



## Mirci welcomes new COO, Ti Barnes



As the former Executive Director of Bowers-Rodgers Children's Home in Greenwood, Ti led a dedicated team in providing a safe haven and comprehensive support services for abused and neglected children. His role involved strategic planning, fundraising, and program development to ensure the holistic well-being of every child in their care. Transitioning to Allen University as the Associate Vice President for Development, Barnes spearheaded initiatives that helped to increase the institution's funding capacity, enhanced educational opportunities for students through scholarships, and improved facilities.

Now, as the COO of MIRCI - Mental Illness Recovery Center Inc., Ti aims to leverage his expertise in strategic planning, fundraising, and program development to strengthen our services and outreach.

"My goal is to ensure that individuals and families facing homelessness as well as mental health challenges receive the support, care, and resources they need to recover and thrive, fostering a community where these issues are prioritized and stigma is eradicated."

Ti's personal and professional journey has been guided by a commitment to service and community. He holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina, an MPA from Strayer University, and a CFRL from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Ti is a 28-year member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., a devoted husband and father of three.

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## Upcoming Events

Our annual 52 Windows fine arts auction and gala will be held on May 9th. For sponsorship inquiries please email [ttreacy@mirci.org](mailto:ttreacy@mirci.org). Register for tickets [here](#).

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**52 WINDOWS**  
**AN EVENING OF ART**  
 MAY 9 • 6PM • 701 WHALEY

*Featured Artists*

LUCY BAILEY	GINA LANGSTON
SONYA DIIMMLER	PASCALE SEXTON
RENEA ESHLEMAN	MAYA SMITH
DANIEL FLORES	TAYLOR SPREEUWERS
MALIK GREENE	KEITH TOLEN

MIRCI

## Celebrating National Social Work Month



March marks National Social Work Month, a time dedicated to recognizing the invaluable contributions of social workers. At Mirci, we strive to honor our dedicated professionals every day, but now, more than ever, we wish to highlight their experiences and unwavering commitment to their field.

Today, we shine the spotlight on Caroline Kearns, an experienced Licensed Independent Social Worker and Accredited Case Manager, who has played an integral role on the Mirci team for the past 1.5 years.

Below, Caroline generously offers insights into her social work journey.

### What made you want to get into social work?

One of my psychology professors at Presbyterian College, Dr. Ann Stidham, introduced me to the field of social work. As part of the psychology program, seniors are given an opportunity to learn about human behavior and the helping profession through a variety of internships. I was fortunate enough to have an internship at The Phoenix Center in Greenville, South Carolina, where I worked along side social workers who provided mental health and substance use treatment in the outpatient setting. These social workers inspired me to pursue my interests in helping individuals who are frequently cast aside for being "different."

### What is your favorite client success story of your career?

While working at a local hospital, one of my patients required a higher level of care than any facility in South Carolina could provide. With the support of my supervisor and manager, our team was able to

arrange an out of state transfer to a highly personalized, hospital-based inpatient program for victims of severe brain injuries with physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral deficits. This transfer took months to arrange and included collaboration with two state agencies - The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs - our interdisciplinary team, the patient's family, and a medical flight crew. This experience was truly an example of prioritizing individual needs and advocating for available resources.

### What are some of the harder parts about being a social worker?

Social workers are often the first face someone sees in a crisis situation, which means we're typically the ones who take the brunt of someone's emotions and at times, hurtful words. I have to remind myself to not take things personally. It can also be challenging to watch a client make a poor choice, but being a social worker means we respect each individual's right to self-determination.

### How do you maintain your personal mental health as a social worker?

It is difficult to put into words how fortunate I have been when it comes to working with people who value the concept of teamwork. Regardless of the work setting, I have been guided and supported by my teammates throughout my social work career. Knowing that I do not have to conquer a difficult or complex situation alone gives me the energy to keep going, keep helping, keep advocating. When you have a strong team that listens when you're overwhelmed, offers a helping hand, and celebrates your accomplishments you've hit the jackpot. Make those people your friends, vent your frustrations, and laugh together.

### Do you have any advice for people looking to get into the field?

Social work is not for the faint of heart. You're going to get emotionally, cognitively, and physically worn down if you don't have boundaries. Check your ego at the door. Professional practice is key - you are an integral part of client's life and that is never something to take lightly.

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## Stay Connected



[Donate one of our most needed items.](#)



For questions about volunteering, hosting a supply drive, or coordinating a fundraiser, please email: [mail@mirci.org](mailto:mail@mirci.org)



Recently awarded the Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency, gifts to Mirci can be made with trust and confidence [here](#).

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