



Newsletter Spring 2018

## A Word From the Director

As spring slowly emerges, the earth will gently awaken, the ground will begin to thaw and new life will start to sprout as the songbirds arrive to share their joy of spring. There is a parallel process with the women who enter Mahala's hope. As they come into the safe and supportive setting, they begin to gently awaken to their inner voice and begin the healing journey that will help them sustain long term recovery.

Mahala's Hope is a nonprofit organization that serves women who have already received primary treatment for substance use but still need assistance before rejoining their communities. Our transitional recovery residence boasts a holistic, nature-based approach and an equine component through which the women learn about themselves by working with horses.

In 2017, we celebrated the first anniversary of our recovery residence being open. Most importantly, we helped 24 women return to their families and communities with confidence and independence following treatment. Of those 24 women, 13 currently have jobs, and 10 secured housing with the help of Mahala's Hope's. Two infants were born drug and alcohol free.

The year 2017 also marked the following accomplishments:

- We reached full capacity for the recovery residence.
- A group from Leadership Fond du lac collaborated with area business' to build a tack room in the stable area.
- Collaborated with Garden of Eden where the women work in the organic gardens and then bring the fresh vegetables to cook with.
- First annual Fundraiser was a huge success.
- Additional counselor was hired.
- Two new offices were added to accommodate added staff.
- We focused on promotion and surpassed our goals by establishing a strong awareness in the region.
- We hosted several vicarious trauma workshops allowing first responders and others to heal and receive support for the work they do.

I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you who have so graciously supported us on this journey and continue to do so.

In Peace,  
Sandy Hardie



## What's New

In December, Jaime (left) joined our team as counselor for the residential program. Jaime has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. She is a licensed Substance Abuse Counselor and is currently completing a Master of Social Work (MSW) graduate degree from the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh. Jaime began her employment as a case manager with ATTIC Correctional Services – a non-profit agency in Marathon County from 2008-2012 and then with the Department of Corrections from 2012-2017. Most recently she worked as a Treatment Specialist who provided substance use disorder services.

Jaime currently holds a position as a MSW Student Representative board member with the National Association of Social Workers, and is also the MSW Student Representative for the UW-Oshkosh Social Work Department. She served on numerous committees while employed with the Department Corrections, including as a peer supporter for the Employee Assistance Program. In the past she has served as an active member for the Portage County Alliance on Alcohol/Drug Abuse Prevention and the Marathon County Domestic Violence Program, as well as has volunteered with the Relay for Life – Fond du Lac and the Dodge County Restorative Justice program.

"I am honored to be a part of Mahala's Hope, and truly believe people who have a substance use disorder have the ability to be successful in all avenues of their lives. I appreciate Mahala's Hope strength-based and holistic approach, and it is a privilege to be able to work with and support women in recovery."

"I was a client at Mahala's Hope for 90 days. Now that I have returned home I have had some struggles, but with being able to go back to Mahala's Hope for the weekly women's support meeting and also being able to call and talk with staff 24/7 I have been able to keep my sobriety! I now have ambition to really focus on my future and really want to achieve my dreams! Without their support, I don't know if this would have been possible. I am ever so grateful."

## Artist Corner

"Art is something that speaks to people. It helps me physically, mentally and emotionally as an individual in a broken society."

- Morgan Lorraine

Expressive arts helps with creative expression and promotes healing. It does not require artistic ability, more importantly it supports the process of exploring ones inner self. For those that have difficulty in verbalizing their thoughts and emotions initially, expressive arts can offer them various modalities in which to do so. We work closely with Marian University interns from the Expressive Arts program. The women in our program look forward to those groups and what they learn about themselves each time. To the right is a piece called "You on the Inside" by a client of Mahala's Hope.



# Stable Thoughts

Gigi Here –

I am the newest member of the herd at Mahala's Hope. I arrived in September from Swisher Iowa.

Michelle Jayne, who is a friend of Mahala's Hope, donated me to the ranch. She knew it would be a good fit for me so the arrangements were made and here I am. It was so easy for me to adjust to the new herd and we have become fast friends. I absolutely love it here, the setting is wonderful and my work is so meaningful. It took me a bit to understand this role, but my curiosity and natural love of



learning new things made it easy. Many people have noticed my playful side and enjoy connecting with that part of me. My new team of staff and volunteers have worked diligently to make sure all of my needs are met with the utmost compassion and understanding.

One woman's experience with Gigi:

"At first Gigi did not want anything to do with me. I had to get grounded first, then we connected while I was grooming her. It was the first time in my recovery that I was in touch with my emotions. She helped me realize I needed to get totally honest with myself and that it was necessary for me to release everything if I was to be grounded. When I did that it felt like a huge weight was lifted off of my shoulders."

## Volunteer Corner

"I grew up with horses and am an animal lover, so volunteering for Mahala's Hope sounded like a good fit. After volunteering here, I feel very fulfilled. It takes me out of myself and gives me the opportunity to help someone who is truly struggling. It also helps to keep me more positive. The most rewarding part has been being able to help others with their process. It never ceases to amaze me how much of an impact the program has on the participants. I also love what I am able to learn from the horses from each interaction. Being a part of this has definitely given me a different perspective on how horses can help us."

- Dani





# Wish List

You can see that we ask for all natural products and septic safe paper products. We not only want to cut down on the chemicals we are exposed to, our goal is to be intentionally living in an environmentally responsible way. We thank you for your support.

## **ARTS & CRAFTS**

Acrylic Paints  
Beads  
Charcoal Pencils  
Paper/Sketch Pads

## **BATH**

Natural Soaps  
Liquid Hand Soap  
Toilet Paper (septic safe)

## **LAUNDRY**

Natural Soaps  
Detergent  
Cleaning Agents  
Fabric Softener

## **PERSONAL CARE ITEMS**

Conditioner  
Deodorant  
Feminine Care Products  
Kleenex  
Shampoo

## **MICELLANEOUS**

Journals  
Adult Coloring Books

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If you would like to be a donor or volunteer, please feel free to contact us.

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