

Summer 2026

Oxford Tri-Star

Oxford House of TN Newsletter



Fast Facts

As of June 2026:

- **Men: 108 Houses, 871 Beds (2 Houses for men/children)**
- **Women: 73 Houses, 588 Beds (24 Houses for women/children)**
- **1,459 Total Beds**



Above: Oxford Houses in TN gathered at the Embassy Suites in Gatlinburg for the 2026 Oxford House TN State Convention. Check out pages 2-3 for more!

Purposeful Connection by Sarah Harris

It's officially summer. That means it's busy season. Whether it's our staff setting up a table and a tent at a local resource fair, or a group of members setting up a car wash fundraiser at a nearby auto parts store – we're guaranteed to be close by, doing what we can to propagate the Oxford House concept. It's often said that the opposite of addiction is connection. We see that ring true each and every summer, as the opportunities to network and fellowship are abundant.

Networking and fellowship are at the heart of every strong recovery community. When we come together, we are reminded that we are never alone in our journeys. The conversations we have, the stories we share, and the connections we build create a powerful network of support, hope, and understanding. Every new relationship has the potential to offer a fresh perspective and reignite our enthusiasm for carrying the message.

For an outreach worker, these connections are the foundation of the work we do. Outreach is about more than sharing information. It's about building relationships, creating trust, and meeting people where they are with compassion and respect. Every handshake, phone call, and conversation is an opportunity to strengthen our recovery community, bridge gaps, and ensure that every person seeking a new way of life knows they have a place to belong.

This season, as we feel the pressure of a booked calendar, the anticipation of upcoming events, and the passion for delivering Oxford House's message, we're reminded of how blessed we are to help those in need. There is no gift greater than the purpose we've found in recovery.

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2026 Oxford House of Tennessee State Convention: Sobriety is my Superpower



A Weekend of Unity, Fun, and Education

From May 14 to May 17, Oxford House members from across Tennessee gathered in Gatlinburg for the annual State Convention. The event brought together individuals from every corner of the state for a weekend centered on fellowship, personal growth, recovery, and education. While the mountains provided a beautiful backdrop, the true highlight was the opportunity for members to connect with one another, share experiences, and strengthen the bonds that make Oxford House such a unique recovery community.

One of the greatest benefits of the convention is the chance to meet members from other houses and regions. Throughout the weekend, friendships were formed, stories were shared, and members learned from one another's successes and challenges. Recovery can often feel like a personal journey, but events like the state convention serve as a reminder that no one walks that path alone. The fellowship experienced during the weekend reinforced the idea that Oxford House is much more than a place to live, it's a statewide network of support, encouragement, and hope.

The convention opened with a creative icebreaker activity called Build a Hero. Members worked together at their tables to design their own superhero, complete with unique strengths, powers, and characteristics. By working

"I have to say that this trip was something I've longed for and needed the past 5 months. It's a mental reset. Going to work and coming home and paying bills means responsibility but everyone needs to get away every now and then. I'm glad I chose to come down here to Gatlinburg for the 2026 Oxford House State convention. I got to see people from all over the state of Tennessee and it's been fun. I'm so glad I chose the path of recovery over 5 months ago. I don't know had bad off I'd be if I was still out there letting the devil sabotage every day, even I would self sabotage just to get a fix. But today, I can humbly and confidently say I am secure in my recovery and there is so much more life to come and life to live!"

• Ian Hodge | Kingsport, TN

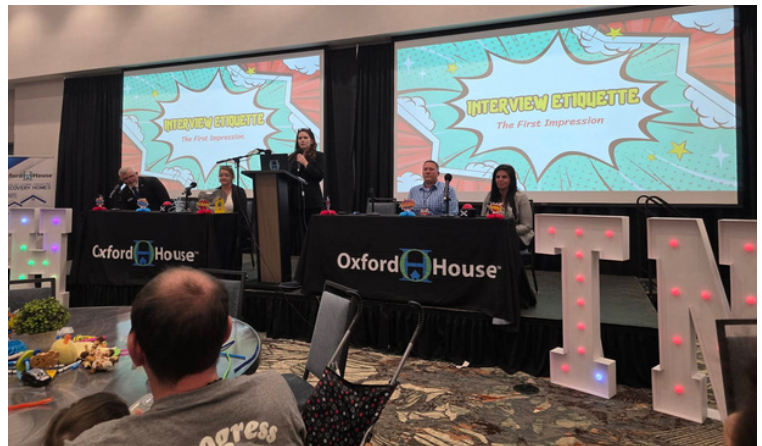
together, members identified qualities such as resilience, honesty, courage, accountability, and perseverance, the very traits that help individuals overcome addiction and build successful lives in recovery.

Education remained a central focus throughout the weekend. One session, Interview Etiquette, explored the importance of first impressions during the Oxford House interview process. Participants discussed how interviewing prospective members is one of the most important responsibilities of an Oxford House. The presentation emphasized that while houses are evaluating applicants, applicants are also evaluating the house. A respectful, welcoming, and professional interview can set the tone for a positive living environment and help ensure that both the applicant and the house are making the right decision. Members left with a greater understanding of how effective communication and thoughtful interviewing practices help preserve the integrity of Oxford House while

creating a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers. Another impactful presentation, Tradition One in Action, focused on Oxford House's primary purpose: providing housing and rehabilitative support for individuals who want to stop using alcohol and drugs and learn to live productive, responsible lives. Participants explored how this mission is carried out every day through house operations, peer support, expansion efforts, and outreach activities. The session served as a powerful reminder that every vacancy filled, every new house opened, and every act of support between members contributes to the larger mission of helping others achieve lasting recovery.

The convention also featured a presentation on All Pathways to Recovery, which highlighted the many different approaches individuals use to maintain sobriety. The session examined several 12-Step fellowships as well as Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs, encouraging members to keep an open mind and recognize that recovery is not a one-size-fits-all process. By focusing on the shared goal of long-term sobriety rather than differences in approach, the discussion reinforced the importance of supporting all individuals who are working toward recovery.

Another thought-provoking session addressed the difference between Disruptive Behavior and Behavioral Problems. Participants discussed how disruptive behavior can negatively impact an entire house and may require firm action to protect the group, while behavioral problems often call for compassion, peer guidance, and support. The conversation helped members better understand how to balance accountability with empathy (an essential skill in self-run recovery housing).



Each evening concluded with recovery meetings that allowed members to reflect on the day's lessons and connect on a deeper level. These meetings provided opportunities for sharing, encouragement, and personal growth, reinforcing the principles that guide recovery and Oxford House living.

The 2026 Tennessee State Convention was a powerful reminder that recovery thrives when people come together. Through education, fellowship, laughter, and shared experiences, members left Gatlinburg with new knowledge, renewed motivation, and stronger connections to the Oxford House community. The weekend demonstrated that while sobriety may be each member's superpower, the support of the Oxford House family makes that superpower even stronger.



Building Bridges in Recovery: Strengthening Community Partnerships in Chattanooga

By Justin Cross



Above: OHI outreach worker, Justin, and staff from Harmony Oaks, Restoration Recovery, & Focus attend the "Welcome Home" premiere at Abba's House.

When I moved to Chattanooga to serve as an Outreach Worker, I was welcomed with open arms by the recovery community. From the very beginning, I was grateful for the strong relationships already established with CADAS and Focus Treatment Centers. These partnerships have played a vital role in helping individuals transition from treatment into long-term recovery.

As our outreach efforts have continued to grow, we have been blessed to develop new relationships with organizations such as Harmony Oaks, RCN, Restoration Recovery, and Chattanooga Recovery Center. Through presentations, networking, and ongoing collaboration, we have worked together to ensure that individuals seeking recovery have access to the resources and support they need beyond treatment.

At Oxford House, we understand that recovery does not end when treatment is completed. In many ways, it is only the beginning. Sustainable recovery requires accountability, a supportive community, and a safe environment where individuals can continue to grow and rebuild their lives.

By working closely with treatment centers and community partners throughout Chattanooga, we are able to show potential applicants that recovery housing is a critical next step in their journey. Oxford House provides more than just a place to live. It offers fellowship, responsibility, peer support, and an opportunity to build a meaningful life in recovery.

We remain committed to strengthening these partnerships and expanding our outreach efforts because we know that recovery thrives when communities work together. Together, we can ensure that every individual leaving treatment knows they have a path forward and a supportive home waiting for them.

Thank you to all of our community partners for your continued dedication to keeping recovery alive, strong, and accessible throughout the Chattanooga area.

One of the most rewarding experiences in Oxford House is welcoming someone who is returning to society after incarceration. One of the first times I had the opportunity to be part of that process involved a young man who had spent 36 months incarcerated in the Wilson County Jail. He was persistent, calling our house every week for nearly six weeks. He was determined to prove that he was ready to live independently in recovery.

On the day of his release, he took the train from Lebanon to Nashville, caught a bus, and then walked nearly half a mile to a house he had never seen before. We were expecting him. We had steaks on the grill and wanted to make sure he had a great

ReEntry Ready: Changing Lives through Oxford House by David Morris





Above: Members of Oxford House Grata in Nashville enjoying a family dinner. Below: OHI outreach working Justin Cross at the Hamilton County ReEntry Resource Fair.



meal on his first day home.

From the moment he arrived, he got to work rebuilding his life. He went job hunting every day and was employed by the end of the week. He lived in our house for a little over a year, and during that time all the good things that recovery can bring began to happen. He developed a solid recovery program, found steady employment, bought a car, started a healthy relationship, and eventually moved into his own apartment with his girlfriend.

Stories like his remind us why Oxford House matters. We love helping our brothers and sisters return to society and become sober, productive, and self-supporting members of their communities.

Today, Oxford House of Tennessee, in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Correction, is renewing its efforts to help incarcerated individuals transition directly into Oxford Houses upon release. As part of this initiative, some houses in each area will be asked to become "reentry ready." Being reentry ready simply means that your house is willing to consider applicants who are coming directly from incarceration. These applicants complete a written reentry interview that is emailed to participating houses for review before admission.

We encourage you to give these individuals a chance. It may require a little extra effort on the front end to get to know someone and establish accountability once they arrive, but the expectations and house rules remain exactly the same. Given the opportunity, many of these men and women go from leaving jail with very little to becoming successful Oxford House residents and active participants in recovery. There is nothing quite as rewarding as watching someone rebuild a life that once seemed out of reach.

Swing Into Action

by Rachel Ketelle



Oxford House of Knoxville was honored to be the beneficiary of the 4th Annual East Tennessee Charity Golf Tournament hosted by SiteOne Landscape Supply at Egwani Farms Golf Course. In total, this event raised \$5,000 for the Oxford Houses in Knoxville. A special thank you to Brian Gossett of SiteOne Landscape Supply and Rob Buerkle, a member of Oxford House Chapman, whose partnership and vision helped create this opportunity. Their efforts, along with the support of sponsors, volunteers, and participants, will make a lasting impact on individuals pursuing recovery across East Tennessee. Together, we're helping more people find recovery, community, and a place to call home.

Building Recovery Pathways for Tennessee's Emerging Adults by Lakeisha Starks

The Oxford House of Tennessee YSOR Emerging Adult Initiative continues to gain momentum as we focus on strengthening recovery opportunities for young adults across the state. While funding has provided an opportunity to expand our efforts, the true focus of this initiative is much larger than a grant. It is about identifying, engaging, and supporting emerging adults who are seeking recovery and helping them find stable, recovery-focused housing before years of addiction and alcoholism take a greater toll on their lives.



Oxford House outreach workers have attended numerous events across the state targeted towards emerging adults. (Including Rocky Top Recovery, meetings at TN Tech, Youth-Led Town Hall)

This work is especially meaningful to me on a personal level. In my early 20s, while navigating addiction and alcoholism and trying to pursue higher education, I had to step away from college and did not have knowledge of the kind of recovery housing and support that Oxford House provides today. That experience continues to shape my passion for this initiative. It's important to me that emerging adults today are aware of these opportunities early on and have access to support systems that can help them continue both their recovery and their education, which is something I wish I had known about at that time.

Over the past several months, we have worked diligently to better understand the needs of young adults residing in Oxford Houses throughout Tennessee. Through data collection, outreach efforts, and relationship building, we are gaining a clearer picture of where emerging adults are located, what challenges they face, and how Oxford House of Tennessee can serve as a valuable resource during a critical stage of life. We are excited about the progress being made and look forward to continuing to build a statewide network of support for Tennessee's next generation of individuals in recovery.

Welcome Home: An Oxford House Story by Jeremy Wilkerson



Above: OHI staff Jeremy Wilkerson & Lakeisha Starks at the "Welcome Home" premiere in Memphis. Tennessee hosted 7 screenings of the documentary across the state.

June 5, 2026. This is the day that Memphis had the honor of hosting the Oxford House documentary. We were excited to partner up with the University of Memphis! This was an amazing opportunity for both of us! The University of Memphis recently became a certified Recovery Campus – they were excited about working with us and sharing our story.

This connection led to an invitation to be part of a 2-day event at the University of Memphis for recovery resources and Emerging Adults in September. We will be able to reach a larger audience and share our story to more people. We hope showing our story with this network of recovery partners will have a huge and lasting impact on the Oxford Houses of The Bluff City! We cannot express our gratitude enough for this opportunity.

Member Spotlight



Coby Carson is a member of Oxford House in Kingsport, TN. He made the decision to change his life and start his journey in recovery on July 25th, 2025. A week later, he was accepted and became a member of Oxford House Genuine. In his tenure, he's moved from one house to another as a core member to help with stabilization. He currently serves Chapter 16 as the HSC Chair and the TN State Association HSC Chair.

"I heard about Oxford House through a treatment center I was at. They told me Oxford House does not discriminate against any pathway to recovery. I was having trouble finding a place to go because I was on MAT/MAR. Oxford House was the only program to accept me as I was. Once I arrived, they immediately treated me like I had been there forever. They made me feel like I was important and that I mattered. The more seasoned members also took the time to show me what Oxford House was and how I could help others. I was looking for a purpose in my life. One of my peers told me they found their purpose by serving others through being a chapter officer.

Today, I've gained my life back. I learned how to be responsible, dependable, productive, and helpful to my peers. I've gained a lot of skills that I would not have gained had I went to any other program. That is due to the responsibilities and the service Oxford House requires." - Coby Carson, TN Chapter 16

Justine's story is a powerful example of what hope, support, and determination can do. From facing some of her darkest moments to now raising her son at Oxford House Speranza, her journey reflects the true purpose of Oxford House.

"Before Oxford House, my life was complete chaos. I was incarcerated when I found out I was pregnant, and I had lost all hope. I was worried my child was going to be born while I was in jail. Everything changed when I was offered a chance and applied to Oxford House. Since moving in, I've had so many opportunities open up—jobs, relationships with other women, and the strength and hope that tomorrow will be better.

As a new mother, life's definitely been challenging, but I take my child to meetings with me, and we get through this together. My child gets to grow up around women who truly care about him and me. I've built real relationships with my housemates that are stronger than any I've had before. The women in my house give me strength, hope, and courage every day.

If you're struggling, call Oxford House. Give them a chance to give you a chance. Today I know I am strong enough to overcome this and be the mother I was meant to be. We get through this together, one day at a time and that's all thanks to my Oxford House family." - Justine Smith, TN Chapter 26

Member Spotlight



Expansion



**OH Speranza
Opened Mar 2026
for women/child
Cookeville, TN**

**OH Padme
Opened April 2026
for women/child
Johnson City, TN**



**OH Bridge View
Opened April 2026
for women
Knoxville, TN**



**OH Genevieve
Opened April 2026
for women
Hermitage, TN**



**OH New Way
Opened May 2026
for men
Chattanooga, TN**

