



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND NEVADA

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Greetings from **WestCare Nevada**, a place where some pretty remarkable things are going on even during the hot summer months. Two of those things are the successes of our Alumni groups (*Las Vegas and Spiritual*), whom both held profitable **Fourth of July/Independence Day** Phantom Fireworks booth fundraisers.

Some of you may ask, "Why two?" Well, let me tell you why. Before my time with WestCare, there were two fireworks booths operated by WestCare: One being operated by the WestCare Nevada staff and the other by our alumni. Eventually, only the **Las Vegas Alumni Group** continued this type of fundraising, which for your information has been replicated by many other non-profit treatment programs here in Las Vegas. In addition, with the inception of the **Spiritual Care Chaplaincy Program** seven years ago and its continued success and development of its own alumni group, they incorporated the same blueprint and began operating a fireworks booth of their own to support their efforts.

When we consider the significance of **Independence Day** for our country, there is no doubt that the celebration and fireworks associated with the passing of the Declaration of Independence and our political separation from Great Britain bring a few terms to mind such as autonomy, freedom, liberation, and self-determination.

However, working in the behavioral health field sure does add a great deal to the meaning of Independence Day, continued celebration, and these terms. These types of successes should also be celebrated based on the hard work and dedication required for an individual to successfully recover and be allowed to experience all the good things that life has to offer.

Let's discuss these terms a little and truly get an understanding of their importance for us as a nation and then peel back another layer and identify their impact for those in recovery.

The Declaration of Independence provided us as a nation the autonomy, or right of self-government, and for the individual in recovery, there is freedom from being under the influence of substances. Freedom on the other hand, removed any type of subjection to foreign rule, and for the person in recovery it means no longer being imprisoned or enslaved (*both figuratively and literally*) to the substances that take control of their thinking and behaviors. Similarly, liberation sets a country free from oppression, while it inevitably empowers and enhances the well-being of individuals. Finally, self-determination for a country allows the opportunity for that country to determine its own statehood and form its own allegiances, while for the person in recovery, they are able to gradually take control of their own lives and develop their own support system(s) and commitments.

This month's issue provides a closer look into these fundraisers with words from those who volunteered their time. The articles and photos demonstrate the overall comradery developed as they operated 24 hours a day for seven full days leading up to the fourth and the relationships that were built and nurtured with others in the recovery community. It was also rewarding to have the opportunity to bring a fireworks show back to those served at the Women and Children's Campus. This issue also highlights the great work being done by our development team and the results in relation to governmental support and donations. I hope and pray that you continue to enjoy this newsletter and all of the great things taking place at WestCare Nevada.



Leo Magrdichian, LCSW, LCADC, Vice President



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The Las Vegas Alumni Group Raises Funds with Help from The Davis Recovery House!

By Michael Mygind, Director of Marketing

Our **Las Vegas Alumni Group** were proud to hold another successful Phantom Fireworks booth this year and were joined by some amazing volunteers from **The Davis Recovery House** and a longtime supporter of ours and their founder, Marcie Davis! In her words, she shared her history with our organization:

"I began volunteering at WestCare Nevada's Women and Children's Campus by bringing in AA meetings in 2011 after learning about them through the pharmacy that I owned and operated, White Cross Drugs, and visiting for a tour. I still go on a weekly basis. I became friendly with WestCare's Alumni and began volunteering with them at the fireworks booth. In 2012, the pharmacy closed and I got my real estate license. Around this time, I took on my first and only real estate deal at the request of Ms. Darlene Terrill, which was finding the location for WestCare's Community Involvement Center on 323 North Maryland Parkway. In 2013, I opened The Davis Recovery House, my first women's sober living house. In 2015, my second and in 2020, I opened my third. I've seen many women come through WestCare or work there and remain successful with their sobriety, notably Kellie G, whom I met at WestCare and became my house manager as well as my daughter-in-law, Sherice D. I've stayed in touch with many of the clients over the years as well as the alumni. Service is a big part of my recovery and I invite my residents to join me every year at the WestCare fireworks booth. WestCare is near and dear to my heart and I like that the money raised goes to help their men, women, and children in treatment. We always have a blast and it feels good to be giving back! After 11 years, I still love walking into WestCare every week and helping their women with their recovery. If it hadn't been for WestCare, I probably would not have opened The Davis Houses as I would not have known how much I enjoy working with the women."

Thank you for your longtime support, Marcie! As an added bonus, she gathered quotes from her volunteers on behalf of The Davis Recovery House to share! Thank you, ladies, for your time, energy, and support in benefit of the women, men, and children that we are so proud to serve!

"I absolutely loved it! I can't wait for next year!" - A.D.

"It was a fulfilling experience getting the opportunity to raise money for WestCare while doing fun volunteer work and making new friends!" - C.S.

"Volunteering at the WestCare fireworks booth and getting to be of service while having fun and fellowshiping with friends was an awesome experience. I am grateful to be a part of the Davis House and WestCare family." - D.D.

"I really enjoyed being a part of a cause that is close to my heart. It was fun getting to meet and work with others in recovery." - S.C.



This year, Mike volunteered on his days off to assist at both of our Alumni fireworks booths!

A WestCare Nevada Alumni/Staff Testimony

By Mike Lee, Behavioral Health Tech, Las Vegas Community Triage Center

I first came to WestCare from county jail in March of 2016 after waiting for a bed at **Harris Springs Ranch (HSR)** for several months. A behavioral health technician named Caren picked me up from jail and brought me to the then-new **Las Vegas Community Triage Center (CTC)** at Maryland Parkway. After a few days of formalities, I was transported to HSR where I spent 90 days as a residential client. I had been fighting a losing battle with stimulant drugs (*initially to treat ADHD*) since childhood; a battle filled with disillusionment, recidivism, and heartache. At HSR, I learned about accountability, the importance of actions and consequences, and the benefits of a therapeutic community. I was also introduced to the **Las Vegas Alumni Group** during their Spring Fling event. They would prove to be an instrumental element in the growth of my recovery - particularly in the arena of service. I ran a strong program while in residential treatment. After I graduated, I connected with the Alumni group. Unfortunately, due greatly to a misstep in my medication, I relapsed on amphetamines and had my probation revoked.

I served seven months' time in the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) and paroled to a local halfway house where my sentence expired six weeks later. While there, I reconnected with the Alumni group, who welcomed me back with open arms and I served for the first time at their annual Fourth of July fireworks booth fundraiser and have gone on to serve with them at over 30 client-centered events at WestCare Nevada's residential facilities, six fireworks booths, and four annual graduations. Around that same time,

I restarted my journey of step-work with my sponsor. For the first three years of my sobriety, I served at every alumni function eventually making a commitment to do a monthly Alumni panel at the CTC in 2018.

This experience led me to accept a nomination in a smaller Twelve Step fellowship catering to meth recovery as its local hospitals and institutions chair, beginning a longstanding journey in my general service for The Twelve Steps. At this point, I was taking care of my elderly parents full time. I became involved in conference service in the mother fellowship, eventually becoming a standing committee liaison to their Nevada area assembly. In the other smaller fellowship, I would become Nevada area chair and have served the last two years as Nevada area delegate to their North American general service conference. When the pandemic claimed the life of my father, I began to weigh the options for my future and asked members of the Alumni group, many of whom have worked as WestCare employees, about their thoughts on me considering a future with the company. I asked Leo Magrdichian, who was the program director of HSR when I was a client if there were any suitable opportunities with the company locally. He suggested that I apply for a position as a behavioral health tech (BHT) at the CTC and I have been here now as the graveyard BHT for 3 months. Thus, I have come full circle in six years and work with Caren, the BHT who picked me up from county jail. I occasionally do client intakes at the very same desk where she had done my initial intake. Truly a surreal experience for which I am wholly grateful.

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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The Spiritual Alumni Group Gathers for Fellowship and Fundraising!

By Chaplain Laura Bjork, Spiritual Care Chaplaincy Program

For the second year, WestCare Nevada's **Spiritual Alumni Group** held a 24-hour Phantom Fireworks fundraiser from June 28 through July 4! This fundraiser brings in funds that we are able to use all year to help those that we serve during their recovery. These funds help with presenting community BBQs and fun activities for alumni such as bowling, ax throwing, and movies. Funds also go to emergency funds, bills and uber or bus passes to alumni members. Money even goes to on-site events at our WestCare Nevada facilities. We had a phenomenally successful booth this year - raising 25% more funds than we did last year. Our schedule was full and our volunteers were fed, hydrated, and stayed cool with our setup. It was a great time for fellowship as we came together to help our program raise money. We are incredibly grateful for everyone who came out, helped, and donated. We could not do this without you! Hoping your 4th of July holiday was safe and blessed. Thank you for letting me serve.



An Independence Day Thank You from the Women and Children's Campus

By Rhonda Davison, Transitional and VA Programs Coordinator

To our WestCare Alumni and WestCare Nevada Administration,

Thank you for thinking of the ladies and children at the **Women and Children's Campus** on the Fourth of July for helping make a fireworks show at our program possible for the third year in a row since the pandemic began!

From the moment that the first box of fireworks or "The biggest box I've ever seen," per a very excited seven-year-old in our care, was brought by members of WestCare Nevada Administration, to the highly anticipated arrival at dusk of Mr. Leo and Ms. Irma with another box donated by the Las Vegas Alumni Group, our ladies were excited and had plenty of fun after that. We'd like to you all to know that your thoughtfulness and generosity showed each lady that their holiday happiness was important to each of you.

Some of our clients' comments before included, "Do you think we'll get to have fireworks here," "What about us," and "What fun is the Fourth of July without fireworks?"

Clients' comments during the festivities included, "Wow. Look, they remembered us," "This is great," and "It's like a real Fourth of July - just for us!"

Following the event, some of their comments were, "It was like they were helping us celebrate our recovery," and "Is Mr. Leo bringing more fireworks tonight?"

Thank you for sharing all of this love and paying it forward for the women and children at the Women and Children's Campus, Las Vegas Alumni Group and WestCare Nevada Administration!



Congressman Steven Horsford Adds The Village to His List of Appropriation Requests

By Andrew Moran, Development Director

The **United States House Committee on Appropriations** is part of the United States House of Representatives and is responsible for passing appropriation bills along with its Senate counterpart. The bills passed by the committee regulate expenditures of money by the government of the United States. Appropriations are payments or obligations from the U.S. Treasury for a specified purpose and are definite (a specific sum of money) or indefinite (an amount for such sums as may be necessary).

WestCare Nevada's planned transitional living program, **The Village at the Women and Children's Campus**, was a part of this process when **Congressman Steven Horsford**, a long-time WestCare supporter, asked for \$2.5 million for The Village via an appropriation request. We hope to break ground on this much needed project as soon as September of this year.

The Village is a one-of-a-kind project and a true public backed/private partnership where the entire community is involved. Along with funding received from the City of Las Vegas, we have enough to build "phase 1" of the project and construct 21 two and three-bedroom apartments for women and their children to continue to heal and work on improving themselves. We want to thank Congressman Horsford for recognizing what we do in the community and we appreciate his hard work and continued support.



BEFORE



AFTER



CAC Update: The Sean Higgins Wellness Area Becomes a Reality at the WCC!

By Andrew Moran, Development Director

It is with great pleasure that I get to share the generosity of an amazing family and their heartfelt donation to our **WestCare Nevada Women and Children's Campus' (WCC)** sports court, dedicated in memory of longtime gaming attorney, lobbyist, and friend, **Sean Higgins**. Sean passed away in late 2020. The family, headed by his beloved wife, Lynn Higgins; daughter, Samantha; and son, Connor, set up a GoFundMe page on his behalf for WestCare. They raised over \$25,000 for the WCC through small donations from hundreds of community members that respected and loved Sean. Additional support came from his family including his mother, Lucia, and his nine brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews, who all adored him. He spent his legal career in gaming and was general counsel for Affinity Interactive, formerly known as Herbst Gaming and Affinity Gaming. Sean was also an executive at Golden Entertainment. Being from such a large and wonderful family, he had a special heart for women and children. Now, through his memorial and this gift from his family, he will pass that love along to so many.

With the donation, we did an entire revamp and beautification of the sports and wellness court at the WCC, now known as the Sean Higgins Wellness Area. We bought brand new tables, benches, and umbrellas so that the families can get out of the heat and relax. The walking path was redone and now the women can get exercise as they stroll around the area. We put in new landscaping and trees to add shade and make it more welcoming. The volleyball court and basketball court got a complete facelift and was repainted. The courts also received new sports equipment and we added bikes for the little ones to enjoy. The area needed love and we are extremely grateful for this family and their continued support of WestCare over the years. The families can take pride in where they live and be able to get exercise and have a beautiful yard to continue to heal in. The entire WestCare Nevada family would like to thank the Higgins family for their act of kindness. Your contribution was a kind and generous way of supporting the lives of the women and children that are trying to rebuild their lives. Thank you for stepping forward and making a commitment to assist us in our mission of helping others find recovery!



Clients Receive New Clothes and Shoes from an Anonymous Donor

By Andrew Moran, Development Director

WestCare Nevada was the lucky recipient of an anonymous donation this month! The donation included two full pallets that filled the back of a step van truck and consisted of 100 new pairs of Reeboks and clothing such as shorts, sweatpants, t-shirts, and jackets. It was an unbelievable gesture and both the **Women and Children's Campus** in Las Vegas and **Harris Springs Ranch** at Mount Charleston were the lucky recipients. I got to see firsthand what new clothing and shoes can do to a person's spirit. Looking good leads to feeling good and it builds confidence. To have brand new shoes and clothing to feel good about goes a long way. Although we cannot discuss who the donor was per their request, we wanted to thank them for their kindness and compassion for the women and men that we serve. Giving back to the community is what it is all about and not wanting any credit for this kind act shows true altruism. We hope to collaborate more in the future and want to thank them for their generous gift! Thank you for Uplifting the Human Spirit in WestCare Nevada!

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