

# TOWNHALLER

Your Monthly Townhall II Newsletter

## Townhall II Helpline

330.678.HELP (4357)

It has been another rough year for everyone that has taken an emotional toll on all of us. Covid 19 and its after effects has shown light on unaddressed and under-addressed mental health and addiction issues across the country. While I could talk for days about this, I would rather talk about one of the programs that is, and always has been, there for the Portage County community to help address any of these stressors 24/7; the Townhall II Helpline. They are often a service that goes unrecognized, sitting quietly in the front of the building. Let me tell you about the service the helpline team provides and how amazing they are.

Our Helpline was the initial grassroots service that started it all here over 50 years ago. It was initially organized by volunteers and still to this day continues to utilize a modified model of staffing from interested community members looking to help others. Our trainers and core management team have over 50 years of combined crisis intervention experience and both of them started as volunteers here at Townhall II. The training that new hires and volunteers receive is far above the industry standard at 80 hours of crisis intervention-specific course work, call simulations, and several months of on-site supervision prior to handling calls independently. This means that when you call our Helpline, you are speaking with a highly trained individual.

Now, let me tell you about our Helpline team. One specialist is learning how to play the piano in her spare time, one has exceptional marketing talents, and one is an outstanding baker! The other day, I walked by to say hello just to be offered the best peanut butter brownie I have ever had. Several of them really like Dr. Pepper, a love of mine as well. Anytime I walk down the hallway, I always get smiles and waves from them sitting behind the glass walls of the phone room. The commonality of the group is the love they have for the community and the callers. They truly care about the people on the other end of the phone. I hear it in their voice when they are speaking to callers. They always go that extra mile for them whether it is a warm handoff to another community partner or walking someone through how to use an addiction resource website. It's not every day that you get this kind of compassion as an entire team. I feel lucky to say, that we certainly have it not only at the agency as a whole but most definitely in our Helpline program.

**Helpline Team past, present, and future.....thanks for all that you do!**

Much Love,  
Tamera Hunter MA, PC  
CEO

### What's New in this Issue:

New Year's Resolutions · P2

Happenings of the Month · P3

Let's Talk About It · P4 & P5

Staff Spotlight · P5

## Making New Year's Resolutions?

As the new year begins, it is once again time for many people to make New Year's resolutions. Resolutions can take many forms, such as quitting a bad habit like smoking, eating less junk food or starting a new routine like exercising or volunteering in their community.

New Year's resolutions are great to have, but change can be difficult. Here are ten suggestions to help you stick to your New Year's resolutions.

1. Be realistic
2. Create a measurable goal
3. Plan ahead
4. Start with small steps
5. Make a "pros" and "cons" list
6. Talk about it
7. Reward yourself
8. Track your progress
9. If you fall off track, get back on quick
10. Limit number of resolutions

The New Year may feel like a clean slate, which can lead to these resolutions, but remember that resolutions are a subtype of goals, and we can set goals all year. So, if your New Year's resolution fails, don't be afraid to set new goals for yourself!



“

*Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day!*

*-Michael Josephson*

# Happenings this Month

January 1st:

HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!  
2022

January 3rd:

Festival of Sleep Day

Festival of Sleep Day is a favorite holiday to catch up on a little sleep. Whether it is all day, a full 8 hours, or just a power nap, enjoy the day sleeping! Cozy up in bed, on the couch, or any other comfortable place.

January 11th: Human Trafficking Awareness Day

This day gives an opportunity to understand the harms of human trafficking and its impact on many lives. According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. This crime occurs when a trafficker uses force, fraud or coercion to control another person for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or soliciting labor or services against his or her will.

**National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1 (888) 373-7888**

January 12th:

National Pharmacist Day

This day honors pharmacists, and recognizes their important role in medical care. If you are in the pharmacy today, make sure to thank them for all the work they do!

January 17th:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy."  
- Martin Luther King Jr.

# Let's Talk About It

## A Mothers in Recovery Support Group

Recovery is difficult for everyone. However, mothers who are in recovery face their own unique challenges. Townhall II has been given a wonderful opportunity to support mothers in recovery with a group designed to fit their circumstances and needs and appreciate the unique challenges they face. Thanks to funding from the Mental Health and Recovery Board, Townhall II has started a collaboration with dedicated and passionate mothers to create Let's Talk About It; A Support Group for Mothers in Recovery.

For some moms in recovery, financial hardships are a major factor. Many are either left on their own to support herself and her child (or children), and as a single mom, may not be able to afford baby supplies, living expenses, and recovery treatment all at once. Moms in recovery may have to take multiple jobs to make things work. In that case, she'll have to pay a babysitter if she doesn't have a family member to watch her kid(s), incurring even more expenses. Those that do have family members that can assist with childcare may find themselves in a unique co-parenting situation; where they are co-parenting their own child with their own mother or father. This can lead to frustrations about which parenting techniques are best and weaken the family dynamic. In addition, mothers in recovery may face harsher bias than fathers in recovery. For all these reasons, it is important for them to have proper support and education.

The support group brings mothers in recovery together twice a month to talk about the issues that only other mothers in the same situation would understand. This space provides moms in recovery with a safe, understanding, and judgment-free platform. The groups are mostly peer-led with a family educator and case manager on hand to keep the conversations flowing in the right direction. Having staff on hand allows the mothers to not only get support and encouragement from their peers but resources from area professionals as well. As needed, educational components are added to fit the group's needs. Some components that have already been introduced include discipline, parenting techniques, communication, conflict resolution, and legal assistance. Our end goal for the program is that participants will learn healthy coping skills, be able to advocate for themselves, and know where to ask for help when they need it. (Continues on page 5)

Because we understand that mothers in recovery are trying to stay afloat financially on top of doing the hard work of motherhood at home, we offer both family dinners and free childcare during the program each night. Our hope is that this will eliminate any possible barriers to attendance and make it possible for interested moms to find time for the group.

**The group meets on the first and third Monday of every month in Ravenna from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. If interested, please contact Sarah McCully at [sarahmc@townhall2.com](mailto:sarahmc@townhall2.com) or (234) 236 – 4803.**

# Staff Spotlight

## Amanda Burke



**Start Date:** November 2013

**Current Title:** Problem Gambling Prevention Specialist

**Background into the field of work:** "Problem gambling prevention started being funded at the end of 2012/2013 when the first casinos/racinos opened in Ohio. Since starting work in PG prevention and treatment, Townhall II has become well known across the country for the work being done through the agency. Sports betting will be legal in Ohio starting in mid 2022, so our prevention efforts will adjust accordingly. I have been fortunate to get to serve on the Ohio Problem Gambling Advisory Board, to be on the Problem Gambling Network of Ohio Community

Empowerment committee, and to be the chair of the National Council on Problem Gambling Social Media and Communications subcommittee. It's been an amazing experience getting to collaborate with PG professionals across the state and country. Working at Townhall II is a dream of mine. I love the work Townhall II does, and am so proud to be able to represent our agency in various capacities. I also work full time at Kent State University as an Associate Professor in the Health Education and Promotion department. This year I was able to develop a course titled Gambling, Gaming, and Health."

**Fun Fact about Amanda:** "My four-year-old son Jett is 1 of 25 children in the United States to be living with Multiple Sulfatase Deficiency, a terminal genetic disease. He was diagnosed at 9-months-old. We were told he would live to be two, but he continues to defy the odds! Because so few children around the world have this disease, we now have family from all over the world who support us near everyday from India, Germany, Ireland, Finland, Spain, Argentina, and across the United States. Starting in January, I will be the president of the United MSD Foundation Board of Directors. You can follow Jett's journey to help fund a cure on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, @readysavejet"

**Favorite Quote:** "If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be". - Maya Angelou