

CREATING PATHWAYS TO
EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT,
AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE



NEW LEAF
JUSTICE ENTERPRISES



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MEET THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JEN SEIFERT

Executive Director

"Everyone in our society is socialized to believe that some groups of people are superior to others. All violence, including sexual violence, is about power and control, and that's the tool that's used to reinforce these unequal hierarchies."

Many believe that our social systems, such as education, criminal justice, economic, and government, are broken. But it doesn't take long for one living and working in Appalachian Ohio to realize our social systems are, in fact, working exactly how and for whom they are designed- and, for the most part, those people aren't us. I've spent the past ten years of my career being wholly consumed and, frankly, overwhelmed by the task of ending gender-based violence in Appalachia. I couldn't imagine this task being more difficult. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the early days of the pandemic, while our team bore witness to the necessary pandemic response amplifying centuries-old disparities in wealth, health, and technology, I would often asked myself what should arise out of the ashes of 2020. As days turned into months, the answer became clear. We deserve a new beginning that uses wealth, health, and technology as medicine to heal the generations of trauma enacted on our people and the precious lands we call home.

And so, forged in the fire of 2020, New Leaf Justice Enterprise was born. We invite you to join us in this new future for Appalachia and see what's possible when our neighbors are afforded the chance to use their hard-earned grit and resilience to not just survive- but to thrive.

A handwritten signature of Jennifer Seifert in black ink.

Jennifer Seifert, Ph.D.(she/her/hers) is the Executive Director of the Survivor Advocacy Outreach Program (SAOP) and New Leaf Justice Enterprises. Jennifer's personal activism and professional work have centered on making the systems and institutions that we interact with every day fair and just for us all, but particularly those within marginalized communities. She was born and raised in Fairfield County, Ohio, and obtained her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies from Ohio University-Lancaster. She went on to earn a Master of Arts in Communication Studies and Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from West Virginia University and a doctorate in Communication Studies from Ohio University specializing in persuasion and sexuality studies.

SURVIVOR ADVOCACY OUTREACH PROGRAM



The Survivor Advocacy Outreach Program (SAOP) was founded as a program of the Ohio University Women’s Center in August 2013 to serve survivors in both Meigs and Perry counties. In December 2013, Athens County was added to SAOP’s service area, and in October 2015, SAOP expanded service to Gallia, Hocking, Morgan, and Vinton counties. Seeing the additional need in the region, SAOP added Jackson and Lawrence to their service area in 2021.

In October 2016, SAOP transitioned from Ohio University and became a program of the Edna Brooks Foundation, Inc. while working toward obtaining independent tax-exempt status (which was awarded in April 2017). On December 1, 2016, SAOP staff opened the main office location at 77 E. State St. in Athens. It remained in that space until the organization decided to relocate from Athens proper to a community more reflective of SAOP’s service area.

In February 2020, SAOP purchased and restored a building at 55 W Washington St. in Nelsonville and moved its main office there in May 2021. Since then, SAOP has opened branch office locations in five of the nine counties served and launched New Leaf Justice Enterprises - a long-term holistic primary and secondary prevention program for individuals/families impacted by trauma and substance misuse.



NEW LEAF JUSTICE ENTERPRISE

The City of Nelsonville is simultaneously a place of great abundance and enormous scarcity. While the metaphorical cup of this community overflows in natural beauty and rich Appalachian culture, residents in this community experience higher than statewide rates of poverty, multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACE), unemployment, and substance/opiate use disorder. In 2019, Athens county, due to shifting economic and social dynamics, was at risk of being economically distressed. The pandemic has amplified these conditions, and as of 2021, Athens County is now considered economically distressed. These communities continue to be ravaged by sexual/relational trauma, substance/opiate use disorder (S/OD), and incarceration - experiences that are mutually reinforcing and lock the community into a spiral of social and economic decline, perpetuate cycles of generational trauma/ACEs, and limit folks' social mobility. Survivors of trauma, S/OD, incarceration, and the other folks that call these communities home deserve a fresh start, to break free of these cycles, and to turn over a new leaf.

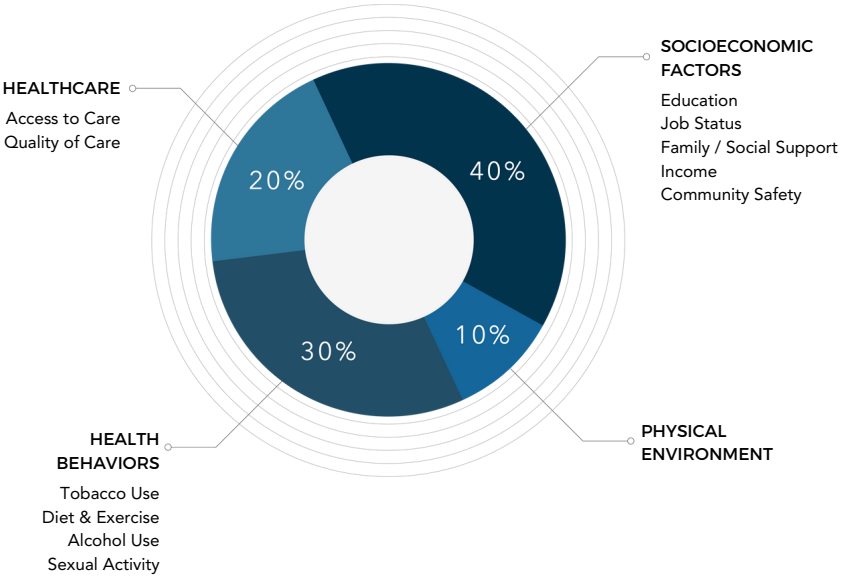
Projects such as New Leaf are essential because at the most fundamental level, the residents of Athens County experience significant barriers to living healthy lives that are free from violence. Although individual-level characteristics do reliably predict health outcomes and the likelihood of experiencing abuse, a growing literature is beginning to highlight the increased importance of addressing social and economic factors to reduce health disparities and trauma. In the health services field, these factors are described as social determinants of health and in the violence prevention field, these features are risk and protective factors.

Social determinants of health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Social determinants of health have a major impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life. They also contribute to wide health disparities and inequities.

Rural Appalachian residents experience a trifecta of disadvantages among social determinants of health, risk factors, and protective factors (i.e., access to affordable/safe housing, living wage employment, educational attainment, etc.). That is, most residents have limited access to almost every social determinant of health and experience higher than state-wide averages of risk factors and lower than state-wide averages of protective factors for sexual violence, domestic violence, trauma, and substance misuse.

By providing and expanding housing, creating living wage employment/job training, and providing mobile strengths-based supportive services, the project will be taking steps toward health equity, preventing violence before it ever occurs, and building resilience such that if someone does experience trauma, struggle with addiction, or experience incarceration, there is a coordinated community response to support that individual.

50% of social determinants of health can be traced back to your zip code.
 Only 20% include those moments in a healthcare environment.



New Leaf Justice Enterprise is more than a marketplace. New Leaf is a fresh start for survivors of trauma, substance misuse, and incarceration in Southeast Ohio.

At New Leaf, we understand that experiencing trauma and substance misuse uproots survivors from their community and support networks. New Leaf works to reestablish these connections so that those survivors can thrive and break the reinforcing cycle of trauma by providing individuals and their families with:



Free housing for up to two years



Wrap-around supportive services



Employment & workforce development training

"There are no words that can express just how grateful I am for the program at New Leaf. It is no exaggeration when I say the folks and this program have saved me. I have only been here a few weeks, but where I once was hopeless and saw darkness, I now have hope and light."

"I am so grateful for the program at New Leaf. It has given me hope for the future. I came here from a situation that had me very scared and hopeless. I feel safe here, I am smiling again, and I am excited for the future."

HOUSING

Participants of the New Leaf program and their families have access to free housing that includes paid internet and utilities for up to two years. New Leaf housing units are private, individual units that come fully furnished. Each unit is located within a 10-minute walk to New Leaf Marketplace, the case management office, and the childcare facility.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Case Management

Upon joining the program, each participant will complete an Individual Service Plan (ISP) with their Case Manager. This plan will be utilized throughout their participation in the program. Participants are expected to attend Quarterly Meetings with the New Leaf support team to assess milestones and achievements regarding personal growth goals; educational needs and career goals; physical and emotional health; problems and concerns of daily living; and accessing outside resources and other issues of concern to the participant.

If a participant has substance use disorder (SUD), an ISP will also include a Relapse Prevention Plan. Relapse Prevention Plans are individualized to a participant's substance of choice, history of addiction and trauma, triggers, and current factors.

Childcare

New Leaf offers free childcare to each participant. Guided by the understanding that the children of program participants are survivors too, New Leaf childcare services are provided by a licensed professional through a trauma-informed lens.

Transportation

New Leaf staff provide transportation to community providers for medical, dental, addiction recovery, and mental health treatment, as well as for appointments and errands to meet participants' daily needs.

Financial Wellness

Participants in the program are enrolled in a 6-month financial wellness and literacy course where they reflect on their relationship to financial security, access their credit reports, develop a budget, and create savings goals. Participants are expected to save a minimum of \$1,500 upon completion of the program.

EMPLOYMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

During their time in the New Leaf program, many participants will work at New Leaf Marketplace - the living wage, supported employment site on the Historic Public Square in Nelsonville, Ohio - to hone their soft and customer service skills while selling locally made food, coffee, and art.



Two months after joining the New Leaf program, participants begin the workforce development training program, which consists of four components:

- 1. SELF-DISCOVERY**
The training program begins with facilitated activities for participants to reflect on their interests, beliefs, values, and communication styles in the workplace.
- 2. APTITUDE ASSESSMENT**
Participants take the Future Plans career assessment that helps determine their interests and aptitudes, then pairs them with in-demand, living wage careers.
- 3. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION**
Once a participant has determined their long-term career goal, they receive individual coaching and support to identify and complete educational requirements.
- 4. NETWORKING**
Through a process of resume building, motivational interviews, job shadowing, and internships, participants are coached through building their network and connecting with future employers.

NEW LEAF ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

- Applicants must be a survivor of trauma, substance use, or incarceration.
- Applicants must be referred by an agency partner who understands their responsibilities to screen cases and honor confidentiality guidelines.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years of age (applicants with minor children are welcome).
- Applicants must be willing to commit to an intensive, two-year program that involves supportive services, employment, and or education.
- Applicants who are in substance use recovery will be expected to participate in recovery services.
- Applicants must be willing to abstain from any substance use on New Leaf premises.

We are unable to accept applicants who:

- Are on the sex offender registry.
- Are a threat to themselves or others.
- Are under imminent threat from others.
- Are unable to manage self-care.

The following rules are non-negotiable and may result in discharge:

- No use of violence or threats of violence towards anyone.
- Racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination will not be tolerated.
- No use of illegal drugs or alcohol or sharing or selling prescribed medication on New Leaf premises.
- No allowing guests into New Leaf housing.
- No breaking another participant's confidentiality.
- No smoking inside any New Leaf property.

How to submit a referral:

Contact René Redd (she/her) at rene@saopseoh.org or (740) 331-9171 to request a New Leaf Referral Form.

New Leaf is building a sustainable future for Appalachian families using technology, home ownership, and living wage careers

NEW LEAF MARKETPLACE ATHENS & GLOUSTER

New Leaf project activities are currently focused in the Nelsonville community but will be expanded to Athens and Glouster communities within the next two years. Although activities are focused in Athens County, participants will be recruited from SAOP's entire service area.

3D PRINTING



Housing is a core social determinant of health, and is beyond the reach of some families due to the pandemic. The skyrocketing costs of homes, combined with high-interest rates in addition to an existing housing shortage means that families are falling further and further behind. Our project will address part of the problem by building homes for low-income families and creating additional workforce development opportunities for clients and local students interested in learning how to 3D print homes.

REMOTE WORK HUBS

A job and workforce training center that includes a virtual/remote work hub are essential for employing people in need of employment and workforce development opportunities. Companies created remote opportunities as a result of the pandemic, but unfortunately, many local families cannot take advantage of them due to a lack of broadband and access to childcare. We have identified and are currently renovating our first remote work hub in Glouster.



CURRENT MOU & PROJECT PARTNERS





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DONATE
from your
smartphone

When you donate to New Leaf you are helping our community thrive and break the cycles of trauma, poverty, and community decline. When communities have individuals who are thriving socially and economically, it prevents violence, prevents substance misuse, and creates a safer community for us all!



@NEWLEAFMARKETPLACENELSONVILLE