



# THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND NEVADA

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## Everything Alumni (Part 2)

Greetings from WestCare Nevada! As mentioned in the last issue and in addition to [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) and [Mother's Day](#), we are focusing this month's issue of the Loop on "Everything Alumni: Part 2." This is due to the events that our [Spiritual Alumni](#) have provided in both April and May and because our [Spiritual Care Chaplaincy Program](#) is celebrating their 7th Anniversary.

Now, when we talk about successful recovery from behavioral health related issues such as mental illness and/or substance use disorders, overall wellbeing should be an equal balance - mentally, physically, and spiritually. That requires stability in our thought processes (mental); diet, exercise, and rest (physical); and finally, a connection (spiritual) to either something bigger than ourselves and/or to others and the world.

The importance of spirituality in behavioral health is now widely accepted, however, this was not always the case. I am reminded of a letter written by Dr. Carl Jung, Founder of Analytical Psychology, to Mr. Bill Wilson, Founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, where Dr. Jung, put his scientific reputation at stake when he revealed his belief that the ultimate sources of recovery came from spiritual sources.

So, how does spirituality benefit those who are in the recovery process? Well, let's start with the fact that mental illness and/or substance use disorders usually push people to disconnect from others and isolate. On the other hand, spirituality brings people together, and restores a sense of belonging - improving their sense of community and connection to others.

Spirituality also encourages people to focus beyond themselves and develop unity with others and unity with their surroundings. Spirituality helps people develop a sense of purpose, which in turn, increases their self-esteem and overall self-worth. Some of the practices associated with spirituality (prayer, meditation, etc.) are considered healthy, and they tend to influence a person's mental state in a positive way.

This issue of the Loop will demonstrate that by providing accounts from our spiritual alumni, specifically Ms. Michelle Carrillo and Mr. Quentin Nunn, both of whom share how they have benefited from participating in the [Spiritual Alumni](#) group. You will hear from our Spiritual Care Director, Chaplain Ryan Creelman, who recounts their tremendous growth that has taken place over these first seven years. You will see and hear about improvements taking place at the Women and Children's Campus and our recent visit from all the WestCare Grants and Development teams who all came to our Foundation office in Henderson for several days of workshops.

Finally, I want to wish all of our mothers (clients and employees) a [Happy Mother's Day](#). Besides the miracle of giving birth, the good qualities that we all possess (both in men and women), come from you, our mothers.



Leo Magrdichian, LCSW, LCADC, Vice President



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## Spiritual Alumni Celebrate Easter at the WCC and Expand Reach Within the Community

By Ryan Michael Creelman, *Spiritual Director/Staff Chaplain*

Greetings from our **WestCare Spiritual Alumni** group, an aftercare product of **The Spiritual Care Chaplain Program (SCCP)**! April is an amazing spiritual month with many sacred and holy periods and days.

April's **Spiritual Alumni Leadership Development Gathering** this month was held at **The Helmsman House**, a spiritual and faith-based recovery home in the northwest Las Vegas area. I had the honor of providing a leadership training with topics from John C. Maxwell's, "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader" and started the planning for our in-person Easter event at the WCC.

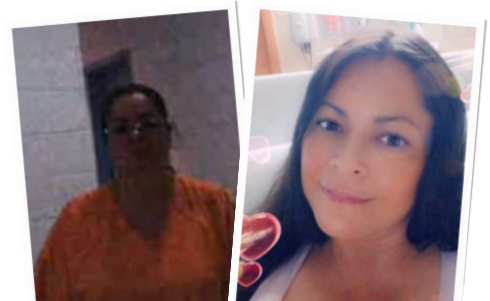
The Spiritual Alumni group's Easter event at the WCC was exciting for us and refreshing for those present. The smell of smoky BBQ ribs and chicken filled the air as a traditional egg hunt was held. Music, fellowship, laughter, and encouragement filled the patio garden under the olive trees. Spiritual Alumni leaders shared their testimonies and held a Q&A session with the clients on topics like spiritual enrichment and recovery success! All participants received an Easter basket titled "Light of the World," which contained chocolate, candies, and crafts for them and their children to enjoy the remainder of the afternoon. Prayers for hope and strength were gifted by chaplains and Spiritual Alumni leaders throughout the event. Spiritual Alumni leadership, WCC staff, and persons in care celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the beauty of spring rebirth that offers radiance and newness of life for all to enjoy!

The SCCP leaders finished their lessons on Lent, recovery correlations, and provided the opportunity for those in care to participate in a water baptism. These New Life baptisms were provided by Chaplain Laura Bjork, our **WestCare Women and Children's Campus (WCC)** Site Chaplain, who led the confession of faith; Sr. Chaplain Joni Papsch, WCC Women of the Bible Instructor, who did the full immersion dunk person; and Chaplain Quentin Nunn, Spiritual Alumni Director, who did the anointing and reception of the Holy Spirit. Twenty beloved women in our care were baptized into this new life of "Recovered & Redeemed." In Chaplain Laura's words, "Baptism is washing away your old spirit and letting a new spirit be born with the love, grace, mercy, and strength that the Lord blesses us with every day. With his protection of this confession of faith, we will grow stronger in our walk with the Lord. The recovery process is hard and emotional, but receiving forgiveness from the holy spirit will make them stronger. I hope all the women can feel a renewal of their spirit and the light of the Holy spirit within."

Our Spiritual Alumni also sponsored the Chaplaincy Nevada fundraiser by providing a basket of spiritual-themed books and faith-filled wall and table décor to enrich the Easter season.

Ongoing aftercare spiritual support groups have been provided by SCCP Alumni leaders every Monday and Saturday evening via Zoom for the past two years with group sizes ranging from 15 - 30 Spiritual Alumni members. Meanwhile, we would like to give congratulations to The SCCP Facebook Group for reaching 800 alumni members as of April 15!

We appreciate the opportunity to have our love and life share offerings highlighted as we Uplift the Human Spirit!



## A Testimonial by Michelle Carrillo, Women and Children's Campus (WCC)

I started drinking and smoking cannabis in 1992. My disease progressed throughout the years. In 2015, I picked up my fourth felony DUI and chose to move to Nevada in 2016. There, I discovered methamphetamine and it just got worse. I soon found myself homeless, heavy in gang activity, and honestly - not a good person. In 2017, I picked up some felony charges and was facing 4 - 10 years in prison. I was offered a deal for felony drug court and was offered care from WestCare as part of my deal. I took it. WestCare provided me with the support, healing tools, and life skills that I needed to start turning my life around. I was desperate and still felt like something was missing. Then I met Chap Ryan, Chap Joni, and Chap Lori. They invited me to try out the **Spiritual Care Chaplain Program (SCCP)**. My life changed. I found that spiritual awakening everyone was talking about and the real healing began. I am now gratefully happy to say I am still active in SCCP and a proud staff member at the **Women and Children's Campus (WCC)**. I truly live a life of miracles. In October of 2022, I am hoping and planning to move forward into chaplaincy and I am currently enrolled in Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) to start classes for my degree in social work. I am not sure what the future holds, but I do know that I am looking to grow in the WestCare family, become a social worker or therapist, and continue to pursue chaplaincy. Without WestCare and the SCCP, I would not be the woman I am today and am so grateful for this program and hope to help women with my experience, strength, and hope.





## The SCCP Celebrates Seven Years of Sharing Faith and Recovery!

By Ryan Michael Creelman, *Spiritual Director/Staff Chaplain*

**WestCare Chaplaincy** and the **Spiritual Care Chaplain Program (SCCP)** officially celebrated seven years of services this past May! The spiritual significance of the number seven is that of wholeness - complete and lacking nothing. A worthy goal for the complete recovery of the mind, body, and spirit.

I was hired in May of 2015 to meet the diverse spiritual and faith needs of our beloved persons in care. Seven years later and thousands served in Nevada, Florida, and Kentucky - WestCare Chaplaincy and the SCCP are quite possibly among the most comprehensive models of spiritual care available in addiction treatment, behavioral health, and human services.

Leaders of the SCCP chose to celebrate this milestone at our **Harris Springs Ranch (HSR)** program on May 7th, 2022. In true spiritual care servitude, our team of 12 faith and spiritual community leaders set a table for 70, provided a celebratory fellowship luncheon of delicious eats and powerful SCCP graduate testimonies of recovery and redemption! The spiritual conceptual practice of the betterment to give above receipt was a blessing for HSR to enjoy a generous donation of brand-new professional grade sporting equipment. Joy and hope echoed from the mountain campus as we laughed and played as living examples of a forever spiritual family that we welcomed them all to join.

As we continue to demonstrate best practices and the highest efficacy for spiritual care in the field of behavioral health and human services, please join us in prayer and intentional thought to expand these spiritual care services to the greater WestCare footprint for the greatest good. Thank you, WestCare, for leading the way with spiritual care with this vital aspect of the health and wellness of the human being.

## A Testimonial by Quentin Nunn, Director, Spiritual Alumni Group



I am truly grateful for WestCare helping me get my life back. The **Spiritual Care Chaplain Program (SCCP)** played a big part in my life then and even more now. It helped me connect with who I believe in and held me accountable. The rewards that I have been able to receive like becoming a chaplain, being a man of integrity, and having a solid foundation for the life I live today have been remarkable. I am honored to be the director of the Spiritual Alumni of WestCare because this program has done wonders in my life and I witness it helping so many others.

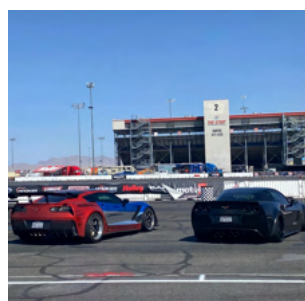
## 2022 Holley LS Fest

By Andrew Moran, *Development Director, WestCare Nevada*

For many years, the **Holley LS Fest** has become the go-to event for fans of General Motors' high-performance, do-it-all LS engine platform and this year, they brought the LS Fest West back to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway just outside of Las Vegas, Nevada from April 22 - 24. Race cars, hot rods, muscle cars, trucks, late models, drift cars, pre-runners, and buggies - if it is powered by an LS/LT, then it was there racing. Every year, it comes to Las Vegas and every year, WestCare is chosen as the premier charity to work the event!

Almost 20 of our **WestCare Women and Children Campus (WCC)** and **4th Street** transitional clients showed up and worked, bringing in around \$600 each in merchandise sales. It shows the clients that they can have fun without having to be under the influence of something and working as a team to sell a ton of merchandise. Sashia Whitmire and Rhonda Davisson-Rhames made sure that everything ran smoothly and had a great time at the event. Community events like this really show what we do at WestCare and how you cannot go back and change the past, but you can start now and build a new future!

We visited with race organizers, Carrie Strange and Bill Tichenor, who welcomed our WestCare family as their own, even providing all our clients' families with a stack of free tickets so they could enjoy the fun as well. Bill is from Kentucky and knows a lot about our WestCare program at Ashcamp and is impressed with our relentless pursuit of helping people. We will collaborate more in the future and see if other WestCare locations across the country can participate in their races and fundraising events. We want to thank everyone at FM3 Performance Marketing and Holley Performance Products, for making us feel welcome and letting us enjoy a weekend of fun!







### Our Grants and Development Teams Join Forces

By Andrew Moran, Development Director, WestCare Nevada

In May, our grants and development teams met in Las Vegas at WestCare Foundation for a workshop on all things related to raising funds and writing grant applications for the WestCare family of programs across the globe. It was wonderful to see everyone's perspective in the many regions that WestCare operates.

The meeting was kicked off by our President and CEO, Dick Steinberg, welcoming everyone and thanking the team for the hard work that they have put in over the

years. Afterwards, Beverly Watts-Davis, Chief Officer for Resource Development and Program Support and Senior Vice President of WestCare Texas, gave an introduction and an overview of the week.

The first activity was team building and we were paired off in groups of two to ask questions about each other and present to the team. We learned a lot of interesting facts about one another, including what is the most embarrassing and happiest that grant you have ever experienced and a unique fact about ourselves and our departments.

We discussed grant volume issues and Dwayne Stevens, our Chief Information Officer for WestCare Foundation, discussed grant support and IT needs for each region, the purchases to be placed with each grant, and data sharing between the different departments.

IT was followed by a senior leadership roundtable including Shawn Jenkins, Chief Operating Officer for our Western Region; Dr. Jason Engel, Chief Clinical Officer; Stephen Wright, Vice President of the Appalachia Region; and Aja Ramos, Senior Vice President of WestCare Pacific Islands, to discuss program challenges, and who should be brought to the grant meetings.

Savannah Jones, Chief Administrative Officer for WestCare Foundation, discussed the roles of Human Resources and facilitated the meeting, bringing open-mindedness and answering questions from an HR perspective. The workshop wrapped up with Jennifer Hilton, Director of Training and Technology, discussing the greatest challenges with training and different options for employees to learn more.

It was extremely informative and a great team-building exercise. The meeting was the first time that the entire grant team came together face-to-face for a workshop. It was beneficial as we got to connect and will stay in touch to collaborate. Although we are all in different regions, we can support each other, and when a great grant opportunity comes down the pipeline, we will be ready to apply!



### WestCare Nevada's CAC Begins Upgrades on the Women and Children's Campus!

By Andrew Moran, Development Director, WestCare Nevada

WestCare Nevada's **Community Action Council** is hard at work beautifying the **Women and Children's Campus' (WCC)** sports and wellness court for our families served to use this summer. They are also painting the entire building which is desperately in need of a revamp.

From the amazing gift of the **Higgins family**, matched generously by senior leadership at WestCare, we have begun the process of hiring Pierro's Landscape and Maintenance and WestCare Alumni, Jason Lavin, to paint different color schemes for the entire building and spruce up the outdoor playground and surrounding area. The landscapers trimmed trees, cleaned out walking paths, and replanted foliage. All of the palm trees got a "haircut," making the area serene for the families to get exercise, visit, and get some much-needed fresh air as they continue their journey of sobriety. The CAC and our clients will plant flowers and are in the process of getting new benches and workout equipment. This project has been in the works for a little over a year and the Higgins family is really pleased with the progress!



### Continue the journey online!

Follow WestCare Nevada on social media to learn more about our team and the work we're doing in our local community!

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