

**2026 Mental Health Advocacy Award
Advocate of the Year Award – Melissa Bemis**

Nominated by Christie Everett, LICSW, Director of Operations, Clara Martin Center

Melissa is an extraordinary mental health advocate whose resilience, compassion, and unwavering dedication have made a profound impact on our community. She consistently champions the needs, voices, and well-being of individuals navigating mental health challenges, and she does so with courage, clarity, and heart.

What truly sets Melissa apart is her ability to advocate with both strength and empathy. She approaches every situation—no matter how complex—with grace and tact, ensuring that people feel heard, respected, and valued. Her communication style is thoughtful and intentional, creating trust and safety for those who seek her support.

In her role as Peer Support Supervisor at Clara Martin Center, Melissa uses her lived experience not only as a foundation for deep understanding but also as a powerful tool for education and empowerment. She bravely shares her insights to reduce stigma, promote awareness, and guide others toward hope and healing. Her advocacy reflects authenticity and wisdom, making her voice both impactful and transformative.

As a supportive supervisor and trusted confidant, Melissa uplifts those around her with steady encouragement and genuine care. She fosters an environment where colleagues feel supported, inspired, and confident to grow. Her caring nature and approachable demeanor make her incredibly easy to connect with, strengthening team relationships and enhancing the culture of compassion within our organization.

Melissa's resilience is evident in the way she navigates challenges while continuing to advocate fiercely for the rights and dignity of others. Her commitment to mental health advocacy is not just part of her role—it is a profound reflection of who she is.

For her leadership, her authenticity, and her tireless dedication to improving mental health access, understanding, and support, Melissa is truly deserving of the Mental Health Advocate of the Year award.

Sincerely,
Ember Power
Director of Access and Acute Care Services
Clara Martin Center