



# Jeremiah's Times



Winter 2023

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH DISPARITIES

In 2020 Jeremiah's Inn signed a joint statement along with other members of the Worcester Together Coalition in which we promised to uphold the principle: *"We will consistently and promptly identify, name, question, and actively resist and denounce policies in our criminal justice, law enforcement, education and health institutions that injure people of color and deprive them of the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our community."* (Visit our website to read the full statement: [www.jeremiahsinn.com/solidarity-statement](http://www.jeremiahsinn.com/solidarity-statement).)

Substance use disorder (SUD) and other health issues do not affect all communities equally. Barriers to seeking and receiving assistance with food or quality healthcare treatment can differ between racial groups. Historically people of color suffer more from stigma, systemic poverty, and a lack of health insurance or transportation that can make it more difficult to receive the assistance needed to recover from food insecurity, malnutrition, mental health issues and SUD. For example, federal law

prohibits many formerly incarcerated individuals (many are parents) from accessing SNAP benefits, jeopardizing their health and making it more likely they will struggle and risk re-offending. This restriction overwhelmingly impacts Black individuals. The poverty rate within the Black community is 19.5% compared to non-Hispanic Whites at 10.1%. According to the USDA, in 2021, 22% of Black children lived in food insecure households and were almost three times as likely to face hunger than White children. The American Psychology Association reports that compared to White adults, Black adults aged 55-64 were twice as likely to be uninsured.

According to Mental Health America, In 2018 58% of Black & African Americans aged 18-25 and 50% of adults 26-49 with serious mental illness did not receive treatment, and nearly 90% over the age of 12 with a SUD did not get treated. Approximately 11% of Black Americans don't have health insurance, compared with about 7% for non-Hispanic Whites. Data from the Centers for Disease

Control & Prevention website reports that Black adults are 20% more likely to experience mental health issues than the rest of the population and only 25% seek treatment, compared to 40% of White individuals. Also, Black teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than are White teenagers (9.8 % v. 6.1 %).

As a community we must increase awareness and address the disparities our Black & African American community members face disproportionately on multiple public health fronts and demand justice. We must recognize the extra need of these communities for ongoing prevention of substance use disorders and the use of proven harm reduction methods; which includes things like access to healthy food, safe housing, healthcare and job training. We can and we must do better!

Visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health's website:



[www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/BHM](http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/BHM)

A great resource for information and to find out how to get involved .

# JI *INN* THE COMMUNITY

We were privileged to team up with Clark University students (pictured) for a community-based learning project. As a part of the Community Naloxone Purchasing Program, we can offer overdose prevention and naloxone administration training. We held a training on campus in December organized by Malachy Taplin and his team and now sixty students are equipped with the knowledge to recognize the signs, and life-saving naloxone in the event they encounter an overdose. Thank you, Malachy, and the rest of the team for inviting us!

Staff members Christine Church and Dick Quinlan were also in attendance at the Non-Profit Careers Conference (NPCC) held at the College of the Holy Cross. NPCC students Amy Inestroza, Stephany Zabala, and Delaney Walch worked closely with Dick and Christine on a project in which they reviewed recent changes to existing regulations and examined JI's ability to adapt to these changes while still providing the best care for our patients, and then presented their findings to the conference in late January. Thank you for all your hard work!!

## NEW OFFERINGS

Recovery is so much more than just stopping using substances. People who use substances often suffer from other health ailments associated with the lifestyle and the effects of the substances themselves. Exercise and taking care of both your physical and mental health are paramount to a successful recovery program. We strive to teach our patients about the benefits of healthy diet and regular exercise and encourage them to get regular health and dental screenings.



We are excited about the addition of two programs for 2023. Revive of the USA is an outreach program that consists of a mobile team of certified and insured fitness trainers

who have experience in both fitness and recovery; they work with recovery programs all across New England. A team trainer visits JI once a week on Friday to get our patients moving - triggering natural chemicals in the body that help them to heal and grow mentally, physically, and spiritually. [www.reviveoftheusa.org](http://www.reviveoftheusa.org)



Cindy Denault has been a dental hygienist for over 20 years and teaches at Regis College and MCPHS (Worcester and Boston).

Cindy has been collaborating with Dr. Mattie Castiel the Health & Human Services Commissioner for the City of Worcester to offer an oral health education presentation that covers topics like:



- Disease process - health to disease
- Assessments that go into a comprehensive oral health evaluation
- Types of restorative treatments
- Sugar and the brain especially in recovery and on Medication-Assisted Treatment
- How medications impact oral health
- HPV and risk of HPV related oral cancer
- Common dental myths and legends

We are grateful to Cindy and the folks at Revive for offering their services and expertise to our patients to help them on their journey to heal their bodies and minds.



# HOLIDAYS AT JI

The Holiday Wish Program was a HUGE success thanks to so many. Special thanks to Miss Nancy Cook and Pam's Porch 5 and her network of givers who shopped for both the patients and the children of several lists!! Thank you, Jim Herlihy from Herlihy Insurance Group and everyone else who sponsored a list for a resident and/or their children. Shout out to Suffolk Contruction Company, and Judy & Michael Reed who shopped in memory of their son Michael, and all who bought items from our Amazon wish list - thank you!



Each year since 2012, Advantage Truck Group (ATG) has joined with their employees, customers and business partners to help fight hunger by delivering meals to local food pantries. Together, the Haulin' 4 Hunger team (H4H)

has provided more than 22,000 meals to those in need. Now in its tenth year, H4H will donate over 30,000 meals to community organizations. We are honored to be among the H4H recipients, and to receive thirty turkeys and bags of Christmas dinner sides delivered by the team each December.



We also received TWO large donations of children's toys from the Worcester Telegram & Gazette & United Way of Central Massachusetts and the Santa Program, as well as students at Lakeview Elementary coordinated by third grade teacher Jill Shea. Elaine McCool from Greenbriar Gift Baskets in Millbury donated some of her delicious creations for the residents to enjoy. We are grateful to everyone who made a monetary or an in-kind donation. We feel so blessed to have had so much support again this year!



Our friends at Masterman's Safety & Industrial Supply donated forty Carhart jackets which we distributed to residents through the Holiday Wish Program, in addition to their annual Thanksgiving donation of pies from Giovanni's Bakery and Butterball Turkey Vouchers!! It is such a blessing for residents to have the opportunity to contribute a little something when they go home for a holiday meal. We feel extremely blessed to have their ongoing support - Thanks Masterman's!!

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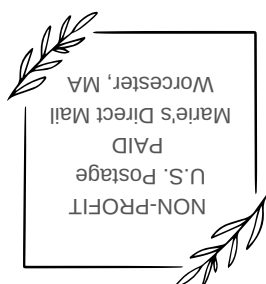
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**Thank you**

**Recovery Program**  
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Mercier Electric Company  
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