

WestCare Express

The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter



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Cuts Put Dreams of New Lives at Risk

By Bill McEwen – *Columnist, The Fresno Bee*

He tried alcohol and marijuana in grade school and was dealing cocaine for the Mexican Mafia at age 19.

Shawn Jenkins wasn't a poor kid from the wrong side of the tracks. His family had money. He raced around on minibikes and motorcycles as a kid in Northern California, and his parents gave him a Mazda RX-7 sports car before he even had a driver's license.

But the gifts didn't fill the emotional chasm between Jenkins and his parents. Only drugs did and then only temporarily. The high school football captain tried college for a semester and left to be a serious drug dealer. During the next five years, the glamour and thrill of selling drugs gave way to the despair of being both dealer and user. Home had become a car or a camper shell pitched behind a diesel-repair shop.

Jenkins owed money to dangerous people. And in the six hours before he made the 3 a.m. phone call that saved his life in the summer of 1988, a paranoid Jenkins smoked and snorted 9 grams of cocaine.

"I was getting to the end of my rope," says Jenkins, who called his mom from a pay phone and told her he wanted help. Jenkins expected to go into drug treatment in Phoenix, where she lived.

But his life, as miserable as it was, held a surprise: His stepfather, a crop-duster, was doing a job near Yuba City, no more than a mile or two from where Jenkins was calling. They met up, and Jenkins' stepdad took him to Fresno because a relative there had told him about a really good program called The Third Floor.

Twenty years later: Jenkins still is in Fresno. He's married, the father of two boys, ages 12 and 7. And he's chief operating officer of WestCare, a nonprofit health and human services company with 1,200 employees.

When I interviewed him last week, Jenkins was trying to save the jobs of WestCare drug counselors in state prisons. Their jobs were slashed by Gov. Schwarzenegger

because of the state budget crisis.

"It's not just our employees I'm worried about," Jenkins says. "It's the effectiveness of the programs. One day the service just stops. What impact will that have?"

Jenkins' job is fast-paced and demanding and not anything like what he – or anyone else – would've envisioned for him back in the late 1980s when cocaine had turned him into a walking skeleton.

"I kept telling myself that I was going to make [a lot of money selling drugs] and get out," Jenkins says. "But tomorrow never comes, and it keeps getting worse and worse. I finally realized I was headed to a long stretch in prison or being dead."

Jenkins' recovery didn't unfold in a straight line. Four months into treatment, he called home and told his parents that he wanted out. Their smart, tough-love answer: leave and you're on your own. He stayed.

Six months later, Jenkins went to Arizona on a 72-hour pass. He got drunk and high and rekindled his Mexican Mafia connections.

"That undid everything," Jenkins says, "but I had made a 10-month investment in myself and I had a lot better awareness of who I was. I decided to go back into the program."

Jenkins went from patient to volunteer to counselor to maintenance guy to one of the top executives at WestCare, which merged with The Third Floor in the 1990s. Now that he's chief operating officer, he's working on a college degree to supplement what he learned on the way up and from the school of hard knocks.

And he's telling his story – not to call attention to himself, but to offer hope to anyone battling drugs or alcohol. Things can get better. People do turn their lives around. He's living proof.

"If you really want help," Jenkins says, "you can get it."

Uplifting the Human Spirit Happy 35th Anniversary WestCare!

By Loretta Berry – *Sheridan Correctional Center, Illinois*

In preparation for WestCare's 35th Anniversary on August 22nd the clients at Sheridan Correctional Center were invited to celebrate the themes of recovery in their housing units through drawing, painting, poems, pictures, signs and designs. This friendly competition was introduced as a means of involving the clients in the preparations for WestCare's 35th Anniversary observance. The contest itself was designed to encourage team work, pride in ones' community and environment and creativity in telling the story of recovery. As one of the Department of Corrections managers helping to judge the contest added "this was awesome. The clients did an unbelievable job, there was so much to see and listen to." Twelve halls participated in the contest and may have been driven early on by a desire to win or the love of pizza.

Once the work started it became clear that the efforts were no longer "prize driven" Indeed, the

contest became a different vehicle to draw community members together and to encourage working as a team. MaryBeth O'Hara, Office manger for WestCare at Sheridan pointed out that "the clients were forced to work with each other in new and different ways. Also important is the sheer creativity they showed with the limited resources they had to work with." "The biggest problem in the contest" explains Stan Brooks, Program Director, "is how to show all of the clients who participated that they are winners. This is so great," said Mr. Brooks, "I don't want any of these guys to think they aren't winners. When you look at the halls, you know they are winners."

Illinois



Arizona



On the ladder-Herb Covert (Maintenance Technician) and standing is Tony Gann (Maintenance Coordinator) working in the new soon to be Thrift Store moving right next door to CIC.

WestCare Arizona Is On The Move!

By Kim Mitchell – *Office Manager, WestCare Arizona*

WestCare Arizona is on the move again! Our Thrift Store is moving right next door to our CIC offices with opening set for Sept. 1. This new location will have more parking spaces and will have a fresh new face. The Grand Opening is set for Sept. 16 with prizes, refreshments and plenty of staff and volunteers on hand to help. Our Thrift Store generates sales from donated items and the proceeds help fund all 12 of our facilities here in Arizona.

WestCare Arizona is also expanding our CIC office by adding more office space on the other side of our current offices. This will accommodate our DUI Education classes and groups for children who witness domestic violence through a Federal grant from CDC. Our maintenance department has been very busy trying to accommodate all this and we certainly appreciate them!

WestCare California Services Impacted by Governor Schwarzenegger

By Seanna Herring-Jensen – *Special Projects Officer, WestCare California*

Governor Schwarzenegger's sweeping executive order when state legislators failed to agree upon a budget by August 1 has had a profound impact on prison programs that offer treatment and counseling for addiction. The executive order was applied to in custody treatment programs but post-release programs were not affected.

Prison treatment programs have been shut down because critical prison staff has been laid off and prisons are not able to guarantee the security of treatment staff working inside. Counseling programs, as well as educational program such as G.E.D., have been closed down.

How did this impact WestCare programs?

Upon hearing that the Governor actually

followed through on his threatening executive order, WestCare COO Shawn Jenkins called all staff from Pleasant Valley State Prison to the Admin office in Fresno first thing the next morning. Unlike most other providers who offered services within the prison walls, WestCare was not going to lay off its valuable staff. Instead, Shawn and the HR department worked to place each employee into a vacancy in a variety of WestCare programs. It was a long hard day of interviewing, learning of open positions, pizza, sodas, and laughter for staff members, but they seemed to appreciate the personal attention of Shawn and the HR department.

All but two of the staff from PVSP took the option to be temporarily placed into other positions

within WestCare. Many spoke about their eagerness to learn more about WestCare through a new position. Staffers will have the option to interview for permanent placement into those positions or to return to their old positions once the budget is passed.

Congressman Costa Visits Wing Family Youth Center

On Friday August 15th, Congressman Jim Costa of the 20th District visited WestCare's Y-Max program at the Wing Family Center in Hanford.

The congressman asked to tour the new program because he is interested in learning more about treatment services.



Pictured: Jenny Gonzalez, Congressman Costa, Ahmad Bahrami, and Maurice Leef.



Recovery Month

The Recovery Month effort aims to promote the societal benefits of alcohol and drug use disorder treatment, laud the contributions of treatment providers and promote the message that recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders in all its forms is possible.

To learn more about Recovery Month activities log on to www.recoverymonth.gov

Please make plans to send your Recovery Month articles and pictures to the WestCare Express.

Kentucky

Operation UNITE Shoot Hoops Not Drugs Basketball Camp

Residents, Clinical Supervisor Mike Williams, Counselor Howard Miller and Direct Care Workers Shawn Clucky, Brian Jones and Keith Mills from the WestCare Kentucky Hal Rogers Appalachian Trail Recovery Center assisted former University of Kentucky basketball player Jeff Sheppard with the Operation UNITE Shoot Hoops Not Drugs Basketball Camps this summer at Johnson Central High School, Letcher County Central High School, and Owsley County High School. ▶



Ashcamp Residents Attend Coal Academy for Surface Miner's Certification



The above Residents from the WestCare Kentucky Hal Rogers Appalachian Trail Recovery Center at Ashcamp, Kentucky recently completed the 24 hour coal miner's surface training. All 11 residents passed the written exam and now have their certification. The training was coordinated by WestCare Counselor Howard Miller and Kentucky Coal Academy Program Coordinator Dennis E. Mayo II.



Check Out the Endowment Campaign Logo!

By Jim Schaitel – *The DuBois Group*

Campaign Corner

To recognize the importance of our Endowment Campaign, we designed a logo just for this project! Taking the word “uplifting” from our mission and combining it with “tomorrow” states very simply what the campaign is all about . . . helping to ensure the future of the programs and services provided to the kids, men and women we serve. And the last two words in the logo . . . WE CAN. With your help and others in our communities, we KNOW we can!

When our Endowment Campaign launches in your Region, we'll take a few weeks to ask each employee to consider making a gift. A pledge of \$1 a day grows to \$360 in a year or \$1800 over 5 years. Pretty dramatic, isn't it? A pledge of \$25 per pay period grows to \$3000 over 5 years!

A WestCare employee came up with a GREAT idea that has meaning to her... she's pledging \$35 each pay period in honor of WestCare's 35th Anniversary this year. Over 5 years, that will mean \$4200 to the Endowment Campaign!

We'll continue to give you updates throughout the year-long campaign and are happy to answer any questions you may have or help you tailor a pledge that fits your wishes *and* your budget!

Why is MY gift important to the Endowment Campaign? Every gift, regardless of size, helps us get to our goal! Also, it's important when we ask your community to make a gift (individuals, businesses, organizations) . . . often they will ask how much support is from our staff and our board. If we don't support the campaign, why should they? It's pretty impressive to tell a community donor that 100% of our staff has made a gift to the campaign!

Can I make my gift via payroll deduction? Yes! An easy way to complete your pledge, just have it deducted each pay period.

Are there pre-tax benefits to using payroll deduction? While there are no pre-tax benefits to fulfilling a pledge via payroll deduction, there ARE typical end-of-year tax benefits as a donation.

Please think about making a generous gift when you're asked. We need you to set the example for the rest of the donors!



WestCare Foundation
Endowment Campaign

Nominee for Outstanding Community Advocate of the Year

By Dr. Tanju Mishara – CCMH Site Manager, Key West Florida

South Florida



Maureen L. Kempa, MA, NCC, LMHC, Children's Therapist with Care Center for Mental Health, is the 16th Judicial Circuit Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Program's nominee for Outstanding Community Advocate of the Year at 2008 Florida Guardian Ad Litem Program conference in Orlando. The Assistant Director of the GAL Program, Tim May congratulated Maureen and said "everybody has a great deal of respect for you, you do a terrific job."

Maureen Kempa, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, is widely recognized in the community as one of the most effective children's therapists. Regional Vice President, Jamie Pipher agreed that Maureen is "indeed an outstanding mental health professional, a very compassionate therapist and one of the hardest driving community advocates."

Ms. Kempa is also an independent consultant and qualified supervisor for mental health counselors at "A Positive Step" of Monroe County, a non-profit agency contracted to the Department of Juvenile Justice to work with at-risk youth. She also provides individual and couples counseling to girls and women through Womankind, Inc., another non-profit agency that provides health care to uninsured and under-insured females in the Keys.

Frank C. Rabbito, Senior Vice President is proud of Ms. Kempa's many accomplishments on behalf of children and youth in Monroe County. "Maureen exemplifies the qualities necessary to succeed. We in Florida congratulate Maureen on being nominated for this prestigious award and recognition for a job well done."

5 Questions with . . .

As WestCare Foundations Chief Operating Officer, **Shawn Jenkins** works with CEO Richard Steinberg to oversee the planning and development needs of WestCare Foundation. A long time employee, Shawn began his tenure as a counselor tech in 1990. Shawn has grown through the ranks from direct client services (counselor tech, counselor, senior counselor, assistant program manager) to middle management (director of operations, director of administration and operations, regional administrator) to upper management (regional vice president), executive management (senior vice president) and finally to a position of executive senior vice president for WestCare Foundation. Shawn is based in Fresno, California, where he resides with his wife, Angie, and their two sons, Dylan and Giovanni.

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

I find it extremely rewarding to watch both clients

and staff grow and develop to their true potential. The most challenging would be the constant education it takes to keep our program funded. We serve the underserved populations and funding for these types of programs are unfortunately considered first when there are budget cuts.

What do you do in your spare time?

I like to relax spend time with my family.

What would everyone be surprised to learn about you?

I am really not a very social person by nature. I am social at work because it is my job to be but I am the type of person who is just fine going to the movies alone.

What is your proudest personal or professional accomplishment?

By far I am proud of my two son's Dylan and Giovanni. They are the greatest!!!!!! In regards to professional accomplishment it would have to be



WestCare (former The Third Floor) Graduating class of 1991 where we went from an annual of 6 graduates to 19 in one year.

What is your favorite TV show?

I am a reality TV junkie. I guess I just like to watch people who are stranger than me.

Georgia

WestCare Georgia's journey with its Outpatient Methamphetamine Program in the Atlanta Metropolitan area, opened its doors for services to the community, October 2007. The agency opened its doors to address an ever increasing social and penetrating public health crisis in our communities. Making an impact on this crisis has centered on promoting community awareness, bridging community partnerships, and enhancing program services aimed at empowering the very clients we serve. Among the central partnerships recognized and appreciated in carrying out our mission are the following: Samaritan House, Aid Atlanta, Café 458, City of Atlanta/Gateway

WestCare Georgia Becomes "A Bridge Builder" – What A Success!

By Kareem Jordon – *WestCare Georgia*

Transition Facility, and the United Way.

These partnerships have created inter-agency relationships with St. Josephs Outreach Program, Grady/Emory Hospitals, the Phoenix House, Santa Fe Villas Residential Program, Morehouse HIV/ Substance Abuse Consortium, Sentinel Probation Services, First Step, and the Georgia Department of Corrections Reentry Program. These inter-agency relationships have generated 50 clients becoming a part of our treatment program and fostered wrap-around services that have included permanent residential housing, employment readiness, SSI awards, and court interventions that have resulted in family reunifications.

Becoming a member of the United Way community has been an extraordinary "Bridge Builder" in WestCare Georgia's on-going mission to advocate, empower, and uplift the Human Spirit. Uniting people together can be a hard task but when everyone has the same mind set, same goal, and same energy to get things done, and then there is no reason why the unity can't make a change. Sometimes thinking out of the box is the best way to get things done in the box. A special thanks to all the people and organizations that have contributed to our program mission's SUCCESS!!



WestCare Employee Photo Contest!

Calling all photographers employed by WestCare! We are asking our employees to assist us in developing a photo library we can use for our new branding. In our new branding strategy, we would like to use more WestCare photos featuring our own clients and landscape photos of our own regional areas as opposed to stock photography in our marketing materials. We will need all of your help and assistance to develop this new resource. So, we're having a photo contest to kick off this effort! Please look for the flyer that will be sent to each region outlining each category, the contest rules and prize incentives that will be offered!

Photo Categories

Category 1

The first category must depict our regional identity. The observer must be able to identify the region this photo was taken in. Environmental photos such as rivers, mountains, shorelines, etc. The goal being to represent each region through photography as well as through copy.

Category 2

The second category is positive, uplifting expressions of individuals. This theme should try to depict a typical client from your region in a headshot. A positive expression is key and we also request that the person look directly into the camera rather than looking away. We want to depict the uplifting outcome of an individual's development near the end or after completing one of our programs.

Category 3

The third category is a group shot or a few people consisting of clients and/or clients and WestCare employees coming together in a counseling situation, a program, an event, etc. These photos should also try to evoke a positive response through positive expressions. Groups holding hands, people in a circle or group, activity, interaction, etc.

Photos will be judged not only by content, but on vivid color, contrast, clarity and overall quality. (If at all possible, try to incorporate the WestCare logo colors somehow in clothing, background or outdoor settings/props). This will assist in the overall design of our projects.
(please see samples provided on this page).

WestCare Celebrates 35th Anniversary

Music at WestCare Kentucky Shelter



35th Anniversary cake



Kirby Burgess, Jennifer Hilton, Jennifer Donaldson, Darlene Terrill, Candy Kidd and WestCare Nevada Board Chair Keith Thomas



Balloon Heads in Kentucky!



WestCare San Diego



CA Administration Employees taking a moment to read WestCare's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principals.



WestCare Georgia Celebrates!



WestCare Georgia Celebrates!



Illinois staff gets together to recognize WestCare's Anniversary



Reno Community Triage Center Staff Celebrating 35th Anniversary.

