



Doc's Recovery House



2022
Annual Report

To our friends, donors, and community members:



As we look back on another year of serving men and women on their path to recovery at Doc's Recovery House, we can't do so without feeling a deep sense of awe, gratitude and amazement at what this place has become.

From men and women coming to Doc's Recovery House during the first few days of their journey, and those continuing their chapter in recovery with us after treatment, to those who attended our training programs, it was an honor to continue watching the beauty of humanity, hope and community unfold before our eyes this past year.

Once again, as we reflect, we can't do so without sharing our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to our generous community of supporters, donors, and champions for the cause of recovery. Your encouragement, selfless giving, and partnership alongside our mission has always made the difference, and this year was no different.

At Doc's Recovery House, we're all about walking alongside people with dignity and respect. We intentionally work to grow deep roots, give people the foundation and community they need to live a life of recovery from addiction, and help them experience every joy and opportunity we know is possible in recovery. Thank you for illuminating the way for so many people to experience the hope of recovery this past year.

With our heartfelt gratitude,

Tori Utley
Cofounder & Executive Director

Rick Utley
Cofounder & Development Director

Steve Coddington
Cofounder & Program Director

Our Mission

Doc's Recovery House is an organization intent on reigniting the light in each person by treating them with dignity and respect while walking alongside their path to recovery.

Our Vision

We emphasize the human being in the process of recovery. We focus on the person, rather than the disease, and empower others to do the same. We work to eradicate the stigma of addiction through the hope of our stories, the importance of connection, and the dignity of recovery.

Housing Programs & Peer Recovery Services

🌲 Pre-Treatment Housing:

Immediate connection to short-term recovery housing before admission to a residential treatment program. Pre-treatment housing is intended to fill the gaps in our current system, get people help quickly, and provide somewhere to start the journey of recovery.

🌲 Post-Treatment Recovery Housing:

A housing program that offers safe and supportive housing to those who have completed residential treatment and are looking for a supportive housing community for their next step in recovery.

🌲 Step-Up Program:

An extended program offering long-term recovery housing to alumni of our recovery housing program. The program focuses on empowerment, community and ongoing peer support.

🌲 Peer Recovery Support:

Our programs are staffed 24/7 by Peer Recovery Specialists, who provide support to residents through their own lived experience in recovery. We host daily peer recovery groups, individual support sessions and opportunities for connection and community building.

🌲 Treatment Coordination:

To help bridge the gaps present while seeking recovery, we provide treatment coordination to individuals in our pre-treatment and post-treatment programs to help with comprehensive assessments and the coordination of the next step in pursuing treatment or supportive services.



Scan for more information about our
housing programs and peer recovery service



Community Programs & Partnerships

🌟 Recovery Coaching Academy (RCA):

The Recovery Coaching Academy is an accredited training course for individuals to become certified as Peer Recovery Specialists in Minnesota. Our academy was uniquely designed to offer the training at no cost to our residents and alumni who have at least one year of recovery and are interested in learning to use their experience to help others, but is also open to community applicants.

🌟 Naloxone Distribution & Community Training:

As a Naloxone Access Point (NAP) with the Steve Rummeler Hope Network, our community center manages a supply of Narcan, an overdose reversal drug that is available to the community without need for a prescription. We offer weekly training to our residents and community members on Narcan administration, and distribute Narcan and Fentanyl test strips to continue combating the opioid epidemic in our community.

🌟 Overdose Response Team:

Through the PAR program, Doc's Recovery House peer recovery specialists provide community outreach with Rochester Police Department social workers to follow-up with individuals who have recently survived an overdose, working to bridge the pathways to treatment, offer a connection to recovery through our pre-treatment program, and continue to distribute Narcan to individuals and family members.

🌟 Police Assisted Recovery Program:

Our collaboration with the Rochester Police Department provides non-arrest pathways to treatment and recovery. In the partnership, Doc's Recovery House offers PAR participants connection to pre-treatment housing and peer recovery support as they take the next step in their journey of recovery.

🌟 Oxbow Park Program:

Our collaboration with Oxbow Park is the earliest partnership at Doc's Recovery House, active since 2015. At the original "Doc's House," we partner with Oxbow Park to do service projects around the park, as well as host numerous community events, trail runs, bonfires and other opportunities for connections in the recovery community at this site, like our weekly Gratitude Meeting by the fire.

Our Impact

Since opening our doors, Doc's Recovery House has served **366 unique individuals** in our housing programs, and facilitated **489 recovery housing stays**, including both pre-treatment and post-treatment in our men and women's housing programs.

489 total admissions at
Doc's Recovery House

212

people engaged with
our program in 2022

366

total residents
have been housed
and supported

125

residents have
participated in our
recovery housing program

250

cakes (and counting)
have been made to
celebrate recovery
milestones

110

alumni have become staff
members, representing
the full-circle vision of our
recovery community.

11

residents were
successfully placed in
residential treatment
programs

Doc's Recovery House Tree Rings symbolize growth. We are grateful for a wonderful third year as an organization, and look forward to the growth ahead for Doc's Recovery House and our residents, alumni and staff members.

Elliott's Story

Written by Elliott Lamere

I grew up in a small town in Wisconsin called Wittenburg. I had a roof over my head, but family ties were not there - they were broken. The first time I drank was at the early age of ten, but I smoked cigarettes and pot before then. That became my thing to do - to look for mood altering substances... and trouble.

I was placed in inpatient treatment at the age of 15, which was just a playground for me as a child. I've been in 7 other treatment centers since then.

Fast forward to my adult life - I was homeless in Rochester for a bit, and I knew about Doc's House, so I ended up making a call and they picked me up from the streets and took me to detox. I joined their pre-treatment program, which was motivation for going to treatment because of the positivity that was present in the house. The morning meditations and morning groups were helpful. It was suggested to me to bring the right man to treatment, so that's what I tried to do - open-mindedness, willingness, and wanting a better life.

At first when I got out of treatment, it was hard because I knew where to get my drugs. The habit and routine of getting out of treatment and using was hard to battle - it was like not knowing any other way to live other than using and getting into trouble.

But I stayed at Doc's, and I felt involved and excited by knowing I was taking the steps to further my mindset on recovery for myself and for helping others.

In February, I celebrated my one year of recovery, which was great. I went around and got 5 one year coins from different groups I go to for recovery, and I wanted to show the happiness and joy I felt so the

newcomer could see that it is possible to be happy after a lifetime of going the wrong direction.

I hit meetings everyday - NA, AA, Wellbriety - and hung around only sober people in recovery - people who had what I wanted: Happiness, sobriety, laughter, friendship and inner peace.

For anyone else on the journey of recovery, I would tell them to have self-worth. To know that the Higher Power created you out of love, and that we are worthy of happiness, and we all are equal. Meeting makers make it, so get out and help the newcomers, because by helping them, we help ourselves by reminding us where we came from and where we could end up if we lose focus on our recovery.



Elliott is a member of the Doc's House family, an alumni of our housing program, and a recent graduate of the Recovery Coaching Academy (RCA). He recently moved out into his own apartment, and is taking steps to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) to give back to others on the journey of recovery.

Sarah's Story

Written by Sarah Whitefeather

February 12, 2014 is a day that changed my life forever. My Dad had been diagnosed with cancer for the third year in a row, and I'm the one who would drive him the hour-long trip to Mayo Clinic in Rochester. I was seasoned at making this trip over the years of his illness, and the weather wasn't any worse than other times we had made the drive - but that morning had proved to be different, and it would lead to a chain of events that I wouldn't have ever imagined.

During the drive, I hit a patch of ice as I approached a stop sign. The car was thrown into a fishtail, and I wasn't able to regain control of the vehicle. As the car whipped back and forth down the road, we finally ended up in the ditch. It was a slow and gentle rollover, but it was enough to take my father's life at the scene, while leaving my Mom and I uninjured. From this, I fully understand survivor's guilt, and would have done anything to take his place.

At that time in my life, I had stopped drinking, but smoked a little weed on occasion. I had a new husband, and we were raising my three children who were teens. I was working in sales and customer service at a well-known company, and was a minivan-driving, varsity parent, traveling basketball mom and didn't miss my daughter's sporting events. After the accident, I kept an outward appearance that things were okay, but survivor's guilt was destroying me on the inside.

17 months after the car accident, my husband was diagnosed with cancer in his liver, the same cancer my father had when he died. My husband was given five weeks to live, but passed away after just three weeks.

At this point in my life, I was done. Broken doesn't even touch what I was feeling. I hated myself for my father's death, felt like I was being punished, hated God, hated life, and just wanted some way to escape the pain. If it took my life, I was okay with that, too.

I suddenly found myself in the most abusive relationship I could have imagined, and picked up meth addiction with it.

My commitment to self-destruction quickly wiped out

everything I had and left me penniless, traumatized, homeless, and with a growing, monster addiction that I needed to keep fed so the pain of my past would remain medicated and subdued.

In a very short time, I had gone from a middle class homeowner to trying to figure out how to survive on the streets. I had no choice but to learn how to survive, fast.

I ended up finding myself on the streets of Duluth in December of 2018, and was blessed with running into other homeless people struggling with addiction that could tell I was in over my head and needed help. There were times I was so cold, so alone, and in so much pain I would cry as I walked, begging for death to come and take me home.

By the beginning of 2020, I was done waiting to have death take me and I was going to make it happen. I'd suffered enough. The drugs didn't take away the pain anymore, and the lifestyle I lived in order to keep my addiction fed continued to grow and grow.

But in a final act of courage, I decided to give getting clean and sober a try before I made any permanent decisions.

I got myself help and kept myself in treatment facilities for 5 months. I managed to keep myself clean for a year, but did it by keeping myself locked in a bedroom terrified of my addiction, knowing it was waiting for me to have a weak moment so I could try and take my life.

After that year was up, I was so miserable from being so isolated, and I went back to using. I bounced in and out of treatment a couple of times, but kept struggling with my disease.

The last time I returned to active addiction was the hardest time for me to pull out of.

I was tired of letting people down. I was tired of hurting. I was tired of life. I would think about going to get an assessment done so I could get into treatment once again, but would run into people I used with and never quite got there.

On September 29, 2021, I used for the very last time and decided it was time to stop. I went back to the transitional living home

I was staying at and called for someone to accompany me to my clinical assessment. I knew that was what I needed to make sure I made it there and back safely and didn't change my mind.

I stayed in that house until October 20th, when I was finally able to get into treatment.

I was in residential treatment from October 20, 2021 to February 4, 2022, hurting and fighting and wanting to die. There were weeks I couldn't bring myself to get out of bed, and other weeks I wouldn't miss a thing and the women around me would look to me as a strong person. I didn't feel that way, but kept clinging to life because I didn't want my children losing their mother, and I had some hope that I could build my life somehow.

When I was close to leaving treatment, I had no idea where I was going to go. There were sober living houses around town, but I needed more than that. I found Doc's Recovery House shortly before my time was done at treatment. I didn't know anything about it, but knew it was where I needed to be.

As soon as I got to Doc's and met the staff, I felt like I was at home and knew I had found a new family. By the end of the second day, I had tears of relief streaming down my face. I knew I was finally somewhere safe. I knew I was home.

I hadn't realized how exhausted I had been from the years of fear and needing to stay guarded until that day. It felt as though the weight of the world had been lifted from me and I could finally relax and work on healing myself from within.

I started opening up and would talk to the overnight staff at Doc's, sharing my hurt and healing and they would listen to me for hours. My first couple of months, I think I spent more time up overnight than around people during the day. I had a rough time once I knew I was in a safe environment, and my mind finally decided it was time to delve into things I had been running from. I started having night terrors, suicidal ideation, thoughts of self-harm, battles with wanting to return to use and more.

But I'd turn to my community and my family at Doc's - staff and peers - and they would listen even if it was the same story over and over, because they loved me and knew I needed to process it and get through it.

Through their patience and love, I finally felt like I belonged somewhere - like I had a family, and like I was going to be able to put the shattered pieces of my life back together again. I finally didn't



feel alone or like I needed to go through it alone. I focused on fixing myself physically and mentally, and knew that on September 29th when I had one year clean, I wanted to be a part of their team, doing for others what they had done for me.

In the fall of 2022, I took the Recovery Coaching Academy (RCA) with Steve and Derek and completed the academy in August, right in alignment with my goal of becoming a staff member at Doc's Recovery House.

“Had I ended up anywhere other than Doc's House, there is simply no way I would have made it through the emotional and psychological battles I did for this past year.”

Doc's saved my life and more-it's given me a family and home and I couldn't be more proud to be a part of their team. Yes, I did accomplish that goal, and became a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) in the state of Minnesota, and an official peer specialist at Doc's House, on October 31, 2022.



Education & Advocacy in the Community



Doc's Recovery House is a Recovery Community Organization (RCO). RCOs are nonprofit organizations governed by and for members of the recovery community. In addition to our housing program and peer recovery services, as an RCO, Doc's Recovery House participates in local, regional and statewide efforts to advocate for recovery, to actively fight stigma, and to promote the hopeful message that recovery is possible through advocacy, education and peer support services. One of the ways we did that this past year was our participation in Recovery Month 2022.

During the month of September, we celebrated Recovery Month with a community-wide yard sign campaign to promote recovery, hosted two book signings with local authors and advocates in the field of recovery, Brittany Carlin and Tim Volz; hosted a recovery car wash on our campus; a movie screening of Tipping the Pain Scale at Gray Duck Theater; and closed Recovery Month with an open gratitude meeting at our Oxbow Park location around the bonfire.

Recovery Month is just one way we advocate in the community. Stay up-to-date with Doc's Recovery House on social media to stay tuned for more events and campaigns to spread awareness and hope!



Sustainability & Funding

As a nonprofit organization, we couldn't do our work without the community. In 2022, we were grateful to have been supported by incredible organizations, who partnered with us through grants, matching challenges, and fundraising events.

A special thank you to our grantmakers





Robert J. Felten Community Center Dedication

In May 2022, we celebrated the dedication of the Robert J. Felten Community Center, a building named in honor of our friend, brother and alumni, Robb Felten. On May 30, 2022, we gathered together for a dinner at our Oxbow Park location with the Felten family, generously catered by Pinnacle Catering, and invited the community in for a dedication event to view the newly remodeled community space. A big thank you to Neighborly Creative, Narrative Signs, Joe Powers, and the Felten family for the partnership and support in bringing this space to life and making the weekend's events possible.





Recovery Coaching Academy

In 2022, thanks to a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services through the State Opioid Response (SOR) funding, Doc's Recovery House was able to facilitate our first full year of the Recovery Coaching Academy (RCA). The academy is accredited by the Minnesota Certification Board (MCB) and is a 46-hour course designed to help people in recovery learn to use their experience to help others. For those interested, this course also prepares them to take the state exam to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) in Minnesota. This certification equips peers to work in recovery community organizations, treatment centers, social service agencies, hospitals and more.

In 2022, we are proud to share that we trained 52 peer recovery specialists over four different cohorts and will continue hosting quarterly academies in 2023!



Scan to view our upcoming academy schedule and other training opportunities!



‘Life And Its Lessons’ -Andrew’s Story

Written by: Tori Utley,
Doc’s Recovery House
Executive Director

Last year, I met a man named Andrew.

He came to our doors at Doc’s House like many others have, looking for recovery and a new life. As we got to know him over the months he was with us, it was an ebb and flow process of trust.

He had been through tough situations in life and came from a long history on the streets. Even though we told him it was different here and he could feel safe and comfortable, we knew we had to prove it.

So we did.

Some days, he was softer and easier to reach, and on other days, his guard would be up. But either way, it didn’t matter. We kept on loving Andrew like we said we would, and made sure he knew he was safe and had a home here for as long as he chose it.

A month or so after he arrived, he stopped by my office and mentioned he heard I was a writer.

I told him I was, asking if he was too. He smiled and said he wasn’t a writer yet, but that he wanted to be. He wanted to write a book but didn’t know how or where to start—he had gone through some hard things in his life and thought his story could help someone.

“I think writing a book would be the best way to do that,” he says.

I smiled—because this is my favorite type of conversation. Hearing about the dreams, and knowing we’ve created a place safe enough for a person to let their guard down and start to show who they really are.

That day in the doorway, through seeing the smile and hearing the dream, I got to see.

Later that day, I went to the store and found my favorite pens and a Moleskin notebook and dropped them off with Andrew, giving him simple encouragement to start writing.

“How many pages will I need before I can

publish my book?” He asked me.

I responded simply that there wasn’t a number to shoot for, just to start writing and follow where the process took him.

“So like 100 pages?” He asked in response.

I smiled and agreed, “100 pages sounds great.”

A few weeks later, Andrew showed up to our Friday night gratitude meeting with his notebook. He held it in his hands as the meeting went on around him, others in the group sharing their gratitude.

A few people from his turn, Andrew got up and went outside. He lit a cigarette, paced, came in and sat back down.

It came to his turn to share.

He slowly pulled out his notebook, took a deep breath, read one line and stopped.

He looked up.

“I’m not ready yet,” he said quietly.

We reassured him it was okay not to share, and the meeting went on.

The next week we were back out by the fire — this time outside in the early June weather just after sunset. With the chirps of the woods, the sound of fire crackling and the serenity of the summer, the meeting started and words of gratitude slowly made their way around the circle.

This time, when the circle made its way to Andrew, he grabbed his notebook, took a deep breath, and started reading— word by word and line by line.

No one made a sound.

Tears started prickling at my eyes and I held my breath, hoping and praying he felt comfortable enough to finish the poem.

His words were poetic and authentic, and there was a palpable awe as we all listened to

him share in that moment.

So in the safety and stillness of the night, he kept reading, making it to his last line, when he looked up.

After a small, reverent pause, everyone around the fire started clapping, followed by cheering and shouts of affirmation in a display of brotherly love big enough to make Heaven proud.

When the moment died down, we asked him to read his poem again, and this time he was eager, speaking loudly, more confidently, with more intonation.

After the second reading, the affirmations continued and Andrew’s face was now in a full smile. Even when the meeting went on and the moment was over, Andrew’s smile was still there, full of pride.

Leaving the fire that night, Andrew stood up a little taller. He was more confident, more talkative, and more engaged.

Around the fire that night, we got to witness Andrew receive the gift that we all hope to receive in this life: to be seen, heard, and loved.

To belong.

A couple of months after this special night, Andrew moved away and into his own place, and a few months after that, we learned he had passed away.

With the grief that is so often present in this work, the loss of his beautiful life has felt like an aftershock — it has come in waves, met with the sounds of his words and the experience of hearing him read them that night.

Andrew’s dream, the spark in his eye, and what it looked like to see a person taste and see the goodness of grace, belonging and brotherly love— these will be things I hold close to my heart for the rest of my life.

And while he didn’t write the 100 pages he wanted to write, his words made it to a page that mattered — and that page became a gift to all who heard him share those sacred words.

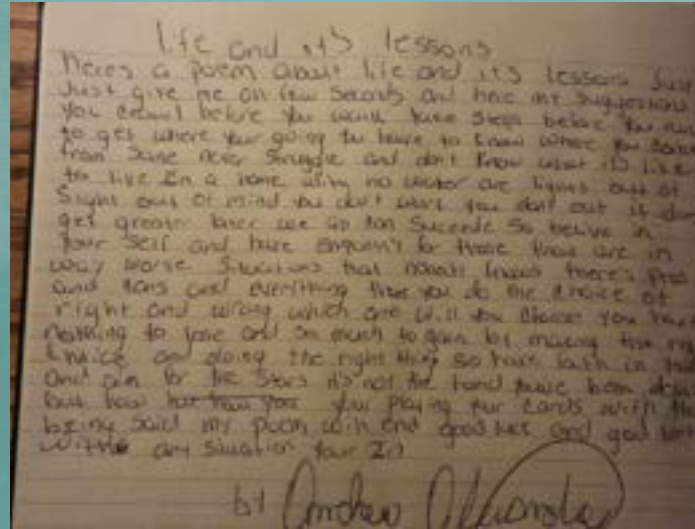
Inspired by his poem after the meeting, thankfully, someone snapped a picture of his notebook, giving us all a gift forever.

This is Andrew’s poem and the words he shared with us that night.

Today, Andrew's poem is hung in our office at Doc's House. It is published on our walls, placed for people to read and experience the magic of his words and the journey of recovery, life and learning they represent.

To our brother, Andrew, you were a writer.

Today, you are published on our walls, and your words are doing exactly as you intended all along — helping someone else on the journey.



Life and its lessons

By: Andrew Alexander

*Here's a poem about life and it's lessons.
Just give me a few seconds, and here's my suggestions.*

*You crawl before you walk, you take steps before you run.
To get where you're going you have to know where you come from.*

*Some never struggle and don't know what it's like,
to live in a home with no water or lights.*

*Out of sight out of mind, you don't work you don't eat.
It does get greater later, we all can succeed.*

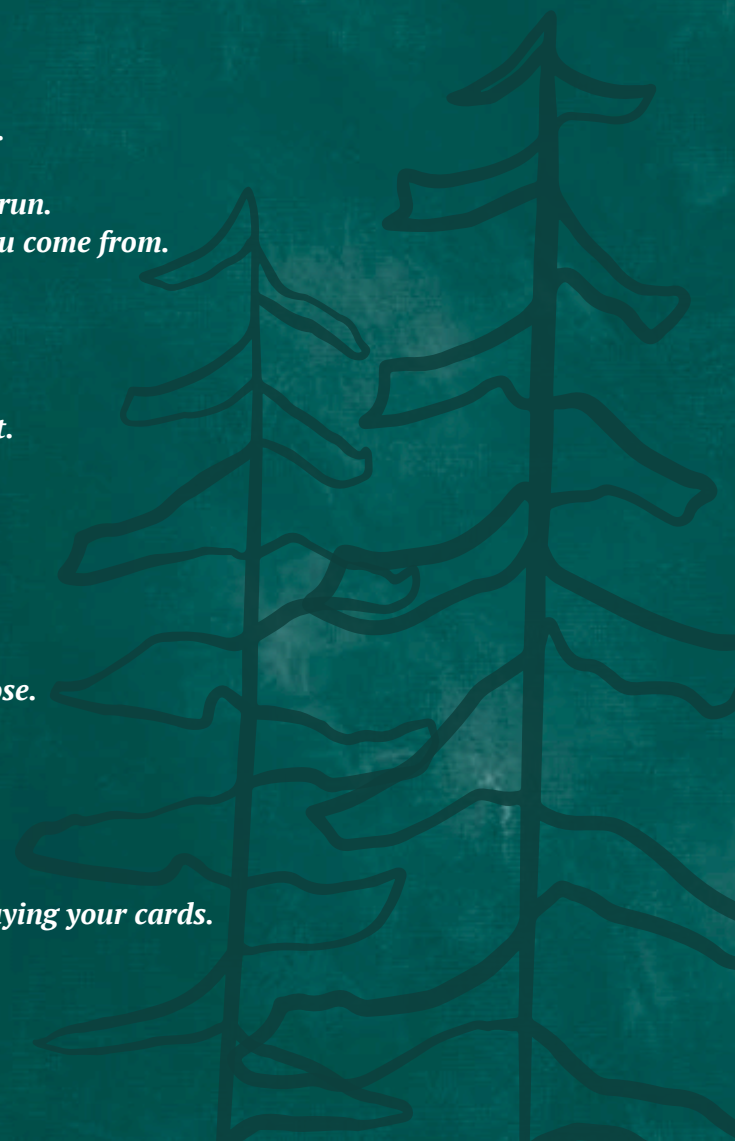
*So believe in yourself and have empathy for those,
who are in way worse situations that nobody knows.*

*There's pros and cons in everything that you do,
the choice of right and wrong which one will you choose.*

*You have nothing to lose and so much to gain,
by making the right choice and doing the right thing.*

*So have faith in yourself and aim for the stars,
it's not the hand you've been dealt but how you're playing your cards.*

*With that being said, my poem will end.
Good luck and God bless with any situation you're in.*







Our Year in Pictures

At Doc's Recovery House, one of our favorite things is to watch people who once had no hope start to smile. Community and friendship are two of the most important, tangible elements of our program, and all year long, we got to bear witness to the power of hope that was alive and at work in the lives of our residents, alumni and staff members because of recovery. Steve, our Program Director, says it best - at Doc's House, we do two things - stay sober, and have fun!





Generosity Makes an Impact

Doc's Recovery House is a 501c3 organization that is sustained by the generosity of donors, grantmakers and community support. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation by visiting our website docsrecoveryhouse.org/donate or scanning this QR code.

Thank you for supporting our mission of recovery with dignity. We look forward to another year ahead!





As we celebrate the many stories of hope and newfound recovery witnessed at Doc's Recovery House this past year, we also humbly acknowledge and remember those we have lost to overdose, to a battle with addiction, or to suicide or mental health challenges.

At Doc's Recovery House, we light a candle in our community center every day to hold space and remembrance for those we have lost, and to create a safe, honoring space for their family members and loved ones.



507.216.3353 | info@docsrecoveryhouse.org | www.docsrecoveryhouse.org

1821 Restoration Rd SW, Rochester, Minnesota 55902