A Better WAY

A newsletter by and about those in Recovery

August 2004

Inside this issue:

LIFE
on Life's Terms...
The hardest thing to do

Giving BACK In Recovery
Willis Center Recovery Houses participate in community event to clean up CASTLE PARK

WUZ GOIN ON...
A Listing of upcoming events

PLUS:

Doing the STEPS
Lessons in Recovery



Thanks



...to the men and women of the Willis Recovery Community! More than fifty people joined together on Saturday, July 31, to rake, clean and help out the Castle Street neighbors with their park. Our thanks to: the men and women from Channing House, Linda Fay Griffin House and Footsteps, all Willis Center programs; the young men of Starting Point program; the HIV/AIDS Outreach Team of the Willis Center; the staff of Health Awareness Services; the staff of the Willis Center.
Hand in Hand, helping one another!

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HENRY LEE WILLIS COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.
WILLIS CENTER
Hand in Hand, Helping One Another!

Recovering people come from all walks of life. We are all races, all economic levels, all ages, male, female and transgender. We are as varied as the rest of the human race. These are some of our voices and some of our stories....

A Better **Way** August 2004

Life on Life's Terms…

A woman's thoughts on recovery.

Quote of the month:

Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to do nothing at all. – unknown author

This is a very difficult thing for me to do! I've been practicing for years and I still mess it up way too often.

When it comes to alcoholics and addicts, I have mastered this only because it was too painful not to. I know, without question, that there is not a damn thing that I can do or say that will *make* someone stop abusing drugs and alcohol. I can share my experiences. I can give them information. There is nothing that will make an addict or alcoholic stay clean and sober until *they* are ready. I've tried many times to fix people and other people have tried to fix me, but change only happens when the individual wants to change. I have now mastered the urge to fix other substance abusers.

Now, you would think that being able to master keeping my mouth shut and letting a person find their own recovery would make it easy for me to master this in other areas of my life. Wrong! My children can tell you all too well how much trouble I have not "suggesting" what they should or should not do. I'm sure a few of my co-workers could also tell you how difficult it is for me to just sit back and watch, with my mouth shut, when I think things should be done another way.

It's always easier to focus on some one else, than it is to take a good long look in the mirror.

It's funny though…the times I find myself struggling with this urge to intervene (i.e. be the nagging, interfering mother/mother-in-law or the employee who puts her two cents in, even when it isn't requested) is when I'm feeling overwhelmed with my own *stuff*. It's always easier to focus on some one else than it is to take a good long look in the mirror. You know, if everyone would just be the way *I* think they should be, and do what *I* think they should do, everything would be perfect! Right? ☺ Wrong!

Anyway, I'll keep working on this, but like the quote says, sometimes it is the *most difficult* thing to do!

Jeanine
Recovering Alcoholic & Addict

WILLIS CENTER is a multicultural, minority-based organization located in Worcester

Our vision is to create a community in which people of color and the disadvantaged can gain equal access to quality human and social services that improve their quality of life.

We welcome your thoughts, ideas, articles, or financial contributions. Please write us at:

Willis Center, c/o A Better Way,
119 Forest Street
Worcester, MA 01609

*The views and opinions of the participants do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion of the Willis Center and shall not be used for endorsement purposes.

The Willis Center Presents the Third Annual

WORCESTER RECOVERY WALK

September 16, 2004

Rain Date: September 17

A collaboration of Willis Center; MOAR; AIDS Project Worcester; Mass. Veterans Shelter; UMass HIV programs



Start Time 11:00 am

Walk Route - Meet at the corner of Wellington/Main Street. Take Main Street to King Street; Proceed to Jaques Ave; turn down Wellington Street; take Main Street to City Hall for a short program and rally.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE at the rally!

For more Information: Call Communications at 508-799-0702 ext 113 or 133.

Doing the Steps: Lessons from Recovery

by Jesse Mellor

Step Two or "What a Relief"

We had to *trust* someone to get us to the door of treatment and change, but just getting there wasn't enough.

Step Two talks about a "power" greater than ourselves returning us to sanity. A common thought when someone is first exposed to recovery is, "If I just don't drink or use, then things will be okay." Physiological detox is safe and relatively painless with medicines available today and we can get the substance out of the body. But the substance is still in our beliefs, our thinking, and our emotions. Psychological detox takes *time and work*!



"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

The foundation for addiction starts long before that first drink or drug is ingested; for some it is an intergenerational disorder. If you come from a family with a history of addiction, you are like a baseball player who steps into the batter's box with two strikes against him, even before he sees the first pitch.

Strike One is the likelihood of a genetic predisposition (biological). **Strike Two** is the theory of Social Learning, which is learning by observation in a social setting, watching a role model drink or use. From this situation you develop a belief that the behavior is what adults do. Not a good way to start the game!

Step Two is the start of our psychological detox, ***changing our belief system.*** Believing in a higher power is a leap of faith for many; "If I believe it can happen, I have a chance. Without that belief, I have no chance to change."

Many people struggle with the concept of "higher power" after years of addictive behavior. Many people don't believe in anything by this point, and now you are told a "higher power" can return you to sanity. This can be quite a leap!

For many, this belief in a Higher Power empowers the person to carry out the change he can now visualize. The group, whether it is AA, NA, or your brothers and sisters in a residential program, helps to motivate the person to keep changing.

Your Higher Power empowers you to take action, because you not only can *visualize* the change of Sobriety, you now *believe* it can happen!

Our Deepest Sympathy...

The following members of the Recovery Community have recently passed away.

Our thoughts & prayers are with the family and friends of ***Steve C.***, and ***Michael J.*** They will be sadly missed.





If *only I had known*
I would have held on little longer
If *only I had known*
I would have sat and talked with you a little longer

If *only I had known*
I would have told you…

If *only, if only, if only*
I could turn back time

I would never have to say…
If only

M.N.



Thanks for Coming

The Willis Center's Substance Recovery Team would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's 9th Annual Alumni Dinner. We look forward to seeing you all next year!





Local Resources

Willis Center men's & women's substance recovery services include:

Recovery Residential
Transitional Sober Living
Independent Living
HIV/Outreach Services
Outpatient Services

For more Information call ***Jesse*** at 508-755-8880 or visit our website: http://www.williscenter.org

Detox Services available in Central Mass:

Spectrum
(800) 366-7732

AdCare Hospital
(800) 345-3552 x256

Community Healthlink, Inc
(508) 860-1260

WUZ GOIN ON... in your neighborhood!

Sober in the Sun 16th Annual Labor Day Weekend Experience. September 3rd thru 6th, 2004, at the Treasure Valley Boy Scout Camp Barclay Rd. (just off Rt. 31), Spencer, MA. A Alcohol and Drug-Free Weekend festival with live music, camping, workshops and activities. For more info visit www.soberfestival.com

Volleyball, ANYONE?

Willis Center Substance Recovery Services is looking for people who are interested in playing volleyball this fall/winter. If you're interested, please call MADELINE @ 508-799-0702 ext 133. We need **YOU** in order to play!



"Survival is worth celebrating"!
Sandi Carlson

Congratulations

To all those who celebrate a sober anniversary for the month of August & September!

If you have a recovery anniversary you would like to share, give us a call: Communications Dept @ 508-799-0702, Ext 113, or 133