

Emily's Hope



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Empowering the Future: A Year of Innovation, Action, and Advocacy



STOPPING STIGMA.
SAVING LIVES.

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A Message from our Founder

2025 was a year of extraordinary growth and momentum for Emily's Hope. What began as a deeply personal mission continues to expand in ways that reflect both the scale of the crisis and the determination of the communities we serve.

Throughout the year, we strengthened our organizational capacity by welcoming new team members whose expertise and passion are accelerating our work. In May, Courtney Hardie joined Emily's Hope to lead the Emily's Hope Youth Prevention Coalition. Courtney brought both nonprofit experience and a deep commitment to mentoring young people. Under her leadership, we formed youth empowerment clubs across Sioux Falls middle and high schools and engaged parents through a fall workshop focused on the realities of today's illicit drug landscape. Her work reflects Emily's Hope's long-term investment in prevention, and we are proud to support her pursuit of certification as a prevention specialist.

In June, we expanded another cornerstone of our mission by hiring Diana Leal to lead our Post-Overdose Response Team. Diana's background in public health has been instrumental as we extended post-overdose response services into additional communities, including Codington, Yankton, Brookings, Turner, and Clay Counties. Her leadership has strengthened our peer support specialist network and deepened collaboration with state partners, positioning Emily's Hope to play a growing role in overdose response efforts across South Dakota.

Our statewide naloxone initiative also reached new levels of impact in 2025. Through partnerships with the Attorney General's Office and the Departments of Social Services and Health, we placed 28 naloxone distribution boxes across the state and distributed more than 14,000 naloxone kits in 2025. These efforts prioritized high-need and historically underserved areas, including tribal communities, reflecting our belief that access to lifesaving resources must not depend on geography.



Some of the most meaningful moments of the year came from time spent in communities across western South Dakota and on our reservations. At Pine Ridge, we opened naloxone distribution boxes and connected directly with community members. At the Sturgis Rally, we placed life-saving tools directly into the hands of those who needed them. Later in the year, I traveled to the Rosebud Reservation, where I observed our prevention curriculum in the classroom, spoke with students, and shared Emily's story. What I saw were young people who were open, receptive, and clearly in need of this education. These experiences reinforced the urgency and importance of prevention-focused work.

Prevention remains central to our mission. In 2025, our substance use prevention curriculum expanded across grades K through 8, while our high school curriculum was completed and prepared for pilot implementation in early 2026. Each classroom represents an opportunity to equip young people with knowledge that can alter the trajectory of their lives.

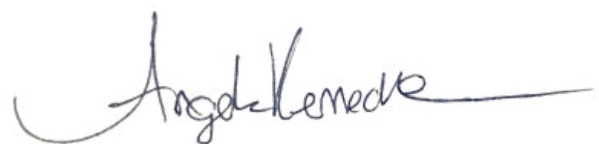
We also reached a deeply meaningful milestone this year, surpassing the \$500,000 mark for Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarships. Since the program's inception at the Avera Addiction Care Center, these scholarships have helped approximately 300 individuals access treatment and recovery support. Behind every scholarship is a life, a family, and a future that might otherwise have been lost to financial barriers.

Emily's Hope's voice and reach also grew in new ways. Our podcast, *Grieving Out Loud*, expanded into video and is now available on KELOLAND+ and YouTube. This evolution significantly broadens our ability to engage audiences in honest conversations about grief, addiction, and recovery, extending the impact of stories that reduce stigma and foster understanding.

We closed the year by welcoming Delana Mach as our Community Outreach and Events Coordinator, strengthening Emily's Hope's presence across the many community events that are essential to awareness, education, and connection.

As I reflect on 2025, I am struck not only by the expansion of our programs but by the courage of those we serve and the commitment of those who support this work. Emily's Hope continues to grow because the need is real, the mission is urgent, and the collective resolve of our communities is extraordinary.

With gratitude,



Angela Kennecke
Founder, Emily's Hope

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EMILY'S HOPE SUBSTANCE USE AND PREVENTION ADVISORY GROUP



**DR. MELISSA "MO"
DITTBERNER**



**STEPHEN
TAMANG, MD**

Our Mission

Emily's Hope is dedicated to removing the stigma of substance use disorder through awareness, education, and prevention, while also removing financial barriers to treatment and recovery.



A future free from barriers to recovery, with a community united against the stigma of substance use disorder. A generation equipped to make decisions to protect their bodies and brains.

Our Vision

YEAR IN REVIEW

Key Accomplishments



Reaching Every Corner: 2025 Impact and Distribution

In 2025, Emily's Hope announced a massive expansion of our naloxone program, bringing our all-time totals to 15,732 kits distributed and 34 distribution boxes placed. By partnering with major healthcare systems and Tribal Governments, we ensured that life-saving resources reached the highest-priority and rural areas in South Dakota. This record-breaking year for distribution reflects our deep commitment to meeting the community exactly where the need is greatest.



Breaking Barriers: Treatment Scholarships and Overdose Response

We reached a major milestone this year by surpassing half a million dollars in total treatment scholarships since our founding. By funding care for dozens of men, women, and adolescents, we ensured that the cost of treatment was never a barrier to recovery. Alongside this financial support, our Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT) expanded into seven counties, providing critical peer support to survivors and families navigating the difficult days following an overdose.



Empowering the Next Generation: Prevention and Youth Engagement

Our prevention education reached new heights, with our curriculum now impacting more than 20,000 students in schools across the country and even internationally. This year, we successfully expanded our lessons through the 8th grade and finalized our high school program for 2026. Through our Youth Prevention Coalition and the first-ever Youth Art Showcase, we are empowering students to lead the conversation on healthy choices and resilience within their own schools.



Advancing the Mission: Policy, Advocacy, and Awareness

Emily's Hope continues to lead in advocacy and awareness. We successfully championed House Bill 1141, a legislative win that makes it easier for employers to keep naloxone in the workplace. Meanwhile, our *Grieving Out Loud* podcast expanded into video on KELOLAND+ and YouTube, reaching a broader audience than ever before to break the stigma of addiction and offer a voice to those navigating grief.

Our Impact in 2025

OVER **18,000**

STUDENTS REACHED

44 SCHOOL DISTRICTS ENROLLED



YOUTH PREVENTION COALITION SERVED

39

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



34,000

PODCAST DOWNLOADS



PODCAST EPISODES

52

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS RECEIVED

713,921

DIGITAL IMPRESSIONS

55 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



POST-OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM NOW SERVING

7

SOUTH DAKOTA COUNTIES

14,000+
NALOXONE KITS DISTRIBUTED



\$80k

AWARDED IN TREATMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

340
AED CABINETS STOCKED WITH NALOXONE

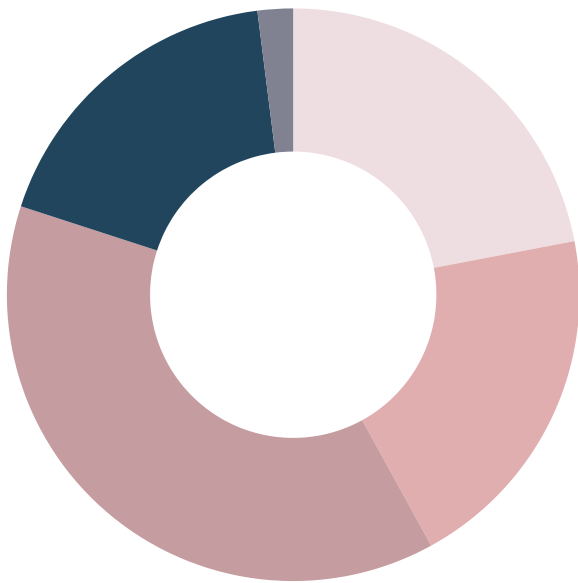
28 NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION BOXES PLACED

NEW PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

9

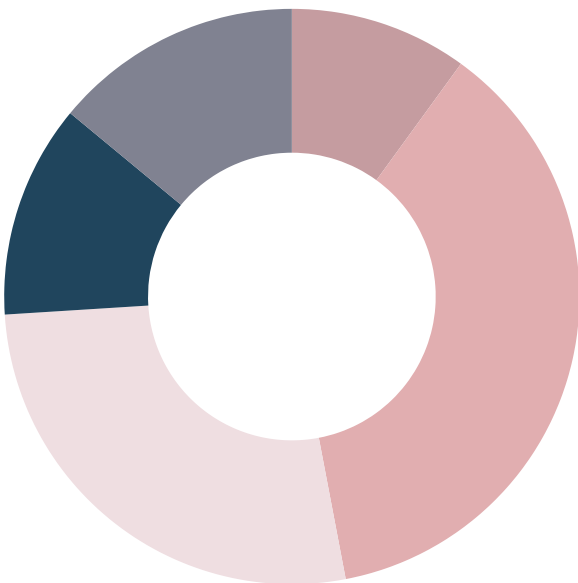
282k+ VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



INCOME

- Charitable Gifts **22%**
- Fundraising Events **20%**
- Gov't Grants/Contracts **38%**
- Private Foundations **18%**
- Other **2%**



EXPENSES

- Life-Saving Tools & Treatment **27%**
 - ♥ Naloxone Distribution
 - ♥ Post-Overdose Response Team
 - ♥ Treatment Scholarships
- Prevention **37%**
 - ♥ K-12 Substance Use Prevention Curriculum
 - ♥ Youth Prevention Coalition
- Awareness **10%**
 - ♥ *Grieving Out Loud*
 - ♥ morethanjustanumber.org
 - ♥ Loss Support Group
 - ♥ Headlines
- Operations **12%**
- Fundraising **14%**

AWARDS

Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency
(top 0.1% of charities nationally)

4-star rating from Charity Navigator



Impact Stories

This section brings our mission to life through the voices of those who have reclaimed their futures. From students building a foundation of resilience through our curriculum to families reunited by our treatment scholarships, these stories represent the courage, hope, and healing fueled by your support. Every journey shared here is a testament to the life-changing impact we create together.

Emily's Hope



Expanding Naloxone Access

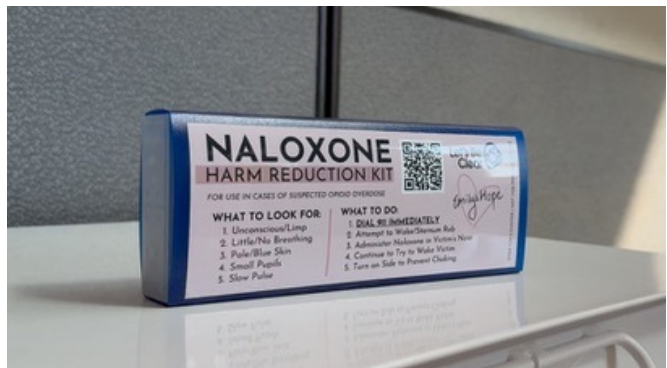
Partnering with the State to Save Lives

The first few months of 2025 marked a definitive turning point for Emily's Hope. What began as a local effort to place ten naloxone distribution boxes in Sioux Falls quickly evolved into a massive, statewide safety net. This growth was fueled by a strategic partnership with the State of South Dakota, the Department of Social Services, and Attorney General Marty Jackley. Through this collaboration, Emily's Hope secured 20,000 naloxone kits and the funding necessary to ensure these life-saving tools reached the hands of those who need them most.

By the end of 2025, the impact was undeniable. Emily's Hope opened 28 new distribution boxes across the state, intentionally placing them in high-priority areas where naloxone saturation was lowest. These locations were chosen based on rigorous data and local overdose rates, ensuring resources were never wasted. In 2025 alone, over 14,000 kits were distributed, bringing the all-time total to over 15,732.



The program also reached beyond the boxes. By co-locating naloxone with AEDs and first aid supplies, Emily's Hope has reinforced the message that naloxone is an essential tool for any emergency. Today, these kits are available at 340 locations statewide, spanning 32 counties and six of South Dakota's nine tribal areas. This momentum even crossed state lines into Lyon County, Iowa, where a new distribution box in Rock Rapids has already provided 185 kits to the community. We are incredibly grateful to the Lyon County Riverboat Foundation for awarding us a mini-grant to make this expansion possible.



One of the most meaningful expansions of 2025 took Emily's Hope deep into the heart of Western South Dakota, where the need for naloxone access is both urgent and personal. On August 6th and 7th, our team traveled to the Pine Ridge Reservation to place distribution boxes at Buche Foods and the Oglala Sioux Tribe Tribal Headquarters, bringing life-saving resources directly into a community that has experienced overdose loss at devastating rates. We also strengthened our presence in Rapid City through a partnership with Monument Health, placing a box at the hospital entrance, and through our continued work with Project Recovery, where a distribution box serves individuals actively seeking a path forward.



That same trip brought our team to one of the largest gatherings in the country. At the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, Emily's Hope distributed naloxone kits directly to attendees, meeting people where they are, regardless of background or circumstance. We are grateful for the partnership of the ABC Coalition, which committed to keeping naloxone kits stocked throughout the length of the rally, ensuring that life-saving access did not end when our team headed home. These two days embodied everything Emily's Hope stands for: reaching the overlooked, honoring the urgency of this crisis, and refusing to let geography or circumstance determine who gets a second chance at life.

Morgan's Story of Hope

For Morgan Mentele, the path to addiction was sudden and devastating. At 27, while navigating the heartbreak of an abusive marriage and the exhaustion of raising a newborn and a toddler, she was offered fentanyl. "The very first time I tried it, I was hooked," she remembers. Within a week, she was physically dependent. Within a year, she had lost her home, her health, and custody of her children.

Morgan describes active addiction as "living in a real-life hell on earth." She became a person she didn't recognize, losing over 100 pounds and facing a string of felony charges. Even when she was ready to change, the system presented a final, dangerous hurdle: a nine-day wait for a treatment bed. "I was begging my friends, please just keep me alive until I can get to treatment and change my life," she says.

Morgan is alive today because of naloxone. She has been brought back from the brink of death nine different times. "I keep telling people I'm like a cat. I'm on my ninth life. I can't mess it up now." But Morgan isn't the only one. She estimates that in her immediate circle of friends, at least 35 people are still breathing because of the free naloxone kits provided by Emily's Hope.

"If it weren't for Narcan, I would've never experienced the recovery side of it. My kids wouldn't have a mom, and my mom would've had to bury her daughter."

Morgan knows that naloxone didn't just stop an overdose; it bought her the time she needed to find herself again. "In recovery, I learned that I'm worthy of being loved," she says. "And if it weren't for people who loved me enough to save my life, I wouldn't have been able to experience all of the good that the world offers."



Lori Kellar

Reclaiming Worth and Rebuilding Love with an Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarship

For Lori Kellar, the descent into alcohol use disorder was a quiet one. It began in her teens as a way to fit in, eventually evolving into a social staple of a successful life. As a nurse by training and a parish nurse by profession, Lori was a woman who spent her life caring for others. She and her husband, Dennis, shared a marriage of over 30 years filled with dinners, entertaining, and a deep, unwavering love. But beneath the surface of their successful life, a shadow was growing.

By 2019, following the devastating back-to-back losses of her mother and her brother, Lori's casual drinking spiraled into a daily, desperate need. "I thought I was smarter than everybody else," Lori admits. "I thought I was pulling one over on them." In reality, the disease was taking everything. Lori lived in a cycle of hangovers and "sneaky" drinking, hiding bottles and self-medicating her mounting anxiety. The toll was physical—she recalls waking up with her face bruised from a fall she couldn't remember—but the emotional toll was even heavier. She was losing her relationships with her children and was eventually barred from seeing her six grandchildren.

The strain became more than their marriage could bear. Dennis, heartbroken and exhausted by years of trying to help, eventually felt he had no choice but to file for divorce. "There was never a question of love between us," Dennis says. "But the question of her drinking and her tearing herself down... I couldn't live with that." Following their split, Lori moved to Arizona, trying to outrun her demons alone, but the isolation only fueled the fire.



The turning point came when her son, Jordan, issued a final ultimatum: move back home and get real help, or lose the family forever. Lori said yes, but a familiar barrier stood in her way: the staggering cost of treatment. Having already experienced an unsuccessful, insurance-mandated "detox" years prior, Lori feared she couldn't afford the long-term care she actually needed. That is when she discovered Emily's Hope.

Through an Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarship, the financial wall was torn down. Lori was able to enter the Avera Addiction Care Center for 28 days of intensive, one-on-one treatment. "Knowing that someone is out there willing to help... and people want you to be healthy and happy," Lori says. Through the program, she found a sense of agency and self-worth she had long forgotten. "It just gave me a new perspective that I am worthy, and I did deserve to have a new life and move on."



Today, Lori has been in recovery for over a year. The "real Lori" has returned, and with her, the life she thought was lost. She recently finished pharmacy technician school and started a new career. Most importantly, she and Dennis have reconnected and are sharing their life once again. "It gave her life back," Dennis says, "and our love back." While Lori continues the hard work of repairing every family bond, she now does so with a clear mind and a full heart. Her journey from the darkness to the light proves that with the right support, no one is ever too far gone to find their way home.

Emily's Hope Substance Use Prevention Curriculum

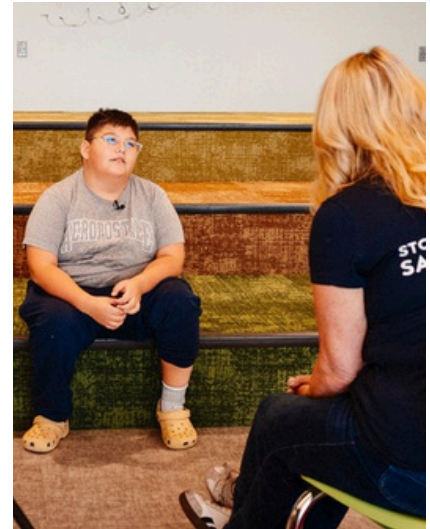
Empowering Lakota Students with the Science of Prevention

South Dakota's Native American reservations are among the hardest hit by poverty and the overdose epidemic. With death rates from substance use reaching four times the national average, the challenges facing the youth on the Rosebud Reservation are immense. However, inside the halls of the local elementary school, a powerful shift is taking place. Three years ago, Rosebud became one of the first schools to pilot the Emily's Hope Substance Use Prevention Curriculum. Today, those lessons have become a vital part of the students' identity and their vision for the future.

For Counselor Carrie Reiners, the decision to implement the curriculum was driven by a need to give her students more than just warnings. She wanted them to have an owner's manual for their own minds. "I felt it was really important for our students to have a curriculum that not only talked about substance use, but also talked about the body and the brain," Carrie explains. In a community where children often witness the devastating physical and emotional toll of addiction in their own homes, understanding the why behind the behavior is transformative.



The curriculum builds year after year, moving from basic health habits to the complex science of the brain. Carrie notes that even the youngest students remember the "Pause-Think-Act" tool, applying it not just to substance use, but to their relationships and daily decisions. Fifth grader Jayna is a testament to this impact. While she acknowledges the peer pressure to "be cool," she has a higher goal in mind. "I want to become an NBA player," she says. "I have to protect my brain so I can become that and make my goals in life."



The impact of Emily's Hope extends beyond the classroom and into the hearts of the families raising the next generation. Oyate Burnette, a Lakota teacher who is raising her grandchildren while her own daughter struggles with addiction, sees the curriculum as a bridge between modern science and Lakota values. "I love that I can take the information about how the brain works and transfer it to our Lakota way of life," Oyate says. She uses the lessons to foster an environment where students don't have to hide their family's struggles behind the school doors.

For many of these children, school is more than just a place of learning; it is a sanctuary. Oyate recalls the moment her oldest grandson told her, "I hope mom can get better, and when I grow up, I'm not gonna choose to do drugs." It is in these moments, where a child chooses to imagine a different path, that the cycle of addiction begins to break.

Emily's Hope does not change the difficult circumstances these children were born into, but it provides them with a powerful new lens through which to see themselves. By focusing on brain health, emotional resilience, and the power of choices, the curriculum is equipping Rosebud's youth to grow up safe, strong, and unafraid to hope for more. As Izzy, another fifth grader, puts it: "You don't need drugs to be happy and feel good about yourself." On the Rosebud Reservation, that simple realization is where a brighter future begins.

Vanessa Needles

A Survivor's Story

Vanessa Needles's life took a drastic turn at just 14 years old when she was run over by a car. The accident left her with a fractured skull, a broken pelvis in four places, and several other severe injuries. To manage the excruciating pain, she was prescribed Hydrocodone, a powerful opioid. "That moment didn't just injure my body," Vanessa says. "It changed the direction of my entire life."

As she navigated her teenage years, she found that substances provided a temporary escape from her reality. In her own words, "substances became my solution long before they became my problem." Though she had dreams of attending college and fulfilling her family's hopes for her future, the growing grip of addiction began to derail those plans. Even as the consequences mounted and she experienced the terror of overdosing, she found herself unable to stop. At 21, she completed a 30-day treatment program, but the cycle of the disease drew her back into use almost immediately after her release.

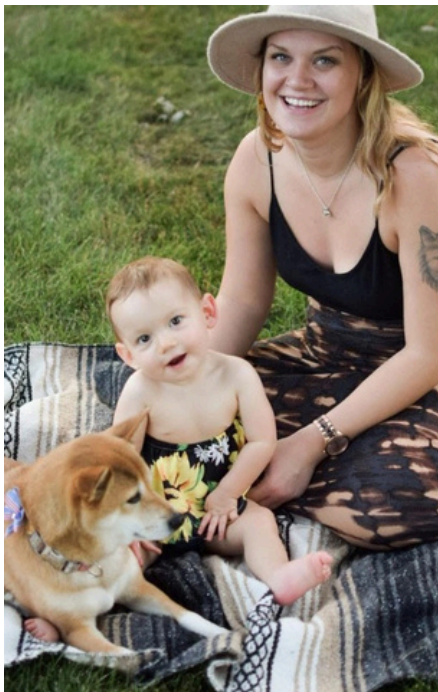


During this period of relapse, Vanessa made a choice that would result in a lifelong burden. She got behind the wheel while intoxicated and was involved in a tragic rollover accident. Her friend Vince, who was a passenger in the vehicle, did not survive. Vanessa pleaded guilty to vehicular homicide and, though she received a suspended sentence and forgiveness from Vince's family, she found that forgiving herself was nearly impossible.

Despite the weight of this tragedy, she continued to use until she reached a definitive breaking point at age 22. Realizing she wanted more for her life, she made a solemn vow to never use drugs or alcohol again. Now 31, she has maintained her sobriety for nine years, finding that her true healing comes from serving others. Today, she is a vital member of the Emily's Hope Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT), where she meets others in the same vulnerable state she once occupied. "Emily's Hope doesn't just save lives," Vanessa says. "It gave mine purpose."



Vanessa's life today is a vibrant reflection of the goals she once thought were lost. She is a mother of three and is on the verge of completing her bachelor's degree in addiction studies. In an era where fentanyl has claimed the lives of many of her friends, she recognizes her survival as a profound gift. She now stands as a beacon for others, proving that recovery is not just about survival, but about transformation. "My life is proof that even from the ashes," she notes, "something beautiful can grow."



PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarships

The Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarship program continued its vital mission in 2025 by awarding **\$79,080.74** to **52 recipients**. This year's cohort included 35 men, 16 women, and one adolescent. To date, Emily's Hope has invested **\$505,494.92** into the recovery of **297 individuals**. By removing the burden of treatment costs, we ensure that life-saving care remains accessible to those who might otherwise be left without options.

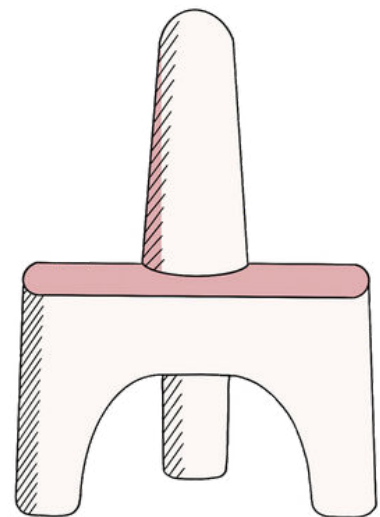


Substance Use Prevention Education

We reached over **18,000 students** across five states and internationally in 2025, delivering an evidence-based prevention curriculum that empowers youth to protect their brain health. Our program demonstrated measurable success, with first-graders showing a **57% gain in knowledge about healthy behaviors** and second-graders seeing a **52% increase in their ability to use "Pause-Think-Act" strategies**. By expanding from our elementary roots into middle school and preparing for a high school launch in 2026, we are providing a continuous, age-appropriate shield against the pressures of substance use.

Naloxone Distribution

We distributed over **14,000 naloxone kits in 2025**, significantly expanding access to this life-saving tool through a landmark partnership that secured 20,000 kits from the State of South Dakota. Our team opened **28 new distribution boxes** in high-priority areas, growing our statewide presence to 34 boxes, and successfully co-located naloxone with AEDs and first aid supplies at **340 locations**. These efforts reached **32 counties and six tribal areas**, empowering communities with accessible education and critical resources to directly intervene and save lives during overdose emergencies.



PORT (Post-Overdose Response Team)



We supported **overdose survivors** through our Post-Overdose Response Team, providing critical peer-led intervention in the vital window following a crisis. By expanding our dedicated team to include **nine new certified peer support specialists** and extending services into Yankton, Brookings, Clay, Codington and Turner Counties, we have successfully bridged the gap between emergency medical care and long-term recovery resources. Our PORT specialists meet individuals where they are—without judgment—and have been instrumental in guiding survivors toward treatment scholarships and stable, healthy futures.

Substance Use Loss Support Group

Emily's Hope continues to provide a lifeline for grieving families through our monthly support group, which now serves **15 active members**. Dedicated to those who have lost loved ones to overdose or fentanyl poisoning, this group offers a vital community for sharing experiences and processing grief. Together, these members find strength in collective empathy and the power of a supportive, understanding community.



Grieving Out Loud Podcast



We amplified the voices of those impacted by the addiction crisis through our *Grieving Out Loud* podcast, which surpassed **34,000 listens** in 2025. The program reached a major milestone this year by expanding into a **video format available on YouTube and KELOLAND+**, allowing us to connect with an even broader audience. By sharing deeply personal stories, from siblings navigating loss to fathers seeking justice, the podcast provides a vital space where listeners feel less alone and families can begin conversations that previously felt impossible.

Youth Prevention Coalition

We empowered the next generation of advocates through our Youth Empowerment Clubs and strategic legislative action, including a coalition trip to Washington, D.C., to support the **HALT Fentanyl Act**. Our initiatives engaged dozens of middle and high school students in leadership training and community mapping projects that highlighted the proximity of vape shops to local schools to influence future policy. Through high-impact events like our **Youth Art Showcase and Emmy-nominated PSA campaigns**, our coalition members are actively shifting the culture among their peers toward healthy, drug-free lifestyles.



CADCA MID-YEAR TRAINING

In July 2025, the Emily's Hope team traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Mid-Year Training Institute at the Gaylord Opryland. This premier national event brought together thousands of prevention professionals, youth leaders, and federal experts to share the latest strategies in the fight against substance use disorder. For our team, the week was an invaluable opportunity to step onto a national stage, connecting with leaders from the CDC and SAMHSA to gain deep insights into emerging overdose trends and evidence-based prevention data that can be applied directly to our work in South Dakota.



A primary highlight of the trip was the opportunity to share the success of our K-12 Emily's Hope Substance Use Prevention Curriculum with a national audience of educators and coalition leaders. As our programming continues to expand across state lines and internationally, presenting our brain-science-based approach allowed us to collaborate with other high-impact organizations and refine our strategies for reaching even more students. The team returned home with a wealth of actionable tools and new professional connections, all aimed at strengthening our local coalitions and ensuring that South Dakota remains at the forefront of innovative, youth-centered substance use prevention.





YOUTH ART SHOWCASE

Art has a unique way of speaking truths that words sometimes cannot reach. On April 24, 2025, Emily's Hope harnessed this creative power by hosting our first-ever Youth Art Showcase at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. This landmark event, led by the Youth Prevention Coalition and supported by our Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant, invited middle and high school students to explore themes of hope, healing, and substance use prevention through their own artistic lens.

The gallery viewing was a profound display of talent and vulnerability. Students representing a wide range of local schools, including Patrick Henry Middle School, Jefferson High School, O'Gorman High School, Roosevelt High School, Lincoln High School, Washington High School, and Alternative Instruction, submitted pieces that promoted healthy, drug-free lifestyles. These works offered a unique glimpse into the strength and perspective of the next generation. Local artist Christian Olson served as the guest speaker, sharing his personal journey of recovery and illustrating how artistic expression can be a vital tool for resilience.



During the ceremony, we honored five first-place winners and five runners-up for their outstanding contributions. Each winner received a trophy donated by JD's House of Trophies, marking their role as leaders in the movement to remove the stigma surrounding substance use disorder.

The impact of the competition extended beyond the walls of the Pavilion. Following the event, the winning pieces were moved to the Charlotte Carver Gallery at City Hall, allowing the entire community to celebrate the creative voices of our local youth. This competition was more than just an art show; it was a powerful reminder that prevention begins with awareness and connection. By giving students a platform to share their vision, we are fostering a culture where they feel empowered to choose a healthy path and inspire their peers to do the same.



Honoring a Creative Legacy

The 2025 Emily's Hope Art Scholarship

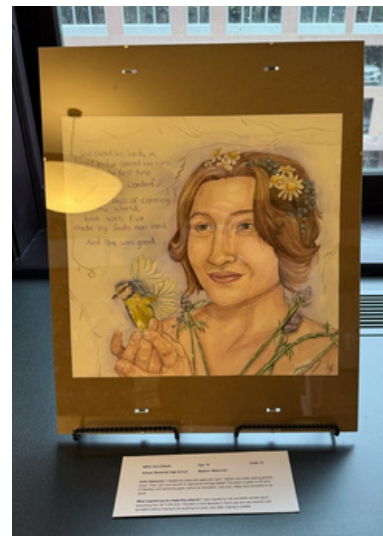
The connection between creative expression and emotional wellness was on full display this year as Emily's Hope recognized the talent of the next generation. Managed through the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, this \$1,000 scholarship was designed to support graduating high school seniors pursuing degrees in the visual arts, ensuring that the passion Emily Groth had for creativity continued to inspire others.

The 2025 recipient was Zuri Cleland, a senior at Sioux Falls Roosevelt High School. Zuri's journey with Emily's Hope began earlier in the year when she was recognized as a runner-up in the inaugural Emily's Hope Youth Art Showcase in April 2025. Her work stood out not only for its technical skill but for its deep connection to the competition's themes of hope and healthy living.

For Zuri, art was more than a field of study; it was a sanctuary. In her application, she reflected on how painting helped her manage anxiety, stating that her mind would go "blissfully silent" the moment she picked up a brush. This resonance between art and healing was at the very heart of the scholarship's mission.

Though Emily's life was tragically cut short by fentanyl poisoning in 2018, her legacy lives on through the vibrant colors of her own work and the opportunities provided to students like Zuri.

"Emily poured her soul into her artwork, and we saw that same spirit in Zuri," said Angela Kennecke, founder of Emily's Hope. "It was incredibly meaningful to support a young artist who also found strength and peace through creativity." As Zuri moved on to the University of South Dakota to study art, she carried with her a piece of Emily's enduring creative spirit.



Volunteer Spotlight

The impact of Emily's Hope was made possible through the unwavering dedication of our volunteers. Throughout 2025, a selfless community of individuals stepped forward, lending their time and talents to turn our vision into reality. Whether they were staffing events, distributing life-saving resources, or offering peer support, these volunteers served as the backbone of our organization. Their passion went far beyond supporting our programs; it fueled the hope and healing that defined this year for so many families.

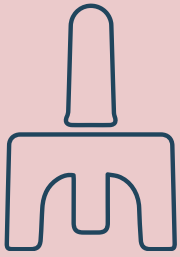
INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY



Every August 31st, the Arc of Dreams glows purple to symbolize hope and remembrance for those lost to overdose. In 2025, our volunteers were the driving force behind this tribute, creating a space for the community to unite in shared grief and resilience. This meaningful tradition is only possible because of the hard work and passion of the people who give their time to Emily's Hope.



LIFE-SAVING TOOLS



Our community's hands-on dedication was the driving force behind our distribution efforts this year. In 2025, we hosted **11 naloxone assembly events**, where volunteers worked alongside our staff to prepare life-saving kits for the region. These collaborative sessions were made possible by the incredible teams at **Sammons Financial, Modern Woodmen, United Way, Midwest Street Medicine, Midco, KELOLAND Media Group, and bWell**, as well as five general volunteer assemblies open to the public. Whether through corporate partnership or individual service, these volunteers ensured that thousands of kits were ready for those in need, proving that we are strongest when we work together.





EVENTS

Our events would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who show up year after year to support Emily's Hope. From helping with setup and greeting guests to assisting with logistics and cleanup, volunteers play a vital role in making every awareness and fundraising event a success. Their generosity, reliability, and willingness to give their time help create meaningful experiences for our community and allow our mission to reach even more people throughout the year.

Emily's Hope HERO AWARD



We were honored to present Jeremy Crozat with the 2025 Emily's Hope Hero Award. As one of the first recipients of an Emily's Hope Treatment Scholarship, Jeremy has remained steadfast in his recovery for six years while dedicating himself to helping others on their own healing journeys. He and his family have become an integral part of the Emily's Hope community, generously volunteering their time and energy to further our mission.

When Jeremy's wife, Mariah, received a breast cancer diagnosis, the family leaned on the foundation that recovery had built. His sons Xander and Brandon, along with Mariah, say that Jeremy getting treatment restored their family — and that stability became their anchor during one of the hardest seasons of their lives. Now Jeremy is taking his commitment even further, pursuing certification as a peer support specialist with Emily's Hope so he can walk alongside others who are where he once was.

Jeremy's story is a testament to resilience, hope, and the power of second chances — proof that when one life is transformed, an entire family is too.

CORPORATE PARTNERS

We are grateful to our corporate partners whose support bolsters our mission and allows us to expand our impact.

VISIONARY PARTNERS



CATALYST PARTNERS



Edgemont Volunteer Fire Department



Steve's Bar



HOPE BUILDERS

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

\$50,000+

Beyond Idea Grant Program of the South Dakota Community Foundation

\$10,000-\$49,999

Beacom Family Foundation

Kinder Future Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Robert and Rita Elmen Foundation

Sioux Empire United Way

Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

The South Dakota Fund of the South Dakota Community Foundation

The Zayden Legacy Foundation

<\$10,000

All Souls Church Unitarian Universalist

Amgen Foundation

Causes IV Chas Inc

Dave and Barb Ohme Charitable Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Dick and Sue Brown Family Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Douglas and Anne Hajek Charitable Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Emilie and John Yu Charitable Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Gregg and JJ Gohl Family Charitable Fund of the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation

Kris and Steve Egger Charitable Fund

Lyon County Riverboat Foundation

Menke Family Fund

Michael's Angels

Miles and Lisa Beacom Donor Advised Fund at the Catholic Community Foundation for Eastern South Dakota

Mya's Mission Foundation Inc.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Sioux Falls

Recovery for America Now Foundation

Robert and Karla O'Connor Family Charitable Fund

Sioux Falls Beta Sigma Phi Xi PSI Chapter

South Dakota Law Enforcement Charities

The Friends of Rachel Club at Armour School District No. 21-1

The Steve and Nancy Neff Advised Fund

The Wellmark Foundation

U.S. Bank Foundation

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Visionary Partners \$5,000+

Autoland
 Avera Health
 Ballard Spahr LLP
 First PREMIER Bank/PREMIER Bankcard
 KELOLAND Media Group
 Mariner Foundation
 Modern Woodmen of America
 Power Brokers, Inc
 Sammons Financial
 Sanford Health

Hope Builders <\$1,000

Alternative Back Care Clinic
 Bluestone Federal Credit Union
 Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project, LLC
 Charlie's Pizza
 D&D Bar
 Edgemont Volunteer Fire Department
 Face It TOGETHER
 Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort
 Great Plains Dental
 Helpline Center
 Hoffman Law
 Ideal Tent & Event Rentals
 JJs Wine Spirits and Cigars

Catalyst Partners \$1,000-\$4,999

Costco Wholesale
 First Dakota National Bank/Loft Advisors
 ICAN, INC
 JD's House of Trophies
 Koch Hazard Architects
 Results Radio
 Scooter's Coffee
 Sisson Printing
 The First National Bank in Sioux Falls
 Tyler Goff Group
 Vern Eide

MacKenzie River Pizza, Grill & Pub Sioux Falls
 Monarch Steakhouse
 Reistroffer Design
 Risk Administration Services Inc.
 Security National Bank of South Dakota
 Shipwreck Bar and Grill
 Sioux Falls City FC
 Stampede Hockey
 Steve's Bar
 Stockmen's Livestock, Inc.
 Take16 Brewing
 Thread & Inc LLC
 Tomacelli's Pizza, Inc.
 UnitedHealth Group Inc

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Legacy Circle \$10,000

Miles & Lisa Beacom
 Todd & Sabrina Meierhenry
 Chris Wermerson

Champion of Change Circle \$2,000-\$9,999

Jesslyn Brown	Tom Howes
Erica & Shane DeBoer	Colin Hall
George & Kristen Lund	Brandy Morrow
Mike Denning	Paul Ode
Natalie Eisenberg	Greg & Pam Sands
Abbie Everist	Theresa Stamato
Rachel & Kristopher Gage	Lisa & Greg Uhlir
Kay & Alan Goeman	Cindy Vandermay
Sam & Elizabeth Gotham	
Angela Kennecke & Jeff Rink	

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Heart of Hope Circle \$1,000-\$1,999

Kerri Armstrong	David Gnirk	Jason & Sherri Otta
Tim Berberich	John Grehan	Matthew Paulson
Jean Bubak	Eric Hanson	Don & Ann Platt
RF & Tamara Buche	Dan & Beth Hindbjorgen	Brent & Cindy Reilly
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Kelly & Tony Dreyer	Julie Lutt	Matt & Susan Stanley
Sharon Dullerud	Eugene & Susan McGowan	Hannah Statz DeVries &
Jim & Jill Entenman	Chris Mercado & Beth	James DeVries
Julie Ermer	Overmoe	Paul & Jill TenHaken
Melissa Flynn-Dooyema &	Erica Mullaly	Marti Thompson
Randy Dooyema	Jenny Orr	Justin Venners
		RuthAnn & Hugh Venrick

Changemakers Circle \$500-\$999

Bridget Bennett	Lilyann Hinrichs	Rochelle & Luke Odenbrett
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Edward Clark	Kira Kimball	Luyen Phan
Matthew & Yvonne DeWitte	Jon & Tracy Kirby	Emily Quinn
Kimberly & Scott Enebo	Kassie Larsen	Matthew Rink
Rob Everist	Angie Lennartson	Tom & Sherry Schmidt
Paul & Enid Farmer	Paul Mayclin	Mike Villanueva
Craig & Lisa Hagen	Elizabeth Meyer	Brittany Wangsness
Gail Hanson	Julie & David Mickelberg	Geoffrey Weidner
Sheila Hartman	Melody Mielke	Stephanie Wiley
Susan Herrick	Kelly Oberbroeling	

Helping Hands Circle \$100- \$499

Susan Abrahamson	Ann & Gene Blondheim	Heather Conrad
Jason Ackman	Mark Bodnarczuk	Gary Conradi
George Allen	Bryan Boelens	Jeremy & Mariah Crozat
Brent Antonen	Alissa Bretsch	Lyle Dabbert
Lisa Baier	Calley Buckley	Alyssa Dahl
Shawn Barnett	Krista Burns	Lee Dardis
Ed Beal	Monica Burns	Denise DePaolo
Lindy Bell	Lisa Carlson	Pam Dybedahl
Liz Bergstrom	Jim Carlson	Steve Eggebraaten
Valerie L Berry	Patricia Coddington	Brian & Diane Eide
Sheyann Bertschinger	Gina Cole	Sharon Ellens

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Helping Hands Circle \$100- \$499 (continued)

Zach Else	Jimmy & Janine Hogan	Stephen Loyd
Shannon Emry	Beth Holleman	Bryce & Peggy Mach
Shari Enger	Alex Holmes	Ryan Matzen
Ashley Enstad	Cathy Honken	Tyler & Ellen McLaughlin
Jimmy Entenman	Dody Hopkins	Samantha McManus
Michele Erickson-Johnson	Stuart Horsted	Machaela Mehlbrech
George Faini	Adam Ray Houg	Robert & Shirley Miller
David Farnsworth	Marty Jackley	Donnie & Janelle Miller
Thomas & Kim Fitz	Susan Jacobson	Laurie Moran
Jesus Flores	Josephine Jannes	Judy Morstad
Faye Marie Frerichs	Desire Jansen	Ardeen & Cindy Mulder
Dana Frost	Dawn Jirsa	Evan Mussetter
Suzanne Fuller	Katherine Jivery	Dawn Nelson
Tom & Ann Garry	Tom & Lea Anne Johnson	Quinton Nelson
Brian Gaulke	David B Johnson	Alan Neville
Michael Geheren	Jenny & Blair Johnston	Diane Newell
Scott Geppert	Suzy Jones	Lisa Nielson
Barb Giles	Stephen Joslyn	Karen Nissen-Boryczka
Amanda Good	Dan Junck	Heidi Ode
Christine Griebel & Mark	Tom Junck	Calvin Ode
Wehde	Dave & Kelly Kelly	Jennifer Ofstad
Jeremy Griffith	Peggy Kirby	Alyssa Olson
Cory Gronewold	Delmar & Beverly Klassen	Dawn Osborn
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Chris Hall	Dianne Koehnecke	Sheri Ouellette
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Jean Hansen	Pamela & Paul Kreber	Jeff & Teresa Parlet
Pennie Hansen	Anna, Ryan & Mollie Kruse	Colette Pasco
Brandon Hanson	Jenna Kvaale	Vicky & Mark Perreault
Tom & Carmen Hanson	Roxanne Larsen	Stacy Peters
Shelley Hardie	Deana Larson	Valerie & Dennis Peters
Marvin & Dianne Harris	Lisa Larson	Jason & Tiffany Pfitzer
Donna R Hartfiel	Kenneth Laskowski &	Gavin & Mae Pochop
Kelly Hasvold	Melissa Nietert	Penny Porter
Cody Heermann	Jan Lawrence	Kevin & Amy Potas
Amy Hendrix	Gary & Lydia Leafgreen	Maksym Pylypchuk
Jodi Hensley	Diana Leal & Tyler Venard	Marilyn & Frank Rajkowski
KC & Montanna Herman	Brenda Lehman	Shannon Reissour
Mikayla Heronimus	Valerie Loudenback	John Rennich

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Helping Hands Circle \$100- \$499 (continued)

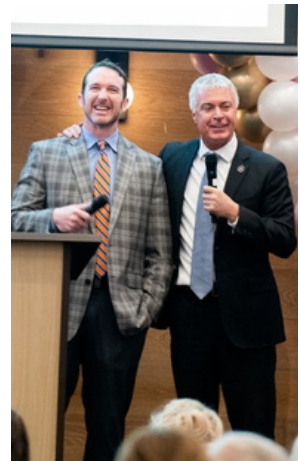
Emily Ries	Shannon & Steve Van
Cassandra Riewer	Buskirk
Dave & Vickie Rink	Kory, Traci & London Van
Andrew Rludt	Sickle
Mary Rogers	Candace Veneberg
Phillip Rysdon	Tracy & Todd Vik
Jill Sando	Adam Vogel
Dave, Dixie & Mitch	Mike & Nancy Vogt
Schladweiler	Tammi Waltjer-Haverly
Jon & Jeslyn Schmidt	Dawn Wartenbee
Keith Schmidt	Barbara & Jim Weixel
David Schoby	Chris Wise
Kari Scofield	Jenifer Wollman
Donna Sebesta	Gregory & Sally Woods
Jennifer Seifert-Brenna	Barbara Wulff
Karen Sherman	Deb Wynia
Taryn & Ben Sietsema	Dave Yonke
Raluca Simons	Kirk & Jan Zeeck
Jeannie Skillman	Sheila Zimprich
Dorothy Smizer	
Mary Spencer-Herbert	
Heather Spies	
Jeff Spyksma	
Matthew Stanfield	
Carlisha Steffes	
Alicia Steinfurth	
Gregory & Kelly Steinkamp	
Craig Stoos & Tanya Scheidt	
Kimberlee Stroud	
Paige Sullivan	
Py Taheri	
Wade Thomas	
Keith & Ashley Thompson	
Amy Thompson	
Barbara Timken	
Cody Toupal	
Rick & Jo Turgeon	
Dennis Turnwall	
Cheryl Van Beek	



Fundraising & Outreach

EMILY'S HOPE GALA: ART SHOW & AUCTION

The Emily's Hope Art Show & Auction is an annual event that brings together artists, supporters, and advocates to highlight the transformative power of art while advancing our mission. This inspiring evening honors Emily's legacy by showcasing her original artwork alongside pieces donated by local, regional, and national artists. The 2025 event raised over **\$111,000** to support our Emily's Hope initiatives, including treatment scholarships, our K-12 Substance Use Prevention Curriculum, public awareness campaigns, and expanded access to life-saving naloxone. More than just an art show, this event fosters healing, drives advocacy, and reinforces the power of community in the fight against substance use disorder.



FIREWORKZ SHOW

The Fireworkz Store organized a spectacular Fireworkz Show on June 8 and supported our mission throughout July with dedicated firework sales and donations, contributing a total of **\$11,101**. This unwavering support has now raised more than **\$62,000** for Emily's Hope since our inception. This represents an extraordinary testament to this partnership and its lasting impact on our prevention and education programs.



7TH ANNUAL EMILY'S HOPE POKER RUN

The 7th Annual Emily's Hope Poker Run on June 28, 2025, brought together over 220 riders at J&L Harley-Davidson for a 100-mile journey through the Sioux Falls area. This high-energy event raised **\$12,571** to support our mission, and we are incredibly grateful for our enduring partnership with J&L Harley-Davidson and their commitment to making this event a success year after year. Thank you to every rider and supporter who joined us on the road to help drive our cause forward.



CRUISE NIGHT AT AUTOLAND

The spirit of community was on full display in July as Karen and Brad Dumdie hosted the annual Emily's Hope Cruise Night at Autoland. The event brought together hundreds of participants and featured dozens of stunning vehicles, including the Emily's Hope Slug Bug, which was donated by Autoland and painted by O'Gorman art students. This year, the evening reached new heights, raising a record **\$8,161** to support our prevention and recovery efforts. It was an incredible night of connection and generosity, showcasing how local passion can drive meaningful change.



SAVE A LIFE DAY

On September 25, Emily's Hope hosted Save A Life Day at the Sioux Falls Downtown Library, a community event focused on immediate support and prevention. Alongside our partners, we distributed over **100 doses of naloxone** to help equip neighbors with life-saving tools. We are incredibly grateful to **Midwest Street Medicine** for providing low-barrier healthcare and flu shots, and to **Bread Break** for serving free lunches. This day was a powerful testament to what we can achieve when we unite to reduce harm and offer hope to those who need it most.



LOOKING AHEAD

2026 Goals

Launching the Facing Fentanyl Campaign

In 2026, Emily's Hope will advance the Facing Fentanyl Campaign, supported by a \$100,000 grant from the South Dakota Community Foundation.

This initiative will expand statewide awareness and prevention education focused on fentanyl risks, counterfeit pills, and overdose prevention. The campaign is designed to provide communities, families, and educators with accurate, actionable information about the rapidly evolving illicit drug landscape.

Implementing the Transformative Project Across South Dakota

Emily's Hope will begin full implementation of its Transformative Project, funded through a \$500,000 award from the Opioid Advisory Committee.

This investment will accelerate the expansion of the Emily's Hope Substance Use Prevention Curriculum across South Dakota schools, strengthening early prevention education and increasing student access to evidence-informed substance use prevention resources. The project represents a major step forward in scaling prevention infrastructure statewide.

Piloting the High School Prevention Curriculum

Following completion of the high school Substance Use Prevention Curriculum, Emily's Hope will initiate pilot implementation in 2026.

This expansion strengthens Emily's Hope's comprehensive K-12 prevention framework and addresses a critical developmental window where prevention education can have a long-term impact.

Expanding Youth Empowerment and Prevention Leadership

Emily's Hope will expand its Youth Empowerment Clubs into additional middle and high schools, building on the success of early pilot programs.

These student-led initiatives promote peer-to-peer prevention, leadership development, and youth engagement in substance use prevention efforts, reflecting Emily's Hope's commitment to equipping young people with knowledge, confidence, and voice.

Sustaining and Expanding Naloxone Access

Emily's Hope will continue statewide naloxone distribution efforts in 2026, maintaining existing access points while expanding placement of naloxone resources in high-need communities.

Ensuring reliable, barrier-free access to overdose reversal medication remains central to the organization's strategy to provide life-saving tools. Emily's Hope will also prioritize long-term supply stability and continued collaboration with healthcare systems, state agencies, and community partners.

Expanding Post-Overdose Response Services

Emily's Hope will continue expanding its Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT) model, strengthening partnerships to increase survivor follow-up, peer support engagement, and recovery resource navigation across South Dakota.

Program growth will focus on extending services into additional communities while reinforcing the infrastructure needed to support overdose survivors and families.

Advancing Policy and Public Health Advocacy

Emily's Hope will remain actively engaged in legislative and policy efforts that support youth protection, overdose prevention, and responsible retail practices.

In 2026, the organization will continue advocating for policies that strengthen oversight of nicotine and vaping product distribution, including legislation to license vape shops. These efforts reflect Emily's Hope's broader prevention mission and commitment to reducing youth exposure to addictive products.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

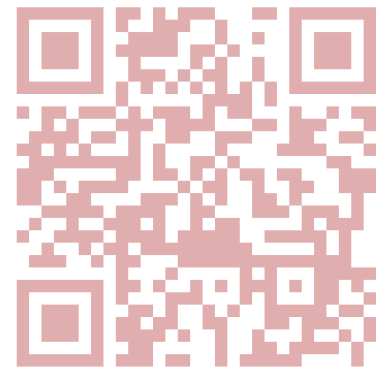
Join us in creating a healthier, more hopeful future for our communities by getting involved with Emily's Hope. Your support can make a direct impact, whether through donations, volunteering, or advocacy. Every contribution strengthens our efforts to provide life-saving resources, deliver educational programs, and drive meaningful change in substance use prevention.

DONATION OPTIONS

Online donation platform →

Recurring donation options

- Monthly & yearly giving
- Legacy gifting



[EMILYSHOPE.CHARITY/GIVE](https://emilyshope.charity/give)

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

We rely on volunteers throughout the year to help assemble life-saving tool kits, including fentanyl test strips and naloxone, as well as to support our awareness and fundraising events.

Learn more at emilyshope.charity/volunteer

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Help raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl and the reality that substance use disorder is a disease of the brain. Attend our awareness events, carry naloxone, and share our mission with friends and family.

Encourage your local school to learn about the Emily's Hope Substance Use Prevention Curriculum and explore bringing it to their district.

Visit emilyshopeedu.org to learn more!

2026 EVENTS

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**JAN
24**

Emily's Hope Gala: Art Show & Auction

- An unforgettable evening celebrating art and hope!
- Location: Canopy by Hilton

**JUN
27**

8th Annual Emily's Hope Poker Run

- Enjoy a thrilling 100-mile ride around Sioux Falls to raise awareness and life-saving funds.
- Location: J&L Harley Davidson

**JUL
15**

Emily's Hope Cruise Night

- Bring your vehicle or simply come to admire the amazing lineup at this fun-filled community event.
- Location: Autoland

AWARENESS EVENTS

**MAR
02**

Can't Look Away - Free Screening & Panel Discussion

- Free Documentary Screening on the dangers of social media followed by panel discussion with experts.
- Location: Belbas Theater, Washington Pavilion

**AUG
31**

International Overdose Awareness Day Candlelight Vigil

- A candlelight vigil to honor and provide support to those affected by the overdose crisis.
- Location: Greenway Amphitheater

**SEP
24**

Save a Life Day

- A community-focused event providing free naloxone and other healthcare resources.
- Location: TBD

YOUTH EVENTS

Emily's Hope Youth Art Showcase

APRIL 23

- Sioux Falls middle and high school student art showcase
- Location: Mosaic Arts & Events



Family Fun Night & Fireworkz Show

JUNE 06

- Experience a dazzling fireworks display while supporting our mission.
- Location: Tea, SD



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR EVENT DETAILS, REGISTRATION, AND UPDATES:
EVENTS.EMILYSHOPE.CHARITY**



Thank you!

As we reflect on the milestones of 2025, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the community that stands behind Emily's Hope. Your unwavering commitment has allowed us to turn a vision of prevention and recovery into a reality for thousands of families. Because of your generosity and advocacy, we have expanded life-saving resources, empowered the next generation through education, and provided a bridge to treatment for those who thought it was out of reach.

We are thankful for your belief in our mission and your dedication to sharing our work with the world. Whether you joined us at our events, supported us financially, or raised your voice to help spread our message, your involvement has had a profound ripple effect. Your partnership does more than support an organization; it honors Emily's legacy by ensuring that hope always has the final word.

We invite you to remain by our side as we move into 2026. The work ahead is vital, and your support remains the fuel for our mission. Together, we will continue to break the cycle of addiction, remove the weight of stigma, and build a future where every individual has the chance to thrive

Thank you for being the heart of Emily's Hope.



