



Christine Turner to Succeed Gary Gastman as Executive Director

After an extensive search, the Link House board of directors has appointed Christine Turner, Link House's senior director of services, to serve as the organization's next executive director when Gary Gastman steps down from the role on October 20 following an eight-year tenure marked by significant growth.

Link House Board President Tyler Livermore noted, "The board is thrilled that Chris has accepted this new role. She has worked to continuously improve our programs and services with professionalism and compassion. I thank the search committee for their terrific work and extend deepest appreciation to Gary for his extraordinary leadership. He leaves Link House on firm financial footing and with a much broader reach through our outpatient behavioral health programs and Women's Independent Sober Housing."

I look forward to providing a welcoming and compassionate place where our clients can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. ~ Chris Turner

With Link House since 2019, Chris oversees all aspects of the organization's residential and outpatient behavioral health and addiction treatment programs, bringing more than 25 years of experience leading human service organizations to her work. Prior to joining Link House, Chris held leadership positions at Lowell House in Tewksbury, where she served as the clinical director for women's treatment services and was instrumental in procuring grant funding for the development and oversight of specialized addiction treatment programming for women. She was also the director of the department of public health-funded community and residential substance abuse services at The Psychological Center in Lawrence.

Gary noted, "Chris has been instrumental in our organization's successes since she arrived at Link House and will bring several decades of experience in the



substance abuse and mental health arena to her new role. The board and I have complete confidence in her ability to bring new vision, strategic planning, and continued financial stability to our organization."

Chris observed, "Addiction and mental health challenges are on the rise post-Covid. Kids and adults are experiencing anxiety and depression like we have not seen before. People are feeling disconnected and lonely. I look forward to continuing to grow and develop our services, helping those in need overcome these challenges by providing a welcoming, kind, and compassionate place where they can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope."

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Dear Friends of Link House,
 It is with mixed feelings that I write my final letter as Link House's executive director. This has truly been a dream job for me; working on behalf of an organization in my own community, particularly one

that is large enough to make a measurable and meaningful difference and yet small enough to be nimble and adaptable in the face of new challenges.

I am deeply grateful for the partnership of the entire Link House community, especially Chris Turner, who will take the reins on October 21. Together, we have helped our clients develop the tools they need to lead meaningful, productive, and healthy lives. We've battled substance use disorder at the height of the opioid epidemic while at the same time many continued to struggle with alcohol misuse. We've made outpatient behavioral health care more accessible to adults, teens, and children from low-income households in an area that was previously a behavioral health care desert for them. We opened a sober house for 16 women in Newburyport, giving them an opportunity to live affordably and support one another while working and contributing to the community. And we weathered the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring continued support at a time when our community desperately needed it.

Thank you to all of you for your support and partnership over the years, and please join me in wishing Chris – and Link House – continued success in the years ahead!

Gary Gastman, Ph.D.
 Executive Director

CATCH Launches Equine Assisted Program for Children and Teens



Thanks to a generous grant from Essex County Outreach, our Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH) launched an equine-based program for young people with Jen Wright of Fair Winds Farm in West Newbury this past summer. Through the program, which does not require any experience with horses, participants work on communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, self-regulation, confidence, and creativity. Participants also gain trust with their horse and explore respectful, mindful boundaries.

CATCH Program Director Carolyn Gayler-Romero, who oversees the program, noted "The benefits of equine-assisted services have been recognized for a long time. Horses provide a "no judgment" zone that holds space for the entire spectrum of feelings and promotes emotional growth. It was exciting to see the growing confidence of the young people who participated in the program, and we also were very happy to see the social connections made by their caregivers, who accompanied them to the weekly sessions."

SAVE THE DATE!

Changing the Conversation on Mental Health

with Justice John T. Broderick, Jr.

Thursday, November 9th | 6:00 – 7:30 pm Newburyport Senior Center, 331 High Street

John T. Broderick, Jr. is a former Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court who has dedicated himself to spotlighting the mental health crisis with deep compassion and empathy by sharing his family's story.

Free and open to the public.

Recovery and Healing: A Client Impact Story



Hope* is no stranger to recovery programs and is strongly motivated to continue her journey with a deep desire to live a healthy life. When she arrived at the Maris Center for Women, she was suffering from a life-threatening liver condition brought on by alcohol use disorder. With the support of the staff and residents of the Maris Center, Hope has begun to rebuild her life. She underwent surgery earlier this year and her doctors attribute her remarkable healing to her sobriety and focus on self-care.

Today, in a community “with kind and supportive staff and residents who taught her she could feel safe,” Hope feels “supported to grow spiritually, artistically,

financially, and creatively. I am encouraged to express my truth by being part of a wonderful strong society of women. It’s been life-changing.”

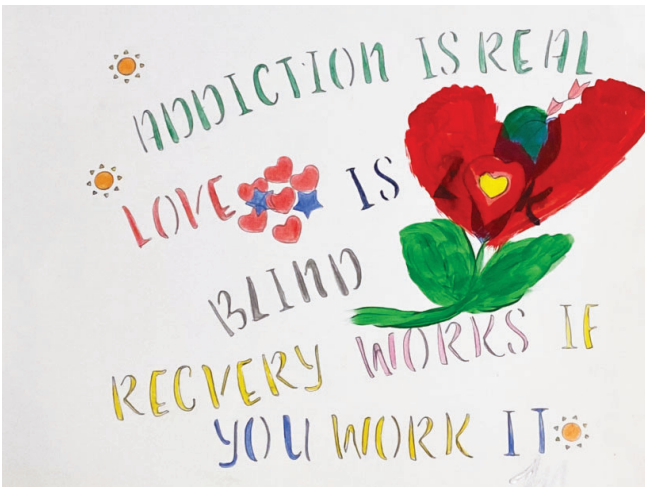
The role model of the Maris Center staff, many of whom are also in recovery, has deeply motivated Hope. “I aspire to be like the staff. And, as a senior client, I care for other women finding balance and leading by examples of love and understanding.”

As a senior client, I care for other women finding balance and leading by examples of love and understanding. ~ Hope

When asked what has been most impactful to her during her time in the program, Hope responds, “I feel I have potential and something to offer. I am needed and part of something greater. And they like me!”

As she looks to the future, Hope will continue with routines such as attending peer support meetings as well as focusing on her self-expression. Having received positive news that her liver is regenerating, she’s feeling on top of the world. Hope will continue to practice affirmations, positivity, prayer, and expressing gratitude to keep her grounded in her recovery.

**Client names are changed in all Link House communications to protect their privacy.*



This beautiful and inspiring piece, made by a current Link House resident, is a reminder of the creativity and resilience of those confronting the challenges of substance use disorder. We’re so grateful for this encouraging message, which now graces the Link House entryway!

Thank You to Our Community Partners!

Heartfelt appreciation to the **Mary Alice Arakelian Foundation** for their very generous support for the Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH), and to **Spectrum Health Systems** for a grant through their Community Impact Committee, which aims to give back to other community-based organizations whose work dovetails with theirs. Additional generous funding for CATCH came from **Newburyport Bank**, the **Moseley Fund for Social Services**, and from the **Institution for Savings**, which also made a grant through their Giving for Good program to support our Women’s Independent Sober Housing. The **United Methodist Church** has supported the Maris Center for Women, and a grant from the **Rotary Club of Newburyport** will support general operations. We are so grateful to each of these organizations for their partnership and shared commitment to our mission!

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CATCH Launches Equine Assisted Program for Children and Teens

[READ MORE INSIDE](#)

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Amber Whitman

Person-centered therapy makes all the difference



Chosen unanimously by Link House leadership for this employee spotlight, Center for Behavioral Health Therapist Amber Whitman has made a tremendous impact on her clients over the past year.

When asked about her role at Link House,

Amber responds, "I feel blessed to work with the people I serve at Link House. I've seen some of the most impressive changes occur over the past year amongst the people I have supported."

Amber's journey began 12 years ago as a counselor/therapist supporting children and teens to stabilize in

their home environments, working with families to support them to be successful.

She developed a special interest in working with those with substance use disorders, particularly opioid addiction, which led to her present position at Link House.

People have the answers within themselves. ~ Amber Whitman

Amber attributes her success at Link House to her "person-centered therapy" approach. Her philosophy is "that people have the answers within themselves." Amber takes the time to get to know everyone, how they view their strengths, their perception of the problem at hand, and what they've tried in the past.

"This work is hard to do," says Amber. "It requires a unique talent to sit with people in pain."