



A STRONG FOUNDATION

I USED TO THINK THAT IT WAS MY DESTINY TO BE AN ALCOHOLIC. It started so young for me that I was getting high by the age of 8. I was prescribed Ritalin at a young age, and when my mom would give it to me every day and I wouldn't always take it. I would save them up and take 2 or 3 at a time and get high at school and just act like a complete goofball. My parents became concerned about my behavior and took me to a psychiatrist. The doctor hospitalized me and I was placed in the juvenile wing of a mental hospital sharing a room with teenagers who were heroin addicts. They abused me for the week I was there.

Unfortunately my time in the hospital destroyed my trust in everyone I encountered and turned me into an extremely angry child. By the age of 15 I dropped out of high school and got a construction job making \$20 per hour, which was a lot of money for me back in the day. Every weekend I would blow my paycheck on drugs and partying, and it became my lifestyle.

By the time I was 25 I had been arrested 10 times. After spending 3 and half weeks in jail, I decided to go into the army. They had recently lowered their standards because the Iraq war had gotten so unpopular. In the army I learned that I needed discipline, structure, and brotherhood to thrive. And that's exactly what I got at The Extension. The housemen became my new sergeants, and I entered a brotherhood tighter than I'd ever experienced before. Eventually, I learned to trust again and let go of my anger. I know it sounds crazy - but I was even able to hug someone without wanting to break their neck.

The education I received at The Extension built a completely new rock solid foundation that I still rely on every day. I'm 13 years sober and the education I received at The Extension has proved to be more valuable than the 9 and half years I've spent in college

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Recently I've had to make the hardest decision of my life... I learned to put my sobriety first and my kids first.

since then. Recently I've had to make the hardest decision of my life, and I don't know if I could've done it without the tools that The Extension gave me. I learned to put my sobriety first and my kids first.

Becoming a father was a dream come true for me. For a long time I experienced a lot of shame and guilt about being a deadbeat dad to my oldest daughter, but I've been able to reconcile our relationship. The birth of my son in 2015 granted me a fresh start at fatherhood. He is the greatest gift that God has given me. I used to have dreams about a little boy with blonde hair and blue eyes, and my dream came true when that little boy was born.

There's nothing I would change about my time at The Extension. Thankfully, I was broken enough to realize I needed help, and it came at the right time in my life for it to stick. JJ Bremner saved my life. I still have my sponsor that I got at The Extension, and for 8 years I went back every Sunday afternoon at 1 for an AA meeting. Of course, life is hectic now with my kids and the PhD program I'm in, but I still make time to go to meetings and share my experiences. I hope that I get to inspire someone with everything I've been through.

When I was at The Extension and met people who were 20 years sober, I never thought I would make it there. But here I am at 13 years, and I know I will. I just went through the most drastic change in my life, and I never once thought about relapsing. Of course it was extremely difficult, and my mental health took a toll, but I never wanted to go back to drugs and alcohol.

I'm still close with alumni like Dennis and Traci Hoffman, Daniel Robinson, and Daniel Yeater, and even when we don't talk regularly, I know they have my back and I have theirs. There will always be difficulties and tragedies in life to navigate, but the foundation that The Extension gave me allows me to approach them with tools that will keep me on the right path even when the road ahead is dark.

Today, I have a passion and fire for life that burns brighter than it ever has before. I look forward to the challenges I will face because I know I will overcome them. I just hope that in sharing my experience, those people who think they are destined to fail or will never make it to being 20 years sober- will find new hope through a stronger foundation.



Please post at your church or place of business. Thanks!

HELP US SLEEP SOUNDLY THIS SUMMER!

Visit our Amazon list to see what we need most:



ONLINE:

Use the QR code to find our Amazon List



IN YOUR OFFICE:

Finance Team: Twin Sized Sheets
SalesTeam: Pillows



AT YOUR CHURCH:

Youth Group: Boxed meals (mac & cheese, Hamburger Helper, instant rice)
Seniors: Canned goods (vegetables, pasta sauce, beans)

Email Betsy@theextension.org
or call 678-410-7520



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Comments or questions about this newsletter or any of the functions of the Extension, Inc. are encouraged, please send correspondence to the information below.

The Extension | 1507 Church Street Extension
P.O. Box 793 | Marietta, GA 30061 | 770-590-9075



Thank You to the Bonsteins
and enthusiasts from East Cobb UMC
for providing bikes to our residents
so they can get to work!

Make a donation to The Extension: SUPPORT SOBRIETY

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

I pledge \$ _____ per month quarter year

I would like to be sent a reminder of my pledge.

I would like someone from The Extension to contact me.

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Please mail to: The Extension, P.O. Box 793, Marietta, GA 30061

David Schwickerath, Board Chair

Shelley Elder, Vice Chair

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Tammy Guelfo, Treasurer

Tyler M. Driver, Executive Director

A member of our staff or Board of Directors would love to come to speak to your group about issues related to homelessness, addiction and recovery. Give us a call at 770-590-9075.

FROM THE DESK OF AN EXTENSION RESIDENT

7th, April 2025

A special thank you to the volunteers, donors, and the various organizations who support Add of us at the Extension. We are all fortunate to have each of you in our lives.

From the wonderful meals provided all year long, to the donations of clothing and supplies, to your invaluable time and talents... we appreciate these things greatly. Your efforts are helping us to achieve one of our greatest missions: to preserve life, and maintain a culture of recovery in unity. You are such a role model and inspiration to each of us; a perfect illustration of service and commitment. Thank you again so very much for all you do. We wish for each of you and your families to experience all the happiness and joy that life (Ae) can bring. Gratefully,

The Extension Inside

Recently, we welcomed home our first residents through our program, The Extension Inside (TEI). TEI allows us to transform lives by sending our counselors to visit Cobb County Adult Detention Center and provide foundational recovery psychoeducation, jump starting individuals' recovery journey.

The Extension Inside seeks to fill the gap between incarceration and stable, life-long recovery. Research shows that one of the most vulnerable times for a person in early recovery is just after they are released from incarceration. Our counselors are meeting weekly with these individuals who meet our program requirements, and once they complete their sentence they are welcomed into our residential program with open arms.

We are excited to expand our partnership with the county and continue to offer healing and rehabilitation through recovery while helping to reduce recidivism rates. Our goal for every person who enters our program is that they never again rely on drugs to get them high or charity to get them by.

TEI Program Director Joe McAdoo says,

"The Extension Inside represents a transformative step in extending our mission. TEI has the power to redefine support for individuals transitioning out of incarceration, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into the community. The program opens doors earlier for the community we already serve and offers healing for individuals who need it the most. As we expand, the program will not only enrich our services but also amplify the positive impact we can have on the lives of our clients and the community as a whole."



ON THE BALL



ON MAY 15TH THIS YEAR WE HELD OUR ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT – BUT THIS YEAR WITH A TWIST!

We held our tournament at TopGolf! Though it was an unconventional approach, we think we hit a hole in one!

Shifting away from a traditional golf course allowed us to welcome anyone and everyone who wanted to come out and support our mission- and have fun doing it! While a traditional tournament would've had everyone playing in the early summer sun, our players got the best of both worlds, enjoying the beautiful weather with plenty of fans providing a cool breeze and bayside servers serving up some good ole southern hospitality.

We also added a Silent Auction to this year's event with some amazing items including seats to see the Braves in the Delta Club located right behind home base, tickets to see the Atlanta Ballet's annual Nutcracker

PRESENTING SPONSOR



performance at the Cobb Energy Center, and a beachfront condo rental! We are so grateful to everyone who donated an item and thrilled that every item was sold and every cent will go into supporting our clients!

Thank you so much to our presenting sponsor CorkHoward Construction for helping us put on such a successful event! And thanks to all of our team sponsors, players, and bidders who brought the energy and the FUN! We can't wait until next year and see how much we can grow! We hope to see you at TopGolf in 2026!



Family Services



From the program's launch in June 2023 through February 2025, family-related services have been provided to 1619 individuals, which includes 349 clients and 1270 family members.

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE AMERIGROUP FOUNDATION,

The Extension continues to expand our family education and therapy program. From the program's launch in June 2023 through February 2025, family-related services have been provided to 1619 individuals, which includes 349 clients and 1270 family members.

Our team continues to expand our Family Workshop & Support Group programming, holding events inviting Alumni, current clients, and all family members to attend. One of our longtime addiction counselors who has been with The Extension since 2019 is working towards becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has been interning with our family therapist, which has helped us expand the reach of our family services program. We also held holiday parties for clients and their families in December at both our Men's and Women's campuses, complete with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus!

All of our clients participate in weekly family education sessions upon admission into our program. Our monthly family support group is also open to both our Alumni and their families as well as current clients and their families. Sessions are held on the last Sunday of every month and focus on a particular topic such as setting healthy boundaries, enabling vs supporting, and rebuilding trust.

We are working closely with the Family Treatment Courts in Cobb and Douglas Counties to reunite families. Through family therapy, our clients and their loved ones are working toward visitation and reunification with their children in the DFCS system.



Of the successfully discharged clients who we were able to reach by phone for follow-up, 95% of men and 90% of women report improved relationships with their families.

We are continuing to add clients to our program each month and we are nearing our service capacity in our new men's campus. All of our clients will participate in our family education programming and have access to family therapy as needed, and we are continuing to see increased interest in and need for the family therapy component. Our monthly Family Group Sessions are becoming signature events for clients, alumni, and their families, providing more education and engagement for those supporting individuals in recovery. We are also adding staff support to the Reconnecting Families program through an LCSW internship that one of our Addiction Counselors is doing.

By participating in our family education program and receiving family support services, our clients are able to develop healthy support systems that are helpful to their recovery process, improve strained relationships with family relationships, obtain stable housing prior to transition, and obtain and maintain full-time employment that assists them in achieving financial stability and independence.

We are so grateful for the 2 year launch pad that funding from the Amerigroup Foundation has provided, and we look forward to continuing to expand family resources for our clients.

If you are an Alumni or family member of an alumni or client and would like to know more about family services, please contact our Family Therapist, Karen Clark at karenclark@theextension.org



"My wife and I have been able to have our child come back home from DFCS custody, and our relationship is much better after having family therapy sessions. I have learned to trust the process and work for what is really most valuable to me which is sobriety and my wife and daughter."

"I wanted to express my gratitude for your efforts in allowing space for us as we navigate our relationship as a couple and as individuals. It has been very helpful to me and my husband as we try to rebuild trust and hopefully reunite our family together after almost 4 years of being apart. I now have hope that we can continue to grow in trust and healthier communication for our relationship and for our children."

"The family program is helping me to get closer to my wife and build a relationship that we have never had. We have been getting closer together since starting family therapy. My wife who is in another program and my 2-year-old daughter who is in custody with DFCS were able to be together with me at the family event for the first time since she was taken from us and I am very grateful. It has been very helpful for my recovery."



"Medication-assisted treatment saves lives while increasing the chances a person will remain in treatment and earn the skills and build the networks necessary for long-term recovery."

- Michael Botticelli, Director, National Drug Control Policy

MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT

FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER, MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT (MAT) is a highly effective tool that can make recovery possible for some people who are in the throes of active addiction. It is one part of a "whole patient" approach to substance use disorder treatment when used in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies.



In 2024, the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission recommended awarding \$3.9 million to The Extension, one of the state's largest awards for implementation of Medication Assisted Treatment to those who will benefit. The program will offer injections of Naltrexone (Vivitrol) or Buprenorphine (Sublocade) to residents who are deemed appropriate for treatment by our team of clinical and medical staff.

In addition to decreasing withdrawal symptoms and reducing cravings, medications have been shown to:

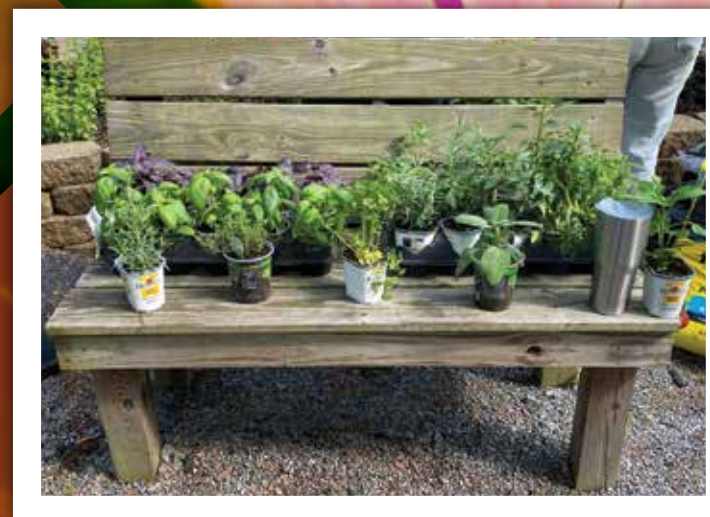
- Improve survival
- Increase retention in treatment
- Decrease illicit opioid use
- Decrease hepatitis & HIV
- Decrease criminal behavior associated with drug use
- Decrease relapses
- Improve social functioning
- Increase employment
- Improve birth outcomes
- Improve overall health

Addiction treatment fails 100% of the time when the person is dead. As long as they are breathing there is hope - and there's a chance. For some, Medication Assisted Treatment can offer that chance.

Thank you Keller Williams

FOR PLANTING HERBS AND FLOWERS IN OUR WOMEN'S CAMPUS GARDEN!

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LOOKING FOR WAYS YOUR COMPANY CAN GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY?

Contact mallorymason@theextension.org to explore volunteer opportunities!



the
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The solution for homelessness & addiction

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We Levelled Up!

The Extension was just awarded the Georgia Department of Community Health's Level 3.5 Certification and renewed Accreditation by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities!

What does that mean for you? It shows you our dedication to continually striving to provide the highest standard of care to those we serve. Recognition from these bodies means that we meet comprehensive international standards while focused on local community impact.



**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

