

# UnSung – Honoring the Voices of Women in Recovery

In Partnership with:

YWCA-Northeast Indiana, 5920 Decatur Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46816

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# UnSung



## INTRODUCTION

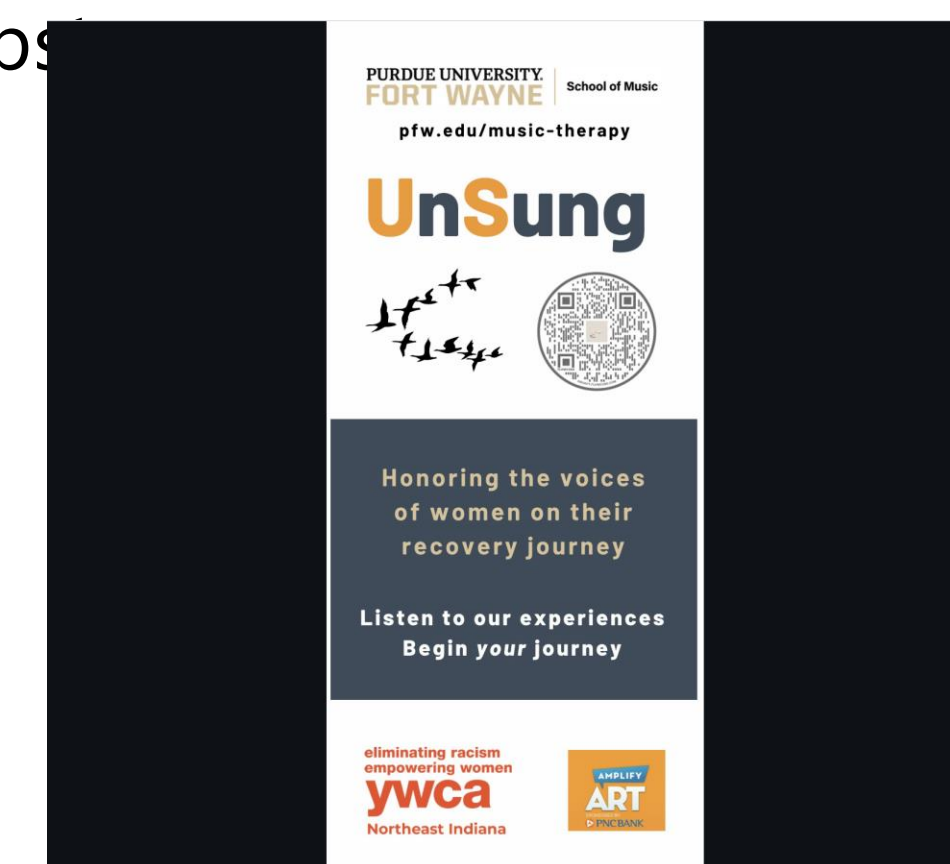
According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2020b) in the United States there were 17.2 million women with substance use disorders. Women face unique concerns and barriers accessing treatment due to societal stigma generating shame, concern for the safety and custody of children, physical separation from children, greater incidence of trauma and violence and additional needs stemming from co-occurring mental disorders (Gardstrom et al., 2013)

The UnSung Project has its roots at the YWCA of Northeast Indiana where PFW's department of music therapy has had a clinical practicum site for the past 7 years. The opportunity to apply for an Arts United Amplify Arts grant arose simultaneously with several of the residents at the YWCA sharing their recovery journeys through music therapy experiences. The idea to share these often unheard and misunderstood stories with the community through music experiences began to take shape.

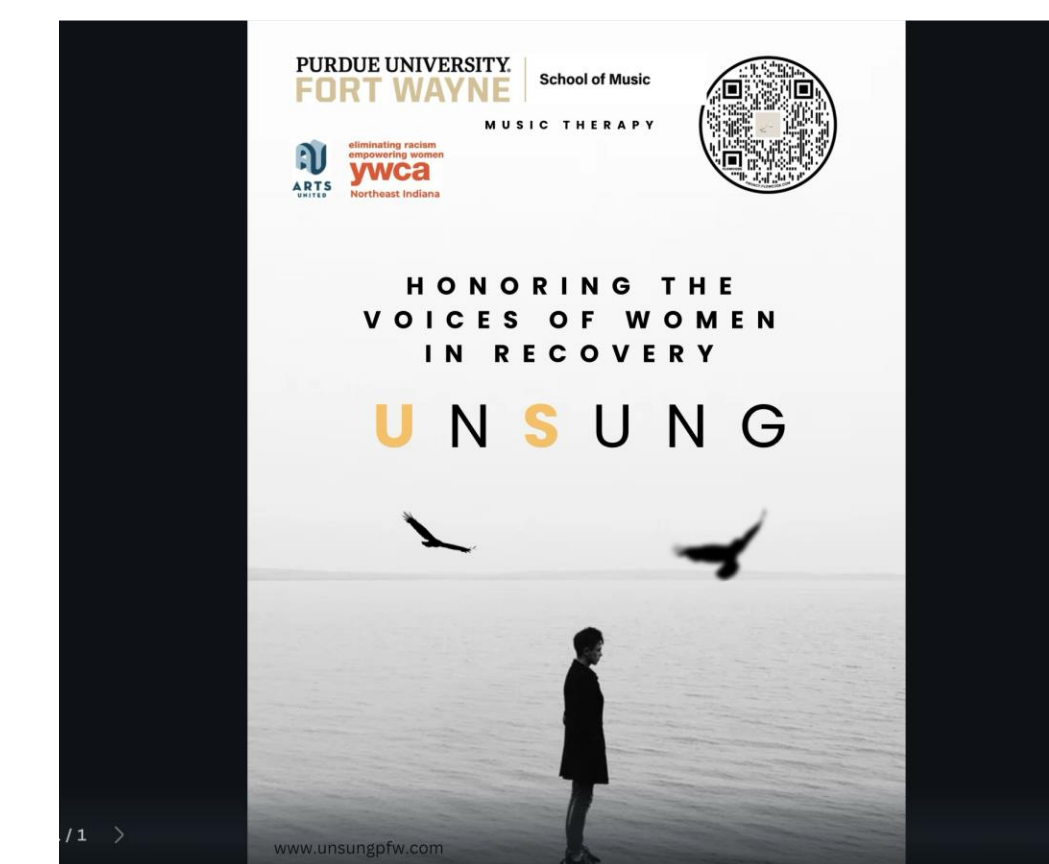
As of 2020, Indiana had 416 recovery programs, with over 40,000 individual residents in active substance abuse treatment (SAMHSA, 2020a). Navigating the often complex network of health insurance, referrals and program criteria was recognized as a barrier for women seeking sobriety and the YWCA agreed to be our community partner on this endeavor, assisting with connecting interested individuals with resources.

## OBJECTIVES

- Afford a different perspective of lived experiences through individualized music therapy sessions thus deepening participant's emotional connection to their story
- Create a personalized piece using narrative, original music and curation of sessions
- Share this work widely to promote acceptance, normalization and empathy
- Provide hope and resources for individuals experiencing challenges with substance use



Unsung Bookmark



Unsung Flier

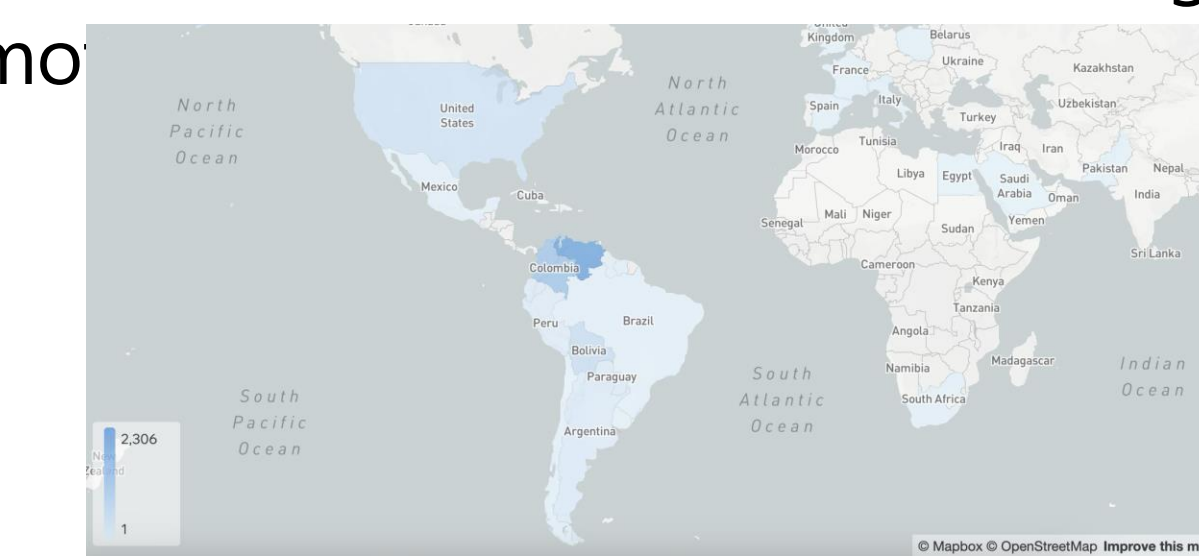
## IMPACTS

To date, over 10,000 individuals globally have engaged with the UnSung Project's work. This includes the United States and Mexico, the entirety of South America, Poland, England, France, Spain, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and South Africa. According to our website analytics, individuals most frequently visit and return to the music.

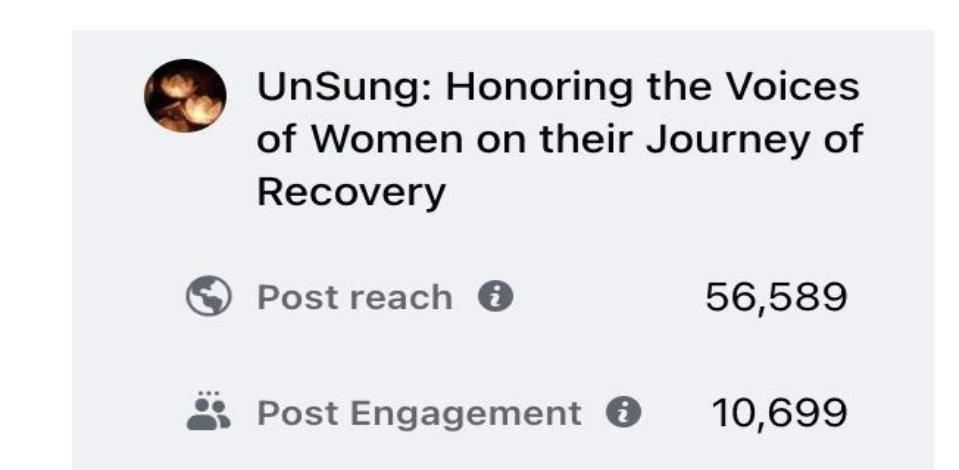
Residents of Indiana are the most frequent visitors to the UnSungPFW.com website. Traffic has been highest in the metropolitan areas of Indianapolis and Fort Wayne.

Locally, the music of UnSung has been used in substance abuse recovery groups at the YWCA, the VA Fort Wayne, the Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Program at VA Marion, Redemption House, Four10 Ministries, Recovery Café and Fort Wayne Recovery. There is a wait list of participants who want to share their stories and their music.

The UnSung Project has offered new perspectives that sustained recovery is possible, and that there are many pathways to reaching lasting sobriety. The enthusiastic interest of UnSung continues to be humbling and mo



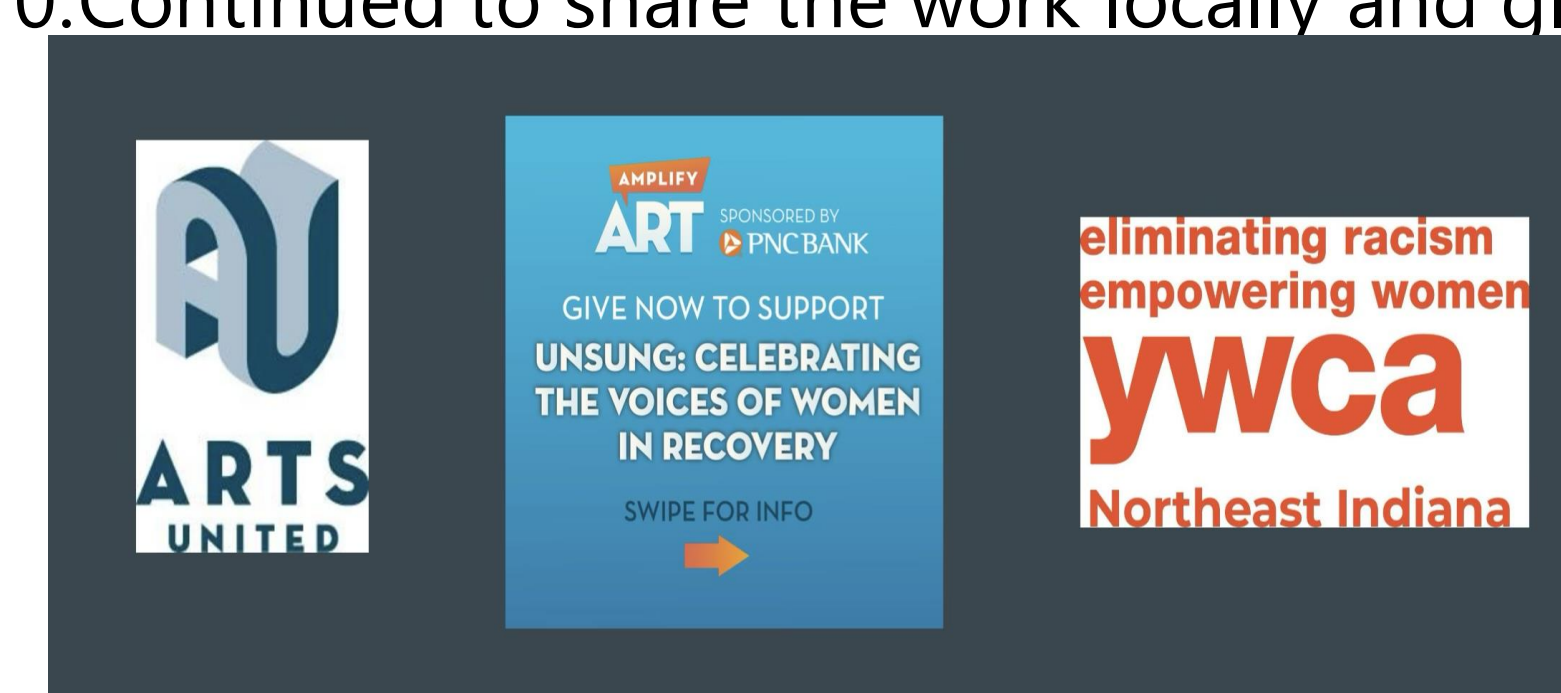
Global engagement via Facebook



Facebook analytics with advertisement reach and engagement

## METHODOLOGY

1. Sought approval from the YWCA-NEI to partner in the endeavor that would become the UnSung Project
2. Awarded 2021 Arts United, Amplify Arts grant (partially funded by PNC Bank) to cover media costs
3. Used snowball sampling to meet with women with diverse backgrounds and years in recovery
4. Had 4-8 individual music therapy session with each participant to listen and co-create their original pieces
5. Collaborated with PFW's Music Industry for recording and editing expertise, with PFW's Department of Theater for narrative readings to protect participant's anonymity, and with PFW MMT students for musical support
6. Created the website: unsungpfw.com to share the pieces and resources
7. Created paper media to share with recovery agencies
8. Premiered the media at Recovery Rocks in Fort Wayne in September, 2023
9. Created a Facebook page for UnSung and scheduled advertisements
10. Continued to share the work locally and globally while creating new



Community sponsors of the UnSung Project



Charlene Delaney and Dr. Eileen Garwood at Recovery Rocks in FW at the Sweetwater Pavillion in September, 2023.

## REFLECTION & CONCLUSION

The largest challenge we faced was how to share the project. We originally had thought that creating semi-permanent signage throughout the city of Fort Wayne using QR codes linking to our website would be our best path forward. We learned from speaking with students that QR codes are not always trusted.

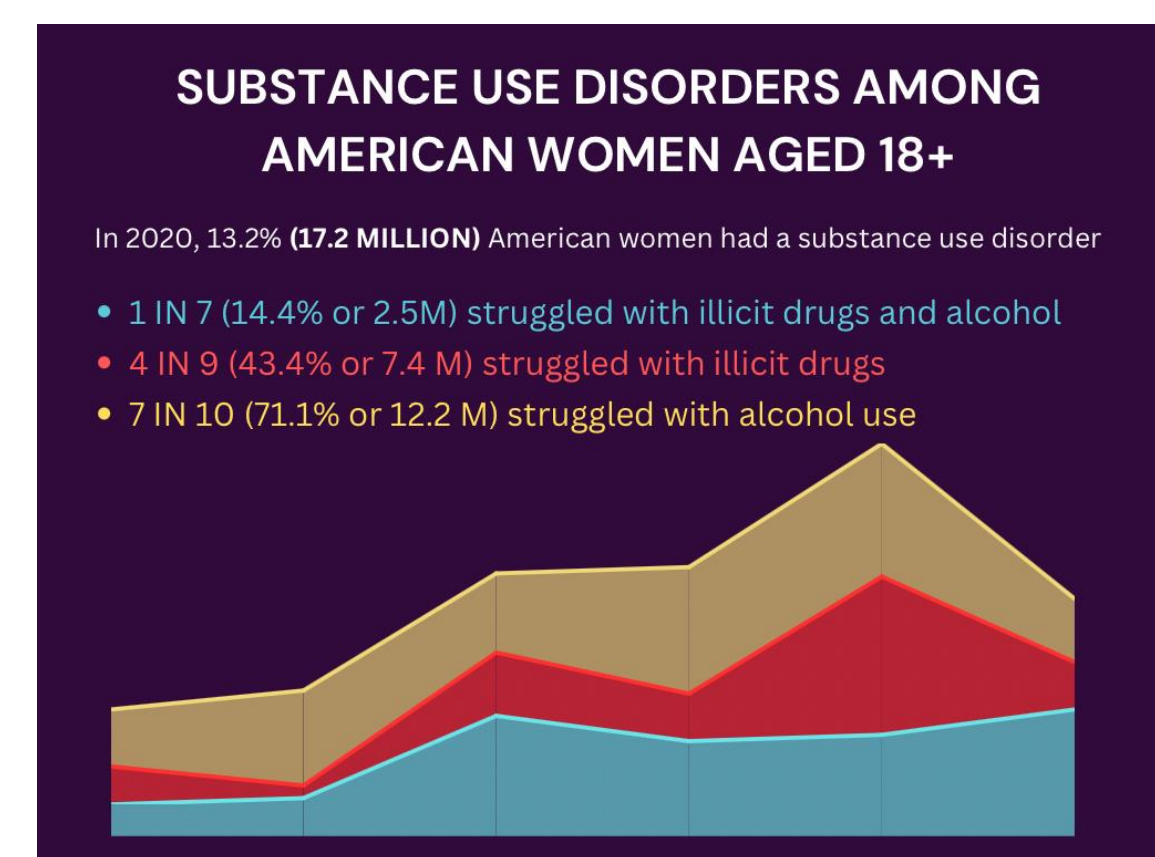
Creation of the Facebook page and sharing through social media truly launched the work into the public. With each Facebook advertisement, we are reaching over 50,000 individuals.

Future plans for UnSung include continuing to co-create original pieces of music with individuals in recovery from substance use disorders, as well as survivors of domestic violence. We hope to present UnSung at the 2024 International Conference of Music and Medicine in Berlin, Germany. We will continue our outreach efforts locally, including plans to download the project on iPads used by inmates in the Allen County Jail.

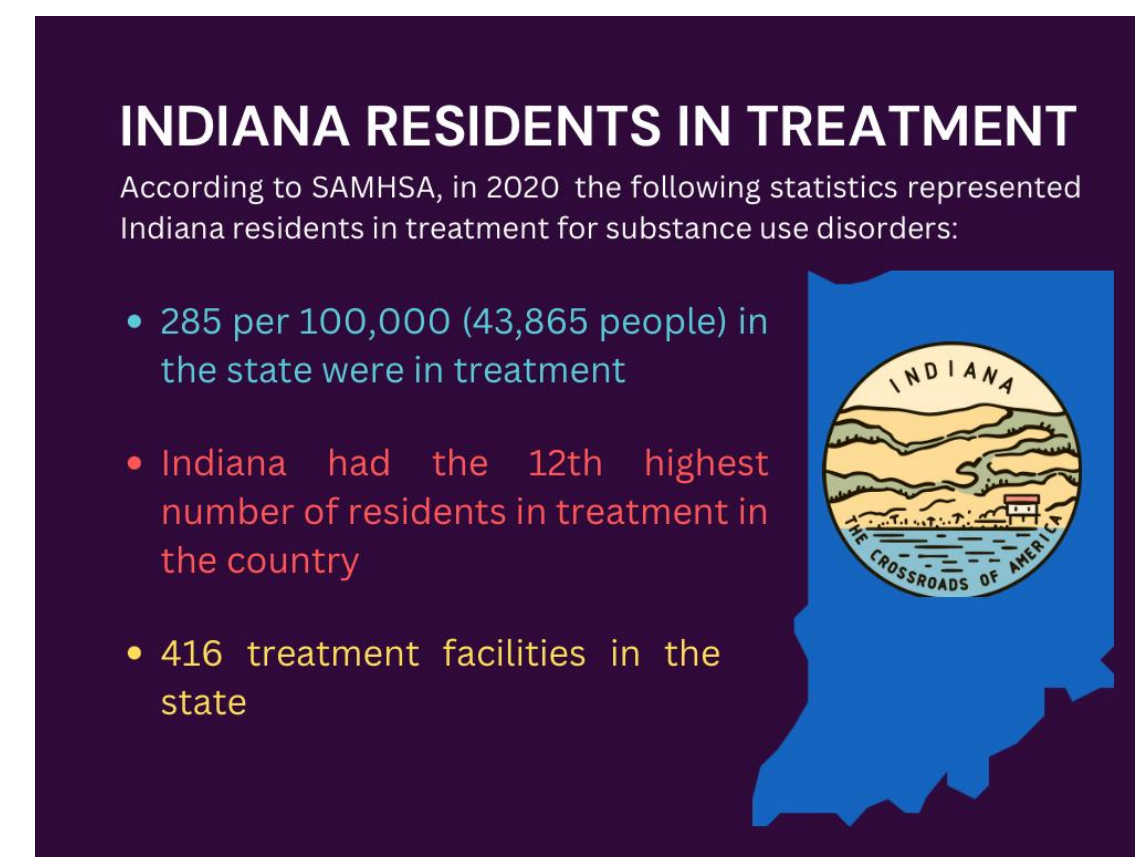
Continuation of this work is a labor of love that will surely expand the hearts and minds of all who engage with it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A most sincere thank you to Dr. Eileen Garwood whose faith and acceptance has shown me how to be a better clinician and a better human. This project would not be possible without the courage and hope of the women who generously shared their stories, energy, time and music. Thank you to Dr. Nancy Jackson and the PFW School of Performing and Visual Arts, the YWCA-NEI, Arts United, PNC Bank, Ali Dencklau and Madison Boyden.



(SAMHSA, 2020b)



(SAMHSA, 2020a)

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