Coming Full Circle
2017-18 Community Report

OAKLAWN
“With uncommon expertise in mental health and addiction services, Oaklawn joins with individuals, families and our community on the journey toward health and wholeness.”

- Oaklawn's Mission
Coming full circle

Message from Laurie N. Nafziger, president/CEO

In the mental health field, we recognize that recovery doesn’t always happen in a straight line. We understand setbacks, slip-ups and relapses. But treatment does work, and it is immensely rewarding to see someone’s story come full circle:

- a young man who uses his own recovery to offer hope to others,
- a woman who finds healing from her abusive past and a healthier future for her kids,
- a man in recovery from addiction with a roof over his head after years of homelessness, or
- a family with generations of untreated mental illness that finally breaks the cycle and gets help.

It is an honor to walk with people on their journey toward health and wholeness. It is a journey we share as a community. We all have a part in the story of how our community addresses mental health and addiction, and we all play a role in helping that story to come full circle.

Through our advocacy, financial support and compassion for others, we help our community, our state, even our nation, move from marginalizing those with mental illness and addiction to embracing and empowering them.

Thank you for joining us.

Did you know?

Oaklawn provides skills training, school-based services, housing and much more to make sure clients have the necessary resources to be successful in recovery.
John Wilford has experienced the highs of life, and its lows. He enjoyed a successful career, a family and good health. But during an emergency operation in 2003, he suffered lack of oxygen, a trauma that changed his life forever. “When I woke up from the operation, I could sort of understand what was going on, but I couldn’t walk, I couldn’t talk coherently and I had trouble thinking two thoughts in a row,” Wilford explained. After leaving the hospital, he became severely depressed and had thoughts of suicide.

His family brought him in for treatment. His therapist encouraged him to join the community Clubhouse, where he began his road to recovery. John regained his confidence and self-worth and saw how he could contribute by advocating for himself and others with mental illness.

Today, John serves on the Board of Directors for the Foundation and as chair of the Consumer Advocacy Board for Oaklawn, he volunteers with local and state organizations helping to shape services for mental health consumers, and he also serves as Secretary on the Board at the Clubhouse of St. Joseph County.

“I feel compelled to give back to the community that supported me,” John said. “From mental illness being the furthest thing from my mind, to living in recovery, I think I have finally found the true meaning of my life in moving awareness about mental illness from stigma to acceptance.”
Dianna Lawson lost her father to suicide. As a child, Dianna knew her father had depression, and sometimes he would be very ill. “My family called this, ‘having problems with your nerves,’” she said. The family didn’t speak much about her father’s depression and, for the most part, the couple dealt with it alone.

As an adult, Dianna went to work at a psychiatric hospital. When her father became ill again, she knew the importance of immediate intervention. She helped him get treatment, and he had wonderful support and the best doctors, she said. Sadly, despite treatment, he lost his battle with depression 18 years ago.

“I realize now my father was a very strong person, to have fought this most of his life. He was 8 years old the first time he felt depressed,” Dianna said. “I often wonder how different things could have been if he had the support that is available now.”

That support is something Dianna knows a lot about. She has worked in the mental health field for 27 years, dedicating her life to serving families. She is currently a child and adolescent care facilitator, helping to connect young people with the services they need to thrive.
30,000 the number of individuals served through Oaklawn’s programs and services

566 the number of people assessed at local emergency rooms

5400 the number of individuals served at the Elkhart and St. Joseph county jails

*Individuals featured on these pages participated in Camp Mariposa or our Mental Health Awareness Anti-Stigma Campaign.
59
the number of adolescents who attended Camp Mariposa

310
the number of adults who received Oaklawn housing services

72
the number of children referred through Partnership for Children

*Individuals featured on these pages participated in Camp Mariposa or our Mental Health Awareness Anti-Stigma Campaign.*