



WESTCARE EXPRESS

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THE WESTCARE EXPRESS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

WestCare Alumnus a Guest at State of the Union

Tim Ryan spent over two years participating in WestCare’s in-prison substance abuse program at the Sheridan Correctional Facility in Illinois. He was a heroin addict. (He eventually would lose his 20 year old son to the scourge.) 17 year marriage dissolved, life in shambles.

Today, at age 47, he is reliving his recent experience as witness to history after being selected as the guest of Congressman Bill Foster at the State of the Union address in Washington D.C. It was Barack Obama’s final SOTU of his two-term presidency.



Tim Ryan and Congressman Foster

Mr. Ryan now dedicates his life to helping individuals and families struggling with addiction through his not-for-profit **A Man in Recovery Foundation**, and as a motivational speaker throughout the country.

He tells The Express: *“The blessing to be asked to join the Congressman at the State of the Union address was a life-changing experience. The President even spoke of the pain pill epidemic. In 2013, after two years and one month at Sheridan, I walked out of prison. Clean and sober. Tell me recovery can’t happen! This is just a start for me. Thanks WestCare! You gave me my life back.”*

WestCare alumni often provide our best endorsements. Thank you, Tim Ryan, for representing us so well.

(Editor's note: This is an excerpt from a recent story in the Chicago Reader. It is superbly written by Maya Dukmasova about a remarkable judge who interacts with WestCare clients, among others, in an unorthodox way. And gets results.)

Every so often, **(Jackie) Portman** pays a visit to WestCare, where at any time about 50 to 60 defendants from her *ARI (Adult Redeploy Illinois)* program participate in counseling services. The goal of these appearances, she explains, is to show her defendants that she's there to support their positive efforts, not just punish them. In the past, she has also come to the funerals of defendants' relatives, made house calls, gone to her defendants' sports games and music performances. She does not intrude on the actual counseling sessions, but gives the staff a heads-up and, as she has today, comes a few minutes beforehand to give a pep talk, and school any latecomers about the importance of being on time.

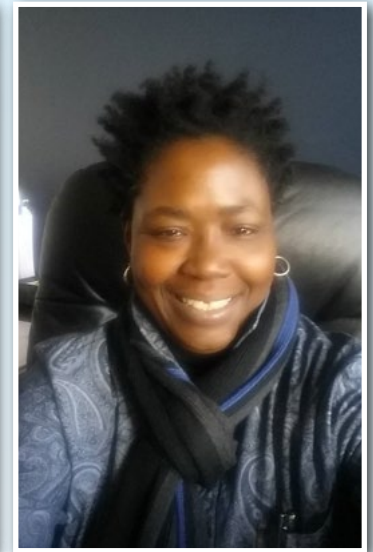
With Thanksgiving around the corner, she chats with the men about their holiday plans, and the proper way to cook chitlins. She counsels a young man who arrived with a cut in his palm on how to dress and care for the wound.

At first, the WestCare staff were apprehensive about these visits, and about the consequences of a judge appearing in defendants' lives outside the courtroom. But their fears were quickly dispelled, according to the program's director **Gwen Maxwell**.

"I have never encountered this," she says of Portman's approach. But, she clarifies, the judge's sincerity caring for



Jackie Portman



Gwen Maxwell

defendants is palpable.

However unorthodox it may be for Portman to cross the usual boundaries, to Maxwell and her counseling staff it seems like a step in the right direction. *"We talk about bridging the gap—bridging community and law enforcement, bridging community and the legal system,"* Maxwell explains. In her view, that is exactly what Portman achieves with these visits. *"She's not designed for [defendants] to continue to be locked up."*

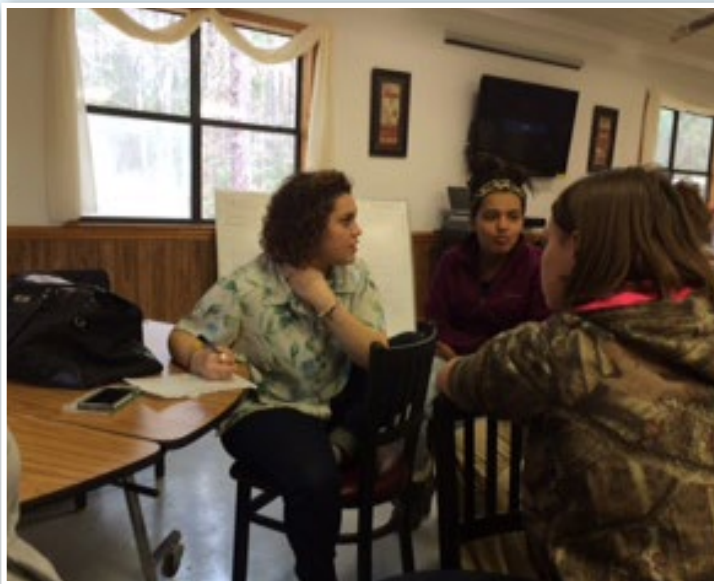
Please see the entire article at:

<http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/cook-county-judge-jackie-portman-criminal-justice/Content?oid=20763827>

NORTH CAROLINA: *Change for the Better - An Alumna's Story*

By Kimberly Marino, Program Coordinator

Throughout the past two years, we have created an *Alumni Group of WestCare Girls Program* graduates, who continue to connect with staff and former clients, as well as mentoring new clients in our program. **Katie** attended for eight months in 2014, and returned in December to talk to our current group of girls. She shared her difficult story, and even more difficult road to success, in order to inspire and encourage other clients not to give up.



Katie chose to extend her stay at WestCare by two months, while waiting for placement at a drug treatment program called *PORT*. Though wanting to go home, she recognized she still needed help with her addiction, and voluntarily signed a referral to PORT. After completing this program, Katie lost her father, and realized her family

situation had not changed for the better, so she asked to be placed in DSS Custody. During these difficult months, Katie maintained straight A's, giving credit to our Education Coordinator **Nancy Snyder** and our Program Manager **Melissia White** remembering when they told her, *"when you cannot control anything else in your life, focus on your education because no one can ever take that away from you."*

Katie is now with a loving foster family, who brought her back to WestCare to talk to the other girls about belief in yourself, and the power of maintaining your education. She held group with the girls, and answered any questions they had regarding WestCare, life, etc. Katie even offered to mentor a young girl who was graduating the next day.

We hope to continue this tradition with many of our graduates, and see the effect it has on other girls trying to change their lives.



SNAPSHOTS: *Blanketed in Snow*

Late January storms held much of the country in their grip, especially the Eastern Seaboard. Eastern Kentucky got its share of snowfall, enough for WestCare's **Anna Coleman** and her husband **William** to enjoy some time on the slopes near snow-laced, historic Pikeville.



Anna and William Coleman



Pikeville, Kentucky

And farther east, clients at WestCare's *North Carolina Girls Program* in Manson reveled in their wintry and wooded surroundings.





WASHINGTON: *Assisting Veterans in All Types of Need*

We received this dispatch from **Ryan Nabors**, Coordinator of the *Rural Veterans Pilot Program*, a collaborative between the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, WestCare and other partners:

"A veteran family that lost their home and vehicles in (December) flooding in Lewis County had reached out for the help. By the end of the day we had delivered food, got them clothing and navigated through the red tape. WestCare Foundation also provided them with a \$25 gas card. Within the same day, we were able to provide food, clothing and gas. In times of emergency, we were able to quickly and effectively impact their lives."



CHARITABLE DONATIONS: *How You Can Support WestCare*

If you shop online, you can help WestCare by shopping at **AmazonSmile** and selecting **WestCare Foundation**. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to WestCare. You can give by going to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-0852629>.



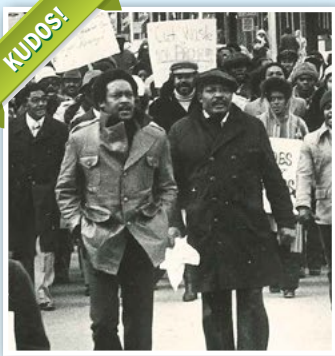
WestCare is registered with **PayPal Giving Fund**. When shopping on eBay or using PayPal online, users can select WestCare as their charity of choice. Donations can be made by visiting <https://www.paypal.com/webapps/mpp/search-cause?charityId=74402>.



WestCare is also on **Razoo**, the online fundraising engine. The organization participates in events like #GivingTuesday. Donations can be made by heading to the following link: <https://www.razoo.com/us/story/Westcare-Foundation>.



KUDOS! *Our Monthly Shout-Outs to Exceptional Employees*



WestCare has been blessed to claim Mr. **John Bascom** as one of ours. This past month, we observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day, remembering the civil rights leader's crusade for equality and public service. John Bascom, long affiliated with WestCare Georgia, has relentlessly followed in Dr. King's footsteps, as these photos show. Society is so blessed by John's commitment and passion.

For the eighth consecutive year, WestCare Sheridan clients in the Therapeutic Community decorated their housing units as a way of getting through the holidays easier. (Only recently did they see all their colorful handiwork taken down for the season!)

The contest winner was C21 with a 12 Step and TC concept, but all the units were winners in their team spirit of working together. This kind of activity offers a sense of teamwork and togetherness, eases the pain of not being home with their families, and helps the time go by faster.

Great job, Sheridan clients and counselors.



Sheridan counselors Stacy Brown and Kelly Thielk with a client-created "Gingerbread Man on a Fan"



In Fresno, CA, eight residents of the MLK residential facility recently graduated the *Men 2 Men (M2M) Parenting Class*. The course provides crucial parenting skills to fathers in treatment. Congratulations to the newest M2M Parenting graduates.



KUDOS! *Our Monthly Shout-Outs to Exceptional Employees (Con't.)*

A couple of newly licensed professionals are receiving praise at Village South in Miami.



Mayachristine Camararogers, is the *Keys to Recovery (KTR)* Coordinator and Therapist for the Department of Corrections contract, providing services to clients in the Residential Substance Abuse field for the past seven years. In addition to achieving her LCSW, Mayachristine's KTR won Program of the Year.

And **Anamaria Arana**, is the Lead Therapist for *Adult Services* and the *US Federal Probation* Program. She has been working in the residential substance abuse field for five years. Anamaria received the award for Clinical Employee of the Year and achieved her license in Mental Health Counseling (LMHC) in December.



FLORIDA: *Life's a Beach!*

By Kathleen Costello, ORP Coordinator-Guidance/Care Center-Key West

Our *Offender Reentry Program* reunion Beach Bash was a huge success! All previous and current clients were invited and the turnout was phenomenal!!! Listening to them brag about their sobriety and accomplishments only reinforced the benefits of treatment combined with 12 step recovery.

The current clients hung on every word and the hope reflected was obvious. Many of them knew each other from the streets and/or jail and were unaware that they were ORP graduates. We are planning to do more activities that bring past and present clients together including a mentoring/fellowship group that includes fun in recovery! All in all....a great feel good kind of day! **ORP rocks!**





NEVADA: *Volunteerism at its Best*

By Al Truism



toys, to diapers, to men's and women's clothing, and other categories...it was a major outpouring of public support for WestCare programs, including Harris Springs Ranch, and the Women and Children's campus.

Special thanks to **Caltrol**, a major industrial leader in Las Vegas, and the **Women's and Men's Ministries at Crossing Church**. Thanks for being solid friends of WestCare.



Many WestCare states and programs benefitted from their communities' wonderful sharing and caring attitudes during the recent holiday season. A good example was passed along to The Express by **Darlene Terrill**, our Development Director for Nevada.

Several local church and secular groups went well beyond the usual giving spirit, by raising funds and donating gifts to scores of clients, young and old. From children's



Submitted by Wendy Ramos, WestCare Florida

We are all so busy, and emails keep coming into the Inbox. Are all of them necessary? No.



For example, emails with either a “Thank You,” or, “Congratulations”... those should be sent to the original sender, not the entire list. I came across this recently, and thought it might serve as a reminder to all of us.

Overview

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As a general rule, the “Reply All” function should only be used when necessary.

Before sending out a “Reply All” message, consider whether or not it is necessary. As Judith Kallos points out, “In many instances, your comments may not be appropriate for “all” or “all” may not be interested in your comments.” If you’ve received a group message and all who have received the message are part of the conversation to which you are contributing, then you should send a “Reply All.”

Addressing a Group

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When sending a “Reply All,” keep in mind that the information you’re sending is going to multiple people

and this is not a private forum. Avoid including an unnecessary amount of personal information or telling off-color jokes, as you can never be sure of how it might be interpreted by a group.

Misconceptions

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While “Reply All” messages are sometimes touted as simple and effective ways to communicate with an entire group of people, they are generally viewed as impersonal. If there are a large number of people in the group, multiple messages back and forth could become confusing. In this case, it’s best to have a meeting in lieu of a “Reply All” email.

Professionalism

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Most importantly, your emails should remain professional. Stick to the subject at hand and do not use this as a method of venting about office upsets. As with any topic, everyone on the address list may not agree with the point of view you are presenting. Also, if you are only responding to one person (or the person who sent the message), choose the “Reply to Sender” function instead.

Read more:

http://www.ehow.com/about_6855327_business-email-etiquette_reply-all.html

By Andrea Labbee, Client - Village South, Miami

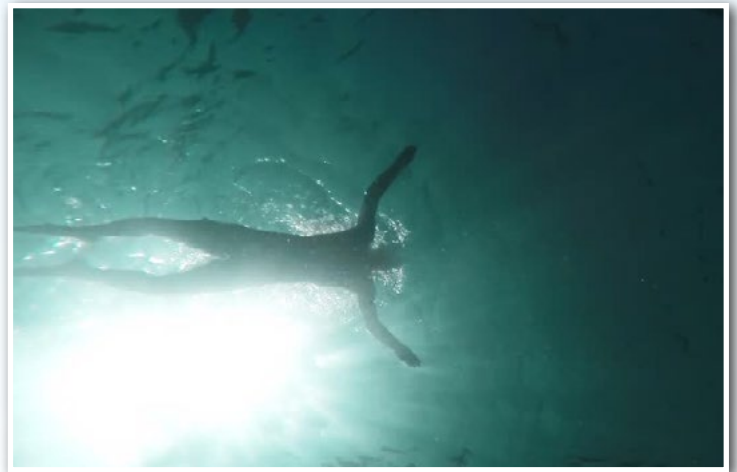
A new phase of my journey has begun. It is certainly exciting, yet also a little bit frightening. My predecessors, those people who have taught me -- and whom I wish to emulate -- have assured me that this “*healthy*” fear, if managed properly, will help me to stay grounded and humble. The past five months have been a life-saving treatment for my incurable and fatal disease.

My journey began in the “*kiddie pool*”. I waded about, getting familiar with a new experience. Others held my hand, kept me from slipping, in a safe and nurturing environment. I gained some confidence and courage; and now, I have taken the steps into the “*big pool*”—life outside of the safe haven of treatment. Beginning to swim, trying to keep my head above water, is now my responsibility.

Right now, I am doing the “*dog paddle*”, and as long as I keep my arms and legs moving, I can manage my fear. If I stop using the tools of recovery that I have been so freely given, I will surely sink, and may very well drown. The small fear, of becoming tired and slipping underwater, motivates me to ask my higher power (God) for the determination and strength to stay afloat. I have a new instructor—my sponsor—swimming beside me; she corrects my movements and encourages me to try new ways of swimming free-style (forging ahead) and doing the backstroke (looking up to my God for help).

There will be times I will tire, and will have to tread water for a bit. It is then that my instructor and the other swimmers in the pool will teach me and make suggestions. If I listen and learn, I will become an excellent swimmer, and that healthy fear will keep its proper place—as a motivator, rather than a burdensome weight around my ankles.

There will always be times I don’t feel like swimming. But there are, at those times, many others like me who will cheer me on, allowing me to dive in and try once again. For these people, I am truly grateful; as I am for the One, the Head Coach who gave me healthy arms and legs, and a clearer head to navigate the unknown rivers and oceans that I must conquer in my new life.



For now, I am learning to swim—not sink in the big pool. God will always keep me buoyant, if I let Him.



FOUNDATION: *WestCare Foundation Board*

The WestCare Foundation Board meets four times a year to review, discuss and plan everything from finances to services to emerging needs in our communities. These are volunteers from the states we serve, committed to the health and strength of humankind.

On January 23rd and 24th, the Board met in Henderson, Nevada. In the large group picture are members of the full Board, with Chairman **Jim Wadhams**, fourth from left, and President and CEO **Dick Steinberg**, far right.



The smaller group is the Veterans Committee, including Chairman **David Youngquist**, second from left.



Our employees do incredible work with unbridled passion and enthusiasm, focusing on *Uplifting the Human Spirit*. And they have total support and respect from the top of a remarkable social services agency.

THE GREEN CORNER: *More Upcycling Ideas for the New Year*

Courtesy of www.popsugar.com

What Is Upcycling? It is the process of converting old or discarded materials into something useful and often beautiful. Upcycling is not a new concept. Some of the best examples of modern-day upcycling come from the 1930s-40s when families had very little economic or material resources. While Recycling requires energy or water to break down materials, upcycling only requires your own creativity and elbow grease.

Book Page Garlands:

Make garlands out of book pages to use in parties or weddings.



T-Shirt Skirt:

Not sure what to do with old t-shirts? Patch them up into a cool skirt.



Coffee Candle:

Use old coffee grounds and the ends of old candles to create this awesome coffee candle.



Suitcase Side Table:

Make your own beautiful side table by piling up vintage suitcases, and top it off with a rustic mirror.





CALIFORNIA: *TEAM Tokens. A Great Idea!*

With a new year came a new system that enables our staff to provide instantaneous and personal recognition when one or more of their coworkers do something that is truly amazing.

The **TEAM** system aims to *Thank, Empower, Appreciate, and Motivate* our peers with one of two tokens. The first is awarded for an action that embodies our mission of *“Uplifting the Human Spirit”* of a consumer or a co-worker. The second token is given when someone has been “Caught Being Good” by going above and beyond their job duties to help their fellow staff or those we serve.

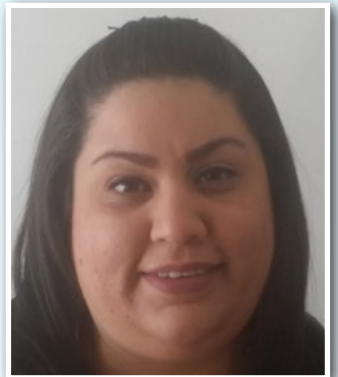
As we all work together to support WestCare and its mission, we want to ensure that we take opportunities to celebrate and recognize each other’s successes. Our peer to peer TEAM program is one way we remind each other that each and every contribution is valued and noticed.

*“I gave my Caught Being Good token for the month of January to **Annette Ortega**. Annette is a Certified Counselor for Women’s Residential in Fresno, With the additional clients and staff vacancies, Annette continues to uplift the human spirit and give her best to our clients.”*

- **Tara Estrada**, Human Resource Manager

*“I gave the round chip (Caught Being Good) to **Crystal Gomez** (MLK front desk receptionist/ data specialist) for always smiling and having a willing attitude.”*

- **Pamela Courson**,
MLK Residential



SNAPSHOTS: *Mugs For Everyone*

Smiling Wisconsin staff members ‘mug’ for the camera, after getting a supply of them. (Mugs, not cameras.)

Porcelain or stoneware beats Styrofoam...and makes for happy coffee/tea lovers!!





From left to right: Claudia Brewer, Secretary John Socos, State Senator Lena Taylor, Travis Landry, and Elizabeth Coggs.

WestCare thrives on solid relationships with local, state and national elected officials. They are often the gatekeepers of funding needed to create or sustain programs that identify our mission.

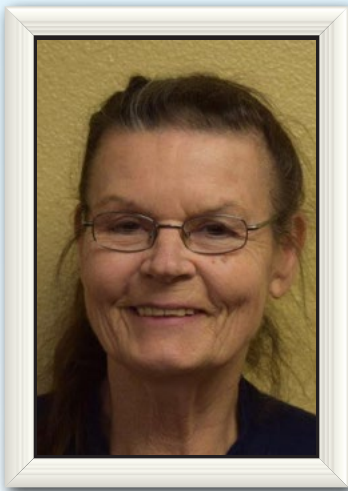
Wisconsin Regional Vice President **Elizabeth Coggs** relays this to the Express:

*"I wanted to share this picture of **Claudia Brewer**, Business Manager and **Travis Landry**, Housing Coordinator, and myself, as we met at the State Capitol in Madison with State Senator **Lena Taylor** and Secretary **John A. Socos** of the State of Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs.*

We discussed doing more housing for veterans, along with a training, health and employment program. Senator Taylor represents the area where we are doing the Veterans Home Owners Program."

Way to represent, and maintain WestCare's premiere state and national significance.

This Month's Question: *"What do you hope to accomplish in 2016?"*



"Become completely debt free, increase my time at the gym, and drink more water."

- **Barbara Varner**, Data Collection Specialist (California)

"I would like to move forward with this great company I work for."

- **James Glass**, Kitchen Manager/Maintenance (California)



For March: *"When you are off duty, what is your favorite hobby or pastime?"*
Send response and photo to john.wallace@westcare.com by Monday, **February 15th**.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS: February 2016

February 2 (8:30am-9:30am ET / 11:30am-12:30pm ET)
Eastern KY - CAC Meeting

Notes: Lunch at Mona's Restaurant, tour of locations and Meeting at 1pm at the Ashcamp location

February 8-10
Foundation - TCA Winter Board Meeting

February 15
Washington's Birthday (AKA President's Day)
Notes: Occurs every third Monday in February. Federally observed; no school for children.

February 16 (8am-9am PT / 11am-12pm ET)
Executive Teleconference Meeting

February 18 (5pm-6pm CT)
Iowa / FAVA - CAC Meeting (Forest City, IA)

February 29
Leap Year Day (Extra Day in February)

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

February Observances

- African American History Month
- AMD / Low Vision Awareness Month
- American Heart Month
- American History Month
- Marfan Syndrome Awareness Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- National Parent Leadership Month
- National Wise Health Consumer Month
- Relationship Wellness Month
- Youth Leadership Month

