

# RECOVERY Today

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## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

by Jeremy Klemanski, Helio Health President and C.E.O.

For a long time, Helio Health has been a place where everyone is welcome. We believe in our agency DNA that people from different backgrounds, life experiences, races, genders, orientations, groups, and amounts of formal training and education are critical to the success of our teams and how we treat people who walk through our doors.

We have a number of very specific strategies to attract, and retain people from all walks of life. And those strategies have led us to a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable experience. But we still desired to do even more work on ourselves, our systems, and our culture around how diverse, how equitable and how inclusive we are as individuals, teams, and as an organization.

We asked if the strategies and striving to be equal prevented us from seeing opportunities to do more to help people feel included, and have opportunities to get ahead. We struggled to answer that question and that led us to form a committee of people to look deeper and further into opportunities we might be missing.

Foundational to our agency identity is the understanding that none of us are as smart as all of us. With that understanding and the inability to answer if we were missing something, we decided to form a committee of people who are passionate about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The DEI committee has already been sharing ideas to help our organization grow to be an even better place for everyone. Later on in this newsletter you will learn more about their important work.



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# Helio Health Foundation

## Welcomes New Board Member

Orazio (Ozzie) Crisalli, was born and raised in Syracuse, Clay, and Cicero, New York. After graduating from Onondaga Community College, he spent 2 years in the Army as a Military Policeman, then graduated from Siena College with a Bachelors' Degree in Accounting and Finance. He has been a Property Manager, Broker, and Developer in commercial real estate for thirty-five years.

With upstate New York having so much to offer, Ozzie and his wife, Deonna, raised four children here. The family was introduced to Helio Health when Ozzie's son, David, sought treatment for opioid addiction. Sadly, in 2019, after an 11-year recovery journey, David lost his battle and died from a fentanyl-laced heroin overdose. He was twenty-nine. In those eleven years, he had prolonged periods of sobriety made possible, in part, by inpatient and outpatient services at Helio Health.

Ozzie's family celebrates David's life, humor, and passion to help others by supporting Helio Health's mission, sharing what they have learned about coping with addiction with other families in similar situations.



## Meet Our Newest Helio Hero

### Amy Kendrat

Amy volunteers at Helio Health's Outpatient clinic answering the telephones and ensuring calls are connected to the right colleague. She chose to volunteer at Helio Health because she wants to help make the world a better place for those receiving mental health and substance use services. Mental health is a topic near and dear to her heart.

Amy is from Syracuse and has a B.A. in psychology. She loves nature, listening to music, yoga, and just finished knitting her first sweater. We are thankful for Amy's enthusiasm and dedication to providing hope and healing!

Volunteers (Helio Heroes) play a vital role in the [TransformNation](#) - a powerful movement to bring the right care, at the right place, at the right time. By volunteering, you give hope to people at all stages of the recovery process. Your unique perspective, dedication, and generosity can lend comfort to individuals who may feel hopeless.

Helio Heroes are compassionate, empathetic, and have a passion for recovery. There are numerous ways that you can give back as part of the TransformNation and many opportunities are flexible. You can find a time that works with your schedule and do something meaningful that you love!

Interested in volunteering with us and becoming a Helio Hero? Contact Susan LaPlaca, Development Director, at [slaplaca@helio.health](mailto:slaplaca@helio.health) or 315.474.5506 x1245.



# Leaving a Legacy of Love

## Helio Health Bids Farewell to Two Cherished Colleagues

Raymond Wright started at Helio Health in 1995 as a Manager at Green Street Men's Community Residence. He left the organization to pursue employment as an Outpatient Counselor at Pelion and then as a Treatment Court Case Manager. We welcomed him back in 2007 as the Residential Service Director. We celebrated Raymond's dedication to our mission and legacy to our agency and people we serve at his retirement party this past June. Those in attendance, one by one, spoke about his impact on their lives and professional journey.

Raymond is quoted as saying, "I own the idea that I want to be a part of this mission. In my walk everyday of my life as I meet people, I am wearing a Helio Health shirt. I want to display that this is the best place to get services for your family." Raymond "walked" Helio Health every day for the past 15 years. He mentored staff, educated the community about programs and services, and served clients by showing up for them any time of day, embodying the culture and mission of Helio Health.

### Raymond Wright



### Barbara Frappier



Barbara "Barb" Frappier joined Helio Health in 2006 as our Finance Director. When Barb joined our agency, our programs and services were all located in Syracuse, NY. We had a staff of 170 and served approximately three thousand individuals annually. Today we have a staff of over nine hundred individuals and serve over 17,000 individuals in Syracuse, Rochester, Utica, and Binghamton, as well as the surrounding counties. Barbara was a key contributor to the overall growth of the organization. Her stewardship led to more than 12 years of positive financial growth, allowing the agency to make significant investments in its future.

She spent the last 16 years devoting her time to the mission of Helio Health, often taking time away from family.

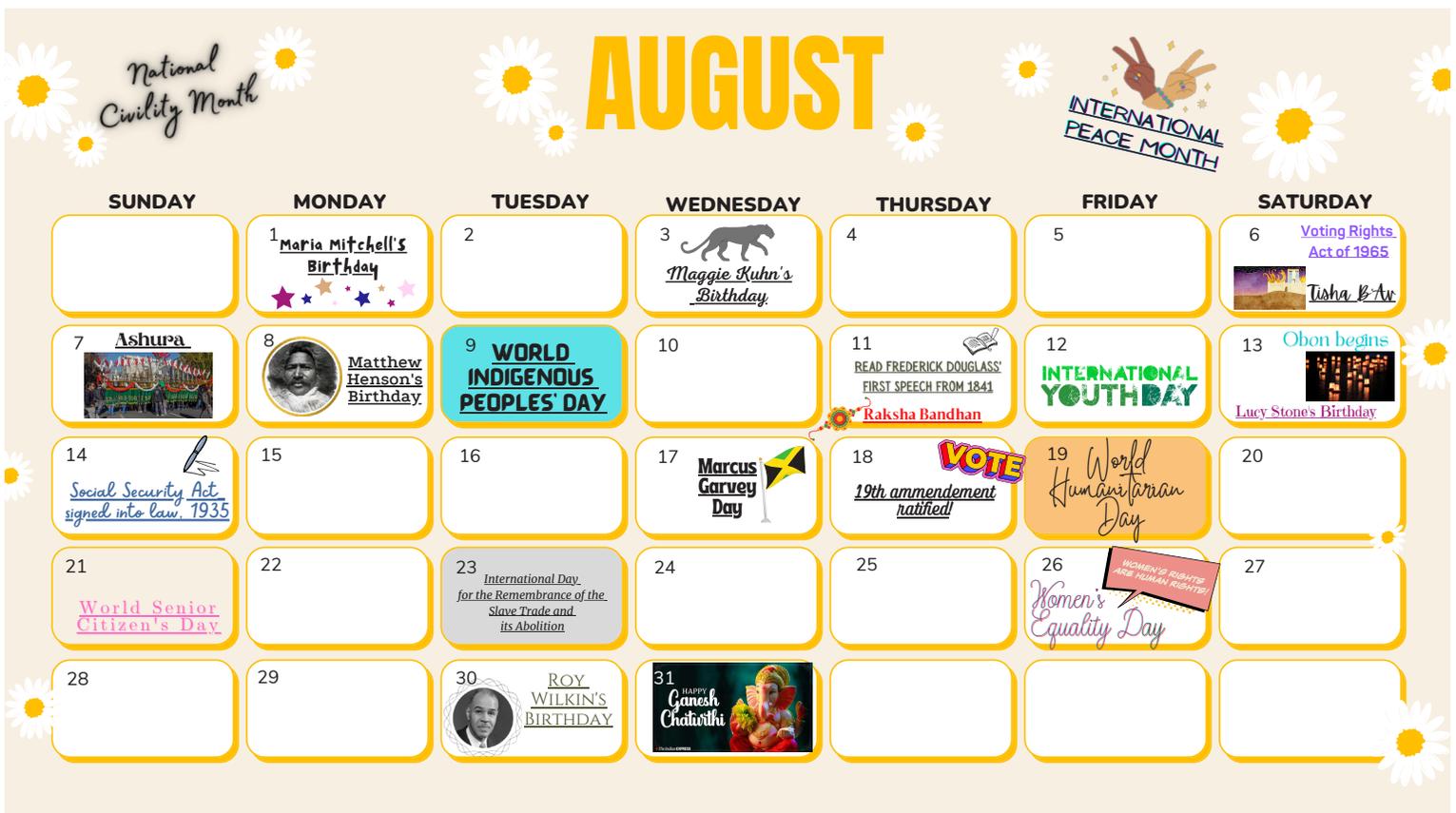
We are forever grateful to Barbara for her passion and dedication to our mission, and happy she will have time in retirement to enjoy time with family and friends.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee’s purpose is to support our organization to embrace diversity and deliver culturally responsive services with compassion. We aim to support and develop the community we serve and the people that serve them; toward promoting increased and enhanced diversity. We will work diligently to ensure our workplace is diverse, inclusive, welcoming of new ideas, different backgrounds perspectives and abilities. We will support a culture that treats all with dignity and respect and embraces diversity.

The committee’s intent is to represent all people of Helio Health. Diversity includes but is not limited to gender, social and economic backgrounds, ethnicity, race, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran’s status, and sexual orientation. The committee is open to discuss uncomfortable subjects and work through inherent individual conflict to model for the agency the priority and value of listening to all.

The Committee is comprised of individuals who care about supporting growth and inclusion in the agency and those we serve. We meet regularly to discuss the need for collaboration between communities within the people we serve. We make recommendations regarding training, policy and procedure, development, and human resource practices to the Executive Leadership Team to then consider. The committee will guide the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Helio Health through the following scope:

1. Assessing the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work Plan.
2. Monitoring the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards for cultural competence for employees.
3. Providing input on policies and procedures to address diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and make recommendations when appropriate.
4. Informing and updating employees regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
5. Disseminating information about ongoing professional development training around diversity, equity, and inclusion for employees.
6. Seeking regular feedback from employees to inform decision-making and opportunities for growth.
7. Sharing the work of the committee with colleagues.



Each month, the DE&I committee creates a calendar with links to community events, pioneers in our fields, and links to podcasts and documentaries.





Above: Recovery Center participants cook a meal for the Food For Thought program.

## Foundation Makes Grants to Four Programs

The Helio Health Foundation recently awarded gifts to fund four projects that will enhance the lives of people served and support hope and healing at all stages along the recovery journey.

Hawthorn CR-SRO, an Office of Mental Health residential program, received funds for a “Hawthorn Healing Garden” to include a raise-bed garden, swings, and benches for residents to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature.

Funds were awarded to Homestead CR-SRO for its “Health in the Homestead” project which aims to expand on-site wellness and recreational opportunities with the addition of a treadmill, recumbent bicycles, basketball hoop, and art supplies.

Similarly, Genesee Street CR-SRO’s “Genesee’ing Our Way to Fitness” program was funded for the addition of exercise equipment and social wellness activities for improving health and wellness and providing opportunities for social connection. Genesee Street will purchase treadmills, stationary bikes, and game tables, as well as Karaoke and popcorn machines.

Finally, the Recovery Center received a grant to resume its most popular group, “Food For Thought,” which focuses on four of the eight dimensions of wellness including financial, physical, intellectual, and social. Participants will work together each week with our Wellness Coach to budget, shop, prepare, and clean up after a healthy meal.

Annual gifts awarded by the Helio Health Foundation come from funds raised throughout the previous year. The Foundation is supported by donations from individuals, local businesses, and corporate partners, as well as fundraising events like the Run For Recovery and campaigns such as Giving Tuesday.

For more information about the Foundation or to learn how you can become involved with our mission, please contact Susan LaPlaca, Development Director at 315.474.5506 x 1245 or [slaplaca@helio.health](mailto:slaplaca@helio.health).

To make a gift to the Foundation, visit <https://www.helio.health/fundraising/donate-now/>

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*Talk with us.*



988 offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress. That could be: thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

988 serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.