

March 28, 2025

Sara Dallas, Director
Southern Adirondack Library System
22 Whitney Place
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Dear Sara and Members of the Library Services Committee,

I'm thrilled to nominate Saratoga Springs Public Library's Read to Recovery program for the SALS 2024 Library Program of the Year. This initiative is redefining what a library can be, tackling urgent social issues and making critical resources more accessible to those who need them most. Led by librarians Emily Martin and Mary Ratzer, Read to Recovery has fostered meaningful community partnerships, expanded the library's reach, and offered crucial support to underserved populations.

It all started in early 2024 when Emily, an Adult Services librarian, came across some troubling data—drug overdoses in Saratoga County were on the rise. Just days later, as if by fate, she stumbled upon an article about San Francisco Public Library's Read to Recovery program. The concept was simple yet powerful: provide free addiction recovery books across all city libraries with no library card required. The goal? To give people seeking help easy access to recovery resources, including major recovery texts and self-help books. Emily immediately saw the potential for Saratoga Springs and got to work.

In just a few short months, SSPL became the first library on the East Coast—and only the second in the country—to implement this kind of no-barrier literacy program for individuals in recovery. The collection now includes over 50 titles in multiple formats and six languages, covering everything from 12-step programs to trauma recovery, harm reduction, mental health and crisis support. Digital resources make the program even more accessible while reducing stigma. And thanks to a partnership with Skidmore College's Social Work program, the collection continues to evolve to meet community needs.

One of the biggest successes of Read to Recovery has been its ability to bring together key players in the community:

- **RISE and Law Enforcement:** Collaborating with RISE, the Saratoga Springs Police Department, and the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office has improved how substance-related calls are handled. Now, Community Engagement Officers work alongside RISE outreach teams to provide immediate support.
- **Saratoga County Health Department:** SSPL hosted mobile naloxone distribution stands at major events like Chowderfest and St. Patrick's Day, getting life-saving kits and education into the hands of those who need them.
- **Legal Aid Society and RISE:** The library now offers low-barrier legal services to help individuals facing substance use-related challenges, housing insecurity, and domestic violence.

- **Healing Springs Recovery Center:** Looking ahead, we plan to integrate Healing Springs services into the library, expanding in-library recovery support even further.

Read to Recovery has transformed SSPL into a vital resource for the recovery community, offering:

- A thoughtfully curated collection of books, multimedia resources, and online support materials.
- Discussion groups, author talks, and peer support sessions to encourage connection and healing.
- Grant-funded outreach efforts aimed at the LGBTQ+ community, which faces unique barriers to recovery.
- A presence at overdose awareness vigils, Pride Fest, and local farmer's markets to reach people where they are.

For too long, individuals in recovery have been overlooked in library programming. Read to Recovery is changing that. This initiative not only provides education and support but also advocates for harm reduction, families seeking information, and the LGBTQ+ community—demonstrating SSPL's commitment to equity, inclusion, empowerment and education.

Since its launch in May 2024, SSPL has distributed over 500 books and materials from the Read to Recovery collection. Among the most requested items? 12-step guides, grief support books, and Narcan kits. By pioneering this innovative program and building strong community partnerships, Read to Recovery has created a sustainable, library-driven support system. And with funding coming solely from donations and grants, its success is a model for libraries nationwide.

For all these reasons, Read to Recovery is a standout candidate for the SALS 2024 Program of the Year award. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A. Issac Pulver, Director
Saratoga Springs Public Library



As of March 2025, the collection now includes over 50 titles with a limited number available in CD audiobook, large print, braille, American Sign Language (DVD), Spanish, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and Korean.

Topics include 12 step programs (AA, NA, GA, SMART Recovery, CoDa), family resources (ACOA, Alanon, Alateen), grief support, spirituality, disordered eating, mental health and trauma recovery.

Access to harm reduction and information for local recovery resources, housing, healthcare, crisis support, and suicide prevention is also available.

The Read to Recovery collection is discreetly located on the second floor of the library within "the stacks". This provides the community with low-barrier access to recovery resources, 70 hours/week.

To best empower library staff and patrons with more related resources, SSPL also maintains an online guide <https://guides.sspl.org/recoveryresources>

**Everything is free to keep.
No questions asked.**





READ RECOVERY





**READ
RECOVERY**
PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

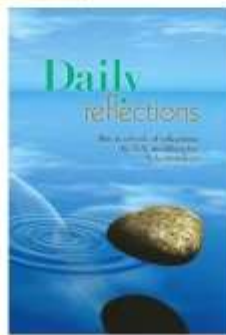
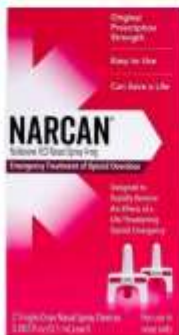
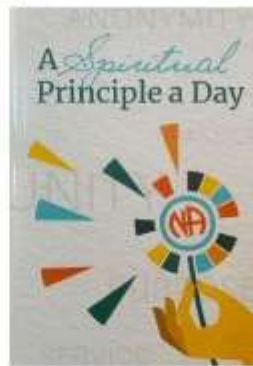
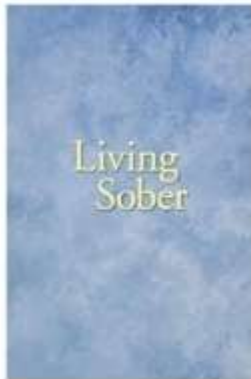
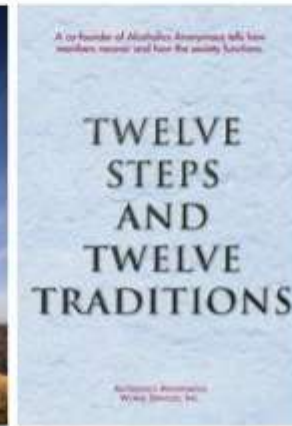
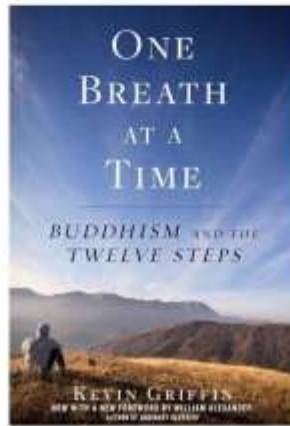
DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
May 20, 2024	Read to Recovery Launch @ SSPL	Press release and official launch
August 28, 2024	Overdose Awareness Vigil @ Congress Park, Saratoga Springs	Hosted by Prevention Council. Emily & Mary in attendance to distribute books on grief support
September 6, 2024	Congressman Paul Tonko Visit	Site-visit to showcase success of Read to Recovery
September 15, 2024	Saratoga Pride Festival @ High Rock Park, Saratoga Springs	Outreach van to bring literature (including LGBTQ+) and Narcan
October 1, 2024	Read to Recovery soft-launch	Materials sponsored by Healing Springs. Now at Mechanicville Public Library & Schuylerville Public Library
October 2, 2024	The Grief Experience @ SSPL	Author event with chapter on substance passing
October 3, 2024	Understanding Consent @ SSPL	Presentation by Wellspring
October 6, 2024	Dan Provost Memorial Walk @ Gavin Park, Saratoga Springs	Memorial walk for those who have lost a loved one to substance passing. Hosted by RAIS Recovery Advocacy
October 7 - 8, 2024	NY Friends of Recovery Conference @ Albany, NY	Emily tabling and attending conference
October 10, 2024	The Hope of Recovery @ SSPL	Film screening of Adirondack Health Institute documentary. Panel discussion w/ Healing Springs & RISE
October 28, 2024	Right Under Your Nose @ SSPL	Interactive program presented by Saratoga County Prevention Council
November 8, 2024	NYLA @ Syracuse, NY	Emily & Mary present at statewide library worker conference
Ongoing	A New Chapter @ SSPL	A monthly book club in partnership with Healing Springs Recovery & Outreach Center
Ongoing	Outreach Van	Outreach librarian regularly attends community events with books from Read to Recovery collection

READ RECOVERY

BY THE NUMBERS



TOP 10 OF 2024



FUNDING

Read to Recovery relies 100% on the support of grants and donations. Tax-deductible donations can be made through the Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library, a registered 501(c)3 EIN: 14-1724307



ADIRONDACK TRUST COMPANY
COMMUNITY FUND
HELPING YOU TO HELP OTHERS



National Library of Medicine
Network of the National Library of Medicine

READ RECOVERY ALLIES & SPONSORS

Read to Recovery is a community-based initiative and would not be possible without our growing list of partners. SSPL has worked closely with the following individuals, non-profit organizations, businesses, and politicians for support.

Adirondack Health Institute

Adirondack Trust Bank

Adirondack Trust Company - Community Fund

CDPHP

Daily Gazette

Dan Provost Memorial Walk

Friends of Recovery – NY

Friends of the Saratoga Springs Public Library

Grief Recovery After Substance Passing (GRASP) Saratoga Chapter

Healing Springs Recovery and Outreach Center & Prevention Council

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

National Network of Library of Medicine (NNLM) Region 7

NE Problem Gambling Resource Center

New York Library Association

Prevention Council of Saratoga County

RAIS Saratoga

RISE Housing & Support Services

Rosen Publishing

San Francisco City Supervisor Matt Dorsey

San Francisco Public Library Librarian Doreen Horstin

Saratoga Casino Hotel Foundation

Saratoga County – Department of Health

Saratoga County Sheriff's Office

Saratoga Community Health Center – Addiction Medicine

Skidmore Department of Social Work

Stewart's Shops

US House of Representative Paul Tonko, 20th District

Wellspring