



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND NEVADA

JULY 2021

ISSUE 4

VOLUME 1



Greetings from WestCare Nevada,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you our 4th issue of the Nevada Loop newsletter. I am confident that what you will find in this issue will accurately keep you abreast of all the great things happening in the Silver State when it comes to WestCare clients, employees, and the communities in which we provide services. This includes Northern Nevada, Rural Nevada, and here in Southern Nevada, which based on the recent heatwave will more than likely prove to be the hottest July on record.

This issue is all about **Independence Day**; the true meaning of this holiday, what is being celebrated, and in addition to its historical significance, what comparisons can be extracted from the historical context and be applied to our daily lives and into to work we do for others at WestCare. Highlights from this month include the two successful fireworks booth fundraisers, employee kudos related to the hard work and dedication at each NV location, another member spotlight of our Community Action Council, and finally some great news regarding our fundraising efforts associated with **"The Village at WCC."**

First of all, Independence Day is a day to remember those that dedicated their lives, even unto death, so that we could live free and experience the privileges that this country has to offer. This takes us back to July of 1776 when delegates of the 2nd Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed that the 13 colonies who were previously under British rule were now free and sovereign states. Weaved into this period was the Revolutionary War and the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1783), which ended the war and recognized our independence.

Never again would the colonists have to fear living under oppression and limited rights. Instead, the hope of freedom and opportunity for all took precedence.

Now we know that 245 years later there are still people who are not experiencing the same freedom and opportunity as others, and we also know that people continue to dedicate their lives and fight for freedom and opportunity for all. In comparison, I am also reminded that much of the people we serve at WestCare were previously under the unfair and unfit rule, maybe not by a tyrannical king, but they were ruled by something that some might view as being much worse, addiction and/or co-occurring disorders.

Now, I believe that hope is intrinsic in each and every one of us, however, there are definitely times when we must hold on to hope for others until they can hold onto it themselves. We do this by exercising our own free will and by "Uplifting the Human Spirit" of everyone we encounter. The content in this issue proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that when we all band together, true freedom and opportunity for all is accessible and is absolutely worth laying down our lives for. I hope you enjoy the stories in this issue and your independence as well...



Leo Magrdichian, LCSW, LCADC
Vice President, Operations



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The Village Prepares to Break Ground with \$2M Angel Investor Gift

By Andrew Moran, Development Director, WestCare Foundation adapted from coverage by Hillary Davis, General News Reporter, The Las Vegas Sun

Our development team has been hard at work raising community support and the funding necessary for the construction of **The Village at The Women and Children's Campus**, a planned 57,999 square foot transitional living facility with 42 two apartment cottages to be located on the five-acre property that the WestCare Nevada Women and Children's Campus currently occupies in Las Vegas.

The complex would offer up to 84 women, with or without children up to the age of nine, who have successfully completed residential treatment units of their own. They can stay for up to 18 months thanks to grant funding as they work, save money and prepare to reintegrate back into the community. Wraparound services that are necessary to reintroduction such as access to social and medical services for their physical and mental health, vocational training, financial literacy skills, spiritual support, and an empathetic network of care.



Our programs and services give the encouragement and strength to make it.

"Our programs and services give them the encouragement and strength to make it," said Andrew Moran, Development Director for the WestCare Foundation. But the current accommodations, he admits, "Are aging and need to be revamped so that our women and children served can feel safe in a pleasant environment."

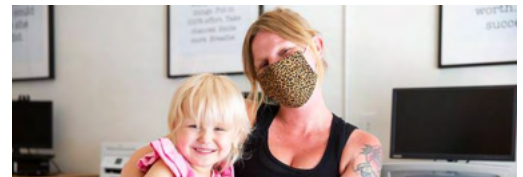
We have currently raised nearly \$3 million in individual gifts and grants from multiple foundations towards the estimated \$12.9 million needed for full construction. In June, we were thankful to receive a generous \$2 million dollar donation from an angel donor!

With \$250,000 in funds provided by **The Engelstad Foundation** this past April, we will be breaking ground as soon as this coming fall! This would include initial construction that consists of building utility linkages, trenches, sidewalks, exterior walls, and landscaping for the facility as well as the first two apartments. The recent gift of \$2 million will fund the construction of an additional 14 apartments!

Leo Magrdichian, Vice President of WestCare Nevada, noted that many participants are coping with more than just a substance use disorder such as a co-occurring disorder with accompanying mental health conditions. Others have experienced past trauma or are facing unstable housing challenges. "Housing by itself is not going to address the problem," said Magrdichian. "However, it is a powerful piece," he continued. Magrdichian also added that while The Village will only serve women and mothers, we hope one day to have a similar program to serve single fathers!

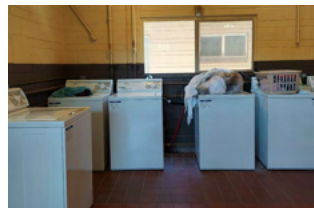
When ready, The Village will serve as a transitional home to women like Aubree and Sharon, current WestCare participants who are about to finish their time with our residential program.

Aubree, 28, a recovering meth user, chose WestCare over a sober living home because she could bring along her four-year-old daughter, Avery. She is also pregnant with her son who is due in August. Having been clean since September, she said that she's learned how to unpack her trauma and "not just normalize it." We are happy to say that she'll be housed with her children soon in an apartment of her own outside of the program!



Deciding that she wanted a better life is what turned Sharon, 55, away from substance abuse and living on the streets. In July, she will get her own apartment off-site after more than six months at the Women and Children's campus. This wasn't her first rehab experience, but she said that the respectful culture as well as learning her boundaries, triggers, and "how to live again" are what made it her best one yet.

The Village is a goal years in the making and it is our hope that it will be another beacon of hope and support among the many other amazing programs that WestCare is so proud to offer!



Expansion and Renovation to the WCC's Laundry Room

By Marilyn Moran, Vice Chair, Nevada CAC

Our **Nevada Community Action Council (CAC)** has been hard at work lately doing our part to support the WestCare programs that we love so much while also being fortunate to recruit new members along the way! We look forward to the amazing work that we can do together and hope to introduce you to them very soon!

We were also proud to get back to work on a project that was unfortunately put on hold. Prior to the pandemic, we received a generous donation of \$15,000 by the Tobman girls for renovations to the **WestCare Nevada Women**

and **Children's Campus'** laundry room! Work began right before the pandemic, but with safety in mind, it had to be halted. Since we resumed our work on the room, we have painted it using a color hand-picked by the very women that we serve! In addition, all eight washers are installed and the dryers are on the way! We all know how necessary this room will be to the women and mothers served and look forward to sharing a final update with you once it's completed!

But, until then: *To be continued*



Nevada CAC Member Spotlight: Bill Houghton

Bill Houghton, Founder and President of Horizon Print Solutions, has been streamlining print buying and distribution since 1992 from his Las Vegas enterprise, although he services the needs of small and medium businesses across North America. He has been recognized locally and nationally in and out of his industry as an extraordinary business visionary. His professional mission is to elevate the reputation of the print industry as a whole by studying great companies from every industry and applying strategies learned to improve business processes in his industries.

Bill's involvement with WestCare is deeply personal for him as he seeks to lift up others who have experienced or are experiencing the lowest, hardest times of their lives. As a champion of the underdog and an advocate for the overlooked, Bill values reaching lives all around our community - providing compassion, resources, and dignity to every person!



My WestCare Success Story

By Karen C., WestCare Nevada Alumni and Staff

My name is Karen and I am a grateful and recovering addict. My clean date is November 25, 2017. I entered WestCare in March 2018. I was court ordered to complete the program or serve my 10-year sentence. For most people, this would have been enough to convince them to succeed, but not for me. I had been sitting in the Nye County Detention Center for four months on a drug court violation. I was beaten and broken, but I was not done. I did not want to go to treatment and did not think that I had a drug problem. I had begged my judge to just send me to prison. But, she felt like prison was too easy. I felt like she hated me and was just out to get me. Regardless of what I wanted, I was now in a program for 90 days that was supposed to change my life. However, I had some serious doubts.

My story starts at a very young age. I experienced some trauma that no child should ever have to experience. I was never given the opportunity to process through that, so it just became one of those things you keep buried in the back of your mind that you cannot forget, but do not want to remember either. I did not know about alcohol or drugs then, so I started cutting to control the pain. I was 15 when I met my children's father. Three beautiful babies and 10 years later, I had no choice but to walk away from my relationship and my two oldest children. I landed in Vegas feeling like I had failed at life. I was heartbroken. I went back to cutting to control that pain, but just like any other addiction, I needed something

more and now I was in the city that never sleeps where there is a bar on every corner. I found my comfort in the bottom of a bottle. If I was loaded, I did not have to feel anything. I woke up drinking and did not stop 'till I went to sleep. It was fine, though, because it was alcohol and it was legal. Soon after, I found myself in another relationship and things were good for a while. But, when you have so much unhealed trauma, the good times just do not last. It is like you are walking around with this ticking time bomb just waiting to explode. The first time that I tried meth I had been sitting at the bar and the alcohol just was not doing what I needed it to anymore. I was 30 years old. Initially, I would only use occasionally after a hard day when I was sad or angry or hurt. After a little while, I found myself using more and more often. Before I even knew it, it became an everyday thing. I could not get out of bed without it. I could not function without it. I believed I was still in control of my use and that it didn't control me. I was so in control that I ended up losing my youngest daughter to her father because I was not able to pass a hair follicle test. In that moment, I started spiraling out of control. I started using more and more just trying to take away the pain. I did not care if I lived or died. I had failed at being a mom, a partner and a daughter. I had failed at life and let everyone down who loved me. I took a possession charge on Mother's Day 2016. You would think after spending a few days in jail, I would have considered stopping using, but instead, I

went right back to the moment that I made drug court and probation. For eight months, I stayed clean, but I ran my program my way. I did not do one thing that I was supposed to. I broke every rule there was and in the end, I went back out one more time. My relapse turned into a blessing because it landed me in jail and in treatment.

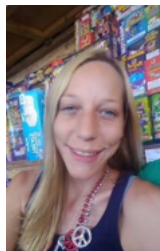
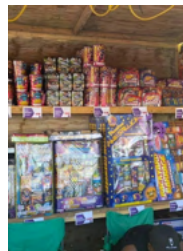
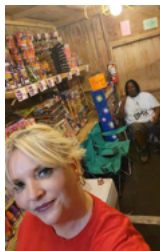
As much as I resisted the thought of needing treatment, I quickly realized that my addiction was more than using drugs. I had to heal from the traumas. I had to learn how to cope with emotions and pain. I walked into WestCare this broken, lost and beaten down person who had no clue who I was anymore. I did not know what I enjoyed doing, could not tell you what my strengths were or what I wanted to do in life. I did not know how to stand on my own two feet and I had no voice. I was so used to doing everything for everyone else that I did not know what I wanted, much less needed. The first thing that I noticed when walking into treatment was how much the staff supported me. They accepted me and loved me without judgment or expectations. The only thing that they wanted me to do was peel back the layers of hurt and trauma and begin the process of healing. In treatment, I met other recovering addicts that came in every month to share their experiences, strength and hope. These individuals surrounded me with love and eventually became my biggest supporters. I completed my program at WestCare in June 2018.

Upon leaving treatment, I went into sober living and back to drug court. I got a job and just started using all of the tools that I had learned to do something different with my life. I was able to reconnect with my children. I was able to be that daughter my mom prayed every day for. I was able to start making the next right choice and I was finally able to be grateful for all of the blessings I was receiving.

Two years ago, I was blessed with the opportunity to work for the place that saved my life. Today, I get to have keys to that building as well as my own office. I get to pursue my passion by helping other addicts learn a different way to live. Today, I get to be present in my children's lives. I am so grateful for the life I have today. I am grateful to have had that judge see more in me than I saw in myself. I am grateful to have been sent to treatment, because WestCare not only saved my life, but gave my mom back her daughter. My mom was able to see me take my three years clean before she passed away.



WestCare gave me the tools to get through the pain of losing her without getting loaded and taught me that recovery is more than simply not using drugs. It is about creating a life where you do not need to use drugs and alcohol. Thank you, God, for my life today and thank you, WestCare!



The **Las Vegas Alumni Group (LVAG)** conducted their annual Phantom Fireworks booth fundraiser and although the inventory was decreased by 30%, it did not hinder the overall success of this year's endeavor. In fact, the alumni experienced their second best year on record of gross sales and net profit. The only year that produced a better outcome was ironically, last year, which was due in part to record-breaking sales of fireworks. COVID-19 travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders and the fact that there was quite a bit of stimulus money being spent last summer all played a role. This year, many news outlets did report that the decrease in inventory was based on shipping delays, supply chain issues and as mentioned, the record-breaking sales of 2020.

This writer has had the privilege of serving as the Alumni Liaison for close to 10 years and the overall camaraderie and level of involvement of the core members of this group is astounding. During one of Nevada's previous CARF surveys, one of the agency strengths identified was this group of alumni. This was based on their overall numbers, the amount of continued participation in conducting events for clients in treatment and of course their successful fundraising which finances all of their yearly events. The CARF surveyors made reference to the fact that the effectiveness of a treatment agency and/or program can easily be measured by the quality and involvement of the alumni group associated with that agency or program.

The LVAG's successes have been noticed and adopted by other alumni groups within and outside of WestCare Nevada. The Spiritual Alumni, part of the **Spiritual Care Chaplaincy Program (SCCP)** overseen by Chaplain Ryan Creelman, embarked on their inaugural fireworks booth fundraiser based on the guidance of several senior members of the LVAG and had a successful fundraiser. In addition, this writer has been invited to be a co-presenter at the **2021 Southern Nevada Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit** to discuss, "A More Resilient Approach to Successful Recovery: Alumni Mentorship"; which is based solely on the anecdotal experiences related to this group and their ability to support one another through events, activities and supportive relationships.

Another Successful Alumni Fireworks Booth Fundraiser

By Leo Magrdichian, VP of Operations and Alumni Liaison, WestCare Nevada

Thank you for your support of both booths this year!

Kudos to our amazing teams!

Our team at 4th Street Transitional Housing

"Kudos and a shout out to the staff at **WestCare's 4th Street Transitional Housing Program**. These staff have worked countless extra hours in the last few months ensuring both the safety and smooth transition of our residential and PHP clients into their next level of excellence within their community. They are constantly Uplifting the Human Spirit and bringing a light-hearted and grounded atmosphere to our men that we served who have struggled with addiction in their past." - **Todd Edwards**, LSW, CSW-I, CADC-S, Clinical Director, WestCare Nevada, and Program Director, Community Involvement Center

Doug and Spencer at the Community Triage Center (CTC)

"This article is being provided to show all of you the level of compassion and treatment that comes from the **CTC** on a daily basis. We routinely receive compliments on the food being served and this is just another example of our great service. On the 4th of July, Kitchen Supervisor, Doug Slaughter along with Cook, Spencer Johnson, provided all of our clients as well as the Silver Summit Resource Center's clients with a BBQ feast. From beans to potato salad to hamburgers, hotdogs, and ribs, everyone got their fill! This is just one great example of making sure that folks who come to WestCare for treatment, are taken care of and made to feel at home even if they aren't at home. Doug and Spencer are appreciated as well as all of our CTC staff. "Heros work here" and I wanted you to know it!" - **Frank Reagan**, Director of Crisis Services, Community Triage Center

Our team at Harris Springs Ranch (HSR)

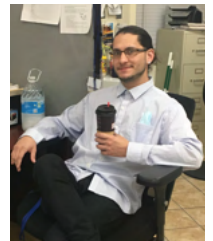
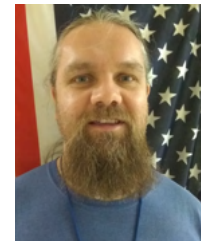
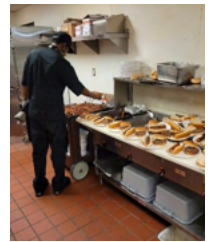
"Kudos to **HSR's** still standing three-man clinical team for making sure that all clients received therapeutic services during these difficult times. I am proud to recognize them for holding individual cabin groups, creative individual sessions, and for respecting the needs of every client during a shelter in place, quarantine, and our temporary 'new normal.' WestCare is blessed to have you and to our newest additions: Ms. Cassandra and Ms. Althea, we welcome you! Thank you so much for all that you do." - **Irma Magrdichian**, Director of Residential Treatment Services, Harris Springs Ranch

To Dorothea at Homefront Reno

"Dorothea McHugh is highly respected here at **Homefront** due to her dedication to her clients and hard work. She pays attention to detail and makes sure that every client has their needs met on a daily basis. Dorothea has saved many lives in the time she has worked here. She is always on top of health needs and due to her diligence, has most recently saved the life of a client who was experiencing a stroke. She also assisted with obtaining immediate care for two clients who were having difficulty breathing due to symptoms of COVID-19. Dorothea is always professional and staff and clients alike know that when they have a need or someone to talk with, she will always be there for them. We are so thankful for all that she does and feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work with someone who has such compassion and is so passionate about what she does." - **Sherry Stevens**, Program Manager, Reno Homefront

Our team at the Women and Children's Center

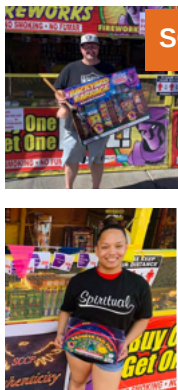
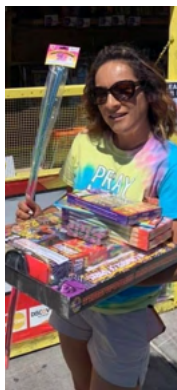
"Kudos to the **Women and Children's Center's** leadership team for making sure that the facility remains safe for those in need. Despite many challenges, your diligence has ensured that COVID protocols are followed and that all shifts are still covered. You have stepped up to work all job functions, followed recommendations with regards to room temperatures, and have made special accommodations to make sure that everyone in the facility is comfortable, safe, and secure. Your hard work does not go unnoticed. You are truly appreciated!" - **Irma Magrdichian**, Director of Residential Treatment Services, Women and Children's Center



Thank you for all you do!

SCCP Alumni Raise Funds for Fellowship and Fun

By Senior Chaplain Ryan Michael Creelman, Spiritual Director/Staff Care Chaplain



Our **Spiritual Care Chaplaincy Program's (SCCP) Alumni group** was proud to hold a Phantom Fireworks fundraiser booth! From June 28th until the evening of Independence Day, the 24/7 booth was managed in four-hour shifts by the 15 members of our SCCP leadership team, volunteers from Chaplaincy Nevada, and members from the Crossing Church who all pitched in to make this a huge success! After all was said and done, we sold out of our stock! While it was certainly challenging, it was fun and a great time for fellowship.

Why did we do it? Every month, our SCCP Alumni host an on-site three-hour food, fellowship, and fun event at our NV Women and Children's Campus, a community engagement activity for clean and

sober fun, and a leadership skills development and planning brunch. Our Alumni also stay connected every Monday evening with our "Recovered & Redeemed" Spiritual Truth Zoom meeting.

We are pleased to share that our SCCP Alumni did a wonderful job for their first year of running a booth and earned themselves enough to cover all existing costs for their activities for the next nine to 12 months.

Next month as our SCCP Alumni leadership goes into Las Vegas' underground tunnels to offer love, resources, and human kindness to those who are experiencing homelessness. Blessings, always!

Connect with us in Nevada

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare Nevada at marketing@westcare.com