

Lake County ROSC Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, September 25, 2025

Time: 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Facilitator: Amanda Douglass, Lake County ROSC Coordinator

Meeting Theme

Persons with Lived Experience- “Turning lived experience into lasting impact.”

Presenters

- **Reggie Handy** – James Lovell VA Hospital, Social Worker
- **Angela Woodard** – NICASA Behavioral Health Services, Peer Support Supervisor
- **Elizabeth Thielen** – NICASA Behavioral Health Services

Welcome and Introductions

Amanda Douglass opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and introduced the theme and guest presenters. Participants then introduced themselves.

Presenter Highlights

Reggie Handy

- Raised in a faith-based home at Shiloh Baptist Church, Waukegan, IL.
- Became involved in gangs and served time in incarceration.
- Upon release, entered **Jack Clark Recovery Home**, where he met **Cliff Grisby** and began his recovery journey.
- Earned restaurant work certificates and attended **Rockway College**, becoming a **Recovery Home Operator**.
- Later joined **Gateway Foundation**, working with court-mandated youth (ages 13–18) involved in gangs — a true passion of his.
- Earned his **Master’s degree in 2013**.
- His criminal record was later **expunged by Judge George Bridges**, who acknowledged Reggie’s remarkable transformation.

Angela Woodard

- Originally from the Southside of Chicago; now resides in Zion, IL.

- Worked with the **Wisconsin Department of Corrections** at Halfway Homes.
- Experienced a personal tragedy in **April 2021**, losing her son to **fentanyl poisoning**.
- Shared the challenge of maintaining professionalism while navigating her own grief and that of others.
- Emphasized that **grief should be integrated into recovery work**.
- Reflected on her lifelong calling as a case manager and her gratitude for working in the recovery field.
- Author of *A Blaze of Virtue*, available on **Amazon**.

Elizabeth Thielen

- Grew up in a family impacted by alcoholism; later moved to **Las Vegas, NV**, with a stepfamily immersed in gambling.
- Former athlete—**state and U.S. women’s boxing champion**, once on **Sugar Ray Leonard’s ticket**, before an injury ended her career.
- After multiple personal losses, turned to gambling for solace and eventually developed a gambling addiction.
- Now serves as a **Problem and Compulsive Gambling Counselor** with **NICASA Behavioral Health Services**.
- Reflected on overcoming fears of being recognized and continuing her personal growth.
- Celebrates **over 10 years of recovery** from gambling.
- Expressed gratitude to **NIRCO** for creating safe spaces for continued healing.

Acknowledgements:

Dr. **Mary Roberson**, **Marie Washington Hall**, **Sharon Huiett**, and **Devin Steiber** thanked Elizabeth for her honesty and courage in sharing her story.

ROSC Member Updates and Announcements

- **Dr. Mary Roberson (BCOR Project)**
 - Shared that **NIRCO** achieved **7,000 days of service** under the BCOR project — a major milestone.
- **Robin Smith (Zion-Benton Library)**
 - Noted this was one of the most emotionally powerful meetings she’s attended.
 - Shared information on **community services and upcoming library meeting dates**.
- **Mimi Doll (Director, DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform)**
 - Announced an **employment survey** currently being conducted.

- **Jheri Bevil (Site Coordinator, Lake County Healing Center)**
 - Thanked the ROSC team for the invitation.
 - Shared upcoming events: **Winter Coat Drive** and **Barber Shop Talk on ADHD** scheduled for **October 22, 2025**.
- **Johanna Gonzalez**
 - Acknowledged **NIRCO's** ongoing dedication and hard work.

Closing

Amanda Douglass thanked all presenters and attendees for their participation and heartfelt sharing.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 23, 2025

10:30 AM