

Journeys to Recovery



Changing Lives to Hope and Achievement... One Journey at a Time

Supported Education and Supported Employment
Program Participants Describe Their Counselors' Help

I really trust her. It feels like I am seen and like I am heard and encouraged. She met me on the campus when it came to financial aid and meeting with my advisor.

Meeting her has changed my life!



Kirby | Supported Education



Jonathan | Supported Education

Working with her has been great. She is very helpful and patient. She really wants me to succeed in school and in life overall. I really appreciate the time she takes to help me stay responsible and organized.

Her support is what keeps me on track with my courses!

I don't like meeting people but the comfort level started around the second or third meeting, which is very rare for me. I think his being here is like a safe space. I haven't felt that safe since... actually, never.

I do have hope that I'll be an adult like everyone else and I won't need the help.



Crystal | Supported Employment



Tim | Supported Employment

Working with him is amazing! Instead of just guiding me and talking about it, we do the work to rebuild my career and apply for meaningful, good-paying jobs.

He helps me get it done!

Thank You for Investing in Recovery!

Dear Friends of Laurel House,

Your financial support, your dedication as volunteers, and your encouragement of our team have helped improve the lives of so many individuals in need – each on a very personal journey, facing unique challenges and with a particular recovery goal in mind. Your generosity has allowed us to guide far more on their path to recovery than would be possible with public funding alone, yet many more in need wait in line to receive our life-changing rehabilitative services.

Revenue sources were especially challenging this past year as some public and private grants were no longer available to us and as many nonprofit organizations compete to seek replacement of federal funding. Despite these challenges, we continued to serve more individuals than in previous years, providing direct service, advocacy, and outreach to 953 individuals. Our rtor.org Resource Specialists also provided responses to 3,369 requests for personalized help, connecting families to expert mental health treatment and offering compassionate guidance for their loved ones' journeys.

We meet clients at every stage of a recovery journey, dealing with mental health and substance use disorders and often also contending with financial, family, and/or cultural issues. Some of our participants join during a period of crisis, needing help to regain social or emotional stability, or at a point in their journeys that requires longer support to engage in the community. We meet others when a brief period of extra supports in place can make all the difference in advancing their educational or vocational progress.

Successful outcomes from our evidence-based practices in Supported Education, Supported Employment, Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation), and Supportive Housing with Community Support Services give us the confidence to address the specific needs and challenges of our clients. Nearly 90% of all program participants served this past fiscal year are low-income, 24% are Black or African American, and 21% identify as Hispanic. Some programs, such as in Supported Education, have as many as 93% low-income participants, 31% Black or African American participants, and 30% of participants who identify as Hispanic. Private donations and grants supported the staffing needed to deliver these innovative and critical services and sustained outreach to underserved communities.

Thank you for your generosity in support of our work and your ongoing commitment at this critical time to the cause of recovery!



Linda M. Autore
President and CEO



Kenneth A. DellaRocco, Esq.
Chairman, Board of Directors

Supported Employment and Mobile Employment Services

The Supported Employment program utilizes the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) evidence-based practice developed at the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center. Laurel House implements the model to help individuals with a mental health disorder get and keep competitive employment (jobs not set aside for people with disabilities), focused on their strengths and talents. 67% of our program participants gained competitive employment during the fiscal year and 77% of Supported Employment (SE) participants sustained employment over 12 months in a review of prior year participation. Our experience supports what research proves – that the use of the model increases job entry, retention rates, better earnings and reduced hospitalizations versus traditional methods.

Our SE team served 150 program participants, the greatest number of clients served by the program in a single year, capitalizing on the additional contract funding awarded by the Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Staffing includes a Recovery Support Employment Specialist, providing an additional level of support to clients.

Alignment with client preferences for work guides the Employment Specialist's focus in targeting job development, building employer relationships through repeated contact in the community, learning the business needs of the employer, and introducing qualified job candidates to those employers.



Stephanie Guza, SE Specialist, and participant Alexis, attend an Employment Achievement celebration to recognize SE participants' new jobs



Saipin, another of Stephanie's clients, operating a forklift at her job



SE program participant Tim and Chase Bellini, RCP, Recovery Support Employment Specialist, strategizing on job opportunities

An additional 71 individuals were served by the Mobile Employment Service (MES) program, funded by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). The program provides onsite services to individuals in recovery from opioid and substance use disorders, living in transitional recovery housing. Laurel House is one of only five organizations in Connecticut providing the MES service.

Our Mobile Employment Specialist, Megan Habakangas, meets her clients in the community and works quickly to secure employment since most of them are living in transitional housing for only 90–120 days. Megan added clients from Bridgeport Rescue Mission to her caseload who had also participated in our Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation) program.

Supported Education

Among the greatest in-demand programs, Supported Education (SEd) improved the lives of 134 program participants in FY25. Counselors help students with a mental health condition or with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders achieve an Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's Degree, complete high school or gain a GED, and complete courses or a vocational certification. They provide both the learning strategies and coping skills needed to ensure the students' progress and increased self-sufficiency. Counselors model advocacy, demonstrating how to seek on-campus disability support services and accommodations.

Laurel House is 1 of only 5 organizations in CT and the only one in Fairfield County contracted by DMHAS to provide this rehabilitative service. Private funding has allowed Counselors to serve three times the number of clients that public funding alone supports.



Counselors provide services on college and high school campuses and at the Resource Center, both in-person and virtually to remove barriers to access. We work with seniors in high school recommended by school social workers or therapists, and approved by a parent, to ensure successful transition of vulnerable students to a vocational path and greater self-sufficiency. We strive to intervene as early as possible to minimize the most debilitating effects of mental health disorders. Counselors identify all available on-campus disability support and facilitate connection to help students who are transitioning to out-of-state post-secondary schools.



Chris Lovermi, GHS Transition Coordinator with Gary Charles, EdD, Program Administrator of Greenwich High School's Windrose Program

This program was made possible partly through funding provided by the Greenwich Department of Human Services (GDHS). This enables us to extend service to Greenwich High School (GHS) and Windrose students, as well as to Greenwich residents of all ages. Supported Education provides a successful trajectory to post-secondary education and vocational certification for at-risk students.



The Community Fund of Darien and First County Bank Foundation provided grants for Supported Education with wraparound services from rtor.org Resource Specialists for the families of Supported Education participants.

rtor services such as providing psychoeducation to families, finding a family therapist, accessing benefits, or locating a new treatment provider for the student, help ensure the student's emotional and social stability and vocational progress.



Gerard Edens Fleurizard, First County Bank AVP and Branch Manager, presents a grant check to the Laurel House team

Thank you to the generous grant funding of the Supported Education program by: The Goodnow Fund; Greenwich Department of Human Services; Near & Far Aid Association, Inc.; People with Disabilities Foundation; Savings Bank of Danbury Foundation; Stanley Family Foundation; and the Tudor Foundation.

Thank you to The Community Fund of Darien and First County Bank Foundation for their generous grants to Supported Education with wraparound rtor.org Resource Specialist services for families of the students.

Thank you, Rotary Club of New Canaan for continued client assistance to Supported Education participants.

Community Support Services and Supportive Housing



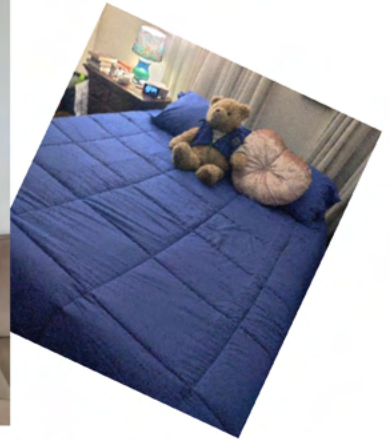
Laurel House's Supportive Housing apartment building at 6 Washington Court, Stamford, offers safe, affordable (well below market rate) apartment living to help sustain the mental health and substance use recovery of individuals living in the community. We receive no subsidies for the building or property maintenance.

Tenants also receive case management and support services, critical to sustaining recovery and fostering greater independence. The Community Support Program (CSP) Counselors provide those skill-building services to other clients in the community as well who live in scattered site apartments, for which Laurel House is not the

landlord. 91 program participants received case management, coaching for Activities of Daily Living, counseling in recovery planning, and access to community services from the CSP team during FY 2025.

Counselors monitor participants' physical health and nutrition, ensuring access to appropriate and timely care, preventing hospitalizations and relapses, and filling voids in needed community support, such as connecting clients with benefits and accessing disability accommodations. Participants benefit from numerous wellness and social rehabilitation support groups, learning coping skills and problem solving.

Counselors facilitate program participants' engagement in groups and events that provide opportunities for socializing and skill building. Monthly Community Hours offer free lunches, entertainment and interaction with others succeeding in recovery.



One of many CSP participants who received new bedding, funded by First Congregational Church of Greenwich Women's Fellowship



Community Support Program and Supportive Housing Team



Hannah Daddario, Supported Education and Thinking Well Counselor, enjoys lunch with a Community Hour participant

Thank you to First Congregational Church of Greenwich Women's Fellowship for grant funding in support of our Community Support Services and Supportive Housing clients' needs. Thank you Diddel & Diddel, LLC, Dolphin Cove Community and St. Leo's Parish of Stamford for your support in fulfilling clients' food and basic needs.



Laurel House is one of only three providers in CT and the only one in Fairfield County certified in the therapeutic intervention developed by thought leaders in Neuroscience and Psychiatric Rehabilitation to address executive functioning issues and cognitive impairment associated with mental health disorders. Thinking Well improves the participants' underlying skills to function better in the workplace, school and the community. A pre- and a post-Assessment identify the cognitive domains that can benefit from improvement and the level of improvement achieved in: attention; working memory; verbal memory; reasoning and problem solving; and processing speed.



Jennifer Piro, Certified Cognitive Remediation Specialist and Supported Employment & Education Counselor with a Thinking Well participant

Progress meetings are held with Thinking Well Counselors at the completion of 10, 20, and 30 session levels to get feedback from the participants. 100% of the FY25 participants who completed sessions and took the post-Assessment achieved improvement in at least 1 of 5 cognitive domains; 98% in 2 domains; 65% in 3; 37% in 4; and 7% in all 5 domains.

Thinking Well Counselors record functional outcomes that are clinically observed during the sessions and the discussion groups, such as engaging socially, showing greater self-sufficiency and following directions. Participants are encouraged to capitalize on their newfound confidence and skills by joining Laurel House's Supported Employment or Supported Education programs. Counselors check in with past participants to learn about ongoing functional improvements, such as advocating for themselves, volunteering, sustaining employment, getting a raise and/or benefits, or moving into a greater level of independent living.

We deliver the program in the Harrison Hoffman Thinking Well Center, at other agencies as requested, and on high school campuses. We also offer hybrid sessions with participants at the Resource Center, joined virtually by other participants who can't travel to the Center. 136 clients participated this past year in 10, 20 or 30 Thinking Well sessions, including instructor-led "bridging" groups to make practical application of the computer exercises.



Tyler Nolan, LCSW, VP of Programs, with David Rabin, Greenwich United Way President & CEO



Participant working in a Thinking Well session



Hannah Daddario, Thinking Well & Supported Education Counselor, with a Thinking Well participant

Thinking Well Counselors work with the Bridgeport Rescue Mission (BRM) team, providing an innovative approach — onsite pre- and post-Assessments at the Bridgeport facility but delivery of the sessions virtually — for their clients in transitional housing. BRM managers track their clients' engagement in the Thinking Well sessions and provide the incentive of participation in Laurel House's Mobile Employment Services (MES) for those with opioid and substance use disorders. Early results are promising.

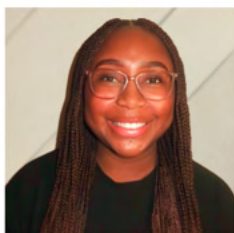
Thank you to Greenwich United Way Community Investment Program and The Oaklawn Foundation for their generous support of Thinking Well.

Advocacy and Outreach

For the fourth year, Laurel House hosted a competition for our Social Work Racial Equity Scholarship to cultivate more Black and Hispanic Social Workers committed to social change and to increase access to culturally relevant mental health care treatment for communities of color. There were two scholarships awarded – one for \$10,000 and one for \$5,000 to Master of Social Work graduate students who were selected among many qualified applicants for their academic excellence, work and volunteer experience and their career commitment to serving Connecticut communities of color.



*Kashmir A. Flood
Columbia University
\$10,000 Scholarship*



*Dezrene Thompson
Southern CT State University
\$5,000 Scholarship*

Committed to making mental health services accessible to all, we have extended our programs' reach to underserved communities and cultivated relationships with culturally competent providers, enabling more communities to be served according to their preferences. To remove barriers, we meet program participants and their families in the community, where they live, work and go to school, and collaborate with other organizations.

The Counselors and rtor.org Resource Specialists present our programs on college and high school campuses, at health care events and association meetings, and to other health care organizations. This ensures that clients and providers are aware of our services, are familiar with our monthly calendar of rehabilitative workshops and groups, and can easily connect with us to make referrals for those in need of our help.



Danielle Leblanc, LMSW, Resource Specialist, and Jennifer Piro, Supported Employment & Education Counselor, at Fairfield University Fresh Check Day



Students at CT State College Norwalk visit our table at a Fresh Check Day



Danielle Leblanc, LMSW, and Denise Vestuti, LCSW, participated in the October 26, 2024 NAMI conference, which Laurel House sponsored



Laurel House participates yearly in New Canaan's Annual Addiction Awareness Vigil. Denise Vestuti, LCSW, and Chase Bellini, RCP, Recovery Support Employment Specialist, at the August 29, 2024 Vigil



Laurel House and rtor.org are grateful to the Pilates Advantage of Wilton and to J. McLaughlin, Darien, for your generosity in hosting fundraisers for us and for giving visibility to our work in the community.



Skill Building for Engagement

Participants in any of Laurel House's programs are welcome to engage in a variety of social rehabilitation and wellness workshops and support groups to develop skills in: recovery planning; problem solving and stress reduction; coping skills; interpersonal communications; and specialized workshops that align with their talents and interests. Monthly calendars of workshop offerings are emailed to all participants to encourage engagement and to healthcare providers throughout the area who make referrals to Laurel House services.



Supported Employment Specialist Cullen Finlayson (on left) engages participants in a Social Rehabilitation group



Lisa Shapiro, LCSW, Supported Education Manager, leads an Emotional Intelligence workshop

Volunteers speak of the reward and gratification they experience in their roles facilitating workshops, sharing their skills and talents with program participants. The clients, in turn, speak enthusiastically about their appreciation for the affirmation and acceptance they receive in their interactions with volunteers. The workshops and events provide opportunities for socializing and for cultivation of talents and strengths.



Molly McAndrew (on right) helps guide Writers' Workshop participant in response to a creative prompt



Chris Hart, author of many popular How-to-Draw books, leads The Cartooning Workshop

With the help of our volunteers, Community Hours provide participants with free lunches, activities and camaraderie. Often, musical performances such as those from three volunteer entertainers are part of the event, to the delight of the program participants.



Sofia Lee Lugo



Nick Biello



Julian Davies and Caitlyn Lentner

rtor.org | Resources to Recover The Site

www.rtor.org (short for Resources to Recover) is a free online service of Laurel House that helps families and individuals affected by mental health concerns connect with expert treatment and support. Robust site content includes information on diagnoses and treatments, more than 180 vetted Family-Endorsed Providers, weekly blogs, and provides opportunities throughout to ask for help by email, LiveChat or phone, and to receive a personalized response to an inquiry.



Three Featured Family-Endorsed Providers:

Suzanne Taluy, LCSW
Embrace Psychotherapy



Silver Hill Hospital
Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program



Matthew K. Phillips, LCSW, MEd, CST
Psychotherapist



Top Mental Health Search Terms Used by rtor.org Visitors (Based on 1,000,000+ Site Engagements)

- What is borderline personality disorder?
- Signs of depression in women
- How to help someone with psychosis who doesn't want help
- Pros and cons of anxiety medication
- How to stop intrusive thoughts
- How does depression affect your life?

Today's parents face an unprecedented "guidance gap" when supporting young adults through mental health challenges and life transitions. Our specialized services for emerging adults bridge this gap by providing families with expert advice, personalized referrals, and ongoing support during these crucial developmental years when traditional parenting approaches no longer apply.

Scan here to read more and sign up for our weekly newsletters



rtor.org is one of the organizations featured on the New Canaan Behavioral Health Alliance website (NCBHA). The Alliance's mission is to improve access to behavioral health care for New Canaan residents seeking help.

Thank you to an Anonymous donor for significant funding supporting rtor.org's operation, helping to ensure the service is free to all in need of help.

rtor.org | Resources to Recover The Mental Health Resource Specialists

Compassionate, knowledgeable clinicians respond to all rtor.org inquiries, whether received by phone, email, or LiveChat. Our two Resource Specialists and Jay Boll, LMSW, Editor-in-Chief of rtor.org and Laurel House Vice President, listen intently to the nature of the requests and the specific needs of the family member. They offer one-on-one consultation, practical advice, and expert recommendations on next steps, including making referrals and personal introductions to mental health care treatment and recovery providers.

Responses to 3,369 Requests for Help

- 77% of requests for help are initiated by women
- 44% of those served are Black, Latino or people of color
- 70% of cases concern a family member or other close relation
- 61% of cases concern a young adult; 12% are for a child under 18



Resource Specialists Danielle Leblanc, LMSW and Denise Vestuti, LCSW

User satisfaction surveys capture the meaningful difference the Resource Specialists make, transforming a moment of crisis into a path forward with hope and concrete resources. Learn more at: <https://www.rtor.org/our-impact/>

Reasons Why rtor Resource Specialists Are Asked For Help

- Find expert behavioral health providers (76%)
- Identify mental health signs and symptoms (70%)
- Help for young adults and for highly dependent adult children (12%)
- Access to care for uninsured individuals (8%)
- Access to crisis intervention services, family support groups, and the Suicide Prevention Lifeline (8%)
- Other types of help (14%)



Sheila McCaffrey, Laurel House, Inc. Chief Operating Officer, receives a grant award from Jeff Williams, NCCF Board Chair, and Suzanne Harrison, Community Investments Committee Chair. Denise Vestuti also accepted the award.

Laurel House was honored to be recognized during New Canaan Community Foundation's Awards Breakfast for the Resources to Recover program. In her presentation remarks NCCF's Board Director, Suzanne Harrison, stated that rtor.org "intervenes early in a family's identification and treatment of mental health disorders by connecting them to expert mental health services, free of charge . . . Laurel House plays a critical role in the New Canaan Behavioral Health Alliance."

Call **203-724-9070** to speak with a Resource Specialist or visit us at **rtor.org**



Thank you to New Canaan Community Foundation and to Max J. & Winnie S. Rosenshein Foundation, Inc. for grant funding in support of the rtor.org Resource Specialists.

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Suzanne Douglas Harris
Jon Exel
Laurie Guido
Tim Killam
Mark Lanier
Jay Spencer Biddle Millius (2)
Kathleen Monahan Martin (2)
Andrea N. Pavia
Carolyn Policastro
Evan P. Reinhardt
Louise Tesei Bavis
Joseph "Joey" Trimboli
Deborah Weintraub
Colin Bruce Clement Young (10)

Bethany Zaro
Melissa Ziegler
Zody's 19th Hole
Jennifer Cohen Zonis

In-Kind Donations

Acuario Restaurant
Linda Autore
Barcelona Wine Bar
Beal's Lobster Pier
BlueTriton Brands
Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts
Chelsea Piers Athletic Club
Columbus Park Trattoria
Sarah and Chris Cooper
Delamar Greenwich Harbor
Delamar Mystic
Fred Astaire Dance Studios, Greenwich
GHG Restaurant Collection
Great Seats by Craig
Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater
J. McLaughlin, Darien
Jade Marketing Solutions, LLC
Juice Kings
l'escale Restaurant and Bar

Le Fat Poodle
Le Penguin
LesserEvil Snacks
Marc Lorenti
Crozer Martin
National Aquarium
Noelle Spa for Beauty & Wellness
Susan and Robert Nolan
Penny Cha
Prime: An American Kitchen & Bar, Stamford
Richards Greenwich
Rowayton Seafood
ShopRite of Commerce Street
Stamford Florist
Ten Twenty Post Oyster Bar Bistro
The Little Plucky
Twelve Percent Beer Project
Winfield Street Coffee

Sound Steps for Mental Health Recovery 5K Wellness Walk/Run

October 26, 2024



Sponsors

PLATINUM

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Sheila McCaffrey



The Nolan Family



GOLD



The Miller Family



Insight Counseling, LLC



Pieces in Place, LLC

Release Recovery



SILVER

BRONZE

An Evening with Laurel House

April 26, 2025

A full ballroom of guests celebrated Laurel House's Honorees at our annual fundraiser held at the Delamar, Greenwich Harbor. Laurel House, Inc. Board Directors Trevor Crow, LMFT, and Vincent O'Banner were event co-chairs. Proceeds from the event support Laurel House programs and services such as Supported Education, which is in great demand but receives limited state funding, and rtor.org, which is a free service of Laurel House but has no source of public funding.



2025 Champion for Recovery

Amir Garakani, MD, DFAPA
Chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health,
Greenwich Hospital-Yale New Haven Health



2025 Laurel House Town Champions (L to R)

Joseph Pankowski, Jr. (Darien), Ann Rogers (New Canaan), Paul Macari (Stamford)

An Evening with Laurel House



An Evening with Laurel House



Sponsors

Champion

Anonymous

Leader

The Goodnow Fund
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Stanley Family Foundation
Stevenson Family Charitable Trust/Trevor Crow
Anonymous

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Alex and Selena Quintero
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Melissa Ziegler

Underwriter

Penny and Ray Foote, Jr.: Music & Photography
Ring's End: AV & Lighting
Anonymous: Food & Catering

Laurel House, Inc. and Friends of Laurel House, Inc.
Summary Income & Expense For Years Ended June 30

	FY 2025	FY 2024	FY 2023
Revenues:			
Public Funding (State of CT; HUD)	\$1,807,198	\$1,823,355	\$1,827,737
Private & Other Revenue Sources:			
Rent, Services	281,836	385,711	246,733
Private Funding	1,031,816	1,053,609	1,114,871
Total Revenues	3,120,850	3,262,675	3,189,341
Expenses:			
Salaries & Benefits	2,209,717	2,299,287	2,088,993
Operating Expenses	715,857	663,519	715,951
Development & Marketing	107,258	105,673	91,664
Interest	11,752	13,137	14,765
Total Expenses	3,044,584	3,081,616	2,911,373
Change in Net Assets	\$76,266	\$181,059	\$277,968
	% of Revenues	% of Revenues	% of Revenues
Public Funding:	57.9%	55.9%	57.3%
Private & Other Revenue Sources:	42.1%	44.1%	42.7%
Sources of Private Funding:			
Individuals	54%	53%	47%
Corporations	11%	10%	10%
Foundations & Organizations	35%	37%	43%

FY 2025 Services

Laurel House provided services to **953** individuals.

Social Rehabilitation: 829 individuals received services in: recovery planning, outreach, advocacy, and peer support; participated in Writers', Artists', and skill-building workshops; received meals; and attended Laurel House Community Hours.

Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation): 136 participants; 100% who completed sessions and took post-assessment achieved improvement in at least 1 of 5 cognitive domains, 98% in 2 domains, 65% in 3 domains, 37% improved in 4 of 5 domains and 7% improved in all domains.

Supported Education: 134 participants; 34% enrolled in Associate's; 22% in Bachelor's; 13% in Vocational Certification; 10% in GED; 3% in Master's; 18% in High School.

Supported Employment: 150 participants with 67% competitively employed; 77% with sustained employment over 12 months.

Mobile Employment Services (MES) provided onsite services to an additional 71 individuals with substance use disorders living at Recovery Houses.

Community Support Services and Supportive Housing: 91 individuals received case management, coaching for Activities of Daily Living, budgeting and goal planning; and access to safe, affordable housing.

rtor.org: 3,369 requests for help received personalized service; there were over 1,000,000 engagements on the site.

Mission: Help individuals and families achieve and sustain mental health to lead fulfilling lives

Laurel House, Inc. and Friends of Laurel House, Inc. FY 2025 Board of Directors

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