

# 2023 Impact Report: A Year of Growth



# Responding to an Urgent Community Need

**The behavioral health crisis and the epidemic of substance use disorder have taken a devastating toll on our community.** Between 2015 and 2021, there were 106 deaths from overdose in Newburyport, Amesbury, and Salisbury—a figure that doesn't include those who succumbed to complications from alcohol use disorder, as those deaths are frequently attributed to other causes. The mental health crisis has had a sweeping impact on children and teens as well as adults, as young people cope with the pressures of social media and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**For more than 50 years, Link House has been a lifeline for those in our community who have struggled with substance use and mental health challenges.** What began as a single residence in Newburyport for men recovering from alcohol misuse has grown in response to community need to five residences for men and women in recovery and two outpatient programs; the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) for adults and the Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH).

Before Link House established CBH in 2019 and CATCH in 2022, greater Newburyport was a behavioral health care desert for adults and children from low-income households. Today, we serve approximately 550 adults and 150 children in our outpatient programs annually, treating a wide range of concerns, including depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder.

We're encouraged by the resilience and commitment of our clients, but we know that there is a significant unmet need in our community, particularly for children seeking behavioral health care. For every child we currently see in our clinic, there are two on our waiting list. With your support, we will continue to grow in the year ahead so that all have access to the care they need. The health and future of our community depends on it.

## IMPACT REPORT CONTENTS

Our Services .....	3
Client Story: WISH .....	4
Our Impact by the Numbers.....	5
Client Story: Progress House .....	6
CATCH Celebrates First Year.....	7
Client Story: Maris Center for Women .....	9
Your Support Makes a Difference .....	10
Financial Statement .....	11



**Here at Link House, we are driven by the conviction that everyone deserves access to compassionate, professional behavioral health**

**care.** This belief has inspired our growth since we opened our doors in 1972, and the past year was no exception. When we established the Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH), we did so in response to an urgent need for mental health services

for young people from low-income households in the greater Newburyport community. Before CATCH, families faced months-long waiting lists or long drives to access behavioral health care. Now they can turn to CATCH for desperately needed care for a wide range of issues, from depression and anxiety to substance use disorder and gender dysphoria.

The outpatient services provided at CATCH and the adult Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) complement the residential substance use disorder treatment programs that have been at the heart of Link House's mission since our founding. Our highly skilled, outpatient clinicians provide critical support for our residential clients and at the same time help adults, teens, and children in the wider community cope with a myriad of behavioral health concerns. Today, about 50% of our outpatient clients come to us for issues unrelated to substance use disorder.

Link House is committed to providing essential, often life-saving, support to some of the most vulnerable members of our community with grace and compassion. I'm awed by the expertise, kindness, and resilience of this organization's staff as they work with our clients to overcome some of life's most daunting and complex challenges, I'm humbled by the community support and partnerships that help make our work possible, and I'm fiercely proud of our clients, whose will to recover inspires us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

**Christine Turner, MSHS, LADC I**  
*Executive Director*



# Our Services: Providing a Haven for Recovery and Growth

Link House provides residential treatment and housing for men and women in recovery from substance use disorder and outpatient behavioral health care for children, teens, and adults from low-income households.

Our five residential programs are founded on the principle that having a safe, secure home and being part of a community are central to recovery. They include:

## **The Link House, Newburyport**

A highly structured six-month program for 18 men new to recovery

## **The Maris Center for Women, Salisbury**

A program for 38 women to support one another in their recovery for up to two years

## **Progress House, Amesbury**

Continuing support for up to two years for 24 men who have graduated recovery treatment programming

## **The Elms, Amesbury**

Continuing support for up to two years for 24 men who have graduated recovery treatment programming

## **Women's Independent Sober Housing (WISH), Newburyport**

A supportive, sober house for 16 women

Our outpatient behavioral health programs for adults, teens, and children are among the only area practices to accept MassHealth and focus on the needs of individuals from low-income households. We provide professional, compassionate care for a wide range of mental health challenges, from depression and anxiety to personality disorders and substance use disorder.

Services at our Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) and the Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH) include:



- Individual, family, and group therapy
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Dialectical behavior therapy skills
- Treatment for substance use disorder
- Medication management
- Community education and support



## I am becoming the person I was meant to be.

Originally from Salem, Mass., Mriaje\* has been sober for seven years. After beginning her recovery journey at another facility, she found safety and healing at the Maris Center which, Mriaje says, “saved my life—it’s the best thing that ever happened to me.”

Now a three-year resident of WISH (Women’s Independent Sober Housing), Mriaje notes that Link House’s five residential programs allow residents to move from one house to another as their recovery progresses. The supportive community at WISH has been central to Mriaje’s sustained recovery.

“Over the past seven years I learned about myself every day. And I am becoming the person I was meant to be.” She still longs to reconnect with family members who don’t fully understand what is involved in living a truly sober life. Yet, she remains hopeful.

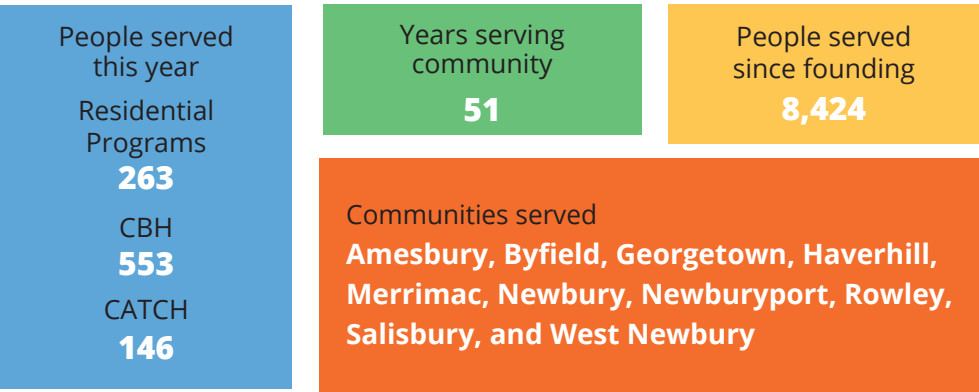
Recalling the success she had at the Maris Center, Mriaje says, “It put me on a path to recovery. I would tell anyone to come here. Link House’s leadership is so supportive — one big family. I’m so blessed and grateful to Link House for helping save my life.”

Nature and the healing benefits of mindfulness keep Mriaje grounded in her recovery. “Nature helps me calm my mind and turns off the craziness in my own head. Sometimes it’s as simple as looking out the window and watching a bird, like a cardinal.” Outdoor meetings and taking walks with others in recovery all remind her that she is part of something greater.

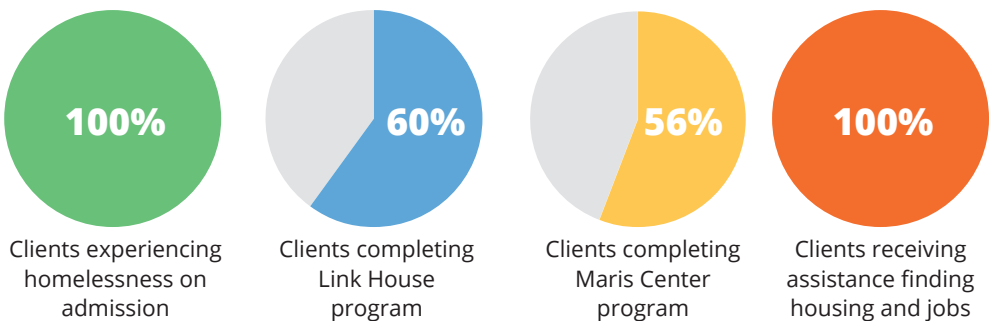
*\*Client names are changed in all Link House publications to protect their privacy.*

# Our Impact by the Numbers

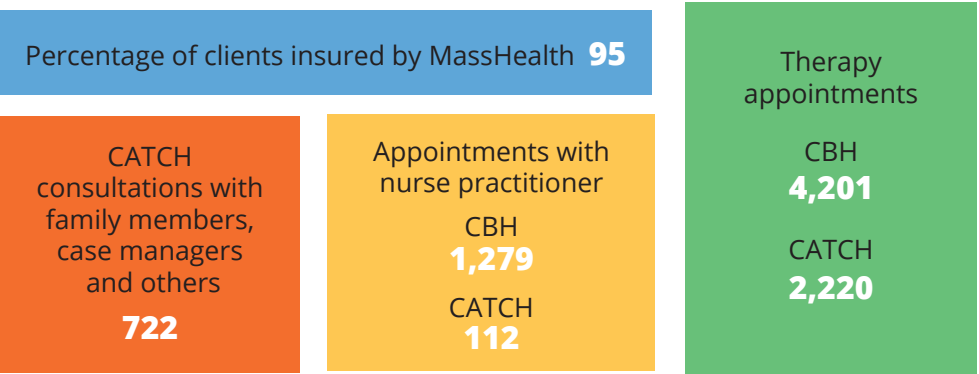
## AGENCY-WIDE



## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS



## OUTPATIENT PROGRAMS





## The further I get in my recovery, the more I want to help the next person.

Samuel\* recalls drinking at 16, being on his own by 17, spending a number of years in and out of homelessness, and eventually using drugs during an unhealthy relationship. He shared, "Substance use was bringing me to places I never thought I'd be." Eventually, he asked himself "Do I want to live, or do I want to die? I got tired of slowly killing myself and pushing my family and friends away."

After spending time in several different treatment programs, Samuel was offered a space at Link House. Samuel credits everyone in the house for supporting and encouraging his recovery. Now, he says, "It's up to me to keep it going, stay focused. There's no room to go backwards. All I have is more room for improvement."

Since coming to the Progress House this summer, Samuel has a powerful connection with his sponsor, attends meetings daily, has a job, and is beginning to provide support to those new to the program. With these connections, the whole journey becomes easier, according to Samuel. "I've been able to befriend a lot of good people in the program who've been able to pick me up when I needed it. The further I get in my recovery, the more I want to help the next person."

Almost a year sober, Samuel finds grounding in his recovery by "focusing on next steps for the next level." When asked if the program and people helped him to see his value in the world, Samuel's answers, "Life is beautiful right now."

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



# CATCH Celebrates its First Anniversary

## OUR STORY

Recent studies by Essex County Asset Builder Network of young people in greater Newburyport show that 21% struggle with depression and 11% had reported a suicide attempt. The crisis is compounded by a shortage of mental health care providers, particularly those serving children and teens from low-income families.

In response to this need, Link House established the **Children and Teen Center for Help (CATCH)** in November of 2022 to empower and support children, teens, and their families to understand and nurture their mental well-being. 95% of our clients have health insurance through MassHealth, and CATCH has been a lifeline for them, providing services that had been out of reach for them and their families.

## WHO WE SERVE

CATCH is for children and teens ages 5 to 18 struggling with anxiety, depression, trauma, substance use disorder, co-occurring mental health disorders, and gender dysphoria. The family-focused program enables children and teens to handle the daily challenges of their lives while equipping families with tools and insight to help them thrive. We provide individual, family, and group therapy, wellness education, medication management, recovery coach services, and programs and resources for the community.

## SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to providing services at our Amesbury clinic, CATCH sends therapists to several local schools so that it is easier for students to make and keep appointments, and teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders are more actively involved in care and support. CATCH currently provides services at Amesbury Innovation High School, where 90% of the children have been identified as high needs and 76% come from low-income households, as well as Amesbury High School, Amesbury Middle School, Charles C. Cashman Elementary School and the Sgt. Jordan Shay Memorial Lower Elementary School (both in Amesbury), and River Valley Charter School (Newburyport).





**When young people experience challenges, how we respond makes all the difference.** At CATCH, we work with children and teens—in partnership with the supportive adults in their lives—to give them the tools they need to be resilient in the face of difficult circumstances.

Our clients face a wide range of behavioral health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and adverse childhood experiences, all against the backdrop of well-documented stressors that affect all of us, including the pressures of social media and the ongoing repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some struggle academically and are at risk of school failure, while others may be in the care of a grandparent or other relative because a parent is suffering from substance use disorder. Some have experienced homelessness or have been involved with the juvenile justice system. Just over one-third of our teens report drug or alcohol use themselves.

**We know that intervening early is critical.** The skilled, caring, professional therapists at CATCH help children and teens develop self-awareness, positive coping strategies, and agency so that they can grow emotionally, socially, and academically, leading to better social, health, and financial outcomes in adulthood. We believe that if we “catch kids now,” they—and our community—will have a brighter future.

**Carolyn Gayler-Romero, Ed.S, NCSP, LEP**  
*Program Director, CATCH*

For more information about CATCH programs and services, visit [catchkidsnow.org](https://catchkidsnow.org).

# I trust the staff, who are open and available when I need them.

Annemarie's\* journey with Link House began after her second relapse with substance abuse. Fourteen years sober, she became addicted again after taking pain medication following a serious injury.

Annemarie came to the Maris Center from her home in California in early 2023 and quickly became a vital member of the Maris community. Formerly a nurse in a transplant unit, she enjoys watching out for the other residents, often accompanying them to medical appointments and helping them understand their health care options. She has also found a job that accommodates her physical needs.

Annemarie credits connection with both the staff and residents of the Maris Center for her continued sobriety. "I'm very close to many of the residents. I talk with them about life's issues and emotions. I listen to their suggestions and advice as well as receive their support," she said.

Annemarie has tremendous respect for staff members. "I trust the staff, who are open and available when I need them. Sharon Roberts (Director of Women's Services) knows me the best. I value her opinion and clear communication style."

Annemarie finds grounding in meditation, going to morning meetings where the theme is "What's good about today," in working, and in conversations with the other residents. When asked about the future, Annemarie said she looks forward to repairing relationships with family members.

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



# Your Support Makes a Difference!

Your donation to Link House helps make it possible for us to provide behavioral health care to adults, teens, and children from low-income households at a time of urgent need in our community. From our founding as a single residence providing treatment for alcohol misuse to a comprehensive behavioral health care agency dedicated to addressing the impacts of the opioid crisis, the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pervasive negative effects of social media, we have risen to the challenge of an increasingly complex mental health landscape.

Your gift to Link House provides direct services to our clients, including:

- Helping us to add therapists to CBH and CATCH so that we can serve more people;
- Providing social and recreational programs for our residential clients;
- Enabling us to continue outpatient treatment when a client's insurance coverage lapses temporarily, ensuring continuity of care;
- Making it possible for us to refresh living areas in the residential programs and replace furnishings and household items that are in near constant use;
- Providing toys, books, and art supplies for CATCH;
- And so much more!

Every year, gifts from generous members of the community help us to ensure that compassionate, professional behavioral health care is within reach of those who need it most. **Thank you for your support!**

## Ways To Give

**Online at:**

[linkhouseinc.org](http://linkhouseinc.org)

**By mail to:**

Link House

110 Haverhill Road, Suite 208  
Amesbury, MA 01913

**For questions about supporting Link House,** please contact Susannah Abbott, Director of Development, at [sabbott@linkhouseinc.org](mailto:sabbott@linkhouseinc.org).

Link House Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 charity and all donations are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS guidelines. Our tax ID is 04-2498329.

## Leadership

### Board of Directors:

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Carolyn Gayler-Romero,  
*Program Director, CATCH*  
Sharon Roberts,  
*Director of Women's Services*  
Tom Whalen, *Director of Men's Services*

# 2023 Fiscal Year Financial Overview

## Revenue

Residential Treatment Programs.....	\$1,420,235
Outpatient Clinics .....	1,034,084
Resident and Women in Transition Rents .....	644,022
Gifts and Grants .....	452,739
Other Income .....	211,504
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$3,762,584</b>

## Expenses

Wages and Benefits .....	\$2,456,744
Professional Development .....	25,669
Program Support and Supplies .....	701,717
Facilities Operations and Maintenance .....	374,588
Administration, Professional Services, and Other.....	235,464
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$3,794,181</b>
<b>Net Income .....</b>	<b>(\$31,597)</b>

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