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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Ashley Addiction Treatment and Release Recovery Co-Founder Zac Clark  
Expand Treatment Access for Underserved Communities of Color**

*Driven by a passion to help others achieve recovery, nonprofits commit more than \$500,000 in scholarships to improve racial diversity and accessibility to treatment*

**Havre de Grace, Md. (June 29, 2021)**—[Ashley Addiction Treatment \(Ashley\)](#), one of the world’s most recognized and respected names in the substance use disorder treatment industry, today announced it has teamed up with [Release Recovery Foundation](#), a nonprofit co-founded by Zac Clark, also of season 16 of *The Bachelorette*, and Justin Gurland, to launch Ashley’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion scholarship program. With an initial commitment of more than \$500,000, the scholarship aims to improve racial diversity within treatment settings and remove financial barriers to make treatment more accessible for people in need.

“The past year has been a deep period of self-examination for us at Ashley. There are many people and families who are unable to afford the quality addiction treatment they need, and the unfortunate truth is that the communities impacted the most have been people of color,” said Ashley Co-CEO and President Alex Denstman. “We need to be an example of the change that’s desperately needed in our field, so we’ve been reevaluating our goals as an organization and finding ways to enact real change within our work environments and treatment settings. One way we plan to do this is by partnering with organizations like Release Recovery Foundation so we can improve access for those communities that have not been well served.”

Studies show that despite similar rates of substance use disorder, people of color—including Black, Hispanic, Latinx, Native American and Asian Americans—are generally more likely to encounter barriers that limit their ability to access or successfully complete treatment, such as cost and other socioeconomic factors when compared to white Americans. Identifying how these disparities show up in addiction treatment settings, and how to address them, is a critical goal for helping all people with substance abuse struggles achieve recovery.

“Our world is being challenged in many different ways, but our goal is simple—to get people into treatment who otherwise would not be able to afford it,” said Clark. “We’re excited to partner with such a long-standing, reputable organization like Ashley that we know will take action alongside us to help solve this important issue within our industry and facing the many people out there who still need help.”



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Release Recovery Foundation was launched in March 2020 by Clark and Gurland as a branch of the team's [Release Recovery](#) addiction treatment center in New York. Its mission is to provide more people with access to the lifesaving treatment they need regardless of status or financial means. Release Recovery Foundation creates opportunities for each recipient to make the world a better place; therefore, all of the money raised goes directly towards care for individuals in need.

“We’re dedicated to giving back to the communities who need our help most,” said Gurland. “It’s inspiring to work alongside a like-minded organization like Ashley that is just as committed as we are to not only voicing the need for change but also making it happen.”

To learn more about Ashley’s scholarship programs, please email Beau Malatesta at [bmalatesta@ashleytreatment.org](mailto:bmalatesta@ashleytreatment.org). To learn more about Ashley or to view the extensive list of services and programs it provides to those who suffer from a substance use disorder and their families, please visit [ashleytreatment.org](http://ashleytreatment.org). For more information about Release Recovery Foundation, please visit [releaserecoveryfoundation.org](http://releaserecoveryfoundation.org).

### **ABOUT ASHLEY ADDICTION TREATMENT**

Ashley Addiction Treatment (Ashley) is a nationally recognized leader in the integrated, evidence-based treatment of substance use disorders. Ashley’s expert staff implements a comprehensive program for patients that integrates a full spectrum of medical, clinical and holistic treatment methods. Ashley’s driving principle – “everything for recovery” – reinforces its timeless mission to heal each individual with respect and dignity, and reflects its ongoing commitment to meet new challenges. Accredited by The Joint Commission and a division of Ashley Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Ashley has treated over 50,000 patients since its inception in 1983 and has awarded more than \$65 million in scholarships to assist patients in their recovery. Ashley’s expansive offerings include inpatient as well as outpatient treatment, sobriety enrichment, community outreach, family and children’s education and specialty programs. For more information, please visit [ashleytreatment.org](http://ashleytreatment.org).

### **ABOUT RELEASE RECOVERY FOUNDATION**

Release Recovery Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to ensuring all who are ready and willing to seek professional treatment, are able. Substance abuse and mental illness destroy the lives of too many people from underserved communities who may not have the resources for proven treatments. Release Recovery Foundation offers scholarships to bridge the gap between what people can afford and what they need to transform their lives, regardless of race, gender, and/or sexual orientation. All of the money raised by Release Recovery Foundation goes directly to care for individuals in need. We believe that by allocating our funds directly to patient/client care, we are creating opportunities for each recipient to make the world a better place. For more information, please visit [releaserecoveryfoundation.org](http://releaserecoveryfoundation.org).



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