Helping Up Mission

Hope Restored. Lives Rebuilt.

Warm-Handoff Programs

January 20, 2026 @ Maryland Office of Overdose Response Grantee Meeting

Presenters:
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Pam Wilkerson, Sr. Director of the Center for Women & Children
Renee Martin, Program Manager
Caitln Warren, Gateway Case Manager





*Located in the **Historic Jonestown** neighborhood,*
*Helping Up Mission **has served people** experiencing homelessness & poverty due to*
addiction for 141 years

***For over 30 years**, Helping Up Mission has provided a **year-long, flagship residential Spiritual Recovery Program** to people experiencing homelessness / poverty due to substance use disorder.*

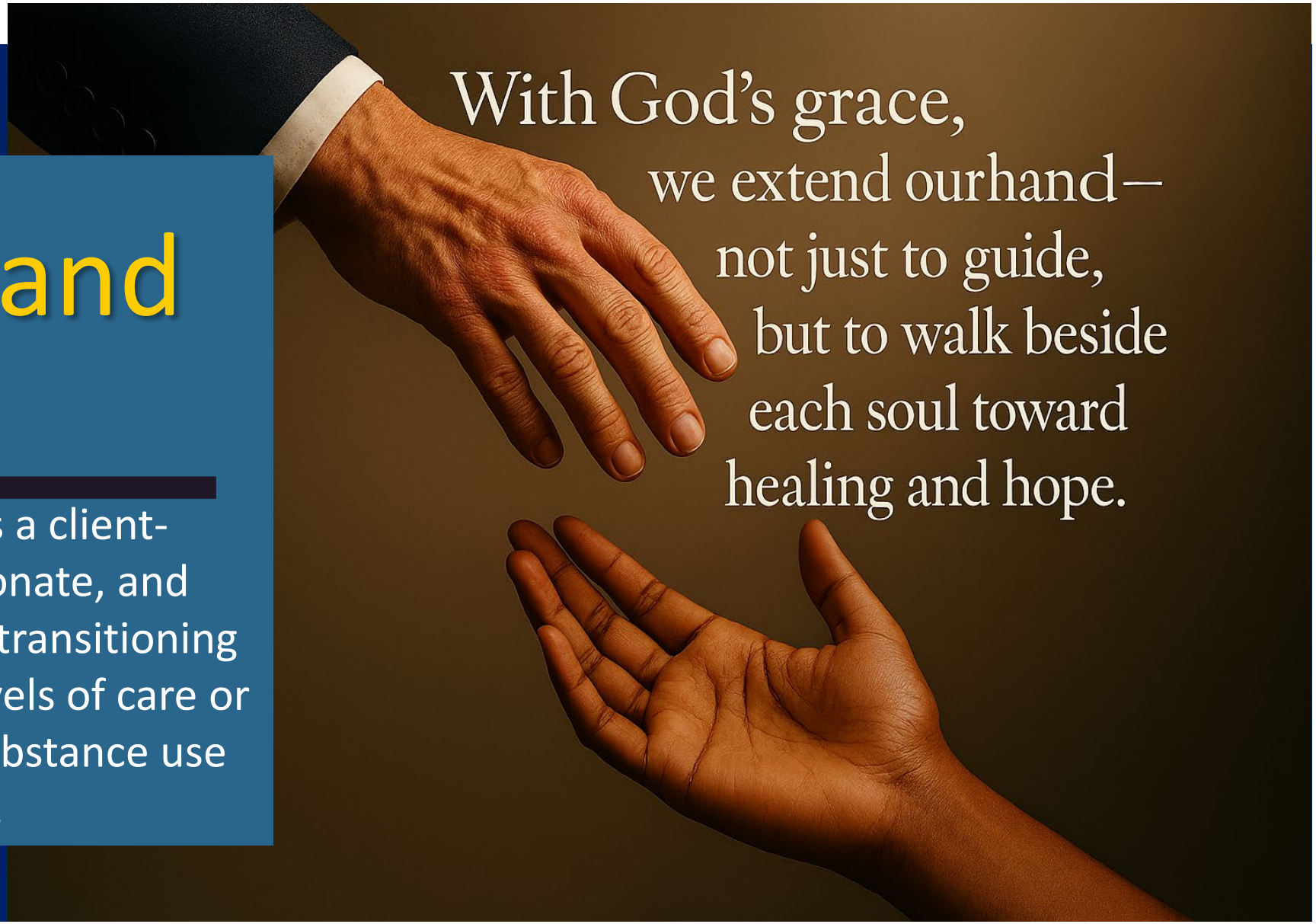


Currently, nearly 650 men, women, and toddlers/infants served daily at two Centers including the largest long-term residential recovery program in the Mid-Atlantic.

Helping Up Mission

Warm Hand Off

A **warm hand-off** is a client-centered, compassionate, and proactive approach to transitioning individuals between levels of care or service providers in substance use treatment.



IMPACT

Impact of Warm Hand-Offs

- **Builds Trust & Safety**
  Clients feel seen, heard, and supported from the very first interaction.
- **Improves Engagement**
  Personal connection increases the likelihood of program participation and follow-through.
- **Reduces Anxiety During Transitions**
  A familiar voice or face eases the fear of entering a new environment.
- **Reflects Faith in Action**
  We extend grace and compansion, walking beside each woman as Christ walks with us.



Warm Hand Off

BEST PRACTICES

- **Use Peer Support:** Our entire Intake Team has battled addiction and now lives a life in recovery. We are highly effective in building trust and motivating clients.
- **Standardize Protocols:** Develop clear procedures for communication, documentation, and follow-up.
- **Train Staff:** Equip all involved parties with skills in motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and cultural competence.
- **Leverage Technology:** Use shared platforms (e.g., Teams, Zoom, Google Voice, FaceTime, etc.) for real-time coordination.
- **Address Social Determinants:** Include health insurance, legal issues, and childcare support in the transition plan.

Helping Up Mission Programs

We use multiple streams of resources to develop and flow of clients into our various programs.
The more the merrier!

- **The Gateway Program**

  (Home Health w/ Johns Hopkins (two hospitals) and our various Intake Streams)

- **The Next Step Program**

  (Johns Hopkins 2 different hospitals, University of Maryland & Ascension St Agnes soon)

- **Street Outreach**
- **Johns Hopkins 911 Broadway Ctr for Addiction (Outpatient)**
- **Spiritual Recovery Program**

  (JH Bayview Comprehensive Addiction and Pregnancy Program)

- **Veterans Housing Assistance Program**

  (Men's Facility – Men's Bridge Housing & Women's Facility – Emergent Beds)

Referral to Others Process

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that every client who walks through our doors finds a path forward, even if that path leads elsewhere. Recovery is not one-size-fits-all, and we are honored to play a role in helping each individual discover the environment where she can truly thrive.

- **Client-Centered Approach**
  - Not every client fits CWC's programs—but every client deserves support.
  - We respond with empathy, readiness, and a strong referral network.
- **Trusted Partnerships**
  - Collaborate with hospitals, shelters, treatment centers, and community organizations.
  - Ensure timely and appropriate referrals based on individual needs.
- **Empowering Clients**
  - Support informed decision-making while honoring autonomy.
  - Help clients explore programs that align with their recovery goals and personal circumstances.
- **Warm Hand-Off Principles**
  - Maintain real-time communication and emotional support.
  - Provide logistical help (e.g., transportation, facility info, introductions).
- **Commitment to Continuity**
  - Every woman deserves a path forward—even if it leads elsewhere.
  - Recovery is not one-size-fits-all; we help clients find where they can thrive.

WARM HAND OFF BENEFITS

- Builds trust & reduces stigma.
- Enhances client satisfaction & safety.
- Improves treatment retention & reduces relapse.
- Strengthens collaboration & efficiency.

WARM HAND OFF BENEFITS

- **Builds Trust and Reduces Stigma**
  - Creates a personal, compassionate connection between client and staff.
  - Helps clients feel seen, respected, and valued.
  - Reduces feelings of judgment, especially for those with substance use histories.
  - Encourages long-term engagement by fostering trust.

- **Enhances Client Satisfaction and Safety**
  - Real-time communication reduces confusion and anxiety.
  - Clients understand what to expect and who will support them.
  - Increases emotional and physical safety during vulnerable transitions.
  - Leads to higher satisfaction with care.

- **Improves Treatment Retention and Reduces Relapse**
  - Ensures continuity of care, minimizing gaps that can lead to relapse.
  - Supports clients emotionally and logistically during transitions.
  - Helps clients stay committed to their recovery plans.

- **Strengthens Inter-Program Collaboration and System Efficiency**
  - Promotes real-time coordination between agencies.
  - Encourages shared protocols and mutual accountability.
  - Reduces duplication of services and loss of critical information.
  - Improves overall system performance and client outcomes.

Questions?



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