# *September Newsletter: Recovery Month & Suicide Prevention Month*

This issue recognizes two important September observances. The first part highlights Recovery Month through person-centered language, participant accomplishments, employment outcomes, community partnerships, and recovery resources. The second part focuses on Suicide Prevention Month through current statistics, warning signs, TEECH's community QPR training, crisis guidance, and prevention resources.

This issue reflects on National Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Month, both observed in September, while carrying their messages of recovery, prevention, connection, and hope forward into October.

National Recovery Month began in 1989 and is observed every September to promote evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, honor the strength of the recovery community, and recognize the providers, peers, families, and neighbors who make recovery in all its forms possible. The 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that 31.7 million adults said they had ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs; among them, 74.3%, or 23.5 million people, considered themselves to be in recovery or to have recovered.

These numbers are a reminder that recovery is not rare; it is happening every day in homes, workplaces, programs, faith communities, treatment settings, and neighborhoods across the country. At TEECH, recovery support is rooted in person-centered care, which means seeing each person as a whole person with strengths, dignity, culture, goals, family, community, and hope. It also means recognizing that substance use challenges, mental health, trauma, housing, employment, justice involvement, family responsibilities, and access to care are often connected.

Recovery Month also reminds us that prevention, harm reduction, treatment, peer support, employment readiness, family connection, and community belonging work together. Overdose prevention remains an important part of that support. According to CDC data, 79,384 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in 2024. Although the national overdose death rate declined from 2023 to 2024, every life lost reinforces the continuing importance of education, naloxone access, treatment connections, and community support. Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, can assist in reversing an opioid overdose when administered in time and will not harm someone if opioids are not the cause.

**Community Overdose Alert:** The Chicago Department of Public Health reported a possible overdose spike on September 1, 2026, when emergency crews responded to 35 suspected opioid-related overdose case nearly twice the city's daily average of 19. The responses were concentrated in the South Shore and Chatham communities. The 35 emergency responses were not reported as 35 confirmed overdoses or deaths. This serious community concern underscores the importance of overdose-prevention education, access to naloxone (Narcan), prompt

emergency response, and connections to treatment and recovery support. If an overdose is suspected, call 911 immediately and administer naloxone when available.

*Recovery resources include SAMHSA National Recovery Month, FindTreatment.gov, FindSupport.gov, CDC overdose prevention resources, and the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances*

## Recovery Language Guide: Words Matter

Before we highlight this year's Recovery Month Proclamation, it is important to pause and reflect on the language we use when talking about recovery, substance use, mental health, justice involvement, and participation in services. Words shape how people are seen, how safe they feel asking for support, and whether communities create barriers or open doors to care.

Using respectful, person-centered language is one simple but powerful way to reduce stigma and affirm dignity. The following guide offers alternatives that help keep the focus on the person first, while recognizing challenges, strengths, and opportunities for recovery and growth.

| Instead of Saying | Consider Saying |
|---|---|
| Substance Use and Recovery | |
| Addict / Junkie | Person with a substance use disorder |
| Abuser / Drug user | Person who uses substances / Person experiencing substance use challenges |
| Clean | In recovery / Not currently using substances |
| Dirty screen | Positive toxicology result |
| Failed treatment | Needs a different level of support |
| Relapsed / Sober failure | Experienced a return to use / Person experiencing a setback |
| Habit | Substance use disorder / Substance use challenge |
| Mental Health | |
| Mentally ill person | Person living with a mental health condition |
| Crazy / Unstable / Psycho | Person experiencing a mental health challenge, emotional distress, or mental health crisis |
| Manic / Bipolar person | Person living with bipolar disorder |
| Schizophrenic | Person living with schizophrenia |
| Attention-seeking | Person expressing a need for support |
| Returning Citizens and Justice Involvement | |
| Ex-offender / Ex-con / Felon / Convict | Returning citizen / Person with justice involvement / Person returning to the community |
| Criminal / Repeat offender | Person with justice involvement / Person with prior justice involvement |
| Inmate / Former inmate | Person who is incarcerated / Person in custody / Returning citizen |
| Parolee | Person on parole / Participant |
| Housing and Service Participation | |
| Homeless person | Person experiencing homelessness |
| Refused services | Declined services at this time / Not ready to engage at this time |
| No-show | Missed appointment |
| Non-compliant | Experiencing barriers to participation |

# *2026 Illinois Recovery Month Proclamation*

## *In honor of Recovery Month, TEECH is highlighting the 2026 Recovery Month Proclamation issued by Governor JB Pritzker for communities throughout Illinois.*

The 2026 Recovery Month Proclamation highlights Illinois' shared commitment to celebrating recovery, reducing stigma, and strengthening community-based support. It offers councils, partners, and local stakeholders an opportunity to raise awareness, encourage meaningful conversations, and recognize the ongoing work being done across the state to connect individuals and families with hope, resources, and pathways to long-term wellness.



STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

**WHEREAS,** we cannot forget those lives impacted by behavioral health challenges in Illinois, and the State of Illinois recognizes that recovery from mental health and substance use challenges occurs via multiple pathways; and,

**WHEREAS,** recovery is the process in which people can live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities; and,

**WHEREAS,** for some individuals, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability, while for others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms – science has shown that having hope plays an integral role in an individual's recovery; and,

**WHEREAS,** the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery has created and maintains access to numerous evidence-based practices that promote recovery such as peer recovery support, harm reduction, Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR), Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), Individual Placement & Support (IPS), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH); and,

**WHEREAS,** the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery continues to prioritize the improvement and expansion of the Crisis Care Continuum in Illinois via Mobile Crisis Response Teams, Living Room Programs, and connection to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, as well as improving access to services and support through the Illinois Helpline and the Illinois Warm Line; and,

**WHEREAS,** we recognize that National Recovery Month increases awareness and understanding of substance use and mental health recovery, reduces stigma, promotes whole health and wellness, and celebrates people in recovery; and,

**WHEREAS,** the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery invites all Illinois residents to participate in National Recovery Month during September 2026.

**THEREFORE,** I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim September 2026 as **National Recovery Month** in Illinois and call upon our communities to observe these occasions with compelling programs and events that support this year's observance.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield, this SEVENTEENTH day of AUGUST, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and TWENTY-SIX, and of the State of Illinois, two hundred and SEVENTH.

SECRETARY OF STATE

GOVERNOR

# Carrying Recovery Month Forward

Although this September newsletter is being shared in October, the message of Recovery Month continues beyond one month of recognition. Recovery is reflected in the everyday work of showing up, sharing resources, reducing stigma, strengthening partnerships, and creating spaces where individuals and families feel supported, encouraged, and connected to care.

As we look back on September, this issue first highlights the employment pathways created through TEECH's workforce partnerships and then recognizes participant completions and Recovery Month events that brought people together through celebration, education, outreach, and community connection. Together, these outcomes show that recovery is reflected not only in proclamations and awareness campaigns, but also in meaningful employment, individual achievement, shared experiences, and continued pathways of hope across Illinois.

# Recovery in Motion: Employment Pathways and Participant Achievements

## Employment Pathways: Five Years of Workforce Impact

According to employment figures provided to TEECH by Dakkota Integrated Staffing on September 28, 2026, TEECH has referred 365 individuals for employment during the past five years. Of those individuals, 245 remain employed within the organization. These outcomes reflect the value of sustained workforce partnerships and the long-term impact of connecting community members with meaningful employment opportunities.

**A Full-Circle Success Story:** One young adult referred to TEECH through the Youth Diversion Program completed his required community service with TEECH. Today, he is employed as an Amazon delivery driver—and now delivers packages to TEECH. His journey is a meaningful example of how accountability, opportunity, and community support can contribute to lasting progress.

## Recognizing September Graduates

As part of this Recovery Month issue, TEECH is honored to celebrate our September graduates and the meaningful progress reflected in their completions. By continuing to show up, meet expectations, and take steady steps toward stability, wellness, and purpose, they demonstrate recovery in action.

Recovery Month reminds us that every milestone matters. Each completed class, appointment, goal, and program requirement represents effort, discipline, and growth. These accomplishments show what becomes possible when participants are surrounded by structure, encouragement, accountability, opportunity, and support that honors the whole person.

Through TEECH's Recovery Support Services and Workforce Development programming, participants worked on individualized goals, employment readiness, life skills, skill-building activities, and program and community supervision expectations. Their progress connects directly to the spirit of Recovery Month by showing that recovery, reentry, and workforce readiness are built through consistency, connection, and one step forward at a time.

This recognition is more than a celebration of completion; it is a reminder that recovery is visible in real lives, real decisions, and real achievements. As we lift up our September graduates, we also celebrate the hope, resilience, and community support that make continued growth possible for individuals, families, and neighborhoods.

*To our September graduates: your effort is seen, your growth is valued, and your next chapter is worth pursuing with focus, courage, and hope. Congratulations on this meaningful achievement. TEECH is proud to stand alongside you as you continue building a stronger foundation for yourself, your family, and your future.*

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# *Recovery Month in the Community*

Throughout September, TEECH joined community partners in recognizing Recovery Month through events centered on awareness, connection, education, and support. The following highlights showcase several of the activities and partnerships that brought the community together to celebrate recovery and share hope. We are proud to feature these Recovery Month moments and recognize the organizations, participants, and community members who contributed to each event.

United Mental Health and Recovery (UMARC)







# TEECH/FSSRI








# *FSSRI and Breaking Barriers Collectively*



# *September Is Also Suicide Prevention Month*

September is also recognized as Suicide Prevention Month, making this an important time to strengthen conversations about emotional wellness, connection, hope, and access to support. Recovery and suicide prevention are closely connected: people may face substance use challenges, mental health concerns, trauma, grief, isolation, housing or employment instability, justice involvement, or other life stressors at the same time. A person-centered response means listening without judgment, taking concerns seriously, and connecting people to appropriate support.

**Recent Suicide Statistics:** According to the CDC, 48,824 people died by suicide in the United States in 2024. Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death nationally and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10–44. The age-adjusted suicide rate declined from 14.1 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023 to 13.7 in 2024. The CDC also estimates that during 2024, 14.3 million adults seriously considered suicide, 4.6 million made a suicide plan, and 2.2 million attempted suicide. These figures show why early intervention, open conversation, and access to crisis support remain essential. Source: CDC Suicide Data and Statistics.

Suicide prevention is a shared community responsibility. Warning signs may include talking about wanting to die, expressing hopelessness or feeling like a burden, withdrawing from others, giving away important belongings, extreme changes in mood, or increased substance use. One sign alone does not always mean a person is considering suicide, but concerning changes should not be ignored.

# *QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer*

During September, TEECH emphasized suicide prevention education through QPR—Question, Persuade, Refer and hosted a QPR suicide prevention training for the community to provide education and increase awareness. QPR teaches practical steps for recognizing warning signs, asking directly about suicide, encouraging a person to accept support, and connecting them with appropriate professional or crisis resources. Asking someone directly if they are thinking about suicide does not put the idea in their mind; it can open the door to an honest and potentially life-saving conversation. The training also strengthened participants' ability to recognize warning signs and connect individuals with appropriate support and crisis resources.



If someone is in immediate, life-threatening danger, call 911. For 24/7 support related to suicide, mental health, emotional distress, or substance use, call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

## *Suicide Prevention: What You Should Know*

- Take statements about suicide seriously. Listen calmly, stay present, and avoid judgment.
- Ask directly if you are concerned that someone may be thinking about suicide.
- Connect the person to support. Call or text 988 together when appropriate, and call 911 for immediate life-threatening danger.
- Connection matters. Follow-up, encouragement, and continued community support can reduce isolation and reinforce hope.

# Community Care Beyond Recovery

## Tornado Relief Still Needed

Recovery also includes rebuilding after disruption. For families across the South Suburbs and Northwest Indiana, that work continues after severe storms, tornadoes, flooding, downed trees, power outages, damaged homes, and interruptions to daily life.

Relief is still needed as residents, businesses, and communities work through cleanup, repairs, food loss, housing concerns, transportation challenges, and the emotional stress that can follow a disaster. Local leaders in the South Suburbs have continued calling attention to the need for additional assistance, while Northwest Indiana communities have been working through storm damage, flooding impacts, and recovery needs.

During this time, community support matters. Donations, volunteer support, shared resources, wellness checks, and connections to trusted relief organizations can help families take the next step toward stability. TEECH encourages partners, residents, and stakeholders to stay informed, share verified resources and continue standing with neighbors as recovery efforts move forward.

## Community Resources and Support

Use this quick-reference list to connect individuals, families, and community members with crisis care, housing, food, recovery services, youth services, transportation, domestic violence support, and other community resources. For a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.

- 2-1-1 Metro Chicago / Illinois 211: Call 211 or text ZIP code to 898-211 for housing, food, utilities, employment, clothing, health care, and social services.
- 311 Chicago City Services: Call 311 for non-emergency City services, referrals, and shelter requests.
- 911 Emergency Services: Call 911 for life-threatening emergencies, fire, medical emergencies, overdose, or immediate danger.
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call/text 988 for 24/7 mental health, substance use, emotional, or suicidal crisis support.
- CARES Line / SASS Youth Crisis: Call 1-800-345-9049 for Illinois children/youth mental or behavioral health crisis support, 24/7.
- CCBYS Youth Crisis Services: Call 1-877-870-2663 for youth ages 11–17 who have run away, are locked out, are experiencing housing instability, or are in family crisis.
- CTA Customer Service: Call 1-888-YOUR-CTA (1-888-968-7282) for CTA service, accessibility, feedback, and travel assistance.
- Greater Chicago Food Depository: Call 773-247-3663 for food pantries, groceries, meals, SNAP/Link help, and food support.

• Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline: Call/text 877-863-6338 for 24/7 confidential support, safety planning, and referrals.
• Illinois Helpline for Opioids/Substances: Call 833-234-6343 or text HELP to 833234 for treatment and recovery support.

• Illinois Warm Line: Call 866-359-7953 for non-crisis emotional support from trained Wellness Support Specialists.
• Immediate Shelter Assistance: In Chicago, call 311 or 312-744-5000 and request emergency shelter assistance.
• NAMI Chicago Helpline: Call 833-626-4244 for local mental health support, guidance, and referrals.
• National Runaway Safeline: Call 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929) for 24/7 confidential youth safety support.
• Pace Suburban Bus: Call 847-364-7223 for suburban bus routes, schedules, and customer support.
• RTA Travel Information: Call 312-836-7000 for regional transit trip planning and travel information.
• Youth Housing Instability Drop-In Resources: Youth/young adults can call 311 for basic needs, housing, food, hygiene, mental health, education, and employment support.

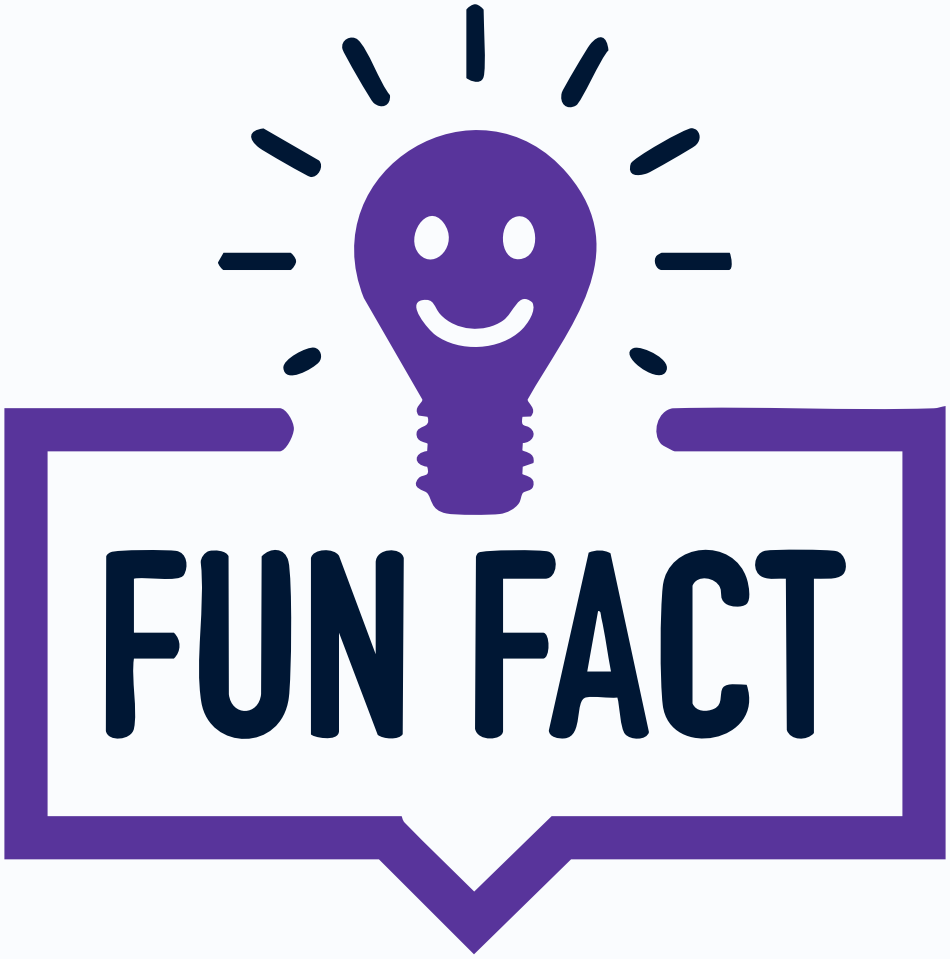
Resource information can change. Confirm service availability, eligibility requirements, and contact details with the listed organization before making a referral.

## *Call to Action: Strengthen Our Community Together*

Take one step this week to strengthen our community. Check on a neighbor, share a trusted resource, learn the warning signs of overdose or suicide, carry naloxone, when possible, support a family affected by crisis or disaster, volunteer with a local organization, or connect someone to employment, housing, food, treatment, or other needed services. Residents, families, businesses, schools, faith communities, service providers, and community leaders all have a role. Choose one action, follow through, and invite another person to join you. Together, we can build safer, healthier, more connected communities where every person is treated with dignity and has access to support, opportunity, stability, and hope.

## What You Should Know

**Local Arts Spotlight:** The Art Institute of Chicago is presenting Mary Cassatt: After Impressionism through January 3, 2027. Featuring more than 75 paintings, prints, and related works, the exhibition explores Cassatt's artistic innovations beyond Impressionism. Learn more from the Art Institute of Chicago.




## Fun Facts

Did you know? A group of flamingos is called a flamboyance—which may be the most stylish group name in the animal kingdom.

***Thank you for continuing to support TEECH's work throughout the community. We appreciate every participant, family, partner, volunteer, and neighbor who contributes to stronger connections and brighter possibilities. We look forward to sharing more community news, resources, and achievements in our next issue.***