

Peace Zone, located at 410 Mulberry St in Evansville, was founded in 2012 by Beth Barchet and Rick Paul of Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. with the vision of empowering those living with mental health issues through a welcoming peer-run recovery center that is open to the public. In addition to mental health, Peace Zone also offers services to those with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues. After receiving a grant from the state of Indiana (through the Division of Mental Health and Addiction), Peace Zone first opened its doors on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013, as the first in the state to be associated with a mental health center. With over 1200 visits in its first four months of operation, Peace Zone was a success! As a peer-run organization, meaning that individuals in recovery are active in running the organization, the Peer Advisory Council helps provide direction and leadership for the day-to-day operations and the Board of Directors provides financial and strategic oversight to keep procedures running smoothly. Although each individual person's story and recovery process is unique, members can find comfort in knowing that they are not traveling the road alone and that recovery is possible for everyone. Peace Zone offers community education and outreach, daily support groups, Wellness Recovery Action Planning courses (WRAP), arts empowerment with a weekly Art Buddies group, and peer mentoring. Certified Recovery Specialist and Peer Wellness Outreach Coordinator, Michelle Krack, makes weekly visits to Southwestern Behavioral's Stepping Stone, Deaconess CrossPointe, St. Vincent, the mental health court program, and the Evansville State Hospital to tell her inspiring recovery story and provide information about Peace Zone to the public. Certified Recovery Specialists, including Lisa Cheatem, facilitate routine conversations and guidance to peers in need of recovery support. According to Program Coordinator and Office Manager, Evan Plock, the ever-present goal of Peace Zone is to help individuals achieve their full potential in their recovery journey, to provide a welcoming sense of community, to inspire members to participate in recovery programs, and to educate the public and decrease the stigma surrounding mental health issues. Peace Zone is open Tuesdays noon-4 PM, Wednesdays & Thursdays 9 AM-4PM, and Fridays 9 AM-2 PM. Monetary donations are accepted via PayPal/mail and clothing/toiletry donations can be brought to Peace Zone, as staff are preparing care packages for those in need during the holidays.