

PURPOSE

REAL LIFE STORIES



OVERCOME ADDICTIONS
JOURNEYS OF RECOVERY
HEALING WRITING, ONE STORY AT A TIME



256 Buena Vista St. STE 100
Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 274-2000

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Stories have always been how we make sense of the world. Across generations, they preserve memory, carry wisdom, and give voice to experiences that might otherwise be forgotten.

In this edition, we have chosen the letter as our central form—a genre that has shaped human connection for centuries. Since ancient times, letters have preserved history, shared knowledge, and allowed voices to travel across distance and time. They honor the stories they carry and give each word the power to endure.

Through these narratives, human connection comes alive. Stories shape understanding, offer guidance, and create space for healing. They invite us to listen, to reflect, and to find courage in the journeys of others, even in a world filled with distraction and the constant hum of technology.

At the center of this edition are **five powerful new stories from our clients**. Their voices are the true heart of this work, each offering insight, resilience, and transformation. These contributions remind us that lived experience carries strength, wisdom, and the capacity to inspire others.

This magazine continues a journey that began with our first edition, which shared the Cherokee story of the two wolves—a timeless reflection on the choices we carry within ourselves. In this second edition, we embrace a new theme: **the winter we carry and the promise of spring**, inspired by the ancient **Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone**. From the coldest seasons, renewal and growth emerge, just as resilience can arise from life's most difficult moments.

In a world where voices can easily be lost amid constant movement and change, these stories matter. Like our ancestors who once gathered around fires to share wisdom, we must continue to preserve and honor these voices.

By reading, reflecting on, and sharing these letters, we keep them alive—and with them, the hope, courage, and humanity they carry.

BY
Violet Lozano

A LOVETT STORY:

RECOVERY, HOPE, AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Nevada County, CA

A powerful new chapter in local addiction recovery has officially begun:

Lovett House Recovery Center is now open and providing critical, around-the-clock care to individuals facing substance use challenges.

Operated by **Common Goals**, a trusted behavioral health organization serving Nevada County since 2005, **Lovett House** is already making a meaningful impact—offering compassionate, structured, and comprehensive treatment in a home-like environment designed to promote long-term recovery.

A Full-Service Residential Program Supporting Lasting Recovery

Lovett House provides 27 residential beds, including 6 specifically designated for detoxification services, offering fully equipped living spaces for both men and women in separate areas.

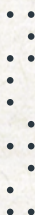
The facility's common spaces promote a sense of community and connection through shared group activities, meals, and peer support.

With most clients covered under Medi-Cal, the program ensures accessible, high-quality care for some of the community's most vulnerable individuals.

Care That Never Stops: 24/7 Services Now Available

The program is fully staffed by a dedicated team of experienced and compassionate professionals, offering 24/7 supervision, counseling, and support.

The clinical team is trained to address the complex needs of individuals coping with addiction, co-occurring mental health conditions, trauma histories, and social reintegration challenges.



Core services currently being provided include:

- Individual and group counseling
- Daily wellness and exercise activities
- Life skills training
- Trauma-informed care and mental health support
- Relapse prevention education
- Medical coordination
- Onsite mental health services
- This holistic client centered treatment approach helps residents not only achieve sobriety but build the emotional and practical foundation for long-term success.

A Lifeline for Individuals and Families

With Lovett House now open and fully operational, Nevada County gains a much-needed, stable, and supportive space for those impacted by substance use disorder.

“This isn’t just a program—it’s a lifeline,” said a representative from Common Goals. **“We’ve already seen how access to safe, structured care can transform lives. Lovett House provides exactly that, right here in our community.”**

May this place continue to be a reminder that recovery is possible, that community matters, and that new beginnings can happen anywhere — even in the quiet corners of Nevada County, where hope has found a place to live.



“WHAT DYING

TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIVING”

Facing death, fighting addiction. By J.M

Beloved Death,

I always knew you were there—lingering quietly in the background of my life. But it wasn't until alcohol became my first addiction that you and I truly met, on my sixteenth birthday. After that night, we crossed paths again and again over the next seven years. Each time, I dismissed you. I convinced myself I didn't have a problem—I just liked to drink until the pain in my soul finally went numb.

At twenty-three, doctors sat me down and warned me there would be no next time if I overdose again. My organs were failing. My heart was weakening. I didn't want to die, yet addiction had already begun tightening its grip. I quit drinking, only to replace it two years later with meth. That's when my slow suicide picked up the speed of a Kentucky Derby racehorse.

Over the next decade, I carved years off my life in my rush to reach you. Snorting turned into smoking; smoking turned into shooting up. I withdrew from my family, isolated myself from the friendships I had built, and abandoned the dreams of success and stability I once held. You came closer each time I slipped further away from myself.

At thirty-one, I learned I had cancer. I barely made it through. At thirty-three, I survived a heart attack. Once again, doctors told me the truth: the damage I had done to my body was catching up, and at any moment, I could meet you for good. But something changed during those encounters with you.





From all that pain, I learned a **deeper form of empathy**—one carved out of my own suffering. It taught me to recognize the wounds in others because I had lived those wounds myself. It wasn't gentle; it was raw and honest, and it reshaped the way I saw the world and my place in it.

And alongside that, I learned **acceptance**—a quiet understanding that everything ends someday, and that each moment is either a gift or a weight depending on how I choose to carry it.

I didn't know much about life, but I knew death intimately. I never wanted you, but addiction kept pulling me toward you, deeper into a place where the end feels both endless and final.

Two more years passed before my battle shifted.

At thirty-five, I made a choice: I wanted to live. I wanted to discover love, purpose, and the life I had almost thrown away.

**Now, with
143 days clean,**

I hold on to life with the same force I once held onto death. I'm learning that goodness can't always be explained—it's something you live through this hard-earned empathy, followed by acceptance, and through a growing gratitude for borrowed time.

For years, I chased you without realizing it. But now, after standing so close to your threshold, I have no desire to rush toward you anymore. I don't know when our final meeting will come, but I will not walk willingly into your arms again.

**UNTIL THAT DAY—
WHENEVER IT ARRIVES—
I WILL CONTINUE CHOOSING LIFE.**

RISING ^{ABOVE THE} VOICES

ADDICTION, MENTAL HEALTH

A Journey Through Addiction By R.A.T.

Dear Me ... at my worst

I know you hurt. Your stressed, overwhelmed by the mess and circumstances you were left in. You feel utterly alone.

I know inside you feel more than a bit crazy and you feel there's no way out, but please don't think there's no way left. While you sit alone stuck in your head writing nonsense on paper, the voices run rampant.

You still can't describe them, thinking one more hit can cure it. Meth won't help you. Your already so fragile. You don't even realize the time flying past or the days you have been like this and the world, your world misses you. You lost everything you love and there is no way to keep yourself sane as you find a way to cope. You lost yourself right along with everything else you love.

Barely holding on, losing the grips of reality, and everytime reality sets in all you can think about is everything you lost. Your words jumbled by voice and everything you write on paper is barely legible, much less understandable.

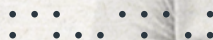
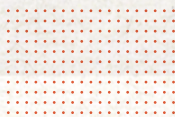
What are you even doing?

You lost all hope and you have nothing to remind you of what was good in your life, except memories and the good ones tear you up worse than the bad ones.

I'd like to tell you that the voices are all in your head and one more hit won't help you like you think it will. But you don't hear me anymore and even im sitting on the sidelines watching as you take one more hit.

I wish you could hear me, but the voices won't quit and all you can think about is your kids.

**Love,
the you that you lost.**



Eventhough I didn't know it at the time I was
dealing with schizophrenia on top of addiction,
A dual edged sword.

I was in pure crisis and could barely
distinguish the world around me.
Stuck in my own false reality,
barely forming

words and i thought the illusions in my head were very real.

Stuck in that cycle for 3 long years. In the end
I got help, because I couldn't sit in the mess
I had made of my life any longer.

That was eight months ago.

**Today I am a changed person because
I got the help I so desperately wished
for during those 3 long years,**

Eventhough my life is still far from perfect.

Its still hard at times to keep my head
on straight. If it weren't for the crisis team,
id still be sitting there lost in my own head
writing nonsense on paper, hating every
second I was lost there.



REDEMPTION IN THE RUINS

BY S.L

A JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL AND COMMUNITY

TO OUR COMMUNITY,

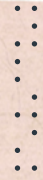
"O Great Spirit, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen." Saint Francis of Assisi prayer

On December 7, 2020, my life took an unexpected but deeply positive turn. For many, this date is remembered solemnly as Pearl Harbor Day—somber, heavy, filled with grief. But for me, it marks the beginning of my journey into sobriety. I am profoundly grateful for this milestone and the new path it opened. It was a true rebirth, lifting me out of the harsh reality I faced on the streets of Grass Valley and Auburn, California.

This date holds a sacred place in my heart because it symbolizes the strength, guidance, and unwavering support that carried me toward a brighter, more hopeful future. This achievement would not have been possible without the people who stood beside me, believing in my ability to change when I struggled to believe it myself. Their encouragement fueled my determination and helped me strive toward a healthier, more fulfilling life. Their support remains vital as I continue walking this path with renewed purpose and optimism.

What ultimately lifted me from the streets was a profound spiritual awakening. Even in the midst of pain, I discovered a deep love for my own life. Though I have changed—and will continue to change—my sorrows have softened, my wounds have begun to heal, and the scars no longer define me.





My addiction touched nearly every substance under the sun and moon. I lost myself in the streets of Nevada and Placer counties for nearly five years, carrying anger, fear, and resentment rooted in childhood. In that world, I became a victim of rape and harmful encounters. Bound tightly to drugs, I fought for my life daily—not only physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I was found near death three separate times. And yet, by God’s grace, I am still here.

I endured the elements—cold, heat, wind, rain, and snow—depending on substances simply to survive. Every day was a fight.

**Today, with 4 years, 10 months,
and 31 days of sobriety,**

I stand in a place I once believed impossible. My path has not been free of trials. I continue to face hardships and inner battles that I do not always understand. One of the most painful challenges has been rebuilding trust with my mother, who lived through everything I put her—and my family—through. Time helps, but not all fires in a tribe extinguish quickly.

One of the greatest hardships I faced in sobriety was the passing of my grandmother—my rock, my hero. I walked through her loss sober, grieving without fully understanding the depth of it, guided only by a Greater Spirit whose power carried me through.

In recovery, we often hear the three outcomes of addiction: jails, institutions, or death. For me, the first became the turning point. On September 29, 2020, I was arrested for burglary, resulting in a felony—a shadow that still follows me today.

It remains a battle I continue to fight.

I would not have made it this far without the agencies of Nevada and Placer counties. They equipped me with spiritual tools to navigate both the good and difficult days, and their support played a fundamental role in reshaping my life.

To my loving, resourceful, and extraordinary community: without you, I would not be the spiritual human being I am today. I now carry hope, grace, and a deep love for others and for the place I call home. I have goals I never imagined reaching—goals I’m actively bringing to life because of the day my world shifted forever.

To anyone reading this: support does exist. I am living proof that help is real, that recovery is possible, and that transformation can rise from even the darkest places.

Today, I honor my support team and the incredible dedication they poured into my healing.

**THANK YOU,
NEVADA AND PLACER COUNTIES
—YOU SAVED MY LIFE.**

Commons Resource Center : 530-265-1627

Common Purpose : 530) 274-2000

Placer County Behavioral Health Services : (888) 886-5401

THE BODY THAT SAVED ME

A STORY OF GENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND TRANSFORMATION

BY P.M

To My Body,

To this physical body of mine that's been carrying me through this life.

Life full of pain and suffering.

I've been running away from you since I can remember.

To painful to be with you. Hunted by all the demons.

Blood, death, starvation and rape.

Bombs dropping from the sky and the smell of human flesh burning in the fire.

Madness, terror, rotting corpses, men slaughtering children.

Steel.

Cold, sharp steel in my belly-
Cutting the life out of me.

It's all in my blood - pain, fear, anger, hatred and frustration. Passed down to me by my ancestors. My grandmothers lived and suffer through both, 1st and 2nd World War. The war is over but emotional and mental impact carries on. The trauma, still- so alive in my body today, always running in the background - affecting my whole life.

I DIDN'T WANT TO FEEL.

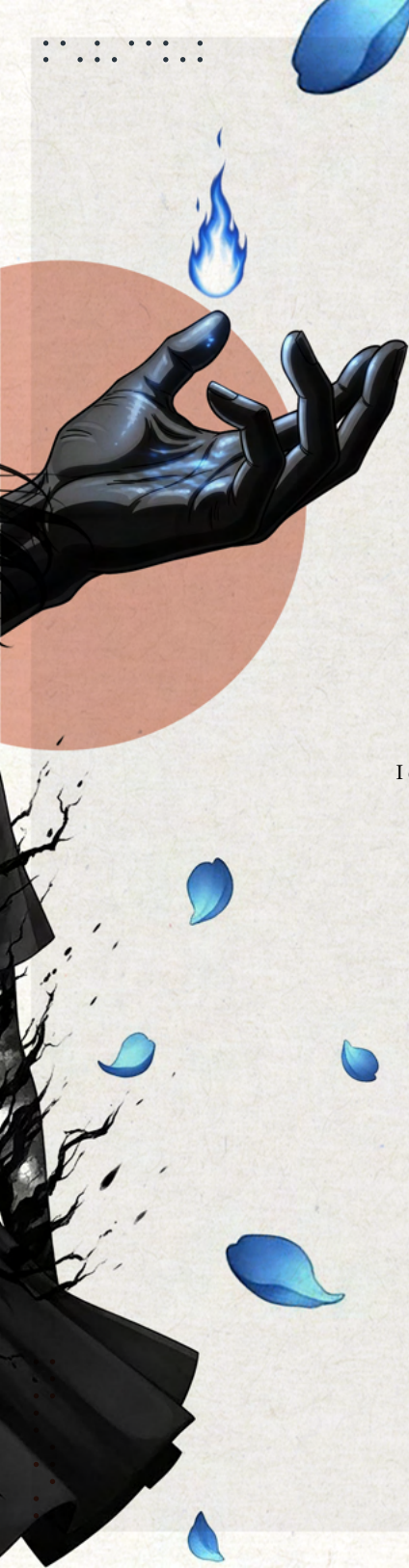
I DIDN'T WANT TO REMEMBER.

SO I KEPT RUNNING AWAY.

I left my friends, my family, I left my country. I flew across the Ocean, moved to a different continent and living life of an immigrant I kept searching for answers -Still I couldn't find peace.

Trying to distract myself I started drinking, alcohol seemed like a good idea at the time.





Spiraling down- poisoning my mind and my body,
I was trying to drown the pain- instead I almost
drown myself in legal problems.
I was lost then, forgetting who I was and where I came
from.
-A divine being from out of space having a human
experience of healing generational traumas.



Today, at 120 days sober
and I'm back stronger than ever.

I don't run away anymore from the darkness
that was trying to swallow me up.
I picked up the sword -this is my life.
Standing on the battlefield covered in blood,
dirt and tears.
My wounds are deep -they show my story.
They made me into who I am.

Crawling from the abyss I slaughtered all the demons.

A child died. A Warrior was born.

I watched my own death then I gave birth to myself.

My strength, magic and wisdom are in my blood.

I can soften up now. Present, grounded and centered I'm finally
connected to my body.

Listening with my whole being. I feel the pain
- that's where the healing begins.

I will pray, I will grieve, I will cry. And like an alchemist
I'll keep transforming it into strength, wisdom and intuition.

And I will never run again.
Stay pure. Stay humble.
Sacred feminine, Warrior of the light.
You carry great power within you.

Use it. And use it for good.
The sobriety was just a beginning to get in touch
with my body, to start feeling again.

Therapy is the key here, it helps me to dive back into the past,
revisiting old memories, shedding layers of old conditioning,
reprogramming my mind, shattering all the lies.

**The journey isn't easy.
But it's so worth it.**

Community Beyond Violence: (530) 272-3467

Sierra Family Therapy Grass Valley: (530) 913-5054

The VILLAINS *confession*

BY C.C

"HOW A PRINCESS BECAME A HERO" THE FALL OF OPIATES

To the Good Subjects of the Kingdom,

I will be blunt: nobody who is reading this, the confession of I, the great and terrifying villain Opiates; none of you are going to like me. Take care not to shake my hand, not cheer me on, and take this tale as fair warning should we ever meet.

In telling this I only wish to offer explanation, perhaps atonement.

It is true I held your Princess captive for most of her life; yes, it is true that I imprisoned her and took possession of her body, only allowing her to briefly experience happiness - a single burst of laughter, a flash of joy, a fleeting moment of satisfaction - mere glimpses of what a normal life would be.

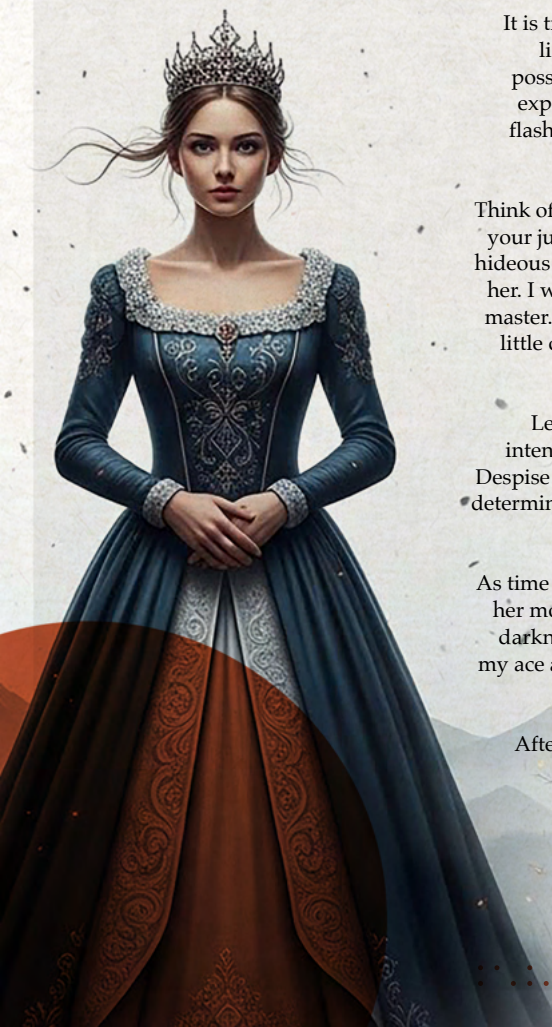
Think of me what you will, but I encourage you to stay your judgement of her actions; every foul deed, every hideous lie, every heart she broke - none of it was truly her. I was behind it all. She was the puppet, and I, her master. I made the decisions. I was in control. She had little choice, however I always kept hope - in secret - that she would rise up and make one.

Let me assure you, good citizens, despite my evil intent, I do always hope that good will compensate. Despise me all you wish, but beneath my cruelty, I was determined to strengthen your Princess in ways not yet revealed.

As time tallied on, I waited patiently, chipping away at her morals, her values, her self-worth, keeping her in darkness, working every angle until at least I played my ace and took from her the only thing she ever truly loved: her child.

After sending the boy away, then finally there took place what I had been awaiting: your Princess changed, transforming into

**the Hero she is today,
some 7 months
past our final battle.**



You don't have to like me in order to trust when I say that what happened next is my favorite part of my job: when the Hero finally triumphs.

When I am defeated, once and for all. Because most of those whom I encounter do not defeat me but the other way around; I destroy those

I touch, and many of them I kill.

But as your Princess Hero drove her dagger into my venomous heart, whispering "No more," in my ear, believe that I went down smiling.

Smiling for knowing that in my doom, others would find hope. You may not like me, but I do feel, and in my last moments, I felt hope.

Hope that others like her who feel small and alone and trapped might hear this tale of your Princess Hero and find comfort.

Comfort in knowing that even the most vicious and ruinous enemy can be overcome. And find courage, that in knowing that your Princess Hero did not ever give up, so neither should you.

**SINCERELY, YOUR
EVIL ADVERSARY,
OPIATES**

Opioid Prevention: FREE Naloxone/Narcan FREE fentanyl
testing strips 530-265-1450

PERSEPHONE & DEMETER

THE PROMISE OF SPRING

A Tale of Winter and Spring

Long ago, in the days of ancient Greece, people told stories to make sense of the world—the changing seasons, the hardships of life, and the hope that always follows. One such story is of **Demeter**, goddess of the harvest, and her beloved daughter, **Persephone**.

Persephone was bright and curious, full of life and laughter. One day, she was taken to the underworld, a dark and lonely place where the sun rarely shone. Demeter's heart ached with grief. She wandered the earth, and as her sorrow grew, the land grew cold and barren. The trees shed their leaves, flowers faded, and **winter was born**. For a time, nothing grew, and the world felt still and heavy.

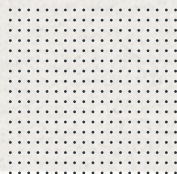




But the story did not end there. Because of the love between mother and daughter, Persephone returned from the underworld, bringing with her the first soft rays of warmth. The snow melted, buds appeared on the trees, and **spring came again**. Life returned to the fields, and the earth blossomed with color and light.

This story reminds us that, like Persephone's journey, recovery has its seasons. There are winters—times of struggle, sorrow, or pause—but spring always follows. Healing, hope, and new growth return, gently and surely,

**reminding us that no
darkness lasts forever.**





FINAL THOUGHTS

In this second edition, we gathered in a small room with big feelings & let words do what they do best; open doors. Five writers, five journeys, five hearts brave enough to put their vulnerable & raw stories on paper. What you'll read here grew from a simple idea; letters.

Letters to the past, to the future, to the addiction itself, to the pain we've endured, to the people we love & the people we're still learning to be.

That seed was planted by a letter I had shared; one written years ago by my son's father, who lost his life to overdose. It was a raw & honest message meant for our infant baby, full of hope & humanity & what he/we went through daily while we fought to regain custody back.

Sharing it with our clients sparked something powerful: the realization that letters let us speak from our deepest places... the places where grief, hope, tragedy & love all become a means to express, connect, inspire & communicate in the most profound & beautiful way.

Recovery has always lived in that same in-between space — between who we were & who we're becoming, between the dark nights & the mornings that through our perseverance & determination still arrive. This edition is built around the idea of two sides: hot & cold, shadow & sun, fear & courage.

Because every person who walks through our doors carries both. Every single one of them teaches us that healing isn't about choosing one side over the other; it's about learning to hold them together & embracing our dark along with our light-without breaking.

Our clients remind us daily what resilience really looks like. It's messy, stubborn, tender work. It's showing up even when the world feels tilted & unsteady. It's writing a letter to yourself & deciding, maybe for the first time, that you're worth the ink.

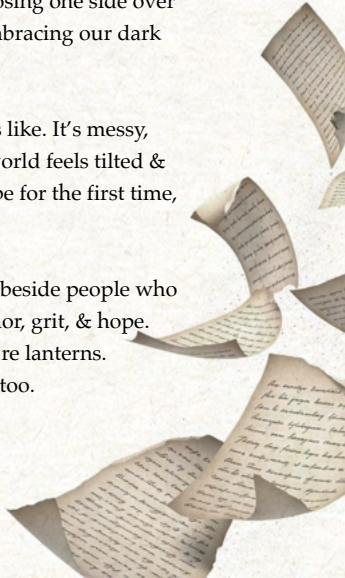
We are honored, truly...to witness these journeys. To walk beside people who are rebuilding their lives from truth, vulnerability, humor, grit, & hope.

Their words in these pages aren't just stories; they're lanterns.

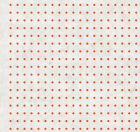
May something in them spark light in you too.

BY

Alix Andersen



REFERRALS



RECOVERY

- **Common Purpose/
Common Goals Inc.**

(530) 274-2000
256 Buena Vista St. STE 100
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Nevada County Behavioral Health**

(530) 2651437
500 Crown Point Cir, Grass Valley, CA
95945

- **Aegis Methadone Clinic**

(530) 280-0553
109 Margaret Ln,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Pathways-Addiction
Treatment**

Center (Yuba City)
(530) 674-4530

- **Buddy's Ranch (Yuba City)**

(530) 684-4015
737 Lask Dr,
Yuba City, CA 95991

- **Yuba Harm Reduction Collective**

(530) 362-8163
<https://yubaharmreduction.com/>
-Outreach
-Supplies
-Sharps collection
-Low barrier MAT services
-Delivery of fentanyl test strips
& Narcan

- **Faith Fueled Recovery**

(530) 368-4169
1864 Ridge Rd.
Grass Valley, CA 95949

- **Spirit House Peer
Empowerment Center**

(530) 274-1431
276 Gates Pl,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Project H.E.A.R.T**

(530) 446-6025
522 Brunswick Rd.
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Narcotic's Anonymous**

(530) 645-1635
<https://www.sfana.org/meeting>

- **Alcoholics Anonymous**

(530) 272-6287
<https://dist20aa.org/>

- **Turning Point
Community Programs**

(530) 273-5440
333 Crown Point Cir #125,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Truckee Adult
& Children's Services**

(530) 582-7803
10075 Levon Avenue,
Suite 204 Truckee, CA 96161

- **Community Connection Center
- Grass Valley School District**

530-273-9528 x 4081
235 S Auburn St.
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Bright Futures for Youth**

(530) 265-4311
200 Litton Dr suite 308,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **211 Connecting Point**

(530) 280-0553
109 Margaret Ln,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

- **Crisis Services**

*24-hour services to help
resolve crisis situations
1-888-801-1437 or (530) 265-5811

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

<https://988lifeline.org/>



256 Buena Vista St. STE 100
Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 274-2000

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT **THE COMMON GOALS TEAM.**

John C. Duff, SUDCC-III | Executive Program Director (530) 263-1398

johnduff@commongoalsinc.org

Gwen Festersen | Executive Administrative Director (530) 263-6929

gwen.f@commongoalsinc.org

Christine Findley, CADPT | Lovett Program Director (530) 263-7568

chris.f@commongoalsinc.org

Misty Navo, SUDCC | Outpatient Program Director (530) 263-8621

misty.n@commongoalsinc.org

**Kasha Kiley, CADTP | SUD Counselor |
Recovery Residence Director (530) 575-2655**

kasha.k@commongoalsinc.org

Daniel Peters, CATC-II | QA Director | SUD Counselor (530) 575-1850

daniel.p@commongoalsinc.org

**Violet Lozano, SUD Counselor Intern
Editor-in-Chief — Purpose Magazine (530) 648-4460**

violet.l@commongoalsinc.org

**Alix Andersen SUD Counselor Intern at Lovett House
Contributing Writer (530) 648-4199**

alix.a@commongoalsinc.org

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for their professionalism, dedication, and support.**



To visit the Common Goals website
and view the magazine online,
scan this QR code.





"WINTER WHISPERS: PAUSE, HEAL, GROW"

SECOND EDITION
12.21.25