

# Bridging the Gaps



## Living Proof Recovery is Possible: Peer Outreach in Camden

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Community Preceptors: *Brandy Mullin, Living Proof Recovery Center; Megan Lepore, Center for Family Services*

Academic Preceptor: *Jessica Horvath-Matthews, MD, Cooper University Health Care*

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**Center For Family Services** is a leading non-profit with more than 1500 staff, offering 100+ programs to serve the New Jersey community for over a century.

**Mission:** To support and empower individuals, families, and communities to achieve a better life through vision, hope, and strength.

**Vision:** For all people to lead capable, responsible, fulfilled lives in strong families and healthy communities.



**Living Proof Recovery Centers** are one of the Center For Family Services programs. They are peer-led, volunteer driven places of support for all members of the recovery community. Their programming includes wellness classes, medication-assisted treatment, sober living resources, educational assistance, treatment resources, development of a recovery plan, and peer mentoring & coaching to help individuals find their personal path to a life of recovery.

### BACKGROUND

Rates of opioid overdoses and overdose-related deaths have risen dramatically the past decade across the nation, and particularly in NJ which saw a 214% increase in drug overdose rates between 2010 and 2015. Camden County consistently reports the second highest number of suspected drug-related deaths according to the NJ Department of health. Camden City has a particularly high poverty population and a correspondingly high rate of opioid use disorder and overdose rates. In 2020, of the 2927 Naloxone incidents in Camden County, 58% occurred in Camden City.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### By the Numbers

- 6 street outreach events around Camden
- 276+ individuals assisted with services
- 158 oral health kits distributed
- 93 boxes of Narcan distributed
- 11 people began treatment

#### Summary of Services

- Assistance in referrals to treatment
- Expanding access to available resources
- Peer mentoring
- Social & Recreational activities
- Street outreach events

### PROJECT

The Bridging the Gaps student intern experienced a handful of Center For Family Services' programs by assisting with connecting people to resources and programming at the Family Success center, going door-to-door to spread information about food distributions, and assisting with street outreaches. Most of the work was with the Living Proof Recovery center through the Recovery Corp programming and expanding existing outreach resources.



### REFLECTION



*It's one thing to intellectually discuss social determinants of health, stigma experienced by vulnerable populations and the importance of community outreach – it is entirely different to connect with individuals and hear their stories firsthand. It must be experienced to be understood. Through my work this summer, I connected with individuals I never would have had the chance to meet otherwise and gained valuable insights as a result. I'm passionate about taking what I've learned forward as I progress in my career – this experience is one I will never forget.*

