



## Defining Moments November 2022

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Dear friends:

About 25 years ago when I started at McCall, I facilitated our Strengthening Families Program; a parent education group that involves the whole family. Week after week, we'd step through the curriculum together discussing child development, sticker charts, the importance of family dinners and helpful techniques for discipline. And week after week, parents would share their progress – or perhaps more often, their lack of progress. They'd say to me; *"Maria, I did everything the book said to do, but something just snapped in me, and I got so angry that I yelled and screamed, and my child cried, slammed the door and told me they hated me. Honestly, I don't blame them, I'm a horrible parent and it's no use. I'm done – I can't do it."* They'd vacillate between buying gifts and treats to assuage their guilt and overreactions to their children's behaviors – a pattern that served to confirm their worst fears; they were bad parents, and their children were lost causes.

After several months of witnessing these heartbreaking patterns, I attended a training about trauma and the impact on parents' ability to tolerate stressful situations while also attuning to the true emotional needs of their child. I learned that adults who've experienced trauma can perceive situations that may be innocuous (or a display of typical child behavior) as threatening –the response is fight, flight or freeze – in other words; take things personally, get extremely angry, shut down or dissolve into tears. It was a defining moment for me; these weren't bad parents; they were adults who had never healed their own wounds and were now transferring that pain onto their children. We transformed the program to include healing modalities, ways for parents to increase their window of tolerance, to build meaningful attachments and recognize the needs behind their child's behaviors. It radically changed how I practiced every aspect of my work and it dramatically improved outcomes for families. The field of behavioral health has evolved tremendously since then and we now recognize that the deep healing work must take place in order to sustain any meaningful change. This is the work that happens every day in myriad ways at McCall.

This month we are celebrating those defining moments. As I type this message, one is taking place in an outpatient clinician's office a floor above me. An extraordinary team of professionals with hearts of gold are ensuring that a client in desperate need of an inpatient bed will get that tonight. Some moments are that weighty – the difference, perhaps, between life and death. Others are far more subtle; a parent employing a breathing technique to remain calm when their child ignored their third request to get in their pajamas and then checking in on their day at school, revealing that no one sat with them at lunch. Some

involve communities recognizing the patterns of neglect and lack of resources for vulnerable people and committing to changing policies to assure access to education and health for all. We are so profoundly interconnected that each moment offers an opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

Thank you, for making the defining moments at McCall possible.

With all my gratitude,

Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW  
President & CEO

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## The Myth: Hitting "Rock Bottom" is Necessary Before Recovery

If you love someone with a substance use disorder you have probably heard the expression that before they can get help, they need to reach this mythical place known as "rock bottom." It's a common belief, thanks in part to the media's portrayal of addiction in movies and on TV. People are depicted to have lost everything before they get help, ***but the reality is that most people enter treatment long before that happens.***



Believing in this myth makes family members feel powerless while watching their loved one suffer and allow for the person in active use to believe that change isn't possible until they're fully willing.

In fact, the earlier a substance use disorders is treated, the better the outcome.

### Change Can Do You Good

Through our experience, there are two common reasons why people reach out for help. The first is that they had an adverse reaction to a substance; they might have gotten really sick, lost their job, or got hurt. The second is that they become parents and reprioritize their life. As you can see, it doesn't have to be all or nothing.

### A Little Encouragement Goes a Long Way

When speaking to your loved one, lead with an open heart. Be honest and direct about how their substance use is impacting you and what your concerns are. Show up with compassion and tell them how you feel. When someone enters treatment, we don't expect them to have all the answers, or even be 100% sure they're committed to recovery. Our trained counselors are here to help our clients understand their goals and motivations. Whether someone is mandated or comes on their own, they don't have to have a plan. Change takes place gradually, especially when a substance has been used as a coping mechanism for a long time. Remember that no one has to be fully committed to be ready to accept treatment.

***It is never too soon or never too late.*** If you would like to explore what recovery might look like for you, call 860.496.2100 or visit us at [mccallbhn.org](http://mccallbhn.org) or on FB/Instagram [@mccallbhn](https://www.instagram.com/mccallbhn)

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## GIVING TUESDAY

*Your moment is now!  
Donate today and  
support our CT Youth*



Our 2022 annual fundraising campaign, Defining Moments, kicked off this week on #GivingTuesday. We are off to a great start, and we hope we can count on you to reach our goal of \$20,000. 100% of all donations will be used to bolster Adolescent Mental Health Services.

### **These are the moments that define us**

The campaign centers around defining moments, the moments that we all experience in life that can fundamentally change and define us. These moments are abundant during our adolescent years, which are full of growth, changes, and new challenges. For today's adolescents, the challenges are tenfold, so our support is needed now more than ever

### **Your moment is now!**

- **If you can, donate!** Every little bit counts!!
- **Share the campaign.** Another way you can help is by sharing the campaign with your family and friends. Go to our [FB](#) or [IG](#) page, [@mccall.bhn](#), and share our posts!
- **Use AmazonSmile to Support McCall for Free!** Did you know that you can have Amazon match 0.5% of your purchases in donations to McCall? At [smile.amazon.com](#), you can choose a charitable organization of your choice to receive donations from Amazon, and it doesn't cost you anything. There are only two steps:
  - First, go to [smile.amazon.com](#), and choose McCall Foundation as the agency to support.
  - Second, buy things. You need to shop on [smile.amazon.com](#) instead of regular [amazon.com](#), and not every item is eligible.

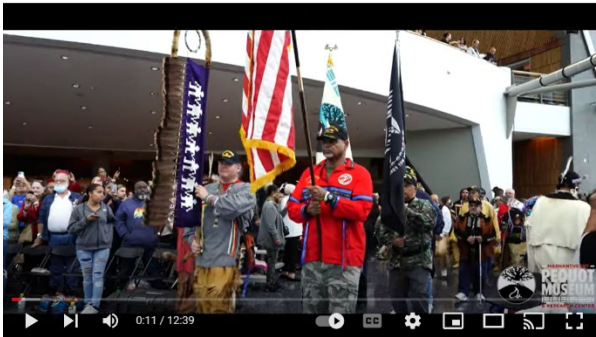
If you have any questions please reach out to Marisa Mittelstaedt, Director of Development and Marketing, [marisa.mittelstaedt@mccallbhn.org](mailto:marisa.mittelstaedt@mccallbhn.org).

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## **Native American History Month**

November is Native American Heritage Month and Kate Gibson, BS, Parent Educator, graciously shared resources and traditions of local tribes right here in CT. She shared [Native American Music by the late Joseph Firecrow](#). He performed with many musicians in Litchfield County and did much to promote the beauty, inspiration and sense of connectedness found through his handmade Native American Instruments.

She has also provided a link to our local indigenous people, the [Schaghticoke Tribal Nation](#) (located near Kent and Macedonia State Park), which has an event calendar and history of its people, and a link for the American Indian Institute and their [calendar of events](#).



### **Veteran's Day Pow Wow at Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center**

By: Marisa Mittelstaedt, Director of Development and Marketing

On November 12th, my children and I were given a tour of the [Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center](#) by tribe member, McCall Alumni, and Veteran of the US Marine Corps, Herb Boyd

and his youngest son. (It was AWESOME, visit if you can!) Herb and I connected during the filming of his video at the Dempsey Center. He had mentioned that he was part of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, and I was interested in learning more about his Native American culture and traditions.

After the tour we attended the Veterans Day Pow Wow. It was an experience my children and I will never forget. If you have a few minutes watch the video of the opening ceremonies below – you will see Herb carrying the American flag. If you want to learn more about his story, [click here](#) to watch a video of his experience at Dempsey Center.

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On November 11th our nation celebrated Veterans Day. At McCall, we are fortunate to work with many Veteran staff members and clients. We are grateful for the sacrifices they have made and their selfless service to our beautiful country.

This month we celebrated our Nurse Practitioners during Nurse Practitioner Week, November 13-19!

We are fortunate to work with some of the best. THANK YOU to Jessica, Kat, Deb, Shakeria, and Elizabeth! They are dedicated to the wellbeing of our clients and show up with compassion every day.

We thank each and every Nurse Practitioner for all that they do!



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## Out & About with McCall

Over the past month we have held and participated in some wonderful events. Check out the pictures below!

### Drug Takeback Day

October 29th was National Drug Take Back Day! The Torrington Awareness & Prevention Partnership, City of Torrington Police Department, and Torrington Area Health District joined forces and collected 51.3 pounds of prescription medication. Thank you to everyone who came out to help keep our community safe.



From left to right: Joanna Keyes, Kyle Fitzmaurice, Officer Ed Mumm, Andrew Lyon, Judy Kobylarz-Dillard, and Janos Kobylarz.

From left to right: Traci Eburg, CRC, Emergency Overdose Responder and Darian Graells, BA, Prevention Facilitator

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## We're Hiring!!

On November 10th McCall held its first ever in-person hiring event. Candidates were able to apply and be hired on the spot. The event was supported by directors and staff throughout our agency. We are growing and still have positions open! Please check out our postings on Indeed; we would love to have you on our team!

Pictured from left to right: Jamie Calvano, LADC, ADS, Director of Training and Compliance and Danielle Brundage, BA, Human Resource Administrator



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## Naloxone Pop-up Distribution Sites

Recently in our region we have faced a devastating number of fatal and nonfatal overdoses. Historically, we often see overdoses increase around the holidays as well. In response, we held eight Naloxone pop-up distribution sites around Torrington during the week of Thanksgiving.

Our goal is to ensure that everyone has naloxone available and knows how to use it. They offered Naloxone kits (at no cost) and a brief training, other resources, and support.



Emergency Overdose Responder Kyle Fitzmaurice, CRC

Emergency Overdose Responder Traci Eburg, CRC



### **Our Contact Information**

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