



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **We Heart You: Recovery in Our Community Event Seeks to Break the Silence and Reduce Stigma Around Substance Use Disorders**

**OSHKOSH, Wis. (March 15, 2024)** – On March 13, more than 370 people gathered in solidarity with the recovery community during the second We Heart You: Recovery in Our Community event, hosted by the Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFR) and other supporting organizations. The event aimed to break the silence of addiction, reduce the stigma of recovery and foster connections to life-saving resources offered by local organizations.

"We Heart You" is the tagline of the Winnebago County OFR Team. It draws on the concept that the community cares about you, no matter your situation, and wants to connect you to care. The idea for the event stemmed from local conversations with people in recovery and their aspiration to honor their journey, break down stigmas, and promote awareness that addiction is a disease.

"Events like this show us that there is not one path for recovery. There is no one size fits all," said Winnebago County Executive Jon Doemel. "It's amazing to know how many organizations are working together on the opioid crisis we are facing. It highlights how people can not only abstain from use but also find recovery and service work as well. Those with lived experience are a crucial piece in this effort. Events like these remove the stigma creating an environment where more people are willing to step up and tell their stories."

Community and positivity radiated from the room as state and county leadership, community members and those in recovery shared stories of resilience and triumph. Vin Baker, former All-Star basketball player and gold medal Olympian, now serving as Assistant Coach for the Milwaukee Bucks, shared his journey of success, addiction and recovery in a compelling keynote address.

"Hope plays an instrumental role in our commitment to our work, healing and sobriety," said Baker. "The reason I'm here is because we all matter. I'm here to help break the silence and to remove the stigma."

Living much of his addiction in the public eye, Baker aims to educate the community and remind people that addiction is a disease and should be met with the same hope and help as any other disease. Baker added, "Being challenged in life is inevitable. We will fall down. We're going to face adversity. But being defeated is optional."

Social connections, support and relationships are critical to wellness and recovery. No one should have to struggle alone. If you or someone you love is struggling with substance use, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211 to get connected to resources in your area. Resources can also be found on the [We Heart You app](#), including 24/7 access to Peer Support Specialists. In addition, Winnebago County Public Health offers free Narcan and other harm reduction materials at their Oshkosh location at 112 Otter Avenue, during normal business hours. Visit [wchd.pub/narcan](http://wchd.pub/narcan) for more information.




"If you're struggling and need help, we want you to know that you don't have to walk this path alone," said Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review Project Manager Jennifer Skolaski. "Our community has so many wonderful resources ready to assist you and your loved ones. Take the first step knowing that we want you to get well to be well."

For those who missed the event or want to relive the excitement, Mirrorless Productions will be producing an event recap video available at [www.weheartyou.org](http://www.weheartyou.org) and the [We Heart You: Recovery in Our Community Facebook page](#). Continue the conversation and build community by posting on the Facebook page.

The We Heart You: Recovery in Our Community Event was made possible through the support of the community and event sponsors: AMS of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Winnebago County Human Services, JEK Foundation, Mirrorless Productions, Rogers Behavioral Health, ThedaCare, Harmonic Harvest, Fox Valley Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition, Interstate Postgraduate Medical Association, Breakwater and Apricity.

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Photos (click on image or caption to download – Photo Credit: Mirrorless Productions):

	<a href="#">More than 370 people gathered in solidarity with the recovery community during the second We Heart You: Recovery in Our Community event.</a>
	<a href="#">Vin Baker, former All-Star basketball player and gold medal Olympian, now serving as Assistant Coach for the Milwaukee Bucks, shares his journey of success, addiction and recovery.</a>
	<a href="#">The Faces of Addiction and Recovery Quilt from the Megan Kelley Foundation represents hundreds of Wisconsin individuals in different stages of addiction.</a>