

PRESS RELEASE



Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020
From: rfaylor@fletchergroup.org 208-713-4002
Subject: Donation of iPads to Recovery Kentucky recovery centers

iPad Donation Allows Recovery To Continue Despite Physical Distancing

OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY — Physical distancing can be especially hard on those recovering from drug addiction. Now, thanks to a donation of 28 iPads arranged by the Fletcher Group, residents of 14 Recovery Kentucky facilities can communicate online, virtually face-to-face, with family members, healthcare providers, sponsors, online educators, and potential employers.

“It’s more than we could have hoped for,” says Anita Prater, Director of the Brighton Recovery Center in Florence. “Residents can now continue their 12-Step work without interruption and also enjoy valuable face-time with their families. Both would now be impossible without the iPads.”

Fletcher Group Criminal Justice Specialist John Rees turned to familiar faces to fund the donation. Aramark Correctional Services and OmniProphis have long served the Kentucky Department of Corrections, Aramark by providing food services and OmniProphis by providing online training and cell phone security.

Rees worked closely with Aramark and OmniProphis as Kentucky’s Commissioner of Corrections under then-governor Ernie Fletcher when he and Fletcher worked together to launch the Recovery Kentucky program. Years later, in 2017, the nonprofit Fletcher Group was established to extend the Recovery Kentucky model nationwide.

“Most tasks involved in recovery are traditionally done in person,” says Sarah Atkins, who serves as both Director of the Owensboro Regional Recovery Center and Program Specialist for the Fletcher Group. “The 12- Step program in particular relies on working very closely with others. That kind of thing would normally stop at a time like this when visitors are barred from entering our buildings. But with the iPads our clients can continue their Recovery program without any real interruption.”

“We have clients using the iPads to talk with their families via Zoom,” says Mathew Wise, Director of The Healing Place in Campbellsville, “and using them to do their 12-Step work as well.”

“The iPads also help protect the mental health of our clients and their families,” says Melissa Estep, Program Director at Sky Hope Recovery Center in Somerset. “With visitations on hold, you worry about the emotions that come with isolation—irritability, discontent, restlessness. But the iPads help reduce that anxiety. And seeing someone face-to-face is powerful. You get a stronger sense of togetherness, that we’re in this together and that we’ll get through it and be okay.”

Estep’s observation is confirmed by an Owensboro resident who’s already using the iPads: “My recovery through the 12-Step program would be on hold right now because I wouldn’t be able to talk face-to-face with my sponsor. But now I can. I can also connect to online AA meetings, see people from outside Owensboro and hear what they’re going through. It’s not in person, but seeing the other person’s reactions really makes a difference.”

Atkins foresees other benefits down the road, particularly for TeleHealth. “The iPads will allow clients to continue their regular, non-emergency medical appointments without having to expose themselves to the virus.”

“Absolutely!” says Prater. “We’re already working to set up TeleHealth functionality.”

“There are a multitude of ways we can use them,” says Estep. “People can work towards their GEDs, get skills training, and search for jobs and other resources they’ll need as they approach the end of their program. We might even use Skype and Zoom to report to probation and parole officers, conduct Child Protective Services meetings, and maybe even appear in court.”

Atkins is appreciative of Aramark Correctional Services, OmniProphis, and the Fletcher Group. “We’re grateful for this chance to better serve our clients and continue meeting their needs during this challenging time.”

“We couldn’t be more grateful,” says Estep. “Besides all the other great things the iPads do, they send the message that our clients matter and that people they’ve never even met are pulling for them!”

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