



# 24/7 Newsletter

The number of hours we spend making Houston better

DECEMBER 2023



*Dear Friends,*

*In 2023, Houston Recovery Center celebrated its 10-year anniversary. This journey has been a richly rewarding experience for the City of Houston, the HRC Board, staff, our community partners, and the many citizens we've had the privilege to serve. We close this year filled with gratitude for what we've been able to accomplish.*

*As pleased as we are with the success we've accomplished, we are not done. Now that we have a solid foundation for providing exceptional services for active users of harmful substances, we are ready to scale up our service model by expanding our community partner network that serves as early points of intervention. Providers that are uniquely positioned to come in contact with active harmful substance users will benefit from having greater access to a reliable referral source and will be equally pleased to have another referral source for this costly underserved segment of our community.*

*We are excited about this new year and the opportunities it brings to increase the number of individuals who, through HRC, find and sustain a path to recovery. We ask that you wish us well and that you support substance use addiction treatment and recovery.*

*Leonard Kincaid, CEO*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

**You can review our 10-year Impact Report at the following link**

<https://houstonrecoverycenter.org/2023-impact-report>

**and you can support our work via this link**

<https://houstonrecoverycenter.networkforgood.com/projects/171723-hrc-donations>

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## Celebrating at the Houston Recovery Center's Christmas Luncheon.



It's party time again. Good food of course followed by some tough competition in the Christmas hat and sweater contests and many laughs during the "build a snowman" contest.





**Houston Recovery Center Fundraising Page is still open.  
Everyone can still support HRC's Running Team.**

Support HRC's efforts to put an end to spending the night in jail for public intoxication and instead, help the people that are brought to our center where they safely sober up, and avoid an arrest charge and all the negative consequences that result. We connect them to services that can offer long-term recovery and stick with them for as long as they want us. Some have stayed in contact for years. Their participation is voluntary.

You can still support HRC and our marathon runners at: <https://donate.hakuapp.com>

## **The Marathon Weekend, Starts This Friday Everyone Come Out and Cheer On the HRC Running Team.**

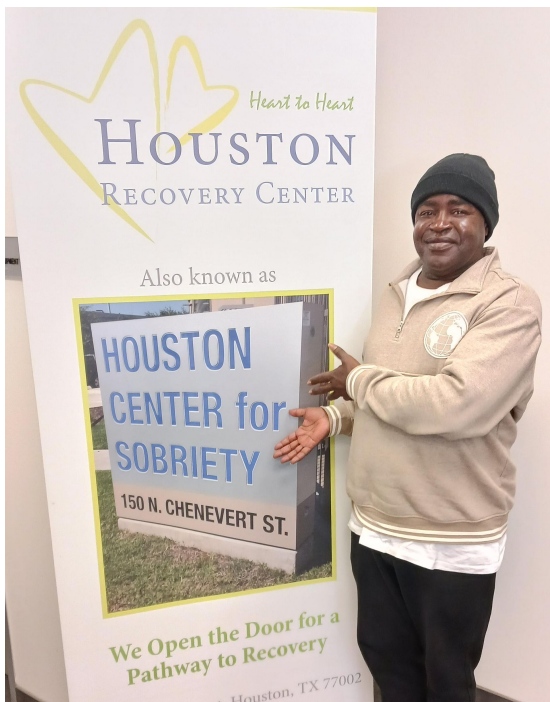
Come visit our Hoopla Station at mile 6.5 and cheer on the runners. Then of course see the HRC booth at the **Charity & Running Club Village** at Discovery Green after the marathon. Join us:

- Starting Friday with the **Health & Fitness EXPO & the Party on the Plaza.**
- Then Saturday, with the **We Are Houston 5K & RunFest.**
- And finally, the big race on Sunday, with the **Chevron Houston Marathon & Aramco Houston Half Marathon.** Starting at Congress & Fannin, 6:50 a.m. Marathon & Half Marathon Wheelchair Start, 7:01 a.m. Marathon & Half Marathon Start.

Followed by **RunFest presented by Michelob Ultra**  
**Charity & Running Club Village** at Discovery Green, Jones Lawn  
5:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Check out the entire schedule and times at <https://www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com/race-weekend/schedule/>

## **SUCCESS STORIES**



**Bufus Fletcher**



**Ricky Shoemaker**



Bufus has been in recovery for one year. He had been a substance user for more than 30 years. Over the years he has tried to quit many times. His life before finally getting successfully into recovery was terrible. Typically, life on the street, homeless, lying, and stealing. At one point while high, he broke into a bank when it was closed just for a place to stay. He has been in prison twice and served seven years for assaulting a police officer. When his mother died in the 1990s he was sent to live with other family members. It was at this time that his sister introduced him to crack cocaine. Coming to Houston from Fort Worth he came to Houston Recovery Center and met Eric Richardson, a case manager at HRC. Eric helped him get into a recovery program.

Bufus now has a job, his own apartment and he is saving money. Coming to Houston and meeting Eric and the whole staff at Houston Recovery Center changed his life. "They were all so very nice and supportive. His advice to others, talk to people like the people at Houston Recovery Center, who have been there and will tell you the truth.

**If you don't want to die search your heart, let God into your life, and take his help.**

Ricky has only been in recovery now for six months. After years of substance use and many failed tries to get clean he feels like he will be finally going to succeed. He started drinking when he was 15. Shortly after that, he began using methamphetamine. His whole family were gang members and into drugs. At 17 he got married and tried to settle down, but his drug use continued. He was working at a chicken plant and cooking meth at 17 and started doing crack with my wife. He was divorced at 22.

He decided to leave Mississippi where he was born and raised, and come to Houston to start a new life. After sleeping on a sidewalk, he came to the Sobering Center at the Houston Recovery Center. "I was there for four days and met Eric Richardson. Eric and the entire staff at HRC were great. He really cared about me and cared about all their clients. I still see Eric every week, working with clients." Today, Ricky has put his old life behind. He has a good job doing "intake" at Open Door Mission, hearing the stories of others' lives like his and learning from them. "To others struggling with addiction, use my life as an example of success. You can recover."

**I read the bible, "giving it up to God" and pray – meditate on a new life.**

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## IN THE NEWS

### AI helps clamp down on fentanyl

Axios AI+

December 07, 2023, edited by Meg Morrone

The days of drug-sniffing dogs aren't over — but now Customs and Border Protection (CPB) agents are using AI to track down the precursor chemicals used in fentanyl production in Mexico to help stop the drug from being created. More than 70,000 Americans died of synthetic opioid overdoses in 2021, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Finished fentanyl is so small and disguisable that enforcement is close to impossible using traditional methods. With the addition of AI systems, agents can see deeper into fentanyl supply chains, leading to bigger seizures of both finished fentanyl and the chemicals used to make it.

Having access to AI with multilingual capabilities is another critical advantage as the number of countries in fentanyl supply chains grows. CBP has concluded two successful operations: one that seized 13,000 pounds of fentanyl precursor chemicals and another that netted 10,000 pounds of fentanyl and 284 arrests.

Secretary Alexander Mayorkas told Axios in November that CBP is also using AI to detect unusual travel patterns of vehicles crossing the border – identifying 75 kilograms (165 pounds) of narcotics in a single instance recently. "AI has changed the game. It can make faster analysis than humans could make alone — spotting changes in trade patterns and participating parties," Ana Hinojosa, a former CBP executive director who is now president of ABH Consulting, tells Axios. "Traditional drug trafficking strategies have not worked for fentanyl," Hinojosa says. "The players are more organized. The precursor chemicals are not in and of themselves illegal."

Read the entire story at: [https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-ai-plus-1f179b16-3b27-4697-898d-0feecdec2dfe.html?chunk=0&utm\\_campaign=axios\\_app#story0](https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-ai-plus-1f179b16-3b27-4697-898d-0feecdec2dfe.html?chunk=0&utm_campaign=axios_app#story0)

## Non-Alcohol Beverage Program and Costs of Increased Marijuana Consumption to Bars

By Travis E. Poling  
TBNA-Newsletter---May-2023

A flood of stories hits magazines, online publications and television news at the beginning of every year talking about low calorie drinks or cutting out alcohol altogether as a trend. The so-called "Dry January" phenomenon is a real thing usually invoked in response to excesses of food, drink and general merriment from Halloween through New Year's Eve. Whatever the reason, like most resolutions, the abstinence from alcohol, carbs or calories usually are abandoned before the demand for alternatives can really reach the level of a true trend for all seasons.



In the last year or two, however, it looks as if some actual trends are emerging in non-alcoholic, low-alcohol or healthier alcoholic drinks. But the evidence is inconsistent and will vary between regions, cities and demographics. Another wrinkle is the choice of inebriant as THC products become more prevalent even in states where recreational cannabis isn't legal. Does marijuana use reduce spending on alcohol? So far, the answer seems to be anecdotal for and against that premise. Canadian voters legalized cannabis and beer sales in the country dropped off 6.8% in March 2019, the biggest one-month hit on beer sales in the two previous years.



"In Colorado, one of the first states to legalize marijuana for recreational use, beer sales have hardly shown any signs of being in jeopardy," Adams writes. "The state broke a beer sales record at the beginning of 2019, according to Colorado Public Radio. "Meanwhile, the Colorado cannabis industry recently broke a sales record of its own in March 2019. Adams writes. "In other words, beer and weed are living together harmoniously." However, anecdotally, cannabis products are also a threat to spending by bar and club goers. "I have called and asked many bar owners and bartenders about this topic over the past few months. The only consistent feedback I get is that the growth in marijuana usage does cause a certain younger demographic not to drink as much when they go out."



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Sobering & Addiction Recovery Programs

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## FORWARD TO A FRIEND

The mission of Houston Recovery Center is to provide compassionate care to underserved individuals affected by substance use through early intervention and community care coordination to help them achieve lifelong recovery.

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