

# WJON AM1240



**Justin LaBounty WJON**

ST. CLOUD -- Over 400 Minnesotan's died from opioids in 2016, to combat the growing problem St. Cloud State University is hosting a week to bring awareness to all the options for people fighting addiction.

**Thaddeus Rybka** is the Recovery Community Coordinator at SCSU. He says part of the program is about helping people understand the life they can have without opioids.

*"We are also showing the community that recovery works. There is a stigma about addiction and addiction recovery and it can prohibit someone from getting that help that they need. We just want people to see that recovery works, you can live an amazing*

*life without substances and here are some resources that are available to you."*

Rybka is able to speak to students as someone who has had his own battle with substances. He will be eight years clean on February 2nd, 2018.

Rybka and SCSU have been on the forefront among Universities to handling the growing problems with addictions.

*"At SCSU we have a recovery community, a residentially based program for students recovering from a substance use disorder. It is the first of its kind among public institutions in the upper Midwest. We started the program in 2012 and have seen many miracles."*

The program has given many students a chance to go to college that would have otherwise thought that was not an option for them.

*"We have seen a lot of students come and get that college degree while being clean and sober, and not just do well academically but thrive socially as well."*

St. Cloud State also offers programs like STARS (Students Taking Action In Recovery & Service) to help students get more involved with fighting the opioid epidemic.

Through a generous donation from Dan Pearson and the JVP Foundation, St. Cloud State University is

able to offer a medication drop-box. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their unused over-the-counter or prescription pills, gels and creams to the campus pharmacy located within Student Health Services (Hill Hall, first floor).

ST. CLOUD STATE RECOVERY COMMUNITY