

September, 2021

# VOICES



## Recovery Month Edition

### Community Events

#### Walk a Mile

Join Community Mental Health Authority (CEI) and the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan (CMHAM) for the Walk a Mile Rally.



**DATE:** Wednesday, September 29th **LOCATION:** State Capital Building  
**WHO:** Anyone is able to participate in the walk

#### DETAILS: Why We Walk:

- To enhance public awareness and remind legislators that Mental Health Matters.
- To end the stigma related to mental illness & developmental disabilities.
- To encourage equality between mental health & physical health care coverage.
- To promote whole health wellness, and show that our voices can make a difference.

#### TIMELINE:

- 12:30pm to 1:00pm: Advocacy Walk around the Capital Building
- 12:30pm to 1:30pm: Check-In Tent and pick up giveaways
- 1:30pm to 3:00pm: Rally Begins, includes speakers and statements

#### For more information:

- For information and to view the WAM packet, please visit: <https://cmham.org/education-events/walk-a-mile-rally/>
- For additional questions, please call Customer Services at 517-346-8244.

### More Events

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness Walk: September 26th from 1pm to 3pm in Adado Park, Lansing  
Link: <https://supporting.afsp.org>
- NamiWalks Your Way Grand Rapids: October 2nd from 8am to 12pm at Davenport University - 6191 Kraft Ave. Grand Rapids.  
Link: [www.namiwalks.org](http://www.namiwalks.org)

### Need Help?



Do you have any questions or need help accessing any part of this newsletter? Contact Customer Service at 517-346-8244 or [customerservice@ceicmh.org](mailto:customerservice@ceicmh.org)

### Writing Submissions



We are still taking submissions for our Writer Spotlight! Do you have a story that you think could be shared in a future issue of this newsletter?

Make submissions to Customer Service at 517-346-8244 or [customerservice@ceicmh.org](mailto:customerservice@ceicmh.org)

For news and information from CMHA-CEI, visit our website at [www.ceicmh.org](http://www.ceicmh.org) and Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CEICMH](http://www.facebook.com/CEICMH).

# Highlighting Recovery Stories during Recovery Month: Branda's Story

Born and raised in Lansing, Michigan, Branda comes from a long line of substance abuse in her family. Branda had been pre-exposed to substance use at a very young age due to her mother and father abusing alcohol and other substances in the home. "We grew up in that kind of environment", states Branda

Unfortunately, Branda's story is more common than many people think. According to the National Institute of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "It is estimated that more than eight million children younger than age 18 live

with at least one adult who has a SUD that is a rate of more than one in 10 children. The majority of these children are younger than age 5. The studies of families with SUDs reveal patterns that significantly influence child development and the likelihood that a child will struggle with emotional, behavioral, or substance use problems".

Branda started using marijuana and other drugs to rebel against her parents, and to cope with previous trauma that she had experienced when she was 13 years old. Running away from home and skipping school were just a few of the ways that she would act out against her parents. The more in-depth her drug use became, the more influential Branda's friends were in supporting her substance use. "In your teenage years you are very influenced by your peers", states Branda. At 16 years old, Branda found herself pregnant with her first child. Dealing with the abuse of the child's father, she found herself abusing substances even more. Eventually, the father's parents coerced Branda to give them full custody of her child.

Through this additional trauma, Branda found that when her drug of choice would change, so did her group of friends. "Gradually, my friends changed and worsened with their own addictions. When you are into smoking pot, you have a set of friends that you smoke pot with. When you are using crack cocaine, you will gravitate towards a heavier using group of friends. It's a different dynamic. When you are hanging out with friends who are smoking pot, you're on the sofa, binging, laughing, and having a good time. Doing cocaine or meth, you will want to go hide out in bars and other areas". Eventually, she would lose one set of friends and gain others. The evolving door of friends that Branda kept in her life would change consistently.

After years of substance use, Branda found her mental health state worsening. Due to her past traumas, Branda was using substances as a way to cope with anxiety and depression. At the age of 25 years old, cocaine was no longer having the same effect as it did before, until a boyfriend at the time introduced Branda to meth. "When I got sober, I learned that everyone has their "yet" moment. "I haven't done this drug yet", or "I have not gotten to that point yet". Eventually, if you keep using a certain kind of drug, that becomes not enough. Your ambitions lower over time and some people will gravitate towards a different drug of choice". This will not happen to every person that experiments with substances, but the likelihood is there due to peer pressures and having peers around you that influence your decision making abilities.



# Recovery Month Stories: Branda Finds Hope and Courage with Sobriety

After being introduced to meth, Branda obtained her second offense and was in trouble with the law. At 30 years old, Branda faced her first “nudge from the judge”, which gave her an ultimatum to get sober, or to face prison time. Ultimately, this opportunity gave Branda a second chance at life.

When asked what steps she took to turn her life around for the better, Branda explained, “I found god. It’s the knowing that he is there. It is the knowing that I can go to church, listen to a service and it will hit home every time. If I am struggling, God is who I turn to”. Branda has also been attending meetings and has continued to meet with a therapist.



By finding sobriety, Branda found soon enough that she would have to overcome obstacles and disappointments to sustain her recovery. “All of my friends, who I would use with, when they found out that I was sober, they just disappeared. I thought that they were my friends. I found out early on that I had to leave them friends behind if I wanted to stay sober. I knew if I went back to hang out with that same group friends, I would relapse and start using again”.

Branda had to learn how to set boundaries with her group of friends, and to put her family and children first. By finding god, setting boundaries, putting her family first, and enlisting in an outpatient substance abuse program at Mid-Michigan Recovery Services recovery was possible. Branda would attend group three days and would have an hour of counseling every week. “I can tell you that the hardest part of sobriety is constantly being tested. Setting boundaries is so important for yourself. You always have to be mindful and aware of yourself and not put yourself in certain situations where you would be tempted to use. I had to learn how to be assertive and learn how to tell people no, including myself”.

Today, Branda has over 12 years of sobriety. Recovery and living a life in sobriety is learning more about yourself, picking up the pieces, and rebuilding yourself. Branda explains this perfectly by sharing, “You have made this mold of yourself, when you get sober, you step out of the drug addicted mold of yourself. Sobriety changes you, so if you were to try to go back, you wouldn’t be able to because you no longer fit into the older addiction mold. I just kept doing things that kept moving me so far away from who I was. The important aspect of recovery is to just keep going”. The person who Branda was before was very in-depth and in looming darkness. Today, Branda is confident that she has changed herself so much that no one would believe that she walked through the fire because she no longer smells like smoke.

Branda is a Certified Recovery Coach at Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties (CMHA-CEI). Branda is able to relate to other individuals who are in need of treatment and recovery services because she has been through it. Branda prides herself in building relationships with her clients.

# Recovery Month Stories: Branda Builds Relationships with Trust at CMHA-CEI

Branda conducts a lot of outreach opportunities at Bridges, Trauma treatment and recovery services because she has been through it. Branda prides herself in building relationships with her clients. Branda conducts a lot of outreach opportunities at Bridges, Trauma Recovery Crisis Services at CMHA-CEI, the Holy Cross, and in many different agencies in the community.

“One of the biggest things that we do at CMHA-CEI is that we share our story. I am not afraid to talk about what I went through to help

someone who is hurting. That is one of the biggest things that I do. I may have a badge on and I may have a title but I am the same as you. I am your peer. I am here to let you know that the exact same thing happened to me and I am here today because I got out. I will share something if it can be helpful for my clients and give them the tools to help them make their own decisions”.

Branda ensures that when she meets with a new client, she helps her new clients build their own plan. These plans are person-centered plans. It is the details that really matter to Branda. Speaking with her clients during an hour long car ride to the nearest treatment center will have an impact on the client for the better. Putting a plan and schedule in place for clients is important to help with accountability for their own individual treatment plan.

Rick Tripp and Branda will provide outreach services to connect with individuals under bridges, in the shelters, etc. Both Rick and Branda will help these individuals get connected to services at CMHA-CEI, such as crisis services, access, bridges, recovery center to detox, and counseling. Branda has been with CMHA-CEI for over two years and loves the work that she does. Branda hopes that by sharing her story, she can share with others who are struggling with substance use disorders.

Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties will be featuring four stories during Recovery Month in September. To learn more about Community Mental Health Authority and the House of Commons, please visit [www.ceicmh.org](http://www.ceicmh.org) to learn more.

If you or someone you know is suffering from a Substance Use Disorder or a behavioral health crisis, please give us a call at 517-346-8460 to access our crisis services. To learn more about our programs and services, please give us a call at 517-346-8318.

Throughout the month of September, CMHA-CEI will be sharing Recovery stories on CEI-CMH Facebook page. To visit our Facebook page, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/ceicmh>



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