

# Lake County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, July 26, 2025

**Time:** 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**Location:** Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (NIRCO)

202 S. Genesee Street, Waukegan, IL 60085

## **Meeting Topic**

**Echoes of Hope – The Unseen Side of Recovery**

## **Presenters**

- Dr. Mary Roberson
- Sharon Huitt
- Carlos Martinez
- Dewayne Cartwright

## **Attendees**

- Amanda Douglas – Project Coordinator, NIRCO
- Dr. Mary Roberson – Presenter
- Sharon Huitt – Presenter
- Carlos Martinez – Presenter
- Dewayne Cartwright – Presenter
- Devin Steiber – Attendee
- Darryl Harlan – Attendee
- Representatives from NIRCO, Governors State University, Illinois Department of Human Services, Lake County Clerk, Lake County Housing Authority, and HOPEDuPage

## **Opening Remarks**

Project Coordinator Amanda Douglas opened the meeting at 10:30 AM, welcoming attendees and introducing the day's theme:

**"Echoes of Hope – The Unseen Side of Recovery."**

## **Presenter 1: Dr. Mary Roberson**

- **Background:** Shared her family's history with substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health challenges. Celebrated 33 years of sustained recovery.
- **Personal Journey:** Discussed trauma from military service and emphasized the importance of faith and family support in healing.
- **Mentorship:** Credited mentor Bruce Johnson for ongoing encouragement, including the affirmation: "Your legacy is set."
- **Community Impact:** Highlighted NIRCO as the first Recovery Community Organization (RCO) in Lake County, serving the community for 5 years.

### Attendee Reflections:

- Devin Steiber praised Dr. Mary as a supportive and focused supervisor who helped him heal and grow professionally.
- Darryl Harlan shared that Dr. Mary's guidance inspired him to serve more responsibly in his church and to help others whenever possible.

### Presenter 2: Sharon Huitt

- **Personal Background:** Wife of 52 years, mother of 3, grandmother of 4, and 11 years in sustained recovery.
- **Recovery Journey:** Began substance use after losing a job she loved; admitted herself to treatment after 3 months.
- **Family Dynamics:** Lost the respect—but not the love—of her family.
- **Faith and Service:** Shared that challenges are inevitable but manageable through her relationship with God, and strengthened recovery by helping others.

### Sharon's Recovery Tips:

- Stay active – vary daily routines
- Use reminders – sticky notes on dashboards or around the house about what's at stake
- Identify and address “the why” behind challenges
- Celebrate achievements – big and small
- Anchor in hope – faith in God and giving back to others

### Presenter 3: Carlos Martinez

- **Early Struggles:** Openly spoke about struggles with alcohol and abandonment.
- **Criminal Activity:** Involved in criminal activity in 1998; placed on probation with LC ROSC member Colleen Casey as probation officer.
- **Path to Sobriety:** Was a “functioning alcoholic” before enrolling in Adult Teen Challenge in Peoria, IL, to pursue sobriety and self-discipline.
- **Transformation:** Returned to Waukegan in January 2022, rebuilt relationship with God, had probation dismissed, restored driver's license and relationship with children. Currently leads a men's recovery group.
- **Quote:** “My hurt is someone else's healing.”

### Presenter 4: Dewayne Cartwright

- **Sobriety Journey:** Has 38 years of sobriety, though with some breaks (“gashes”) in between.
- **Motivation:** Prior recovery attempts were for others; now pursuing recovery for himself.
- **Daily Practices:** Uses sticky notes as daily reminders of what's at stake, like Sharon.
- **Community Role:** Recognized by Dr. Mary as a valued “family member” of NIRCO.

### **Announcements & Closing**

- **Upcoming Events:** Attendees shared information about upcoming community events.
- **Next Meeting:** Scheduled for Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 10:30 AM.
- **Closing Remarks:** Amanda Douglas closed the meeting, thanking all attendees for their participation and contributions.

### **Minutes Prepared By**

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