There's a reason the pandemic is affecting your mental health.

Welcome Home
Permanent supportive housing opens to formerly homeless tenants
A word from the director

Dear friends,

It's in hard times we witness true character. These past months have revealed that Oaklawn's mission and values aren't just words in our brochures, but principles we carry out in everyday life.

Throughout these extraordinary days, our staff lived out our mission to join with individuals, families and our community on the journey toward health and wholeness. I'd like to share a few ways we've done that, as well as how you, our donors, have made a difference in the lives of our clients.

• COVID-19 Relief Fund: In early April, the Oaklawn Foundation set aside $25,000 for direct financial relief to clients and families. These funds helped over a hundred clients with rent, utility bills and groceries. Our primary focus will always be mental health and addiction services, but we know that without basic needs like a safe place to live and food to eat, it's very difficult to pursue recovery. Thank you for helping us serve both the material and mental health needs of our clients!

• Telemedicine: In the early days of isolation, Oaklawn underwent a rapid transition to telemedicine. In two weeks, we converted 92 percent of outpatient services to telemed. This required hundreds of providers to learn multiple virtual platforms and make rapid changes to medical recordkeeping. I am amazed by the flexibility and versatility of our staff, but most of all, their willingness to leave no stone unturned in finding ways to safely provide essential services.

• Face-to-face services: We operate many 24-hour programs, including an inpatient hospital in Goshen, a residential facility for youth in Mishawaka and group homes in both counties. In the face of an unseen threat, direct care staff showed up every day to serve others. Indeed, heroes work here!

• Spring Spectacular: For the first time in 21 years, we cancelled the Spring Spectacular, our largest annual fundraiser. While we were sad not to host this important event, the health and safety of our community come first. We are so grateful to the many businesses and individuals who gave anyway. Check out our list of donors on the back page of this issue of The Advocate. Thank you!

In such uncertain times, it's comforting to see Oaklawn's leaders, staff and donors so dedicated to fulfilling our mission. If you are able, please consider making an extra gift to the Oaklawn Foundation to support this work. You can give online at www.oaklawndonate.org/give or by sending a check to Oaklawn, attention: Kari Tarman, PO Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527.

I don't know what the future holds, but if the past few months are any indication, I know we'll persevere. We are people of hope.

Sincerely,

Kari Tarman
Executive Director
Oaklawn Foundation

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

Vision:
To help people live in harmony with self, others and God, through healing and growth of the whole person.

Values:
As a faith-based organization, the people of Oaklawn are committed to:
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Human dignity
- Professional expertise
- Community partnerships
We all face a new normal. COVID-19 has changed our world, our communities, our day-to-day lives. We worry for our health and the health of those we love. We face unexpected financial struggles. Our routines are disrupted. We’re physically distanced from our strongest support networks – family, friends, communities of faith. Some of us are grieving the loss of a loved one, with even our traditions of mourning transformed by this invisible threat. Some of us are grieving the loss of a loved one, with even our traditions of mourning transformed by this invisible threat. And, on top of everything, we don’t know when or how this will end.

Amid all this uncertainty, loss and isolation, it’s no wonder this pandemic is affecting our mental health. There’s a name for it: trauma. Witnessing our world change so drastically and rapidly, seeing the suffering and feeling a heightened sense of fear is distressing. What we’re experiencing is a trauma.

Acknowledging that, and naming it, also gives us insight to help live with it.

First, trauma triggers changes in your brain. The “fear center” goes into overdrive, while the parts of your brain responsible for rational thought and emotions start to slow down. Some of us feel numb or out of touch emotionally. Others feel hypervigilant and anxious. Some become inactive or depressed. Children especially may exhibit challenging behaviors. All of these are normal responses to trauma.

Eventually, when we feel safe to do so, we’ll process what we’ve been through. For now, it’s OK to just get by. We should lower our expectations and recognize that while each of us will react differently, this is a common struggle.

Second, caring for ourselves physically will strengthen us mentally. As much as possible, eat regular nutritious meals, drink plenty of water, exercise, get a good night’s sleep and limit your use of tobacco, alcohol or other substances. These habits are good for your brain as well as your body.

Third, get the support you and your family need. While it is normal to feel anxious or depressed at a time like this, you don’t have to go through it alone. In most cases, leaning on the people in your natural support system will be all the help you need. Talk to your minister or faith leader, a trusted mentor, a friend or family member. We’ve compiled some of our recommended resources at www.oaklawn.org/take-care.

However, if feelings of anxiety or depression persist, worsen or begin to interfere with daily living, call us at 533-1234. Parents facing unique challenges without the traditional support of schools and youth programs are also encouraged to call. Our Access Center specialists can help determine your level of need and connect you with the appropriate resource which may include scheduling an appointment at Oaklawn via telemed or in person.

Lastly, hold on to hope. This will not last forever. One day, we will move from merely surviving this to healing from it. That journey of healing is one we’ve been privileged to see a thousand times over in the lives of our clients. Until then, be generous in extending grace to yourself and to others.

Laurie N. Nafziger
President & CEO

CFEC selects The Source for $750,000 grant

We’re so grateful to the Community Foundation of Elkhart County for its continued support of Elkhart’s youth mental health network! The Foundation recently approved a 3-year $750,000 grant to support The Source, Elkhart County’s system of care. The Source is doing amazing work to transform and enhance how youth and families experience our community’s mental health systems.

One of the ways it’s doing this is through Partnership for Children. This unique, collaborative program joins together youth-serving agencies in Elkhart County to help identify at-risk youth earlier, get them help faster and improve outcomes for families and youth. Learn more about Partnership for Children at www.oaklawn.org/pfc.
On the windowsill of Kim Terlap’s apartment sit four small potted plants – growing in the bastion of sunshine, leaves dancing in the gentle spring breeze sweeping through the open window.

Kim takes pride in the little plants, and in the apartment itself, spick-and-span and welcoming with a few cozy comforts of home. Kim says she’s surprised at how easily she’s fallen back into the routine of cooking and cleaning and keeping house.

Just a few months ago, she was homeless – living on the streets, sleeping on the ground. Today, she has her own apartment at Benham Avenue Apartments.

Kim, 54, was homeless for a little over four years.

“[Before that,] I had my own apartment, had a job,” she said. “Then my daughter passed away. I lost my job and lost it mentally and just lost everything. I just spiraled downwards.”

Kim had experienced her share of struggles even before her daughter died. As a girl, Kim was molested by a relative, she said. Throughout her adult life she’s experienced severe depression, thoughts of suicide, substance use and post-traumatic stress disorder with flashbacks of her attacks. She was married once and had four children, although she lost custody due to her own substance use. She’s sought treatment many times, including at Oaklawn.

Despite her ongoing mental health and addiction issues, Kim maintained a relatively normal life – she worked and had her own apartment. She had reconnected with her daughter and four grandchildren, and they became close in the years before she died.

“She lived right down the street. She used to go to my house every day, or I’d go to her house, and I’d hear my grandson, ‘Ma-maw, it’s time to wake up,’” she said.

Then in February 2016, Kim’s daughter died of an overdose at the age of 27. It turned her world upside down. She immediately stopped using drugs, but she tried multiple times to die by suicide.

“I just felt like I didn’t deserve to be on this planet anymore because my daughter, my best friend, was gone,” she said. “I’m slowly coming back out of it now. I’m in therapy, on meds. I never had so many people trying to help me succeed.”

One of those people is Dawña Heiliger, an outreach specialist with Oaklawn’s PATH team, which works to engage homeless people in services. She met Dawña about a year ago at the suggestion of a woman from Guidance Ministries.

“I got into it with the lady who runs [Guidance Ministries] and she said, ‘You have anger problems, you can’t just go around cussin’ people out like that.’” Kim remembers. That’s when she agreed to meet Dawña.

Dawña provided skills training and care facilitation, which included helping Kim get connected with a therapist and psychiatrist. Kim knows she benefits from it – she kept...
About Benham Avenue Apartments

Benham Avenue Apartments offer permanent supportive housing through a partnership between Lacasa Inc. and Oaklawn. The project was funded by IHCDA and built by R. Yoder Construction on land appropriated by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. After its completion, each unit was furnished with household staples by the Elkhart County Board of Realtors. The property features 11 one-bedroom apartments, a common area and laundry room.

Kim said that after her daughter died, she wanted to help others who are struggling with their own journey. “Don’t give up on yourself. Seek help, because you’re worth it. Keep that hope and that light inside, because it’s there.”

She’s grateful to everyone who helped with Benham Avenue Apartments, from the folks who built it to those who donated home furnishings. When she moved into the apartments on April 6, all she had were the clothes on her back. She didn’t sleep the entire first night – it was strange to be “inside,” she said. It didn’t take long to feel safe and comfortable, to sleep in her own bed in her own home.

“I almost felt like I didn’t deserve to be here. I’ve been a homeless person so long. People look at homeless people differently,” she said. But through her work with Oaklawn, Kim is re-discovering her worth. And, she has a message for anyone struggling with their own journey: “Don’t give up on yourself. Seek help, because you’re worth it. Keep that hope and that light inside, because it’s there.”
THANK YOU TO OUR sponsors

Even though we weren’t able to hold this year’s Spring Spectacular, these faithful supporters still gave to ensure people get the mental health and addiction treatment they need. Thank you!

**Platinum Sponsor**
Robert Weed Corporation

**Gold Sponsor**
Ancon Construction

**Silver Sponsors**
Miller Poultry
Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer & Buckingham, LLP

**Bronze Sponsors**
Bradley Company
Everence
Fifth Third Bank
John & Lois Fidler
Larry & Kay Schrock
MapleTronics Computers, Inc.

**Media Partners**
Print Management Solutions

**Patron Sponsors**
First State Bank
USI Insurance

**Event Sponsors**
Blue & Co.
DJ Construction
Greencroft Communities

**Community Partners**
Leah Badertscher
NIPSCO
Glenn & Christine Stutzman
Cheryl G. Waldman

**Program Patrons**
Bob & Mary Kay Froschauer
Family Footcare Clinic -
Dr. Kathleen Toepf Neuhoff, DPM
Kuert Concrete

*Sponsors as of 7/6/20*