

# Start Healing Now

MAR 2026

Volume 2

Edition 3

## Honoring Loved Ones While Saving Lives: Introducing the O.A.K. Memorial Initiative

Start Healing Now (SHN) is proud to introduce a meaningful new initiative that transforms loss into life-saving action: O.A.K. Memorial Installations. Across Wisconsin and beyond, families who have lost loved ones to overdose or fentanyl poisoning often search for ways to honor their memory while helping prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak. The Overdose Aid Kit (O.A.K.) Memorial Installation program offers a powerful way to do exactly that.

An Overdose Aid Kit (O.A.K.) is a public, life-saving station that provides free overdose-response supplies and education to the community. Each kit includes NARCAN® (naloxone), fentanyl testing strips, a CPR breathing barrier, step-by-step overdose response instructions, and local recovery resources. These kits are placed in accessible community locations such as

- schools
- libraries
- parks
- faith centers
- businesses

to ensure help is available when it is needed most.

### Learn More

To learn more about sponsoring an O.A.K. memorial installation, visit:

<https://starthealingnow.org/o-a-k-memorial-installation-guide/> and contact SHN today.

## Turning Grief Into Prevention

For many families, installing an O.A.K. in memory of a loved one creates a lasting tribute that also protects others. Memorial installations:

- Honor the life and legacy of someone lost
- Reduce stigma around substance use and overdose
- Provide immediate access to life-saving tools
- Raise community awareness about overdose prevention
- Offer families a way to channel grief into meaningful action

As the SHN team often says, *this is more than installing a box—it's carrying forward someone's light in a way that saves lives.*

Turn *Remembrance*  
Into **Lifesaving Impact**

Sponsor an O.A.K. Memorial in Your Community

Honor a Loved One • Provide Free NARCAN® • Help Save Lives

*Remembrance with a Purpose. Hope in Action.*

SHN [StartHealingNow.org/OAK](https://starthealingnow.org/OAK)  
<https://starthealingnow.org/o-a-k-memorial-installation-guide/>

# Healing in Focus:

## Meet Mack Park

### Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE)

Start Healing Now's *Healing in Focus* project highlights the faces and stories of people working to bring hope and healing to communities impacted by the opioid crisis. Through powerful portraits and personal stories, the series honors those we've lost while uplifting the advocates, leaders, and changemakers helping others find recovery.

Following our first two features—remembering Travis Busse and spotlighting Chief Scott McFarlan—our third installment introduces Mack Park and their work with the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE). Across the country, leaders like Mack are helping build supportive recovery communities on college campuses so students in recovery can heal, grow, and thrive.

Read Mack's story:  
<https://starthealingnow.org/mack-park/>



## Black Balloon Day: Remembering Lives Lost, Inspiring Action

On March 6, communities across the country observed Black Balloon Day, a day dedicated to remembering the lives lost to overdose and standing in support of families affected by substance use and fentanyl poisoning.

Black balloons displayed in homes, businesses, and community spaces served as a symbol of remembrance. They represented the thousands of individuals whose lives have been cut short and reminded us that behind every statistic is a person—a son or daughter, parent, friend, or neighbor whose life mattered deeply.

At Start Healing Now, Black Balloon Day also reinforced our commitment to turning remembrance into action. Through continued overdose prevention efforts, increased access to naloxone (NARCAN®), and the placement of Overdose Aid Kits (O.A.K.) in communities, we work every day to help prevent future loss.

As we reflect on Black Balloon Day, we honor those we have lost, support the families who carry their memory forward, and renew our commitment to saving lives.

*Every life matters. Every life remembered.*





**What SHN Has Been Up To**

It's been a busy few weeks for Start Healing Now as we continue expanding access to life-saving resources across Wisconsin.



- **Bridges of Dodge County – Joe's House** recently installed two Overdose Aid Kits (O.A.K.) at their men's sober living home in Beaver Dam, helping ensure residents and staff are prepared to respond in an emergency. We are grateful for their partnership and commitment to recovery.
- Members of our team met with **Beloit College** regarding installing O.A.K.s on their campus! We are excited to supply them with NARCAN® and training in the coming months, helping to expand overdose response resources in higher education settings.
- Our team was also honored to participate in the **We Heart You Community Event**, where more than 500 community members gathered to celebrate connection and compassion. We hosted a resource table, shared information about O.A.K.s, and gave away a free Overdose Aid Kit to help expand access to life-saving tools in the community.



# START HEALING NOW

<https://starthealingnow.org/>

PRESENTED BY:

**ROGERS**  
Behavioral Health

## MKE RECOVERY NIGHT

### BUCKS VS. CAVS

**MARCH 17, 2026**  
SOBER TAILGATE 5PM AT GATHER  
TIP-OFF 7PM

THANK YOU TO  
OUR SPONSORS!

Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

Denoon RECOVERY CENTER

WELLBROOK RECOVERY  
VIN BAKER RECOVERY  
SAMAD'S HOUSE  
MIRAMONT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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**THE PHOENIX**  
RISE | RECOVER | LIVE

Recovery at Marquette

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## I Carry Narcan



# SHN

— Start Healing Now —  
**Carry Naloxone. Save a Life.**  
[STARTHEALINGNOW.ORG](http://STARTHEALINGNOW.ORG)

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## Wisconsin Peer Recovery Conference



April 20-21, 2026

Kalahari Resort and Convention Center

Wisconsin Dells, WI