

## Kenny says, “Thank you. Because of you, I’m here.”

*Thanks to your support, Kenny found his path to recovery from opioids.*

If you met Kenny, an enthusiastic young man brimming with energy and inspiration, you would never know that just two years ago, he had no hope for himself... or his future. Addicted to opioids, his life was spiraling out of control. But thanks to you, Kenny’s life is back on track.

Kenny remembers growing up as an, “all or nothing type person.” “When the teacher gave out lollipops, I would just chew it up because I needed that sugar rush – and then I would want more lollipops immediately. I could never just have one of anything.”

That urge for instant gratification combined with regular exposure to alcohol led Kenny to learn to equate having fun with drinking at an early age. “I started drinking at age 12 and I couldn’t stop. I couldn’t socially drink; I was drinking to black out,” he said.

After a brutal assault left him with a perforated lung at age 18, Kenny’s doctor prescribed opioids for him to cope with his pain. His use of opioids quickly became an addiction. “My life went downhill. I worked a couple of jobs to support my habit, but I had nothing to show for it,” Kenny said.

When legislation made it harder to buy opioid pills, Kenny began using heroin to avoid going through withdrawal. “I always thought I was different because I sniffed my heroin – I didn’t shoot it,” recalled Kenny. “But when I

overdosed twice in one day, I realized that my obituary was going to say, ‘He died of an overdose.’ It wasn’t going to say how it went into my body. It was a hard realization.”

After a stay in a detox facility, Kenny found his way to Community Healthlink’s PASSages

program. PASSages provides clinical stabilization services through intensive inpatient treatment for people in the early stages of recovery.

Of his earlier attempt to receive addiction treatment, Kenny said, “The first time I tried this, I tried to do it my way – a ‘cafeteria’ style of recovery. I relapsed very fast.” When Kenny arrived at PASSages, however, he decided to open up more to all the advice and suggestions he received while there.



*Kenny successfully ran the grueling Fenway Park Spartan Race in November.*

“PASSages was one of the best experiences I’ve had in recovery. It was exactly what I needed. The people I was with there...we’re still a family,” said Kenny.

“We talk about the times we had in PASSages that changed us: the first experience of having fun without using anything. Playing board games, watching a movie...you would swear it was the funniest movie we’d ever seen. All of PASSages was laughing at the same time, with tears streaming. It was that good joyful soul laugh that we hadn’t felt in so long.”

*(Continued on p. 2)*

## Kenny's life changed - because of you!

(Continued from p. 1)

At PASSages, you experience that all over again in a safe space.”

As Kenny's recovery has progressed, he's found meaningful employment and gives back by sharing his original spoken word poetry about addiction and recovery with others. More than 200,000 people online have seen Kenny's poem, "You Don't Look Like an Addict," and he performs it in person at recovery programs like PASSages to inspire others.

Kenny credits the staff of PASSages as a major part of his success. "Because of their support and the work that they do...their help in the process was second to none, and I'm so grateful to them." ■

*“PASSages was one of the best experiences I've had in recovery. It was exactly what I needed. The people I was with there... we're still a family.”*

## Lending a hand to make a big improvements

Your help during the United Way Days of Caring created better environments for our clients!

Volunteers from People's United Bank and CHL (below), Reliant Medical Group (page 3 top left), SimplexGrinnell (page 3 top right), and Fitchburg State helped us build raised garden beds, landscape one of our building entrances, and add mulch to a playground so our clients' children can play safely. Thank you!!



Thanks to you, our generous volunteers, for joining in Day of Caring projects across CHL!



## New grants mean new beginnings for our clients

Our programs could not provide critical services to clients in need without the support of generous community partners like these!

generously supporting our “Moving Beyond Depression” program that helps postpartum mothers learn how to cope with and move past depression so they can bond with their babies.

### Greater Worcester Community Foundation

CHL recently received generous funding from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation to support our Together for Kids program. TFK provides behavioral health evaluation of and therapy for preschool-age children facing developmental challenges with the goal of keeping them enrolled in school. Together For Kids also provides consultation and training to a number of preschool centers and teachers throughout the area.



*From L to R: Maribeth Janssens of the Comm. Found. of NC Mass. awards a check to Heather O'Brien, Lynn Hennigan, and Elizabeth Raymond of CHL.*

### UMass Memorial Health Care

As a partner of UMass Memorial Health Care (UMMHC), is eligible to apply for “Innovation Funds” that make a difference to our programs. CHL was recently awarded funds for two projects aimed at improving the experiences of our clients in our inpatient addiction treatment programs. These two projects involve the creation of:

### Community Foundation of North Central Mass.

We are excited to announce a new partnership with the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. The Foundation is

1) A private outdoor recreation area that includes raised garden beds (see p. 2), a basketball hoop, picnic tables, and a swing. This space will allow our clients to spend time outside in a recreational space while minimizing exposure to substances. *(Continued on p. 4)*

Newslink, CHL's newsletter,  
is published several times each  
year.

Questions and comments can  
be directed to:

Sarah Loy  
Director of Communications  
and Resource Development  
sloy@communityhealthlink.org  
(508) 860-1217

Summer 2017  
Vol. X, No. II

## Funders Make A Difference In Our Clients' Lives



(Continued from p.3) 2) A "recovery" library, hosted in our PASSages program, that will feature several hundred volumes related to addiction and mental health recovery. These books will be available for our inpatient clients to check out for as long as they'd like while with us.

Thanks to all of these funders for their generous support. ■

## My Gift To Help Adults, Children, and Families Recover

**YES!** I want to assist Community Healthlink to help people recover from the effects of mental illness, addiction, and homelessness!

Here is my gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_



 **UMassMemorial**  
**Community Healthlink**

Or donate online at:  
[www.communityhealthlink.org](http://www.communityhealthlink.org)

Thank you! Please return this form  
with your tax-deductible gift.