

# ONWARD, TO LIGHT



WINTER 2020-21 NEWSLETTER

# Seeking the light in a dark season

**A letter from Executive Director  
Patrick Patterson:**

The light of hope shines brightest when we are surrounded by darkness.

That may be helpful to remember here in the darkest season, when each minute of daylight is precious, and as we reflect back on a year that was dark for many of us. I also find it helpful to remember that the same march of time that brought us to winter is carrying us relentlessly through the darkness, toward brighter days.



That's literally true as measured by the calendar. December 21 is the winter solstice, the point at which daylight starts returning, minute by minute, to our lives. It's also true in how we pursue our mission at Mid-Michigan Recovery Services.

Our journey is always onward, toward light, toward hope, toward belief that our best days are ahead of us.

We stayed focused on those lights of hope this year.

It's my honor to highlight some of them here, and you can read about them in more detail in the newsletter. Merry Christmas, happy holidays from all of us here at MMRS.



## **Safe Harbor expansion**

One of our biggest accomplishments of 2020 was an expansion of Safe Harbor, which provides a badly needed next step for the rest of the recovery journey. We can now serve up to 24 men and 11 women in this program. All of this was only possible with the contributions from many community partners.

## Lightkeepers launch

Another bright spot was the launch of our Lightkeepers program, an apprentice-style initiative that pairs clients with our experienced construction and maintenance staff, building and maintaining our facilities. This mentoring gives clients a chance to learn in-demand skills, earn a modest income and contribute to their own and others' recovery.

## Navigating COVID-19

Like our neighbors in the Lansing community and people worldwide, we faced many challenges with COVID-19. Our emphasis on keeping clients and staff safe had to be balanced with the life-saving work we provide.

For someone in recovery, isolation can be devastating, especially when combined with the added stress of life in a pandemic.

The University of Michigan has tracked the tragic results, with a 15 percent increase in suspected opioid deaths and a 29 percent increase in overdoses for the first seven months of the pandemic.

That's why I am proud of how our staff ensured we stayed connected with those we serve. We developed careful precautions for our residential programs, and quickly pivoted to online services for outpatient care. To date, we have been blessed with success on both fronts: keeping clients and staff safe, while maintaining strong, life-saving connections with those we serve. We're grateful to have had no staff or client COVID infections to date.

I hope you find similar lights of hope to carry you through the winter and into the inevitably brighter days ahead.

## ADDING YOUR LIGHT

Recovery from substance dependence requires courage and community. Supporters of our nonprofit agency bolster both, by becoming valued members of a community striving boldly toward hope.

**Click here to make a tax-deductible contribution today.**

## An added incentive

In recognition of the burdens of COVID-19, the IRS has new rules expanding charitable tax deductions for gifts made in 2020, even if you don't itemize. For information:

**<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/how-the-cares-act-changes-deducting-charitable-contributions>**

# Safe Harbor: For the Rest of the Journey



The interiors of the homes are designed to create a welcoming sense of community.

**A**mid a challenging year, it was heartening to have plenty to celebrate, including the grand opening of Safe Harbor, which extends our care six months.

Recovery housing is known as an effective step in the continuum of care for the chronic disease and isolation of addiction.

Safe Harbor provides healing, renewal, stability and safety – it is where the rest of the journey begins for people ready to move forward with their recovery.

Many people – particularly the low-income clients we serve – exit residential treatment penniless, homeless, jobless and disconnected from community.

Safe Harbor provides a soft landing for these folks to re-

establish those important elements of long-term recovery. Mid-Michigan Recovery Services is experienced with this approach. We know it works. We know it changes and saves lives.

The time and skill of several community members, including Hayhoe Asphalt, FD Hayes Electric Company and The Meridian Company, helped make these houses true homes of recovery.

More good news: Part of this expansion is a badly needed Safe Harbor community for women.

Stay tuned as we continue finding ways to help people along their recovery journey.



The four adjacent homes of Safe Harbor for men.



Take a virtual tour  
of Safe Harbor:  
<https://bit.ly/SafeHarborTour>

See the next page for how the renovation of these homes provided job-skills training through our Lightkeepers program.



**The good work continues!** Volunteers have been working to upgrade two more houses for a Safe Harbor program for women. The volunteers here are Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Tom Cutler, left, with granddaughter Betsy and brother Jim on a day of painting.

Kyle, foreground, a trainee in the Lightkeepers program, works on gutter repair at Safe Harbor with Arne Riutta, Construction and Maintenance coordinator.



# Lightkeepers: building skills, giving back

One of our newest programs, Lightkeepers, gives residents of our Safe Harbor program a chance to learn marketable skills from Aarne Riutta, our Construction and Maintenance coordinator, who also is certified as a Peer Recovery Coach.

Participants earn income as they develop skills that are in high demand. We also will help them find employment once they complete the program.

Many early projects in the program focused on Safe Harbor, giving participants a sense of accomplishment as they improve the homes where they and their peers live.



Aarne Riutta, left, goes over a work plan for Safe Harbor with Lightkeepers trainee Josh.



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

### **BUILDHER UP: A FOCUS ON WOMEN'S FACILITIES & PROGRAMS**

Women in recovery face trying challenges. They are more likely than men to have children in their care and are more vulnerable to domestic violence.

Women's programs have been an important part of Mid-Michigan Recovery Services since our beginning. In 2021, we are embarking on an ambitious effort to upgrade our women's facilities. This will be an initiative led by women, helping women – but all will be invited to be part of it.

**Watch for more details in coming months about the BuildHer UP initiative.**

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**Family:** The women of Glass House gather in front of the Christmas tree they decorated in the group room where they spend much of their time together.

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Mid-Michigan Recovery Services is always innovating to meet client needs and ensure the safety of our clients, staff and community. **If you or someone you know needs help, call or email.**



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