



Matters of Substance

FROM THE ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNCIL

AUTUMN 2008

Celebrate Recovery Month-

Join the Voices for Recovery: Real People, Real Recovery



An estimated 22.6 million people in the United States suffer from substance use disorders. Substance use disorders are treatable diseases. Participating in treatment and/or recovery programs for substance use disorders is as effective as receiving treatment for other chronic conditions-yet nearly 21.1 million people needed but did not receive treatment at a specialty facility in

2006, according to the 2006 *National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*.

Treatment is important. One year after treatment, people report a significant reduction in their alcohol and drug use, increases in employment and income, and decreases in homelessness.

In order to highlight the importance of recovery, towns, counties, and states around the country observe *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* in September each year. This year, the 19th annual *Recovery Month* recognizes the impact that real people and real stories have on recovery, and celebrates those who have worked to advance the treatment and recovery landscape.

In 2008, the highlight is on the people for whom treat-

ment and long-term recovery have given a renewed outlook on life. We invite you to take part in the theme, "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Real People, Real Recovery*," and spread the word that addiction is a medical illness and that treatment is effective and recovery is possible. By getting involved, you can help more people on a path of recovery to lead more fulfilling lives.

You may know someone with a substance use disorder, whether that person is a family member, friend, colleague, or neighbor. Those who have lived through these experiences have the most compelling stories to tell and can truly make a difference in helping others seek treatment. With that in mind, this year's *Recovery Month* celebration highlights the unique stories of each person in long-term recovery.

*Join us for our
Annual Lunch
Thursday, October 23, 2008
12-2pm*

*Borg Warner Room, TCPL
Guest speaker: Honorable M. John Sherman*

A Voice for Recovery



Abby is a 20 year old client who grew up in a stable, supportive household. She continues to live with her parents although her 30 year old sibling is already out of the house and living on her own. Neither of her parents had problems with alcohol or drug use, nor any history of mental health or legal issues. Abby is a personable, attractive young woman who successfully graduated high school, previously held jobs in the field of child care and nursing and is currently working full time for a child care provider. Her career goal is to become a nurse and eventually teach nursing. She is also recovering from an addiction to alcohol, marijuana, and opiates. Her first use was at 15, when she began smoking pot. When she graduated high school at age 18, she began drinking. Two years later she was using Vicodin and Oxycontin. At the time Abby entered treatment, she had been smoking 5-6 times daily,

drinking some 20-30 ounces of vodka a week, and taking 10 pills a day. In addition to hangovers, she experienced shakiness, vomiting, nausea, disabling headaches, irritability, loss of control in verbal outbursts with family and friends, and blackouts. Abby said she gave up her health, her family, and friends to support her habit. She was stealing hundreds of dollars from her parents to support her habit when her wages no longer could. It was hard to recall a time when she wasn't using or under the influence of drugs. Abby tried unsuccessfully to stop 3 or 4 times, then an overdose brought her to the emergency room of Cayuga Medical Center and later, upon discharge, to the Alcohol & Drug Council. Through individual and group counseling and attendance at self-help groups, Abby has been successfully drug free for more than 8 months. She has rebuilt the trust with her family and continues to work full time.



Message from the Director

There's a lot on people's minds these days: the economy, the upcoming Presidential election, this nation's dependence on foreign oil and the need for changing lifestyle behaviors to preserve the environment. Change is in the air. Twenty four years after the Walter Mondale/Geraldine Ferraro campaign, not only is there a female Vice Presidential candidate, but the first African-American candidate for President.

Change can happen in a moment, or in a year. Other changes take decades, even a lifetime. As we celebrate National Recovery Month this September, we are reminded just how hard it is to change. It requires a recognition that the current course is unproductive, even life-threatening, to continue. It takes the willingness to consider alternative approaches to problem-solving and the courage to take action to make change happen. It also takes the support and guidance of family, friends, and professionals.

The shame and stigma of addiction can lead to isolation and alienation from one's family and the community. Substance abuse disorders are family diseases, since the consequences of addiction and the impact of long term recovery affect all members of the family. No one understands better than families that recovery can be a long process requiring multiple episodes of treatment. No one plans to become addicted to alcohol or drugs. Even when the abuse has caused someone's life to spin out of control, there is hope. Treatment for substance abuse disorders is just as effective as for other chronic medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, asthma, and diabetes. Join us this month in acknowledging the courage of recovering individuals and their families in their efforts to reclaim their lives. Recovery is possible.

Kathleen M. Blair, LCSW-R
Executive Director

ADC is celebrating 43 years of service to the community!

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Welcome!



Brian Corbin and Lezlie Namaste

Brian Corbin, BS, CASAC, has worked in the human services field for over eight years, specializing in chemical dependency treatment. He has worked with diverse populations including adolescents, criminal justice, family groups, and dually diagnosed populations. Before coming to the Alcohol & Drug Council, Brian worked in a maximum-security prison and an inpatient chemical dependency facility. He feels that it is a gift to be a part of the healing that takes place during treatment. He is looking forward to new challenges at the Alcohol & Drug Council.

Lezlie Namaste is in the process of getting her MSW at Binghamton University. This is a career shift from teaching parenting and life skills to at risk populations in Ithaca and the surrounding area. She is entering a new bittersweet stage as an empty nester now that her twins, the youngest of 7, are off at college.

Tina Doyle is in the MSW program at Roberts Wesleyan College. Tina has worked with Headstart as a Home Visitor and in the transportation industry before returning to college to pursue her MSW. In her placement with the Council, she will be able to use knowledge of addiction with various populations she will work with in the future.

Cher Powell comes to the Alcohol & Drug Council as an intern from the Chemical Dependency Counseling Program at TC3. She retired 5 years ago after more than 30 years as a flight attendant. Having worked as a volunteer in a domestic violence shelter before moving to Ithaca, her interest in chemical dependency counseling comes with an extra incentive to treat women and dual diagnosis clients. She feels that working with the wide range of people at the Council will provide invaluable experience and insight for her future career as a clinician.



Tina Doyle and Cher Powell

Program Highlights

BASICS Group

The BASICS Group is designed to provide a supportive environment in which participants learn about chemical abuse and addiction. While considerable stigma remains attached to alcohol and drug abuse/addiction, these are imminently treatable conditions. The first goal of the group is to shatter the stigma attached to the illness and communicate hope that the recovery process, while difficult, is attainable and rewarding. Shame is a major obstacle for individuals trying to reclaim their lives from disease. Group members are provided with information on the symptoms of the disease, the progression of addiction, treatment options, and community support. This aids clients in identifying and treating symptoms early, rather than progressing to the terminal stages of the disease. The BASICS Group is open to clients struggling with alcohol and drug abuse, as well as their significant others/family members. Two groups are offered: Mondays from 5:00-6:30pm and Tuesdays from 4:00-5:30pm.

Recovering Professionals Program

The Recovering Professionals Group recognizes the specialized treatment needs for maintaining recovery while practicing as lawyers, nurses, physicians, pharmacists, educators, editors, chefs, executives, and other professionals. The goal of the group is to help professionals experiencing problems with chemical abuse or dependence understand their relationship to alcohol and/or other chemicals. The group objectives include beginning a program of recovery from addiction, reinstating or maintaining professional licensure, remaining employed in chosen field, exploring impact of addiction on familial and personal relationships, exploring impact of addiction on mental and physical health. The group is held on Wednesdays from 5:30-7:00pm.

*"Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the sand and sings the song without the tune and never stops at all."
-Emily Dickinson*

By the Sea-
By Ariel.*

I've built my castle in the sand
like a child, by the sea.
& you, your waves
they come and go,
pulling parts of me.
Disturbing this foundation,
fragile as it lay,
it withstands your ebb and flow
day by
day by
day.

I've built my castle tall and proud.
For years your winds have blown some down.
And yet it's standing on its own,
barely stable:
this I know

I've built my castle by the sea.
I always dreamt that's where it'd be.
Just not so battered by the storms—
I'd hoped the weather calm and warm.
I hold the walls up with my faith.
This castle strong you shall not take.
It's all I have to harbor me,
This windblown castle
By the sea.....

*Lisa C. is a recovering artist
and poet. Her nom d'arte is
Ariel.

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VISIT THE ALCOHOL & DRUG COUNCIL ONLINE: www.alcoholdrugcouncil.org

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