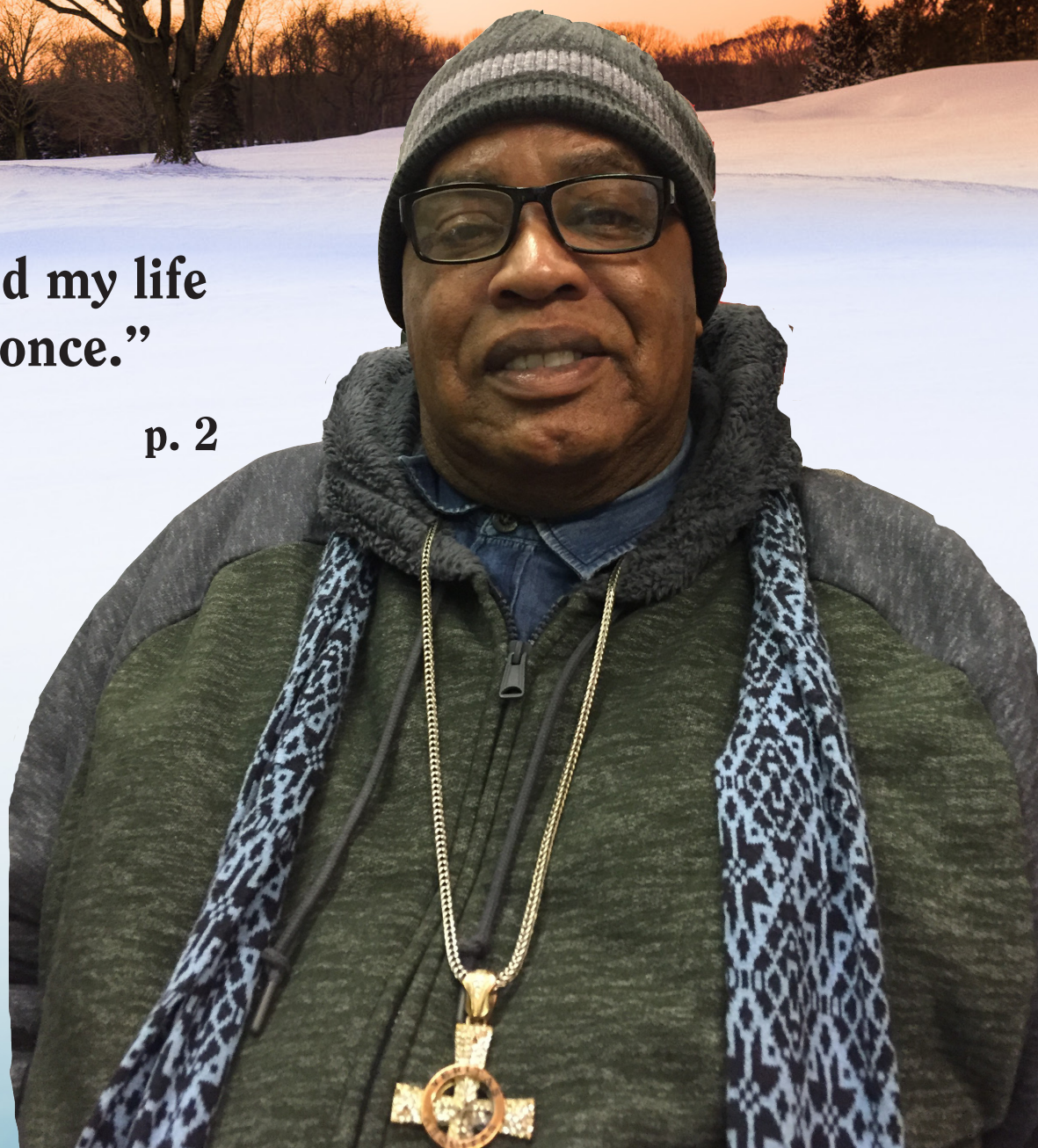


# *Bright Horizons*

Winter 2018

**“BHcare saved my life  
more than once.”**

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## BHcare Believed in Me

"BHcare saved my life more than once. I had graduated from their Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) back in 2013. I was on the right track and for the first time in my life, I started feeling better about myself. I stayed clean and sober for over two years and life was good.

Then my past caught up with me. I found myself in trouble with the law for something that happened years ago. I had to deal with a court case in another town. Since I was put on probation, I had to stay in that town for a while and I could not get to BHcare. It threw me off track. I got depressed and was full of fear. I relapsed for a week and tried a local IOP program but it did not work for me. I knew I had to get back to BHcare and finish the good work they started. My sister even insisted that I go back to BHcare. She saw the difference they made in my life.

I enrolled in BHcare's IOP again. Things started to look up and I once again began to feel wonderful about myself. My case worker kept it real for me. She kept me grounded and focused on working on bettering myself. I worked hard and could see it was all uphill from here.

My case worker referred me to the Recovery Academy to become a recovery coach. She believed I could do it and that I would be very good at it. She even found funding through BHcare for me to enroll in the course.

A lot goes into becoming a recovery coach. I learned so much about people in recovery and I learned even more about myself. Becoming a recovery coach is my way to give back and help others. I hope to continue my education in this field and look forward to the next step. I am so glad for BHcare's help. I'm not only in recovery but will be helping others in their recovery, too. I am very blessed to have BHcare in my life and hope to be a blessing to others." ~ David

*Your support is helping David, and many others, build happy, healthy and productive lives.*



## Ending Stigma



"I am the education coordinator and paramedics coordinator at Echo Hose Ambulance Training Center in Shelton. Community education is a large focus of our department and my number one goal is to reduce mental health and substance abuse stigma.

We need to change the image about mental health and drug abuse that people have had from 20 or 30 years ago. In their minds they see some lowlife in an alley with a needle hanging out of their arm. That's not reality. We are talking about sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, someone's mom or dad; all good people.

I've been working with Pam Mautte, Director of Alliance for Prevention and Wellness (APW), since 2015. She provides training on drug trends and prevention to the paramedics and new EMTs. This is a tough crowd full of alpha-dog personalities but Pam is helping to change their attitudes toward drug abuse and mental illness.

We can better our community by teaching compassion and empathy. I know firsthand how bad the drug epidemic is throughout CT. It is killing our young people at an alarming rate. My son died a few years ago from a heroin overdose. Since 2016, our department has given out over 500 Narcan kits. These kits give people a second chance at life. Sometimes it takes 15 or 16 chances, but I believe we should never give up on anyone.

We are also collaborating with APW to host a community health fair. We want to give families a place to find resources and support they need especially those dealing with an overdose loss.

We do our best to give back to the community and want people to have a new outlook on mental health and substance abuse. Working with APW has been a godsend. Pam is very passionate about her work and is helping to change attitudes." ~ Pat Lahaza

*Your gift helps provide programming and education to help save lives and end stigma.*

## MSP Volunteers Give Back

"I have been at MSP for about a year. After I retired I wanted to do something to keep busy. I have always donated to the store to support the domestic violence program. The program is so important to women especially when children are involved. I've experienced emotional and mental abuse in my past and people didn't take it seriously. I know the damage any kind of abuse can cause. I'm grateful others can get the help they need and I want to do my part to help make sure these services are available to everyone.

I work in the back room taking donations. I am here once a week and am surprised at how many repeat donors I see. The donors are as passionate as I am about the cause and are always dropping off clothing and other items." ~ Karen

"I've been volunteering here since 2014. I wanted to give back to the community and I believe in the cause the store supports. When I was growing up, women had no place to go if they were being abused. They stayed in their relationships no matter what happened. I can remember a neighbor of mine being hospitalized several times with injuries caused by her husband. The women back then just lived with the abuse. There was no help like we have today with programs like The Umbrella.

I volunteer two days a week in the donation center. I make sure the glasses and cookware are sparkling clean. I know what sells and what doesn't and only put out merchandise that I would buy myself. We have so many people from all walks of life donating to the store; some drive up in Mercedes and others with cars held together by duct tape. The community is very supportive. I am always surprised by the quantity and quality of the donations. Karen and I both love to shop the store after we leave the backroom. You never know what treasures you will find!" ~ Denise

We truly appreciate the generosity of our donors and try our best to get every dollar possible out of the items donated. Over 25 volunteers work tirelessly, seven days a week, sorting through box after box of donations. We are also grateful for our customers that continue to support our store by shopping each week. And soon you can shop from the comfort of your own home, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with our new online store! Details will be announced soon.

*Thanks to your generosity, MSP has provided financial support to BHcare's The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services for over 30 years.*



**Karen Garbini & Denise Stromp**

## A Bright Future

"I brought Michelle to PCRC to help her with her panic attacks and anxiety. She was a bright 17-year-old but seemed depressed and never wanted to leave the house or go to school. She got to the point where she wouldn't go into a store on her own, she couldn't order food at restaurants and she avoided any kind of interaction with people. She couldn't sleep, felt hopeless, had very low self-esteem and had no appetite. Her anxiety was so crippling that our primary care doctor gave her medication which she took on a daily basis.

Michelle attended outpatient therapy at PCRC once a week and they helped her manage her meds. At first, she would not go without me. But over time she learned calming strategies and how to deal with her anxiety. She learned relaxation techniques and guided meditation which she started using daily. Within two months, she was able to cut back on the medication and after five months she stopped taking it altogether.

Michelle started attending school again on a regular basis and was able to complete her senior year. She gained confidence in herself and was accepted to an out of state university with a scholarship. I am happy to say she is now flourishing in college and is actively engaged in college life in ways she never thought she was capable of doing. PCRC has given me back my daughter." ~ Michelle's mom

*Your donation helps improve the well-being and enhance the quality of life for thousands of children and families.*



# The Umbrella is All I Have

"I didn't know what to do. He beat me so bad. My eye was black and blue, the left side of my body was swollen, my lip was bloody and I had bruises and cuts all over my body. I couldn't believe this was happening to me. And the emotional abuse was as bad as the physical abuse. This man is not the man I fell in love with. He is a stranger to me.

I had just moved to this country and knew no one. I can't speak English. I was so scared. When the police arrived, they referred me to The Umbrella's Assistance, Support and Counseling Program. I began working with a case manager who was able to speak for me and assist me with safety planning. She referred me to Legal Aid to get a restraining order but I knew he would fight it. He was obsessed with ruining my life.

I moved into the shelter for a brief period of time then was able to get a place of my own. But he continued to stalk, threaten and harass me. My case manager was able to communicate my fears and concerns to the police. They understand that I was and still am in real danger.

I continue to work with the police and have told them about my history with my abuser. It is very emotional and I am receiving counseling at The Umbrella. The Umbrella is all I have. I don't know what I would do without them." ~ Lorena

*Everyone deserves to live a life free from fear and violence, and your donations make this possible for thousands of domestic violence victims and their children each year.*



BHcare is supported by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Connecticut Health Foundation, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Derby Discovery Committee/William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, Griffing Trust, Katharine Matthies Foundation, Norma F. Pfriem Foundation, the Guilford Community Fund, the Guilford Human Services Council, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, The Valley United Way, United Way of Milford, The Valley Community Foundation and the Towns of Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Derby, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, West Haven and Woodbridge.

BHcare is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation Rehabilitation Facilities and is licensed by the Department of Public Health.

BHcare is a partner agency of CommuniCare, Inc.

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We apologize for any omissions or oversights. If your department, foundation or municipality has been overlooked, please bring it to our attention.

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