A Better WAY

A newsletter by and about those in Recovery

November 2004

Inside this issue:

LIFE
on Life's Terms...
How do I make it through?

A Way Of Life

The well-known secret society

A Place to call Home

Looking for affordable sober housing? Ready for independent living?

Look no further then the Willis Center!

PLUS:

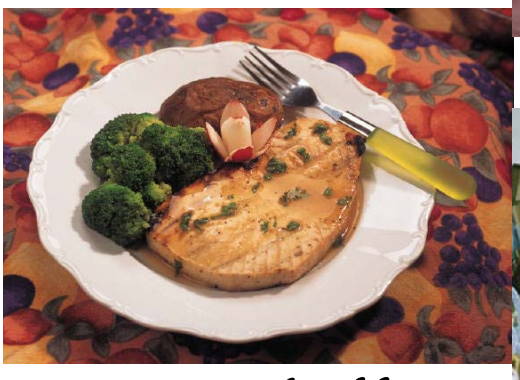
Listing of Resources and Sober Events in your Community!

Sponsored by the

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



*"We make a **living** -*



*But we make a **life** -*



Willis Center - helping change Lives

" In 2002 more than 14 percent of requests for emergency food assistance are estimated to have gone unmet." **Black Press USA**



by what we get.



by what we give."



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….

Life on Life's Terms…

A woman's thoughts on recovery.



Quote of the month:

Joyful people live their lives finding ways to celebrate what is and not what could have been… -Jane Jayroe -

This month's article isn't based on a quote. Someone requested that I share my first sober holiday season. My initial reaction was that it was not a pleasant time and I wasn't sure that it would be a good topic. After I thought about it, I decided that maybe, just maybe, sharing my sober holiday experiences might help someone out there who is struggling.

Well…my first holiday season was spent in treatment, I didn't have custody of my children and I had no contact with my family. I was miserable. However, looking back now it was an important stepping-stone in my recovery. It helped me realize that I could experience being sad, lonely, regretful, resentful and just plain angry without using drugs or alcohol to make the emotional pain go away. I just had to go through it a day at a time, an hour at a time and at some points moments at a time. **The important thing is that I didn't pick up -** and by not picking up my tolerance to emotional discomfort increased. Every time I make it through a situation that brings up strong, negative emotions without picking up, I get a little stronger.

"I could experience being sad, lonely, regretful, resentful and just plain angry without using drugs



The holiday seasons have gotten better and now I actually enjoy them! My favorite is Thanksgiving because I have so much in my life to be grateful for today. Gratitude is one of the tools I use to keep myself in a positive frame of mind. Even when bad things happen, I try to focus on something positive so the negative things don't overwhelm me.

If you are struggling this holiday season, hang in there and just wait for the negative stuff to pass. You'll be stronger for it and next time the negative emotions and thoughts won't have so much power over you. Every sober year that goes by increases my ability to manage the negative stuff that life throws at me. It also increases my ability to enjoy the good things that life throws my way.

I hope your holiday season is a happy one; but if not, remember it will pass.

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.

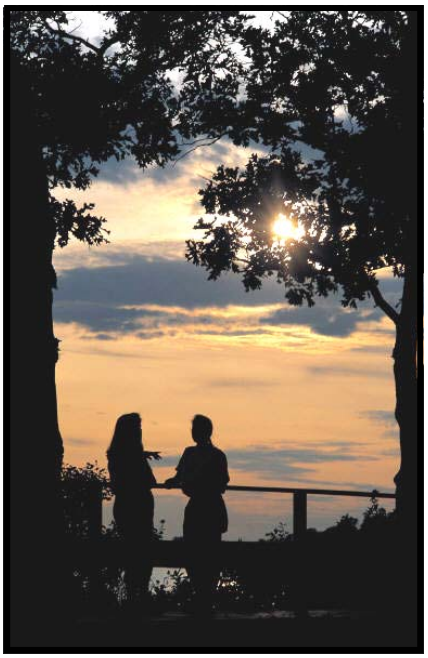
INFAMOUS
HO, HO, HO LET'S PARTY!
PRESENTS...
OFF THE BLOCK PARTY PRODUCTIONS
Holiday Dance
December 17, 2004
8 pm - 1 am
COVER $5

Refreshments & Food wil be sold
Providence's Own
DJ by Ron
United Congregational Church
6 Institute Rd, Worcester MA
Across from Worcester Vocational High School
Contact: Will 857-452-6658

AWOL - A Way of Living

By: Dana/ Recovering Alcoholic

"You don't know how to live life sober," I distinctly remember my counselor saying to me in our first session. Living life as a sober person was not something that came easy for me. I abused alcohol and drugs from an early age, thus stunting my emotional maturity. Abstinence from alcohol and drugs was only the first step for me. I had to change, but how? My years of denial and hiding my true feelings from others, made me a stranger to myself. It was not until I used the AA twelve step recovery program that I began to explore the real me. By becoming familiar with the twelve steps and integrating them into my everyday life, I can maintain contented sobriety and gratitude, one day at a time.



"I can maintain contented sobriety and gratitude, one day at a time"

What is AWOL?

AWOL (A Way of Living) groups are formed by people in recovery who are willing to commit themselves to one meeting every week for six months. The groups typically begin with eight to twelve individuals, including facilitators, and are limited to same sex groups. There are no formal rules or policies, and the group's agreements and wishes are observed. If members drop out, they are not replaced. Group leaders have at least three years of continuous sobriety and are active in AA, although the AWOL group is not an AA meeting and will not be found in AA listings.

My first introduction to an AWOL was as a resident at the Pathway House. I was placed in a group with twelve other recovering addicts, and once a week we would read and discuss one of the twelve steps. The group was facilitated by a counselor and by alumni members.

As the weeks progressed and group members became familiar with each other, they began sharing their thoughts, feelings and personal stories. I immediately identified with my peers and felt comforted knowing that I was not alone with the guilt and shame over past misdeeds. We were supportive of each other, but would often confront one another regarding behaviors not conducive to ongoing recovery. I remember my reaction to the criticisms of my behavior was sometimes less than civil, but we endured, and through the eyes of my peers I began to find myself.

Throughout my recovery, I have made an effort to become a part of an AWOL group every year, which enables me to maintain an awareness of what is most important in my life.

I have talked with many recovering friends and the origin of the AWOL is unknown, although I have encountered several authorities who insist they began in Boston, MA. For me, the origin of the AWOL is unimportant; what counts is how well it works in my life. I am starting a new group soon and look forward to meeting the group members. I know that together we will experience the miracle of recovery through the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dana/ Recovering Alcoholic

Local Resources

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

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

For more Information call ***Jesse*** at 508-755-8088 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

A Place to call Home...



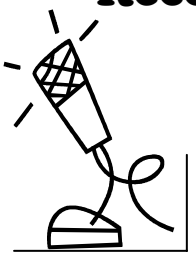
Footsteps Supportive Housing Program provides women with a safe and supportive environment as they work through their early recovery.

Located in Worcester, the Footsteps Program offers:

- 20 Affordable Single Rooms (electric/heat included)
- Phone and Cable accessibility
- Case Management
- Community Involvement
- Individual Service Plans
- House Groups & Activities
- Individual Counseling at the Willis Center Outpatient Department.

For more information call Footsteps House Manager at **508-756-8320.**

Recovery Radio Project



Dr. Steve Soreff's "Worcester Health Team" Radio Show presents

VOICES OF RECOVERY

This month's discussion:

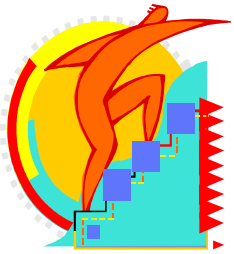
Cold Turkey - All about Detox

Featuring- Jan & Jesse

When:
Monday, November 22, 2004

What time:
4:00-5:00 pm

Where on the dial:
WCUW 91.3 fm



Are you stable in Recovery and ready for that next step?

Independent Living

Willis Center ***Independent Living*** program offers apartment living for persons in ***stable recovery*** who have an income but have trouble getting an apartment due to credit or CORI issues.

Currently we have **1 & 2 bedrooms market rent apartments** available. Contact us today!

Call George Spring at 508-755-2382 Today!

Congrats

"Survival is worth celebrating"!
-Sandi Carlson



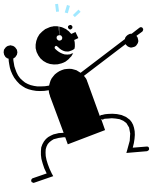
To all those who celebrate a sober anniversary for the month of November!

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

And the Winner is....



Congratulations to Bryan of the Genesis Program for winning the DVD at the Vision House Halloween Open House.



Vision's house manager Maribel would like to thank everyone who participated.