



Cover photos taken by current client, Quentin.

Independence

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All photographs taken and stories written by Molly Gilbert, Director of Business Development and Editor of Vinland's *Independence* newsletter, unless otherwise indicated.



GIVE TO THE MAX DAY



Give to the Max started in 2009 as a one-time campaign to mark the launch of GiveMN.org, Minnesota's digital home for generosity. The results of that day—\$14 million raised in just 24 hours—blew everyone's expectations out of the water, and a new Minnesota tradition was born. In fact, Give to the Max was one of the nation's first online giving days and now serves as a national model for giving days across the country. In the years since, nearly one million donors have given more than \$300 million to 10,000 nonprofits and schools as part of Minnesota's giving holiday.

Please consider making a tax deductible contribution to Vinland Center on November 21.

Mark your calendars—**Give to the Max Day returns for a 16th year on Thursday, November 21**, with Early Giving beginning on November 1. Visit GiveMN.org during that time to follow along with totals, see prize winners, and have your generosity counted as part of this year's campaign.

Please keep Vinland in mind when you make your charitable donation on Give to the Max Day. With your help, we can continue to provide complimentary services to our clients, such as our Therapeutic Exercise Program, Independent Living Skills classes, Yoga, and all of the sober recreational activities that Vinland provides such as pontoon boat rides, kayaking, fishing, Arts & Crafts, and use of our lakeside Chalet for cooking, baking and bonfires. All of this contributes mightily to their long-term success.

Because so many of our clients come to us with so little, it's essential that we receive help from the outside to help us provide clients coming from jails or being unhoused with weather-appropriate clothing and shoes. Fulfilling this basic need helps our clients focus on their treatment, which helps contribute toward their success.

The only way to participate in Give to the Max day is to donate via their website. Go to: <https://www.givemn.org/gtmd> and search for Vinland National Center!

If you'd rather not participate that way, you can always send a check to: Vinland National Center, 3675 Ihduhapi Road, Loretto, MN 55357

We (and our clients!) thank you in advance for your thoughtful generosity!

A SPECIAL NOTE

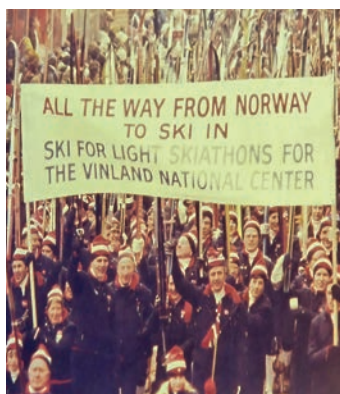
From Our Executive Director, Mary Roehl

Vinland wishes to thank Ski for Light for their past support. Congratulations on the 50th anniversary and here's to the next 50 years.

Mary Roehl,
Executive Director



Earlier this month, I was fortunate to join Board members Denise Seck (and her husband Tim), Karin Holt (and her husband Martin), along with Vinland staff, Molly Gilbert, Peggy Martin and Renee Olson at the 50th Anniversary of Ski for Light. The event was held at the Norway House in Minneapolis.



Left: Actual picture of the 445 Norwegian cross-country skiers in 1978, during their visit to Minnesota to help raise funds to start Vinland National Center. Right: Mary, Peggy and Molly in front of the wall of memorabilia at the Ski For Light 50th Anniversary Gala.

Ski for Light was formed in 1975 as the United States concept of the Norwegian Ridderrenn which teaches blind people to cross-country ski. In 1976 the event was held in Minneapolis to generate support for the "Vinland Concept." In attendance at this event were Senator Hubert Humphrey, Governor Wendall Anderson, Congressman

Arlen Erdahl, member of the Vikings football team, wrestler Vern Gagne, Senator John Warner, Norwegian media personality Erik Bye, and 60 blind and visually impaired skiers and their ski guides. Then 445 Norwegian cross-country skiers came to Minnesota to join American skiers in a skiathon sponsored

by the Sons of Norway and Ski for Light to raise funds for Vinland in 1978.

These fundraisers, along with the Bicentennial gift from Norway and grants awarded, allowed us to open Vinland Center officially in 1980.

Ski for Light has continued to do an annual ski event for the past 50 years that has allowed countless visually and mobility impaired people an opportunity to learn and enjoy cross-country skiing. Peggy Martin and I had an opportunity to participate in the 2008 event held in Bend, Oregon. It was truly a remarkable and memorable experience for both of us.



Board member Karin Holt (left) with her husband, Martin, and board member Denise Seck (right) with her husband, Tim.



At a board meeting this year, board member Karin Holt is pictured with Peggy Martin, director of mental health, and Mary Roehl, executive director of Vinland, holding a plaque that is gifted to each board member in gratitude for their service to Vinland over the years.



SAM'S STORY

I sat down with Sam the day before he was graduating to move on to the next step in his recovery path. He's a stoic guy—pretty reserved, which will be explained here in a bit. Here is our Q&A session:

How did you hear about Vinland?

"I was sitting in the Anoka County Jail and found one of your brochures underneath my mattress. When I was finally in court and brought it up as an option, the judge was all for it!"

What are some of your first impressions upon arriving at the residential campus and not knowing anyone?

"I have some pretty extreme anxiety disorders, so I often appear distant at first to others. I didn't even know I had this until I got here, and it was only thanks to my working with Peggy in the mental health department that we were able to help figure out what has been going on with me. Now I am able to understand myself more. Particularly, the fear of anything humiliating or embarrassing is common with people who have spent time in prison, and I've been there twice."

Basically, it took me about one month to warm up to others here. The good news is that this disorder isn't permanent. Just getting trauma therapy with EMDR

or ART helps, as does exercise, which I've been doing three times per day since I got here. In fact, this is one of the more lasting lessons I've learned while here—that sticking to an exercise routine helps—big time. Other

copied mechanisms I've learned while here include simply taking a breath, and learning to count backwards also helps. I didn't realize how much trauma I've actually had until I got here. I honestly thought I didn't qualify as having any trauma!"

What helped this to be a successful treatment program for you?

"The fact that I was allowed to keep my timeline here open-ended was super helpful to me. We actually were able to extend my discharge date three times, so I ended up staying for 90 days. In other treatment centers I've been to, often

the clinicians simply didn't show up for the group, so I didn't get what I needed, then the clients were moved along after 30 days. Being here made a real difference for me, as I was able to take the time for everything to align for my next steps on the outside, and I had several different people here helping me with these issues."

What would you tell others who are considering going to treatment?

"Give it a shot. Try it someone else's way for once."



Sam

"Agoraphobia involves fearing and avoiding places or situations that might cause panic and feelings of being trapped, helpless or embarrassed. You may fear an actual or upcoming situation. For example, you may fear using public transportation, being in open or enclosed spaces, standing in line, or being in a crowd." *Mayo Clinic*

What is your most memorable event or awakening that took place while you were in treatment at Vinland?

“When my family came to visit me. I’ve never had anyone visit me before. I’ve been on the inside of prison walls for almost 20 years—since the age of 14, and never once did anyone visit me. I felt like I’d been hung out to dry.

They wanted me to change so badly—they must’ve finally had some hope.

Physical fitness of course was always a thing for me in prison, but here it was great to be able to do both simultaneously—substance use disorder treatment as well as taking care of my physical health. I was encouraged to have a program lined up to follow my time here to help keep these healthy behaviors going forward. The thing I learned at Vinland was how to actually get rid of my chronic pain simply by doing the correct exercises. I no longer have chronic pain—and that was accomplished with no pills!

“Give it a shot. Try it someone else’s way for once.”

One positive thing I did learn while in prison was to pace myself. Let things pan out. That proved helpful to me during my stay here, along with coloring while in group! This was something I learned how to do while here that was super helpful for me in processing emotions or staying calm and not reacting if I didn’t like something I was hearing.

Some of the most challenging events I had to deal with while in treatment consisted of a lot of outside issues, such as court dates, as well as having to foreclose on my house. I’m now selling it, but having to deal with this issue and not being able to just run off and get high was a real growth opportunity for me. The only reason I am actually able to sell my house now, is due to having been here at Vinland.”

Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us, Sam! We are proud of you and hope you come back to tell your story to our clients after a year or two of recovery!

What Causes Agoraphobia?



Agoraphobia Statistics

- Women are more likely to have agoraphobia than men.
- Rates of agoraphobia are highest in adolescents and the elderly.
- Agoraphobia in adults is relatively rare.
- Onset occurs before 35 years of age.
- Characteristics of agoraphobia in children include tantrums, clinging, crying and freezing up.
- In teens, agoraphobia is common and tends to be more severe.
- Symptoms of agoraphobia include muscle tension and cramps, headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, facial blotching, hyperventilating, sweating and trembling.
- Co-occurring disorders include major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety, separation anxiety and OCD.

HAPPY RETIREMENT, COLLEEN!

Our long-time operations manager, Colleen Larson, celebrated her retirement with us in late August after 18 years with Vinland!



Colleen Larson

Photo by Renee Olson

Starting in 2006 as a billing specialist—when we were a much smaller venue with fewer staff and clients—she immediately discovered Vinland was owed over \$50,000 by insurance companies and promptly got to cleaning that business up! Through this, she helped establish policies and procedures, including having our intake team start to ask whether a client might have insurance (!). She said she “wasn’t popular” due to the many changes she started to institute, but looking back, it was a necessary implementation due to rapid growth and we needed to catch up. It even came down to simple typos not getting fixed! For example if we were to be paid \$200 per day per a client’s insurance plan, and the bookkeeper input \$20 by accident, that was what we were reimbursed! No one was catching these things!

Utilization review had to be improved. It took several years to “right the ship,” but everyone got on board and made it happen. Of course, DHS rules kept changing (as they tend to do...), and back then, every treatment facility had a different ID number with different forms and different ways of doing things, until the Uniformity Act was put into place. As she kept saying throughout this interview “...and SO much has changed since then!”

She was proud to tell me of her involvement with the building of our 2013 addition. She said she attended every meeting, wore the hard hats, and was in charge of all of the furniture and equipment for the addition. She mentioned that this was when everyone on the management team really noticed the incredible intellect and talents of our facility manager, Matt Koch. He was quietly identifying construction and architectural issues that, in fact, in the end, turned out to be important issues that needed to be addressed. Good eyes, Matt!

In short, this was something that she looks back on as a great joy, and a real accomplishment on all of their

parts. She then was assigned to take on management of our Lodges in Crystal, Minnesota. These are our permanent supportive sober housing facilities for clients who have over 90 days of continuous sobriety, have a cognitive issue, and are in need of a more permanent place to live. Again, more systems, procedures and policies needed to be put in place.

After three or four years, Colleen was promoted to being our operations manager. She is proud of the work that she put into making up the Employee Appreciation Committee here at Vinland (the EAC) who puts on (so many!) special events for us, including meals during all-staff meetings, a food truck at the chalet/lake, or a surprise “welcome to work,” which consists of unexpected donuts and hot coffee greets on a random weekday as we pull into the parking lot. She also implemented employee Perk Points for each activity we participate in. I just cashed out some of my perk points for a \$250 Amazon Card!



Our amazing Employee Appreciation Committee (EAC) with one of their surprise coffee and treat “Welcome to Work!” mornings. Pictured L.-R.: Kirsten Dagel, fitness & wellness assistant; Garry Winter, accounting associate; Jacob Hatchfeld, facility maintenance; Brian Murphy, IT associate; Renee Olson, executive administrator (and assistant editor of this publication); and Matt Koch, facility manager.

When I asked what one of her greatest challenges was in her position, she said that the typical responsibilities of keeping up with OSHA, Affirmative Action, IT planning and record-keeping could sometimes prove to be a challenge, but she was quick to point out that each and every inspection that came through Vinland, whether from the State of Minnesota, an insurance company, food licensor or fire inspection, we have passed with zero dings! She was often told that “No one gets a 100 mark,” yet we always would! She is very proud of the job that the facilities, housekeeping and maintenance crews have done. The rest of us couldn’t agree more!

The best part of working for Vinland for so long? The people. Both clients and staff. She had a great story of a former female client who came into her office late one day asking if she could see her intake picture from the day she arrived at Vinland. Colleen printed it out for her. She said the client was so moved that upon graduating, she left Colleen a thank you note with a copy of her intake photo alongside her picture taken on her graduation day, and told her she had no idea the impact that moment had on her. Just the fact that someone would care enough to take the time out of their day to do this for her meant so much to this client. Colleen said she thought we should look into implementing that for every graduating client—assuming they want one. What a great idea!

She said another thing she was continually impressed with is the longevity of staff here. There are 11 staff members who have been here for more than 15 years, including herself at 18 years; Mary, executive director at 27 years; Peggy, director of mental health and former Special Olympian! at 21 years; Brian, overnight HST at 19 years; Patti (new part-time) front desk/services associate at 19 years; Paula, lodge coordinator at 19 years; Tom, director of residential services at 19 years; Connie, housekeeper at 18 years; Jeff, director of therapeutic exercise at 18 years; Lisa, evening and weekend HST at 18 years; and our before-mentioned Matt, facilities manager at 15 years.

Her favorite memories were many—but so many wouldn’t translate well to a newsletter where folks weren’t aware of the inner stories connected—something to do with a “Mayberry RFD Day,” where staff went to a costume shop in Maple Lake and everyone dressed up as a character from the TV show—for someone’s something-or-other event—sounded wild!

She said the conferences she attended with Mary all over the country were great memories—that they both learned so much about how other treatment centers work, as well as being asked to share their knowledge of the specialized work that Vinland does (now, in part, referred to as “disability responsive services”). She marveled at how much interest others had in learning more about what Vinland was doing and how to possibly incorporate what we’ve learned into their treatment programs. *Editor’s Note: Something Vinland is **still** willing to help other treatment providers learn more about. Just reach out to me if you want to arrange a training with either myself (mollyg@vinlandcenter.org) or Tom Beckers (tbeckers@vinlandcenter.org).*



The one thing Colleen really teared up over was that she received fresh-cut flowers on her first day of employment, and again on her last day.

When I asked what her retirement plans were shaping up to look like, she said, “Just the usual stuff: baking, gardening, grandchildren, girls’ weekends, time at the lake,” and she likes to go to Florida annually to visit family there. She thought it might sound boring to me. I told her it sounded absolutely blissful. Just as retirement should be.

Congratulations on your well-earned retirement, Colleen and THANK YOU for all your dedicated work at Vinland National Center!

CPRS WITH FORENSIC ENDORSEMENT

We are very proud of Steve Applen, one of our very first peer recovery specialists, who just received his Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Forensic Endorsement.



Steve Applen, CPRS, FE

The ways in which Steve has (always) stepped up to help clients, no matter where they might have come from, or how much baggage they might be carrying, is one of the most authentic points of light at Vinland. Prior to this, Steve was a health service technician (HST) at Vinland for several years, so he really comes to the job with a well-balanced and understanding point of view. We asked Steve to tell us a little about what this new endorsement means to him and the clients we serve.

Forensic Peer Recovery Specialists are certified Peer Recovery Specialists who utilize their own history of criminal justice involvement and mental health/substance use recovery to deliver services related to behavioral health and criminal justice involvement. (Retrieved from: SMI Advisor – On 11/1/2022 – <http://smiadvisor>)

Here's what he had to say:

"I consider it a privilege to be able to share my life story. I'm a man in long-term recovery. What this means to me is that I haven't used any street drugs or misused any prescribed medications for over 15 years. Not so coincidentally, it also means I haven't been to jail or prison for the same length of time! Recovery has given me a life where I get to be a father, grandfather, brother and uncle to my family. Recovery has granted me a close relationship with a god of my understanding and countless supportive friends in this program of recovery. It has given me the opportunity to be a homeowner and to hold a position at Vinland National Center as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS), with a Forensic Endorsement.

Like my CPRS endorsement, I completed my Forensic Endorsement at the Minnesota Recovery Center, hosted by Justin McNeal (Justin is now with Begin Anew). I was interested in obtaining the Forensic Endorsement because many of the recoverees at Vinland are involved

in criminal justice. Their story is, resoundingly, the same as mine. I have a strong desire to let them know they are not alone and that there is hope following time spent behind bars that has meaning and purpose.

The forensic training revealed that overdose is the leading cause of death for someone coming out of incarceration. An article in the May 6, 2024 edition of the Star Tribune stated, 'One of five Minnesotans who died of an overdose had been incarcerated within the past year.' These statistics alarmed me and brought with them a sense of urgency for me to do something to help. I am grateful that a program exists that allows me to be attentive to recoverees with criminal justice involvement needs. These needs are similar as recoverees from SUD, but sometimes in a different order of priority. For example, getting employment is usually one of the top priorities for a recoveree who has been incarcerated. There is a strong desire to 'make up' for time lost. An on-purpose discussion must happen initially for a recoveree to not lose sight of self-care, with attention to mental health and substance use disorder. A successful aftercare program should involve safe, sober housing that has access to public transportation.

In the upcoming months at Vinland I look forward to facilitating groups specifically focused on the needs of those recoverees with criminal justice involvement. When I first meet a new recoveree, I make a point to identify the part of my story of being incarcerated. This helps open the door for them to share their stories about the different effects incarceration has had on them. Now, when a recoveree shares with me the term 'I'm broken,' I understand that this might originate from substance use disorder, mental health issues, a traumatic brain injury, or time spent incarcerated 'behind the walls.' I know that together, we can help put those pieces back together."

WHAT VINLAND MEANS TO ME

About a week before Michael graduated from Vinland, he let me know he had written something about his time here that he wanted to share. Thank you, Michael, we are so proud of you!

As we were talking about it, he mentioned that he does so much better when he sits down to write things out, to really take the time to be thoughtful, so I suggested we do his “interview” that way! What came out of that was something powerfully beautiful all by itself:

“To help contextualize, this is my third residential treatment and my second time back to Vinland. I think it’s important to say that the Vinland experience starts with the pickup by a Vinland driver.

Believe it or not, some of the important therapy starts during the initial van ride to Vinland. This journey to Vinland has always felt like a ride out of the pit of hell, and strangely enough, just a few miles down the road I start to feel like there’s actually a chance.

When I arrive at Vinland, I’m surrounded by a couple of staff and a few clients shaking my hand. Hugging me. It always blows me away when I walk in the door for the first time—how positive everybody is. People will actually change directions from the way they’re going and turn around to greet you. It feels so different than where I’m coming from, as I’ve hurt everyone around me, and people run from me, not run toward me....this is truly powerful.

Of course, Vinland **is** the people—and the people are just extraordinary beyond what I could think is possible.

And, of course, there’s nature—lots of it! Prairies and lakes and woods, dragonflies, frogs, big musky fish, deer, coyotes, and, of course, a giant Osprey nest with a protective mother. This is healing. This is Hope. This is the future.

People sometimes ask me what Vinland is like, and I say, “Well, it’s like going to treatment in a Bob Ross painting!” (Editor’s Note: Happy little trees!)

The term “dual diagnosis” is thrown around quite a bit in the field of addiction treatment. But Vinland actually gets it.

There’s a whole team of psychologists, nurses, mental health therapists, drug and alcohol counselors, peer recovery specialists, and more. They really do address the whole person—body, mind and spirit. So, truly, dual diagnosis is addressed at Vinland and done correctly.

It’s not lost on me what kind of dedication and resources it takes to have an infrastructure such as this.

I am somebody who has ADHD and dyslexia. Of course, this is one of the key components of my substance use disorder (attempting to self-medicate these issues). It has been proven to me while here that one of the key therapies for this is not a drug, and it’s FREE: cardio exercise! Lots and lots of it. That’s where the magical

Therapeutic Fitness Center comes in at Vinland. This program, its staff, and the person who originally created it for Vinland (Editor’s Note: Jeff Willert, our director of therapeutic exercise) saved my life.

This program should be a road map for all treatment centers across the world.

Whether it’s the HST (Health Service Technician) driving the pontoon boat or passing out meds; the chef in the kitchen; the housekeeping staff helping you with pillowcases; the case manager you can cry with; the client that hugs you; the groundskeeper you can lean on while they’re planting the flowers; or the mental health therapist you can pop in on and pet their dog—Vinland is life healing, hope, future, love and truth!

Thank you for being here for me.” Michael



Michael

**“This is healing.
This is hope.
This is the future.”**

VINLAND OPEN HOUSE

This summer, it took every member of our team to make our residential and outpatient open houses possible, including staff to take residential clients off-site (for HIPPA purposes) to a fun movie event. We were so happy to see so many of our friends and colleagues, as well as referents who have never before visited either the residential or outpatient locations! We were thrilled to have great weather and great company for both. Thanks for visiting us!

Photos by Renee Olson



Residential Open House

We appreciate longtime Vinland supporters as well as new friends joining us at our residential Open House. Above: Senator John Hoffman helped welcome the crowd by acknowledging the important work that Vinland does in our state. Right: Sarah Sandgren, senior outreach director from Senator Tina Smith's office thanked Vinland for the specialized work it does.





Outpatient Open House

Upper left: Katie Richard, outpatient services manager, introduces our main speaker and outpatient case manager, Sandy Halseth.

Upper right: Outpatient location front entry.

Left: Katrina Meyer from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance presents on the subject of brain injury.

Below: Outpatient case manager Sandy Halseth conducts a CEU talk during Vinland's outpatient open house.

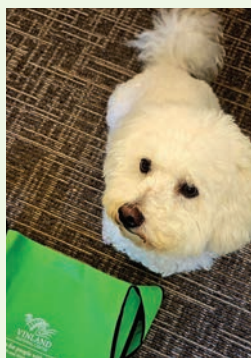


PUPPY PROFILES

By Amy B., Accounting Specialist

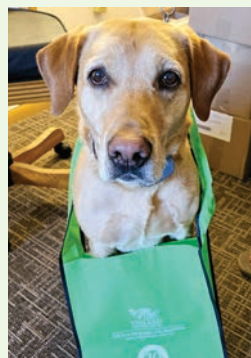
We want to introduce you to the latest group of staff pups visiting at Vinland!

These pups are so great with the clients and the clients absolutely love being able to visit with them. Because we don't allow client dogs to visit due to insurance complications, the staff dogs go through a vetting process that is thorough and updated annually, requiring all vaccinations be up to date. Have staff members' dogs visit helps those who are so desperately missing their own pets back at home.



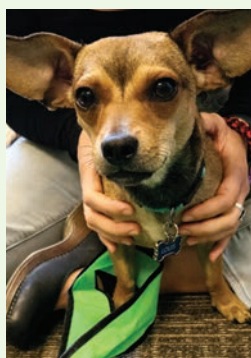
Janina's pup, Oli

This sweet, beautiful boy is named Oli. His mom, Janina, is a case manager, so he loves to hang out during the day with the clients and be with his mom while she teaches our clients yoga. He likes to be held and loves attention from everyone. Isn't he just the cutest, fluffiest little boy? A real plus is that he is hypoallergenic!



Desiree's's pup, Duke

Meet our handsome Duke. He loves to come to work with his mom, Desiree, a lead case manager, and meet new people and get attention. He is a very gentle and loving boy who loves to walk the hallways to see what is going on or to go for cool walks outside with all his new, two-legged friends.



Madison's pup, Louis

Look at this sweetie, Louis! Little Louis was adopted from "The Rescue Crew Rescue" by his new mom, one of our mental health counselors, Madison. Thank you Madison, for giving this boy a forever home! Louis is a kind, sweet, loving little boy. He is super friendly with all the clients and loves to interact with all his canine friends here at Vinland.

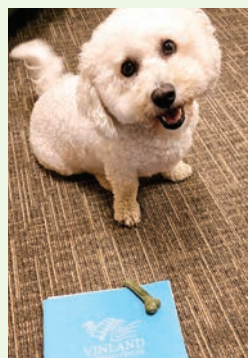
This beautiful little princess is named Nova. Her mom,



Beth's pup, Nova

Beth, is a case manager, and Nova loves to go for walks and be by the lake with all her new, two-legged friends. She is up for any adventure! Nova was adopted from the Animal Humane Society in July of this year. Another doggie finds her forever home. Thank you, Beth, for giving Nova a wonderful home.

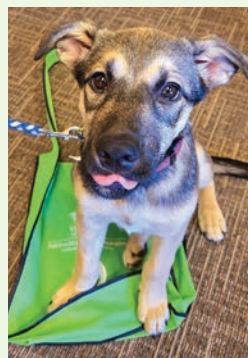
Meet sweet Kiro. He is our second Bichon Frise we have at Vinland, and is such a beautiful sweet fluffball. Poor Kiro lost his home when his owner became homeless.



Angie's pup, Kiro

He was taken in by Wags and Whiskers Animal Rescue of Minnesota. Angie, one of our mental health therapists, adopted Kiro, and he is adjusting well to his new life and loves coming to Vinland to see the other dogs and clients. Kiro is very kind and sweet. Thank you, Angie, for adopting this special, friendly boy.

Meet Miss Layla. She is a beautiful German Shepherd/mix little girl. She was a rescue from the Leech Lake



Katey's pup, Layla

Reservation with her siblings, and Crossroads Animal Shelter out of Buffalo, Minnesota took her in. She was adopted by Katey, one of our case managers. Layla is a sweet and shy girl who is friendly with everyone she meets. Can't wait to watch this lovely girl grow up. Thank you, Katey, for adopting this special baby girl.

THANK YOU, QUILTERS!

Many thanks to the amazing quilting groups who so generously donate beautiful handmade quilts to our new clients.

Our clients rely on these quilts to keep them warm at night, and many are thrilled to be able to take them home when they leave. We had 273 quilts donated in 2024.



Amy Benson with her sweet rescue, Peach. (Amy is a Medical Billing/AR Associate at Vinland).

How Vinland staff's dogs help our clients:

Those who said pets positively impact their mental health cited several key benefits, including:

- Help reduce stress and anxiety (69%)
- Provide unconditional love and support (69%)
- Offer companionship (69%)
- Provide a calming presence (66%)
- Are true friends (63%)

Cited from American Psychiatric Association 3/01/2023



Some of the quilters from Our Father's Lutheran Church in Rockford that delivered 6 quilts today! From left to right: Sally, Gail, Lynne, and LeAnn. Photo by Renee Olson.



St. John's Lutheran Church Quilters out of Zimmerman, Minnesota. Photo submitted by Jan Wallin.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

It's time for an update on Vinland's outreach throughout the spring, summer and into this fall...

Molly Gilbert, M.Ed., Director of Business Development

Vinland was delighted to help sponsor the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance's annual conference this spring. As a bonus, Tom Beckers, our director of residential services, presented at the conference and brought with him one of our peer recovery specialists, Romney Skarp, a person with lived experience who gave testimony regarding his brain injury and his past struggles with SUD. It was a very moving and full-circle moment for all of us.



Tom Beckers, director of residential services at Vinland (left) with Romney Skarp, peer recovery specialist.

Tom recently presented to Nuway Alliance clinicians, as well as the Momentum Addiction Treatment Center for staff in St. Cloud. He was also a featured speaker at the MARATP (Minnesota Alliance of Rural Addiction Treatment Providers).



Tom Beckers using audience participation at MARATP.



Molly Gilbert, director of business development for Vinland National Center; Marti Paulson, executive director of Project Turnabout and president of MARATP; Bobby Benson, Congressman Tom Emmer's Minnesota chief of staff; Matthew Bergeron, vice chair of Vinland's board of directors and MARATP's legal representative; Representative Dave Baker; Amy Brustuen, Southwest Initiative Foundation; and Mary Roehl, executive director of Vinland National Center and MARATP vice president.

The Legislative Dinner is a must-attend event while at MARATP as those who most support this important group of treatment providers present to us on a panel and answer some of the more pressing legislative questions facing us as a group.

Many of you may know that the months of September and October are two of the year's busiest for anyone who works in the realm of outreach within the behavioral health field. September is National Recovery Month with an event happening almost every weekend, including a Saturday Walk for Recovery (not to mention a Walk for Thought by our friends at the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance that same day); and a fundraiser or evening speaker event. There is the annual Gratitude Breakfast at Augsburg University via the Step-Up program; the annual Rally for Recovery Twins game, where over 2,000 recoverees sit in one huge section and represent recovery in the state of Minnesota and are recognized as such; and so much more to celebrate! Our gratitude goes out to our friends at the Minnesota Recovery Network and Nuway for all of the hard work that goes into making sure these events take place!



Every quarter, Vinland holds an all-staff meeting where both the residential and outpatient staff get together, share a meal and update each other on what's happening from each area/department. We also welcome new staff, and celebrate work anniversaries. This September we had perfect weather to do this outside of our chalet next to the lake, followed by pontoon boat rides and canoeing. This picture gives you an idea of the size of the Vinland staff. Of course, not all were there due to those on second shift and others in the residential facility being there for the current clients. But with 90-ish staff members, you can see who makes up the small but mighty team that is the magic of Vinland.



Walk for Recovery at the state capitol with friends of Vinland: Randy Anderson, owner of Bold North Recovery & Consulting; Pam Jones Lanhart, owner of Thrive! and Molly Gilbert, director of business development for Vinland.



Vinland staff at the Gratitude Breakfast at Augsburg University. L. to R.: Tanya Milless, HST supervisor; Grace Sohn, assessment counselor; Molly Gilbert, director of business development; and Jessica Tester, residential case manager.

In addition, on September 25, Vinland's Outpatient Services location in northeast Minneapolis held our first CEU (continuing education credits) open house in over seven years! We had Katrina Meyers from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance open our filled-to-

the-brim event with an overview of brain injury and what amazing services the Minnesota BIA offers to those with lived experience, as well as to their families and loved ones, and to professionals. This includes offerings like resource facilitation; public policy and awareness; case management; education sessions and advocacy; along with an annual professional brain injury conference; a brain injury support conference for those with lived experience and their support systems; a stroke conference; and so much more. Go to www.braininjurymn.org to learn more! This was followed by one of our fabulous outpatient case managers, Sandy Halseth, presenting on the subject of working with those with different learning styles. We had a great showing of passionate clinicians and advocates within the field of Recovery learning different ways to reach their clients who might be struggling with some cognitive issues.



Also in September, I had the pleasure of representing Vinland at the annual LETAC (Law Enforcement Mental Health and Criminal Justice Summit) over three days.

That same week, we hosted an exhibitor booth at the annual Problem Gambling Conference, followed by the Minnesota Public Defender's annual conference at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd.

Business Development continued on next page.

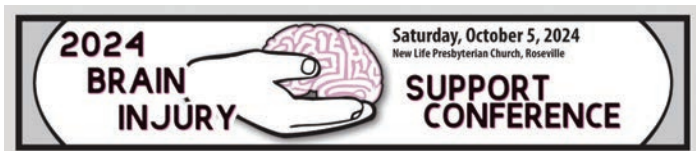


Molly with a friend of Vinland, Sylvanus with Metropolitan State University, at the Problem Gambling Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota.



The annual Problem Gambling conference in Bloomington, Minnesota.

During all this activity, we've had our director of residential services, Tom Beckers, present to Hazelden Betty Ford's clinical team, as well as at both of the North Dakota and Minnesota Brain Injury Conferences in Fargo and Minneapolis. This was followed by a "lunch and learn" given at the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance in September.



In October, I had the pleasure of presenting to the Peer Support Alliance Board about the work that Vinland does in working with those with brain injuries and substance use disorders.

We're in talks right now for Tom to meet with Bemidji State addiction students before the end of the year, and he is waiting to hear back from the University of Minnesota on a date to present to their students. While he's doing that, I am on a panel for Minneapolis Community and Technical College's Addiction Practicum, so if you are a college or university with upcoming LADCs, please

reach out to Vinland as we are happy to present for your students and answer any questions they might have about the work that we do and internships we offer! Tom is going to visit our friends at Kinnick Falls Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services in Wisconsin to conduct a staff training, as we utilize them so often as a step-down in aftercare for our residential clients. All of this outreach truly takes a village!

October conference season was off with a bang with two of the largest conferences for those in the fields of substance use disorders, behavioral health, and social work with Duluth's annual St. Louis County Health & Human Services 3-day conference, where our very own Mr. Beckers gave a great presentation, followed by the Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health 3-day conference in St. Paul. In between are all sorts of special dinners and events (some happening simultaneously) that we attend to network and catch up with our friends and colleagues in the field. I was excited to be able to represent Vinland at the Recovery Community Network of St. Cloud's annual banquet, where the featured speaker in Recovery was former anchorperson and journalist, Don Shelby—who shared an incredible, personal story of his journey! Being able to meet Don after his moving talk was really special.



Molly Gilbert, director of business development for Vinland, with Don Shelby at the Recovery Community Network of St. Cloud's annual banquet.

Between all this, my role on the DHS TBI Advisory Committee takes up a couple of days per month and we recently presented our vision of a State and Housing Plan to the state of Minnesota on behalf of those Minnesotans with brain injuries. We are all very proud of this 1.5-year project. Vinland also has me in Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey County jails meeting monthly with those who are justice-involved, educating them on signs and symptoms of brain injuries and the many connections between TBIs, the criminal justice system and substance use disorder.

UPDATE FROM OUR OUTPATIENT PROBLEM GAMBLING PROGRAM

*Katie Richard, Outpatient Services Manager,
Problem Gambling Counselor*



Every year in July, the National Council on Problem Gambling holds their annual conference. This year it was held in San Diego and I had the privilege of being sent to represent Vinland's problem gambling program.

The main focus was on upcoming research from several East Coast states, as well as the topic of self-care. One of the keynote speakers helped remind the attendees to take a moment and be mindful of how we all were feeling. She led the group in a mindfulness exercise to help remind everyone to slow down and be kind to themselves. I think this was a good pause for everyone, no matter what profession they came from, and it helped highlight the need for a space to be created in order to be gentle with ourselves.

One of the breakout sessions I attended was related to someone who has lived experience with problem gambling, and how they are self-promoting gambling recovery. Because of the presenter's background prior to being in recovery, he was able to use this knowledge and experience to help educate people on what gambling addiction is and can look like. As a provider of gambling counseling services, I am aware of the damage that gambling can cause to someone's life, and was glad to see that he is able to take his unique experience and help others learn from it.

This conference is always a place where people can connect and this year was no different. I was able to meet people from other states who understand problem gambling counseling and share many of the same concerns I do. I was also able to reconnect with those I only get to see at the conference and find out what their year has brought them.

Looking forward to the upcoming year in the realm of gambling within the state of Minnesota, the potential of having sports betting legalized is a very real possibility. Part of attending the national conference helps me gain an understanding of how other states have worked with legalized sports betting.

I always look forward to attending this conference and being able to bring this knowledge back to share with my colleagues at Vinland, as many of our clients suffer from this co-morbidity. Thanks to Vinland for making this possible!

NEW FACES

We are happy to announce new hires and staff changes that will help us continue to best serve our clients.

New Staff:

- Amanda Straka, Gardener/Groundskeeper
- Mark Parady, HST
- Natasha Habiger, HST

Changes:

- Renee Olson was promoted to Executive Administrator

THERAPEUTIC FITNESS NEWS

Jeff and Kirsten in our Therapeutic Fitness Center are happy to share stories about our clients, including comments they have received.

This is why we do what we do:

- Client said this morning on the treadmill, “Jeff, I used to start the day every morning with a couple of hits of the pipe, now I start the day on the treadmill. This is so much better!” This is a gentleman just two days ago wanting to leave and go use!
- Andrew, one of our new guys, has a right foot drop, and is really de-conditioned; just came to my office and needed some t-shirts and shorts. After I provided him with those he said, “I really, really like it here. Thank you so much.”
- A client leaving the therapeutic exercise program said, “Jeff, you have absolutely no idea what a difference this is making in my life!” Had to share as it’s not in writing anywhere but he literally just left here pretty much with tears in his eyes; it was choking me up a little bit.
- When doing Jeremy’s intake this morning—in the midst of some chaos, mind you—I said to him as we say to most of our assessments, “We want you to look back on your time here at Vinland and think what a great time you had and that you did the work, got clean and sober and are now moving on with your life.” His response to me was, “I have been in several treatments before here. This is the only place where I’ve felt welcomed since the first minute I arrived.” He

went on to explain to me that “Vinland staff seems to genuinely care for the clients.”

- Another new client that just went through our intake process asked, “Why don’t other places do this?” (He was referring to our therapeutic fitness program as a required part of SUD treatment.)

The following are just a few success stories from the Therapeutic Exercise Program:

- Improved in every pre- and post-measurement. He now has almost ZERO pain and his brain speed improved significantly! He is incredibly pleased with his results and his treatment here as a whole.
- 1,776 cardio minutes! Hall of Fame kind of guy. Came in with cervical and lumbar pain from working construction most of his life and left with ZERO pain! He will exercise as part of his recovery, as he is very motivated.
- Was very proud of how he built up his endurance here. Plans to continue with regular exercise.
- Came in with numerous health issues, including life-ending stuff. Left feeling hopeful that he has some time left. He had perfect attendance and over 2,400 cardio minutes and was super-proud of this accomplishment. He will be joining the YMCA to continue his fitness path.

- Came to Vinland with chronic pain from an ATV accident and playing football and left with ZERO pain reported (after almost perfect attendance and over 1,000 cardio minutes). Plans to exercise at the gym when he leaves Vinland.
- Came in with knee pain from hockey, left with a 1/10 pain level!
- Pain is now minimal after battling chronic pain from a fractured C-spine in a motor vehicle accident. Exercise and improved nutrition will be monumental in his recovery.
- Came in with bilateral rotator cuff injuries and is leaving with a full range of motion and ZERO pain!
- A body composition test on a particularly hard-working client showed his muscle is up nine pounds and his body fat is down three pounds.

We’ve had many perfect attendance records from our latest clients, plus many of them are planning to continue working their fitness and nutrition routine as part of their long-term recovery plan.

We wish all these folks well in their next journey as they transition from Vinland!

FEEDBACK FROM GRADUATES

Our clients continue to amaze us with how hard they work in our Therapeutic Fitness Center and the outstanding results they accomplish!

Did the program meet your fitness and wellness goals?

- It got my head in the game enough to want to continue outside of here.
- Absolutely! I lost 5 lbs. and 3% body fat.
- Yes, staff and equipment are both amazing!! Not just saying that—these are truly some of the nicest people you could meet.

What did you like best about the program?

- The sense of relief
- I enjoyed the daily routine and the freedom. It made me feel like my own program instead of feeling forced.
- Jeff and Kirsten were the best. Great people, great talks, great motivators.
- It has been an integral part of my recovery.
- The food!
- How thorough, patient, and professional Ms. Kirsten and Jeff are.
- The instructors were fantastic. I was able to build up motivation every day with the help of the instructors. I am extremely happy with the results!
- I liked that the fitness program sets you up for success and gives you the opportunity to grow in mind, body, and spirit.
- That it was first thing in the morning and was a great way to start your day out running or biking and hitting weights.
- Simplicity. I've been known to complicate these things in the past.
- The fact that you scheduled fitness into the daily treatment programming.
- Nice program and gym size.
- The push to put down the snacks and eat healthier.

- That it's a part of Vinland's treatment.
- Nice people, good equipment, and a great atmosphere.
- Some of the best, caring people I have met, who truly care about mind, body, and soul.

How did you hear about Vinland?

- Taylor Rickers through Sanford Health of Beltrami (thanks Taylor!)
- My sister and I did research on treatment all across the state of Minnesota and Vinland really stood out to us.
- A friend of mine came here and told me about it.
- Internet search.
- I first heard about Vinland in 2021 and that they incorporate physical fitness
- Searching for treatment for TBI.
- Through my mental health therapist.
- Peer Recovery Specialist Romney Skarp (thanks Romney!)
- From my girlfriend. She looked it up online and it was close to our house.
- At my last outpatient from a client.
- Mental Health Coordinator at NorthStar (thanks friends!)
- Fellow inmates that had been clients.
- Hibbing Hospital (thanks, friends!)
- Word of mouth in jail and by a probation officer.
- My wife.

Overall, how would you rate Vinland's TEP?

- One of the best experiences I've EVER HAD!!!
- I would give it an 8.5/10 because I think I could have tried harder and committed more to the workout and possibly set more goals. Overall it was great and I enjoyed every day in

fitness (especially when I had it in the morning because it helped me get my day started with a more positive attitude.) Thank you!

- 10/10—I've never been into getting healthy, pushing myself, lifting weights, eating healthy. I've totally changed my thinking on all of that. It's important to me now.
- 5 out of 5 Stars *****
- 10/10—I LOVE IT
- Well, I could not walk on my own and now I'm getting around independently. Thank you for giving me the freedom and health that I truly needed. Love to you both, Kirsten and Jeff.
- Jeff and Kirsten exceed expectations. My experience in the fitness program was my favorite part. The interactions with Jeff and Kirsten and their unyielding support were life-changing for me. 5/5 Stars—100%.
- Giving you guys a 5-star rating on Google



We have added on to our shoe repair side hustle and discovered we are also in the wheelchair wheel repair business!



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About Vinland National Center

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Vinland National Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that enables individuals with multiple disabilities to live productive and fulfilling lives through a whole-person approach that addresses the mind, body and spirit. Vinland's programs meet the complex needs of individuals living with brain injuries, serious and persistent mental illness, learning disabilities and other neurobehavioral disorders. Our primary focus is on substance abuse treatment including mental health services, a renowned therapeutic exercise program, family programming, outpatient services and permanent, supportive housing for adults with disabilities in recovery from substance use disorder.

Earn CEUs with Vinland's Online Webinar Library

You can watch recorded webinars on Vinland's website and earn CEUs for free. Webinar topics include substance abuse treatment for individuals with cognitive impairments, dual diagnosis, therapeutic exercise, and mindfulness meditation. Vinland offers free webinars as a way to share our expertise with other health care professionals.

➔ To view recorded webinars, visit VINLANDCENTER.ORG/EVENTS

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