

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

Fall 2023



CENTERED

THE NEWSLETTER OF DAVID LAWRENCE CENTERS

A decade of **exponential growth**, and rising to meet the community's **behavioral health needs**

In January 2014, my wife and our three children packed our belongings, said our goodbyes to the Windy City, and headed south toward the Sunshine State. Once there, I would join David Lawrence Centers (DLC) as its new Chief Executive Officer to tackle the challenges and opportunities needed to meet the demand.



CEO Scott Burgess

Now, as I approach my 10th anniversary in this role and as a Southwest Florida resident, it's astonishing to reflect on all that our community has "weathered" together. Through the years, the Southwest Florida area has experienced a global pandemic, a nationwide opioid and suicide epidemic, two catastrophic hurricanes, and the physical and emotional wreckage they have collectively left behind.

As I am sure you have witnessed in your own lives or in the lives of those around you, more children and

adults than ever are struggling with mental health and addiction challenges.

Demand for our services has skyrocketed over the last decade as more people turn to DLC to ask for help with depression, anxiety, substance use, and feelings of despair. This is evidenced by the record-breaking 342,000 services DLC provided to children and adults last year alone. Compared to 10 years ago, that is 177,000 additional services, or a 107% increase. Adding insult to injury, during that same time, our Collier County population has grown by 23% with no end in sight.

I could not be prouder of how the entire DLC team, with the incredible support of friends like you, has risen to meet this overwhelming demand for our life-changing, life-saving services.

While there have been many accomplishments over the past 10 years to celebrate, here are my top five:

1. Addressing critical community concerns by acting on pivotal issues such as crisis support, housing, and the specific needs of vulnerable populations like veterans and seniors. This was accomplished through the launch of Collier County's inaugural Mental Health & Addiction Services Five-Year Strategic Plan. *(For additional details, visit CollierHealthyMinds.com).*

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Meeting the community's behavioral health needs

(continued from front page)

2. Responding to Collier County's growing demand for enhanced services tailored to children. We achieved this by:

a. Expanding the capacity of our Children's Crisis Stabilization Unit, elevating it from four to 15 beds. This expansion is a vital step in ensuring more children can access the immediate care they need during a crisis.

b. Introducing Southwest Florida's first Children's Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP): In a pioneering move, we established the region's inaugural Children's PHP. This program differs from a traditional inpatient program and helps keep families together by offering critical daytime support to children, who then go home in the evening with their parents.

c. Enhancing our prevention and education efforts to increase awareness and address the root causes. This includes initiatives such as Mental Health First Aid, which equips adults to provide immediate support to individuals facing mental health crises.

3. Securing County approval and the necessary funding to construct the groundbreaking Collier County Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC).

This visionary project will more than double the crisis bed capacity in Collier County, marking a monumental shift in mental health services for the future. This expansion isn't just a game-changer; it's a transformative leap in how people access treatment throughout Southwest Florida. By extending the reach of DLC, we're poised to provide effective and comprehensive services to the entire community. From the very young to

the young at heart, mental health support will be accessible and life-changing for all.

4. Fighting the opioid epidemic by expanding our substance use disorder programming through:

a. Helping people who are struggling with substance use disorders, especially opioids like painkillers or heroin, through Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT).

b. Diverting individuals from law enforcement and the judicial system. This means that instead of sending people with substance use disorders to jail or court, they are directed into treatment programs.

c. Launching "Hope Home," a residence where people in recovery from active addiction can live with support as they work to rebuild their lives.

5. Significantly increasing our influence across all service domains - spanning inpatient, outpatient, and community-centered care. This remarkable expansion has enabled us to save people who might have otherwise faced rejection. As the only Baker Act facility in Collier County, DLC is the sole refuge locally for individuals grappling with crises. Through the expansion of our crisis units and the establishment of a receiving center, we've profoundly enhanced our ability to aid these individuals, allowing residents to stay close to their families and loved ones during a critical time.

Winston Churchill famously said, "With great growth comes great responsibility." In our case, I would say that with *exponential* growth comes *exponential* responsibility.

After 10 years of remarkable expansion, the moment has arrived for us to unite against these immense struggles plaguing our community. DLC is here to stand as a pillar

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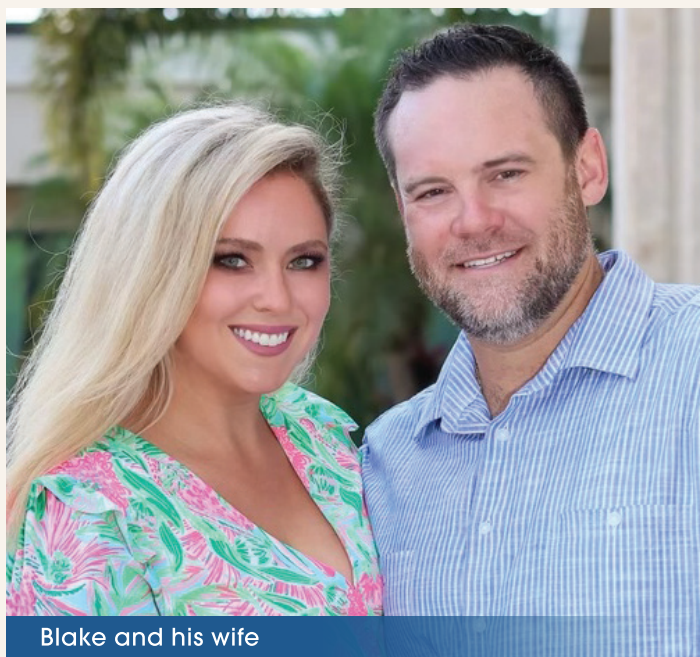
Success Story UPDATE

Celebrating 12 Years of Sobriety

A lot can happen in 12 years. For Blake, every day is better than the previous one.

When Blake committed to treatment at DLC 12 years ago, he got a new lease on life. Now, he has more years living in sobriety than in active addiction.

He also has a beautiful new family, two thriving businesses, and a legacy that his family and community can be proud of.



Blake and his wife

But Blake never forgets the depths of despair from which he came.

Today, Blake maintains his sobriety by sharing his experience, strength, and hope with others in early recovery. He also gives back to the community and is always willing to continually learn and grow.

To help others, he willingly describes his downward spiral into addiction and how it affected his relationships—and nearly cost him his life. He shares the traumatizing details of being robbed and brutally attacked by a drug dealer at age 19, resulting in a brain injury and a stay in DLC's Crisis Unit.

He explains how, over the next 10 years, his life in addiction landed him in jail 12 times. And how, finally, he took a critical step to make a formal plea in court that allowed him to be admitted to DLC's Crossroads residential recovery program.

"Crossroads was the turning point for me. They were truly invested in seeing me succeed. They loved me unconditionally until I loved myself." — Blake

What Blake is most passionate about sharing, however, is how he continues to follow the important life lessons he learned at DLC. One of those lessons, he said, is choosing to live one day at a time.

He also remembers the value of learning from others who had walked a similar path before him. This makes it even more meaningful to him to now share his own story.

The inspiring parts of Blake's recovery include the uplifting anecdotes of how he got married, became a business owner, had a baby, and continues to show up for himself and others. But he also knows life can often present unexpected hardships—including losing his father and grandfather and coping with the impacts of COVID-19. During the challenging times, he stays committed to what he knows works: doubling down on 12-step meetings, leaning into faith, and doing more to help others.

In addition to attending as many as four 12-step meetings a week, "carrying the message" once a week at Crossroads, and attending national recovery retreats, Blake volunteers and supports DLC's fundraisers and other nonprofits. For several years, he has served on the Chip In for DLC golf tournament committee, sharing his professional success by upping his sponsorship level every year.



Blake and his daughter

"I never again want to be that person who walked into DLC 12 years ago," said Blake. "Giving back keeps me sober. I have a debt of gratitude to DLC not only for saving my life, and also for the donors who covered the costs of my treatment when I was there. It's an honor to do whatever I can to pay that back."

Social Well-being for Seniors:

Setting ourselves up for connection and harmony in our later years

By DLC Community Partner Lisa Gruenloh, MPAP, CPC,
Founder and President of Purpose Journey®

While social connection is a fundamental need for our mental, emotional, and physical health, it's never been more challenging to attain, cultivate, and sustain. This is especially true for older adults, many of whom were suffering from loneliness and isolation even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

For individuals to be proactive with their own social well-being and to support others, it's helpful to understand the difference between social isolation and loneliness. According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA), loneliness is "the distressing feeling of being alone or separated," while social isolation is described as "the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly." NIA also makes this important observation: "You can live alone and not feel lonely or socially isolated, and you can feel lonely while being with other people."

Elevating awareness of these conditions allows each of us to identify warning signs in ourselves or people we know – and, hopefully, take early steps to set up ourselves and our loved ones for meaningful connection and harmony throughout our lives.

Here are a few tips for seniors to be proactive with their own social well-being:

Assess your circle and support system. People in your circle serve many different roles, so think about your support system from numerous perspectives:

- Caring friends or family members
- Neighbors, church, or social club members
- Quality and accessible health care providers
- Trusted professionals
- Other people you interact with or who are important to you

Engage in meaningful activities with others. After we retire, it's easy to feel as though we've lost our sense of purpose. We sometimes stop engaging in activities that allowed us to use our gifts to serve others or experience a sense of accomplishment. Sometimes we get used to not being around other people and can become more isolated.

Consider ways to stay connected, including:

- First and foremost, nurture your most important relationships.
- Participate in events with family and friends.
- Find meaningful volunteer activities that allow you to share your time and talents with others.
- Identify groups that share an interest or passion and create or attend special events.
- Take a class or attend a presentation to learn something new and meet new people.

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Key Factors Affecting the Well-being and Mental Health of Seniors

An estimated **20%** of people **ages 55 and older** experience some type of mental health concern, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



- 1** Grief from loss of a loved one
- 2** Reductions in social networks and social functioning
- 3** Frustrations over physical and/or cognitive decline
- 4** Caregiver fatigue associated with caring for a spouse or friend

Mrs. Tennessee International Shares Inspirational Message During DLC Visit

While the road to recovery is not easy, hope is possible. Someone who understands that journey first-hand is Mrs. Tennessee International 2024, Celia Anzalone Bowers.

Bowers grew up as a child caught in the center of a messy divorce and faced serious drug problems as a young adult. Today, she uses her platform to speak openly about how she overcame her challenges, forgave herself for her mistakes, and built a new life.

A special visit with DLC clients in recovery

After learning about DLC's life-changing work, Bowers visited our campus to share her message and uplift those in recovery. She met with clients in our Crossroads residential recovery program, who found their time with Bowers both engaging and encouraging.

Clients who attended also received copies of her book, *Celia's Eyes*, which recounts her recovery journey.

"Thank you so much for your time and the books. You are a true inspiration!"

— Ashley, DLC Client

Bowers is a podcast host and leads workshops centering on transforming pain into something positive and productive as part of her nonprofit, Lead with Love International.



Lee Fox, DLC Substance Use Outreach Specialist (left), and Celia Anzalone Bowers (right)

Tickets Available for 2024 Sound Minds Featuring Brooke Shields



Brooke Shields

Treat yourself to an unforgettable experience while raising critical funds used to address Collier County's mental health crisis.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

AT THE RITZ-CARLTON NAPLES, TIBURÓN

EVENT BEGINS AT 5PM

Sponsorships and tickets are available at DLCSoundMinds.org or contact Victoria Grimaldo at victoriag@DLCenters.org or call 239-354-1445.

SOUND MINDS

PRESENTED BY:



DLC responds to the youth mental health crisis by **expanding services** and **education**, thanks to supporters like the **Collier's Reserve Country Club Women's Club**



(l to r) Judy Tuttle, Peggy Wilson, and Monica Walsh

While hard to fathom, on many days during the last school year, DLC had no choice but to send children who were in crisis out of Collier County to receive help—simply because there was not enough room in our facility. This great and growing demand for children's mental health services in our community has made it critical for DLC to expand.

Meanwhile, a group of women with the Collier's Reserve Country Club (CRCC) was stunned by the crisis and stepped up to create change.

"After learning more about children's mental health concerns, our membership strongly believed that we had to do something to help families address the anxiety and other concerns brought on by outside influences, such as social media and the pandemic," said Peggy Wilson, Co-chair of the CRCC Women's Club Community Service Committee.

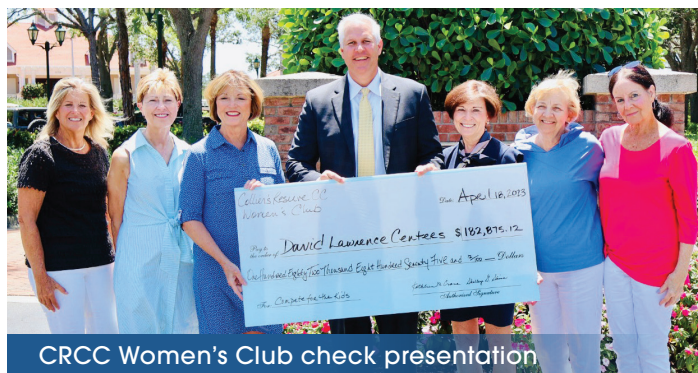
The CRCC Women's Club launched "Compete for the Kids," a fundraising effort that included a series of creatively themed events: a twilight golf tournament and dinner; a bocce and glow-in-the-dark pickleball event; and a happy hour cocktail party with live music, a raffle, and a presentation by DLC CEO Scott Burgess.

Beyond supporting active care for Collier's children, this group of women also committed their efforts to the vital prevention and education services DLC offers.

"The number of mental health struggles that go untreated as well as increasing suicide rates among children gave us pause," said Wilson. "Choosing to support children's mental health was a clear choice and something we know our membership could rally around and make a real difference in the lives of young people."

"We feel incredibly blessed and grateful to have been selected by the CRCC grant committee and so warmly received by the entire community as the recipient of their fundraising efforts this year," said Burgess. "Through their efforts, they have greatly aided in raising children's mental health awareness, decreasing stigma and providing resources to help those struggling not only survive, but thrive."

Thankfully, the generosity of the CRCC's Women's Club and other supporters has made it possible for DLC to increase its capacity to more than 500 children's crisis unit admissions each year.



CRCC Women's Club check presentation

Thank you to the following major supporters of **Compete for the Kids**

**The Brooks and Joan Fortune
Family Foundation**
The Moehring Charitable Trust
Woco Oil Company
Driftwood Garden Center
Germain BMW

Porsche of Naples
Uline
City Mattress
Wine and Nine
Pat Martin Group



Follow the lead of the **CRCC Women's Club**

If the efforts of the CRCC Women's Club inspire you, there's good news: **You** can help us find solutions to the County's mental health crisis. To learn more, send an e-mail to **victoriag@DLCenters.org** that says, "I want to become a part of the solution!" or call **239-354-1445**.

Social Well-being for Seniors

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Confront challenges and take courageous action. We all experience regrets, disappointments, and insecurities in life. When we carry those into our later years, they can become paralyzing and keep us from enjoying a full life and connecting with others. It is never too late to liberate our mind and open our heart.

Here are just a few ideas to explore how a shift in mindset could enhance your relationships – and your happiness:

- Many of the common regrets people have later in life involve people and relationships. Reflect on these questions: Is there someone I need/want to forgive? Is there someone I need to apologize to? Someone I lost touch with and want to reconnect with? Is there something important I need to say to someone in my life? Then, have the courage to be the first to reach out.

- Negative experiences in the past can impact our ability to trust others in the present. Do you find yourself holding back in your relationships or friendships out of fear? It's appropriate to be cautious, just ask yourself if you are giving yourself and others a fair opportunity to develop a connection.

- If you find yourself thinking, "I don't want to be a bother to others," know that there is likely someone in your life who is desperate to understand your needs and be there for you. Be willing to share your needs and concerns, knowing that you deserve the love and support of others.

To read the complete **Social Well-being for Seniors** article, please scan the QR code



DLC | ADVOCATES: Join this group of champions for mental health awareness!

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to get more involved in the Collier community, we have the solution for you! DLC Advocates is open to anyone in the community who is passionate about solving our community's mental health and addiction crisis. The group raises awareness and support for DLC's mission through social events, held in partnership with DLC. Their most recent event was the annual Sunset Cruise aboard the Naples Princess.

In addition to philanthropic fulfillment, DLC Advocates members enjoy networking with like-minded professionals and taking on leadership opportunities.

The generosity of local organizations and sponsors also supports DLC Advocates events, including:

Purpose Journey
Blue Zones Project - Southwest Florida
Halstatt
Aome Art
Zachary & Francesca Whiting
The Waterside Shops



Photos from the DLC Advocates Sunset Cruise

To learn more about the DLC Advocates and how to become a part of this fun and purposeful group, visit:
DLCAdvocates.org



David Lawrence Centers Welcomes New Leaders



Elizabeth "Lizz" Martinez
Chief Financial Officer



Kimberly Dye
Vice President of
Advancement



Miriam Pereira
Senior Advancement
Officer



Amanda Curbelo
Annual Giving &
Events Officer

Meeting the community's behavioral health needs

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for anyone who needs support and help with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

In addition to the construction of the new CCBHC, we're about to welcome several other exciting projects into our future, and I'm excited to share these plans in more detail with you in the months and years ahead.

I feel honored and blessed to work alongside so many incredible champions of our cause. I'm also optimistic about the upcoming opportunities to guarantee that all in our community can receive the best-in-class quality care they deserve and so desperately need—today and for decades to come.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Scott Burgess, CEO

To learn more about our new staff, please scan the QR code



CHIP IN RECAP FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20

Thank you to all of our sponsors and participants for making this event a success!



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