

“Recovery is Transformative.”

Helio Health colleague Sam Castleberry promotes awareness raises funds for recovery



Sam Castleberry understands the emotional and physical sting of living with substance use and serious mental illness because he once stood in the shoes of those who struggle. Now in long term sustained recovery and serving as the Team Lead for Helio Health’s Mobile Crisis Unit, his mission is to promote awareness and understanding, and to serve as a beacon of hope that recovery is possible. He said, “Recovery is not only possible; it’s *transformative*. It literally changes your life.”

Sam used to live his life from one drink or drug to another. Even the conscious realization that his substance use exacerbated his suicidality and other mental health symptoms did nothing to prevent what he describes as a “vicious, defeating cycle”— until he entered a dual treatment program that finally brought him hope and enabled him to start his transformative journey. Now many years into recovery, Sam continues to live a life that he describes as “incredibly full and free, even in the face of adversity.”

Having lost too many friends to drug overdoses and suicide, Sam’s mission is to shed light on the complex journey of recovery, with the hope of making people feel connected. In addition, he advocates for ongoing funding for essential services and programs that support hope and healing. As such, in May he participated in Helio Health’s Run for Recovery 5K, and through a letter writing campaign, collected more than \$800 in donations for the Helio Health Foundation. In his letter, Sam shared how donations help transform lives. He wrote, “Whether overcoming substance use disorder, navigating mental health challenges, or seeking sustainable housing, your financial support provides vital resources, guidance, therapy, and hope to those who need it most. Your sponsorship plays a critical role in empowering individuals as they embark on the challenging, yet immensely rewarding process of reimagining their lives.”

To further his message about transformation, Sam worked with Helio Health’s Marketing team to create videos for social media in which he shared his recovery story. His honesty and encouragement cast a positive, hopeful light on the recovery process, and allowed others to consider that transformation could be possible in their own lives.

Sam looks forward to his continued advocacy on behalf of Helio Health and our current and potential clients as he partners with others, such as Service Director Tania Lyons, to assist with the new Syracuse Crisis Intervention and Prevention Program, which will launch later this year.



Scan the QR code to learn more about Sam and why he supports Helio Health fundraising efforts.

Do you know someone with an inspiring recovery story? We’d love to celebrate and share it. Reach out to Susan LaPlaca, Development Director, at slaplaca@helio.health.



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Helio Health Foundation Grant Projects in Action

Fulton Friendship Lodge teaches cooking skills



Each spring, the Foundation makes grants to Helio Health programs for projects that enhance the lives of the people we serve. Fulton Friendship Lodge (Gloversville, NY) received a grant to purchase Instant Pots and teach classes with the goal of preparing residents for transitioning to a lower level of care by increasing their skills in cooking, budgeting, creating grocery lists, shopping, and socializing. Residents recently enjoyed making (and eating!) a beautiful roast beef dinner. Beth Savage, project coordinator, said, "Residents socialize more freely with each other and staff during our cooking classes, and many have expressed how grateful they are to have the opportunity to cook and learn new recipes."

Drug Court Expansion team provides care baskets

Utica's Drug Court Expansion project provides peer support and case management services to more than seventy individuals engaged in Oneida County Drug Court. Many participants in the earlier phases of Drug Court rely solely on temporary assistance and SNAP benefits to cover basic needs, and often find it challenging to afford personal care items such as toothpaste, deodorant, and laundry detergent. Through a grant from the Helio Health Foundation, individuals in need are provided baskets of hygiene and cleaning products, alleviating the stress of having to choose between purchasing shampoo and filling their gas tank, for example. Additionally, the items are used as tangible incentives to help participants meet their goals and remain engaged in recovery.



Will you lend your financial support to people working toward recovery from substance use, mental health, and housing challenges? To make a gift to the Helio Health Foundation, visit our secure [donation page](#). Your support helps transform lives.

Run for RECOVERY

WHO DO YOU RUN FOR?



Nearly six hundred runners and walkers joined us at Green Lakes State Park for the 8th Annual Run for Recovery 5K and Kids Fun Run to raise funds and awareness for the Helio Health Foundation. **Together we raised more than \$40,000**, making this our most successful event ever! When you purchase a ticket or donate to our events, it allows us to continue providing hope and healing to people recovering from substance use, mental health, and housing challenges. *Your kindness has a marked and lasting impact on the people we serve.*

Scan the QR code to view our inspirational Run for Recovery video.



**Mark your calendar now for the 9th Annual Run for Recovery
Saturday, May 3, 2025!**



Heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated, our amazing Race Crew volunteers, and our dedicated sponsors for their ongoing support.

Recovery Center Happenings

Close to home or out in the community, participants celebrate recovery

Community BBQ - Save the date!



Mark your calendar for the 2nd Annual Recovery Month Community BBQ on Saturday, September 7th from noon - 3:00 p.m. Join us on the back lawn of the Recovery Center (714 Hickory Street, Syracuse) to honor and celebrate recovery and enjoy (abundant!) food, lawn games, and camaraderie. It's an afternoon of hope and healing you won't want to miss! There is no cost for the BBQ, and all are welcome.

Out and About

Through a generous donation from the David Crisalli Memorial Bowling Tournament fund, Recovery Center participants recently enjoyed a day at Seabreeze Amusement Park in Rochester. The summer weather was perfect for water rides, roller coasters, and delicious eats!



To learn more about the Recovery Center's supports and services, visit our [website](#) where you can view the monthly calendar and schedule and watch our Recovery Center video. For additional information, reach us at 315. 701.1518.

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Meet Alyeska Dronsfield

Volunteer plays Dungeons and Dragons, engages participants' creativity



Alyeska Dronsfield is a proud Syracuse transplant originally from Durham, NC. She graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University in 2022 with a BA in Women's & Gender Studies. Her passion for creative writing and her happy-go-lucky extroversion lend to her interest in playing Dungeons & Dragons with friends, colleagues, and now Recovery Center program participants. When she isn't rolling dice or crafting stories, Alyeska enjoys spending time with her cat.

Of her work at the Recovery Center Alyeska said, "I volunteer twice a month to run Dungeons & Dragons with participants. This is meaningful to me because I believe that imagination and play should

not be limited to children and can be a useful avenue for self-exploration and creative expression. Players get to make their own characters and be whoever they want to be and do whatever they can dream of -- as long as the dice allow it! There is power and joy in collective storytelling and I am grateful for the opportunity to volunteer in this unconventional way, and for the enthusiasm I have received from staff and participants alike."

Binghamton Organizations Support Recovery

Staff and participants grateful for community donations



Pacemaker Steel's philanthropy committee recently visited to take a tour, meet staff, and learn about treatment and recovery services. Upon hearing about current needs, the committee organized a company-wide drive and delivered an enormous cart of personal care items, clothing, art supplies, games, and blankets. It brought tears to our eyes! Our patients have benefitted greatly from and are so appreciative of these items. Thank you, Pacemaker Steel!



The Endicott Performing Arts Center held a "Come As You Are" rock show highlighting bands of the 1990s, many of whom struggled with drug addiction. Erica Robinson, Admissions and Outreach Specialist, attended the show and provided program information. EPAC, realizing the need for continued support of treatment services, donated \$350 to the Binghamton Inpatient Rehabilitation Center. A big round of applause for all the organizers and performers. We are grateful for your generosity!



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Save the Date!

Helio Health Foundation Annual Golf Classic *A Round for Recovery*

Monday, August 25, 2025 (next summer!)



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Join with us to raise funds and awareness for people recovering from substance use, mental health, and housing challenges.



Bellevue Country Club, Syracuse, NY



18-hole Captain and Crew tournament includes gift, lunch, dinner, contests, and prizes.



Details about registration and sponsorship opportunities coming soon!