

2020
ANNUAL
REPORT



Dert Nash





It's been a year none of us will ever forget.

When 2020 started, no one could have foreseen the challenges, uncertainties and hardships we would all face.

At the same time, in the face of adversity unprecedented in our lifetimes, we adapted, adjusted and we persevered. It's hard to imagine a more difficult year for us as a community, as individuals, and as a Center. But I couldn't be prouder of all of the Bert Nash Center staff. They met every challenge. They came together as a team. They supported each other. They found creative ways to deal with every obstacle. Whether working remotely or in the office, their dedication to the work we do and to the people we serve has never been more apparent.

After this past year, I think we can safely say none of us will be the same. And neither will the Center. From the transition to virtual therapy and psychiatry, to virtual formats for the Discover Bert Nash tours, Mental Health First Aid classes and our Celebrate Bert Nash event, to physically distanced case management meetings with clients, to the Woody Park campsite for those who experiencing homelessness, to the creation and collaboration of Building Bridges, the Bert Nash Center team overcame every barrier, rose to every occasion. Change can be uncomfortable, but this year, change was demanded from us. Yet, collectively, the Center staff navigated each challenge they faced. Every team figured out how to do what they do, but in new and different ways.

The theme for the 2020 virtual Celebrate Bert Nash event was "Here for You." Never has that been truer. For 70 years, the Bert Nash Center has offered a safe space for our community. Even during a pandemic, we continued to provide that safe space, whether in person or virtually. The Bert Nash Center has never stood stronger than during these uncertain times.

As we move forward, we will be better because of the lessons we have learned, we will be stronger because of the adversities we faced, together. Despite the loss and grief of this past year, I believe better days are ahead.

This coming year holds the promise of new beginnings. Transitions opened in March and construction of the crisis center should be completed in early 2022. And people continue to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. So, hopefully, it won't be long before we can once again gather with family and friends and as a Bert Nash Center team. As excruciating as this past year was, I'm excited about our future. I want to celebrate the Center's team, the people we are privileged to serve, our community partners, and all of our Bert Nash Center supporters. Thank you, all, from the bottom of my heart.

PATRICK SCHMITZ, CEO



For 70 years, the Bert Nash Center has offered a safe space for our community. Even during a pandemic, we continued to provide that safe space, whether in person or virtually.

70 years of changing lives.

During a 2014 interview, the late Bob Nash was asked about his father and the community mental health center that bears his name.

"I like to think about all of the lives that have been changed because of my father's work," Bob Nash said. "That's what I think of when I see Bert Nash."

Bob Nash's father, Dr. Bert Nash, collapsed while giving a presentation Feb. 18, 1947, at a Lions Club meeting at the Eldridge Hotel in downtown Lawrence. He suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and never regained consciousness. He was 48 when he died.

Three years after Dr. Nash's untimely death, community leaders established the Bert Nash Mental Health Clinic, as it was called then, as a "living memorial" to continue the work the distinguished University of Kansas educational psychologist had started.

That work has been carried on at the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center for more than 70 years. The Center celebrated its 70th birthday on July 5, 2020.

"Thousands of lives of been helped and changed over the past 70 years because of the vision Dr. Nash had for providing behavioral health services to the residents of Douglas County," said Patrick Schmitz, Bert Nash Center CEO. "We are proud to carry on that work and we are proud of our community that it saw fit to dedicate a mental health center in Dr. Nash's name."

Bert and Ruth Nash had two children, Barbara and Bob. The children were teenagers when their father died. Ruth Nash never remarried and lived in the same house until her death in 1975.

During his short-lived but ascending career, Dr. Nash made a name for himself as a tireless advocate for improved mental health services for children.

"In the year before his death, he made more than 200 presentations to Rotary Clubs, to schools, to city councils, to whatever, across the state," Bob Nash said in the 2014 interview.

Bob Nash died in 2016. His sister, Barbara Nash, lives in California. The siblings were honored with a Pioneer Award at the annual Bert Nash Center Pioneer Celebration in 2010, along with the Menninger family of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka and the families of Sandra Shaw and her husband, Doug Witt. Sandra was a longtime CEO of the Bert Nash Center and Doug was a longtime clinical director. Together, the couple spent nearly 60 years working in various roles at the Center. During their tenure, the Bert Nash Center experienced tremendous growth, going from fewer than 10 employees to almost 180.

"The Bert Nash Center is fortunate to have had such outstanding leadership throughout its history and I want to thank and recognize all those who came before," CEO Patrick Schmitz said. "They helped to grow and shape the Center into what it is today — a leading mental health provider that has been recognized across the state and even nationally."

As an essential healthcare provider, the Bert Nash Center has remained open throughout the coronavirus pandemic, delivering critical mental health services virtually and in-person when needed.

"In my nearly 30 years of being in this field, I've never seen a team come together like this," Schmitz said. "I am humbled by the work they all are doing. I am so grateful to be part of the Bert Nash Center team and to work alongside them during this time. At the end of this, whenever that is, we will end being proud of the way we have handled things. I believe Dr. Nash would be proud, too."



BLACK LIVES MATTER



I entered the mental health profession in part because of pain I had experienced in my life and the help I received from a community-based mental health provider much like the Bert Nash Center. Watching the news is to see pain aired on live television. Some of us turn away, overwhelmed. Some of us become sympathetic, separating ourselves from the experience of others. Some of us simply feel at a loss and don't know what to say or do... caring and maybe sad but also feeling helpless and confused. Some of us become frustrated with how others are showing us their pain, ready to offer unsolicited advice of ways that we would theoretically approve of receiving those grievances.

In listening to the work of my colleagues, Black women and men, I believe the way to respond to this pain is by listening and doing the work that I, as a white man, have been asked to do for a long time, whether I have ever really heard that request before. In therapy, in recovery, we say you can always start now. Today, I start again in a new way, different than I have been before.

As a Center, we have discerned our values to be Compassion, Equity, and Integrity on a Foundation of Hope. We work on living into our values and our commitment to community in numerous ways, including the important work we do with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Work Group. Despite this, we still have room to grow and work to do.

I wish that I could say why today is different because it isn't different in the experiences of our community members that are Black, Indigenous,

or other people of color. Black people have been telling us for centuries about their experiences of oppression, brutality, dismissal, and discrimination. Of being ignored, tokenized, asked how white people can help, only to have white people ignore them or do the opposite, being blamed for racism and tasked with ending racism alone.

While I can't speak for everyone, I can say that I have not listened in the way that an ally should. I can and will do better. We can and will do better.

First, our Executive Team plans to undertake the important work of evaluating how implicit and unconscious bias are at work within our organization. This is a combination of personal work and organizational work, which we are committed to doing.

Second, we will celebrate Juneteenth on June 19, 2020, in a way that honors the day slavery ended in the United States.

Third, we will provide training and support for our staff to serve our community in culturally appropriate ways, recognizing with humility that this also means increasing our commitment to hiring a diverse team to serve our diverse community.

This is not an exhaustive list. Rather, these are the next steps that I and the Bert Nash Center are ready to take to help make our world a place filled with compassion, equity, and integrity, and, always, hope.

*Patrick Schmitz, Bert Nash Center CEO,
issued this statement of support June 3, 2020*



I didn't think we would be where we are if not for Bert Nash.

Even though she is a teenager, there have been times when Rebecca has had the responsibilities of someone much older.

When her grandmother was sick, she was the caregiver. When her mother was incarcerated, she was the grownup.

Now she can focus on being a daughter.

"I had to make a lot of adult decisions when my mom was gone," Rebecca said. "When my mom first got out, she saw me as the little kid she had left behind. But I wasn't that person anymore. It took us awhile, but we've got a lot better understanding of each other now."

Rebecca was 9 when her mom, Amy, went to prison. She was almost 14 when Amy was released from a halfway house.

"I have had to let go of a lot of anger about what happened," Rebecca said.

Coming to the Bert Nash Center has helped Rebecca and Amy reconnect as mother and daughter. Rebecca started coming to the Center when she was 14.

"There was a lot of chaos in our lives when I started coming to Bert Nash," Rebecca said.

Before Rebecca came to the Center, Amy had come to Bert Nash at the suggestion of her parole officer.

"I was struggling with my mental health at the time," Amy said. "I didn't trust anybody."

Former Bert Nash Center Child and Family therapist Sunnie Shedd, who has worked with both Rebecca and Amy, saw a lot of improvement in their relationship.

"When Amy was released, Becca didn't really know how to let Amy be a mom, because she had been taking care of herself and her grandma," Sunnie said. "Amy has done a really good job of recognizing she can't go back and make up for lost time, but she really wants to be present for her daughter now."

"There's damage that I have done to our relationship, with being incarcerated," Amy said. "I take responsibility for my actions."

Besides working on her relationship with her daughter, Amy is working on herself with the help of Bert Nash Center Adult Services therapist Emma Kaiser.

"I've dealt with a lot of trauma in my life, and Emma has helped me a lot with that, which helps me be a better parent," Amy said. "I don't want my daughter to have to go through the emotional things I had to go through. That's why I'm glad we got her into counseling when we did."

Communication between Amy and Rebecca is much improved since they have been coming to the Bert Nash Center.

"They don't argue nearly as much as they used to," Sunnie said. "They want to have a relationship

Barbara Nash proud to carry on family connection.

with each other, and they don't want to hold grudges about what happened in the past. They've done a lot of really good work together."

"We used to fight all the time," Amy said. "I never thought we would be in a position to talk the way that we do now."

April Patton, Bert Nash Center parent support specialist, has worked with both Amy and Rebecca and she couldn't be prouder of the progress they have made, individually and as a family.

"They're like a team," April said. "It's been a really hard road, but they have come through it. They're a special little family."

From Amy's incarceration, to being evicted and homeless for a time, to Amy overcoming substance abuse, to now having their own place and building a healthy family dynamic, Amy and Rebecca have come a long way.

"We're in such a better spot than what we were," Amy said. "If it wasn't for the clinicians and the support, I don't know what would have happened. I don't think we would be where we are at if not for Bert Nash."

Working and living in Lawrence at the time, Barbara Nash had heard of the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, but that was it. Until she met Bob Nash.

That was in 1977. Some friends set them up on a blind date.

"It did not go well," Barbara said.

Fortunately, there was a second date.

"I am a rabid Jayhawk fan and the second date was a KU-K-State basketball game. KU won. There's no way it could have possibly not gone well," Barbara said.

The couple was married two years later.

"We were together a long time, almost 40 years," Barbara said of her late husband.

During that time, she learned a lot about Bob's family, his parents Bert and Ruth, who both had passed away, and his older sister, Barbara Nash Mills, who lives in California. She also learned about the community mental health center that was named for Bob's father, Dr. Bert Nash. The Bert Nash Center celebrated its 70th anniversary on July 5, 2020.

"Bob talked often about his parents," Barbara Nash said. "Bob was proud of the work his father did, but he was a shy person. He didn't want the emphasis placed on him. He wanted the focus on the Center."

Bob Nash, a retired psychiatrist, died unexpectedly in 2016.

"He was an extraordinary human being," Barbara said. "I was lucky enough to be Bob's wife. I miss him so much."

In Bob's absence, his wife, Barbara, has carried on the family connection to the Bert Nash Center, serving on the Endowment Board.

"I'm honored to be part of this wonderful organization," Barbara said. "It keeps me connected to Bob. I think he would be pleased that I wanted to continue something that was important to him. He loved the Center. I'm so proud to be a Nash and to carry on that name."



Bob and Barbara Nash with former Bert Nash Center board member Carol Hatton (left).

“I’m not defined by my mistakes.”

When Christel hit her breaking point last summer, she knew she needed to find help but did not know where to turn, until a close friend told her about the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center.

“My best friend from college told me about Bert Nash. She said, ‘Here’s their number, please go talk to them,’” said Christel, a 2016 University of

Kansas graduate and local Lawrence resident. “I’m very glad that she did.”

Christel was having issues within her friendships, family life, and mostly in her relationship with her boyfriend. It was because of the uncertainties on how to deal with those issues that ultimately led to her decision to find help.

“I felt really lost that I had hurt someone because of the way I was coping with my own traumas,” Christel said. “There were days I thought I couldn’t get up. I was so weighed down. I looked at myself in the mirror and was like, OK, you need to change your ways. I thought enough is enough. You need to go get help.”

Christel said mental health was not something her family talked about, but she is learning to be more open about her mental health. That’s when she reached out to the Bert Nash Center.

“The idea of depression, the idea of anxiety, growing up that just wasn’t something that we talked about. It was like depression is not real. But just because you can’t see it, doesn’t mean it’s not real. I was dominated by the circumstances I grew up around, but I was also dominated by the fear of what other people thought about me,” she said. “I just wanted to end that cycle. I didn’t want to push things under the rug anymore. I think mental health should be a priority. It’s okay not to be okay, and it’s okay to ask for help.

“I had basically lived my life with trauma blocking; I didn’t want to be that way anymore because I’ve hurt people I cared about. Through that hurt, I learned how to remove toxic people from my life, so I could be a better person for the people who are in my life and also for myself,” she said.

Christel overcame her fear of taking medications to improve her mental health and is continuing to learn self-acceptance.

“Honestly, I feel awesome. I rarely get anxiety attacks anymore. I’ve become more accepting of things that have happened to me,” she said. “I’m a human being; I’m not defined by my mistakes. There’s always room for improvement. Every day is progress.”

Christel expressed how virtual therapy with Bert Nash therapist Connor Wyckoff has helped and the support of the crisis team helped her to get to that place.

“Bert Nash gave me a safe place to talk openly about myself and the way I was feeling, and there was no judgment,” she said. “Everyone was so helpful. They let me talk through my issues. Just having someone to listen to me, it makes me feel like I’m not just this broken person. It’s really helped me sort through my priorities and who I want to be as a friend, as a daughter, as a sister, as a girlfriend, as a person.”





“I can’t stress enough how much Bert Nash has helped me.”

Kim Brook had never equated her mental health with her physical health.

That is, until she started having difficulty managing the stress in her life.

“Before, I would think my mental health would take care of itself,” Kim said. “I grew up thinking that mental health was a separate issue from physical health. But I found out if I don’t take care of my mental health, things won’t get better on their own.”

Relationships, life changes, a stressful job, it all added up. Kim was struggling with things she hadn’t dealt with before and she was wondering how to manage them emotionally. Then a friend recommended the Bert Nash Center.

“From a friend’s suggestion, I went to Bert Nash,” Kim said. “Finances were a concern, and this friend said Bert Nash can work with you.”

When Kim first came to the Bert Nash Center, she wasn’t sure what to expect. She also had to rethink her own views about mental health.

“I was coming in with this stigma that I grew up with that needing help in any kind of way made you a weak person,” Kim said. “I also didn’t think anyone would understand me; that they wouldn’t get it. But at some point, I felt like I didn’t have a choice. I needed help.”

Kim discovered there were no quick fixes. That her mental health was a process.

“It wasn’t always a smooth journey for me,” she said. “I didn’t connect with some of my initial therapists. It wasn’t because of anyone’s fault. There just wasn’t that connection. Also, I wasn’t always consistent with attending and I wasn’t giving 100 percent of myself to the process. I didn’t see my mental health as a journey as much as I wanted someone right away to say this is how you fix it. I started thinking about it as a process.”

Over time, Kim began to embrace her own mental health journey.

“It didn’t happen overnight,” she said. “But I found I could talk with a professional I trusted and I wouldn’t be judged. It was very freeing.”

Kim is grateful her friend told her about the Bert Nash Center.

“I’m feeling better; I’m learning new skills,” Kim said. “Every time I go to Bert Nash, I feel stronger and healthier. Once I realized that the big steps were the results of a lot of small steps, things got much better for me. I can’t stress enough how much Bert Nash has helped me.”

“Bert Nash changed my life.”

When Damian started coming for services at the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, it not only changed his life.

It may have saved it.

“I used to struggle with suicidal urges, so I honestly don’t know if I would be alive if it wasn’t for Bert Nash,” Damian said.

Damian, who is transgender, wasn’t feeling accepted at school or at home.

“I started coming out as trans in middle school,” he said. “No one really supported me. I didn’t have a good relationship with school or family. My life kind of spiraled. We started looking into therapy options. So I came to Bert Nash. That was the first real support I had.”

Damian immediately felt accepted when he came to the Bert Nash Center.

“It provided me with a safe space,” he said. “I was able to talk to someone and find that support system that I needed. I didn’t have to pretend to be someone else or to pretend I wasn’t trans. We’ve been working on helping me advocate for myself as well as being comfortable with myself in social situations.”

His family has also benefited from Damian receiving services at the Bert Nash Center.

“Bert Nash helped to educate my parents as far as me being trans,” Damian said. “Having an outside person talk with my parents has really helped. So it created a safer home environment.”

Therapy also gave Damian an outlet for talking about his anger issues.

“It gave me a safe environment to get things off my chest,” he said. “I have had anger issues for a long time, and I still struggle with it. Bert Nash has helped me with coping skills and de-escalation.”

After transferring from another school in Douglas County, Damian is a senior at Free State High School in Lawrence. He has also done volunteer work at the Lawrence Public Library, mostly doing art activities.

“My peers in Lawrence have been very accepting,” he said.

After graduation, Damian plans on earning a welding certificate.

“Welding is part of STEM (an education curriculum that stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics), which is important to me,” Damian said. “But it also has a lot of applications in the art world and I could do it on the side for fun, too.”

Damian is excited about the future and looks forward to becoming more independent. And he is grateful for the help he has received from the Bert Nash Center.

“Bert Nash has consistently been a support system for me,” he said.



It's important to talk about mental health.

Elinor Hurst has been on both sides of the mental health field.

As a client and a mental health worker.

It's all part of her story.

"I really enjoy sharing my story," Elinor said.

"Because I think it's important to talk about mental health."

As a former peer support specialist for the Bert Nash Center, Elinor shared her story with others who were on their own mental health journey.

"That's what I did when I worked in peer support," Elinor said. "My first client, when we first started meeting, I could see that at one point we had been the same kind of person. I told her, I know you're in there. There were so many people who didn't give up on me. I didn't want her to feel like nobody understood, because I did. I had been there."

People who are struggling need to know they are not alone, Elinor said.

"Nobody survives on their own," she said. "It can be hard to find stories about people who still have struggles, who still face obstacles, but who have found joy and a purpose. Hopefully people can find others in their lives who can support them and build them up, like I did."

When Elinor came to the Bert Nash Center, both as a client and as part of the peer support team, she felt accepted from the start.

"My first impression when I walked into Bert Nash was even if I don't get a job here, I want to be in this environment, because this is uplifting. The people who work here, even if they don't have their own trauma, they get it. They understand. I've been to a lot of other places, and you don't find that everywhere," Elinor said. "At some places, it's just a job; not here. The impact people here have on the people they work with, it's not an 8 to 5 job, and you can tell that. I'm gay, and here, you are encouraged to be who you are. I get to be who I am, and that's not the case everywhere."

Elinor began receiving mental health services when she was 19. She has had multiple health issues her entire life.

"I was born with many medical problems," she said. "I always say, I grew up in hospitals. I had my first surgery when I was 5 months old and that process continues."

There was also abuse growing up. Something she blocked out for many years. With help, she overcame her painful past.

Which is why she likes to share her story. To give others hope.

"When I started getting services, I definitely viewed myself as a victim," Elinor said. "Then I became a survivor. And now I think of myself as a success story."



“Bert Nash has been crucial for me.”



His mental health journey hasn't always been easy, but he's grateful for the path it has put him on.

JG is grateful for the level of trust he has with his therapist.

"It's been a rough journey at times," said JG, a Bert Nash Center client. "But it's definitely been worth it."

When JG returned to Lawrence in 2018, he began seeing Cassie Parker, an Adult Services therapist at the Bert Nash Center. They quickly developed a level of trust.

"She always remembers the things we've talked about," JG said. "That really built up a relationship, where I felt like she was present and she wanted to give me the best possible advice she could."

During the pandemic, the opportunity to have virtual therapy sessions with Cassie was beneficial for JG, who lives in rural Douglas County.

"Teletherapy is comfortable for me," he said. "I do it from the comfort of my home. I feel like it is as beneficial to me as meeting in person."

Having structure in his life, which includes his therapy and medication appointments at the Bert Nash Center, helps keep JG on a healthy path.

"Bert Nash has been a support structure," he said. "I had a couple of no-shows and Cassie was very patient with me and we worked through it. I realized I needed that structure in my life. I've been going to my appointments regularly ever since."

Previously for JG, the stigma about mental illness was an obstacle to dealing with his own mental illness.

"A family member had mental illness and I thought I don't want to be like that. I felt the stigma of mental illness," JG said. "I saw how people treated this family member, and while I didn't care

about their mental illness, at the same time I cared a lot about what other people thought. That was my biggest fear."

During the past 10 years, JG has had several hospitalizations because of his mental illness.

"I've come to realize that if I have too much alone time it can be really bad for me," he said.

JG has also had relationships suffer because of his mental illness.

"I can get paranoid and it can turn into a situation where someone is in crisis and it affects everyone else around them," he said. "It can really hurt relationships."

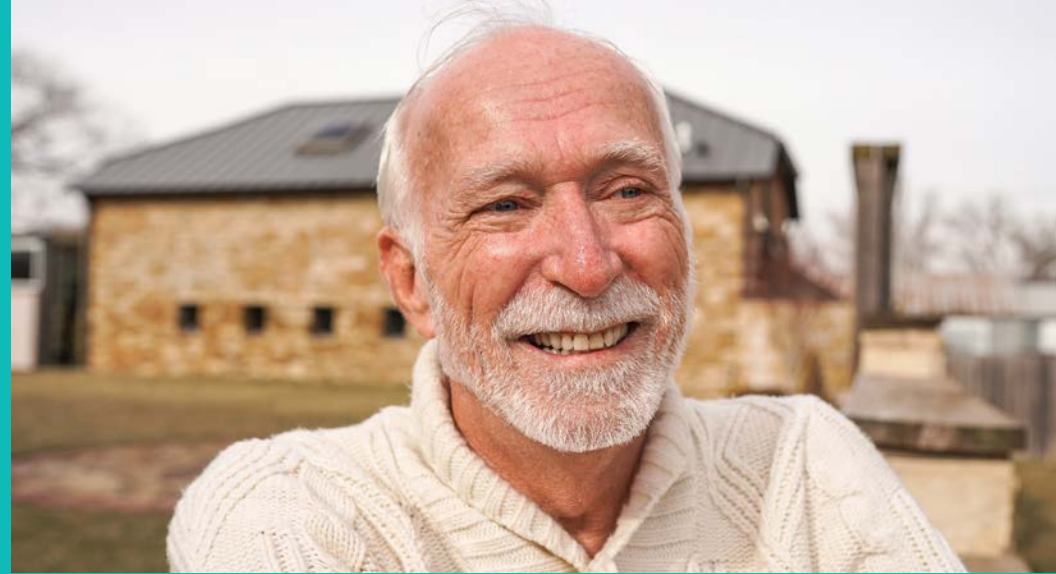
In the past, JG has learned the hard way that deciding on his own to stop taking his medication can lead to problems.

"You can go for a while after you stop taking your medication, but now I know with my diagnosis, the medication provides a buffer to keep me from going paranoid, to keep me from responding to every impulse that I feel," he said.

JG has been taking better care of his mental health and has every intention of continuing on that path.

"The biggest thing I'm focusing on is how do I not have another hospitalization. Bert Nash has been crucial for me to keep that going," he said. "I haven't had a hospitalization in two years, which is good for me. I've had moments where I've felt anxious but I remind myself of my goals and what Cassie and I have worked on. It's been a source of peace."

“I wouldn’t be here if not for Bert Nash.”



Jim Ruane had spent most of his life living in Wichita. When he moved to Lawrence a few years ago, everything changed. For the better.

He credits his relocation to Lawrence and coming to the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center for services with putting him on a different path.

“It was just kind of meant to be,” he said. “It absolutely saved my life.”

Jim had been a successful lawyer in Wichita. In part, he said, because he’s Irish and he’s stubborn. But he went through a divorce and his life was falling apart.

“I was living an invalidated life with all sorts of family dynamics,” he said. His problems spilled over into his law practice.

“My inability to regulate my emotions in the courtroom became a problem,” he said. “It just became clear that the wheels were falling off and that the rigors of practice were too hard. I got suspended.”

Jim was severely depressed with suicidal tendencies.

“I was literally scared all the time,” he said. “The only way I could slow down the panic was to get somewhere where I felt physically safe and then I could work on getting mentally safe.”

About 20 years ago, Jim was diagnosed as having bipolar disorder. He also was diagnosed as having dyslexia and attention deficit disorder.

“I’ve had a very heavily prescribed last 20 plus years,” he said. “I was misdiagnosed for years and taking a protocol of medications that made things worse.”

Now, Jim works in tandem with his therapist and medical services provider at the Bert Nash Center.

“They work really closely together,” Jim said. “It makes for a very impressive team.”

He said of his therapist, Amy Hammer, “She was very quick to get me. She is never judgmental about anything. She’s just a really good example to follow. You can see how much she works the same set of skills herself.”

Amy is a member of the Bert Nash Center’s DBT (dialectical behavior therapy) team.

DBT is a cognitive behavioral therapy that teaches people how to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions, and improve their relationships with others.

“One of the big DBT credos, is don’t judge yourself,” Jim said. “Everybody is doing the best they can, including you.”

Jim said he still has “freak-outs, but I know what they are, and I know what to do about them.”

“DBT is my new emotional health system,” he said. “It arms you with tools where you just ramp yourself down.”

Now when Jim knows people who are having the same struggles he went through; he tells them they should go to the Bert Nash Center.

“I tell people I wouldn’t be here if not for Bert Nash,” he said.



“ They gave me a lot of tips that really helped me. ”

Michelle, a master’s student in geology at the University of Kansas, figured she could handle things by herself.

“I’m very stubborn,” she said. “For a long time, I thought I could do it on my own. That I could deal with the struggles I was going through.”

Until she couldn’t.

“I had a mental health crisis, and I finally accepted that,” Michelle said. “I needed help immediately. But I didn’t know how to get help.”

It’s OK to get help.

That’s when she reached out to the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center.

“I looked into a bunch of places but nobody called me back,” she said. “Bert Nash was the only one that responded to me.”

Michelle, who grew up in Virginia, had gone through therapy before, beginning when she was in elementary school.

“I had gone to a lot of therapy, but I didn’t have a good experience and it usually made the situation worse,” she said. “I kept thinking I didn’t want to talk about my issues.”

Fast forward to last spring, during a pandemic, and Michelle found herself struggling to cope.

“I was supposed to finish my master’s last summer, but after everything shut down because of Covid-19, I lost my safe place, which was my office,” she said. “For a full month almost, I couldn’t

go into the office and working from home wasn’t working for me. I was away from my family. I didn’t have a lot of friends here. I kind of had a breakdown, where I couldn’t do this anymore. I needed help.”

Once Michelle started coming to the Bert Nash Center, her situation began to improve.

“They were so prompt and so nice to me. I just appreciate how friendly everyone has been. They were so kind. They answered all of my questions,” she said. “They paired me with my psychiatrist and my therapist. They gave me a lot of tips that really helped me.”

Michelle also overcame her fear about taking medication.

“Getting over that phobia was another really big thing that Bert Nash has helped me with,” she said.

“Everything they have prescribed for me has worked.”

Michelle has done virtual therapy with her Bert Nash Center therapist.

“Virtual therapy works perfectly for me,” she said. “My schedule is so busy, I don’t have time to step away and go sit down and talk to somebody. So the Zoom calls have been really helpful.”

For Michelle, reaching out when she was struggling proved to be a turning point in her life.

“I feel a lot better than I had in a really long time,” she said. “They told me I didn’t always have to carry this burden. They made it manageable and they made it palpable. It made me feel like I wasn’t alone.

“The biggest thing,” she said, “it’s OK to get help.”

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness.

Precola has dealt with mental health issues for much of her life. It's OK, she said, to ask for help.

"Your mental health is just as important as your physical health," she said.

Precola started receiving services at the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center after her husband passed away in 2018.

"I decided to seek help," she said. "At first, I went to Bert Nash for crisis help and then I went to Stormont Vail in Topeka. I started going to Bert Nash regularly after that."

Precola is a single parent. She has two children, 7 and 2.

"Being a single parent is stressful, especially when you suffer from mental health issues, because you never know what to expect when you wake up the next day," she said.

Therapy services — both individual and group — have provided Precola with the coping skills she needed. She is grateful for the help she has received.

"I'm finding better ways to cope with all of the things I deal with every day," Precola said. "It's helped me figure out ways to build a support system. I now have people in my life that if I need support I know I can call them."

It wasn't always this way.

"I grew up in the Black community. Mental health is not talked about," she said. "But when you're suffering from these things, it's not good to keep them bottled up. Reaching out and seeking help is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of courage."

During the coronavirus pandemic, Precola has continued to receive services virtually with her Bert Nash Center therapist Connor Wyckoff.

"We've been doing telehealth and that's been going great as well. For me, telehealth is a lot more convenient, mostly because I have kids and I don't have to get a babysitter," she said. "I like doing it in the comfort of my own home and being able to have a conversation about what's going on in my life."

She plans to return to in-person appointments at some point, so she can also be a part of group therapy, which will include social distancing and wearing a mask.

Besides receiving mental health services, Precola is grateful to have a strong support system of family and friends.

"Not everyone is going to be aware of your mental health unless you reach out. You have to set those guidelines, hey, if I do this or I act weird, ask me what's up. It's about being aware of your triggers and informing everyone else around you," she said. "It helps me know that when a situation becomes too much, I have people who will support me. It helps me know that I am not alone in my struggle."





Tiffany Jones has a tattoo on her left forearm that says My Brother's Keeper.

"To me, it represents my need to give back to those who are struggling with mental health or addiction, because I can relate," Tiffany said.

About 10 years ago, Tiffany was a Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center client, struggling with her own mental health. Today, she is a peer behavioral health specialist with the Bert Nash Center Supportive Housing team.

It's possible to get better.

The road to how she got to where she is now was traumatic and painful. It included the loss of her stepsister and her grandfather, a marriage that ended in divorce, toxic relationships, drugs, manic episodes and two suicide attempts. From the time she was 21 until she was 27, Tiffany was hospitalized at least 10 times. Her first suicide attempt was six years ago.

"I had given up," Tiffany said. "I was coping by drinking and partying. My dad called me and said why are you partying so much. Someday

when you have kids you'll understand, he said. Ever since I could remember, I wanted to be a mom. I thought, I don't want to pass this on. And it broke me. I came up with a plan and two days later I did it. I took a lot of pills, like hundreds. I was so toxic, because I had taken so much. I was in a coma for five and half days. They said on day two I would never make it. If I did, I was going to be vegetable. They asked my family to take me off life support."

Five and a half days later, she woke up.

"I took a nap that changed my life forever," Tiffany said. "I feel like I am alive for a purpose. That's where my faith comes from. I asked God, if you have a purpose for me, save me. If not, let me come to you. That's all I asked. I woke up and I remembered what I had prayed."

Tiffany continued to struggle for the next two or three years. She was delusional. She thought everyone was out to get her. Her second suicide attempt put her back in the hospital. The last time she was hospitalized was June 5, 2017.

When Tiffany first came to the Bert Nash Center as a client, she was going through a rough time. She was a smoker at the time, and she was outside of the Center when Amy Hammer, a therapist on the Bert Nash Dialectical Behavior Therapy team, saw her.

"I was losing it," Tiffany said. "My emotions were all over the place. Amy said, 'Oh, honey,' and gave me a hug and I just hugged on her. I didn't want to let go. She said, 'Tiffany, I'm a DBT therapist and I think you could benefit from it.' I didn't know what DBT was at the time. But I went to groups and individual therapy with Amy. Amy Hammer, I feel like, saved me."

Tiffany has bipolar disorder, but it doesn't define who she is.

"I say I have it; it's not who I am," she said.

Fast forward years later, and Tiffany is a peer support specialist through the Douglas County Peer Fellowship program, the position she started out in at the Bert Nash Center. She recently reached out to Amy Hammer and asked if she remembered her.

"She said, 'I do and you're doing so well.' I said thank you, you were one of the first ones who grabbed onto me," Tiffany said. "That's what it's about. That's why I'm passionate about it. That's why I love working here. It's more than a job; it's something I really care about." So, now when I work in crisis, I can really relate to those people. I tell people, even if you feel like it will never get better, it can. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can happen. It's possible to get better."

Tiffany got better. She is now remarried, to the man who was her first boyfriend. They have a 2-year-old girl she calls her little miracle.

"He's so supportive," she said of her husband. "We support each other. It doesn't mean I don't have down days, but I don't have delusional days. I just appreciate life. If I do have to get help, I always tell my husband, I'll let you know."

Tiffany feels like she has come full circle.

"God bless a broken road, you know," she said, "because we're here."

"This poem specifically relates to my own lived experience and journey with mental illness."

— Lisa Cyrus, Bert Nash Center peer support program manager



Something New

I saw you on the pages of inspirational magazines.

I heard echoes of you from motivational speakers and the like.

I longed for you at different periods of my life.

When you finally came to me, my imagination of you fell short of your reality.

Though not by surprise, you came softly, in your own way and at the right time.

You didn't make a grand entrance yet your presence was for real.

You exchanged places with the old and mundane with no fuss or fight.

But with clear expectations that you were not willing to share the light.

You did it brilliantly, quietly stepping in with ease. You took your position gallantly.

You are a breath of fresh air -so fair, so tangible in character. You are the sort of thing that some spend countless time and resources yet, not get. So, my response to you is,

"Yes, You. I do accept." With open arms, I welcome you – my new life, my transformation."

When she needed help, Bert Nash was there.



What was your mental health journey that brought you to Bert Nash?

I actually started seeing a therapist back when I was in eighth grade because I had depression on top of typical teenage angst that I had a hard time dealing with. I also started getting medication for depression from Bert Nash at that time that went on for maybe a year or two.

However, it wasn't until I was 22 that I believe I was in dire need of Bert Nash's services. I got pregnant at the age 16 and gave birth to my daughter, Bailey, at 17. My only real support came from my single mother, Dorothy, and my younger sister, Nicole, whom Bailey and myself lived with.

I tried very hard to live up to everyone's expectations of me from before I had gotten pregnant. "You are so smart," "You are so talented," "You are capable of being anything you want to be when you grow up." I enrolled at KU full-time, started working a telemarketing job full-time, got an apartment for me and Bailey, and was sending Bailey to what I deemed the best preschool she could go to, Raintree Montessori. I got some student loans so that I could buy a cheap car and pay the deposit on my apartment. It all felt really great at first. But by the time May got here, my grades were failing, the engine in my car had gone caput, and I hated my job. My plate was just too heavy, and it all became too much. I had a mental breakdown, stopped going to my classes, kept calling in sick to work, and was very suicidal. I confided in my mom, who took me to Bert Nash to speak with someone. They helped me get into Stormont Vail in Topeka, where I stayed for a few days and got the immediate help that I needed. When I got out, Bailey and I moved back in with my mom, and family helped me pay my rent and Bailey's preschool tuition. I started seeing a therapist weekly, got diagnosed, and given medications all through Bert Nash. I honestly have had a lot of obstacles and past trauma to overcome, and although I'm still working on it, Bert Nash has helped a lot.

“ *I consider myself fortunate because I have almost never felt the need to hide my mental illness from people, or to feel ashamed of needing to receive services.* ”

How did you learn about Bert Nash?

My mother (Dorothy) is a social worker and since I was still a minor when I first started receiving services through Bert Nash, it was all through her that I learned about it.

How long have you been coming to Bert Nash for services?

I had just turned 22 when I started and have just turned 36. I haven't seen a therapist non-stop the whole time, but 14 years now.

How has Bert Nash helped you?

It has actually helped in a lot of ways. The things that stick out the most for me are some of the things I learned in IOP, which I attended right after leaving Stormont Vail when I was 22. I learned how to realize when I'm having ruminating thoughts and to recognize them for what they are, and also some of the different techniques to distract from those thoughts. I will admit, that every once in a while, I'll need a refresher, but those skills have been a big help. I also joined a forgiveness group (to help me to forgive myself and a few other people), which helped me to begin to work out some of the past trauma from my life. It is also because of seeking therapy through Bert Nash has helped me to finally start to realize that it's not the end of the world if I haven't reached certain societal milestones by a certain age (college degree, career, marriage, more children, having a car, moving out of my mother's home, etc.), and that it doesn't mean that my life has been a failure. In fact, as my therapist was quick to remind me, a lot of people who have reached those milestones don't report being any happier than people who haven't.

What do you like about meeting with your therapist via virtual therapy?

I actually really like meeting via televideo and hope that it remains an option even after this pandemic is no longer an issue. In the past, there have been times where I was really depressed and even getting out of bed was a huge chore. If I could have literally just rolled over and talked to my therapist on a screen from my bed, there would have been a lot less no call, no shows on my record. I also do not currently have a vehicle, so I have to borrow my mom's car to get to Bert Nash normally, which is inconvenient for her,

because she drives a lot for her job. Again, not having to leave my home but still being able to talk to my therapist and work on the struggles I'm trying to overcome has been very convenient. I honestly don't feel any difference between meeting in person and meeting via televideo except for the convenience. I feel that I am getting the same amount of help that I would be receiving in person.

Have people you are close to been supportive of your decision to receive services?

I consider myself fortunate because I have almost never felt the need to hide my mental illness from people, or to feel ashamed of needing to receive services. Like I said, my mom and sister, along with the rest of my mother's family have always been supportive, and everyone I consider a good friend is very supportive as well, and even glad that I'm receiving the support I need.

Can you describe your relationship with your therapist?

At first, I will admit that I wasn't sure if working with Connor would work. I'm not usually comfortable around men my age, especially in the role as therapist. I had only ever had one other male therapist, but he was older which made me more comfortable. It didn't take me long to realize that I had nothing to worry about when it came to Connor, though. He's very professional, but still manages to make me feel like he knows some of the struggles that people my age go through, which is comforting. He's also not so serious that I feel like I can't be my normal sarcastic, smart-aleck self, which is also comforting. He's also very patient, which is good because I can be very long-winded, detailed, and just talk non-stop for a long time!

from the **Governing Board**

SHERIFF JAY ARMBRISTER (Joined the Board in January 2021) *I've always strived to help those who cannot help themselves and Bert Nash embodies that so selflessly and wholly. I am honored to be a part of the Bert Nash family and look forward to serving our community.*

GENE BAUER *We are so blessed to have the Bert Nash Center in our midst. Having a personal passion/commitment to mental health issues since graduate school, I feel that by serving on the BNC Board I am able to support its programs and offerings that are vital to the overall mental health of our community.*

CLAY BRITTON *I support the work of Bert Nash because caring for the mental health of our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers is one of the best ways we — as a community — can care for each other.*

BRAD BURNSIDE *My involvement as a Governing Board member is based on the remarkable and powerful impact Bert Nash has on the lives of Douglas County residents.*

GENE DORSEY *Regardless of ability to pay, Bert Nash supports all of Douglas County with quality mental health care. We all face mental health challenges at some time in our life and it is important to keep Bert Nash strong for ourselves, our family, and our neighbors.*

MARTHA GAGE *While I support all of the assistance available through Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, I am especially supportive of the work it does in the WRAP (Working to Recognize Alternative Possibilities) program. Sometimes our young people find themselves in confusing and frustrating times and situations. The WRAP specialists are able to give our students help, guidance and support as they work in the various schools in Douglas County.*

MATTHEW HERBERT *I support Bert Nash because I believe a community can only be great when a real, genuine effort is made by all members of the community to ensure that those most in need within the community are supported. From my experience and perspective, the mental health needs of a community are often put secondary to more immediate needs such as food and housing. As such, I've made it a personal goal of mine to support community mental health to make sure it is neither forgotten nor ignored.*

KIRSTEN KUHN *Mental and behavioral health concerns have such wide-ranging impacts for people, now more than ever. Encouraging and providing proper care helps our community members achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals. Bert Nash supports a thriving Douglas County, which is why I support Bert Nash.*

TINA ROSENTHAL, CHAIR *I support Bert Nash because I want to help break the stigma associated with mental health. Bert Nash has served our community well and I want to ensure that they will be able to continue the good work they do in our community.*

PATRICK SCHMITZ, CEO *For 70 years, the Bert Nash Center has offered a safe space for our community. Even during a pandemic, we continued to provide that safe space, whether in person or virtually. The Bert Nash Center has never stood stronger than during these uncertain times.*

STEVE SPLICHAL *Bert Nash staff are doing critical work every day to support students and families. We understand the critical role played by WRAP staff who help to meet students' social-emotional needs. Academics and social-emotional health go hand in hand.*

Additional Governing Board Members:
Barbara Ballard, Kathy and Matt Brown and Lucia Orth

from the Endowment Board

JERREE CATLIN, CHAIR *Good mental health is so important for a healthy quality of life and Bert Nash provides a wide range of services that help support a healthy Lawrence community. Bert Nash services have always been critical for those in crisis, but almost everyone has a time in their lives when they could benefit temporarily from the services at Bert Nash. If you or someone you know have lost someone dear, are having problems with a child, or suffering from loneliness because of isolation, Bert Nash services can help improve your quality of life.*

JANE FEVURLY *It is important that I support Bert Nash and their mission because good mental health is so critical to overall health. It is vital that mental healthcare receives the recognition and support that it deserves to make Douglas County a healthier community. Supporting Bert Nash is such a pleasure.*

CHRIS HUTCHENS *Jalon and I feel so drawn to Bert Nash for what they provide to our community. There is such a massive gap between the number of people needing services and what is available that we just want to help anyway we can. The gap is money, education, and additional resources to help ease the burden of care.*

JON JAMISON *Mental illness affects all walks of life. Bert Nash helps people to cope and to become healthier and live a life with more meaning. Supporting Bert Nash helps our community in many different ways, and it is an honor to be associated with so many professionals that truly care.*

DANA KNORR *A strong community mental health system like Bert Nash is foundational to making Lawrence and Douglas County a great place to live. I'm committed to supporting open conversations about mental health within our community and look forward to contributing new ideas and continued growth at Bert Nash.*

ANNA OLIVER *I love advocating for an organization where its sole purpose is to make sure the mental health/well-being for people in the community is their priority. That they are constantly finding new and better ways to make sure people in the community have access to their services on all levels and committed to make sure EVERYONE does. I support everything Bert Nash represents and so proud that I am able to commit my time to volunteer and help be a voice.*

PATRICK SCHMITZ, CEO *I want to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all of our supporters, and especially our Celebrate Bert Nash Society Members, who helped us navigate through these difficult times as we continued to provide mental health supports and treatment to our fellow community members. None of our achievements would be possible without you!*

JEAN SHEPHERD *Over the past 40 years I've seen Bert Nash's commitment to providing for the mental health needs of our community never waiver; instead, it has grown with determination and creativity. I choose to be part of that growth as the needs of our community, our children and families, and our vulnerable populations continue to increase, especially as we all deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects.*

KELLY WELCH *The Bert Nash Center serves so many whose needs would otherwise go unrecognized. Mental health is as essential as physical health, and both deserve compassion and treatment.*

Additional Endowment Board Members:

Alice Ann Johnston, Barbara Nash, Amy Northrup and Myra Strother

Why is Bert Nash important to you?



CATHERINE SHENOY

What would you say to others about why they should support the Bert Nash Center, especially during a pandemic?

In this time of isolation, people are suffering more than ever. They are more afraid than ever to reach out. Bert Nash has had a great response with tele-sessions and other safe consultations, but those things aren't reaching everyone and it is always more expensive to change delivery modes.

How did your involvement with the Bert Nash Center begin?

I first found Bert Nash in 1977 when we were having family problems, and I needed some help. As our children grew we occasionally needed other resources at the Center.

Why is it important to you to support the Center financially?

My father was a psychiatrist in Lubbock, Texas, and thought that community mental health facilities were very important. He was a strong advocate for all community mental health centers and helped start several in West Texas. My mother is a drug and alcohol counselor. I worked in my father's office growing up. I got to see close up early in my life how mental health care can make a huge difference.

Our experience had been very positive at Bert Nash even when I didn't have much money to pay. Now that we have more financial resources, I'd like to support Bert Nash so that everyone who needs psychological help whether for short bumps in the road or for long-term chronic conditions has a place to go. We need to eliminate the stigma for those getting mental health treatment. All of us need help at some time.



SHANDA AND JOE
HURLA

How did your involvement with the Bert Nash Center begin?

My involvement started by being invited to a Discover Bert Nash Tour. The tour was so well done and I realized the essential services that Bert Nash is playing in our county. I can still remember the impactful stories that they shared on the tour about the work that Bert Nash does with community training of Mental Health First Aid to public schools having WRAP workers. A simple invitation to discover more about Bert Nash was all it took.

Why is it important to you to support the Center financially?

Joe and I strongly believe that our community is only as strong as the resources and services it has available to its residents. Communities thrive when their residents are thriving. It was more than 20 years ago that we moved to Eudora - prior to having our four sons. We wanted a community that works hard to support each other. We have found that Eudora plays an

integral part of Douglas County, therefore we need to do our part in supporting countywide services, including mental health services. We have experienced first-hand the importance of WRAP workers in our schools, access to therapy, and the importance of understanding mental health holistically. We want Bert Nash to thrive, we want our community to have access and take advantage of their services. We can play a small part in that success by giving financially.

What would you say to others about why they should support the Bert Nash Center, especially during a pandemic?

Lately, we have been talking about the intensity of stress that the pandemic has placed on all individuals. We have seen it particularly with our own family, with our involvement with Eudora Schools, and the greater community as a whole. It is evident that every individual needs mental health support at some level during this unprecedented time, whether it is taking a walk with your family or shutting off Zoom or making an appointment with a counselor. These activities and resources play an essential role in each of us handling the intensity of our situations right now. I think it is easy to make the connection that if I am feeling stress by daily life in 2020, then others are as well. So, I believe at this time more than ever supporting the resources that are available like Bert Nash is worth it.



**ASHLEY AND STEVE
MCCASKILL**

How did your involvement with the Bert Nash Center begin?

I started working with Bert Nash on their marketing materials while I was a designer at Design Brilliance. I was asked to re-brand their Discover Bert Nash program, so I went to the center to participate in a tour. Although I grew up in Lawrence, I'd never set foot in the building. The tour inspired me to make sure that more people in Lawrence are aware of where the center is and all the different kinds of help Bert Nash provides. Taking

your first steps inside the doors, even if just for a tour, breaks down a huge barrier to getting help and helping other people recognize this amazing resource we are so lucky to have.

Why is it important to you to support the Center financially?

Our picture of the perfect community is one in which no one is forgotten and everyone has equal access to health, happiness, and opportunities. If today we have resources to give back to our community, whether that be money, time, or expertise, we believe it's our responsibility to do that. If the day comes when we are in need, we hope that we will have helped build a community that can catch us when we fall, and that our neighbors who have resources to share will be giving back.

There are a lot of wonderful organizations in Lawrence, and I know we all wish we could give every non-profit all of the resources they need. Steve and I chose a handful of organizations who are doing work that aligns with our values and working on the issues about which we are passionate. We support Bert Nash financially because we have seen first-hand the impact they have on people suffering with mental health challenges today, and we recognize their efforts to continue to build evidence-based services and programs to support the ever-changing needs of our community.

What would you say to others about why they should support the Bert Nash Center, especially during a pandemic?

I don't know anyone whose life has not been affected by a mental health challenge of some kind. The older I get, the more I learn that so many families have kept histories of mental health struggles a secret because of the stigma attached to someone being less than perfectly happy and "to sane." These histories would have allowed younger generations to recognize their own trauma, symptoms, and challenges. This stigma is ruining, and literally ending, lives. It is so very important that we all learn to recognize that our mental health is as unique and fluid as our physical health and that resources like Bert Nash are as necessary to the health of our community as primary care doctors and emergency rooms.

SANDRA SHAW SPIRIT AWARD RECIPIENT

Sara Godinez

SARA GODINEZ, Supported Employment/Education Development and Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment program manager, was the 2020 recipient of the Sandra Shaw Spirit Award, the highest award a Bert Nash Center staff member can receive. The presentation was conducted during a virtual all-staff meeting in September. She was joined by her husband, Mike, and their son, Alex.

"There have been lots of highs and lots of lows this past year and lots of anxiety and stress. But there have been plenty of high points and one thing for sure, this pandemic has made me very grateful for the things I do have in my life. Unquestionably, one of the things I'm grateful for is the honor of working here at Bert Nash," Sara said.

"I am very in awe of the members of the Spirit Committee; they have all been an inspiration in some way for me. I hope in some small way the work that I do here is making a difference, for you, for our clients, for our agency, for the community. So, it is an honor to be among this great group of people," Sara said. "I think in these dark times that celebrations are more important than ever. I feel like I am kind of accepting this on behalf of everyone because I see how hard everyone is working. I see your dedication and your commitment to your clients and to the people that you

work with. That's what makes Bert Nash such a great place to come to every day. So be sure to celebrate yourselves and to celebrate each other, because this is an amazing place."



LYN SMITH AWARD RECIPIENT

Linda Robinson

I am deeply honored to be the recipient of the Bert Nash 2020 Lyn Smith Award. It means so very much to me to think that my friends and colleagues at Bert Nash find me worthy of this prestigious award.

It was my great fortune to join the Bert Nash Endowment Board at a time of growth and innovation, at a time when resources were becoming more and more scarce. It was a time when we envisioned a new way of articulating and sharing the mental health needs in Douglas County. It was a time when we needed to talk about mental illness, about removing the stigma, and about Bert Nash. It was a time when I personally had the opportunity to become a part of a working team to help people Discover, Celebrate and Build Bert Nash. I cherish and value my years on the Board during which time we saw the reinstatement of WRAP in our schools and the passing of the bond issue to build the Mental Health Crisis Intervention Center. I couldn't have worked with a better team of professionals and volunteers, or for a better cause.

LINDA ROBINSON

former Bert Nash Endowment Board member

Pioneer Awards

Douglas County is deeply honored to receive the Pioneer Award from its longtime partner Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center. Commissioners and administrative staff are committed to helping those who struggle with mental illness and substance abuse in our community. Through community partnerships — such as our partnership with Bert Nash — we can truly make a significant difference in supporting our most vulnerable community members.

In recent years, Douglas County has leaned on Bert Nash more than ever to help tackle the evolving and complex needs of our community. We are truly grateful for their expertise and guidance. They have devoted countless hours to helping improve our system of care. Together, we are proud of what we've accomplished, including:

- Reducing the number of people with mental illness in the Douglas County Correctional Facility.
- Launching a new Peer Fellow program that connects trained individuals who have lived experience with members who struggle with mental illness and addiction.
- Expanding the WRAP program so it is available in all four school districts in Douglas County.
- Providing more psychiatry services in Douglas County.
- Creating Transitions, a congregate-style living setting that will serve up to 12 clients of Bert Nash and help them in their recovery, expected to be complete this fall.
- Creating a new Crisis Center, expected to open by early 2022, that will be open 24/7 and provide observation, medication assisted detox, crisis stabilization, and respite beds.

During the past decade, as state resources and funding have significantly decreased, Douglas County has worked diligently to help fill the void. In 2018, Douglas County provided an additional \$1.9 million in its budget for mental health services through the vision of retired County Administrator Craig Weinaug. And, thanks to Douglas County voters, a quarter-cent sales tax was approved in November 2018 in an effort to continue to improve behavioral health services and facilities.

On behalf of those who live in Douglas County and those who work for Douglas County government, thank you for recognizing this important work. We look forward to the opening of the Treatment and Recovery Campus and working with Bert Nash in continuing to provide and improve services. Ours is a tremendous partnership, providing important, life-saving work for years to come.

PATRICK KELLY

Douglas County Commission Chair



Thank You, Sponsors

A special thank you to our sponsors who, without their generous support, our virtual fundraiser would not have been possible: CEK Insurance, Mid American Credit Union, The Trust Company, US Bank, LMH Health, SS&C Solutions, and Maceli's Banquet Hall & Catering.



Since the Community Health Facility, 200 Maine Street, opened in 1999 and until early in 2020, city employee **DALE SEELE** was the building manager. During that time, he became a friend and honorary staff member of all three agencies that call the building home: Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health and Visiting Nurses Association. On the 20th anniversary of the building in 2019, the first-floor meeting room was named the Dale Seele Meeting Room. Dale passed away on July 5, 2020.

REMEMBERING TWO FRIENDS OF THE BERT NASH CENTER.

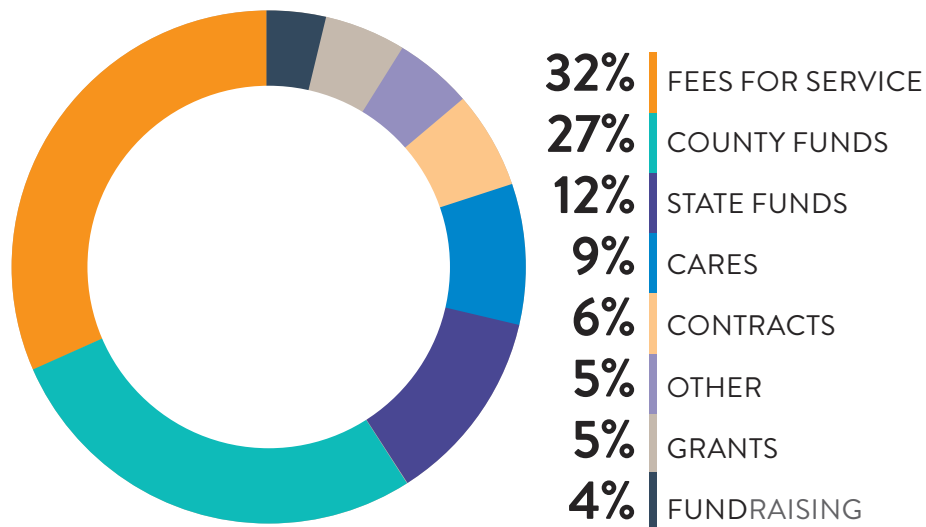
We were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of our friend **DALE WILLEY** on Aug. 14, 2020. We will forever be grateful to Dale for his support of the Bert Nash Center and mental health services in our community.



BERT NASH

By the Numbers

(For Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2020)



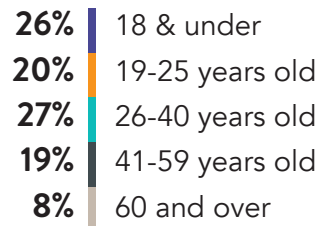
OPERATING REVENUES

\$13,581,276

\$4,314,047

Cost of uncompensated services (write-offs for sliding-fee scale and insurance write-offs) Bert Nash provided in 2020.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS



4,618 People Served

3,172 ADULTS

1,446 CHILDREN

RESTORING LIVES

1,984 New admissions in 2020

FEMALE 54%

MALE 46%

We serve a diverse community and aim to make our services accessible to everyone.

BUILDING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

465 people were trained in 41 Mental Health First Aid classes. Only one class was held from March 15-Aug. 1 due to the pandemic. All but three classes after Aug. 1 were virtual classes.

285 people attended one of 23 Discover Bert Nash tours; 18 tours were virtual.

THE MISSION of the Bert Nash center is to advance the mental health of the Douglas County community through comprehensive behavioral health services responsive to evolving needs and changing environments.

**BERT NASH VALUES:
COMPASSION, INTEGRITY,
EQUITY, ON A
FOUNDATION OF HOPE.**



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