



WESTCARE EXPRESS



The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter

Page 1

April 2011

April is Alcohol Awareness Month – What One WestCare Program is Doing

By Jenny Magdaleno– Program Coordinator, WestCare California

Drinking too much alcohol can lead to health problems, including alcohol poisoning, hangovers, and an increased risk of heart disease. This April, during Alcohol Awareness Month, the PADAWANS (Prevent Alcohol and Drug Abuse: WestCare Assistance to Non-traditional students) prevention staff encourages you to take this time to educate yourself and your loved ones about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

Drinking can cause harm in many ways such as motor vehicle crashes, fatal falls, greater risk of liver disease, heart disease, depression, if drinking during pregnancy -birth defects, and more.

According to DMV statistics, DUI remains the single largest cause of automotive related fatalities in the state of California with 56.4% of motor vehicle- related deaths cause by drunk drivers, over 2,200 fatalities.

PADAWANS is hosting an activity for the youth ages 12-20 at the PADAWANS Center on April 8 and the 15th in conjunction with Alcohol Awareness Month. PADAWANS will be educating the youth on the dangers of underage drinking, and using drinking goggles for demonstrations to see what is like to be impaired.

To spread the word and prevent alcohol abuse, PADAWANS is honoring Alcohol Awareness Month to prevent alcohol abuse in our community. For more information on upcoming activities or groups, contact padawans.fresno@westcare.com.



The staff of PADAWANS in California: (L to R) Jeremy Ramirez, Natalie Ortiz, Erin Shelton, Cynthia Wright, and Jenny Magdaleno.

In This Issue

Page 1

April is Alcohol Awareness Month
What One WestCare Program is Doing

Page 2

Top White House Official Visits WestCare
Pike County Program, Cites Prescription
Drug Problem in America

Community Council Member
Represents!

Page 3

Sheridan Teams up to Help One of
WestCare's Own

Mister Mayor Helps Bring More Smiles
in the Sunshine State

Flower of the Month: The Daisy!

Page 4

WestCare's Unsung Heroes in the
Florida Keys

Page 5

WestCare Alumna 'Blossoms' . . .
Now an Employee

Foundation for Recovery: 5K is a Great
Start for the Journey

Page 6

New Heights, New Depths for
Undaunted Daredevil

Most States Have Axed Mental Health
Funds, Report Finds

Page 7

Blanket Atlanta – Completion Ceremony
Another Success Story!

Maine Could Eliminate Residential Treatment

Page 8

Community Council Member Attends
Arizona Meeting

WestCare Wellness Watch

Page 9

April Calendar

Talking Teen Drinking: MADD and ER Docs
Release Handbook for Parents

More Employers Saying Smokers
Need Not Apply

Top White House Official Visits WestCare Pike County Program, Cites Prescription Drug Problem in America

Submitted by WestCare Kentucky Staff

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske was in Kentucky to meet with state and local officials, educators, health providers, and substance abuse treatment centers and prevention coalitions. He discussed the administration's response to the public health and safety threats posed by drug abuse, specifically the prescription drug epidemic – and drug-related crime.

The Director and staff from Congressman Hal Rogers, Senator Mitch McConnell and Representative Mary Bono, CA visited the WestCare Kentucky Pike County Detention Centers Substance Abuse Program (SAP) on Thursday February, 24th. WestCare, Jailer Rodney Scott and the Kentucky Department of

Corrections partnered in 2006 to open 24 male beds and the program has grown to 74 beds for both men and women.

Kerlikowske, who has served as director for the Office of National Drug Control Policy since May 2009 and coordinates all aspects of federal drug control programs and implementation of the president's national drug control strategy, said substance abuse knows no boundary. "People don't recognize that prescription drugs can kill you," Kerlikowske said. "They don't recognize that prescription drugs are highly addictive. They often think they're safe because, after all, it's just a prescription."

Kerlikowske, in an interview with FOX News' John Roberts, acknowledged the country has been slow in recognizing the severity of the problem. "Sometimes we, as a country, we only have a certain capacity for understanding those really complex issues, and this was one that I truly believe was a bit under the radar screen," Kerlikowske said. "But, now it is really out there in front of everyone."

After the PCDC visit Director Kerlikowske participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by the Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Director Gil Kerlikowske and WestCare Kentucky Program Director Rodney Bentley.



Kentucky



Veronica Hunt, Program Administrator, KY Department of Corrections answers questions concerning the Substance Abuse Program



WestCare Kentucky Board Chair Bill Baird and PCDC Jailer Rodney Scott.

WestCare Kentucky Board chairman Bill Baird is still beaming over the Bears. The Pikeville College Bears, that is! The PC men's basketball team recently captured the NAIA national championship, beating Mountain State in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Baird also serves on the Board of Trustees for Pikeville College!



Community Council Member Represents!

Submitted by WestCare Kentucky Staff

Sharon Hensley, Coordinator for the Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (ASAP) and WestCare Kentucky Community Council Member, attended a roundtable discussion in Lexington that focused on the efforts of small counties and local law enforcement to fight prescription pill abuse. Sharon also had the opportunity to meet Congressman Ben Chandler and the White House Director of National Drug Control Policy Gil Kerlikowske.

Sharon Hensley, Coordinator for the Agency for Substance Abuse Policy and WestCare Kentucky Community Council Member, Congressman Ben Chandler and Gil Kerlikowske, White House Director of National Drug Control.



Sheridan Teams Up to Help One of WestCare's Own

By Charlene Hamann – Recreation Therapist

On Sunday, January 30, 2011, Sharon McArthur, one of WestCare Georgia's long-term dedicated employees, experienced a tragic house fire. Upon hearing this news, WestCare's Sheridan Illinois team decided that being a part of WestCare's Therapeutic Community meant that we needed to support our fellow WestCare family member during her time of loss and find some way to help Sharon and her family.

We did this by sponsoring two benefit raffles, with all proceeds to benefit Sharon McArthur: A 50/50 raffle open to all staff at Sheridan Correctional Center featuring several additional prizes such as a Wal-Mart Gift Card and a gas gift card; and a WestCare staff raffle with a grand prize that features two days at the IAODAPCA Conference and one-night stay at the Westin Hotel. One employee even donated PartyLite home décor products as part of the prizes awarded.

Along with the employees of WestCare, other staff including IDOC, Safer, TASC and many other vendors within the Sheridan TC were supportive as shown by their involvement. Everyone came together and worked together, which in the end proved to be a successful effort. On February 25 all staff were offered the opportunity to purchase beef sandwiches, chips and raffle tickets to benefit Sharon. This was a great event not only to help Sharon but also a way to show how people working in a TC not only help our clients in difficult situations but also each other.

Illinois



Sheridan employees, left to right, Charlene Hamann, Jessica Bateman and Amber Morsch sell raffle tickets to raise funds for WestCare Georgia's Sharon McArthur.



Florida

Mister Mayor Helps Bring More Smiles in the Sunshine State

Village South March Graduates pictured with City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, Frank Rabbito and Doug Hughes, Village South Community Council member.



Flower of the Month: The Daisy

The April birth flower is the daisy. Daisies are associated with innocence. The gerbera daisy has large colorful blooms, which has made it a favorite with flower lovers. There is a legend that a nymph wanting to escape unwanted attention, transformed herself into the daisy. Ever after this the April birth flower has the flower meaning of implicit and modesty. An alternate birth flower for April is the sweet pea.



WestCare's Unsung Heroes in the Florida Keys

By Nadine Hood – Guidance/Care Center Deputy Director


January 21st, 2011 was a very special day in the Florida Keys; not only were the sun-kissed ocean breezes rustling through the palm trees and across the dancing blue ocean waters surrounding our island paradise, but the warm winds of appreciation culminated on that day in a ceremony to recognize those extraordinary folks in our community who give so freely of their precious time Uplifting the Spirits of those in need. WestCare employees were well represented at this year's Unsung Heroes banquet and awards ceremony held at the Casa Marina Resort in Key West.

donated to the Salvation Army. Other projects have included making various Holiday cards for VA Hospital patients, hand-decorating T-shirts for the children of our community, and creating origami pieces used at special events for non-profit agency fund raising and recognition banquets. When Kat shares with others about the Art Behind Bars projects her eyes light up and her voice sings. "I truly believe that Art is a perfect avenue to help incarcerated project members relax, communicate some things they may not be willing or able to verbally express, and build their self-esteem. This program allows them to feel they are contributing to the good of society instead of feeling like an outcast." We celebrate with Kat the tremendous positive successes of the Art Behind Bars project facilitated by her passion and excitement for working to uplift the Creative Spirits of those who might otherwise be forgotten and unappreciated.


The Guidance/Care Center nominee for this year's Unsung Hero award was Colonel Rick Ramsay who is not only the Undersheriff in Monroe County, but also the Chairman of the G/CC Community Council. Col. Ramsay has been actively involved with our agency for over six years; he is recognized agency wide as being "supportive," "a teacher," and "a motivator and good role model with a strong work ethic." His dedication to the WestCare mission and vision has resulted in his tireless efforts to ensure the initiatives of the G/CC include access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for those who are involved in the Criminal Justice System in Monroe County as well as others in the community at large. Thank you again Colonel Ramsay for your dedication to our agency and the people of our community.

Even before she joined us, our new Area Director A.B. Maloy was also recognized by The Southern-most Homeless Assistance League (SHAL) for her efforts in advising the group as they moved through the task of reorganizing their Board of Directors and other matters of community involvement. Now that she is at the helm of our agency's ship, we are already reaping the rewards of her

Florida



Amy Beth ("A.B.") Maloy



Colonel Rick Ramsay



Kathleen "Kat" Maguire

Kathleen "Kat" Maguire, a Substance Abuse Counselor at the Jail In-House Program (JIP) in the Key West Detention Facility since 2008, was recognized by the Art Behind Bars program for her dedication and hard work with the inmates in the Monroe County Jail. When the program was in peril of ending in 2009, Kat stepped up to the plate to ensure that the program would continue. She dedicates two nights every week to working with program participants to create works of art that are then exhibited and sold with the proceeds going to community non-profit agencies. In 2009, for the annual Parrothead Celebration that brings Jimmy Buffet fans from all over the world to Key West for a week of laid back island life revelry, Art Behind Bars members designed and created decorative "Parrothead" lamp shades. The lamp shades were auctioned and raised \$1,700 that was in turn

expertise in these vital areas. Way to go, A.B.!

To those of you who were formally recognized this year at the Unsung Hero Award Banquet, as well as the many others in our WestCare family who give so freely of their time and efforts to go above and beyond to Uplift the Human Spirit of those in our community, our hats are off to you. Thank you for all you do to make our little corner of the world an even better place to be!



WestCare Alumna ‘Blossoms’... Now an Employee

By Tracy Stevens – Area Director

Lisa Armstrong entered Arizona’s Blossom House Sober Living Program in January, 2008. She had been a drug addict for over 20 years. Through her addiction to meth and cocaine she lost everything including custody of her only daughter, Skyler. After many jail sentences, CPS (Child Protective Services) suggested that she enter WestCare’s Blossom House Sober Living Program. During the 90 day program, Lisa attended substance abuse counseling, followed all program rules and requirements, obtained employment, attended 12-step recovery support meetings and found a sponsor. When her 90 day stay was complete, she had regained joint-custody back of her daughter. Lisa had done so well while in the program; learning how to interact with the other women, becoming actively involved in Narcotics Anonymous, and setting a good example for changing her life, that we asked her to stay on as the House Senior Peer.

Lisa stayed on as Senior Peer for about a year while she saved money for her and her daughter to get their own place. Lisa moved in mid-2009 but continued to help the women clients at the Blossom House through sponsorship, taking them to meetings, and often dropping by the house to talk to new clients and share her story. In July of 2010 we asked Lisa to come back and stay at the house for a few months to help out as there was no resident qualified to step into the Senior Peer Position. Lisa obliged and stayed again for about 3-4 months to help out.

In late 2010, the Arizona Thrift Store Manager position became vacant and Lisa submitted her resume, dressed up nice and interviewed for the position along with five other candidates. It came down to Lisa and two others, but Lisa had the edge as she speaks fluent Spanish. She was hired and has been the friendly face at our WestCare Thrift Store and out in the community since.

Lisa recently received a 3 year sobriety chip on January 24th. She continues to be actively involved in 12-step recovery support groups and often speaks at events in the community. Her story always ends with her expressing gratitude to GOD and West Care’s Blossom House as being a very big and important part of her recovery; and we get to see her continue to grow on a daily basis. Good job Lisa, we are so proud of you.

Arizona



Nevada

Foundation for Recovery and participating sober was recovery in itself. The feeling of self love and self destruction was put into perspective the day I walked into WestCare. Possibilities were given if I was willing. Love was given to me before I was able to give it back, especially to myself. Having the opportunity to participate in an event such as “Foundation for Recovery” was a chance to grow and succeed in my journey. I have so much gratitude and another accomplishment in my sobriety.

*– Thank You –
Dyan F.*

Foundation for Recovery: 5K is a Great Start for the Journey

By Dyan F. – Client, WestCare Nevada



New Heights, New Depths for Undaunted Daredevil

By Barbara Varner – *Data Collections*

California



▲ During Extreme Canopy Expedition: Barbaras' first rapel

▶ During Extreme Canopy Expedition: Barbaras' journey down the ZipLine

Two years ago I took this same cruise with my mother and spent it all pushing her around in her wheel chair. I saw the extreme canopy expedition and told myself I would do it next cruise. I knew I would need to get in shape so I joined a gym as soon as I returned and I go at least 5 days per week. My niece wanted to go on the helmet dive, so I said OK I would go with her, she said she was afraid of heights so she did not accompany me on the Extreme Canopy expedition. I had never participated in any of these activities before and I was a bit concerned if I was able, but I was and had a great time. It turned out to be much easier than I had thought.

Editor's note: One of WestCare's original employees in California, Barbara Varner, recently checked a few things off her 'bucket list' in advance of her 70th birthday. And her adventure along the coast of Mexico was an inspiration to us all



▲ Making friends while exploring during the helmet dive.

Most States Have Axed Mental Health Funds, Report Finds

Article from – *jointogether.org*



Two out of three states have made deep cuts in general fund spending on mental health care in the past two years, Reuters reported March 9.

According to a report released by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), two-thirds of all states slashed non-Medicaid mental health funding. NAMI examined the budgets of all 50 states and the District of Columbia for its analysis. States that cut the most are: Kentucky (47 percent), Alaska (35 percent) Arizona (23 percent), and South Carolina (23 percent).

"Cutting mental health means that costs only get shifted to emergency rooms, schools, police, local courts, jails and prisons," said Michael Fitzpatrick, NAMI's director. "The taxpayer still pays the bill."

A few states bucked the trend by increasing spending on mental health over the same time period, including Oregon (23 percent), North Carolina (21 percent), and Rhode Island (7 percent).



Blanket Atlanta – Completion Ceremony

By Jeannie Lewis – Program Director

It was a joyous time for all in attendance on March 4th when Blanket Atlanta held an auspicious event for the clients in the program – a Completion Ceremony. In front of family and friends, 13 individuals who had put time and effort into changing their lives received certificates of completion for either Phase 1 or phase 2 of the program.

The guest speaker was Dominic Johnson, Director at one of our collaborating partners. His story of struggle and triumph was motivational to them and helped fan their individual sparks into a strong collective flame of desire and willingness to continue to put forth the effort necessary to maintain their recovery.

Many of the graduates said “I’m not going nowhere” and publicly expressed their desire to remain

involved with the program, committed to becoming part of the BA Alumni team where they will help facilitate life skills groups and provide recovery support services to assist others as they navigate the road to recovery.

You could feel the strength of commitment in the room as their desire for a new way of life was shared by the graduates. One spoke of his miracle of coming from being a recipient of services at one location to working there and how much this helped him to stay focused.

A good time was had by all as we celebrated their accomplishments.

Georgia



Another Success Story!

By Canzada Twyman – Blanket Atlanta Program Manager

Jerome Knight is a man who has defines success. He was homeless, living and doing volunteer work at the Task Force for the Homeless. Jerome was offered a position as the Recovery Coach Specialist for the Blanket Atlanta Program and was hired in January, 2010. Jerome made a sound decision to rise above his homeless situation and press towards a productive future. Since his arrival at Blanket Atlanta,

he has accomplished and achieved great things. Jerome has obtained an automobile, permanent housing and – tip your hats to this – while out on vacation he recently married the love of his life, Tina! Yes, Jerome Knight walks with a new awareness, a new attitude and most of all he has developed a new agenda for life. What a great achievement Jerome. We believe in you and appreciate you!



Maine Could Eliminate Residential Treatment

Article from – jointogether.org

Budget cuts in Maine may soon force the closure of 10 out of 13 residential treatment centers, the Maine Public Broadcasting Network reported March 9.

Maine governor Paul Le Page is proposing to cut \$5.6 million from the state’s substance abuse treatment programs. Most treatment providers say the cuts will be so deep that they will have to stop operating.

“It’s the classic pennywise-pound foolish, because we treat people at less than half the cost of the corrections community,” said Roger Prince of Serenity House, a substance abuse treatment program that is over 40 years old.

“So what do we want to do? Do we want to close this place down and send [our clients] back to jail or to the emergency room? It makes no sense to me,” he said.

According to a March 9 story in the Bangor Daily News, 40 percent of the Wellspring treatment program’s budget, or over \$500,000, will vanish with

the cuts. “There is no way I can make that up from other sources,” said Pat Kimball, the agency’s executive director.

“People who need residential care are the most chronically ill people in the state,” she said. “If we close our doors today, over half our clients would return to jail, one-third would be homeless and only 13 percent would be able to live with family or friends.”

The state cuts, combined with federal funds that require state match and federal grants set to expire, would slash the budget for Maine’s Office of Substance Abuse from \$37 million to \$24 million.



Community Council Member Attends Arizona Meeting

By Mike Weisser – Minnesota Community Action Council

I am a typical Minnesota resident. We can't wait to leave the state in the winter for warmer climates. While vacationing in Lake Havasu City Arizona, I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in the February 23 Council meeting in Bullhead City AZ. Tracy Stevens, Area Director, with WestCare Arizona, found out from Mike Lavin, WestCare Operations, that I was in the area and she invited me to attend the meeting. WestCare MN is developing a veterans facility, called VictriVillage in Sauk Centre, MN at the site of the original Home School for Girls. This will be a planned community serving America's military, veterans and their families . . . truly a place to uplift the human spirit.

I was somewhat surprised to see the many different types of treatment facilities that are in the western Arizona area, from sober living homes and domestic violence programs, to children and youth programs, and all were interesting. I was also pleased to find out the many veterans programs that WestCare AZ is currently involved in, as that is the sole purpose of the new facility in Minnesota. WestCare AZ participated in the fourth annual

Veterans Expo in Fort Mohave, AZ. I was asked to participate at that expo but a previous engagement kept me away. Arizona area, from sober living homes and domestic violence programs, to children and youth programs, and all were interesting.

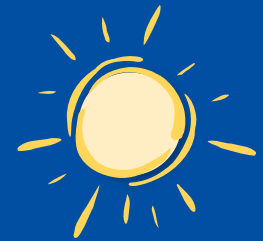
Also interesting was the review of each facility and the issues facing the Council such as needing new carpet, or having the exterior painted. My comment to the Arizona Community Council was, "I can't wait until we get to that stage, as now our meetings are about how do we raise the money to complete the property purchase and fund the renovation to open the facility. It will be great to have to worry about a worn carpet. That means the facility is open!"

I recommend that those of you as members that are traveling in another area that has a local CAC, find out where it is and ask if you can attend their meeting. I learned a lot. I would also mention the great hospitality extended by Tracy and the rest of the CAC in Bullhead City. Hopefully I will be invited to another meeting when I am in the area.

Minnesota



Mike Weisser and his wife Judy.



April is Alcohol Awareness Month

– From healthfinder.gov

Alcohol Awareness Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of alcohol abuse and encourage people to make healthy, safe choices.

Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after drinking?

Strategies to Cut Back or Quit Drinking

There are many strategies you can try to cut back or quit drinking. To get started:

- Keep track of your drinking and set a drinking limit.
- Try to avoid places where heavy drinking occurs.
- Ask for help from a doctor, family, or friends.
- If you keep alcohol in your home, keep only a limited supply.



April Calendar



April 5th
CAC Florida GCC Meeting
9:00am PT/12:00am ET

April 6th
Executive Committee Meeting
Pre-Board
8:00am PT/11:00am ET

April 6th
CAC Monthly Report Due 12:00pm
(Executive Committee)

April 6th
CAC Arizona
Mohave County Probation
5:00pm

April 9th
AZ - Legends Over the Colorado,
Vintage

April 10th
AZ - Legends Over the Colorado,
Vintage

April 12th
CAC Minnesota
8:30am PT/10:30am CT
(VICTRI, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

April 12th
CAC GulfCoast Florida Meeting
3:30pm PT/6:30am ET
Davis Bradley Building

April 16th
Eastern Region Board Meeting
8:00am PT/11:00am ET
(VICTRI, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

April 26th
CAC Minnesota
8:30am PT/10:30am CT
(VICTRI, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Talking Teen Drinking: MADD and ER Docs Release Handbook for Parents

From jointogether.org

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) says that 30 percent of U.S. eighth graders drink alcohol, and 20 percent binge drink, according to a March 4 story in HealthDay. In that light, it's particularly chilling to learn (also from HealthDay) that federal statistics show that underage drinkers are responsible for about 546 visits to emergency rooms each day.

What's a parent to do?

Talking with teens about alcohol and drinking can be difficult for parents – but emergency room doctors and MADD just made it a little easier.

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) teamed up with MADD to create and release a new, free handbook as part of MADD's "Power of Parents, It's Your Influence" campaign.

The handbook is part of the lead-up to PowerTalk 21 Day, scheduled for April 21, a national day for parents to talk to their teens about alcohol.

"Parents are the first line of defense against underage drinking, but it can be daunting to know exactly what to say. This booklet helps guide parents through these conversations with their kids," said Dr. Sandra Schneider, president of ACEP.

According to HealthDay, ACEP said that when youth drink before turning 21, the likelihood increases that they will have trouble in school, be assaulted, get in a car accident involving alcohol, "drown or fall, [or] abuse alcohol later in life."

"I know from being a mother myself how hard it is to talk to teenagers," Schneider said. "But it's much harder to face a child who has been seriously injured by alcohol, or who has injured someone else. MADD's parent handbook will help parents start what could be a life-saving conversation with their child."

More Employers Saying Smokers Need Not Apply

From jointogether.org

An increasing number of hospitals and medical businesses are making tobacco use a reason to reject job applicants or fire existing employees, The New York Times reported Feb. 10.

Under the new "tobacco-free" hiring policies, applicants can be turned away for smoking, or if they are caught smoking after hire. Policies differ by company, but some require applicants to take urine tests for nicotine. Health care businesses say they have adopted the new policies because they want to promote health, cut health care costs, and support healthy choices. Opponents say the policies set a troubling precedent for penalizing employees for engaging in legal behavior.

Dr. Michael Siegel, a professor at the Boston University School of Public Health, said that if the policies become mainstream, there could be serious consequences. "Unemployment is also bad for health," he said.

It's not certain how many businesses have adopted tobacco-free policies, but the number of examples are growing, and courts in several states have said the policies are legal. Federal data show that about 20 percent of Americans smoke, and that employees who smoke cost \$3,391 more each year in health care costs and lost productivity than non-smoking employees do.

"We felt it was unfair for employees who maintained healthy lifestyles to have to subsidize those who do not," said Steven C. Bjelich, CEO of St. Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo., which has stopped hiring smokers. "Essentially that's what happens."

