

The saying “It’s not work when you’re doing something you love” is undoubtedly familiar to all of us.

When the Hartnett family decided to leave New York City in the 1980s and move to rural Pennsylvania to raise their family, our community gained a gem. John Hartnett attended Meadville schools and graduated from Allegheny College with a political science degree. He floated through school doing the bare minimum, yet managed to get by. Many in his social circle were drug users. “Going along with the crowd, my life was spinning out of control,” John said recently. “I saw several of my close friends pass away from opioid use and I knew I wasn’t going to continue going down that road; I wanted more out of life. When I missed out on an opportunity at work because I was too hungover, I decided that was the last straw.” He worked to make his life more manageable, beginning his journey of addiction recovery.

A self-taught web developer, John enjoys creating websites and doing graphic design work. He also likes snowboarding, yoga and disc golf, but his greatest joy is volunteering. “In recovery it is vital to sustain healthy routines. Volunteering and being of service to others allows me to maintain an ‘attitude of gratitude’ and is really enjoyable,” he said. “Drug addiction is very isolating. And, life is hard. One of my biggest goals is creating a more compassionate and inclusive community where everyone can lead fulfilling, happy and healthy lives. I would love to see a teen center built near the high school. With the right volunteers, students could see the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude and build resiliency to stay off drugs as a coping mechanism.”

After seeing firsthand the grave destruction addiction causes in families, John went to Not One More NWPA, a support and advocacy group. Talking with others who understood addiction helped him get through the loss of so many of his friends. Today, John is the president of the organization, and he helps addicts and their families by connecting them with local support groups, treatment options and life-saving naloxone. He also helped start Thankful Thursdays.

Faces Behind Your MMC

John Hartnett

Photo by Fallon's Photography Studio

“With the help of several awesome individuals from the community, we do pop-up community service events,” he explained. “We have so much room for growth. We welcome anyone that is interested in joining us.” He noted that he models his community service efforts after another Meadville resident, Lee Scandinaro. “I am in awe of what a selfless, thoughtful human being he is,” John said. “I have learned so much from him.”

Recently, John became a Recovery Service Navigator with Meadville Medical Center. The position was created through the Meadville Medical Center Foundation’s Let’s Talk campaign, which focuses on the current opioid crisis. John acts

as a comprehensive resource for anyone seeking information about treatment or support options related to addiction. “My day job is an extension of my life,” he said.

Like bees to honey, John attracts people from all walks of life. They see the good in him and what a kind soul he has. His love for our community and its people is heartwarming. A lot of exciting things are happening in the Meadville community, and we are proud to have one of our own responsible for a good share of it. Not only has he cleaned up his own life, he is making Meadville a much better place for all of us.

**We are proud to introduce our
May Faces Behind Your MMC,
John Hartnett, Recovery Service
Navigator.**