

F.A.V.O.R.~Western PA, Bolivar Community Center

My name is Kim Botteicher, and I'm founder and the Executive Director of Faces and Voices of Recovery – Western PA, a small but mighty, 501(c)(3) Recovery Community Organization dedicated to serving our isolated rural communities along the Conemaugh River Valley and across Western PA.

I don't have a degree in recovery services or recovery medicine or even an undergraduate degree in social services or anything else for that matter. But what I DO have is extensive lived experience. I am a mother of a son in long-term recovery. Seventeen years ago, when my son first started using heroin there were no programs in our area other than 12-step programs, for both the person with a SUD or their family. I was determined to change that....families need recovery as much as those struggling with addiction.... at times, even more so.

My other hats that I wear that make up my life is that I am 'mom' to seven children, and I'm 'grammy' to ten beautiful grandchildren. I am also the co-owner and operator of K & K Flowers and Coffeehouse LLC. My daughter and I own the building that houses my non-profit RCO.

Eight years ago, I started a simple family support group in the bottom of my flower/coffee shop, I never imagined it would lead to a rural recovery and harm reduction movement. I was just trying to find help for one of my sons, and back then, our only options were in Johnstown, Indiana, Greensburg, or Pittsburgh, the major population centers. And at that time, he was mandated to Intensive Out-Patient services, but also had his driver's license revoked, and no reliable public transportation, a common issue and concern for rural communities. There was literally no support for individuals like my son in our isolated area.

Today, our mission is clear: to be a "Gateway to Recovery for Western PA" We offer All-Recovery Mutual Support Meetings and serve as the sole provider of Naloxone for local law enforcement, volunteer fire departments, and a technical school. We've partnered with a major hospital in downtown Pittsburgh to provide critical Medically Assisted Treatment services, along with testing and treatment for communicable diseases. We work to help the whole person. Every human deserves the dignity of general healthcare and other social determinants of health with no barriers.

Our organization also provides one-on-one peer recovery support for individuals and their families. With the support of Allegheny Health Network and grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, we offer educational training in substance abuse and harm reduction across eight counties. Previous funding from Vital Strategies has allowed us to provide crucial transportation for clients and their families for appointments and hearings and R2W (Recovery 2 Work) options.

- Our MAT Clinic was started as a pilot program with AHN Center for Inclusion Health Department to provide mobile medication, testing and treatment in a low barrier, non-judgmental and stigma-free environment. We are known around the state for this pilot program started by Mr. Stuart Fisk, CRNP.
- With the ARC INSPIRE grant, which allowed us to develop a great working relationship with all PA Career-Link and other agencies to provide Recovery to Work trainings and job placement services for those in recovery, we now have lasting connections for recovery friendly work environments.

In addition, we are the primary emergency food bank location for the Westmoreland County Food Bank and serve as a site for the Babe's in the Burgh mobile van (also a pilot program) for new and expecting mothers.

Our annual Breaking Down the Borders recovery event for National Recovery Month has grown every year and was a result of funding not being available to our rural community due to being at the tip of three counties, Westmoreland, Indiana and Cambria. We have been left to fend for ourselves through our volunteer, civic and religious funders. We keep striving to 'break down the borders' for those in recovery. Recovery knows no boundaries, neither should the support.

Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) play a crucial role in supporting individuals in recovery within small towns and rural areas of Western Pennsylvania, where access to resources can be limited. These organizations provide essential services such as peer support, education, and employment assistance, helping to foster a sense of community and belonging among individuals navigating the recovery process. Research indicates that RCOs significantly improve recovery outcomes by offering tailored support that addresses local needs, enhancing social networks, and reducing stigma. In regions where traditional healthcare services may be scarce, RCOs serve as vital lifelines, empowering individuals to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their communities. Building and rebuilding the family structure with those that are struggling with SUD is so important. Statistics show that just one supportive and educated family member is equal to 10 professional support people!

But there's still a lot of work to be done. We advocate for expanding safe syringe service programs to rural communities, reshaping contracts between Single County Authorities and outpatient providers, and increasing funding for community recovery services in rural Pennsylvania.

Numbers and events

- Community outreach and engagements: For FY 23 FAVOR Western PA has distributed 169 doses of Narcan. We have had 3830 unique engagements with community members to include, but not limited to, hosting several All-Recovery meetings at our Bolivar location and throughout our surrounding community, hosting the annual Breaking Down the Borders event in Seward Pa, Being active members in Cambria, Indiana, and Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce. Supporting events, outreach and awareness drives for the same three primary counties.
- AHN: Through our partnership with Allegheny Health Network, we are currently able to provide Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT), testing and treatment of multiple communicable diseases for not only our 50 AHN Patients but within the surrounding communities in our 3 county primary footprint (Indiana, Cambria and Westmoreland). We bring the Docs to those in need who wouldn't otherwise be able to travel to them.
- Recovery to Work: Through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, FAVOR was able to expand its partnership with AHN to provide workforce development training and support for all of our 129 clients and their families. Through our efforts in our 8 county footprint we are able to be the connecting force between individuals in all stages of recovery and their families obtain sustainable, rewarding, and engaging employment. With these efforts FAVOR Western Pa has held 6 PA Cert Board recognized Certified Recovery

Specialist and Certified Peer Specialist trainings averaging 30 people per class. 2 of which were held at our Bolivar site.

- To date FAVOR Western PA has conducted Narcan training for 6 of our 8 grant county CareerLinks, as well as, the local automotive trade school, Indiana University of Pennsylvania students and staff and several other small businesses around the area. YTD we have assisted 135 recovery and 'non-recovery' individuals in workforce development and training. FAVOR Western PA has assisted and employed 31 CPSs and 75 CRSs through various organizations.

We operate FAVOR~Western PA Recovery Community Organization at no-charge for any services!

Works Cited:

Becker, K., et al. (2018). The Role of Recovery Community Organizations in Promoting Recovery. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Recovery Community Organizations: A Guide for Stakeholders*.

White, W. (2012). The Role of Recovery Community Organizations in the 21st Century. *Recovery Research Institute*.