



MCRSP LIFELINE

Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers

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~ SPECIAL EDITION ~

MCRSP Leadership Change

Recently, MCRSP held elections for several positions on the Executive Committee to the MCRSP Board of Directors. The new executive committee members, whose terms will begin January 1, 2023, include:

- Pastor Marsha Hawkins-Hourd ~ Chair
- Alon Fisch ~ Secretary
- Charles Stephenson ~ Chaplain
- Jordan Hampton ~ Parliamentarian

Those continuing to serve on the Executive Committee include:

- Apostle Harold G. Long ~ Vice Chair
- Rev. Michael Rogers ~ Treasurer
- Rev. Ladell M. Flowers - Immediate Past Chair
- Gregory D. Smith ~ Ex-Officio Member

Let's welcome all the newly elected members.

Ladell's Thoughts

In a few days, I will step away from a nine-year tenure as chair for the Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers, (MCRSP). It has been a rewarding and fulfilling endeavor for me.

My official role as chair began at our very first annual conference at the University of Central Missouri, (UCM) in December of 2014, when a group of colleagues and friends, expressed confidence in me to assume the position for MCRSP along with then Bishop, and now Apostle Harold Long as vice Chair; Jane Pfefferkorn, secretary;

Dr. Adriatik Likciani, Parliamentarian; Reverend Mike Rogers, Treasurer; and Reverend Chad Bles as Chaplain. Together we assumed what was to become the first official governing body for the Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support providers. Our purpose for convening with over 100 recovery-minded colleagues that day was and continues to be to unite, empower, and mobilize a network of faith-based, peer, and community-based organizations to restore and rebuild lives and families seeking recovery from substance use disorders.

As I think back on my journey to that day of being elected as chair, so many memories of events, people, and faith-filled initiatives come to mind. One of the first memorable moments was when President Bush signed two executive orders to establish centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in five executive branch agencies with the federal government. The news article making the initiative announcement quoted the president saying, *"The paramount goal is compassionate results, and private and charitable groups, including religious ones, should have the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete on a level playing field, so long as they achieve valid public purposes.... The delivery of social services must be results-oriented and should value the bedrock principles of pluralism, non-discrimination, evenhandedness, and neutrality."*

For me, the announcement of this initiative was finally a recognition by our government that Faith-Based and Community/Peer Based Organizations are paramount in addressing one of the deadliest domestic enemies we have ever faced in our nation, alcohol/drug use and addiction.

The next memory that helped shape my trajectory to my past nine years of work in the coalition was a one-day treatment/recovery conference I attended in Kansas City in or around 2001 conducted by a community-based organization, Committed Caring Faith Community, (CCFC) out of St. Louis, Missouri. This group of committed professionals had begun an initiative to organize Faith and Community Based recovery support providers to create a statewide network to address behavioral health issues, including substance use and addiction. CCFC played a major role in helping our Missouri Department of Mental Health submit a winning proposal to SAMHSA to secure our first Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative funding. I will never forget an analogy given by one of the Treatment / Faith speakers that day who was a Muslim Imam. When he stood at the podium, he took an ink pen and while dropping it to the podium he said, **"Things that are seen are impacted by things that are not seen."** After repeating that statement several times, he made his point that even the slowest of us finally understood which was gravity that is not seen forcing and guiding the ink pen which we could see down to the podium. As he spoke, I reflected on the unseen supernatural force that helped guide me to my recovery journey after a period of indiscretion living which contributed to my failing miserably in my first year at the University of Missouri in Columbia. After being dismissed from the university I returned home to St. Louis and renewed my faith and commitment to my higher power which provided me with the guidance and help I needed to start my life recovery journey. With that help and the fervent prayers of my mother, I was able to return to the university and start my new commitment to the field I now serve. I've subsequently spent my life sharing with others about that unseen entity in my recovery. Looking back on my participation at the conference that day, I was beginning a new collaborative relationship with hundreds of people who shared a very similar experience as myself and were now dedicating their lives and possessions to reach out and minister to others being negatively impacted by alcohol and drug use. It was the beginning of my participation in coalition work in Missouri. Even now, years later I still reflect on that day in Kansas City, especially at our MCRSP conferences.

Today MCRSP has exponentially expanded the collaborative efforts I experienced years earlier at the Kansas City conference. We have served as a major catalyst in identifying, unifying, empowering, and mobilizing many Faith, Peer, and Community Based organizations to create a net to help catch people falling from substance use and/or addictions. Today, MCRSP houses five regions of these types of organizations serving multiple communities throughout our state. Thousands of Missourians receive valuable assistance and guidance daily through the connectivity and unity of MCRSP.

One of the greatest attributes of MCRSP's grassroots initiative has been the partnership we began and continue to forge with our certified mental health /behavioral health treatment centers. The initial Faith-Based and Community Based / Access To Recovery grant submitted to SAMHSA was designed to help us create an arm of recovery support services to enhance the existing treatment efforts in addressing our problem of alcohol and substance use disorders in our state. After getting this partnership up and going, the immediate impact we realized included but was not limited to increased access to treatment, longer stays in treatment, and phenomenal long-term recovery support services after treatment. Another and probably most significant benefit the grassroots movement created was viable multiple pathways to recovery. We were no longer bound to one approach to recovery. We experienced a complete paradigm shift in the way we approached getting people connected with the treatment and/or recovery support services they need.

Finally, MCRSP addresses one of the greatest needs we have in treatment and recovery and that is safe and clean housing with recovery-conducive living environments. Regardless of what a person's recovery day looks like, they need a place to live and rest their head that will support and enhance their recovery efforts. The faith, peer, community, and social recovery style homes MCRSP provides via its National Alliance for Recovery Residences movement in Missouri deliver this to over 1,792 people a day in recovery with, as President Bush said, **"Compassionate Results"**.

Thank you MCRSP for letting me be a part of these past nine years.

Sincerely,
Ladell M. Flowers

"I want to thank Ladell, Jane, and Adriatik for their service to MCRSP and the foresight and fortitude to be part of the founding members of the organization. No one could have imagined when MCRSP was founded in 2014 the achievements we would see for the recovery community in Missouri. Recovery supports are now officially recognized as a part of the continuum of care in Missouri and RSS providers are actually contracted with the state and have their own line item in the Missouri core budget for substance use. Other states often look at Missouri in developing their own recovery support programs (in fact, Iowa just voted to develop their own "Iowa Coalition of Recovery Support Providers - ICRSP"). Indeed, Missouri has become a national leader when it comes to recovery, and Faces and Voices of Recovery highlighted that fact when it awarded MCRSP the National Recovery Organization of the Year Award in October 2022. Recovery has become a real force in Missouri, which is good for people in recovery and good for the taxpayers of the state since our programs have demonstrated that they save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by lessening incarceration rates, and emergency room visits and they put people back into the workforce. None of these achievements would have ever happened if MCRSP was not formed and Ladell, Jane, and Adriatik all played critical roles in the development of MCRSP. Thank you for all the work you have done and will continue to do in the future. Recovery is not only possible, recovery is expected and people can flourish in their recovery thanks to your dedication and hard work!"

Gregory D. Smith
Executive Director, Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers



“Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It’s about Impact Influence, and Inspiration.”
~Robin Sharma

What Others Say

"When I see Mr. Flowers, I see a man that puts on the armor of God each day with confidence. He has shown us how to use that armor.. and due to his leadership, we clearly understand our mission. - I'm forever grateful for the wisdom he has taken the time to share with me!"

Jordan Hampton, CPS, MARS
Director of Housing
Recovery House St. Louis

"In ancient times, we learn of a young woman purified and made ready to come before a King. The King loved her more than any of the other maidens and she was chosen to be Queen. In time, the Queen learned that there was a plot against her people. She was reluctant to intervene, but her cousin and her mentor, said that perhaps she had been chosen for royalty "for such a time as this." She was able to approach the King because of her spiritual readiness and save her people. We know her as Queen Esther.

Today we have all encountered a leader who was purified and made ready over time. He was proven and chosen for a similar time to provide safety, a way out, and recovery pathways in "such a time as this." That man is Ladell Flowers. He has been a man for this season for individuals, families and recovery support providers. He has provided leadership and a steadfast voice of passion and faith bringing MCRSP from a mustard seed to the nationwide leader that it is today. As he moves into the role of elder statesman, I want to express my respect, gratitude and honor him for all he has forged on behalf of recovery here and to others nationwide.

Thank you, Ladell."

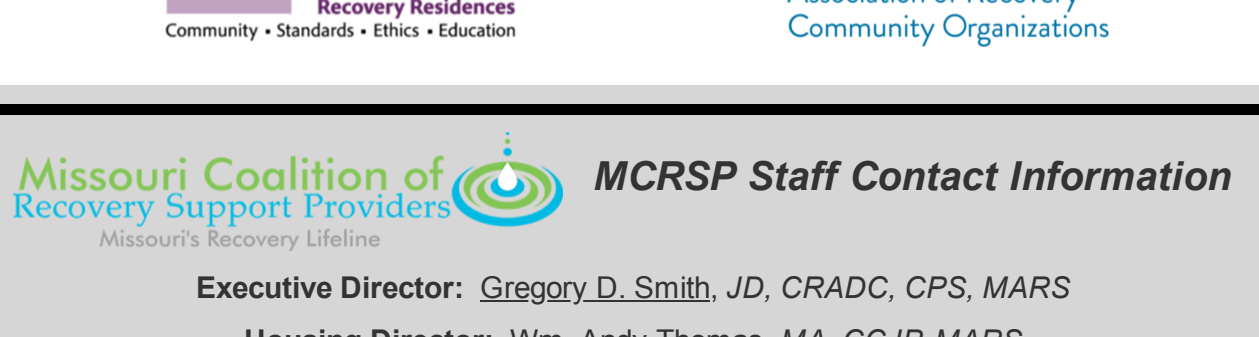
Merna Eppick,
President, Recovery Coalition of the Ozarks.

"Rev. Ladell Flowers is an ordained minister and has served as pastor over 30 years in three different Kansas City churches. He holds Master's degrees in Secondary Education and in Guidance and Counseling. He has over forty years of experience in the areas of substance use treatment, recovery support, corrections and re-entry program services with a faith-based approach. He is the Executive Director of the Dismas House of Kansas City, Inc. where he has provided oversight to its residential and outpatient programs since 1977. Rev. Flowers is a past chair and a founding member of the Kansas City Recovery Coalition and has also served as Chair of the Missouri State Advisory Council. This year Ladell will become Past Chair of MCRSP (Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers). He served as a founding member and Chair since its inception in 2014.

Reverend Flowers is known and loved throughout our nation. His leadership has provided the ingredients that were necessary to pull together a group of providers across Missouri who had served in Access to Recovery in order to create MCRSP. Had this organization not been birthed, the work of almost 20 years through ATR would very possibly have faded away due to the loss of the federal funding. Because Ladell, Bobbi Jo Reed and Greg Smith spent months in 2018 going to the capitol and educating legislators about recovery, the Missouri Department of Mental Health was provided funding in their core budget for Recovery Support Services funding for the first time in history. MCRSP had not only been created but now was validated with a line item. In October, 2022, MCRSP received a national award from Faces and Voices of Recovery as the Recovery Organization of the Year.

Not only has Ladell led the charge in advocacy in the legislative arena, he has, perhaps even more importantly, used his influence to build unity among the movement. No one has had more positive impact than Ladell in keeping people communicating and coming back to the table, even in the midst of confusion and conflict. MCRSP is comprised of faith-based, community-based, and peer-based providers, and as one would suspect, this can often cause misunderstanding. However, Ladell possesses the unique characteristics to have kept the connections solid and respectful. Therefore, even in the face of his stepping aside as Chair, he has built the foundation that will uphold the future growth and impact of MCRSP for the years ahead. Ladell leaves his legacy, even while the next season and next assignment begin to unfold. Reverend Ladell Flowers will remain a leadership voice for MCRSP and a faithful heart for the recovery movement in Missouri and beyond."

Jane Pfefferkorn



Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers *Missouri's Recovery Lifeline*

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