

# A new haven for workers on front lines

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Rochester Democrat and Chronicle  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Respite Place has opened in the South Wedge to provide a place for front-line workers to relax.

The newly renovated space is housed in the upper unit of the BreatheDeep Inc. headquarters at 1515 South Ave. It includes a sauna, a massage chair, a dine-in kitchen and a living area for creative relaxation.

Leaders of BreatheDeep, Greater Rochester Health Foundation and the community joined on Jan. 23 to open the site.

The Respite Place is a component of Project Restore, a comprehensive wellness program that provides front-line workers with healing resources to rejuvenate body, mind and soul. The program include services such as free mental health counseling groups, restorative day stays, personal and professional life coaching and one-on-one personal training sessions when it comes physical fitness or nutrition planning.



**Leaders of BreatheDeep Inc., Greater Rochester Health Foundation and the community hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch Project Restore: The Respite Place.** ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE STAFF

## 'We want them to be taken care of'

Dr. Melany J. Silas-Chandler, CEO and president of BreatheDeep, expressed how thrilled she is to launch this first-of-a-kind program for front-line workers.

"We know that first line workers are doing a lot in terms of helping those who are in traumatic situations, grief response, violence response, or those who are dealing with different mental health issues," Chandler said. "We want them to be taken care of so that they can con-

tinue the work they're doing."

She described how her understanding of the critical need for support was profoundly shaped by her mother's journey with schizophrenia. "The work we do here at BreatheDeep is deeply rooted in her story and my own experience," Chandler said.

Matt Kuhlenbeck, president and CEO of the Health Foundation, recognizes the great amount of work front-line workers face. Kuhlenbeck described how the foundation is dedicated to advancing equitable solutions that support health and well-being for all.

## How to get access to services

Project Restore services and access to The Respite Place will initially be available exclusively to staff from grantee organizations that are part of Greater Rochester Health Foundation's Racial Health Equity work. During this phase, participants will share their feedback on the services and the space. After gathering feedback, access will be extended to front-line workers across the wider community. For more information about Project Restore visit <https://breathedeepinc.org/project-restore>.