



# Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

## December 2023

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### THE NEW SCHN ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION IS ASHLEY McCUTCHEON

Ashley McCutcheon (she/her) has been selected to be the new SCHN Associate Director of Administration, as announced by CHN Chief Strategy Officer Mike Mansheim earlier this month. Her first day on the job was Dec. 11.

“Ashley’s keen ability to communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders, which is essential for this role, was a key factor in the hiring decision,” said Mansheim. “Her fluency in English and Spanish will also be an asset to CHN.”

Ashley previously served as the Communications and Operations Manager for the south-central Colorado Mobile Vaccination Unit (MVU), growing her skills and experience in responding to public health challenges, ensuring equitable access to care, and organizing and operating successful events. She also has work experience as an Academic Disability Advisor and Peer Support Leader.



Ashley’s academic background includes a Master of Arts in English, First Class, from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. She also completed an Advanced Intensive Spanish Course in Madrid, Spain.

“Though I’ve always been passionate about health and well-being, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that pushed me to pursue public health as a career,” said Ashley. “My work in Colorado spans strategic healthcare coordination, community collaboration, and employee management. I’m so happy to be joining CHN and I look forward to being a part of this exceptional team.”

### MYRA McCOY PROMOTED TO SCHN CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER



Myra McCoy was recently promoted to Client Services Manager for the SCHN offices. She has been part of the Case Management team at SCHN since March of 2021, first as a Case Manager followed by the advancement to Lead Case Manager.

“Her professional experience and skills will undoubtedly bring additional layers of support to the SCHN case management team,” said Tracie Smith, CHN Director of Client Services. “We look forward to watching Myra and the SCHN case management team shine on in 2024 and beyond.”

Myra has a degree as a Deaf Support Specialist and is bilingual (Spanish/English). This opened many opportunities for her, but she always remained steadfast regarding helping people. This new role will certainly allow Myra to continue to do so.

## COLORADO SPRINGS HEY719 & ACCESS POINT UPDATES

- Andrea, who was recently promoted to Lead Prevention Services Coordinator for SCHN Colorado Springs (see page 3), organized an outreach testing event at the Butler Center for antiracism, diversity, equity & inclusion at Colorado College. We catered this event to queer BIPOC students and hope to offer more regular, targeted testing in the future. Ten students were tested for HIV and other STIs. We also held a testing event at Inside Out Youth Services on 11/30 and tested four young people.
- Manuel finished his phlebotomy training with 10 successful, supervised blood draws on clients. This is no small task! Well done!
- We completed interviews to fill our open Prevention Services Coordinator position and offered the role to Parker Wild (they/them). Parker has experience with harm reduction through mutual aid programming locally. Parker started on 12/11.
- Melissa was invited to sit on a panel on the fentanyl epidemic by El Pomar's Forum for Civic Advancement along with Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez, CSPD Chief Adrian Vasquez, DA Michael Allen, and others. The panel was moderated by Dr. Leon Kelly, the El Paso County Coroner. The event took place on 11/14. It was a rare opportunity to provide insight into what is happening on the ground in terms of overdose reversals and participant experiences.
- Nora onboarded two new SAP volunteers, including Leah, an employee at UCCS, and Izabella. Leah has been joining us on Wednesdays for mobile SAP at Westside Cares, and Izabella has been assisting on Tuesday evenings at Diversus Health.
- We registered 114 new participants at Access Point. We had two reactive HIV confirmatory tests from Hey719.

## PUEBLO HEALTH HUB UPDATE

Health Hub saw 27 clients in November. Services provided included : medication assisted treatment; MRSA referrals; X-rays; high blood pressure medication; abscesses; mental health; law enforcement assisted diversion; and HCV linkage-to-care.

Denver Health provides telehealth HCV treatment. Right now, this is limited to Pueblo clients. Linkage-to-care has been rather complicated. We have one client with medication and one client working through insurance issues.

Client success story: Jereme and Sarah met an individual during outreach who started coming to our brick-and-mortar location. They came on a Tuesday when we had a SCFM resident present. The individual met with the SCFM resident and on a single day received 1) a blood pressure check and a written prescription; 2) inhaler prescribed; 3) blood work ordered for general labs; 4) STI test on-site. This individual has followed up multiple times and expressed feeling much better.

The SCHN Pueblo office resource fair on Nov. 8 provided haircuts, clothing, food, testing, referrals, etc. Hey Denver supported with phlebotomy training the day before and testing support at the event.

## LEAD PREVENTION SERVICES COORDINATOR POSITION GOES TO ANDREA ROOT

## Positive Press

Colorado Springs SCHN Prevention Services Manager Melissa Chizmar recently announced that Andrea Root has been promoted to Lead Prevention Services Coordinator.

Andrea has been with SCHN Prevention in Colorado Springs since January of 2022. During this time frame, she has facilitated the growth of HEY719, Love Alive and Access Point Colorado Springs through events and outreach such as the HoliGAY Art Market and International Overdose Day.

“Andrea is a natural leader and tester extraordinaire and we can’t wait to see what she will accomplish and learn in this new role,” said Chizmar.



## PARKER WILD JOINS THE SCHN COLORADO SPRINGS PREVENTION TEAM



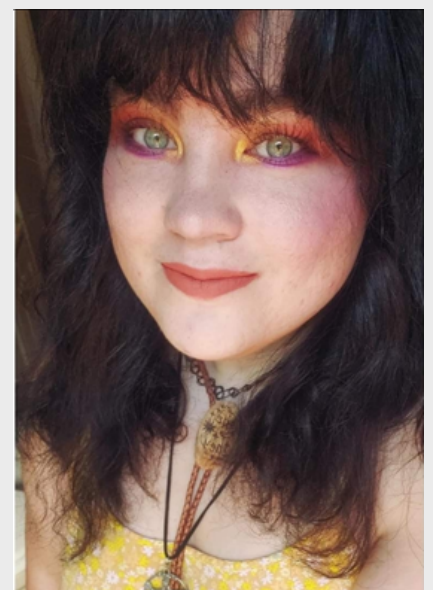
Hello! My name is Parker and my pronouns are they/them. I joined HEY719 (and SCHN Colorado Springs Prevention) because I am passionate about reproductive health and access to needles and naloxone. In my free time I enjoy making art, particularly Stained Glass.

## SPRINGS SCHN OFFICE HAS A NEW PROGRAM ASSISTANT: KARA ZEHNER

My name is Kara Zehner (she/they). I am from Colorado Springs and after high school, I moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, where I went to CSU for English Education. I was a teacher for a year in Fort Collins until I became a cook assistant in the dining halls, as well as a Programming Manager and a radio DJ at the radio station KCSU. After college, I began working at a local nursing home as a cook assistant in their kitchen.

I moved back to Colorado Springs from Fort Collins in 2019 to live with my partner and to be closer to family. I continued to work in a nursing home kitchen at Life Care Center of Colorado Springs until I began working here for SCHN. I am so excited to be here! I love new experiences and I am so excited for this opportunity.

I love volunteering outside of work. I also love to bake and cook, so be prepared for baked goods! I also read tarot, make crafts for fun, and painting is one of my favorite hobbies. I enjoy taking care of my many plants as well as the animals in my household (four cats/one dog).





# TOOLS AND TIPS TO COMBAT HOLIDAY & WINTER BLUES AND BLAHS

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**It's that time of year again!** The season we hope is filled with tasty food, fun activities, and quality time with friends and family. However, the holidays can also bring focus to stressors such as financial burdens, health concerns, and lack of free time. If you are looking for some tools to help you combat the holiday and winter blues and blahs, here they are!

- **Take Care of Yourself:** Be mindful about your personal needs. They matter! In this time of togetherness, it is easy to get caught up in other's needs and space. During this time, it is helpful to ask ourselves questions about our overall functioning. Are you paying attention to how you feel when you eat? Are you sleeping enough? These are just a few foundational needs we have to address during this busy time. Also, are you attending to your creative, spiritual, and emotional needs?
- **Set Boundaries:** Boundaries are important, especially during the holiday season. Boundaries allow you to have autonomy over your space and understand and communicate your limits and expectations.
- **Get Sunlight:** The winter months bring the cold weather and less sunlight. If you are able to, make sure you get some sunlight during the day, even it is by your favorite window or a short visit outside. If you experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or if you are concerned about increased depression during this time, check in with your medical provider.
- **Move Your Body:** Physical activity is helpful to produce endorphins and improve sleep. Strive to do physical activity at least a few days a week, even if you start with just 10 minutes. Focus on your emotions and your body sensations during physical activity.
- **Limit Alcohol Intake:** Keep in mind that alcohol is classified as a depressant and affects the nervous system, so drinking while already feeling down can worsen that feeling.
- **Get and Give Support:** Reach out to your social network if you are feeling isolated. Plan ahead to meet with your loved ones. Create a fun new tradition with friends and/or family that highlights themes of the season. If you feel you need extra support, reach out to a professional to discuss your needs. If your cup is filled this season, think about reaching out and lending a hand to others through volunteer service or through donations.

### FLEXIBLE PAYMENT PLANS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES AND PIKES PEAK UNITED WAY'S 211

If you are having difficulty paying your utilities bill, Colorado Springs Utilities flexible payment plans and assistance programs may be able to help. You may also qualify for federally funded programs.

Options include: --**Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)** is a federally funded program that helps with home heating and water costs from Nov. 1 – April 30. --Project COPE offers emergency utilities payment assistance regardless of income. Funded by our community, Project COPE is the only local organization that donates 100% of its funding to utilities payment assistance year-round. --**Home Efficiency Assistance Program (HEAP)** offers energy and water efficiency improvements for qualifying homeowners.

Visit [csu.org](http://csu.org) or call 719-448-4800 to learn more details. Also, Pikes Peak United Way's 211 (just dial 211 on your phone) provides referrals to partner agencies and individuals for utilities bill assistance and other essential services.

### Access Point Pueblo

Free, sterile supplies available for those who need them.

Tuesday & Thursday,  
10:00am-12:00pm  
1:30pm-4:00pm



### Sign Up for Our E-Newsletter!

Are you interested in receiving the Positive Press through e-mail? If so, please contact your Case Manager to be added to our e-mail list! You'll get the newest Positive Press at the moment its published!



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