



For monthly client updates, head over to www.damien.org.

NEW SUPPORT GROUPS LAUNCHING

Starting on April 13th, Damien will start offering a **Transgender and Non-Binary Support Group**. The group will meet every other Tuesday from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, starting April 13th. It is an open support group for Trans and Non-Binary individuals. The group will be co-led by two group facilitators, Erica Cox and Cosmo Xavier, and will create a safe space for trans and non-binary folks to come receive encouragement and talk about real life situations to increase resilience and

strengths. Clients who are interested in joining the group can sign up at the front desk with the receptionist or send an e-mail to Erica (ecox@damien.org) or Cosmo (cxavier@damien.org).

Along with the Trans and Non-Binary Support group, we will be launching a Damien's **Women Support Group** in May. The Women's Support Group will be a space where women who engage with the Damien Center can come to talk about everyday struggles and have a safe space to open up about what is happening in their lives. The group will meet bi-monthly to start out with, but the dates, days, and times are still to be determined. If

you are interested in getting updates about the Women's Support Group, please send an e-mail to Annie Nelson (anelson@damien.org).

Additionally, we will launch the **Pregnant and Parenting Support Group** on May 3, 2021. It is an open group for all pregnant and parenting individuals to create a safe space to come and receive encouragement and talk about daily life. The group will be hosted by Jaime Reynolds. If you are interested, you can sign up at the front desk or send an e-mail to Jaime Reynolds (jreynolds@damien.org).

Damien Center is here when you need us—but we're also committed to continuing services in the safest way possible, with social distancing, staff health precautions, and plenty of hand sanitizer!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Damien Center is looking forward to 2021, and not simply for the new year that it represents for all of us. It has also brought a satellite location, Damien Center @ CAFE, offering free HIV and STD testing, case management, and prevention services.

Throughout the pandemic, we've prioritized safe and secure housing, critical care services, and tele-health options. The new Damien Pharmacy offers same-day, affordable medication. And now clients can also access harm reduction services, youth peer support and housing, and employment or back-to-work programs to find good work quickly.

Your safety is important to us. Damien Center is here when you need us—but we're also committed to continuing services in the safest way possible, with social distancing, staff health precautions, and plenty of hand sanitizer! We ask that you help keep this community safe by following safety protocol while you're in the building, and please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY - STARTING APRIL 2021

Starting on April 1, 2021, the Damien Center team will begin implementing and enforcing the new Disruptive Behavior Policy. The policy exists to protect both the clients and staff of the Damien Center.

If you have questions or to review the full Disruptive Behavior Policy, please see your Case Manager or ask anyone on your care team or more information.



DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?

Disruptive behavior is any inappropriate behavior that interferes with the functioning and flow of work within Damien Center. Any behavior that impedes a provider or staff's ability to provide care, obstructs communication, threatens the well-being of themselves or others, or causes damage to organizational property qualifies as disruptive.

EXAMPLES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:

- Verbal threats
- Direct or implied derogatory and/or threatening statements
- Physical acts of violence or aggression including intimidation, harassment and/or coercion
- Emotional abuse
- Suggestive comments, offensive gestures or inappropriate sexual behavior
- Throwing objects, tampering with and/or destruction of property
- Theft
- Interference with staff and/or provider's ability to administer care
- Possession of weapons on the premises
- Possession, distribution and/or use of alcohol or illegal substances while on the premises

Failure to follow the above guidelines can result in disciplinary action or removal from the premises. For a more detailed version of the Disruptive Behavior Policy, please see the Front Desk Receptionist.



Over the past year, Damien Center has seen quite a few new faces added to the staff. The housing department has grown their team to better help serve our community. **Karsyn Mohler** is one of those new members and Damien is so glad to have him as a part of the team. He is a hardworking staff member who always goes above and beyond for his clients and fellow Damien staff members. If there is something that needs to be done, he will jump right to it to help in any way he can. See below to learn more about Karsyn and his role at the Damien Center.

Before joining our team, what did you do?

Prior to working at Damien, I had spent the last 8 years working with adults and children with cognitive variances and abilities in various roles. Most recently before Damien, I worked as a behavior specialist in a group setting for almost 4 years. I definitely have a special place in my heart for those with special needs.

What do you like to do in your spare time outside of work?

Outside of Damien, I have a niece and nephew who keep me busy. I enjoy hiking and cycling, and I love cooking for my friends and family. I also pick up a lot of spare jobs on the weekend to help make ends meet. Most recently I demoed a house for a couple looking to remodel. We tore all the carpet out, busted out a wall, painted the ceilings and walls, removed all cabinets and shelving, etc. I'm always for hire!

What is your department and your role at Damien?

I am your resident Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Case Manager.

What are the main functions of your role?

A lot of my job consists with working with clients and landlords to ensure my clients can remain housed. I do a lot of preventive work to avoid evictions and problem solve when issues arise. I help clients walk through the lease process, stay on top of maintenance concerns, and assist with any other things that might help their housing experience be a better one. I'm also always on the lookout for donated furniture and household items to help clients feel more at home in their space. While we can help get people into housing, many times those individuals are moving in with nothing and starting from scratch.

What do you love most about your job at Damien?

I love that there are real concrete and tangible goals I can help clients meet. Nobody should have to sleep on the street in America, and I'm grateful to be a part of a team that is working tremendously hard to help end homelessness in Marion County. I also love working in an environment that is forward-thinking and truly trying to better itself to feel more inclusive for everyone, clients and staff alike. For the first time in a long time, I truly feel appreciated in my role.



What have you learned since being in this position/what do you hope to learn?

I have learned so much since starting in August. Prior to this position, I had not worked in housing. While I understand some of the ins and outs due to my history working in group homes, this was a whole new ball game. Thankfully, the housing team rocks and has been so supportive in my transition here and have helped me grow so much. I hope to continue growing my knowledge base so that I can hopefully do a better job with each new day. There is so much to learn to better myself and be a better case manager.

If you came back in another life, what object, person, or animal would you be and why?

If I could come back in another life, I think I might choose to be reincarnated as my dog, Elmo. His life is truly golden. He sleeps all day, eats when he wants, and gets all the love a pup could ask for. Everyone that meets him falls in love; therefore, he is extremely spoiled. Most importantly his life is stress-free. One can only imagine what that's like.

Through Karsyn's time here, he has done so much to help clients and move Damien Center towards its overall goal. The Damien Center is lucky to have him as a part of the team. ***Thank you, Karsyn, for all your hard work and for what you do!***





DAMIEN PHARMACY

DAMIEN PHARMACY - NOW OPEN!

For over three decades, Damien Center has stood as One Home for HIV Wellness in our community. Our innovative one-stop shop approach has brought vital services under one roof for our clients. Our goal is to empower our clients by breaking down barriers to accessing quality care and providing the necessary tools for our community to thrive. We are so excited to announce that on March 1, 2021, the Damien Center officially opened it's own pharmacy – **Damien Pharmacy**. Now, all Damien Center clients and Damien Cares patients can access the pharmacy for all their prescriptions – and all under one roof.

Having our own pharmacy allows us to keep prescription costs low, reduce barriers for accessing life-saving medications, provide additional benefits to our clients, and expand services to our community.



Benefits to YOU:

- Some over-the-counter medications can be provided FREE.
- Prescriptions can be filled online and through the app, RX LOCAL.
- Prescriptions can be delivered right to your door.
- Low out of pocket cost for medications that aren't covered by insurance.
- Copay assistance is available for those who qualify.
- We accept most major insurance plans including HIP and Marketplace options.

Offering our clients equitable, quality care is at the heart of our decision to open Damien Pharmacy. Your health and wellness are our highest priority. We hope that by using Damien Pharmacy, you are empowered to put your best foot forward.

Please contact your Case Manager, Provider or call **317-981-1989** for information on how you can access the pharmacy.



TRANS AND NON-BINARY SUPPORT GROUP STARTS APRIL 13!

The Trans and Non-Binary Support Group will begin on April 13th! It is an open support group for Trans and Non-Binary individuals. The group will be co-led by two group facilitators, Erica Cox and Cosmo Xavier, and will create a safe space for Trans and Non-binary folks to come receive encouragement and talk about real life situations to increase resilience and strengths. The group is created to help reduce isolation and create a sense of belonging. The group will begin on **April 13th from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM** and will be held every other Tuesday. Sign up for the group at the front desk or e-mailing Cosmo (cxavier@damien.org) or Erica (ecox@damien.org) directly.

The concept of U=U is the foundation of being able to end the epidemic.

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, NIAID, NIH Interview at International AIDS Conference (July, 2019)

UNDETECTABLE EQUALS UNTRANSMITTABLE

WRITTEN BY TODD FUQUA, CLIENT ADVISORY CHAIR

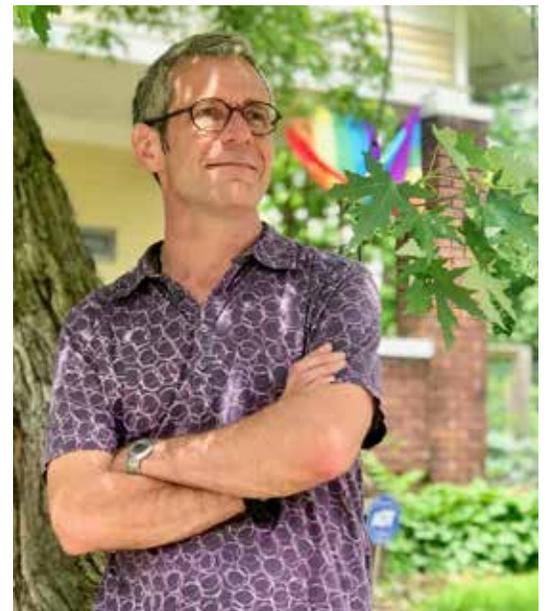
The current COVID pandemic has thrust the public into better understanding viruses, viral transmissions, and terms like “flattening the curve.” It’s also got people more comfortable or familiar talking about how to reduce the risk of transmission, the importance of testing and knowing your status. And some people have experienced stigma related to getting or spreading COVID, or more likely wearing or not wearing a mask.

Those of us living with HIV know all of this already. We live with it every day.

That’s why I think NOW is the best time to be talking about U=U. It’s a game changer for ending the HIV epidemic – but one that isn’t being talked about enough in Indiana. I think that needs to change. Our health and the health of our community depends on it.

It is a scientific fact that a person living with HIV who is on treatment and has an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV through sex. **Full stop, end of story. U=U:** With an Undetectable viral load, HIV is Untransmittable to sexual partners. For more information, check out www.uequalsu.org or www.untransmittable.org

This is HUGE. Why? Because it gives us freedom and hope. It frees us from the shame and fear of sexual transmission to our partners. It gives us hope of dismantling the HIV stigma that has plagued us since the



beginning of this epidemic. It gives us better health because the virus is less able to attack our immune system cells, which means that there will be less damage to our immune system.

I also believe U=U is the most effective way to prevent HIV transmission. Yes, I'm glad there is PrEP and PEP as additional tools in the fight to end the HIV epidemic. They are especially important as they give HIV- individuals choices about their health. But let's be clear – if all people living with HIV were able to get into & stay in care, PrEP and PEP would not be required!

I know the world isn't that simple. And it's important to know that people living with HIV are more than just our lab results, and value isn't dictated by viral load. No one living with HIV is a danger. I also know that ultimately, we need and deserve a cure. But, as people living with HIV, I want us to realize what a powerful message U=U is for us. The science backs us up. The time for excuses is over.

For answers to any questions, I'd encourage you to check out the FAQs at www.preventionaccess.org/faq. I also welcome conversation about U=U because I'm super passionate about it. Feel free to email me your questions or comments at ctfuqua@damien.org or find me on social media. I have this email as a volunteer and client because I also chair the Client Advisory Board. We meet the last Thursday of the month at 3:00 pm via Zoom. All clients are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you're interested in learning more about the CAB, please contact myself or Annie Nelson at anelson@damien.org.



NEW PROGRAM: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

With the launch of this program, clients will feel empowered to access the resources they need to gain steady employment. This program consists of workshops, referrals to employment opportunities, open computer time for job searching (coming soon), assistance with applications, and more.

Each month, we'll hold **workshops** to empower clients by giving them the tools to succeed in the workforce. Damien Center's Employment Services Program will be providing **direct referrals** to job opportunities for our clients. With this opportunity, we hope to eliminate barriers that clients see when seeking out employment. Positions will vary but will be updated regularly.

We want to empower our clients to feel professional and confident when they walk into an interview, so coming up, we will be providing direct referrals to Dress for Success and Success Wear. Both are non-profit organizations who provide people with free professional attire and workshops. Learn more online: www.damien.org/services/employment

WE NEED YOUR VOICE

The Client Advisory Board (CAB) will start meeting regularly on the fourth Thursday of every month at 3:00 PM. For the time being, Client Advisory Board will be meeting virtually on Zoom. The board meetings are open to clients of the Damien Center (a client is any person who is accessing or has ever accessed a direct service of the Damien Center). The meetings will be a place to discuss current policies and services in place at Damien Center as well as bring up concerns or ideas to help create a safe space for all Damien clients. Participants in the CAB will receive a gift card! If you are interested in being a part of the Client Advisory Board, please reach out to Annie (anelson@damien.org).



BUILDING A FUTURE RETURNS TO DAMIEN CENTER IN APRIL 2021

Building a Future will be coming back to Damien Center in April 2021. Classes will be offered virtually and in-person (depending on current state regulations). Building a Future will have classes that explore financial literacy, emotional and mental health, and lifestyle. These classes will be offered to all those who utilize Damien services. Building a Future is a space where clients can get together and discuss how to practically maneuver around everyday issues that come up. Full classes will be posted on the Damien Center website for clients to access if they are unable to attend the originally scheduled session.

To view upcoming classes or to learn more, visit us online at: damien.org/services/building-a-future



Trans and Non-Binary Support Group

Starting April 13, 2021

Meets every other Tuesday from 6p - 7:30p

Damien Center Board Room

Facilitators: *Erica Cox, MSW (she/her) & Cosmo Xavier (she/her)*



**DAMIEN
CENTER**

*Have feedback about the client newsletter?
Email us directly at damien@damien.org or
join the Client Advisory Board to make your
voice heard!*

*For monthly client updates or to sign-up to
receive Damien Center emails, visit us online!*

www.damien.org