



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RED OAK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GRAND RE-OPENING

March 11, 2025, Akron, Ohio: Red Oak Behavioral Health hosted hundreds of community leaders for the grand re-opening of its facility at 611 W. Market St., Akron, OH with a ribbon cutting and open house. The community mental health center received \$2 million in federal funds to seed these renovations as part of the FY2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill approved by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Biden. Championed by both Senator Sherrod Brown and Congressman Tim Ryan, the Red Oak project was one of only fifteen capital community projects to receive funding in Northeast Ohio. Renovations of their Highland Square facility began in September 2023 and were completed in November 2024.

The trauma-informed building was designed and co-created in partnership with Red Oak's stakeholders and consumers, and includes two outdoor butterfly sculptures designed by Kimmy Henderson (local artist and founder of the Bipolar Butterfly Project), individual and family therapy spaces, a gross motor room, a teaching kitchen, a resource room, art and activity rooms, a KultureCity certified sensory room, and a state-of-the-art Training and Development Center. Trauma-informed design principles create a foundation of safety and belonging for everyone who accesses the space, removing barriers to care and promoting inclusivity. As a result of its renovations, Red Oak's facility now meets 96% of the trauma-informed design principles. Red Oak's renovation also resulted in improved accessibility for those who are mobility challenged, expanding its usable square footage to 24,000 ft² and supporting care delivery for a projected 13,000 individuals in FY25.

Red Oak trained nearly 500 community partners in Mental Health First Aid, Question Persuade Refer (suicide prevention training) and Trauma-Informed Care in FY24. The new Training and Development Center allows the agency to expand its current training offerings, including the model in-house training program it will launch this summer for non-licensed mental health providers designed to address the realities of the mental health workforce shortage.

According to Red Oak's President & CEO, Megan Kleidon, *"This project was a true labor of love. Built on Red Oak's foundational commitment to showing up for our youth and our community, we've created a vibrant third space for kids, a refuge for our staff, and a community center where we can all connect, grow, and thrive together."* Red Oak's clinicians began serving clients in the renovated space this fall, and are already seeing its impact on the community. *"When I hear kids who are leaving the building asking when they can come back again, I know we've done something right,"* Kleidon said.

For appointments, inquiries, or assistance, Red Oak can be reached at 330-996-4600 or by visiting its website at www.redoakbh.org.

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Red Oak Behavioral Health

Red Oak Behavioral Health is an accredited non-profit organization that has served the Greater Akron community since 1963. Its mission is to deliver mental health and wellness services that empower students and those who support them.

