



Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 7/23/2025 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM | 10 to Noon

LOCATION: Bremen Township, 15350 Oak Park Ave, Oak Forest, IL 60452

PRESENTER(S): Yvonne M. Orr-Blake, Meeting Facilitator; Jerry Davis-El – Guest Speaker

TOPIC: Reducing Stigmas: How Recovery, Incarceration, and Mental Health Matter

ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION	ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION
1	Angelia F. Smith	Cornerstone CDC, Exec Director	24	Bahiyyah Khalilallah	Chestnut Health; Statewide ROSC
2	Yvonne M. Orr-Blake	ROSC Coordinator; BEE CDC	25	Terry Banies	GRO Community; PLE
3	Kathryn Straniero	Together We Cope	26	Ros Thomas	GRO Community
4	Capucine McGinnis	Cornerstone CDC, Workforce Coor	27	Lori Dill	South Suburban Council on Alcoholism
5	Kamil Walton	Cornerstone CDC, Deputy Director	28	Raymond Jackson	Governors State University
6	April Thompson	Cornerstone CDC; HHI	29	Christine Cornacchia	Together We Cope
7	Leonard Noble	Cornerstone, Workforce Dev Dir	30	Nile Richardson	BEE CDC
8	Lamont Wallace	PLE, Comm Nav, Cornerstone; BEE	31	Marcus McGhee	GRO Community; PLE
9	Sherri Keyes	Family Guidance Center, Prog Mgr	32	Myron Graham	South Suburban Council on Alcoholism
10	Johanna Gonzalez	ROSC Coord, IDHS	33	Ernest Graham	South Suburban Council on Alcoholism
11	Michelle Ferraro	Together We Cope	34	Langston Graham	South Suburban Council on Alcoholism
12	Jasmine Atkins	PLE, Comm Nav, Cornerstone; BEE	35	Jerry Davis-El	GRO Community; Guest Speaker; PLE
13	Eula Burge	Proactive Community Services	36	Trizeyah Brunson	GRO Community
14	Souheir Rahman	Together We Cope	37	Yvonne Lee	BEE CDC
15	Elena Rivera	Family Guidance	38	Danielle Portis	GRO Community
16	Denise Jones	Tender Touch Inc.	39	Talisha Burge	Proactive Community Services
17	Andrea Coletta	Together We Cope	40	Jenette Samuels	GRO Community
18	Kaylon Vaughn	Cornerstone CDC	41	Blaise Parker	South Suburban Council on Alcoholism
19	Kenneth Bell	Region I TA, Statewide ROSC	42	Frank Trombley	Bremen Township
20	Yasmeen Hismeh	Together We Cope	43	Sue Ernst	Bremen Township Senior Services
21	Katie Huffman	Together We Cope	44	Tyler Williamson	BEE CDC
22	Yvette Monson	BEE CDC	45	Calvin Golden, Jr	BEE CDC
23	Marianne Bithos	NAMI South Suburbs of Chicago	46	Anaya Torres	BEE CDC

MEETING SUMMARY: Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting

The meeting opened with ROSC Council members gathered in a small conference room to review the previous strategic plan and begin planning for upcoming pop events. Angelia Smith, Lead Fiscal Agency, spoke with small group committees on new roles and expectations for SRC moving forward in FY26. ROSC Council Meeting started at 8:41 AM and both Committee Meet Ups and the ROSC Council meeting concluded at 10:09 AM.

FY26 Updates and New Councils

The meeting began with introductions and updates from various participants, including Jerry Davis-El, who mentioned his previous work with UMARC and association with Cornerstone CDC. Yvonne and Angelia shared updates on the start of FY26 beginning July 1st and forthcoming changes and deadlines to keep in mind for September. The TA Kenneth Bell reviewed other events across the region. Angelia F. Smith made closing remarks about pop ups, obtaining additional funding and outreach/collaboration opportunities.



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Angelia F. Smith welcomed everyone to the Recovery Mini-Conference at 10:15 AM. Introductions and updates from various participants, including new roles and the excitement for the start of FY26 was expressed.

Activities, Prizes, & More!

ROSC Council Members/PLEs Jasmine and Lamont led attendees through Recovery Bingo as many attendees networked while playing the game as a means to be the first to proclaim, "BINGO!" Collectively, the group discussed the growing criminal activity that is often tied to substance use; how more strides could be made to deepen recovery awareness throughout the Southland; and what target communities should be considered when planning activities.

Announcements

The meeting covered updates on upcoming events, workshops, and other Region 1 ROSC Council events and initiatives. SRC noted upcoming pop up events.

The conversation ended with a reminder for attendees to stay tuned for upcoming emails about fiscal year changes and renewal grant opportunities.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:09 am

Southland Recovery Coalition Mini-Conference 10:00 am – Noon

Highlights>Guest Speaker: Jerry Davis-El, Gro Community

In this powerful and deeply personal presentation, Jerry Davis-El of GRO Community illuminated the urgent need to dismantle stigmas surrounding recovery, incarceration, and mental health. Drawing from his own lived experience—including his journey through incarceration and into sustained recovery—Davis-El offered a compelling narrative of resilience, transformation, and purpose.

He shared how GRO Community's trauma-informed programs provide culturally responsive support for justice-involved individuals, emphasizing healing, accountability, and community reintegration. Through mentorship, peer-led initiatives, and holistic care, GRO Community fosters pathways to wellness and empowerment for those often marginalized by systemic barriers. Davis-El's message was clear: stigma is not just a social burden—it's a barrier to healing. His story underscored the power of vulnerability, the necessity of second chances, and the enduring motivation to keep moving forward, not just for oneself, but for the broader community.

He further shared information about GRO Community Chicago and the organization's various locations across the country. At the root of the GRO Community, there is the desire to combat the impacts of Gun Violence in our communities. Statistics show that the leading cause of death for black males between the ages of 14 -34 is homicide through gun violence in Chicago. Jerry explained how the agency understands that mental health plays a major role in the contribution to the challenges that take place in our communities, and GRO Community serves as a catalyst for solving it.

Trizeyah and Danielle from GRO shared more information about their workforce development program and its benefits for those with lived experience and their other workforce pipeline—The Gro Community Print Shop, which is a social enterprise dedicated to producing high-quality screen-printed and promotional items. Since 2021, they have specialized in creating a wide range of products.



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Recovery Champion Myron Graham Remarks

In a heartfelt moment of recognition, Myron Graham—President and CEO of the South Suburban Council on Alcoholism—accepted the 2025 Recovery Champion award from the Southland Recovery Coalition with deep gratitude and humility. His remarks reflected a profound commitment to service, rooted in a mission-driven and value-based approach that centers dignity, equity, and long-term healing.

Graham spoke candidly about the personal significance of this honor, not only as a professional milestone but as a legacy-building moment for his family. He emphasized the importance of recovery awareness and community education, expressing a powerful hope that his pre-teen son will grow up in a world where compassion replaces stigma, and where those seeking help are met with understanding, not judgment.

Under his leadership, the South Suburban Council continues to be a beacon of culturally responsive care, trauma-informed programming, and systemic advocacy. Graham's vision is clear: recovery is not just possible—it's transformative. And it begins with changing the narrative, one life, one community at a time.

Conference concluded at 11:43 AM



presents its
**MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO
RECOVERY CONFERENCE**
WED., JUL 23, 2025
9:00 AM to Noon



SCAN THE QR CODE OR
CLICK THE LINK TO REGISTER
<https://bit.ly/SRCconf72325>



Keynote Speaker
JERRY DAVIS-EL
LCSW, LPHA, CADC, CDOP1

Bremen Township
15350 OAK PARK AVE, BLDG A
OAK FOREST, IL 60452-1500



HOSTED BY
CORNERSTONE
Community Development Corporation



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Together We Cope
BRIDGING THE GAP

honoring the
**2025 RECOVERY
CHAMPION**



Myron Graham

**FREE GIVEAWAYS,
PRIZES, SNACKS
& MORE!**