

Stefanie Robinson

My name is Stefanie Robinson. I am from Medina, Ohio and I am a person in long-term recovery. For me that means I have not used drugs, alcohol or eating disorder behaviors since July 9, 2008. After a seemingly successful life in high school, college, and career in corporate America, I found myself struggling. On the outside, I had it all together but behind the mask and behind closed doors I was battling a 14 year battle with a life-threatening eating disorder, drug addiction and alcoholism. After failing at an outpatient program, I spent 90 days in residential treatment and finally found freedom in recovery! I have been a voice and face of recovery ever since. Over the past 10.5 years I have sat on the boards for the Ohio Citizen Advocates for Addiction Recovery, and Eating Disorder Advocates of Ohio. As a recovery advocate, I was named an Ohio Captain for the 2015 Facing Addiction National Rally in Washington DC. As the owner and CEO of Simply Bold, a communications company, I spoke professionally for 7 years-sharing my story of addiction with people around the state of Ohio. I shared my story with over 100,000 people through speaking engagements, TV appearances, radio interviews and magazine and newspapers stories. I loved speaking but I continued to see the addiction issues in my own community were not getting better but getting worse. I continued to see a lack of resources, lack of community, and lack of recovery support! I decided to take break from speaking and get trained as a recovery peer support specialist/recovery coach. I have spent the past several years doing peer support/recovery coaching in Medina County. I work one on one with clients modeling recovery and addressing all aspects of life in the hopes my clients will achieve long-term recovery in the real world. I love recovery coaching...but it was not enough. We had very few resources for those struggling with drugs and or alcohol and we had no true community for those desiring to live in sustained recovery. As a person in long-term recovery, I was not ok with this. I saw too many decisions being made about recovery without asking people in actual recovery. The recovery community needed to come together and be heard

We started having the conversations that we needed to have...but it was not enough. We held rallies, lit candles and created awareness...but that was not enough. We needed more and I was committed to more. We know that extended abstinence is predictive of long-term recovery. We know a person that gets to the 5 year mark has an 85% chance of life-long recovery but we had nothing beyond treatment and sober living? Where do people go and “do” recovery? What recovery-oriented places do we have for community, education, and fun? We had no true community of recovery! There was a big gap in my community and I was committed to finding solutions to fill that gap.

We decided to create a true community of recovery, a place beyond treatment and sober housing. A safe place where people can go and “do” recovery. A peer run, peer-driven organization with a physical location where we speak the language of recovery, support multiple pathways of recovery, and integrate recovery peer support in every aspect. We are creating an organization that supports loved ones impacted by addiction, educates, creates awareness, and advocates on behalf of the recovery community. We started organizing several years ago but in 2018 Hope Recovery Community (HRC) was born. HRC is a recovery community organization (RCO). We are a non-profit organization led and governed by representatives of our local community of recovery. We organize recovery-focused policy advocacy activities, carry out recovery-focused community education and outreach programs, and provide peer-based recovery support services.

HRC is dedicated to increasing sustained recovery by providing hope, support, advocacy, and resources to those impacted by addiction.

I am the Executive Director of HRC. We have a Board of Directors and Advisory Council, with the majority of those on our board being people in the recovery community. We believe in nothing about us without us! By leveraging strong partnerships with a local SUD provider, our local ADAMH Board and the faith-based community, we have been granted a building and first year startup costs. In 8 weeks we will open a recovery hub. This hub will be a recovery community center with all things recovery every day of the week. We are creating a true community of recovery. We are excited...but just getting started. There is much work to do!

We can recover. We do recover. Every Saturday we feed over 100 people at our local recovery dinner. Those impacted by addiction and community members come together...all in the name of recovery. I get the honor and privilege to see individuals turning their lives around, connecting into purpose and dreaming big! Families are being put back together, employers are finding new employees, and communities are getting new contributing citizens! Healthier individuals make for healthier families and healthier families ultimately equal healthier communities. We must unite, come together and face the addiction crisis head on. We believe we are working towards creating communities that no longer fear addiction but embrace recovery!

I am grateful for the funding that supports substance abuse treatment and recovery. Thank you for that. But I am here to tell you we need more and we need less restrictive funding. Yes- opiates are an issue but let's get honest, we are in the midst of an addiction crisis. Alcohol still kills more people each year and 3x the amount of meth was seized in my county last year. ITS NOT JUST HEROIN! We need the funding to continue with less restrictions. This funding is an investment in our communities and in our future. This funding will change individuals, strengthen families, empower communities, and potentially shift the tide of the current addiction epidemic we are battling!