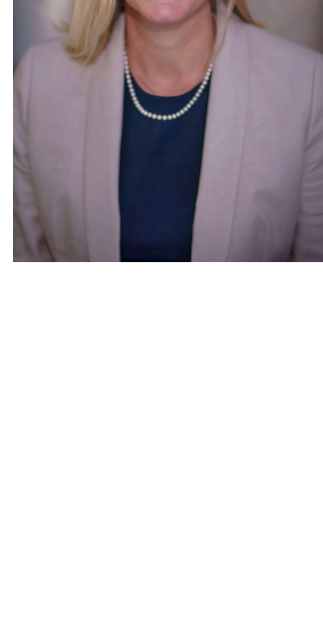




LIGHT UP THE HOLIDAYS – FROM WITHIN. December 2024



Dear friends;

I was out and about shopping this weekend – yes, I’ve waited until the 11th hour to get all my holiday errands done, again! So, I, and about 7 million other frantic people hustled into the stores to try to find the just right gifts for our loved ones. There were some sweet moments amongst us in lines as we bonded over our procrastinating ways – but when I tell you there were some crabby people out this weekend!! I will be sure that I was no exception and may have uttered some unpleasanties in my car in response to some rude parking lot behaviors!

Many of you will remember the story of the lamplighter, one of my very favorites. Young Robert Louis Stevenson grew up in Scotland. In those days, streetlamps didn’t just come on automatically; people were hired to light each one individually. One evening, as the lamplighters did their work, climbing their ladders, lifting the glass lid, lighting the torch, shutting the lid, climbing down, and moving on to the next lamp, young Stevenson was enthralled. As dusk settled into night, one light would be kindled, then another, and another. He turned to his parents and said: “Look, they’re punching holes in the darkness!”

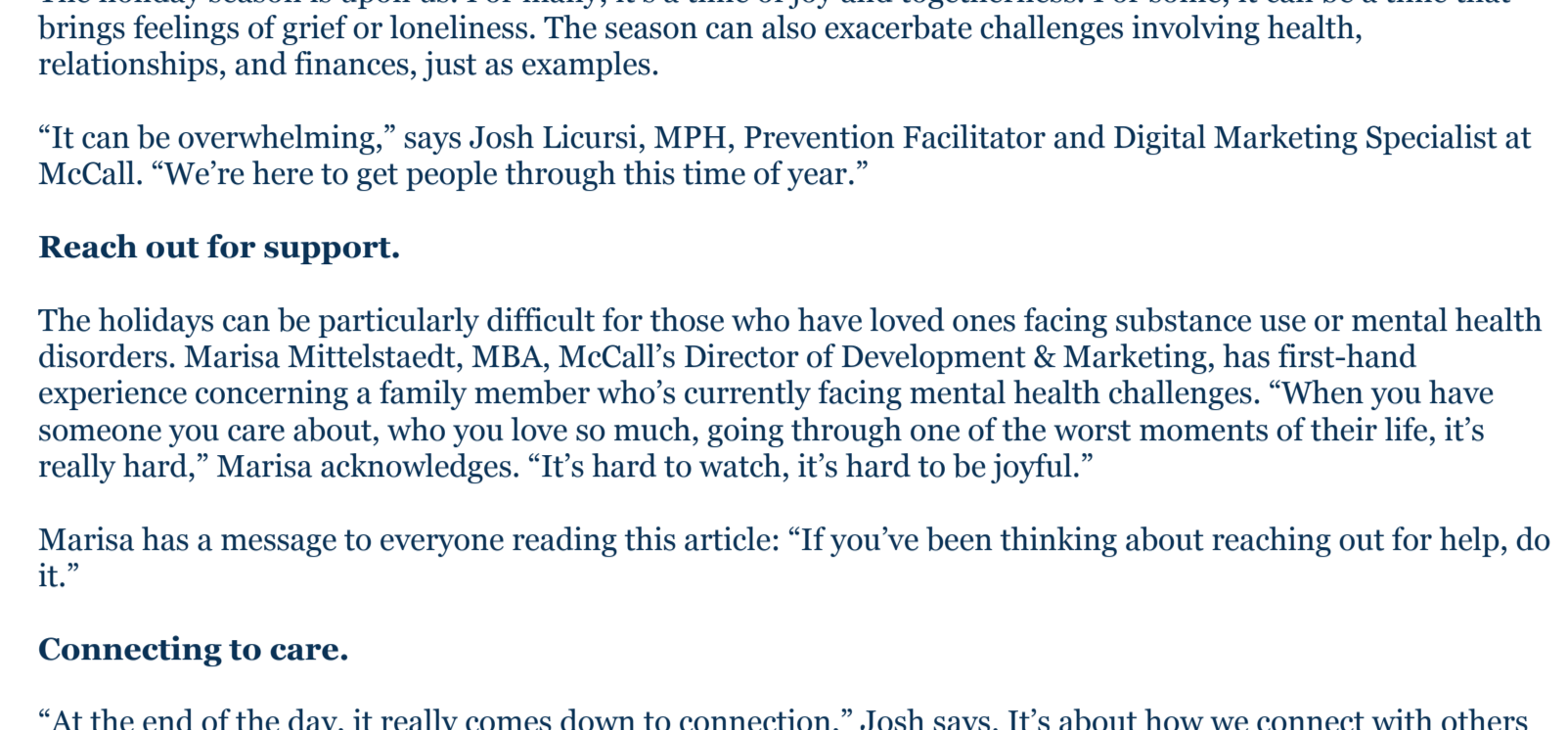
The darkness comes in many forms, large and small. How we treat the Starbucks barista, the stranger in the parking lot, our children, and our spouses – are all subject to the expressions of our internal light/ darkness ratio. It’s easy to share light when we are well-rested, balanced, and feeling like we’re on the right path. It’s much harder when we are feeling defensive, lonely, exhausted, or stressed.

The lamplighter is an aspirational goal, one we can access when we’ve done the ongoing work of inner peace. Our interactions are always a manifestation of how we are doing – truly, deeply, down. We can blame that bad driver, the rude barista, the family member for not doing what we hoped or even prayed they’d do, but our reactions are always about us and belong to us. We all wrestle with the darkness from time to time and we are all capable of being purveyors of light. Please give yourself grace to gently do the important soul work you so deserve.

Wishing you and yours a peaceful, light-filled holiday season.

All my best,

Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW
President & CEO



THE HOLIDAYS CAN BE JOYOUS AND CHALLENGING AT THE SAME TIME.

The holiday season is upon us. For many, it’s a time of joy and togetherness. For some, it can be a time that brings feelings of grief or loneliness. The season can also exacerbate challenges involving health, relationships, and finances, just as examples.

“It can be overwhelming,” says Josh Licursi, MPH, Prevention Facilitator and Digital Marketing Specialist at McCall. “We’re here to get people through this time of year.”

Reach out for support.

The holidays can be particularly difficult for those who have loved ones facing substance use or mental health disorders. Marisa Mittelstaedt, MBA, McCall’s Director of Development & Marketing, has first-hand experience concerning a family member who’s currently facing mental health challenges. “When you have someone you care about, who you love so much, going through one of the worst moments of their life, it’s really hard,” Marisa acknowledges. “It’s hard to watch, it’s hard to be joyful.”

Marisa has a message to everyone reading this article: “If you’ve been thinking about reaching out for help, do it.”

Connecting to care.

“At the end of the day, it really comes down to connection,” Josh says. It’s about how we connect with others and how we can provide connection to those who are in need of it.

Let’s all make sure that people who are struggling are being connected to the services and resources they need this holiday season and beyond.

McCall’s promise is that anyone who comes through our doors will receive comprehensive, compassionate care regardless of their ability to pay. You can help us fulfill that promise by contributing to our 2024 Annual Appeal, which is going on right now and continues until midnight on December 31. Your gift will truly make a difference.

[Click here](#) to donate or learn more about McCall’s Annual Appeal.

As always, if you or a loved one need support for substance use or mental health challenges, we urge you to reach out to McCall by visiting mccallbhn.org or by calling our main number: 860.496.2100.

TOPIC: NAVIGATING THE EMOTIONAL UPS AND DOWNS OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 17
8:20 AM

NEW INTERVIEW

with
MARISA MITTELSTAEDT
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING

and
JOSHUA LICURSI, MPH
DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST

McCall Behavioral Health Network
WZBG 97.3

LEARN MORE ON WZBG.

Did you miss the interview? Don’t worry, we’ve got you covered!

Visit our pressroom to hear Marisa Mittelstaedt, MBA, McCall Director of Development & Marketing, and Josh Licursi, MPH, Prevention Facilitator and Digital Marketing Specialist, talk about connecting to care and support during the holidays.

Click on the image to listen to the full FM 97.3 WZBG interview.



Graciously written and shared by Alicia Peterson, RSS, Family Recovery Coach.

The holidays can be a challenging time for individuals in recovery and their loved ones, but they also offer opportunities for connection and growth. From creating supportive environments to embracing inclusive, recovery-friendly traditions, there are many ways to make this season joyful and meaningful.

[Click here](#) to read the full Family in Recovery Newsletter article and discover practical tips to help your family celebrate the holidays with care and compassion.

Alicia Peterson, RSS
Family Recovery Coach
959.229.4814
alicia.peterson@mccallbhn.org

MAKING AN IMPACT: THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING GIVING TUESDAY!

A huge THANK YOU to our amazing staff, board members, and donors who went above and beyond to donate to McCall during Giving Tuesday on December 3. Thanks to your incredible efforts, we raised \$3,371 in just one day!

The Appeal runs through December 31, so there’s still time to make a difference.

Your gift will help fulfill McCall’s mission of never turning anyone away, regardless of their ability to pay. McCall’s programs, including our Outpatient Services, are provided to every person who walks through our door. To make that happen, we need your help.

[Donate Now](#)



STAFF STANDOUTS RECOGNIZED AT ANNUAL BOARD MEETING BREAKFAST.

McCall held its Annual Board Meeting Breakfast on December 6 to celebrate the incredible work our staff members do each and every day. “Many thanks to all who made it happen and attended,” said McCall President & CEO, Maria Courant Skinner, LCSW. “For those unable to make it – we missed you!”

A big thank you for everyone who participated in the Staff Award nomination process – the response was terrific. “It is SO evident that you have great admiration for one another,” Maria said about the organization-wide survey designed to give special recognition to deserving staffers. “What an amazing testimony to the generous team culture at this special organization!” Without further ado, here are this year’s winners, as voted by fellow McCall team members.

HEART OF GOLD AWARD.

(For the staff member who embodies our mission to inspire hope and promote wellness and healing through a continuum of behavioral health services – prevention, treatment, recovery supports, and community engagement – for individuals of all ages and families across Connecticut.)

The winner is Noel DeLeon, Community Engagement Specialist. Here’s what his colleagues say about Noel:

Noel embodies the description of Heart of Gold. I have witnessed his gentleness, kindness, and compassion on a regular basis.

“He’s simply a beautiful person with a beautiful soul and a heart made of pure gold.”

“Noel always steps up for his clients and coworkers alike. Noel has given more than his all to the company and the people he believes in.”

“Noel goes over and beyond to make sure individuals receive the services and treatment needed.”

SHINING STAR AWARDS.

(Given to the person who interacts with staff and clients in a friendly manner, positively motivates and respects others, is accountable, dependable, flexible, and a good team player, is committed to excellence and professional development, demonstrates an open mind, takes a creative approach to problem solving, and helps to develop new ideas.)

It was a tie! Congrats to Darian Graells, B.A. CPS, Prevention Program Supervisor & Alex Long, Food Services Coordinator. Don’t let us sing the praises of these standout staff members, look what their colleagues wrote...

About Darian:

“Darian is one of the most friendly and personable colleagues I have ever worked with. In the office, she creates a culture of comfort and care, and out in the community, she makes strangers feel like they’ve known her for years.”

“Darian is, above all, an outstanding team player. She is committed to professional development and approaches problems with an open mind.”

“Darian sets such a positive tone in every room she’s in, whether it’s somewhere within the McCall office or in the community. She’s very approachable, dependable, charismatic, and relatable.”

“Darian is a force to be reckoned with! She has a positive attitude and wants the best for McCall and the clients she serves.”

About Alex:

“Alex has one of the most stressful jobs in Residential, and I have never seen him lose his cool or be anything but polite, empathetic, and patient.”

“Alex always comes to work with a smile and is there to help and accommodate with anything that both staff and clients may need.”

“He is always making sure everyone is fed a nutritious meal filled with love. Not only is his cooking amazing, but he serves the clients with a smile every single day.”

“Alex goes above and beyond. He always has a positive attitude toward his peers and clients.”

Alex’s supervisor, Clinical Program Director Teesha Huertas, LCSW, adds, “Alex is that staff member you hope for. He is friendly, kind-hearted, a team player – and, man, can he cook!”

SERVICE AWARDS.

We also celebrated the retirement of two board members, whose years of service to McCall have been marked by unwavering dedication, impactful contributions, and a steadfast commitment to supporting our mission and the clients we serve.

Pictured from left to right:
Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, President & CEO
Susan Subanovsky
Frank Traviano
Joe Stanley, Board Chair



Thank you to: ARPA
Award amount: \$200,000
Funding will be used for: Leveraging NexGen Healthcare technology solutions to bolster our integrated care delivery capabilities, including our Electronic Health Record (EHC) system.

Thank you to: The Anne and Rollin Bates Foundation
Award amount: \$50,000
Funding will be used for: Enhancing our Family Services capabilities under the invaluable guidance of Director Leann Mitchell, LCSW.

Thank you to: Connecticut Community Foundation
Award amount: \$3,525
Funding will be used for: Helping McCall clients in Waterbury obtain the necessary tools and resources to secure sustainable employment.

Thank you to: The Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation
Award amount: \$3,000
Funding will be used for: Adventure Recovery for clients at McCall’s Hotchkiss House.

Thank you to: The Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation
Award amount: \$1,000
Funding will be used for: our Torrington Holiday Angels, who provide toys for children and holiday assistance gift cards for families who participate in our Family Services programs.

Thank you to: Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation
Award amount: \$2,500
Funding will be used for: our Waterbury Holiday Angels, who provide toys for children and holiday assistance gift cards for families who are clients at McCall’s Renato Outpatient Services in Waterbury.

MCCALL'S CEO AND CCO SHINE ON THE RADIO!

SPECIAL GUEST:
MARIA COUTANT SKINNER, LCSW
President & CEO

Produced by John Voket

Recording from
Sunday, December 22, 2024

SPECIAL GUEST:
JOY PENDOLA, LMFT LADC
Chief Clinical Officer

TOPIC: Accessible, full continuum of care – Now in Waterbury!

McCall Behavioral Health Network

We’re excited to share that our President & CEO, Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, and Chief Clinical Officer, Joy M. Pendola, LMFT LADC, were featured on John Voket’s award-winning *For the People* radio program on Sunday, December 22. They discussed the launch of McCall’s new Primary Care office and the expansion of our Child & Adolescent Services in Waterbury. The interview, which aired as the third segment of the show, highlighted McCall’s ongoing commitment to serving our communities.

If you missed it, you can listen to the interview on your favorite podcast platform:

[iTunes](#)
[Audible](#)
[iHeart](#)

WE ARE SO VERY PROUD OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES

New Opportunities celebrated its 60th anniversary on December 12 with a 300-person dinner at La Bella Vista in Waterbury. Dr. James Gatling, who led New Opportunities for 43 years before his retirement in 2021, was among the evening’s honorees. Over six successful decades, New Opportunities has expanded to offer housing assistance, emergency food pantries, shelters, weatherization-assistance programs, employment help, nutrition for seniors, and childcare. To learn more about their wonderful work, visit their website at newoppinc.org. See a photo from the event in the image below in the top right-hand corner!

