



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 8, 2021

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Mayor Jacobs' Small Business Series Features The Renew Clinic

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviews Sarah Keel, executive director of The Renew Clinic, as part of his small business series.

Each week, the Mayor conducts interviews with small business owners, offering them the opportunity to talk about what they do; highlight their work; and share any future plans. A new vignette runs each Wednesday on the county and Mayor's various social media platforms.

This week's discussion goes a little more in-depth as it focuses not only on the business but Sarah Keel as well.

The Renew Clinic, located on Western Avenue, is an intensive outpatient treatment center that strives to be both Biblically rooted and clinically effective in an effort to restore individuals affected by substance misuse.

"We recognize that addiction – that there is a science to addiction," Keel said. "There is addiction science that we look to and turn to, to inform us on how we treat our participants. So, we don't reduce our treatment model down to something purely biological and we also don't reduce it down to something purely spiritual. We believe it's both."

Keel is a certified peer recovery specialist who helps oversee the operation. But she's not just any recovery specialist. She was once a substance abuser herself, spending her teenage and early adult years caught up in drugs.

She started "using and rebelling" and "blackout drinking" by 12. She tried cocaine at 14 and was shooting heroin by 18. At one point, Keel said, she had 45 arrests to her name.

But her life eventually turned around for the better.

"I was just lost," she said. "I didn't know how to connect with people. I felt like I was in constant competition with everyone around me and I felt very isolated and that is a recipe for someone to go start using drugs. And when I was in jail there was a prison ministry that came to visit us. And that was the first time I truly felt hope that maybe God could restore me. That maybe He actually does love me and I'm not a throwaway."

Mayor Jacobs agreed.

"You are a living testament that you can be suffering in a situation and there is hope that you can overcome that because you were able to do that and I think you're a great example," he said.

To hear more of what was said, check out the [video](#).

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