distribute to those members who register.

Please see Patty, TMWC Food Coordinator, to sign up for the HOPE Food Pantry. This initiative is made possible thanks to the support of the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board (MHRSB).

**HOPE Pantry at TMWC is accepting donations of non-perishable foods.**

**Contact Patty at:**  
419-241-3000 / ext. 122  
pvaculik@wernertcenter.org



TMWC staff Patty and Angela with volunteer member EvaMae in front of TMWC’s HOPE Pantry.

## Khan Academy EXPLORE ONLINE LEARNING!

The computer lab at Thomas M. Wernert Center now offers Khan Academy programs. Khan Academy is an online learning portal that offers educational videos, practice exercises, and personalized learning tools that empower learners to study at their own pace.

Choose from topics like History, Science, Arts and Humanities, Life Skills, Test Prep, and more. Members will also receive incentive prizes and a certificate of completion for every Khan Academy course they finish.

Explore the courses offered by Khan Academy:

**Mondays: 1:15 - 2:45 PM**

**Wednesdays: 9:30 - 10:30 AM**

Please see TMWC Computer Lab Coordinator, Todd for more information or for any questions.

**Happy Learning!**



# Recovery Is Beautiful Celebration

Photos from Recovery is Beautiful 2023. Hosted by the Lucas County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board and TMWC on September 9, 2023.






THOMAS M. WERNERT CENTER  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY & SUPPORT

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**MISSION**

To improve the quality of life for persons living with mental illness by offering hope and peer-driven programs that address recovery through education, advocacy and peer support.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Deborah Riley-Jackson – President  
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- Amanda Denniss – Vice President
- George Monger, CPA – Treasurer
- Evamae LaVoy – Secretary  
Community Volunteer
- Jesse Baum – Glass City Academy
- Timothy Cummins – US Coast Guard Marine  
Safety Office Toledo
- Raina Dawson – Advocates for Basic Legal Equality
- Crystal Heft – Aetna of Ohio
- Henry Hartford – Community Volunteer
- Troy Deters – Community Volunteer
- Warren Frary – Community Volunteer
- Georgia Humbarger – Community Volunteer
- Patricia J. Robb – Executive Director

SUPPORTED BY:




**recovery**  
**together**  
**Let's Talk About It**

**Sign Up for One or All of Our Let's Talk About It Recovery Events:**

**Wednesday, October 25**

**5:30 PM: SNAP OUT OF IT...AND WHY IT DOESN'T WORK**

**6:15 PM: BUILD A TERRARIUM**

**Wednesday, November 29**

**5:30 PM: WINTER SLUMP?**

**6:15 PM: KARAOKE DANCE PARTY**

**FYI:**

- ▶ Event to take place at TMWC: 208 W. Woodruff Avenue
- ▶ FREE parking
- ▶ Refreshments provided
- ▶ TMWC transportation is not available

**TO RESERVE A SPOT FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS CALL:**  
**419-242-3000, EXT. 121**