

Redefining Addiction Recovery

Dan Hostetler of the Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center, has been honoured with the title of Most Influential CEO 2023 – Chicago (Non-Profit Organization Management). We wanted to find out a little more about the history of this outpatient addiction treatment facility, and the man at its helm.

Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center is a licensed (Level I and Level II) outpatient addiction treatment facility with a focus on serving the communities, both at large and those who are disenfranchised, in West Chicago. It is a not-for-profit organisation, funded privately which ensures no one is ever turned away because of an inability to pay for treatment. The treatment centre was built by an artist/builder using repurposed materials to create a uniquely modern, eclectic industrial space. The building is inhabited by original furniture pieces and art. The clinic believes that many of these discarded pieces retain value, and can be transformed into something useful and beautiful. This is very fitting as it's the same sentiment the facility applies to the lives of its clients, believing they too can be transformed. Its goal is to offer a place that evokes order and pride in the people it serves.

The clinical services it provides are conducted in group sessions, as well as on an individual basis. Its certified and licensed counsellors and clinicians

are a handpicked team, all solidly grounded in the traditional techniques of addiction therapy. Its CEO Daniel Hostetler has more than 30 years of experience in corporate consultancy and non-profit management under his belt. This includes serving as president and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Southern European Division of an International Consultancy for 10 years, where he managed more than 300 consultants. In the light of his award announcement as Most Influential CEO 2023 – Chicago (Non-Profit Organization Management), we have taken the opportunity to catch up with Dan, and dig a little deeper into his past.

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To be honoured with this recognition is quite strange to me. I accept it with deep gratitude and humble disbelief, both, because the role I fulfil as CEO looks very different than what I believe most onlookers would expect.

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Dan explained what a long journey it's been for him, beginning when he was a young boy at the Cub Scouts. When the Den Mother asked who would like to volunteer as the leader, the Den Chief, Dan raised his hand. He looks back on that moment now as the beginning of his life in, mostly, inglorious servitude to his masters. He can imagine now how his business school professors might scoff or even openly mock this vision of his young self. But ever

since that first tentative step forward, Dan has continued through the epochs of many leadership opportunities.

Even as a 'leader', Dan has always answered to someone else, a higher human power as it were, whether this be the board, a president, a donor, benefactor, or constituencies. It is very rare that he has ever had time to indulge in other interests, as the rigours and constant vigilance that come from being a conduit for someone else's mission has never allowed for such an indulgence. In the 40 years or so that Dan has spent tackling challenges and fulfilling a wide variety of leadership roles across the United States and the world, he's learnt a few things. He's been able to clarify his primary role as being that of a balancing pole between defining reality and providing hope; sharing credit and taking responsibility; providing a living wage and being able to keep the doors open; simultaneously serving the stockholders and the constituencies; being a boss while remaining a human being.

The key for Dan has always been to stay centred and true to himself, but he has borne witness to many colleagues become unglued and lose their footing over shifting principles and wavering loyalties. For him, the gauges of progress and success have always come from the attitudes of his constituencies, something that has always been easy for him to read. His guiderails have always communicated their satisfaction or dismay loudly and clearly. The only thing that's not been so easy to pin down is how their satisfaction was won. In the end, age and experience has revealed the answer comes down to his employees and designees. He's realised if they're happy and satisfied in their job roles and environment, that positive energy will be



transmitted vicariously to the constituencies. This creates a win-win sort of contagion, spreading joy on contact.

This means that for Dan, his primary and overarching purpose as CEO is the long-term, measurable, and sustainable well-being and outcomes of his patient populations. The secondary priority is the overall well-being of his staff, something that is obviously well-served by successful achievement of the primary priority. In fact, this is very much a chicken/egg situation, so closely linked are the outcomes dependency on each other. Dan sees it as a paradox on most modern perceptions of leadership.

The other factor to consider for any company is of course the need for survival in good fiscal and governance health. Without satisfying the stockholders, the auditors, and the ogres of compliance, all other endeavours are rendered meaningless. This is another set of skills requiring constant monitoring and balancing, ensuring the pressures and anxieties of the business side of operations don't invade or

infect the provision of the services. One side usually doesn't understand the other, so they both stand at bay to one another, leaving Dan as the middle-man connector and balancing pole once more.

This strategy has become Dan's go-to policy, with the majority of his attention being focused on the superior functionality of a well satisfied staff. This is the key to producing unequivocal business outcomes throughout all constituencies, almost without exception. He has also found it works equally as well in both for-profit and non-profit settings. In his moment of reflection on past leadership positions, Dan has been filled with gratitude for all the many thousands of lives he's had the opportunity to improve. His positions have included President and Board Chair of an International Business Consulting Firm, Operations and Finance Director for a national refugee resettlement non-profit, and Executive Director and Spiritual Leader of a 100+ year old international spirituality organisation. And now, of course, there's his current position as CEO of

one of the most innovative addiction treatment centres in the United States and maybe the world.

Throughout it all, the most consistent key to untangling the collective messes he's been faced with has been to put his ego aside and work in deft, intuitive servitude to those around him. He has a need to help those that depend on him to navigate the dense fog of uncertainty and doubt, and deliver them to a better destiny without any personal gain or self-aggrandisement. For Dan Hostetler, the gains and rewards he's received have exceeded his expectations, and reassured him that whatever gifts he possesses they have been put to good and proper use.



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