



WESTCARE EXPRESS

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THE WESTCARE EXPRESS NEWSLETTER

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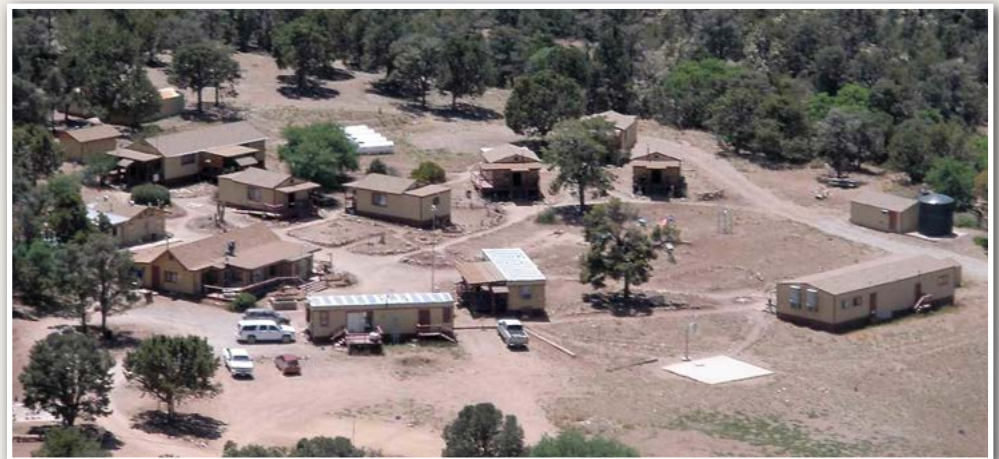
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Back to the Early Days

By Susan Decker, MPA - Electronic Communications Coordinator



Harris Springs Ranch

Harris Springs Ranch (HSR) sits halfway up Mount Charleston, 45 minutes northwest of Las Vegas in the Spring Mountain Recreation Area. This is where one of WestCare's earliest programs was born in 1979. The drive to HSR takes you off the main highway and down a four-mile bumpy, narrow dirt road which is challenging in the best weather. Dedicated staff drive it in rain and snow, regularly displaying their commitment. As **Christopher Anton**, Behavioral Health Therapist says, *"Working for HSR has been one of the best experience's I have had in my life. To be able to help others the way I was helped when I needed it most is why I love what I do."*

HSR is a residential therapeutic community housing 56 men. The cabins maintain the look and feel of the Girl Scout Camp that it was in the 1940s, including a long walk to the restrooms. In addition to the residential cabins, other cabins house the dining hall, restroom/showers, and staff offices. *"The peaceful, remote surroundings allow residents to focus on themselves and develop*

FEATURE STORY: *Back to the Early Days (Con't.)*

appreciation for the simple things in life,” says **Felicia Bliatout**, HSR Counselor.



Tucked away in the scrub brush is a small cabin where President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** stayed briefly in the early 1900s when the property was a work camp.

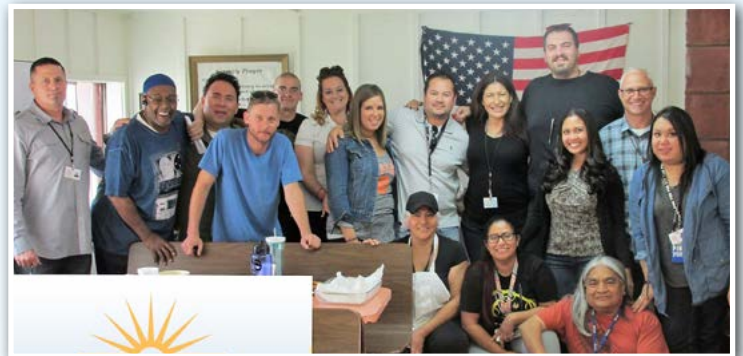


While much of the facility pre-dates WestCare's ownership, residents have added a cemetery where they can bury their addictions. Clients proudly show visitors the crosses bearing names and dates which signify some of the many lives changed at HSR.

Programming provides a highly structured environment with well-defined attitudinal and behavioral boundaries.



It incorporates community responsibility as part of the recovery and growth process. It embraces the concept that behavioral change can occur through positive peer support. Assistant Director **Ramona Muzquiz** says *“HSR allows me to plant the seed of recovery and a new way of life.”*



HSR Director **Leo Magrdichian** says the demand for residential treatment services is so high that HSR could easily serve twice as many clients. This would require expanding and updating the facility. In the future, Leo would like to see additional cabins with their own bathrooms, an indoor workout area to house their fitness equipment, and a staff building with individual offices to better accommodate private counseling sessions. Right now, big-hearted volunteers from the valley below frequently travel to the tranquil setting, bringing their construction and painting skills to keep the unique property a very special place.

PACIFIC ISLANDS: *In the Heart of the Village*

By Aja Ramos, Program Coordinator

Guam's Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) closed out the summer with a bang! For the second session of WestCare Pacific Islands' summer camp, PREP ventured deep into southern Guam to offer programming to some of the island's most needy.

The southern villages are home to the island's most resilient communities. Youth in these areas, due to distance and minimal resources, face barriers in accessing opportunities and critical services. The beauty of the scenic village of Agat is often overlooked, as gang violence, poverty, and social isolation have been an increasing concern. However, the strength of the people has inspired a revival of village pride and activities.

Partnering with Agat village's Mayor's office, PREP staff was able to recruit youth from the area and deliver a successful week-long



camp in an idyllic beachside setting. While at the camp, the young participants engaged in multiple activities focused on team building, communication, social connections, and interdependence. Workshops based on the evidence-based curriculum Relationship Intelligence taught youth how to engage in healthy relationships, cope with peer pressure, and think critically about life choices.

The summer camp was packed with fun activities including a field trip to Valley of the Latte cultural center where participants learned about native animals and plants, and visited an ancient village site where their ancestors once went about their daily lives—all on a rainy day! The positive energy of the camp was infectious and made a meaningful impact on the youth of Southern Guam.



As one youth stated, *"I shared it with my brother... about WestCare camp. And he said 'Oh, that's a new thing..! What do you guys do there?' I was telling him I learned a lot there. I learned about carabao, the fish, the Chamorro culture... And then he's like 'Oh wow. That's good you're changing. You're finally getting to new stuff.' 'Cause me, I'm never into these kinds of things. All I do is just go with my friends, drink and party.' He's really proud of me that I'm actually doing these kinds of things...It really helps us get teamwork, it helps us communicate with others. It helps us with healthy friendships."*

OREGON: *And That's How He Rolls*

By Stephen Jensen, HomeBase Veterans Navigator

In early August, I received a call from **Jill Baker**. She told me her father **Fred Wimmer** is a 93 year old veteran. He is unable to push himself around in a regular wheelchair because his shoulders are bad. She asked me if there are any programs to help him get an electric wheelchair. I told her that I would go to the assisted living facility and talk to Mr. Wimmer.



I met Fred that day and completed an intake with him and then went down to Clearview in Pendleton, Oregon, where they help veterans get equipment they can use. I met with the founder and CEO of Clearview, **Darrin Umbarger**, and explained my situation. Darrin told me he has an electric wheelchair that he will donate to me but the batteries are bad and it needs new ones. I emailed my WestCare team and asked if anyone knew how I could get batteries for this donated wheelchair. **John Lee** (WestCare Senior Vice President) picked up the tab.

A few days later, I received a call from Clearview saying the chair was ready for delivery, so we delivered the wheelchair to Fred Wimmer. He is excited to have it and very thankful.



Without WestCare and my amazing team coming together, who knows when or if Mr. Wimmer would have received the electric wheelchair he so desperately needed.

ILLINOIS: *Recovery: Sometimes, It's "Whatever Works"*

By Carolyn Ahlback, Clinical Supervisor



Carolyn Ahlback

As one of the most significant months for the WestCare family, *Recovery Month* is especially significant to the Sheridan team. Recovery Month provides the perfect opportunity for us to put sobriety in the forefront. We do so by encouraging clients to use their artistic abilities through artwork, poetry and skits (just to name a few) to show what recovery means to them. We also have been fortunate to have various speakers throughout the years, ranging from past clients and motivational speakers to 12 Step advocates.

All of this is not to diminish what the treatment staff does on a daily basis. The team regularly goes above and beyond to encourage and show our clients just how important and meaningful the designated month of September can be. This is done by illustrating why recovery deserves such high recognition.

Just as our clients come from all walks of life, they also vary in their recovery status and experiences. Many of our clients have never actively worked a recovery program and as a result, don't yet know what hope and opportunities are possible for their futures. On the other end of the spectrum, many have gone through countless bouts of recovery and relapse, recognizing the significance of what they have had, but being unable to maintain it. Either way, the staff at WestCare Sheridan understands their responsibility: to instill and maintain hope and initiate the motivation to change.

The treatment team works tirelessly to celebrate every achievement and advancement of our clients on the road to recovery. We encourage them to find their own path to sobriety and success, understanding that there is not a "one size fits all" answer. One thing that is stressed is that regardless of what keeps clients moving forward on the road to change, recovery is a process.



ILLINOIS: *Inspiring Hope in the Land of Lincoln*

Submitted by Staff

The last 10 months have brought new challenges and successes to the WestCare team. In October, we became the treatment provider for two *Impact Incarceration Programs (IIP)*... Dixon Springs and DuQuoin in southern Illinois. These boot camp programs last 120 days. As with all WestCare programs, staff emphasize teamwork and commitment towards *Uplifting the Human Spirit*. They work to inspire hope and promise of a better future in the men and women they serve. 204 men and 11 women are currently enrolled in the programs.

Since assuming responsibility for the IIPs, improvements have been made to both the overall quality and quantity of program services. The new curriculum and added services have already received positive feedback from both clients and prison administrators. Satisfaction ratings have improved, and many have expressed that they enjoy the new curriculum and feel the counselors have been really helpful and supportive.

One major difference from the previous provider's model is transitioning treatment to a more therapeutic format. It now includes drug education, relapse prevention skills, fatherhood and motherhood therapy groups, anger management skills, individual counseling, and re-entry preparation. Participants are able to sit in circles, express feelings, and freely share ideas and opinions with each other. GED assistance is also available for those who qualify.

Everyone involved with the IIP deserves a round of applause and appreciation for their efforts, which have gone above and beyond. Staff is so motivated that they are promoting WestCare's name throughout southern Illinois.



Pictured is the IIP Team. This great group of employees is improving the lives of participants and spreading the WestCare name and mission in the Midwest.



WISCONSIN: *A Life, a Neighborhood, Transformed*

"I have an affection for a great city. I feel safe in the neighborhood of man, and enjoy the sweet security of the streets."
--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 19th century American poet.



Before...



...And After

Those words rang true in Wisconsin, where WestCare joined the City of Milwaukee in making a senior citizen's dream come true. Under the direction of Project Coordinator **Travis Landry**, **Betty Saffold's** home has been renovated so beautifully, that Ms. Saffold wrote a letter of praise to WestCare: *"I can only hope that others,*

especially those my age, will wake up proud in their home with your help." The project was completed in the Transform Milwaukee corridor of the city.

Great job, Travis and crew. And best wishes to our new friend.



WestCare Votes!

Next month's election could very well determine the focus and direction of public health policies and programs for years to come. Not only will a new President be elected, but also the makeup of Congress could be reconfigured.

We encourage you to watch, read, listen and be discerning. Then, on Tuesday, November 8th, use the wonderful gift we have been given as Americans: *The right to vote.*





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



Always there when needed, the GulfCoast Community Action Council raised money to host the third annual Employee Appreciation Picnic. Some 80 WestCare staffers and their families enjoyed the food, fun and pedaling around Lake Seminole Park in St. Petersburg.



Great job by Nevada staff and clients who served hundreds of people attending a Recovery Month rally at Las Vegas City Hall. And big thanks to Sysco for donating all the food.



Lorenzo Matthew was born on September 7th at 10 lbs. He and **Amy Gertz**, TBOS therapist in Key West, FL are doing great!



LGBT COUNCIL: *Be Part of the Conversation*

Be part *of the* Conversation

Help shape WestCare's first national LGBT Council

Sign up today

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LGBTCouncil>



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LGBTCouncil>



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

As we know, so many WestCare staff, families, clients and community members have experienced personal and professional losses to suicide. Across the United States, millions of people experience new losses every year. *The International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day*, sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, is on November 19th. This is an opportunity for loss survivors to come together to find comfort, understanding, healing and hope.

If you are interested in finding an event in your area, you can find information at:

<https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/survivor-day>



CALIFORNIA: *Recovery Happens*

(Stories submitted by Gabriela McNeil and Michael Mygind)

In honor of National Recovery Month, our residents and others transitioning to sobriety, had an absolute blast at the *Recovery Happens* kickoff event at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. They visited our WestCare California booth, learned about services from other providers, heard testimonies and came together with their fellow brothers and sisters in recovery to celebrate their sobriety!



WestCare California is proud to share its May - August 2016 Tri-Annual Board Report Video highlighting many of the amazing accomplishments of its programs and staff. Visit the Facebook link to read the post: [facebook.com/WestCareCalifornia/posts/10154486230099266](https://www.facebook.com/WestCareCalifornia/posts/10154486230099266)



CALIFORNIA: *Employment Readiness Classes*



Several of our clients successfully graduated from a two week employment readiness class presented by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Fresno and Fresno City College! This pilot program aims to teach prospective job searchers new skills, from resume building to job searching and more. Upon completion of the program, they were invited along with their loved ones to a graduation ceremony held at Catholic Charities in honor of their accomplishments! Great new program. Glad to take part!



CALIFORNIA: *Walk to End Alzheimer's Event*

Clients from our residential treatment facility played a tremendous part in the setup for this year's *Walk to End Alzheimer's* event in Fresno. They helped with the setup the day before, the morning of, and assisted with various duties on the day of the event before helping break down after the event. And many of them took part in the walk itself. The coordinators said the WestCare volunteers were *"the work horses that were needed"*.



FLORIDA: *Young Audience... Same Serious Message*

By Deborah Matthews, LMHC Clinical Coordinator

The Marathon Middle/High School *Keys to Be the Change* members, in collaboration with Guidance/Care Center's *Project Success*, hosted a school-wide suicide prevention activity.

Bulletin boards were created across the campus and club members provided prevention information to students during middle and high school lunch. Additionally, teachers were provided with suicide prevention information so they were more aware of signs to notice in students, and prevention clips were played daily for the week on the school announcements.



FLORIDA: Graduate: The First of Many

By Sasha Thompson, LCSW-Program Coordinator

The *Keys Intensive Screening and Treatment (KIST)* Program had its first successful program graduate!



While in the six month program, the client received substance abuse counseling that helped him understanding his reasons for using substances. He was able to develop coping skills that have helped him move forward from his past. He reported that that he is now on a positive life path and has no desire to return to his old lifestyle. He attends AA meetings on a daily basis and is working very closely with a sponsor.

The new graduate highly recommends the KIST Program for those who are suffering with substance use, stating, *"The KIST program has taught me a lot, like safe coping skills, breathing techniques, and grounding techniques"*.

He now enjoys many healthy activities in his free time, including swimming, riding his bike, and listening to Brazilian jazz.

KIST is a Targeted Capacity Expansion Grant funded by SAMHSA and the Guidance/Care Center was the only program in Florida funded in 2015.



(Pictured: Back row, left to right: Sasha Thompson, Program Coordinator, Julia Williams, Behavioral Health Therapist, Ann Brignolo, Research Assistant. Front Row, left to right: Jimmy Anderson, Care Coordinator, Araceli Walterson, Care Coordinator. Not pictured: Colette Anderson, Behavioral Health Therapist)

CARIBBEAN - PUERTO RICO: *Together... It's Possible*

By Cristian Duarte, Senior Vice President



This past summer, at Hacienda Nativa in Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico, a recognition activity titled *“Everything is possible as long as you believe”* culminated the *Guara Bi* program.

The participants learned fellowship, overcoming, and

cooperation. During the activity, staff and invited agencies shared with participants the keys to integrating in a family environment. All are pictured here.

Six of our participants recovered their lives after living in inhuman conditions for years.

This Month's Question: *"Cat? Dog? Other Pet? Who's Your Favorite?"*



Dog, obviously, for Florida's **Wendy Ramos**. Here, she cuddles with **LillyAnn** (10) and **BellaLynn** (8 months), both rescue pooches.

"What is your favorite television commercial?" Send your response and photo by **October 20th** to john.wallace@westcare.com.

GEORGIA: *Whew! Just Under the Wire for New Funding*

By Carolyn Frye, Program Director

The Woman's Place (TWP) was in the last day of the last month of its three years of funding from a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) grant issued in 2013.

At the 11th hour, WestCare Georgia received the news that they had been awarded the TCE:HIV-Minority Women grant from SAMHSA and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) in the amount of \$500,000/year for budget periods 9/30/2016 through 9/29/2019!!

Over the past three years, TWP delivered substance abuse, mental health and trauma treatment services to minority women over the age of 18 who were challenged with these issues and are at high risk of or living with HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C.

The program served 188 women over a three year period alongside their faithful community partners:

- City of Refuge
- New Hope Enterprises
- Ruth's Place
- Fulton County Public Defender's Office
- DeKalb County Public Defender's Office
- Fulton County Department of Family and Children Services



A few of the ladies are shown here after completing the program. Front row from left: **Kinshata H.** (client), **Shannett McGee** (Counselor Intern). Back row from left, clients who received certificates at last completion ceremony: **Stephanie C., LaVonda R., Yolanda W., Caryn W., Tanisha J.**

The team is now planning and implementing new strategies upon the successes they had in the previous grant. In addition to treatment services, TWP established community partnerships that provided the following services to participants:

GED classes (free)-Permanent housing (income based)-
Job readiness certifications (free)-Clothing closet for

GEORGIA: *Whew! Just Under the Wire for New Funding (Con't.)*



women and children (free)-Linkage to medical care-
Furniture and housing needs (free)-Dental Services-
Eyeglasses (free).

We have been busy as we transition from the previous grant and prepare for the new one. September has been a month of positive transitions for all of us.

We thank our leadership for their on-going support, and for their compassion and commitment to serve. They are from the left: **Jaketa Singleton** (RN), **Samantha Adams** (Counselor Intern), **Tiffany Hill** (Counselor), **Shannett McGee** (Counselor Intern), **She'me Thorns** (Counselor) **Yuniko Tonge** (Research Assistant), **Ekemeni Nsentip** (Women's Specialist).

WEBINAR CALENDAR: *Behavioral Addictions: The Unholy Trinity*

When: Thursday, November 3rd at 2pm-3:30pm.

Presented by: **Larry Ashley**, Ed.S, LPC (*Professor Emeritus of Counseling at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Addiction Specialist in the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Nevada School of Medicine*).

Interested? TRAINING@westcare.com

Description: A review of three significant behavioral addictions: gambling addiction, sexual addiction and eating disorders. When looking at one addiction, it's important to consider co-occurring and screen for them all. This is good for **1.5 Continuing Education Credits!**

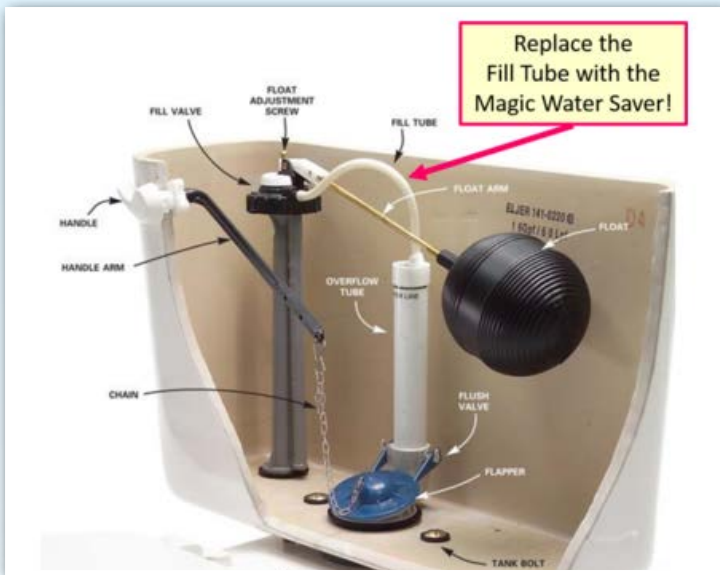
Who should log in: All counseling staff and anyone interested in learning more about addiction from a national addiction expert.



THE GREEN CORNER: *Save Water. Save Money. Be the Change!*

WestCare is saving water thanks to FitzHouse Enterprises!! FitzHouse will be installing the Magic Water Saver in 400 WestCare toilets over the next few months.

The US Average water footprint is 2,220 Gallons/Day... How BIG is your Water Footprint?



The Magic Water Saver saves up to ½ gallon of water per flush without altering flush capacity or functionality and helps protect septic systems. With this new system WestCare plans to save well over 200 gallons of water!

The Magic Water Saver is suitable for any tank type toilet with an overflow tube. No tools are needed and it is easy to install – just replace the Fill Tube with the Magic Water Saver. Get yours at magicwatersaver.com.

Gross but true: your toilet might be the biggest water hog in your house. So remember, *“If it’s yellow, let it mellow. If it’s brown, flush it down.”* Every time you skip a flush, you save between 1.5 and 5 gallons!



Find out with the Water Footprint Calculator at watercalculator.org to learn about the water “hidden” in food, energy and the things you buy. Play with your answers to see how you can lower your footprint. After you get your results, the website will email you over a hundred water saving tips and in three months remind you to come back and see if you’ve improved!!



Standing tall and proud with new volunteer responsibilities, Eastern/Caribbean Region Board of Directors gather with staff in Miami to discuss expanding areas of service.



Dave Youngquist (r), Board Chairman, and Dave Turner, Program Director, welcome WestCare's official footprint in Minnesota, focusing on veterans services.



A perfect night on the water for Guidance/Care Center employees on their annual sunset sail off the Florida Keys.