

Vinland National Center Honors National Brain Injury Awareness Month

Vinland's "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project was just one of the ways Vinland recognized this important month.

See story on pages 2-3.

Independence

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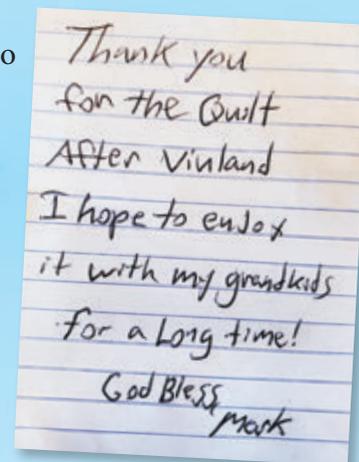


GRATITUDE

Vinland's residential treatment program is grateful for all of the local quilting groups who donate quilts so we can give each incoming client their very own quilt for their stay, then let them take it along when they leave as a reminder of their time spent with us.

Our clients are often dealing with a lot of unmet needs when they arrive—some have only the clothes on their backs and prison-issued flip-flops. So, receiving a comforting quilt upon arrival is a need that is being met and is easy to appreciate, but giving thanks isn't something the brain is often ready for in early recovery. That's why it was so great to receive the note above from a recent client.

With recovery, gratitude happens!



"Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation."

—John Ortberg

A SPECIAL NOTE

From Our Executive Director, Mary Roehl

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of Congressman Tom Emmer and Congressman Dean Phillips, as well as Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Tina Smith, who were all instrumental in securing this funding.



Mary Roehl, Executive Director

I am so excited to share the news that Vinland National Center is the recipient of two Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funding opportunities!

The first project was endorsed by Congressman Tom Emmer for \$500,000, and includes spending for several major structural repairs to our residential treatment facility located in Loretto, Minnesota. These repairs include new roof shingles over client rooms, as well as the replacement of siding and windows. It will also implement drainage for our driveway, and prevent erosion of the facility's many acres of walking trails.

The second project was endorsed by Congressman Dean Phillips for \$140,000 to develop an enhanced living skills program, that will help our clients transition back into the outside world once graduated from Vinland.

Both of these funding opportunities have come at a time when they were most needed. Vinland has continued to operate throughout the pandemic, but at a reduced capacity, and that has handicapped our ability to move forward with these much-needed capital improvements and expansion of our programming options.

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of Congressman Tom Emmer and Congressman Dean Phillips, as well as Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Tina Smith, who were all instrumental in securing this funding. We also want to thank the many friends and supporters of Vinland, who have made it a point to further support these efforts on our behalf.

Thank you so much!



This mask reminds me of what my face and brain feels like after a three week binge of drinking hard liquor non stop. My cheeks turn red and burn and my nose feels like it turns multiple colors and dries out from dehydration, my brain feels distorted and effects my walking, talking, sleeping, and motivation to do anything.

Christopher shared his thought process in the creation of his mask for our "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project. See story on page 2.

VINLAND NATIONAL CENTER HONORS NATIONAL BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

March was Brain Injury Awareness Month and Vinland honored it with mask-making, brain caps, guest speakers, workshops and more!

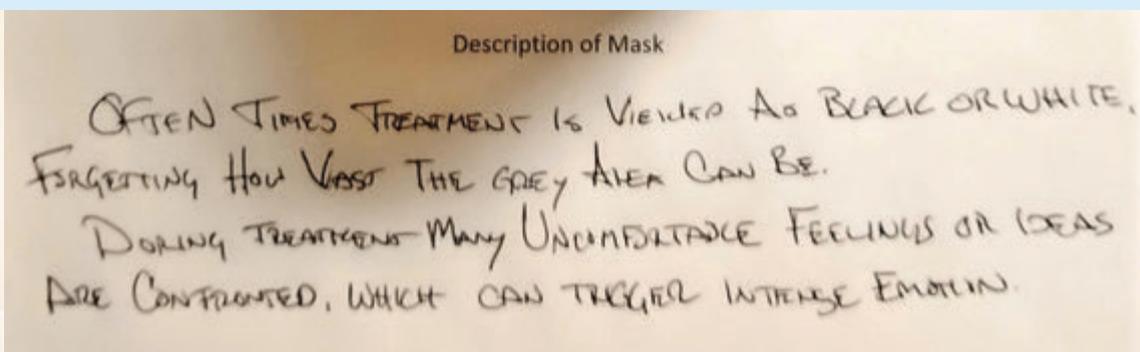
March is recognized yearly as National Brain Injury Awareness Month, and Vinland always participates in various ways to support and acknowledge this month. Our Director of Residential Services Tom Beckers hosted a *Lunch and Learn* internally for our staff to not only remind us of brain injury basics from the Brain Injury Association of America and our CBIS (Certified Brain Injury Specialist certification) exams, he also broke all of our clientele into groups and conducted brain injury basics workshops, which they found very enlightening.

In addition, our mental health practitioners brought in masks, paint, brushes, glitter, gems, feathers (and everything in between!) to work with all of our clients on artistically representing either their brain injury in their mask work, or, if they were someone without a brain injury, to decorate their mask to reflect either their journey through substance use disorder treatment and/or their struggles with mental health issues along their way. We have included some of their inspirational creations on the cover and throughout the newsletter. Then, during mental health groups, the clients created *brain caps*. The caps have each of the lobes of the brain depicted along with basic functions for each lobe. This is an *experiential* activity that allows clients to look at and think about their brain injury in different ways. The mental health clinicians have been continuously weaving in traumatic brain injury information into their classes. For example, they have introduced clients

to videos, card games, word finds, cryptograms, and more on the subject of traumatic brain injury.

Of course, Vinland participates year-round in being advocates for our clients who suffer with TBIs and mental health issues, along with substance use disorders, with not only the core work we do daily, but also by providing training sessions for treatment and veteran courts to help bring awareness to these issues all across the state of Minnesota. We also present on the subject to hospital staff, jails/prisons, social workers, mental health teams and other treatment providers. We do this free of charge, as the need for education in the realm of TBIs is significant, particularly within the field of recovery and substance use disorders, as well as the need to help others make the connection between TBIs and those who are justice-involved. We are all working with those with TBIs, whether we know it or not. If you are a professional who believes your team could benefit from a presentation on working with clients with Substance Use Disorders and TBI's, feel free to reach out to our Director of Business Development, Molly, at 763.479.4525 or Mollyg@vinlandcenter.org to arrange this.

In addition, Vinland participates as a member of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Committee, and collaborates with others in the field focusing on this specific area of knowledge and advocacy.



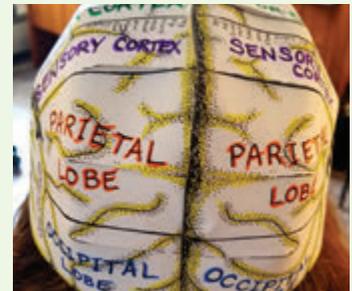
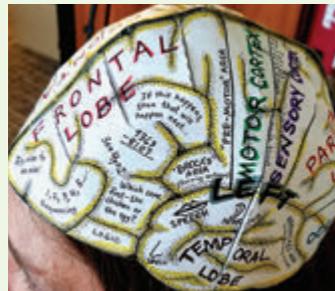
Landon shared his thought process in the creation of his mask for our "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project. See story on page 2.



Many people with disabilities have their lives defined for them. The #MoreThanMyBrainInjury campaign gives individuals a chance to overcome those definitions, allowing them to tell their own stories and change the narrative of their lives.

For further information: <https://www.biausa.org/public-affairs/public-awareness/brain-injury-awareness>

Brain Caps Help with Understanding TBIs



One of our most veteran mental health therapists, Peggy Martin, LPCC, CRC, CBIS, was kind enough to model an example of the *brain caps* they worked on creating with clients in mental health groups.

Peggy reports this exercise really resonates with most clients, as they learn so much about how the brain works, and what potential damage can occur through injury to one area of the brain or another. Clients learn that brain injuries can affect behavior, emotions, speech, taste, vision, etc.

Peggy reports the phrase, “No one ever told me that before!” is one of the most off-heard phrases during this exercise, and clients find it very beneficial—even our clients who don’t suffer from a TBI.



The grateful outpatient crew of 2022!

During March, over at Outpatient Services in northeast Minneapolis, they had Ntianu Carter, who is the Education and Community Outreach Manager from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance, speak with the outpatient clients about the services they offer. She also had a guest speaker with her who told his brain injury recovery story and talked about the services he received and continues to receive from the Brain Injury Alliance (BIA) and other services in the community to help him continue to be successful with his ongoing road to recovery.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW: ANTHONY



Yes, it's a "selfish program"—we need to be selfish in our own recovery by putting up healthy boundaries with people. However, we can't do it alone. Vinland will give you every possible outlet they can so when you leave here, you will leave healthy, sober, and into a safe environment with a positive direction in life. I hope you can take it seriously, and if you do, Vinland will welcome you with open arms.

Anthony

What was your life like prior to coming to Vinland National Center?

I was living at home with my family, doing well, until I got into an argument where my emotions got the best of me, and I went back to what I was used to. I started drinking and it wasn't long after that I started calling my old dope buddies.

That didn't sit well with my wife, understandably, so I ended up living on the streets for a few weeks, going from Brainerd to Duluth. I went down really fast—right back to the old habits that were very detrimental to my life. It wasn't long before I was shooting (IV drugs) and became extremely hopeless, thinking I was better off dead than alive.

How did you hear about Vinland?

Initially, I readmitted to a treatment center I had previously attended, and was there for a few weeks. I had actually completed that program in the past, where they focused a lot on faith and recovery, but not so much on the mental health and traumatic brain injury recovery.

I spoke with my wife and she did some research and found Vinland National Center! I followed up on her research, applied, and was here within a week. So far, it's proving to be one of the most helpful programs I have experienced.

Vinland has gone above and beyond to help set me up for success when I leave.

I have been in so much fear of setting up my own recovery and extended recovery, because everything I have done in the past has succeeded for a moment, but hasn't really had a lot of longevity. So, when I met with my case manager, we sat down—my wife included—and came up with some goals. This was really great, as she is a huge part of my recovery, plus, she has huge worries and stresses that I can't see because I can sometimes be blind to that (or just stubborn, I guess). We sat down and went through what my plans were going to be for my mental health, AA and NA meetings, personal therapy, marriage counseling, then outpatient programming when I'm done at Vinland's residential program.

Then there was the overwhelming subject of how was I going to continue on meds? So, my counselor set me up for med management and psychiatry for once I leave. This was amazing, as my regular doctor had fallen through, and when I went to tell my case manager this, she had already set up a referral for me!

In my first two weeks, Vinland literally had my entire plan set up and ready to go for me. This was very

exciting, as it took a lot of the stress and pressure off so I could really focus while I was in primary treatment at Vinland. That made me extremely grateful as I feel this enabled me to focus on the here and now, and ultimately learn a lot more about myself and my addictions.

How did Vinland stand out as different to you?

I think pretty much all of the programs within the state of Minnesota have the important information to share regarding addiction and substance use disorder, but the way Vinland lifted the stress, then delivered the information and helped me practice it while here, and helped me recognize how I'm learning, really made a difference for me. While here, I've been dealing with some issues where I've been applying the skills I'm being taught, especially some of the coping mechanisms I've been given and staff have been encouraging me to practice. Then it was pointed out to me how I've actually been applying these skills while here—I didn't even realize I was catching on to these things just by going through the program. Just bringing that to my attention showed a holistic approach to this treatment, and an extra level of personal attention I wasn't expecting.

I think it's important to mention that, as I was coming into Vinland, I knew there was a strong focus on mental health along with substance use disorder, and that Vinland specializes in working with those with traumatic brain injuries. However, coming in, I denied ever having had either a mental health issue or a TBI. This is one of the things that I have finally accepted—the realization that I have been struggling against BOTH—which has brought me to a real place of peace, because I can now address these issues head-on. I have a great plan, including med management, which will allow me to get my life together in that way; stopping the excuses that enabled me to continue to use and self-medicate.

While here, I learned that all of the drinking and using was me just trying to self-medicate my mental health issues “on the street” instead of just going to a medical professional and being honest about what I may have been struggling with.

Interviewer's note: Anthony and I had a good laugh over the insanity of addiction—how we somehow would find it preferable and “easier” to get some illegal drug on the street and put it into our body versus just admitting there might be depression or another mental health issue happening—go figure! You can get a LEGAL medication, with little to no side effects, that would not destroy your entire life you've built in sobriety AND wouldn't make you make bad decisions regarding the rest of your life! There is often a lot of dark humor “in the rooms” regarding this

from those who have been lucky enough to figure this out—and survive to tell the tale. But how sad is it that going to a medical professional is harder than buying some heroin on a street corner?

Learning this has allowed “the chaos in his head” to slow down enough to be able to start taking in new information that is helpful to him in his recovery.

What did you think of the Therapeutic Exercise Center?

I can't say enough good things about Vinland's Therapeutic Exercise Center. Jeff (Willert, Vinland's Fitness and Wellness Manager) and Tom (Everett, Fitness and Wellness Specialist) are *extremely* knowledgeable in the work they do with clients. They have worked together for over 25 years—starting at the Minneapolis Clinic of Neurology, then coming to Vinland to create this program just for the clients at Vinland. Once a new client admits, they team up together and create an individual program just for that person. I watched as it helped me build my self-esteem and my physical health in such an encouraging environment. I noticed I would never leave there feeling down about myself. I always left there with my chin held high and looking forward to the next session. I imagine any new clients coming to Vinland will have a very similar experience.

What was a game-changer for you?

I'd like to talk more about Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). When I initially came to Vinland, I would sit in groups with others who would talk about their multiple concussions and eventual brain injury and think, “Well, THEY might have that, but I don't,” until I started to listen, relate and identify. It's like these guys were talking about me as some of them told their stories.

As I mentioned before, my whole life I had denied ever having any mental health or brain injuries, which was (to me, finally) clearly false. I had a tumor removed from my brain when I was 14 years old. Because I had a surgeon go in and remove it, I figured that was that, so denied having any kind of a brain injury. While at Vinland, I've been given so much information about how the brain works, that it has become undeniable to me that I think a bit differently than how other people's brains work.

If you're a person struggling with that, I would encourage you to check this place out. Do some research, and compare what they offer to what other places offer. Doing that, for me, has been a game-changer in this whole life of recovery.

Anthony continued on next page

What is your daily schedule like at Vinland? A lot of prospective clients ask that when they first inquire.

I think I'm a little more motivated than the average client, so if you are reading this, I hope you can find some motivation too. A typical day is shown below. It is great to have a routine, but still have some day-to-day flexibility. I wake up very early (which *isn't* a requirement, by the way). The gym opens up early for anyone who wants to have an extra session/open gym with the Fitness and Wellness Trainers. They are phenomenal and work with us individually, one-on-one, in regard to our individual needs. This has been an amazing part of my journey here at Vinland.

In addition, there is an *actual* fitness class, where we go in and work on our individual fitness plan that was created for us when we got to Vinland, following a thorough physical assessment including everything from brain speed to individual goals. The motto is "Safe, slow and gentle," and like I said, it's one of my favorite parts of being at Vinland.

We also work on fitness of our brains. In the mental health group, a mental health clinician introduces all sorts of information that can help anyone struggling with bipolar disorder, ADHD, anxiety disorder, depression, as well as traumatic brain injuries—because TBIs can look a lot like all of those disorders. The information I've been learning there has been phenomenal.

Meals are excellent—they have a great cook here! They are very nutritionally balanced (caveat: Anthony used to be a personal trainer...), consisting of vegetables, a carb and a protein.

There is also time during the day for individual check-in with our counselor/case manager where we might get challenged a little bit by some of the questions they ask. This can be a

variety of questions, from, "Which is your favorite season and why?" to "How do you struggle or cope with anger?"

It can be a wide range of topics just to help teach us an awareness of things in our lives.

Group setting gives us some time to learn about our chemical dependency problems. This can be anything from an informational video, to an open topic, to individual relapse prevention skills, and plans for our graduation. We learn about how people with mental health issues and TBIs can sometimes impulsively go from zero to 100 because of those issues, what we can do to recognize when this might be happening, along with coping skills to manage that emotional dysregulation. What I love about this schedule is that we are exposed to every aspect of substance use disorders, mental health, and TBIs, and how it all ties together.

Every aspect of what they are trying to teach here is split up into an easier way for us to understand—in bits and pieces, rather than all being crammed down our throats at once. At the end of the day, we transition into cleaning up—from certain parts of the building that our group may be assigned to, as well as our rooms. Of course, this schedule fluctuates and changes over the week, so it's never the same every day. There's some comfort in knowing that you're just not going to do the same thing over and over again.

We also have some unscheduled time in the evening—they're very flexible, especially if you deal with insomnia or high energy, they really work with you to allow you to kind of move around a little, so you can relax and just be YOU. There are lots

Anthony continued on page 21

ANTHONY'S TYPICAL DAY AT VINLAND

| | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| 5 a.m. | Wake up, sit quietly with coffee and the news <i>(not a requirement, I'm an early riser)</i> | 11 a.m. | Mental health class |
| 7-8 a.m. | Optional time in Therapeutic Exercise Center | 12-1 p.m. | Lunch |
| 8-9 a.m. | Go to group for check-in with counselor/case manager | 1-2 p.m. | Individual check-in with counselor/case manager |
| 9-10 a.m. | Fitness class in Therapeutic Exercise Center | 2 -4 p.m. | Return to group setting |
| | | 5-6 p.m. | Dinner |
| | | 6-11 p.m. | Free time |

NURSING UPDATE

By Marisa Moline, APRN, CNP, CBIS, Nurse Practitioner

Our dynamic group has been readily adapting to the evolving COVID-19 situation. As a nursing team, we have found ourselves continuously updating our disease mitigation strategies to protect our clients and staff.



Marisa Moline, APRN,
CNP, CBIS, Nurse Practitioner

The Vinland nursing team has been hard at work the past several months. Our dynamic group has been readily adapting to the evolving COVID-19 situation. Vinland is incredibly fortunate to have three new LPNs added to our team within the past year. Jen, Lisa and Elizabeth have proven to be kind and caring patient advocates who have helped manage a barrage of client medical situations. Their experience and willingness to help out in all situations has eased the workload for Registered Nurse Rhonda and myself. As a nursing team, we have found ourselves continuously updating our disease mitigation strategies to protect our clients and staff. Our group has been following the latest CDC guidelines and implementing them into practice. As soon as rapid antigen COVID-19 test kits became available, we started testing clients upon entry to the program. These admission tests helped reduce the chance that an asymptomatic carrier was exposing healthy clients and staff. Even prior to that, our intake team did an excellent job of prescreening clients for any COVID-19 symptoms. Acutely ill clients are not admitted to the program until their symptoms are resolved and their quarantine is completed.

Nursing has also been working closely with the Minnesota Department of Health to assure that all rapid antigen COVID-19 tests, positive and negative, are reported to them. This helps provide accurate data on the virus, which is imperative to measure disease activity. Nursing has also been utilizing the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC) to help us determine which clients are fully vaccinated. This information is important when there are possible exposures. Nursing also tests clients who are already in the program, but experiencing illness. When clients are positive, Vinland nursing assists with immediately placing them into isolation. Our quarantine area, for positive or exposed clients, allows for a healing environment. Clients are monitored closely for any signs of severe illness with vital signs three times daily and a daily symptom checker. My nursing staff quickly alerts me, as the nurse practitioner, of any deterioration in status, so immediate follow-up can be performed. I am amazed at what my team has accomplished in these uncharted waters. The past two years have been a whirlwind. We have responded to the COVID-19 situation with willingness to place changes into practice as new information continuously becomes available.



NAME: Gary H.

Description of Mask

Tell on steps with steaks

Gary reflected on the everyday cause of his unexpected traumatic brain injury in the creation of his mask for our "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project. See story on page 2.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW: JEREMY



It was honestly, unbelievable. I really felt like I was at home. It was almost like summer camp when you're a kid! So, it definitely, definitely was well worth it and a great experience. I just wish I would've done this 20 years ago. Fortunately, I made the decision to do it now and I would recommend this place to anyone.

Jeremy

How did you hear about Vinland?

I was referred to Vinland by a family friend. My sister took it upon herself to call Vinland on a Monday morning, and by Thursday they said they had a spot open for me. That following Monday, I checked in at 10 a.m. and started my treatment. This is my first treatment, and I had no idea what to expect when coming here. Upon arrival, I was nervous, not knowing the process. When I got here, it was a relaxing and welcoming setting as soon as we pulled up.

I went through orientation, then afterwards met some people shooting pool in the billiards room. From that point going forward, *everyone* welcomed me with open arms. We went from playing pool to going to group, and it was instantly like a brotherhood. Everyone was able to open up to each other with no judgment from anyone, or putting people down. It was very uplifting, and I would never have expected treatment could be like this. I'm really glad I came to Vinland for not only my first, but hopefully my *only* time.

When did you first feel like you were "home" at Vinland?

The first time I remember feeling really at home here, I would say had to be the third night. By then, I had met quite a few of the other people here, along with my counselors; had gone to a couple of groups already; and by talking with everybody and having breakfast, lunch, and dinner together, as well as being in the workout area together, everyone was very welcoming. If you need something, you just need to ask. If for some reason you have to miss group, they are very open to that, as there is always a group make-up time offered.

Literally, just sitting around after the day is done watching a movie or TV program before we go to bed was great downtime when everybody would just unwind. The movie was done around 11:00 p.m., then everyone said goodnight and went to bed. You can go back to your room and read a book or write in your journal, but for me it felt like I was living with two brothers in the room I was sharing with my two roommates. It was honestly, unbelievable. I really felt like I was at home. It was almost like summer camp when you're a kid! So, it definitely, *definitely* was well worth it and a great experience.

What are some of the more memorable lessons you have learned while here?

Some of the most memorable lessons that I will take with me from here—definitely number one—is being honest with myself, family and friends. I’ve learned how to not hide behind a wall or keep up barriers from everybody in order to continue my use. I broke down the barriers here and they will stay broken down.

Probably one of the biggest parts of the program here was the therapeutic exercise center and the nutrition classes. When I was in my second full day here, they completed a workout /physical assessment with me, along with weight, body fat and brain speed, and set up a program from those results so that every day at a minimum I would be working out for a half hour. You can work out more if you want to, but they set up a routine for me so that one day I would focus on my upper body, and the next day I would do my lower body, legs, etc. With that, this taught me how to take care of myself with not only my exercise habit, but my eating habits as well. That is one thing I am going to take with me and live day-to-day, as a routine. That’s something I really didn’t expect coming in here. I thought it would just be groups. But there was so much more.

What else sticks out as a valuable memory while here?

We had so much to do here with the 178 acres of restored prairie, forest trails and lakefront! Everyone just kept coming up with fun things to do: snowshoeing, fishing off the shore during the summer, basketball, volleyball, and horseshoes. There are just so many things to take from here, that I really couldn’t name them all. I could sit here and talk for an hour about it, but definitely my personal honesty and everything I learned through the personalized therapeutic exercise program along with the mental health services were all huge. Just the way we were taught how to rethink situations and not get angry, or if we thought about using again, just learning how to communicate with myself. How to calm myself and try something different or do something that I learned from here—be it an exercise to just to get through the situation instead of resorting to using—has been amazing.

What has made this a successful treatment for you?

First and foremost, the counselors/case managers, and the mental health therapists. They really let you open up at your own pace. Nothing is ever shoved down your throat—no expectations that you have to achieve a certain level or thing by a certain time frame. Instead, it was at my own pace. They gave me space. And when

in groups, I didn’t necessarily need to have an opinion on anything we were talking about. I could sit back and listen to everything everyone else was talking about and just take it in. During the first two to three days, I just sat and listened to what was going on in the groups, just taking everything in, then once I got comfortable and got to know everybody, along with the counselors/case managers, I was able to open up. Once you open up, everybody sees that you are willing to let your guard down, then it’s kind of like you get accepted into the group. Once that happened, it was like a million pounds got lifted off of my chest and shoulders, showing one’s self to be more able and apt to join into the conversation, whatever the topic was: mental health, self sabotage—anything like that! How you used, why you used, and what are you going to do moving forward not to use. Everybody was welcoming. No one would interrupt while I was talking, and if anyone had a question about what I was saying, they would raise their hand. Then, once I was through talking, I would call on that person, who would then speak. So, it wasn’t a room of people all talking at once or screaming at each other. Instead, it was relaxed. Of course, every once in awhile someone would bring up an uncomfortable topic or touchy subject. If you have a problem with it, though, you can simply get up and leave the room. No one is going to come chase after you down the hall asking what’s up or where you’re going. Instead, you just take a couple of minutes—whatever was needed—to come back to the room like nothing ever happened. No one asks questions of you, so I never felt that I was forced to do anything. Everything came naturally. Everyone accepted how I answered and nobody put me down. Everyone just listened. It was very therapeutic. I know that is one of the biggest things new clients are afraid of: being judged. It doesn’t matter if you are coming in here on your first day; coming down off whatever you’re on/your drug of choice—everybody knows that first week to week and a half, you’re going to have trouble sleeping, you might be shaking, etc. But here, everyone knows that, so once you walk in here you *know* that everyone knows this, so you tend to feel more comfortable. Just that kind of openness is really love to me. We are in this together as brothers, fighting this disease, and that’s all there is to it. Everybody has everyone else’s back, and that’s what’s really great about this place.

What would you say to someone who is “on the fence” over whether to come to treatment?

If you’re on the fence, I would highly recommend you come to Vinland. When you pull up, the first thing you will notice is that you are *away* from the concrete jungle. There are no cars driving by constantly, no people

CLIENT POETRY

We see a lot of talent come through our doors. We hope you enjoy these poems by our clients, past and present.

Flying With a Broken Wing

On a broken wing, not so long ago,
Obstacles in your road, hell bent on leaving.

Whispers of others, much so deceiving,
Standing at cliff's edge, hell bent on leaving.

Ready to bail, rather than moving ahead,
Hell bent on flying, rather be dead.

Trying so hard, feeling so much like dying,
Even with a broken wing, hell bent on flying.

Inspiring many, but inspired by few,
I found a solid brother, through your struggles
through and through.

Failures and let-downs by the masses they come,
But we only fail when we stop trying as one.

Powering through with the inner warrior in you,
For the recovered are a tribe of many, many more
just like you.

Chris

Between Villages

This is a journey common only to those who find them-selves between villages, it is individually suited, and of just bearable severities...

I am afraid, and yet confident of the well-worn path before me. I know of many distractions that lead to "death and destruction", the "fear of the unknown" and the pressing weariness of time passed, all of which has taken a firm hold of my confidence. I have a clutch of vaporous experiences, any-one of which should be frightening enough to warn those who come after me.

While navigating from one village to another, I remain a temptation away from another failure. And yet to go forward is the only sure remedy I know of, it's a direction with built in rewards of miracles and blessings, and intuitively I know what I must do. The future is clear and yet seemingly so far away.

While on this road I remain a stranger to some, but in the Way I am known as a sojourner with Christ. And in this life, and on this road, I have promised to be His possession and at His direction I shall be granted redemption and rest. But when will I get there, and with whom will I fellowship?

So many fellow travelers being led by the blind and those of little faith have all together fallen in a ditch, or have been misled by the subtle seductions of false angels. "Go back, you won't make it !!!" They claim, and beckon with smoke and mirrors, making promises they can't keep.

"Remember when we sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play?"

I have failed repeatedly attempting to create a future of my own design. I sought after a dream of earthly fame and fortunes, to which a lonely patch of poverty has been my comfort and friend. And so, if I truly want to be free of that which I have no control, what do I embrace? That which I profess to put my faith in, or do I continue to struggle under the weight of my own will power?

Am I so self-centered I believe I can retain any part of this wreckage and not get burned again? And yet, even in this moment of clarity I fear again, for I have no control of either, the known which I seek to retain, (for it has a life of its own), or the unknown (which also is in the hands of another).

I have set out repeatedly from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, only to wander in the desert of uncertainty, full of self-reliance, and self-will, and a love of dark offerings. Vapors, lies, and ugliness were payment for my feeble efforts.

Wishing to wake in a very awaken state is another step forward, I am still afraid, but the village of "I am there" is near. Where safety in numbers, and the counsel of many provides much needed wisdom, and will keep me from returning to a false hope, and my own destructive ways

The weights that need to be laid aside are being strewn at a quickened pace as the race for home is becoming increasingly difficult. It is with great confidence that I run, knowing the author and finisher of that for which I run is for me, and that none can confiscate the hope, that I have in Him.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of Power, and of Love, and of a Sound Mind.

And so here I am, and here I go, on that road "Between Villages" —Bill

*My name is "Crystal Meth"
My power is awesome
Try me... you'll see
But if you do...
You may never break free
Just try me once
And I might let you go,
But try me twice
And I'll own your soul!!!
When I possess you,
You'll steal and you'll lie,
You'll do what you have to
Just to get HIGH!!!
The crimes you'll commit
For my narcotic charms
Will be worth the pleasure
You'll feel in your arms!
You'll lie to your mom,*

*You'll steal from your dad
But when you see their tears
You must not feel sad,
Just forget your morals
And how you were raised!
I'll be your conscious,
I'll teach you my ways,
I take kids from parents,
I take parents from kids,
I turn people from GOD,
I separate friends,
I'll take everything from you
Even your good looks and your pride!!
I'll be with you always
Right by your side
You'll give up everything
Your family, your home,
Your money, your friends*

*You'll be all alone!!
I'll take, and take
Until you have no more to give
When I'm finished with you
You'll be lucky to live!!
If you try me be warned
This is not a game
If I'm given the chance
I'll drive you Insane,
I'll ravage your body,
I'll control your mind,
I'll own you completely
Your soul WILL be mine!!!
The nightmares I give you
When you're lying in bed,
The voices you'll hear
From inside your head,
The shakes, the sweats,*

*The visions you'll see
I want you to know
That all these affects are from me
By then it's to late,
And you'll know in your heart
That you are now mine
And we shall not part!!
You'll regret that you tried me
They always do!
But you came to me,
Not I to you!
You knew this would happen
How many times you've been told
But you challenged my power,
You chose to be bold,
You could of said "NO"
And then walked away
If you could live that day over*

*Now what would you say?
My power is Awesome
As I told you before!
I can take your mother
And turn her into a whore!
I'll be your master
You'll do as I say
Even when I tell you
To go to your grave!!!
Now that you've met me
What will you do?
Will you try me or not?
It's all up to you!!
I can show you more misery
Than any words can say!
Come take my hand
And let me lead you the way
!!!!Directly to HELL!!!!*

—Anonymous

Forever Unchained
 We don't know each other
 but you're my sister
 and you're my brother.
 Bonded by chains
 that keep us all down,
 it's a miracle that
 we're all still around,
 Using recovery like a pair
 of bolt cutters,
 thoughts of using again
 should make us all shudder,
 Standing up tall, and walking so proud
 to blend back seamlessly
 into the crowd.
 Though these chains that bind us
 are brittle and cold,
 too many don't make it
 until we are old.
 Walking our path,
 we're all free at last.
 In Sobriety we're trained
 to be forever unchained.
 - Colin J V25/22

DOPE

I destroy homes
 I tear apart families
 I take your children
 And that's just the start!
 I'm more valued than diamonds
 More precious than gold
 The sorrow I bring
 is a sight to behold.
 If you need me remember,
 I'm easily found!
 I live all around
 In schools and in town
 I live with the rich
 I live with the poor
 I live just down the street
 And maybe next door!
 I'm made in a lab
 But not like you think
 I can even be made
 Under your kitchen sink
 In your child's closet
 And even in the woods!
 If this scares you to death
 It certainly should
 I have many names
 But only one you'll know best
 I'm sure you've heard of me...

Anonymous

KEEP GOING!

Notes from an in-treatment journal —Mike

3/20/21

The beast within steady.
 Wants to sin.
 So it's a battle every day
 Not to let him out to play
 And when he is out it don't
 matter what you say
 He always makes you his lovely prey
 Day to day, hour by hour

I hope he don't get out to devour
 The good, the bad, the mad
 He always gets out when I'm sad
 And that's when I get real, real bad
 So dear lord I pray for savior
 I don't want to cause no danger
 So please help me with this
 mother#84ing ANGER

4/12/21

Oh crystal
 You're worse than a pistol;
 You're a cluster of passion
 It doesn't matter what happens
 You sparked that rush
 I've searched to find again
 But truth be told, You turned
 my heart completely dark
 You helped me watch
 My life fall apart
 Staying in the dark
 Flicking that Bic
 Love you so much
 I'm unaware you're making me sick
 Even though you slow my thoughts
 It never fails, you're all a plot
 When I'm with you

The world ceases to exist
 Even though I know the risk, I'll do
 whatever it takes to keep you near my lips
 You're as cold as ice
 And took from me any hopes of paradise
 Any dreams became a gleam in my eyes
 Which lately tend to always cry
 The desperation to cut ties
 Because what I thought of you
 was clearly just lies
 The time stuck on you, well,
 My life passed me by
 Who was I inside?
 Felt like he had died
 So crystal meth
 My love for you is like loving
 the Grim Reaper
 And the outcome is death.

5/5/21

The drive is running deep
 I live this day to compete
 I challenge my thoughts
 Along with the emotions
 I challenge how much
 Time along with my devotion
 I fight daily putting plans
 In motion
 To find my inner strength
 These tools are becoming my potion
 I find myself not coasting

And I'm taking my time in the moment
 I'm doing my best and steadily, showing
 I can't believe how much inside I am growing
 I'm loving life and finally ready to explore it
 I'm not living in fear, I find myself able
 to cheer
 I'd have to say this has been one
 hell of a year
 It is clear I've learned to love myself
 and it's pure
 And I no longer have to live a life
 guided by fear.

COVID-19 AND THE THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE CENTER



Jeff Willert, B.Sc., E.P., S.E.T., Fitness and Wellness Manager



Tom Everett, B.Sc., Ex. Phys., S.E.T., Fitness and Wellness Specialist

Because we put COVID-19 safety procedures in place early, Vinland has fared quite well during this pandemic.

COVID-19 and the Therapeutic Exercise Center at Vinland

In the Therapeutic Exercise Center on the residential campus, COVID-19 management has been a bit problematic with clients not wearing masks. Masks are not comfortable especially when using more oxygen than normal, as one does during an exercise session.

Therefore we have enforced hand washing pre- and post-exercise sessions diligently. If someone is symptomatic, we do not allow them in to use the facility. Instead, we send them to nursing.

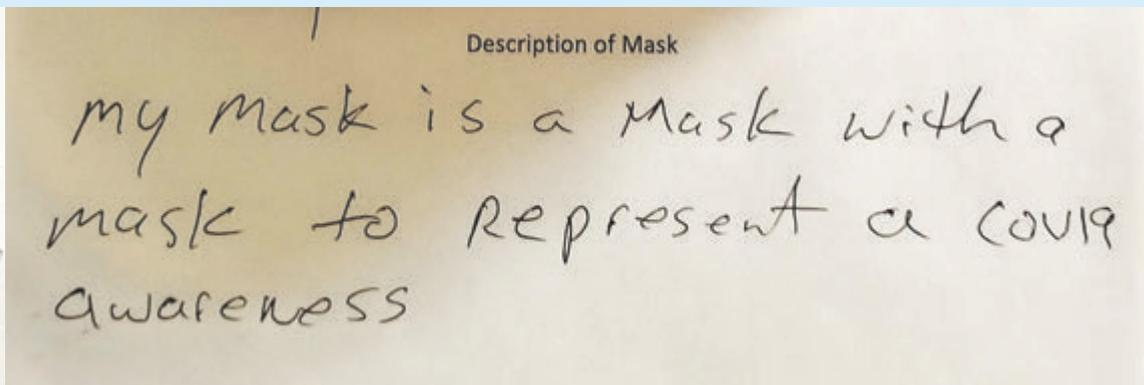
The clients have been really good about wiping down the machines after each use. Otherwise it has been business as usual! Because we put COVID-19 safety procedures in place early, Vinland has fared quite well during this pandemic. We are continuing with program/client goals and helping to prepare clients for their next steps in their recovery and health planning.

Preparing our clients for health/wellness activities after Vinland

Tom Everett and I prepare the clients for aftercare by teaching them what works for their body in regard to a continuing exercise program. By the time they leave us, they have a full understanding of what to do when they graduate from Vinland. Most clients improve in terms of their pre- and post-treatment physical health and want to continue on this path in their aftercare. Our clients take significant information with them about how to improve their nutritional plan as well.

We also write a letter of medical necessity for a health club, which helps them secure a membership (often at a YMCA) at no cost or for reduced fees, for those who might be in need of this.

It is our goal for all clients to continue with regular exercise and nutritional improvement as part of the recovery process.



Tony shared his thought process in the creation of his mask for our "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project. See story on page 2.

“This beautiful setting helped me to get back in touch with nature and meditative walking as part of my self-care moving forward.”

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE PROGRAM POST-EVALUATION COMMENTS

Did the program meet your fitness goals?

- The program went above my goals and I accomplished more than I thought I would.
- Yes, very well. Tom and Jeff are excellent.
- Yes, over the expectations. I was very grateful.
- Yes, I was fully satisfied and attained a conditioning that beat expectations!

Are you planning to continue your exercise plan when you leave Vinland?

- I will never stop working out now because Tom and Jeff pulled me out of my laziness and helped me lose weight and get stronger.
- Yes, four to five times per week!
- Yes! Every day!

What did you like best about the program?

- That Tom and Jeff are outstanding guys and always motivated me to try harder.
- The trainers, Tom and Jeff. The plans to be able to meet me where am.
- Cardio and available extra sessions. Jeff and Tom give their all!
- This beautiful setting helped me to get back in touch with nature and meditative walking as part of my self-care moving forward
- Learned more about the specifics of weight training.
- The help and coaching I get from the fitness instructors.

How did you first learn about Vinland National Center?

- While I was in jail
- My son went here twice. He has been sober now for 1 ½ years.
- Probation/legal
- I was here 3 years ago.
- 1800 Chicago Detox! (Minneapolis)
- Referral from Regions Hospital doctors (St. Paul)

Overall, how would you rate your exercise program experience?

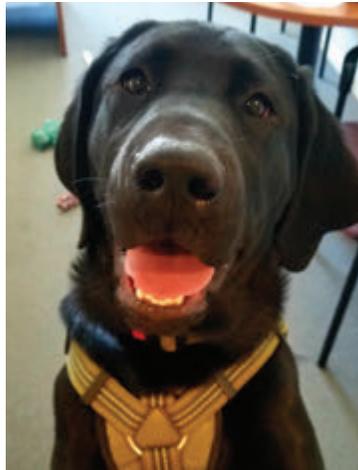
- This truly has been a big step in overcoming my addiction/mental health. I will be thinking about my experiences here with my brothers here for some time to come. Thank you.
- A++. Staff was always encouraging and realistic about fitness goals.
- It is an excellent exercise program with experienced and trained trainers. I will recommend it to anyone coming through Vinland National Center.
- 10/10! Best ever!

PET CORNER

*We love to bring our pets to work!
Enjoy these unique, colorful and lovable pets!*



Mason, the Leopard gecko, belongs to Amy in our billing department. She feeds him mealworms and crickets and thinks he's cute. So do our clients!



Stitch (above) and Milo (below) belong to Paula in our billing department. They are both super sweet!



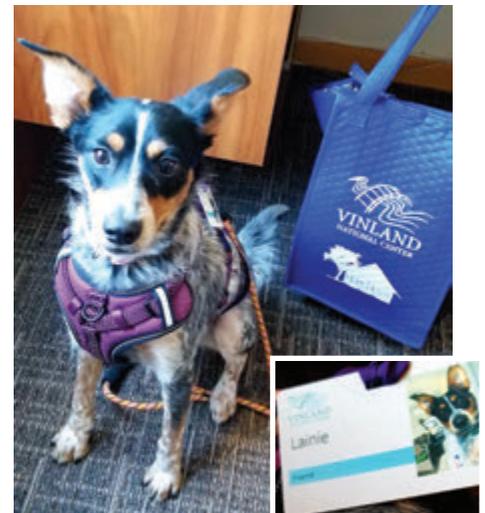
Fishy belongs to April in our intake department. It's about all she can handle with her busy days.



We've shared some of our friendly pets at play at Vinland in some of our past *Independence* issues and we wanted to introduce you to one very special little gal named Lainie.

Lainie was adopted from a rescue shelter by her mom, Registered Nurse Rhonda, who started bringing her in to let clients pets her as a pup. Since then, Lainie's become somewhat of an ambassador in the hallways, playing ball with anyone who will throw it for her!

She's such a help and bright light to all who come into contact with her, that we decided to get her a name tag!



Ambassador Lainie with her very own name tag!



Hazel (left) and Maple (right) belong to Case Manager Eddie Rose and are too cute to even handle!



Coco is a sweet family member of Treatment Coordinator Katey.

PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM AT OUR OUTPATIENT LOCATION

By Paulena Lem, B.S., LADC, CPGC, Problem Gambling Counselor

I have been gifted the time to be able to fully familiarize myself with all aspects of gambling, and have realized what a great need there is for advocacy and outreach for those who need help.



Paulena Lem, LADC, CPGC, Problem Gambling Counselor

When I graduated with my bachelor of science and earned my LADC (licensed alcohol and drug counselor) certification, I began my journey working with substance use clients. Shortly after joining Vinland's Outpatient Program team, I was asked if I would be open to becoming problem gambling certified and helping to develop the program. I was enthusiastic and open to growing my scope, so I accepted the challenge and humbly put my thinking cap back on. I was able to complete the needed hours and begin to help build the Problem Gambling Program further. Having been given the opportunity to grow the Problem Gambling Program at Vinland is exciting, different, and inspirational.

Something that was expected, yet still unexpected, is that my focus has shifted to not just learning about substances, but also learning about casinos, sports betting, chasing losses and how to play table games such as poker. These are all vital components to help me understand current and future clients, how gambling affects their daily lives and what their individual triggers could be. My supervisor, Katie, and I have spent many afternoons together creating new programming to offer our groups. It has been super rewarding to be able to develop and grow this profound knowledge base in order to help people with problem gambling, along with their families, on an individual basis. Another exciting part of creating and further developing curriculum is the thought process behind it; incorporating what I learned in college directly to group topics and creating worksheets as we go.

I have been gifted the time to be able to fully familiarize myself with all aspects of gambling, and have realized what a great need there is for advocacy and outreach

for those who need help. My biggest takeaway is that problem gambling is truly an invisible disease that affects far more people than meets the eye. To those of us in the field of recovery, having the awareness of the need for conversations surrounding money and gambling could greatly help an individual we might be working with, and possibly save their life.

I am looking forward to continue helping this population, bringing awareness and above all, making a positive difference in others' lives.

Editor's note: Vinland's Problem Gambling Program is entering its fourth year at our outpatient location in northeast Minneapolis and the number of services we are offering as part of this program is also growing! We've begun offering afternoon groups for our clients as well as the morning track. The curriculum is focused on the identification of problem gambling behaviors, while helping clients become more aware of how gambling affects not only themselves, but those around them.

We have been able to continue to offer our services both in-person at our outpatient services location in northeast Minneapolis as well as via telehealth for those who prefer the comfort of their own home, or might be located outside of the metro area. Due to this telehealth option, we have been fortunate to see clients from all corners of the state join us, along with their families, so that we can help educate them on how to heal.

Paulena is our newest certified gambling counselor, and we were happy to hear from her perspective on how further developing the program has been going.

Welcome, Paulena!

NOTES FROM OUR GRADUATES...

We love to collect the notes on calls or letters we get from our alumni. We sometimes get tears in our eyes when we read some of our staff observations on our clients' growth and all of the positive changes they are seeing. Get ready to smile!

Mark will be volunteering and attending AA meetings. He has done a truly incredible job since he has been here. He is the type of client that knows exactly what he wants in an aftercare plan and how to follow through with it. I know he is very grateful for Angie and her providing two sessions a week for him. His mental health has improved significantly since he was admitted—he is more confident, stutters less, started joking with staff and clients more, and he is finding lifelong friends with the guys in Group One. Thank you, Angie!

Eddie-Rose Steinhoff, Utilization Review Counselor

Past client Mike called today. He wanted me to tell everyone, "Hi." He got his 1-year clean on January 1. He was so unsure he would get that, he told me that now he is really starting to believe in himself. He seems to be doing much better than he even thinks he is. For anyone who worked with him, he wants you all to know that this is where his journey began and he is grateful for all of you!

Tanya, Health Service Technician Supervisor

- When Rod entered Vinland he was using a walker. He put on 10 pounds while here—mostly muscle—and now ambulates completely independently! His mind is clearing and he has a will to live again! He had perfect attendance and is going to join the YMCA to continue with daily exercise as part of recovery. We wish this fine gentleman well in his next steps!
- Jake just called me to say that he is eight months clean! He got a job at LA fitness on the sales team! He seemed incredibly happy. Told me to tell "everyone" whom he worked with, "Hello!"
- Jeff came in using a walker, and now only uses a cane. HE WORKED SO HARD! Such a sweetie! I will miss him. Vinland saved his life! We got him just before his disease was past the point of no return.
- Mark started out on the treadmill about 10 minutes a day and worked his way up to an hour a day! He's such a great guy!
- Kurt had perfect attendance; achieved over 1,000 minutes of cardio; lost two pounds of fat and gained 10 pounds of muscle; improved his brain speed and now has ZERO pain. "I thought I would have pain in my right shoulder forever."
- Greg is just leaving. He asked me to tell anybody he didn't get to say goodbye to "thanks for everything." He was super grateful for Vinland entering his life. He is starting HVAC school right away. He feels really positive now. He now likes the guy in the mirror, he never used to.
- Josh checked in with me and told me he is down 20 pounds now! He is doing it by following the recommendations set forth from Vinland! He is clean and sober and is now working a third shift job. He sounded great. He told me to tell all, "Hi!"

Jeff, Fitness and Wellness Manager

...AND CURRENT CLIENTS

To Residential, all staff:

Just wanted to let everyone know that the little things continue to make a big difference! Here is some of what Josh shared with me about Vinland.

Special shout-outs, of course, to Jeff and Tom in our Therapeutic Exercise Center. He said this is the first time in his life he has actually paid attention to what he puts in his body and how he treats it. He says he has never felt healthier and knows that his sobriety now goes hand-in-hand with his physical health. He came in feeling like he didn't look good, so in part because of that, he used—which made him feel worse. He said if it wasn't for them and Marisa holding him accountable and not giving in to his pleas for a stimulant to help him lose weight, making him do it the right way—he would never have learned how to do it on his own.

He said, “The fact that Vinland knew how to flush out the few bad apples that were here so swiftly has made all the difference in the world in groups, and once Tom B. addressed everyone, it really helped. There's just a really cool vibe here now, and a good group of

guys. Sure, there's always going to be someone here because they have to for a parole officer or something similar.” (He WAS one of those guys in the past!) but overall, he said Vinland was like a “warm hug” when he walked in these doors. He said everyone has been so kind and welcoming.

This is the first time he has ever gotten his blood pressure under control (“I should've been stroking out!”) and is so proud (and grateful) for that. He almost died from an overdose prior to coming here, and he knows this experience has helped him finally take treatment seriously. He thinks he might even have been an inspiration for a couple of other clients while here and he hopes to continue to be able to help others (do service work) in the future.

Thank you Jeff and Tom, for being such mentors for so many of these guys who really need that ‘father figure’ in their lives; and Tom B. for taking the bull by the horns and addressing the clientele as a group.

It matters!

Molly, Director of Business Development



“I believe God watches over this place.”

The staff of counselors at Vinland have been completely amazing. They care and show it every day. From nurses to class instructors, their dedication was more impressive to me with each passing day. The mental health professionals are so helpful; I personally think they are amazing. The nurses and Health Service Technicians who work in the Medical offices, are dedicated and it shows every day.

The pair that runs the gym and its equipment are incredible. The health assignments and progress details for each of us are well documented and tabulated on a daily basis. The results for me, personally, have been amazing in just two short months. I am incredibly impressed with their dedication as well as attitude.

Vinland has saved my life and continues to push me in the right direction. I believe God watches over this place.

Thank you Vinland! —Jeff, recent graduate

ODE TO PATTI AND RENEE

By Colleen Larson, Operations Manager

Patti and Renee are two very special members of the Vinland family who have been with our residential treatment center for 28 years combined!



Patti Schwartz

Patti Schwartz is the “Voice of Vinland.” She is usually the first person an incoming caller will hear when they call our main number during business hours. For close to 17 years Patti has, among countless other duties, managed our front desk like a maestro conducting an orchestra. With a perpetual smile on her face and a calm disposition, she answers

a plethora of questions from callers, clients and staff, or efficiently directs them to the appropriate department. Patti knows everyone at Vinland and what they do, and appears to have memorized 70+ extensions! She also manages the transportation schedules for our drivers, handling last-minute changes amid multiple interruptions with patience and grace.

As one staff person said, “Every single day she inspires us with her uplifting and positive ‘can-do’ personality.”

With heartfelt appreciation, thank you, Patti, for your wonderful contributions to Vinland.



Renee Olson

Renee Olson is an exceptional “attention to detail” administrative professional that possesses the ability to complete every task to the highest possible standard. For 11 years running, Renee manages a multitude of responsibilities including support to our executive and management teams, and client services. She is also a valuable member of the staff dedicated to sustaining our supportive housing initiative.

Her manager said Renee’s ability to deliver high-quality efforts exceeds expectations. She provides a constant, efficient and meaningful contribution to Vinland’s staff and clients.

Thank you Renee!

Jeremy continued from page 9

walking by; there’s no noise other than nature! When you walk outside, you see a lake, woods, squirrels, birds, and the occasional raccoon. Just don’t pet them...

One of the biggest issues I dealt with when I got to Vinland was my disbelief that I had a TBI. While here in treatment, I befriended another client who had started up a TBI group for after hours. I was asking him about it and he asked me if I had a TBI. Of course, I said, “No.” He asked me if I had ever had a concussion or anything similar while growing up? I said I had over a dozen concussions. Matter of fact, two months ago I was taken by ambulance to the emergency room where I had to get three staples put in the back of my head!

He looked at me and laughed and said “You DO have a TBI. They are very misdiagnosed and misunderstood. Come to the group.” So I went, and I learned just how misdiagnosed this is. And the reason I used for so long really had a LOT to do with that. By coming to terms that I do have a TBI, there’s so much information they can give you here on how to think! There are certain foods you can eat that can actually take your brain way back to what it used to be. It’s unbelievable! Just by quitting/not using, the receptors in your brain can start to have a chance to reconnect. I mean, I’m 44 years old and I feel like a little baby. I’m seeing and doing everything for the first time in my life, and it’s amazing! I just wish I would’ve done this 20 years ago. Fortunately, I made the decision to do it now and I would recommend this place to anyone.

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATE

By Melissa Petoletti, LPCC, LADC, CBIS, Mental Health Program Supervisor

In addition to the mental health clinic's focus on identifying and treating mental health conditions, we are equally committed to promoting mental and emotional wellness which continues to be a core value of Vinland Center.



Melissa Petoletti, LPCC, LADC, CBIS, Mental Health Program Supervisor

The pandemic has really highlighted the importance and necessity of the availability and accessibility of mental health services for everyone. The clients that have come into treatment at Vinland National Center over the past two years, at both our residential and outpatient programs, are displaying a higher incidence and severity of mental health symptoms. On top of that, the support in the community that they relied on previously, was temporarily or permanently disrupted when they needed it the most.

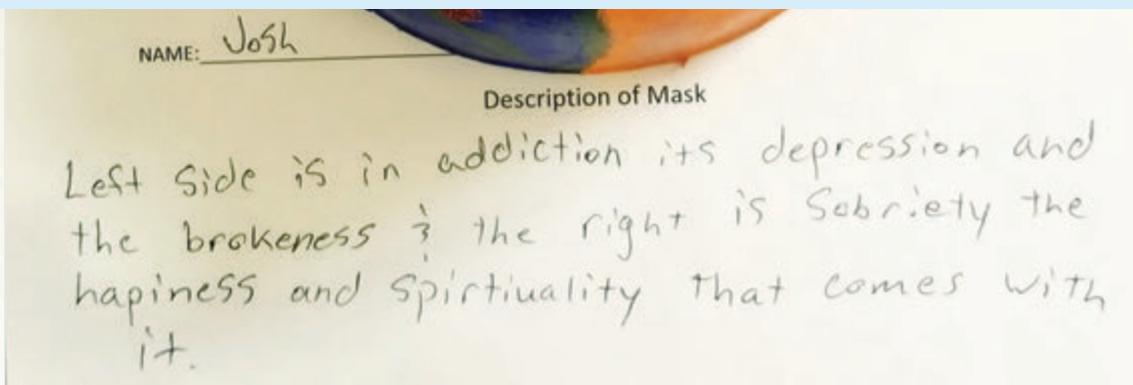
Vinland's residential program has been a place where clients can count on structure and human connection during these uncertain times. Even with lockdowns and COVID-19 precautions, our mental health team has continued to see clients in our residential program face-to-face (mask-to-mask). The feedback we get from clients is that they are grateful for the support and the ability to connect in person. We have also adapted to utilizing the option of telehealth if needed, to support them after they transition to their next step in their recovery following their time at Vinland.

Over the past two years we have hosted two interns. We added one of those interns, Angie Hyde, to our team when a therapist position opened up this fall. She has been a great addition to the team.

This has not been an easy time for anyone, however, it has been more bearable within the Vinland Mental Health Clinic, because we have each other.

We work together as staff of the clinic and in collaboration with the staff of the substance use program. It's always great to be able to mirror mental health goals with substance use recovery goals, and to include therapeutic exercise in clients' mental health plans as a way to cope with symptoms and improve overall mental wellness.

In addition to the mental health clinic's focus on identifying and treating mental health conditions, we are equally committed to promoting mental and emotional wellness which continues to be a core value of Vinland Center.



Josh shared his experience with addiction and mental health issues in the creation of his mask for our "Unmasking Brain Injury/Mental Health/Treatment" project. See story on page 2.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW: ELIJAH

By coming back to Vinland, I knew I would be able to focus on my mental health and TBI issues. This was the first treatment that truly cared about other things besides my addiction, therefore helping me to become comfortable with just being me, and not all scatterbrained, for once.

How did you first learn of Vinland? Did someone suggest us to you, or how did you go about getting connected to us?

I was in jail and my lawyer brought it up. I was thankful that the courts let me bail out to go to treatment. I was in for a first-degree possession, so I thought I was going to be locked up for a long time.

What were your first impressions upon getting to the residential treatment center and not knowing anyone?

I was at ease right when Marty (the driver) picked me up downtown at the jail release and booking. Then when I got here, I was like, dang, I never knew about this and I have lived in the area pretty much all of my life!

How long did it take for you to feel assimilated/like you were home?

Well, I felt like it was a *waaayy* better place than where I had just come from! I also felt like all of the staff truly cared about me.

What were some of the more lasting lessons you learned while here that you have taken with you and practice in your life now?

That's a good question. I would say that I learned how to ask for help while I was here in 2017, and well as 2021. So, the reason this is a lasting lesson is because I used to freeze up. Now I feel comfortable enough to ask for help, and it isn't such a terrible weakness like it used to seem to me. Coming through Vinland, when I asked for help, not one time was I denied.

What made this a successful treatment program for you?

Well, one reason is that I surrendered. I was completely drained. I mean, I've been like that since 2007, but I have gone back to using several times until my last use. By coming back to Vinland, I knew I would be able to focus on my mental health and TBI issues. This was the first treatment that truly cared about other things besides my addiction, therefore helping me to become comfortable with just being me, and not all scatterbrained, for once. Getting the correct mental health care made all the difference in the world for me.

What would you tell others who are considering treatment through Vinland Center (either residential or outpatient?)

I would say that Vinland is a place that will help get your life right and find you the right place after you graduate the program. Vinland is an excellent program.

What is your most memorable event or "awakening" that took place while you were in treatment at Vinland?

2017 was memorable because my kids could come hang out with me on the weekends (before COVID-19), and I was able to meet a lot of cool people who were here with me in treatment that cared about their friends/family members. Being able to go down to the lakefront chalet and participate in client cookouts, watch movies and just be in nature was the first time I learned how to have fun while sober! In 2021, I was fortunate enough to be here during the Christmas holiday, where each group competed in decorating their group rooms—and we had a blast! The formal meal was amazing, too!

To the clinicians that worked so closely with me: Tom B., Melissa P. Theresa, Dr. Simon—basically all of the staff who helped to get me where I'm at and need to be: *Thank You.*

NEW FACES

Vinland continues to grow and change! We are happy to announce several new hires who will help us continue to serve our clients in the best way possible.

New Staff:

- Sandy Halseth, Outpatient Case Manager (MA, LADC)
- Lisa Bessel, Nurse (LPN)
- William “Billy” Bourgeois, Case Manager (LADC)
- Jim Tripp, Driver
- Josie Wicka, HST
- Elias Rocha, Case Manager (ADC-T)
- Elizabeth Spreiter, Nurse (LPN)

Changes:

- April VanIseghem promoted to Intake Supervisor
- Greg Chamberlin has taken on a new position at our outpatient location as an Intake/Assessment Coordinator
- Don Raasch promoted to Director of Outpatient Services
- Debbie Larson promoted to Director of Accounting and Human Resources
- Eddie-Rose Steinhoff has taken on a new position as our Utilization Review Counselor

Anthony continued from page 6

of different activities, including movies, card games, foosball, and pool. There are often daytime activities as well—snowshoeing, if you’re here in the winter, like I am, and I hear in the warmer months they have fishing and canoeing and even groups held out on the pontoon boat! They have a wonderful facility here with frisbee golf, basketball and volleyball courts, and paved and mowed trails to walk the 178 acres here, so you’re not just stuck in a building. You can get outside and get active. The staff is wonderful—they’ll even join in sometimes on some of the activities and they become an encouraging advocate for you instead of an overseeing authority.

Have you learned anything about the mind/body connection?

The stress and damage I put on my body while using was so significant. I would put so many chemicals into my body that I would literally start to disintegrate. I would put on weight in recovery, then relapse, and it would all fall off. In recovery I would spend time in the gym, eat well with good nutrition, and then I would relapse. The guilt, shame and pain that would come with that was horrible. I realized, though, that the physical pain one goes through to get off the drugs and the booze is painful but temporary. When we get into recovery we start to get healthy again, get back into the gym and start eating

correctly, start feeling a lot better, and when we start putting muscle weight back on, our self-esteem builds. That’s one of the things that definitely happened to me while here. When I started to look better, I started to feel better and I started to *want* to take better care of my body. I hope if somebody out there is reading this, they will have the same thing happen to them.

What are your final thoughts?

If you decide to come to Vinland, I would encourage you to come with an open mind, great expectations and your own knowledge to share, because your stories are meaningful and WILL HELP others. Knowing other people have dealt with some of the same things I have has been one of the most relieving parts of my experience here, because we can relate, we can talk, and we can encourage each other. One of my favorite parts of the day here is just meeting with the other guys, sitting down and hearing what they have to say, and encouraging them—or getting an encouraging word from them. This is not all about us anymore, individually. Yes, it’s a “selfish program” in that we need to be selfish in our own recovery by putting up healthy boundaries with people. However, we can’t do it alone. Vinland will give you every possible outlet they can so when you leave here, you will leave healthy, sober, and into a safe environment with a positive direction in life. I hope you can take it seriously, and if you do, Vinland will welcome you with open arms.



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About Vinland National Center

763.479.3555

Vinland National Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that enables individuals with multiple disabilities to live productive and fulfilling lives through a whole-person approach that addresses the mind, body and spirit. Vinland's programs meet the complex needs of individuals living with brain injuries, serious and persistent mental illness, learning disabilities and other neurobehavioral disorders. Our primary focus is on substance abuse treatment including mental health services, a renowned therapeutic exercise program, family programming, outpatient services and permanent, supportive housing for adults with disabilities in recovery from substance use disorder.

Earn CEUs with Vinland's Online Webinar Library

You can watch recorded webinars on Vinland's website and earn CEUs for free. Webinar topics include substance abuse treatment for individuals with cognitive impairments, dual diagnosis, therapeutic exercise, and mindfulness meditation. Vinland offers free webinars as a way to share our expertise with other health care professionals.

➔ *To view recorded webinars, visit VINLANDCENTER.ORG/EVENTS*

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