



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center

Volume XXVI

Winter 2023

Number 1

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This summer, NCC therapist **Michelle Sideroff** became our Clinical Manager. Michelle's thoughtfulness, commitment to equity and diversity, and experience with complex trauma make her an invaluable asset to NCC. Read on to learn more about her journey.

Erin Peters, Executive Director



A Recipe of Rain and Desert

My roots as both an Oregonian and a New Mexican have blended a sweet and spicy recipe to both my personal and professional sides. The aspiration to be a mental health counselor was sparked young at 13 from my experiences at Portland Impact, a community agency here in Portland where I was blessed with the opportunity to be a youth peer coordinator and was able to participate in a pilot project involving peers in family counseling. My heart then discovered the essential ingredients for my passion and meaning in work.

This professional journey would flow out into New Mexico with the lovely Sandia Mountains in the background, the smell of chile roasting, and the beam of a persistent sun. As a Lobo (wolf), I graduated with my Bachelor's of Science in Family Studies and my Master's of Arts in a dual track program for Community Counseling and School Counseling from the University of New Mexico. Trauma dominated my work with individuals, couples, and families who experienced struggles with substance use, challenges in the legal and social welfare systems, and navigating the paths between surviving to thriving. I transitioned to working with sexual trauma survivors in both roles of therapist and the Clinical Director at the Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico.

The years baking in the sun meant some respite from rain was much needed. My journey returned me back to the familiar background of breathtaking Mount Hood, the smell of roses, and the sweet drops of rain. I returned searching for an organization that had a vision and a mission in practice that resonated with my own values and philosophies on care. And in the slew of postings and websites, **Hope and Healing** stood out and drew me in. My heart knew NCC was the place to take the next leap of faith.

With more than 10 years experience in non-profits in both roles of a mental health therapist and manager, I have been blessed to walk diverse travels with inspiring and thriving travelers. These experiences have influenced my recipe that the heartbeat and pulse of mental health care is a nurturing and accepting space where trauma, vulnerability, struggles, strengths, pain, love, compassion, identity, boundaries, and growth can coexist.

[Continues on next page]

Providing Help Creating Hope

Wedding Bells On The Horizon?

Do you know an engaged couple who wants to strengthen the foundation of their relationship?

Our marriage preparation workshops are facilitated by our trained counselors and tailored to each couple's needs and areas for growth.

Couples can choose from individual sessions, a weekend workshop, or a combination of both.



2023 Weekend Workshop Dates

**March 31st–April 1st or
June 9th–10th**

Friday from 5:30 pm–8:00 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am–11:00 am and 12:30 pm–3:00 pm. Couples must attend each session; cost is \$250 per couple.

Learn more and sign up online at nwcounseling.org/product-category/marriage-preparation or call 503-253-0964.

2022 By The Numbers

In 2022, NCC provided:

6,333 therapy appointments to 538 clients;

2,552 of those appointments were sliding scale, for community members who are uninsured or underinsured.



Center Wish List

Below are some items therapists will use in their work with clients. If you have items to donate, please email donate@nwcounseling.org or call the Center at 503-253-0964.

Magazines (for clients to make into collages)

iPads or Android tablets to help clients complete paperwork. Newer models are best with an operating system that can support Google Chrome and Google Forms.

Help Us Look Our Best!



Are you a professional photographer or videographer?

NCC is looking for someone to donate their time and skills to take professional headshots of our hardworking staff, and someone to record and edit educational videos featuring our staff.

If you can help, please email donate@nwcounseling.org.

Community Need

Mental Health America has released their state of **Mental Health in America 2023 report**. The key findings show NCC's services are needed now more than ever:

21% of adults in the US are experiencing a mental illness, equivalent to over **50 million Americans**.

Oregon was ranked second to last of all of the states, meaning we have a high prevalence of mental illness and low access to care compared to other states.

60% of youth with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment.

1 in 10 youth with private insurance does not have coverage for mental or emotional difficulties – over **1.2 million youth**.

Thank You To These Grantors For Their Support

Bernice Heffernan Family Foundation • BP Lester and Regina John Foundation
Cigna Foundation • Dwyer Charitable Trust • Echo Fund
Jackson Foundation • Juan Young Trust
Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund • MJ Murdock Charitable Trust
OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation
Providence Health & Services - Community Health
St. Martin de Porres Trust

Client Story: Ryan

Young people in our community are really struggling with their mental health. The effects of COVID continue to reverberate, with 63,000 Oregon youth experiencing at least one major depressive episode last year. At NCC, kids can find help. Ryan, age 11, sent this heartwarming letter to his therapist.

Therapy has helped me so much to get over my worry and anxiety! For example, now when my parents go out, I don't think twice about them not being ok. I think how I got over this was just being able to breathe and have all the options to keep me calm. Therapy has helped me because I have different things to do to keep me away from those thoughts like my rock, and just the overall trust that I can have. When a time comes where I used to worry, now I feel so grateful that I don't have that burden of stress on me and I can just relax and do what I need to do. Thank you so much for helping me through this! I wouldn't know how to cope without you and your generosity! Thanks again!

Ryan

Welcome To The Team!

Stephanie Awalt, MA

Stephanie (she/her) is NCC's new Operations Manager. She came to us from southern California, has an educational background in Sociology and holds a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from San Diego State University. Stephanie brings with her more than 15 years of professional nonprofit experience, working for the past 5 years in healthcare compliance after 10 years working primarily with underserved youth in rural communities as a substance abuse counselor. As a more recent transplant to Oregon, Stephanie enjoys exploring the natural surroundings, as well as the various communities she is passionate about serving.



Laken Nelson, MA

Laken (she/her) is a Professional Counselor Associate. Laken graduated from Lewis and Clark where she earned a master's degree in Professional Mental Health Counseling. Her experience is primarily with folks individually who have experienced chronic and complex trauma throughout their lifespan. When not counseling, Laken can be found reading or spending quality time with loved ones which includes her two precious dogs.



A Rewarding Opportunity

Do you want to become involved in the Board of Directors?

Have you ever thought about serving on a board of directors? Do you know someone who is passionate about serving the community who may be interested in being on the NCC Board? Even if you've never done something like this before, board work can be an incredibly rewarding way to give back.

The board is committed to reflecting the diversity of our community and the clients we serve, and we welcome people of all life experiences. Even if you're not sure if board work is right for you, the board would love to chat with you. Email erin@nwcounseling.org for more information.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Erin Peters

CLINICAL LEADERSHIP

Michelle Sideroff, LPC, QMHP

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Stephanie Awalt, MA

CLINICAL STAFF

Lacie Baumer,

Professional

Counselor Associate, QMHP

Kathleen Butler, LCSW, QMHP

Marchelle Carl,

Professional

Counselor Associate, QMHP

Tod Fiste, LPC, QMHP

Aaron Fry, Graduate Intern

Thomás Grubb, LPC, QMHP

Lu Lu,

Professional

Counselor Associate, QMHP

Laken Nelson,

Professional

Counselor Associate, QMHP

Jeremy Richardson, LPC, QMHP

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

Annie Teer

ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

Dinorah Alvarenga

BOOKKEEPER AND**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Kalie Self

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Mark Uhrich

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Vickie Carl

Nancy Fredricks

**OFFICE HOURS**

9:00am – 5:00pm

*Evening and Saturday
appointments available*

nwcounseling.org

[Continued from front page]

Now, the shift into the role of Clinical Manager has cooked up excitement and passion in the continued work with our NCC team, board, and communities in adding more boldness to **Hope and Healing**. I am inspired to operate in this new role in our commitment to grow our circle of strength to more intersectional communities with our anti-oppression, trauma-informed, and presence as a protective factor. With my blending of rain and desert, I am looking forward to adding some more sugar and spice to the recipe.

Warm Regards,

Michelle Sideroff, MA, LPC, Clinical Manager



Growing Our Circle

NCC's 21st annual **Circle of Strength** fundraising brunch raised \$77,100! It was such a delight to return to in-person Circle of Strength for the first time since 2019. On October 8th, 2022, we gathered in The Madeleine Parish Hall for brunch, raffle prizes, inspiring speeches and conversation.



Whether you attended virtually or in-person, or donated to our campaign, **THANK YOU!** You are a vital piece in our circle of strength. Want to hear from our client speaker Sylwia or a talk on trauma by Clinical Manager Michelle Sideroff? View the videos here: nwcounseling.org/cos-2022

Save The Date

Mark your calendars for NCC's 22nd annual **Circle of Strength** fundraising brunch:

**Saturday, September 30th, 2023, 10am-12pm
at The Madeleine Parish Hall.**

We are so excited to see you there!

The Northwest
Catholic Counseling Center
8383 NE Sandy Blvd., Suite 205
Portland, Oregon 97220

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
US Postage
Paid
Permit #22
Portland, OR



We Are Hiring!

Check our website soon for these opportunities:

- **Development and Outreach**
- **Licensed Therapist**

Head to **nwcounseling.org/job-openings** for more job descriptions and application instructions.

Social Media

Find us on social media for mental health tips, event information, and client stories! Or visit our website for short, timely articles of interest written by NCC staff.



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center
LevantarPDX



@nccorg
@2Have2HoldPDX



@ncc1986
@2Have2HoldPDX



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center

nwcounseling.org

Want to save paper?

If you'd like to receive newsletters and thank yous from us electronically to save paper and postage, please say so! Just email **info@nwcounseling.org**