

WestCare Express

The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter



In This Issue

Page 1

Americans of All Incomes Say They Could Not Afford Alcohol or Drug Treatment If They Needed It

Page 2

Positive Action Numbers Explode in Rural Laughlin, Nevada

Bitter Sweet Goodbye

Page 3

Hooked on Fishing in the Florida Keys

Village South Staff Selected for PPW National Panel

Page 4

Karaoke Contest

National Mental Health in California

Page 5

New WestCare General Counsel

WestCare Youth and Water Conservation

Page 6

WestCare Sheridan Hosts Two-Day Veteran Training

5 Questions

Page 7

WestCare Kentucky Graduation

Operation UNITE Shoot Hoops Not Drugs Basketball Camp

Page 8

WestCare Wellness Watch



Americans of All Incomes Say They Could Not Afford Alcohol or Drug Treatment If They Needed It

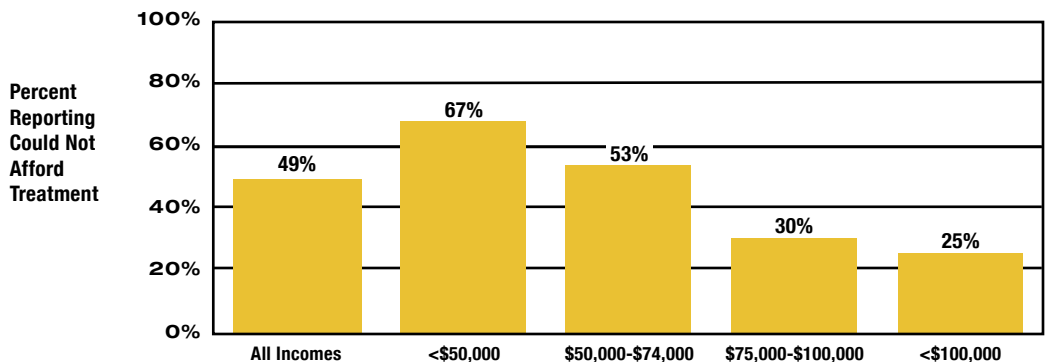
An Article from Cesar Fax – *From the Center for Substance Abuse Research*

Nearly half of U.S. adults say that they would not be able to afford alcohol or drug treatment if they or someone in their family needed it, according to a telephone survey conducted this past June. While adults with annual incomes under \$50,000 are most likely to say they would not be able to afford treatment (67%), more affluent adults also perceive an inability to pay for treatment. Thirty

percent of those with incomes between \$75,000 and \$100,000 and one-fourth of those with incomes above \$100,000 didn't think they would be able to afford treatment if they needed it. R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, recently stated that his office will be "working to ensure drug abuse treatment services are incorporated into our national health care reform process."*

Percentage of U.S. adult household residents reporting that they could not afford the costs of alcohol or drug treatment if they or someone in their family needed it, by annual income

(N=1,001 adult U.S. household residents)



NOTE: Data is from a nationwide telephone survey of 1,001 adults ages 18 and older conducted by telephone, using RDD probability sample, May 29 to June 1, 2009. Data were weighted by gender, age, race, and region. The margin of error is ± 3.1 percentage points.

*R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Remarks at Release of the 2009 World Drug Report, June 24, 2009.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Lake Research Partners, "New Poll Shows Majority of Americans Support Efforts to Make Alcohol and Drug Addiction Treatment More Accessible, Affordable," June 16, 2009 Press Release. Poll conducted by Lake Research Partners for the Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap program, an initiative of the Open Society Institute.

Positive Action Numbers Explode in Rural Laughlin, Nevada

By Raquel Merrigan – Prevention Staff, Laughlin

More than a year ago, WestCare Nevada expanded its Positive Action program to rural Laughlin, NV. WestCare Arizona staff member Raquel Merrigan worked the program and struggled to keep the youth participant numbers averaging two to four per month. With a lot of hope for success and in full WestCare fashion, staff did not give up. Although it took a year of continual outreach to the community, participation in community events and numerous meetings with key individuals in the community, this much-needed program is now providing services to more than 50 youth per month. Partnering with the Laughlin Boys & Girls Club has enabled WestCare Arizona and WestCare Nevada to provide services and empower the youth of this small, rural town.

Positive Action is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program that is meant to give youth a healthy leg up in today's world. Positive Action focuses on teaching youth a variety of skills including: coping/life skills, anger management and impulse control, positive self-image and self-esteem, peer pressure resistance strategies, goal setting and substance abuse prevention.

The lessons are intertwined with fun, interactive games the kids really enjoy. Through the program lessons, handouts, games and exploring the community with staff, the youth are learning vital life skills they will need to help them as they grow and mature. Funding for the program is made possible through the Goshen and Luz coalitions out of Las Vegas. WestCare Nevada staff also implement the program in Las Vegas and Pahrump in Clark County, as well as the rural towns of Armargosa, Gabbs and Tonapah in Nye County.

The Positive Action program is finally flourishing in rural Laughlin thanks to Raquel's hard work and the collaborative working relationship between WestCare Arizona and WestCare Nevada. Two states working together toward one goal - *Uplifting the Human Spirit.*

Arizona



▲ Raquel Merrigan, Prevention staff at the Laughlin, Nevada Boys & Girls Club

Georgia



▲ Rebekah Going Away Party, *The Cares Team* – Amina, Miltina, Rebekah

Bitter Sweet Goodbye

By Miltina Fraser – “*The Cares Program*”

The Cares Program began in October 2007 and faced many challenges in the start-up phase. It is now a stable and productive program, and a large contributor to its success was Rebekah Coleman. She was the first employee of the program and put forth a great deal of energy and commitment.

Her enthusiastic attitude, resourcefulness and loyalty to the community make her departure bittersweet. Rebekah has always given her full support to every aspect of the program. She demonstrated leadership skills that not only touched our clients but uplifted the Cares team as a whole.

We wish Rebekah well as she ventures toward her new endeavors at Columbia University in New York, where she will be pursuing her master's degree in social work. Rebekah's ethics, morals and principles will lead her to be successful in all new challenges. Her influence on the program will always remain; however, she will be sorely missed.

Hooked on Fishing in the Florida Keys

By Sean Furey, *Executive Assistant*

South Florida

With the help of a grant from the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the Guidance Clinic of the Middle Keys (GCMK) has been able to offer an exciting substance abuse prevention program called Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs (HOFNOD).

HOFNOD is a week-long program in which children and early adolescents on summer break can learn the skills needed for long-term involvement in fishing, as well as establishing a sense of self-worth, belonging and acceptance. The HOFNOD concept started in 1986 when a teenager from Florida wrote to the Future Fishermen Foundation explaining how he chose to go fishing and think through his problems instead of turning to drugs.

GCMK's Nick Toman, LMHC has been the primary instructor for this program and has spearheaded a successful implementation of the program. Each week culminates in a deep-sea fishing trip aboard a local charter boat, at which time the children are able to use their newly gained fishing knowledge. These children are not catching little fish either, as catches so far have included tarpon, mangrove snapper and even nurse sharks.



▲ Above – Instructor Nick Toman helping the children with their catches!



Village South staff selected for PPW National Panel

Article submitted by South Florida Staff

In June, Pam Ungvary, research and evaluation assistant, attended the Pregnant and Post Partum Women conference in Washington, DC. While there, Pam was selected to participate in an expert panel for the research and evaluation component

of the nationwide grantees. She was also asked to participate in a subcommittee that will be researching the nationwide findings from all grantees, which will ensure future funding. We congratulate Pam on this huge honor.

Did You Know? August 15th is National Relaxation Day!

"Mini" Relaxation Exercises

Mini relaxation exercises are focused breathing techniques which help reduce anxiety and tension immediately!

Ways to "do a mini" . . .

Switch over to diaphragmatic breathing; if you are having trouble, try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, or take a deep breath. You should feel your stomach rising about an inch as you breathe in, and falling about an inch as your breathe

out. If this is still difficult for you, lie on your back or on your stomach; you will be more aware of your breathing pattern. Remember, it is impossible to breathe diaphragmatically if you are holding your stomach in! So... relax your stomach muscles.

Karaoke Contest

By Art Irise – Operations Coordinator, WestCare California

WestCare California's own Chrissy Entrocaso traveled to Las Vegas recently to compete in the Bowl Expo's 5th Annual Karaoke Contest held this year at the Mandalay Bay Hotel & Casino. It started on a Sunday morning with 80 contestants in four rooms. Five contestants were chosen from each room to compete in the afternoon in the semifinals, where 10 of the 20 would go into the finals Monday night. Chrissy made it to the finals, and even

though she didn't finish in the top three, she had a fantastic performance.

WestCare California is very proud of Chrissy. She has been singing at our graduations for the last five years, since she graduated WestCare. She works as one of our cooks at our MLK facility. She has also tried out for *Nashville Stars* and *American Idol* and has won several local contests.

Chrissy Entrocaso ▶

California



National Mental Health Month in California

By the staff of The Health and Wellness Center – WestCare California

The month of May was National Mental Health Month and as part of the Wellness activity board the staff at the Health and Wellness Center was encouraged to use their mind. Reading has been proven to improve your mind so as part of the activity bulletin board they started a story. It started with "Once upon a time . . ." They were provided strips of papers and were asked to add a sentence to the story. They were very creative and this is what they came up with. I want to thank all the staff for participating in this activity and doing such a wonderful job.



▶ The story board was created by the staff at the Health and Wellness Center

Once upon a time . . . In a cheap motel in the seedy part of town . . . Irene came outside and said . . . "I think I'll go for a walk today" then . . . Rebecca arrived and said let's go on a road trip so . . . They hitchhiked all the way to Mexico and . . . They saw Bronda buying chicklets from a man named Dustin who . . . Was wearing a sombrero and serenading his donkey while . . . Eating tacos de nopal (cactus) when suddenly . . . Pee Wee Herman came out of the Edwards Theater looking disheveled, fatigued, with a smirk as if he just got away with something . . . As he was walking by, Pee Wee collided with Kelly then . . . Kelly asked Pee Wee "Aren't you the guy that dances like a jerk?, Let me show you the WestCare Shuffle Dance in reverse" As if . . . Kelly could really dance. Then Kelly and Pee Wee ran into a third amigo, Gerry. They all walked into a local cantina, where all the local Mexicans stared at them asking, who are these gringos? . . . They all came in together and said "set me up bartender" the bartender laughed and said "Que dicen estos?" . . . The three amigos were so exhausted and thirsty from dancing that they ordered three Aquafinas each and said "I'm so tipsy O-M-G" . . . And the H2O bartender said to them "It's A-D-M (Aye Dios Mio) gringos estan en Mexico" One guy looked perplexed and said . . . "What's A-D-M? Where are we again? Wow there must have been something in the water!!" He stood up and . . . Began singing The Star Spangled Banner but forgot the words so started humming Super Freak. Then Laura passed by and started bumpin' screaming something about her scarf, when Tiffanie, who was bumpin' too, laughed and asked . . . "What are you doing here in Mexico? Aren't you supposed to be working?" and they laughed and danced the night away wondering . . . How someone can forget the words to the star spangled banner and why Roxanne was coming around the corner with a huge bag of HIV booklets and condoms. She walked up and said . . . Hey guys why are you singing the Star Spangled Banner anyways? We are in Mexico" and she began to play the Mexican National Anthem and they . . . Saw Erin and Kim melting dry ice so they could swim without getting wet. Then everybody . . . Started eating Frank's wonderful Tortuga soup while munching away on their small toes. Careful to not choke on their small bones! "Wonderful stuff" they all said. And thus began the history of Tortuga soup. As sunset started they gathered around the campfire to listen to the old folks tell their stories of . . . Their grandparents, La Llorona and El Chupacabra. Then suddenly Irene and Rebecca decided they would pay a visit to their long lost relatives (La Llorona and El Chupacabra) who are residing in their vacation home in Florida. They packed up their stuff and . . . Flew first class all the way to Miami, Florida. When they arrived at the airport they saw Bronda holding a sign that said "WestCare Employees Secret Hideout" They walked up to her and she told them "Follow me. Don't ask any questions" So they all . . . Climbed into the WestCare van and drove out to the beach where four row boats were waiting everyone started to row towards Key West but the winds blew them off course and they landed in Cuba where they were greeted by . . . Nessy, the Lockness Monster, who was on vacation from Scotland. "Do you need a ride somewhere?" Nessy asked. Irene answered "No Thanks" so Nessy smiled and . . . Drove away. Then the WestCare staff was asking "How are we getting out of here?" everyone stood there thinking. Then Brandi said "I know !! I will use my I-pod phone GPS navigation app." So they climbed back on the row boats and they . . . Headed back to Irene and Rebecca's cheap motel in the seedy part of town where they ate lobster tails and Cup-o-Noodles and danced the "Funky Chicken", "The Mashed Potato" and The Twist all night long in a way no one ever imagined. As the sun began to rise . . . WestCare transportation arrived to pick them all up and drove them to the Health and Wellness Center where they all got to work like the loyal employees they all are, and they lived happily ever after . . . or did they? . . . THE END

Nevada



New Foundation General Counsel

WestCare is pleased to welcome Jim Hanna as its new general counsel. Jim will be working with us out of the foundation office in Las Vegas.

A native of Southern California, Jim has been living in Green Valley, a suburb of Las Vegas, for the last five years. He attended college at the University of California San Diego and received his JD from the University of San Diego School of Law. Jim is licensed to practice in both California and

Nevada and has worked in development and gaming over the last several years. Jim brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in contract, transactional and business law. He is excited to join our staff and work with us on our many projects and endeavors.

Jim's free time is spent chasing his two year old and participating in various athletic endeavors. Please join us in welcoming him to our team.

WestCare Youth and Water Conservation

By Jennifer Hilton – Director, Men's and Adolescent Treatment

Las Vegas is an oasis in the middle of a desert. For many in the Las Vegas community, water conservation is second nature. This is especially true for the youth in our community, as we have been in a drought for as long as most of them have been alive. So it was very inspiring when the staff asked the youth how they would like to give back to their community this summer, and all three of the residential programs asked to do something at the Springs Preserve.

The Springs Preserve is a 180-acre cultural institution designed to commemorate Las Vegas' dynamic history and to provide a vision for a sustainable future. The Preserve features museums, galleries, outdoor concerts and events, colorful botanical gardens and an interpretive trail system that meanders through a scenic wetland habitat.
<http://www.springspreserve.org/html/about.html>

WestCare Nevada is extremely proud of the joint effort of the BOYS, Young FACES and VOYAGE programs that all together spend 10 hours a week, with a total of 35 volunteers, at the Springs Preserve helping to maintain the birthplace of Las Vegas and one of the richest and most unique cultural and biological resources in Southern Nevada.

Client Quotes:

"It's cool to know that we're helping to keep Vegas environmentally friendly." – Sam – 17 (VOYAGE)

"It makes me want to do more to change things in my community, as we found out that Las Vegas has one of the lowest percentages of recycling for a major city." – Lacey – 16 (Young FACES)

"It has taught about Las Vegas history, including that the Springs Preserve is host to an Indian Burial ground." – Steven – 17 (BOYS)



▲ Members of BOYS, Young FACES and VOYAGE with volunteers helping to maintain Springs Preserve in Las Vegas, NV ▲



WestCare Sheridan Hosts Two-Day Veteran Training

By Dawn Ruzich – *Evaluator, WestCare Illinois*

With an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 Illinoisans serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Illinois will be

Illinois



experiencing a tremendous influx of returning combat warriors. While we cannot say what needs these service members will have once they get home, it is important that we, especially as a treatment agency, are well prepared for their return. With this in mind, WestCare Sheridan was excited to have Alison Lighthall, RN, MS provide the training “Working with Incarcerated Veterans” on June 26 and 27. Alison is a combat stress specialist for the U.S. Army stationed in Fort Carson, CO and is the founder of *Hand2Hand Contact* <<http://www.hand2handcontact.org/default.asp>.

On the first day of this two-day training, Alison presented on military psychology, suicide in the military, understanding the experience of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and provider mental resiliency. The WestCare Sheridan staff was very pleased with the training and felt that they took away many new tools for working with clients who are veterans, as well as any client that

has experienced PTSD or other significant trauma. Many staff commented that even at the most basic level of being an American citizen, the training was useful and important because it made us aware of what our service members and their families endure, especially during wartime.

On the second day of training, Alison met with about 20 veterans who are currently incarcerated at Sheridan. In two focus groups of approximately ten clients, she gauged the clients’ interest in a clinical veteran’s group. The clients were all in agreement that they would like such a group and felt that they could really benefit from it. Staff who wished to come in on Saturday were encouraged to do so. Alison met with the staff after the focus groups to debrief and brainstorm as to what the clinical veteran’s group should look like. She stated that she was very encouraged and excited about how forward-looking and advanced the WestCare Foundation is!

5 Questions with . . .

Leslie Balonick – is the Senior Vice President responsible for Illinois and Georgia. She began working at WestCare in January 2007. Leslie began her career in substance abuse after completing a therapeutic community and has made this career her life’s work since 1977. She has been married for “almost” 25 years to her best friend and husband – Casey.

1. *What is your most rewarding experience and biggest challenge working for WestCare?*

I have had the honor of meeting some very special people throughout the entire WestCare Family - including both staff and the clients we serve! I was given a very special “charge” in terms of working with both the Sheridan Team in Illinois and the entire team throughout Georgia. I am most proud of how all the staff has “risen” to the challenges and humbly celebrated our accomplishments. “We’ve Come a Long Way Baby!”

2. *What do you do in your spare time?*

As Casey will tell you, I’ve been known to spend a little “too” much time shopping. I love to cook and entertain and I enjoy gardening, reading and spending time with Casey and our “daughter” Janka (2 yr old Shih-Tzu).

3. *What would everyone be surprised to learn about you?*

I am a true urban cowgirl!! No really...I was born and raised in Chicago and my

dad was a true “sportsman” so I grew up riding horses, hunting, fishing and doing water sports. My dad had 8 brothers and sisters. We had so many cousins but my younger sister and I were the only girls. So . . . for my 12th birthday my dad bought me a “12 gauge Browning over and under” hunting rifle. I secretly wanted a new dress but was afraid to ask!

4. *What is your proudest personal or professional accomplishment?*

As I was working a full-time job with increasing responsibility – I attended both college and graduate school - in the evening for 9 years. One class at a time – at the age of 45 - I received my Masters Degree. I am most proud that my father was able to come to my graduation before he passed away.

5. *What is your favorite TV show? If you do not watch TV what is your favorite type of music?*

I never missed an episode of “Prison Break” Now that this series is over; I enjoy the new pilot “The Philanthropist”. As for music- I love Jazz and oldies but goodies from the 60’s and 70’s.



WestCare Kentucky Graduation

WestCare Kentucky recently held graduation ceremonies for their Women's In-Jail Treatment Program.

Pike County Judge Executive Wayne T. Rutherford was one of the guest speakers at the graduation ceremonies



Kentucky

▶ Rodney Bentley, program director for the Pike County Jail Program poses with recent graduates

▶ Women's In-Jail Treatment Program graduates



Operation UNITE Shoot Hoops Not Drugs Basketball Camp

WestCare Kentucky clients, staff and alumni volunteered to work with the Operation UNITE Shoot Hoops Not Drugs Basketball Camp's that were in Bell, Clay, Floyd, Morgan and Wolfe counties during June. A total of 592 youth representing nineteen Kentucky counties and three other states participated.

▶ WestCare Kentucky Team huddle



▶ Operation UNITE Executive Director Karen Engle with the WestCare Kentucky Team

WestCare Wellness Watch



Sun Safety

By Wendy Simpkins

We all need some sun exposure; it's our primary source of vitamin D, which helps us absorb calcium for stronger, healthier bones. But it doesn't take much time in the sun for most people to get the vitamin D they need, and unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression and even cancer. Even people in their twenties can develop skin cancer.

Most kids rack up between 50% and 80% of their lifetime sun exposure before age 18, so it's important that parents teach their children how to enjoy fun in the sun safely. With the right precautions, you can greatly reduce your child's chance of developing skin cancer.

Facts about Sun Exposure

- The sun radiates light to the earth, and part of that light consists of invisible ultraviolet (UV) rays. When these rays

reach the skin, they cause tanning, burning and other skin damage.

- Sunlight contains three types of ultraviolet rays: UVA, UVB, and UVC.
- UVA rays cause skin aging and wrinkling and contribute to skin cancer, such as melanoma. Because UVA rays pass effortlessly through the ozone layer (the protective layer of atmosphere, or shield, surrounding the earth), they make up the majority of our sun exposure. Beware of tanning beds because they use UVA rays. A UVA tan does not help protect the skin from further sun damage; it merely produces color and a false sense of protection from the sun.
- UVB rays are also dangerous, causing sunburns, cataracts (clouding of the eye lens) and immune system damage. They also contribute to skin cancer. Melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, is thought to be associated with severe UVB sunburns that occur before the age of 20. Most UVB rays are absorbed by the ozone layer, but enough of these rays pass through to cause serious damage.
- UVC rays are the most dangerous, but fortunately, these rays are blocked by the ozone layer and don't reach the earth.

It's important to protect your family from exposure to UVA and UVB, the rays that cause skin damage.

