

# Shine a Light

BRIGHTENING LIVES IN JOHNSON COUNTY

*A Fundraising Event hosted by Friends  
of Johnson County Mental Health Center*



**Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 6 - 9 p.m.**

Lodge at Ironwoods, Leawood, KS



## *Hello, friends! Join us in shining a light on unmet mental health needs in Johnson County.*

Hello!

Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center's fourth annual Shine a Light event will be an evening filled with inspiration, recognition and community spirit. I would like to invite you and your business or organization to join us as a sponsor and guest.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "Hope is being able to see the light despite all the darkness." At this year's event, we will shine our light brightly and share the incredible work being done to bring hope to Johnson County's residents who are living in darkness.

Over the past three years, Shine a Light has raised over \$200,000 from generous corporate partners, community organizations, and individuals. Most of the funds raised have been used to keep JCMHC clients safely housed and meet their basic needs. Other client needs supported include advancing education, eliminating court diversion fees, and boarding pets during treatment.

Beyond the funding, these life-changing supports could not happen without the work of Johnson County Mental Health Center's staff and community advocates. That evening, we will honor their efforts with the presentation of our Beacon of Hope and North Star Awards.

Finally, our keynote speaker at Shine a Light is Benjamin Sledge, a combat-wounded veteran of two wars, award-winning author, and creative artist. His high-energy storytelling and poetic message of hope and healing will inspire you to do even greater things for yourself and your community.

Your support and attendance on this special night is greatly appreciated. I hope to see you there!



**Rodney Longhofer**

Chair, Board of Directors,  
Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center





# Keynote Speaker

## Benjamin Sledge

**Writer / Author / Graphic Designer / Public Speaker**

Benjamin Sledge is a wounded combat veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, mostly under the Special Operations community (Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command) of the U.S. Army. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and two Army Commendation medals for his actions overseas.

Upon returning home, he began work in geopolitical intelligence, then moved into mental health. He holds multiple certifications in Crisis Response, Trauma Care, and Suicide Prevention and continues to work in the veteran community and within geopolitics. With over 14 years of experience as a creative director, he has designed logos, websites, graphics, and ads that have been prominently featured in highly regarded publications such as TIME magazine and The New York Times.



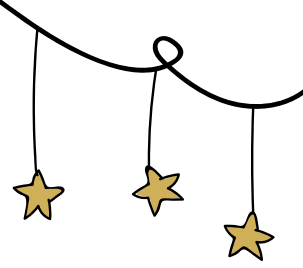
A prolific communicator, Sledge has also written several articles on masculinity, the military, relationships, and faith that have gone viral on social media, and his essays are featured regularly on Medium. From CNN and The New York Times to Fox News and The Daily Wire, his writing and graphic design have graced the pages of diverse publications. His book, *Where Cowards Go To Die*, chronicles his time in war and personal struggles to readjust and was released in July 2022 to critical acclaim. To date, his book has won the following awards and accolades:

- Gold Medal Winner, Nonfiction Book Awards for Biography & Memoir
- Gold Medal Winner, Readers' Favorite Book Awards
- Winner, 2024 Book Excellence Awards
- 2023 Chanticleer Military & Front Lines First Prize Winner for Narrative Non-Fiction
- 2023 International Book Award Finalist for Autobiography/Memoir
- Winner, 2022 NYC Big Book Award for Military Nonfiction

Sledge has consulted and spoken on behalf of major entities ranging from The U.S. Census Bureau, The U.S. Military Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), Colorado State University, Volunteers of America, and even shared the stage with influential figures such as Tim Tebow.

Sledge lives in Colorado with his wife, daughter, and son. You can learn more about him or contact him at **[benjaminsledge.com](http://benjaminsledge.com)**.

# About the event:



## Supporting community mental health

Last year's Shine a Light event raised nearly \$57,000 for Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center. The funds raised each year at Shine a Light directly support Johnson County Mental Health Center's mission and vision, from community education and outreach to client support and staff development. The support Friends provides would not be possible without the community coming together at Shine a Light.

## Recognizing mental health advocates and professionals

Two awards are presented annually at Shine a Light: the Beacon of Hope Award and the North Star Award. The Beacon of Hope Award is presented to a community mental health advocate who has been a guiding light in supporting people living with mental illness in our community, while the North Star Award is given to Johnson County Mental Health Center employees who shine brightest in their service to their clients and colleagues. The awards are a reminder of our "why" for Shine a Light: supporting the people on the front line of building a healthier community and improving access to mental health care and resources.

Pictured is last year's Beacon of Hope recipient, Sharon Lawrenz, who established Pathway to Hope to encourage, educate, and empower individuals to live life to the fullest.



## Hearing the inspiring journeys of the people we serve

At last year's Shine a Light, guests heard the inspiring story of Taku, an immigrant from Zimbabwe who sought services through Johnson County Mental Health Center. When Taku was facing an eviction, her case manager, Amy, reached out to Friends for financial support to keep Taku in her home until she could find transitional housing. That support of Taku's basic needs helped her stay focused on her mental health treatment, and she's now working, going to school, and thriving on her recovery journey.

Pictured is Taku, who shared her story on how Friends of JCMHC was able to help her stay focused on her mental health treatment by providing assistance.

# Sponsorship levels and benefits

	<b>Luminary \$15,000</b>	<b>Radiance \$10,000</b>	<b>Spotlight \$7,500</b>	<b>Beacon \$5,000</b>	<b>Lantern \$3,000</b>
Event Tickets	3 tables (24 guests)	2 tables (16 guests)	1 table (8 guests)	1 table (8 guests)	4 guests
Event Program	Full Page Ad	1/2 Page Ad	1/2 Page Ad	1/4 Page Ad	Logo only
Name & Logo Placement at Event	On all event materials, including on tables and in the slide show	In the slide show	In the slide show	In the slide show	In the slide show
Name & Logo Placement on Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to Provide Takeaways at Event	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Featured in Social Media Posts	✓	✓	✓		
VIP Package	✓	✓	✓		
On-Stage Mentions	✓	✓			



## 2025 Sponsorship Participation Agreement

### Shine a Light: Brightening Lives in Johnson County

Benefitting Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center

Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025 | 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. | Lodge at Ironwoods, Leawood, KS

#### Sponsor Information

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Sponsorship Level

We would like to commit to the following *Shine a Light* sponsorship level:

- ☐ Luminary \$15,000
- ☐ Radiance \$10,000
- ☐ Spotlight \$7,500
- ☐ Beacon \$5,000
- ☐ Lantern \$3,000

#### Payment Method

We will be paying with the following method:

- ☐ Check enclosed, made payable to *Friends of Johnson County Mental Health Center*
- ☐ Please send an invoice to enclosed address
- ☐ Please charge the listed credit card

Type of credit card: \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_ Discover Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

#### RETURN YOUR COMPLETED AGREEMENT TO:

ATTN: Jo Chavez  
Johnson County Mental Health Center  
6000 Lamar Ave, Suite 130  
Misson, KS 66202