

New Recovery Homes Will Help Women and Members of the LGBTQ Community Find Their Footing Again

Cailin Riley | November 26, 2024



Finding safe, stable, affordable housing on the East End of Long Island — and, increasingly, in many other parts of the country — can be an uphill battle, even for families and individuals with stable jobs and a steady income.

For those managing mental health issues and recovering from substance abuse, that climb can be even steeper.

Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital in Greenport has been doing its part to alleviate that stress and last week announced the opening of two new recovery homes, created specifically for women and members of the LGBTQ community.

The homes were established through a Suffolk County opioid grant.

Along with an already existing recovery residence for men, there is now housing available for up to 34 residents at a time. The homes not only provide safe and supportive housing for

the residents but also offer a full spectrum of support services, such as medical and mental health care, substance use counseling, and vocational guidance, all through Stony Brook Medicine's network.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at one of the new homes in Flanders, followed by a small reception, on November 20.

Elizabeth Bonner Day is a licensed social worker and the director of Quannacut Outpatient Services. She oversees the outpatient clinic and the three recovery homes for Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital.

She spoke about why the addition of the new homes is so important and how they will help members of the community who will call them home.

"For women and those identifying as women, housing options, especially on the East End of Long Island, are limited," she said. "Our hope is to allow for a person's safety and stability, so that their recovery can come first."

She added that she hopes the recovery homes can also help "break stigma by creating a place that women, and those identifying as women, can rebuild their lives."

Janet Jackowski has also been deeply involved with the effort to bring the recovery homes to the area. She is also a social worker and the vice president of behavioral health and social services for Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital, with oversight for the inpatient and outpatient Behavioral Health Services, including the recovery homes.

She shared many of the same sentiments as Day when speaking about why the homes are so important and what they will mean for many at-risk members of the local community.

"Safe, supportive housing is vital to all individuals, particularly those in early recovery," she said. "We have been a provider for recovery homes for over 20 years. Our recovery homes allow for those in recovery to live together in a communal environment, learning to support each other, while focusing on themselves.

"Women and those identifying as female face tremendous barriers in finding safe support housing," she said. "The social stigma that people in recovery face is only magnified for women and those identifying as women. We wanted to create an environment where that is not the case and the residents can feel comfortable being true to themselves."

Both women are hoping the surrounding communities can join in the effort of supporting and embracing their new neighbors.

"We hope that our new homes can be seen as a positive addition to the neighborhoods and community they are a part of," Day said. "Mental health, addiction, and physical health are all challenges a person may face, but they often carry a stigma. Our goal and hope is to break that stigma by providing and creating a home where women and those identifying as women, can find the support and resources they need."