

CENTERED

THE NEWSLETTER OF DAVID LAWRENCE CENTERS

Spring 2021

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From the CEO | Scott Burgess

**“We’re on
the MOVE...”**



There are many ways I could describe the last couple of years, particularly since COVID-19 crashed into the world. “Unprecedented,” “challenging,” and even “exhausting” are a few words that come to mind.

So does “resilient.” Even with all the uncertainties brought on by the pandemic, DLC continued to provide life-changing services and support 24/7/365 and rapidly adapted to robust telehealth capabilities through our Virtual Care Center, which has grown exponentially during the pandemic. And, sadly, we’ve seen record levels of need for our acute care inpatient services. Overall service levels are running at almost 300,000 per year now. While other aspects of the local economy may have slowed down, we could not and did not.

In the midst of all this, I am thrilled to announce two very positive developments with DLC that will better enable our organization to serve the needs of our community well into the future.

The first is a new **Central Receiving Facility**, a much-needed expansion project being made possible through a one-cent local sales surtax referendum approved by Collier County voters in November 2018.

The new \$25 million mental health facility will be located next to DLC’s main campus on Golden Gate Parkway. It will allow for

significant expansion of inpatient mental health and addiction services. Our existing facility simply cannot keep up with the rising community demand, but the new facility will enable us to better meet both current and future needs.

The DLC team is working closely with Collier County staff and engineers to ensure this new facility not only increases capacity but continues to offer the highest quality clinical care and therapeutic environment for which DLC is known. Its anticipated ground-breaking will be later this year, with opening in 2023.

I am also pleased to announce that the **David Lawrence Foundation** has been officially merged into **DLC**. In so doing, we are eliminating any redundancies, costs and confusion by donors and others in our community. The new structure will also allow us to fully and efficiently align our strategic growth and development efforts. We are now one organization, with one Board and one staff of dedicated professionals focused on one critical mission.

I look forward to sharing more about our exciting expansion opportunities being planned in the very near future... stay tuned for more “we’re on the move” news!

If you have any questions about these items or any other elements of our mission, please do not hesitate to contact Emily Budd-Schepperly, Director of Development, at 239-304-3505 or emilyb@dlcenters.org.

As always, I am deeply humbled by and grateful for your support!

Scott Burgess
President & CEO

Keep Your **Mental Health in Mind** this May (and Always)!

By DLC Children's Outreach Specialist **Jessica Lira, M.S.**

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, here are some helpful tips to strengthen and protect your mind:

Prevention is Essential

The correlation between prevention and wellness is understood in many aspects of our daily lives to improve and protect our health. For instance, we wear a seatbelt when riding in a vehicle to prevent injuries in a car accident, and we brush our teeth to prevent cavities and maintain good hygiene. Our mental health needs prevention too! Be sure to take time for yourself to decompress and practice self-care regularly. Just 15 minutes throughout the day can go a long way!

Listen to Your Body

Emotions and stress have a large impact on overall health and contribute to how we think, feel, and act. Muscle tension, body aches, and headaches take a toll on a person's overall

mood and how we interact with others. Spend a few minutes during the day relaxing your muscles and take a few slow, meaningful breaths. Pairing this with some light stretching increases oxygen and blood flow throughout the body. A win all around!

Experience the Present

While some traditions may not be possible during this time, reflect on what changes can be made to the usual routine. Establishing new traditions is a great way to improve family bonding time and to focus on something fresh and unique.

Set Future Goals

In addition to focusing on the present, maintaining a positive outlook for the future further strengthens our mental health. Set healthy goals for yourself, and identify the steps

needed to achieve them. Whether it is a short-term goal or a long-term goal, keeping our mind focused on achievement and progress continues our personal growth. Everyone defines success differently, so be sure to set your own goals and what success will look like for you.

Be Open to Change

Just as important as setting goals is knowing when adjustments need to be made. We are ever-evolving, and the environment around us is as well. This means that constant evaluation of our goals and progress is needed to ensure that we still have the passion and realistic capabilities of reaching what we set out to do. Altering your course for the better—or making necessary edits to stay within the boundaries of what you can achieve—is part of the journey!



Pablo Veintimilla, a true champion for DLC

We express our deepest gratitude to DLC Board of Directors member Pablo Veintimilla for his **13 years** of service and leadership. "Pablo has been a dedicated advocate and champion for DLC," said CEO Scott



Burgess. "It has been an honor to work in partnership with him to expand services in order to meet the vital behavioral health needs of thousands of children, families and adults each year. His tireless efforts and support have been, and are, deeply appreciated."

Congratulations to the following annual DLC **"Employee of the Year"** award winners:

Kim Esworthy – *SHINE Award*

Deb Lewis – *SHINE Award*

Fernanda Guerra - *Above and Beyond*

Gabby Galanti - *Above and Beyond*

Brooke Macias - *Above and Beyond*

Dave McKay - *Above and Beyond*

Emily Korolevich - *Rookie of the Year*

Jeff Sabean - *Rookie of the Year*

Amy Peters - *Leading the Way*

Abigail Pitts - *Leading the Way*

Tammy Seyler - *Employee of the Year*



Virtually Saved... Literally!

How online therapy turned one woman's life around.

Stacey was afraid to go out in public during the pandemic.

Worried about catching the potentially deadly virus, she chose instead to isolate herself as much as possible, mostly removing herself from the outside world. For a person who has struggled with loneliness, depression, and suicidal thoughts, this self-imposed quarantine could have been a substantial detriment to her mental health.

Instead, it saved her life. Here's how...

After about a decade of homelessness, drug use, unhealthy relationships, self-injurious and suicidal behavior, and a jail sentence, Stacey was referred to DLC by the Collier County Mental Health Court in March 2020. At 48 years old, after a lifetime of pain and a lifestyle of risk, she felt like she was finally ready to turn things around.

But that was exactly when the world changed, when everything essentially shut down because of the pandemic. Since Stacey didn't want to go out with this new virus on the rampage, she opted to take advantage of DLC's Virtual Care Center, participating in sessions — including trauma therapy — via online video.

She says it's the best thing that could have happened.



“If my counseling sessions were held in person at DLC, I don't think I would have opened up as much and gotten to the root of my problems,” says Stacey. “For me, it's a lot more comfortable to do it from home.”

“I think the online sessions helped my therapy. I was more relaxed at home. I don't feel like I do when I'm at a doctor's office. I feel like I'm talking to a friend at home. So I opened up and shared more.”

Stacey is just one of hundreds of DLC clients who have been helped since the Virtual Care Center services launched in early 2020. Online sessions became necessary because of the pandemic, but even once fully beyond the days of COVID, DLC will continue offering Virtual Care for clients who are right for it for the same reasons Stacey embraces it: *Many people are more at ease talking from their own kitchen table over a cup of coffee or tea.*

It all started in her childhood

Stacey's challenges began even before she started attending school. Both parents were involved with drugs and struggled with addiction, and she says her grandparents were not much help either: “I didn't really feel loved by anybody.”

Sexually assaulted by a family friend at a very young age, Stacey first attempted suicide at age 6. She says she was playing on a swing set when her only friend in the world suddenly said she no longer wanted to be friends. After the friend walked away, Stacey tried to hang herself by the ropes on the swing. Her grandparents took her to a clinic for counseling.

By the time she was a teenager, Stacey was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anxiety. Years later, she was also diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder.

Most of her adulthood consisted of substance use, harmful relationships, risky behavior, and several suicide attempts. “I was hurting myself with the way I was living,” Stacey says. “I didn’t care if I lived or died.”

Fast forward to a little more than a year ago, when she was referred to DLC for help... and where her story became literally a virtual success, thanks to Virtual Care.

“I think I’d be dead if it weren’t for DLC,” Stacey says. “Their help has saved my life. Things are going well now, and I’m happy.

“For the first time in my life, I wake up looking forward to the day ahead.”

Friends like you make success stories like Stacey’s possible.

Thank you for your support!

DLC and Wounded Warriors of Collier County Provide Veterans Increased Access to Behavioral Health Services

Through a new collaboration with Wounded Warriors of Collier County (WWCC), David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC) will establish a new Veterans Services Program designed to build meaningful partnerships with Veterans and their families to help them function better at home, in the community, on the job, in educational settings and throughout life.

An anonymous supporter has generously donated \$100,000 to launch the program to assist Veterans suffering from behavioral health issues including post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and co-occurring substance use – challenges that are common among today’s combat Veterans returning from deployment. Funds were made available through a donor-advised fund with the Community Foundation of Collier County.

The program will develop a system of care that ensures availability of and access to a broad, flexible array of evidence-informed, community-based services and supports for Veterans and their families that addresses their physical, emotional, social, and educational needs – including traditional and nontraditional services as well as informal and natural supports.



The funds will be used to hire a case manager who will be a Veteran peer as well as provide incidental funding to assist Veterans with emergency housing, food, and other costs. The case manager’s primary responsibility will be to help Veterans access evidence-informed, trauma-specific treatments.

An integral part of the Veteran Services Program will be to create an emergency team comprised of Veteran-based community partners including WWCC, DLC, Home Base SWFL, Collier County Veterans Treatment Court as well as Veteran advocates to assist Veterans in crisis. The Veterans Care Action Network will be led by the DLC Veteran case manager and will assist in the identification of Veterans and their families who may be at risk for mental health, physical health, vocational/educational, housing, employment, forensic/legal or other challenges.

“WWCC is excited to work in collaboration with DLC to provide additional resources for Veterans and their

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DLC receives grant from **BANK OF AMERICA** for **HOPE HOME** Recovery Residence

A \$5,000 grant from Bank of America will go toward the capital expenses DLC needed to purchase and renovate its first certified recovery residence: **Hope Home**.

Hope Home is a six-bed recovery residence for men that opened in June 2020 and is located less than one mile away from the DLC Main Campus on Golden Gate Parkway. The cost to purchase the home and complete the renovations for the five-acre, five-bedroom residence totaled over \$630,000. To date, 63 donors contributed \$400,000, including in-kind furniture contributions from St. Matthew's House and the former home owner.

The Bank of America funds will be applied to the \$200,000 needed to cover the remaining costs.

Due to a lack of certified recovery homes in Collier County – which are often full – DLC staff and Board of Directors saw a great need to help ensure the best possible treatment outcomes for individuals in substance use recovery, especially in light of the opioid epidemic, where relapse rates and overdose risk are higher for those in early recovery. DLC's Hope Home is one of only four Florida Association of Recovery Residences

(FARR) certified homes in Collier County. FARR-certified homes provide accountability, a structured and healthy new environment, skill-building, goal setting, and peer support.

Hope Home is supported by recovery support specialists with sustained recovery and provides a substance-free and affordable living option for individuals in early recovery. The home is designed to help individuals transition from DLC's Crossroads residential treatment program or other substance use recovery programs into daily life in the community. The mission of Hope Home is to enable personal growth and powerful life transformations in a safe, sober, and peer-led environment where individuals foster connections with the recovery community, thrive in their responsibilities, and work toward fulfilling and successful independent living.

"It is an honor to partner with Bank of America and donors from throughout the community to add the Hope Home transitional recovery residence into our full continuum of care," said Scott Burgess, DLC CEO. "Our goal is to address the ongoing, changing needs of individuals, and Hope Home offers those in need enhanced time to build long-term recovery. These are community issues and they require community solutions. It is critically important to ensure care is available for all those in need, and we humbly welcome others to partner with us as well to fund the remaining costs for Hope Home. No donation is too small and every contribution matters."



To donate to Hope Home, visit [DLCenters.org](https://www.DLCenters.org), call 239-354-1455, or e-mail donorcare@DLCenters.org.

For more information about DLC's Hope Home admission criteria, e-mail HopeHome@DLCenters.org, or visit [DLCHopeHome.org](https://www.DLCHopeHome.org).



THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR 2021 SOUND MINDS VIRTUAL LUNCHEON A SUCCESS!



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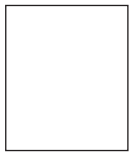
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DLC and Wounded Warriors of Collier County Provide Veterans Increased Access to Behavioral Health Services

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families living in Collier County,” said Dale A. Mullin, President of Wounded Warriors of Collier County. “The need for this resource was identified by Veterans and families as one of the top two priorities families need during times of crisis. This resource will help save lives and support our mission of no Veteran left behind.”

Improving access to services for Veterans as well as increasing evidence-based practices is outlined in Collier County’s new five-year strategic plan for mental health and addiction services. The Board of County Commissioners-approved plan serves as a road map for community partners, donors, and government leaders as they mobilize responses to address associated current and future challenges.

“We are so grateful to the generous donor who provided funding to help launch these most important services for our heroes who served our country so valiantly,” said Scott Burgess, DLC CEO. “This additional support will help many struggling Veterans in our community not only survive, but thrive and we couldn’t be more excited to be a catalyst in that process.”

