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Alternative
News
Sources

A New PATH

A

New

PATH

Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing



Vol XXVI January 2007

Postcard from the Prez.

by Caroline Stewart

Happy New Year PATH Comrades! 2006 was a blow out year for our wonderful organization. I hope that you were able to attend at least one of our fabulous events...I don't think that I will ever forget the Second Annual *Strut for Sobriety!* As the mother of a recovering addict, I had the wonderful honor of carrying my candle down the runway. It was a tremendously moving experience for me and my family after living with our son's active drug abuse for seven years...Here are a few sneak previews...Watch for the HBO film "Addiction" in February. PATH has been honored to help publicize this special event...Put on your best party clothes for an afternoon tea and art opening featuring students from City College and their Prop 36 graduate buddies in February...Thank you Bill Stewart and Andrea Singer...Jazz under the sun anyone? PATH is planning an outdoor jazz concert in the Spring...Gretchen Burns Bergman is planning another spectacular *Strut for Sobriety!* on September 8...And, last but not least, yours truly is starting a quilt making support group for PATH parents that will meet weekly for emotional support and encouragement...We are hoping to make a quilt to auction at *Strut*, so please watch for the announcement when this group will start. Fathers are quite welcome. It has been an honor to be your President this past year.

Thank you to our 2007 Board of Directors:

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Vice President: Sylvia Liwerant
Treasurer: Richard Conklin, LCSW
Secretary: Donald Stewart
David Beck-Brown, Frank Courser, Dianna Flint, Mary Jo Grubbs, Oliver Hamilton, Besse Koopman, Barbara Pevney, RN MPH

Executive Director's Message

by Gretchen Burns Bergman

Respect, Recovery & Restoration

The chapter of 2006 is closed and a New Year has arrived. Again, I resolve to continue to advocate to reduce the stigma of addiction and to renew efforts to end discrimination against individuals who struggle with addictive illness. Reflecting on the obstacles we have surpassed, the successes we have achieved and the daunting challenges ahead towards achieving therapeutic justice, I recommit to the recovery advocacy movement.

This past Christmas morning, I received two messages on my cell phone. They came in even before I received early morning greetings from my two sons. They demonstrated the blessings of the advocacy work that we do with A New PATH. The first one was from Reggie Washington, with his daughter's voice in the background, thanking me and PATH and expressing gratitude for and commitment to the work that we do. Reggie was one of the inmate team leaders of PATH's Self-Reflection Garden at Donovan State Prison. He had been serving 15 years in prison, and in 2005 became the first African American ex-gang member to receive a parole date the first time he went before the Board of Prison terms. He now has his own apartment, has created a program called A.W.A.R.E. (Attitude When Angry and Resolving Emotional Issues) to help kids to avoid drugs and violence, and is reunited with his teenage daughter and celebrating the holidays at home.

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January 2007

PATH Welcomes Your Involvement!

PATH holds semi-annual educational speaker meetings and seminars. We invite you to attend and to get more involved in our many projects to reduce the stigma of the disease of addiction and to increase substance abuse treatment options.

Our Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at 6pm. Please let us know if you are interested in attending or if you would like to serve as a member of the Board of Directors in the future: 619-670-1184. The next meeting will be held on March 14, 2007 at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital (due to a planning retreat on Feb. 10, 2007).

Resource Information:

A New PATH: 619-670-1184
AA Hotline: 619-265-8762
Alanon, Alateen: 619-296-2666
Naranon: 858-492-8720
NA Hotline: 619-584-1007
Central Public Defender: 619-338-4700
Juvenile Hall: 858-694-4500
Las Colinas Jail (women): 619-258-3176
Mental Health Assoc.: 619-543-0412
Probation: 619-515-8202
SD County Jail (men): 619-615-2808
SD Superior Court Central: 619-531-4420
Teen Drug Screen, Palmerado E.D., 858-694-8497
SD County Alcohol & Drug Service Info. & Referral:

Parent Survival Kits, now available in english with spanish translations

Who do you turn to for help when a loved one has a substance abuse problem? Where do you go for information when your substance abusing family member gets arrested?

We have created a Parent Survival Kit, a brochure of information to help parents navigate the criminal justice system. It includes information on when to intervene, warning signs of relapse, court related phone numbers, and the judicial process. If you would like a copy, please send \$1 for mailing.

PATH is endorsed by

- ⇒ San Diego Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Mental Health Association in San Diego County
- ⇒ NAMI San Diego
- ⇒ Friends of SD Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes
- ⇒ The San Diego District Attorney's Office
- ⇒ Join Together/Demand Treatment

A New PATH

A New PATH 2007 Committees

Please help us move forward with our goals by joining one of our committees:

- ◆ Legislative & Prison Reform
- ◆ PR & Publicity
- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Education & Recovery
- ◆ Fundraising

Contact the office at 619-670-1184 or e-mail anewpath@cox.net to join a committee.

Support A New PATH by Purchasing Ad Space

A New PATH appreciates your support! We continue to expand and our newsletter now goes out to over 3300 people! We are now offering ad space:

\$60 - business card \$125 - 1/4 page
\$250 - 1/2 page \$500 - full page

Our printing deadline is March 30, 2007. Make checks payable to A New PATH, 2527 Doubletree Road, Spring Valley, CA 91978. Phone/Fax: 619-670-1184, E-mail: anewpath@cox.net. Thanks for all of your support!

A New PATH newsletter is published quarterly by the Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing non-profit organization.

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Check our website at www.anewpath.cc

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PLEASE HELP SUPPORT OUR CAUSE BY PURCHASING:

- 2007 Faces of Recovery Calendars for \$12 each
 - "Givin' Somethin' Back" CDs by ex-inmate Pierre Alexander \$10
 - PATH License Plate Holders \$5
 - Silver "PATH to Recovery" cause bracelets -- 3/\$10
- ORDER THROUGH THE PATH OFFICE: 619-670-1184 OR EMAIL: ANEUPATH.COX.NET.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE US TO MAIL ANY OF THESE ITEMS, PLEASE ADD \$4. PARENT SURVIVAL KITS WITH SPANISH TRANSLATION: \$1 MAILING.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AS A FATAL ILLNESS

By Caroline Stewart, LCSW

My next door neighbor recently tripped in his house and hit his head. He had just celebrated his fortieth birthday. I don't know about you, but I think forty years old is a pretty young age to die. He suffered a massive injury to his brain and never woke up. He was the darling of the paramedic scene. The university hospital ER was his home away from home. We neighbors always nodded knowingly to one another at the sight of the ambulance in his driveway. He was just another alcoholic hitting bottom. There was much talk about "slow suicide." The pain of knowing the truth was too much for all of us. It was easier to say that we were witnessing an aberrant event so that we could then comfortably tuck the memory away and forget. Most of us are tragically comfortable watching people die slow deaths from alcohol or drug addiction. While we rage into the night about the cruelty of breast cancer or heart disease, we stand as cold observers as our loved ones slip below the waves of substance abuse. What is this all about?

My neighbor's sister often flew in from out of town in what became a hopeless but heroic effort at advocacy. She begged the emergency room providers to hold her brother against his will. She asked them to admit him to the psychiatric ward. I advised her to go on strike in the waiting room and to refuse to leave in an effort to appeal to someone's mercy. Did the hospital physicians really think that this man was going to live if he was sent home a sixth, a seventh, an eighth time? How much can the human body suffer?

I can recall on more than one occasion when the paramedics had to climb through my neighbor's window or break down his front door to gain access to his lifeless body. Despite his fragile connection to life, my neighbor was often discharged home within a few hours of his ER assessment. His sister told me that the hospital social worker advised her brother that he was free to go because he told the treating physicians that there was nothing wrong with him. It's true that he often had that "you look marvelous" look about him that distracted one from noting his physical decline. As he lost pound after pound over several months, he had that hip lean and hungry look so popular with the younger set. In hindsight, it is hard to accept the fact that he was dying in front of our eyes.

There were weeks on end when he never exited the house except to make his way before dawn to the local market to buy booze. His friends would come to his door and plead with him to let them in so that they might assess his worsening health. He eventually lost the professional job that he had held for many years. His elderly mother visited and slept on his front room sofa to nurse him as she had done when he was an infant. She announced to all who would listen how well he was doing. The power of denial in a suffering mother is legion. Even the mailman knew that my neighbor was going to die. It was only a matter of time. How odd that the mailman knew my neighbor better than he knew himself.

How odd that the mailman knew my neighbor better than his treating physician.

As a licensed mental health provider in the state of California, I have been around long enough to have witnessed the cruel irony of patient rights. Governor Ronald Reagan emptied the state psychiatric hospitals in so-called celebration of patient autonomy. However, his was a financial decision more in keeping with Scrooge than with a redeemer. It was costing the state of California a great deal of money to keep people alive for the cure. The horrific specter of "warehousing" leads us to believe that homelessness is a lifestyle choice. The infamous "McDonald Rule" is our moral compass: if your patient has the money and is able to order a hamburger, he does not meet the standard for "grave disability" and cannot be held against his will in a confined hospital setting. Sadly, my neighbor met none of the standard mandates for grave disability. He was fully oriented. He had food and shelter. He had supportive family. He denied having suicidal ideation with a plan or intent. I think what killed my neighbor was an elaborate confabulation that he constructed in his own head that provided him with the moral authority to keep drinking. What is really tragic here is that the entire community validated his psychotic beliefs. He told the doctors that he was well and not in need of treatment and they discharged him home. He told his addiction specialist that he was not drinking and the addiction specialist believed him even as we saw his daily trek home from the market weighed down by vodka bottles. We all fell down the rabbit hole and embraced the illusion of health.

There are people who tell me that my neighbor was ready to die. I am quite certain that he was done with the agony of it all and that suicide did, indeed, present itself as a viable option. Shame was the fuel that fed the flames. If I am on fire, I want the fire out. We witnessed rational people diving off of the Twin Towers to escape a similar agony. Illusion and denial were my neighbor's bedfellows. They conspired with the ER "docs", the social workers, and the addiction specialists who agreed to believe in the paradox of substance abuse treatment. Addiction is a fatal disease whose primary presenting state is that of denial; patients in denial are either ineligible for treatment or see no need for treatment. How ironic!

This is what I know. My neighbor was a mensch. He was kind to my children and pets. He was a good cook. He was emotionally attentive to his aging parents. He loved an addicted brother when all others gave up hope. He had a good mind and worked hard for most of his adult life. He made good money. He loved music and intellectual conversation. He was politically astute. He was a gifted gardener and raised beautiful bonsai trees. He was an alcoholic with over twenty years of sobriety who returned to alcohol use to alleviate chronic pain from a back injury. He was too young to die. No one kept him alive for the cure; he was too ill to keep himself alive. Go in peace, friend. Your little trees are singing your praises. They and I will not forget you.

A case for sentencing reform

By Daniel Macallair SD Union Tribune December 7, 2006

Few cases illustrate the senseless cruelty of California's sentencing laws than the case of Annette Imboden. In September 1998, the former mental patient with a history of drug abuse was given a life sentence for stealing from family friends. At the time of her offense, Imboden had relapsed into a depression-driven cocaine binge that resulted from a broken romance. She was sentenced under California's rigidly constructed "three strikes" law because of a prior instance of burglary and check fraud.

Despite pleadings for leniency from Imboden's victims, the sentencing judge imposed what he acknowledged was an unjust sentence, lamenting that his "hands were tied." At the age of 39 she was carried from the court room despondent and sobbing, and sent to the California Department of Corrections, where, absent a gubernatorial pardon, she will spend much of the next decade.

Imboden is now confined in California's violent overcrowded prison system, where she engages in a daily struggle to survive. In October 2006, Imboden nearly died after she was viciously beaten by four women gang members with padlocks stuffed in socks. They then attempted to sodomize her with a broom handle when she refused their demand for \$200. In prison jargon it's called "paying rent" and is a typical technique employed by prison gangs to extort money from vulnerable inmates.

While recovering from her injuries, Imboden is housed in a 23-hour-a-day protective custody cell where she has no access to counseling or other supports – ironically, the same treatment imposed on her attackers. Once she recovers and is returned to the prison yard, her ordeal will begin again.

To the politicians and prison lobbyists responsible for the state's sentencing policies, the plight of inmates such as Imboden is irrelevant. Since the passage of the 1978 determinate sentencing law, the state's political leaders and prison interest groups have engaged in a frenzied effort to mandate ever-harsher penalties without regard to the long-term effects on the prison system or the inmates.

With the Legislature passing over 1,000 new sentencing enhancement laws, California's prison population exploded from 21,647 in 1980 to nearly 171,000 today. As crowding increased and rehabilitation programs were eliminated, prison conditions deteriorated. The state now faces numerous lawsuits over prison conditions that will cost taxpayers billions if current policies remain in place.

For over 15 years, independent analysts, including the non-partisan Legislative Analyst Office and Little Hoover Commission, have urged sentencing reform through the creation of a sentencing commission. Sentencing commissions are independent administrative bodies comprised of legislative, executive and/or judicial branch appointees charged with setting

sentencing standards while insulated from the political pressures of grandstanding politicians and powerful prison lobbies. By operating free from political influences, sentencing commissions institute fair and rational sentencing policies that establish sentencing durations based on the seriousness of the crime and the individual's threat to the community.

In addition to eliminating the injustices imposed on individuals such as Imboden, a California sentencing commission could address the problem of statewide sentencing disparities. Under current sentencing practices, California counties impose prison sentences at vastly different rates. For example, Santa Barbara County's prison commitment rate in 2005 was 330 per 1,000 felony arrests; more than triple Sacramento County's rate of 108 per 1,000 felony arrests. If all counties sentenced felons at Sacramento County's rate (a conservative jurisdiction), California's prison population would be reduced by 20,000, saving \$1.4 billion. The savings resulting from eliminating these county-based sentencing disparities could then be reinvested to improve the quality and intensity of county-based correctional options such as probation.

Since 1990, the Legislature has attempted to create a sentencing commission on three occasions only to have it vetoed once by Gov. George Deukmejian and twice by Gov. Pete Wilson. With the current overcrowding and the state's prison system on the verge of collapse, prison officials are now expressing an interest in establishing such a body. Let us hope that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will seize the opportunity and demonstrate a level of responsible leadership that was absent from his predecessors by finally creating a state sentencing commission that will initiate long overdue reforms.

Macallair is executive director of the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice and serves on California's Little Hoover Commission's advisory board on sentencing reform.

Iraq War Vets Face Mental Illness, Addictions

December 5, 2006 News Summary

Fighting an Iraqi insurgency with no clearly defined enemies or front lines has left American soldiers highly vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder — especially those who have endured long, repeat tours — [Cox News](#) reported Nov. 16.

Experts expect that PTSD rates among returning veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan will be at least as high as those among Vietnam veterans. Faced with extreme combat stress, many soldiers are already turning to alcohol and other drug abuse, according to military health authorities who add that many soldiers are not getting needed treatment. Currently, about one in six Iraq/Afghanistan vets are being diagnosed with PTSD, but that rate is expected by some experts to increase to as high as 30 percent or more.

Jesus Bocanegra, 24, dealt with his memories of combat in Tikrit, Iraq by drinking heavily when he came home, and later turning to marijuana and cocaine.

From the Inside

by David Beck-Brown

Corrections, Reform Yourself

A June deadline for reforming the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is fast approaching and the prison unions are clamoring for reform. The unions are demanding reducing over-crowding and for the implementation of inmate rehabilitation programs. Genuine prison reform may become a reality.

What a difference a day makes.

It seems only yesterday the CDCR was shutting down inmate programs at sky rocketing speed. Tools and equipment were crated and industrial spaces locked-up. Inmate programs including Hobby Crafts and Arts-in-Corrections were decimated. The Arts-in-Corrections program was a successful behavior-modification program documented to reduce prison violence and the destruction of state property. Once released from prison, compared to the general inmate population, a greater percentage of program participants stayed out of prison. At an annual per inmate incarceration cost of \$36,000 (and rising), keeping these inmates from returning to prison saves taxpayers millions of dollars

The justification for decimating inmate programs was because these program had little obvious connection to the basic housing and feeding needs of prison inmates. Therefore, inmate programs like Arts-in-Corrections had its Contract Artists eliminated. Each prison was left with only one position. This was done at the time the California prison population grew beyond 150,000 inmates. Since then, the prison population has risen to nearly 174,000 inmates increasing. Two consecutively appointed directors have resigned and the prison guards union seems to be driving the department. Jeanne Woodward was one of the directors with a tract record of promoting inmate programs and education. In an LA Times opinion article, she stated her resignation was because of a lack of political will to reform corrections. The powerful prison guards union known as the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) was another reason.

Even though over-crowding has made our prisons more dangerous than ever before, the CCPOA has a history of supporting a growing prison population. Much like animal trainers engaged in behavior-modification, the CCPOA throws money to politicians supporting its agenda and punishes those it disfavors. Arnold Schwarzenegger can attest to being a target of the union's displeasure even during a time he supports spending an additional \$10 billion on building more prison space and beds.

The CCPOA supports tough-on-crime legislation, three-strike and one-strike laws, and resists easing prison over-crowding by transferring California inmates to other states. Three-strike laws have sentenced non-violent substance abusers to 25-to-life in prison. Now Jessica's law will do the same with a single conviction. 80% of inmates are incarcerated for a drug related offense.

These laws may be great in an ideal world; however, prosecutors make mistakes as they did in San Diego with the Dale Akiki and in Manhattan Beach prosecution as well as the Mc Martin Preschool child molestation fiasco. Both infamous cases were overturned and cost taxpayers plenty. One and three-strike legislation are death sentences. The CCPOA also fought Prop.36. This popular proposition has redirected first and second time non-violent substances abusers away from prison and onto a path of rehabilitation through community substance abuse programs. Had it not have been for

the passage of Prop.36, the California prison population would be much larger today. The Federal government has already taken over the prison medical programs. The dysfunctional system had an inmate needlessly dieing per week.

If the CDCR doesn't reform itself by June, the Federal government will also take control of all 33 California prisons. Correctional officers have experience working with dangerous people; they know a bluff when they see one.

The Federal government isn't bluffing. Federal receivership

will emasculate the political power of the CCPOA. This is similar to when Ronald Reagan broke a union strike by the air traffic controllers. The CCPOA doesn't want to loose its power and political base. Therefore, in an odd twist of fate, the CCPOA may end up reforming the California prison system. It may be the vehicle for implementing inmate rehabilitation and supporting inmate programs. If so, it will serve the State of California and its union members well.

Beck-Brown is Prison-Reform chairman with A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing). He has worked in City, County, State, and Federal lock ups since 1977. <http://www.davidbeck-brown.com/>



Coalition for Effective Public Safety (CEPS)

A New PATH will participate in the 3rd annual Grassroots Mobilization Day on March 28, 2007 in Sacramento. As members and supporters of CEPS, we are united behind the following principles to make our communities safer and to reduce prison spending by:

- Eliminating barriers to successful re-entry for those coming home from prison
- Reducing recidivism through effective educational and vocational programming and comprehensive treatment
- Opposing new prison construction in California
- Utilizing these and other alternatives to reduce the number of people in prison

US Prison, Parole and Probation Population Skyrockets

Excerpt from Drug Policy Alliance Online – December 2006

A record 7 million people – 1 in 32 American adults – were behind bars, probation or parole by the end of last year, according to a recent report by the Justice Department.

Drug law violations play a disproportionate role. From 1995 to 2003, inmates in federal prison for drug law violations accounted for a 49 percent increase in prison population growth....

“I spent 12 years behind bars for a first time nonviolent offense,” said Anthony Papa, communications specialist at the Drug Policy Alliance. “Many of the people I met were serving long sentences behind bars on drug charges and were not major drug dealers. They were people who sold drugs to support a habit. These individuals, their families and society would have benefited from receiving treatment, not jail time.”

Student Advocates

PATH believes that students need to be a part of the conversation about drug prevention and treatment. We feel that it is important to talk “with” youth, rather than “at” them. Through honest communication we hope to gain their insights about the problems of addiction. In Fall of 2006 we developed an anonymous questionnaire that was distributed to a few high schools and middle schools in San Diego County. Some of the interesting results of the questionnaire include:

1. Do you think experimenting with the use of street drugs is ok?
20 yes / 77 no
2. Do punishments for drug use stop people from using drugs?
22 yes / 74 no
3. Do you know places where people can get help to stop using drugs?
50 yes / 47 no
4. Do you think students could help solve drug abuse / addiction problems?
70 yes / 25 no

In 2007 we plan to create a youth panel to partner with us in our advocacy mission.

Huge Victory for Patients in Medical Marijuana Lawsuit

Excerpt from Drug Policy Alliance Dec. 13, 2006 by Daniel Abrahamson

A San Diego Superior Court judge rejected the lawsuit brought by three counties attempting to challenge California’s medical marijuana laws. This win not only protects seriously ill Californians, but demonstrates that states do not have to march in lockstep with the federal government’s failed war on drugs. The lawsuit was brought against the state of California in January 2006 by San Diego County, later joined by San Bernardino and Merced counties. These local governments argued that federal laws prohibiting all use of marijuana invalidate state medical marijuana laws.

DPA, along with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Americans for Safe Access (ASA), intervened in the case to represent patients, their caregivers, and doctors, to make sure that the people who were most affected by the case had a voice. Not only did we file our own briefs in the case, we also worked closely with the Attorney General’s office—charged with protecting the law—to craft persuasive arguments for the court.

Following oral arguments by the three groups in November, the court confirmed the full validity of California’s medical marijuana laws. Enacted in 1996, the Compassionate Use Act, also known as Proposition 215, allows qualified patients with a doctor’s recommendation to use medical marijuana. The Medical Marijuana Program Act, passed in 2003, requires counties to implement an identification card program that allows law enforcement to properly identify legitimate patients.

Newsletter Questionnaires

In October we sent out a questionnaire in our newsletter to get your response as to how we are doing in communicating information to you and in an effort to reduce the stigma of substance abuse and addiction. Thank you to those who responded. We received 27 completed questionnaires and learned that:

- Most of you scan the newsletter and read selected articles, however 6 people read the entire newsletter (Hooray)
- Almost all believe that drug addiction is NOT a moral failing, however 3 responded: sometimes/ a little /questionable
- Is mandated treatment such as Prop 36 effective?
19 yes / 2 sometimes / 2 don’t know / 3 no
- Does substance abuse treatment work and is recovery possible?
25 yes / 1 sometimes

Executive Director's Message

Continued from page 1

The second call came from Pierre Alexander, who was also on the inmate Self-Reflection Garden team at Donovan. Pierre wrote an incredibly poignant rap song called "Givin' Somethin' Back", which honestly tells his story of drugs and gang violence, and his evolving commitment to transformation and restitution. Although he was serving a life-sentence, his desire to be a productive member of society was heard and he was paroled this Fall, so he spent his first Christmas at home and in the community in 23 years. Both of these men have spoken about how meaningful it was to meet people (like PATH members) who believed in their ability to change and respected their desires to restore a positive position in society.

The holidays can be such a difficult time for families who struggle with the disease of addiction. Unfulfilled expectations and hopes for renewal can be challenges to the spirit. My own acceptance of addictive illness in my family, and greater understanding of fear-based shame imposed by society has given me some peace of mind. My pride in one son's recovery and hope for my other son's journey to recovery are life's blessings. The stories of healing and reunification of individuals like Reggie and Pierre fuel my passion to continue PATH's mission.

Family members have often experienced social stigma and misunderstanding. Nurturing and caring, when applied by parents whose offspring are addicted, has easily been labeled co-dependant and enmeshed, rather than a natural adaptation to a confusing and devastating illness, which offers no easy answers, no single "right" way. We encourage family members who have a wealth of experience and recovery resources to join us in mutual support and advocacy, rather than to retreat into silence, shame and secrecy. Progress is being made towards greater understanding of addictive illness and implementing more humane drug policies, so the opportunity is here to value your experience, to speak up and make a difference. We invite you to join us in the quest for respect, recovery and restoration.

Quotes:

"Americans are paying too high a price in lives and liberty for a failing war on drugs about which our leaders have lost all sense of proportion."

Walter Cronkite

"California's prison system is in crisis because of the public's desire to punish all criminals, above all else, instead of treating nonviolent and violent criminals differently."

Joe Domanick, Author

HOPE-BASED (AS OPPOSED TO PAIN-BASED) INTERVENTIONS...

are interventions into the lives of people with severe alcohol- and other drug-related problems that rely not, on enhancing a pain-based crisis, but on enhancing a hope-inspired leap into recovery. Where traditional pain-based interventions rely on amplifying the experience of alcohol- and other drug-related consequences, hope-based interventions rely on living proof (role models) of what is possible, encouraging change, expressing confidence in the individual's ability to change, and providing concrete steps of how the recovery journey can begin. Pain-based interventions rely on threats of what we will do TO you; hope-based interventions are based on a promise of what we will do WITH you. Hope-based interventions are particularly important for historically disempowered and personally victimized people who have developed massive capacities for physical and psychological pain and who exhibit chronic, self-defeating styles of interacting with professional helpers.

-Let's Go Make Some History

Chronicles of the New Addiction Recovery Advocacy Movement
By: William L. White

Art / Book Project with Prop 36 Alumni Association & San Diego City College

Prop 36 Alumni have participated in a cross-discipline collaborative project with students from San Diego City College and UCSD. Andrea Singer, a Professor of design, and her husband Bill Stewart, a Professor of philosophy, directed the project. In Fall of 2006, 16 of her students interviewed 16 Prop 36 Alumni in order to create individual art, video and book projects based on the oral histories. Professor Singer and her class then took the stories and combined them into a final art projects that will be exhibited at UCSD in January. One of the goals of Prop 36 alumni is to go into the community and provide information that will help people to understand addictive illness and the success of Prop 36 treatment.

The students were deeply moved by the project. According to Professor Singer, "Each student in the class ends up calling me to tell me about the power of the interviewing process and how it has affected them on a personal level. It is such a beautiful example of the co-participatory aspect of this project."

"The most powerful moment of my interview was when I asked about what advice Susanne had for me. We both started to tear up as she told me that I am a unique individual, and should never discount myself, or let others put me down. I instantly saw how she had struggled with being devalued in school, and how that carried into decisions she made later in life. It is very important advice as I face the wide-open future of life after college. I hate filling out applications and resumes, trying to market myself. I always feel like I'm just a dime amongst all of the well-qualified applicants in the world. Respecting myself in my mental thoughts will be important in the future. I really do think attitude is a huge part of success, so I need to maintain the mentality that I really am a lucky catch, because I am unique. No one else will be able to do my job in my way. Which makes me special. Its the whole Buddhism thing...we like to hold onto our scars a lot more than our positive attributes, but ultimately we have to acknowledge neither is a complete picture of who we are."

Marilyn Shapley, college student

After the first exhibit at UCSD in January, A New PATH is planning an event that will be open to the public to celebrate recovery, and the power of telling personal stories of addiction and recovery in February or March. Watch for upcoming announcements.

California Doctors, Advocates Call for Public Health Approach on National Methamphetamine Day: Evidence shows that Prevention & Treatment are Best Response

On November 30, 2006, National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, San Diegans called for more prevention and treatment services to counter drug abuse.

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing) joined with the Drug Policy Alliance and the California Society of Addiction Medicine to urge local and state leaders to focus on prevention and treatment efforts, which are shown to be more successful and cost-effective than punitive measures.

Gretchen Burns Bergman, co-founder and executive director of A New PATH, said “It is tempting for our leaders to talk ‘tough on crime’ and to respond to addiction through increased criminal penalties. But, as the mother of two sons who have struggled with addiction and with the criminal justice system, I know that treatment, not incarceration, is what makes positive change—and recovery—possible.”

California is already ahead of most other states in implementing a public health approach to addiction, according to local advocates. In 2000 61% of California voters passed Proposition 36, the treatment-instead-of-incarceration law, which provides treatment to over 35,000 Californians convicted of nonviolent low-level drug offenses each year. About 2,000 people access the program each year in San Diego alone. What’s more, the program has saved taxpayers \$1.3 billion in just five years.

Margaret Dooley, San Diego-based Prop. 36 Coordinator for the Drug Policy Alliance, stressed “Prop. 36 is the country’s largest diversion program for people who suffer from addiction to methamphetamine, helping to improve lives, reunite families and reduce the burden on the state’s overcrowded prisons. Prop. 36 has also provided irrefutable evidence that methamphetamine addiction is treatable.”

According to data collected by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), over half (53%) of Prop. 36 participants name methamphetamine as their primary drug of abuse. That is, over 19,000 people enter treatment for methamphetamine abuse each year under Prop. 36. In the program, methamphetamine users have a treatment completion rate of 35%, higher than users of cocaine/crack (32%) or heroin (29%).

Dr. Shannon Chavez, medical director at UCSD Outpatient Psychiatric Services and member of the California Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM), explained “Addiction is recognized as a medical illness by every medical association in the country, and addiction is treatable. Although treatment techniques differ depending on the drug type (such as with depressants like alcohol or stimulants like cocaine or methamphetamine), we must remember that the underlying condition is addiction, not the specific drug, and that our responsibility is to treat the person suffering from any addiction.”

According to CSAM’s *Recommendations to Improve California’s Response to Methamphetamine* issued earlier this year, “The media has stimulated a wave of public attention and uproar. But, from the perspective of addiction medicine, little has changed. Methamphetamine is one of many stimulants, with a few unique features, and methamphetamine abuse can be treated with the same level of success as other drug addictions.”

Learn more about Prop. 36 at <http://www.Prop36.org>. Read CSAM’s 2006 report on methamphetamine at http://csam-asam.org/pdf/misc_Meth_Recommendations.pdf. Read UCLA’s Prop. 36 analyses at <http://www.uclaisap.org/prop36/html/reports.html>

Congress Votes to Increase Access to Drug Treatment

Excerpt from Drug Policy Alliance Online – December 2006

In a unanimous vote Congress approved a bill that will make addiction treatment accessible to more people across the U.S. The bill raises the number of people a doctor can treat with buprenorphine, a medication approved by the FDA to treat opioid addiction. Buprenorphine is administered orally, and, unlike methadone, it does not require regular visits to a clinic.

Until now, the number of people with access to buprenorphine has been severely limited by the fact that doctors could only prescribe it for up to 30 patients at a time. In fact, until last year, this 30 patient limit applied to entire group practices, not just individual doctors. Last week’s vote improves the situation by raising the cap to 100 patients per doctor. However, there are still formidable barriers to buprenorphine access. With the new bill, the patient limit only moves to 100 after a doctor has been prescribing buprenorphine for one year.

For more information on Buprenorphine (Suboxone) see website: www.suboxone.com

Jefferson middle schoolers learn perils of gangs

By: KEITH RUSHING - Staff Writer

OCEANSIDE — Money, power and respect were the three things that attracted Reginald Washington to gang life as a teenager, but on Monday he told a group of Jefferson Middle Schoolers that being in a gang wasn't "all that."

Washington should know what he's talking about — he spent 15 years in prison after being convicted on two counts of attempted murder for shooting two people he thought were out to do him harm. He was released from prison last year after volunteering in a prison program where inmates talked to youth and their parents about developing coping skills to avoid crime and prison.

Washington now works through a 12-week curriculum called A.W.A.R.E., funded by Tri-City Medical Center, that aims to help middle school students avoid gang activity. Some of the middle schoolers in the program are already in gangs; others are considered to be "at-risk" because of the problems they've had in school and in the criminal justice system.

At Jefferson on Monday, the 13 students in the A.W.A.R.E. program had their fourth three-hour session, which focused on how they could analyze their own thinking and learn to make different choices than they've made in the past. A.W.A.R.E. stands for changing one's Attitude When Angry And Resolving Emotional issues.

Washington discussed his own fears and past problems and asked the students pointed questions about their own lives, including whether they'd ever thought about killing someone. He told them that they couldn't be involved with gangs without considering "putting in work" or doing violence for the gang. Washington also said that the idea that gang members don't snitch or cooperate with the police is a lie. He said when he shot two people in 1990, he didn't think any of the 10 people who saw the incident would talk to police. However, he was arrested that same night and a witness later testified against him in court. Washington told the students that gang members will work with the police to keep themselves out of prison and that prison is full of people who've cooperated with authorities for their own benefit. "There's a reason your homeboys have to lie to you — because you might want to get the hell out the gang if they tell you the truth," Washington said.

During Monday's session, Gretchen Burns Bergman, a cofounder of a nonprofit group called A New Path, handed out questionnaires that asked the youngsters questions about illegal drug use. Burns Bergman told them that her 35-year-old son — now out of prison and drug free — began using drugs at age 13 or 14, dealt drugs and spent years in prison. She said her son joined a gang in prison to feel safe.

Before Monday's session, Washington talked about what he's tried to get across to the students in the first four sessions. "I've talked to them about being a follower and not a leader. I try to get them to relate to people other than their homeboys," he said. Washington said many of the youth in the program don't feel comfortable in mainstream society or in the traditional school culture. Washington hopes they'll identify with him since he spent years in a gang. "If they see themselves in me perhaps they can get a bridge to society," he said.

"The major goal for me is to get them to think before they act and to get them to be in society without having to feel like they're different."

Although district administrators say the Oceanside Unified School District has a zero-tolerance policy for gangs, administrators acknowledge that gang influences do affect the school's campuses despite attempts to keep the schools free of gangs.

Kim Takatsuki, a guidance counselor who helped screen Jefferson students for the A.W.A.R.E. program, said students have changed a great deal in four sessions. She said during the first week they were combative and made it clear that they didn't feel a need to be there.

Washington said he had to get in between two rival gang members at the first session because the groups were about to fight. Now, he said, they can be in the same room without the same tension. Washington said he's trying to create a safe environment where students can talk openly and feel safe.

Iraq War Vets Face Mental Illness, Addictions

December 5, 2006 News Summary

Continued from pg 4

"The only way to sustain yourself day-to-day is to keep yourself drugged up," he said. Bocanegra stopped taking drugs, but it took him two years to get an appointment at the nearest VA hospital, where he eventually was diagnosed with PTSD and prescribed medication — but no counseling.

A government study found that almost four out of five soldiers diagnosed with PTSD were never referred to any further mental-health evaluation or services. Many soldiers said that marijuana and prescription drugs are widely available in Iraq, and used by soldiers to cope with violence and combat. Others are addicted to painkillers or sleeping pills given to troops in the field. The military does test soldiers for drugs, but only once per year.

Some soldiers diagnosed with "mild" cases of PTSD after returning home have later been sent back for another combat tour. Joyce Raezer, director of government relations at the National Military Family Association, said such soldiers are bringing "all the baggage from the last deployment into the next ... The stress is cumulative."

The VA's Ira R. Katz said the agency has enough resources to help all returning vets, either in person or with online interventions. But many returning vets say that they face a variety of obstacles to getting help, from geographic to bureaucratic. Some say they were ignored after initially being identified as suffering from PTSD. "The impact of these repeated deployments is enormous," said Amy Fairweather of the veteran's group Swords to Plowshares. "It contributes to all the elements for substance abuse, mental illness, and family dissolution. There's only so many times you can be uprooted from family and work. Not to mention that they're over there in hell."

It's Never Too Late for a Second Chance

By Chase Campbell

Have you ever felt your heart disappear?
Where there's no more strength for hope
and the horizon is covered in tears.

I ask myself questions
like when will I stop breaking my own heart,
I'm scared of the answer 'cause it's painful like cancer and lives in
the dark.

All I ever wanted was to be proud of myself, happy and free, now I
dream of a Second Chance to bring peace to my family.

I can't keep living life like I'm scared to go on, because one day
I'll look
back on my past and realize my dreams are forever gone.

This Second Chance has made me realize it's never too late to walk
away,
It's never too late to close my eyes and pray.
It's never too late to say goodbye to the drugs, thugs and lies,
It's never too late to give my life another try.

I think about my family throughout each and every night,
and what I'm going to have to do to change my wrongs to rights
and shed some of God's light.

Sometimes I feel like God is the only one who knows that I try,
then I see
my mother's eyes and hear her voice say,
"Someday my son's going to rise."

It's hard to watch every breath that we take,
'cause the sinning in our hearts uses our words to escape.

Now I have faith that I have found the strength I need to maintain,
This is the beginning of the end of my name...being known as a
Painstaking shame.

God sent me angels to give me a Second Chance to STRIVE and
want to be alive,
And I've learned it's never too late to better my life and peacefully
Survive.

Chase Campbell is a graduate of Second Chance Strive

Research by Joan Petersilia in Report for California Policy Research Center:

- About 42% of California's inmates have a high need for alcohol treatment, but only 7.5% receive it. The numbers are even more glaring for drug addicts: 56% have a high need for treatment, but only 9% are treated. Opportunities for educational or vocational training are similarly limited.
- Almost ¼ of all California inmates are completely idle during their prison stay, never participating in any treatment programs, despite an unusually high need for drug and alcohol counseling
- Roughly 66% of parolees return to prison within three years
- Medium age of a prisoner in California is 36. About 20% of the state's inmate population is now 45 or older.

A New PATH

Prop 36 Alumni Association Network

My Year in Review

By Oliver Hamilton

Since October 21st 2005, the day I graduated Prop 36 in court, I've had the opportunity to go behind the scenes and step up to the front lines where the battle for Prop 36 takes place. From Sacramento to San Diego I've seen the hard work people put into Prop 36, keeping the dreams alive for everyone needing the help and care of Prop 36. When things don't seem so bright for the home team, there they are: keeping the lights on and the doors open for future Prop 36 clients and graduates to come. My thanks goes out to all in Sacramento who fought so hard for the funding of Prop 36, to all of the Judges, Lawyers, Speakers, and advocates who helped defeat the flash incarceration law. Although prisons lock up criminals, it's no place for people with the disease of addiction! I myself, as a Jr. Advocate, have watched two commanders in the field at work: Margaret Dooley (Drug Policy Alliance), and Gretchen Burns Bergman (A New PATH). Like many others throughout the state, they trudge the road and pave the way, carrying the message to the State of California that building more prisons is not the answer! Treatment instead of incarceration... now that works! To all the voters who voted for Prop 36 six years ago, I thank you for believing that we (people in addiction) can change, turn our lives around, and become productive members of society again. To all the alumni of Prop 36, I thank you for taking our struggle and fight to the next level. Standing up and being accounted for takes strength and courage. My wish for 2007 is that all of us continue to trudge the road, taking the fight of the Prop 36 cause to an even higher level of success. Until then, have a happy and prosperous new year!
P.S. To all directors, staff and interns throughout the state, in all facilities everywhere, a very special hoorah goes out to you as well!

Spotlight on Prop 36 Recovery

Cynthia McDonald

I am Cynthia. I am 48 years old and have been in the grip of alcohol and drugs since I was 16. I can't tell you why I chose that path, but everyday I learn more about myself and about the disease of addiction.

I was the only one in my family to go down that road. It was not living; it was existing. "Incomprehensible demoralization" describes it best. I have been in and out of programs over the years, but never stayed clean for long. I had stopped believing I could ever change my life. In 2003, after a second round of legal problems related to my drug use, I received a gift: Proposition 36. I didn't realize the opportunity I was being given. I wasn't happy about being court ordered into treatment, but I stayed at Serenity House for 7 months. The changes I began to make in my life came directly from the lessons I learned in treatment. I also began attending college for the first time. I will have completed 54 units by the end of 2005.

I now see a future without drugs and alcohol. I have received support, encouragement and help from my family and so many other incredible people. Some of these people are in recovery, while others are caring members of the community who believe that we are all worth saving. I used to dream of a life not controlled by my addiction, and it is happening for me now, thanks to so many who care.

For more Prop 36 and other stories of recovery, order your Faces of Recovery 2007 today.

Family Foundations Project

A NEW PATH has been conducting several programs at a prison for women in San Diego who have been convicted of a non-violent drug charge. It's a prison without bars, and the women are allowed to live there with their children for the duration of their one-year conviction.

These programs have been very successful:

1. A Book Group, where they read one book a month, then discuss content, style, and interesting points. Books we read in 2006 include: "Like Water for Chocolate", "Midwife", "The Pilot's Wife", and "A Place to Stand". The women receive a copy of each book to keep. These discussions give us the opportunity to speak about how other people live, how they handle their problems, how they've chosen to live their lives, etc. Raquel Cohen, Sheila Hittleman, Phyllis Epstein and Sylvia Liwerant are in charge of this program.

2. Parenting Lessons: we've had two series of 10 sessions, conducted by Mrs. Silvia Dubovoy, a Montessori teacher trainer, and we've seen many changes in how the women relate and interact with their children. Great emphasis is placed on mother-child bonding, and on making special mobiles and yarn balls to promote development of baby's muscles through movement.

Lately Ms. Holly Spilsbury, who is the English Toddler Directress of Montessori School has been helping. She plays guitar for the older children who love to hear her and dance after class.

3. The women have benefited also from several classes on "Non-Violent Communication" given to them by Mrs. Marceline Brogli, from the Non-Violent Communications Institute. She uses puppets to illustrate her points, so the women have learned better ways of communicating in a very entertaining way.

4. In January, Mrs. Michele Hebert, an expert in stress Management through breathing, through breathing, visualization and exercise will conduct several sessions.

We are very interested in helping the women see their lives in a different way and to teach their children healthier patterns of living. We help them as much as we are allowed to, and we consider this approach to be part of their rehabilitation.

Harm Reduction 101: *a biological, psychological, social view*

In an effort to support therapeutic harm reduction strategies in dealing with substance abuse and addiction, A New PATH presented an informative panel discussion of cutting edge ideas about drug and alcohol treatment with guest speakers who are experts in the field of addiction. The event, held on Saturday October 28, 2006 at St. Paul's Cathedral was co-sponsored by The Drug Policy Alliance.

Harm reduction is a public health philosophy that seeks to lessen the dangers that drug abuse and our drug policies have on society. 23 million Americans suffer from substance abuse and addictive illness and approximately one in four deaths each year is attributable to substance abuse.

A distinguished panel of speakers, including Caroline Stewart, LCSW (President of the Board of PATH), John de Miranda, Ed.M. (Executive Director of the National Association on Alcohol, Drugs & Disabilities), Paul Delaney, MFT (Director of Co-Occurring Disorders, UCSD), and David B. Bergman MD DLFAPA (Psychiatrist) presented the history and etiology of the modern harm reductionist movement. Gretchen Burns Bergman, Co-Founder & Executive Director of A New PATH served as moderator.

According to Caroline Stewart, "Harm reduction is actually not a new idea. It is, indeed, a very ancient philosophy with its roots in the humane teachings of the first physicians. The primary premise of harm reduction is that all illness, including the disease of addiction, requires active and respectful engagement between the patient and his provider and the patient and his community. The science of harm reduction requires the doctor, the patient, his family and the community to work together to provide an ongoing, abiding support system that actively engages the patient even when he or she is active in their illness. There is no moral "eject button" in a harm reductionist system. A positive drug screen will not result in banishment from treatment any more than a high blood sugar test would banish the diabetic from treatment. The recovering patient and the actively using patient are welcome."

Help A New PATH reduce Stigma and Celebrate Recovery!

In order to celebrate the "silver lining" of sobriety, and to show your support of loved ones in recovery, or your pride in your own recovery, we invite you to join us in wearing

"PATH to RECOVERY" silver cause bracelets.

Order them through the PATH office by emailing: anewpath@cox.net or calling 619-670-1184 and we will mail them to you right away. We ask you to purchase 3 for \$10, so that you can wear one and give the others to friends in recovery, or you can purchase one for \$5. We want to see these bracelets worn throughout the community so that others can appreciate the growing number of people taking pride in recovery!

Advocacy with Anonymity Released

Excerpt from Join Together Online – Dec. 11, 2006

Washington, DC – Faces & Voices of Recovery, the Johnson Institute, Join Together and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) are pleased to release Advocacy with Anonymity.

The brochure provides guidance to people in long-term recovery and their family members who want to speak publicly about the power of addiction recovery and advocate for policies that will make it possible for others to get the help they need. Advocacy with Anonymity answers the frequently-asked question, "How can we stand up for our rights while honoring the anonymity of our twelve-step groups?" and contains tips and examples of how to do just that...

Advocacy with Anonymity can be downloaded or ordered at: www.jointogether.org.

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A New PATH
2527 Doubletree Road
Spring Valley, CA 91978

History

Mission Statement

PATH is a voluntary organization of concerned parents of individuals suffering from the disease of addiction. Our PURPOSE is to partner with health care professionals, the justice system, recovering addicts and concerned members of society to seek better understanding of the illness and "therapeutic justice" for substance-related criminal activities.

Attention PATH Members ...

For immediate and up-to-date information, please send us your e-mail address and we can inform you electronically! Our e-mail address at PATH is anewpath@cox.net

Please visit our website:
www.anewpath.cc

PATH grew out of a series of pre-Substance Abuse Summit meetings with parents, Superior Court Judges and Officers of the criminal justice system in the Spring of 1999. Founding members are Gretchen Burns Bergman, Sylvia Liwerant and Tom O'Donnell.

PATH WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

- ⇒ Alliance Healthcare Foundation
- ⇒ California Endowment
- ⇒ Drug Policy Alliance
- ⇒ Join Together/Demand Treatment
- ⇒ Las Patronas
- ⇒ San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts
- ⇒ Sempra Energy

For their generous grants and support!

A New PATH would like to thank Las Patronas for a 2006 grant for a laptop computer, network color laser printer, docking station, and computer accessories.

Our Proposals for Alternative Sentencing

- 1) Long-term mandatory rehabilitation in a structured alcohol and drug-free recovery environment for non-violent offenders.
- 2) If the nature of the crime does not allow for this alternative, sentencing should include immediate placement in a rehabilitation and recovery program within the prison system.
- 3) Upon release from prison or recovery homes, substance abusers should be mandated to a transitional program in a sober-living environment to prepare them to re-enter society.