

FREE



All 4 Ur ADDICTION RECOVERY

Treasure Coast / Palm Beach • Vol. 2, Issue 1
Spring, 2014

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
RECOVERY ARTICLES
REHABS
SOBER LIVING
ATTORNEYS
THERAPISTS
CLASSIFIEDS
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REFERRAL
RESOURCE GUIDE



LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

All 4 Ur Addiction Referral Recovery Guide was established in Stuart, Florida, by Jenny C. in 2013. The All 4 Ur Addiction Referral Recovery Guide is a resource magazine for those suffering from the cunning, baffling and powerful disease of addiction. Our publication provides not only information about the disease, but help in locating detox facilities, in and out patient treatment facilities, counseling services, life coaching and more. This directory includes available legal help, sober living facilities, and community services. We supply a list of resources to include free community services, transportation, sober events and activities and more. We offer assistance to family and friends affected by the disease as well.

Our founder and owner Jenny C. has worked in the health care industry for over 8 years, specifically Chemical Dependency for over 3 years. Her experience includes Peer counselor, Intake Coordinator, Admissions and Marketing at several different health departments and treatment centers over the last 8 years. She assisted in the development of a new treatment center on the Treasure Coast establishing the protocol for their Admissions and Business Development Departments. Her love for people and serving those in need has resulted in the development of All 4 Ur Addiction Referral Recovery Guide.

Jenny has experienced the pain of addiction in her own life and witnessed the devastation in her immediate family. She is dedicated to her own personal recovery and providing public services to those in need.

All 4 Ur Addiction Referral Recovery Guide takes great pride in our relationships. Every addict deals with specific issues, and every addict should be treated with compassion and care. Entering recovery is very taxing on the mind and body, but that should not be a deterrent. It is important that the right decision be made for the sake and well-being of the affected suffering addict.

To find quality addiction help in Florida, make sure you call professionals. All 4 Ur has great resources at hand to aid you in making a new beginning. We are a means to help you or a loved one find sobriety, and most importantly, happiness.

Our mission for this monthly resource guide is to bring awareness and resources available to those suffering from addictions and their families who are affected by this disease.

If you have found this resource guide to be helpful, you may visit us online at www.All4UrAddiction.com

Sincerely,

Jenny

Publisher

info@All4UrAddiction.com

Important Helplines

800-ALCOHOL, 800-COCAINE, 800-LOSTBET, 800-RELAPSE

AA WORLD SERVICES	212-870-3400	www.AA.org
AA Intergroup St. Lucie County	772-873-9299	www.aastlucieintergroup.com
AA Intergroup Martin County	772-283-9337	www.martincountyaa.org
NA World Services	818-773-9999	www.na.org
Florida Regional	863-683-8224	www.Floridana.org
NA Treasure Coast Area	772-343-8373	www.treasurecoastareana.com
Al-Anon Alateen Worldwide	800-344-2666	www.al-anon.alateen.org
NA Nar-Anon Treasure Coast	888-425-2666	http://nar-anon.org/Nar-Anon/Florida.html
OA Anonymous	505-891-2664	www.oa.org
Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous	210-828-7900	www.slaafws.org
211 Treasure Coast-211	211	www.treasurecoast.org
211 For Teenagers	211	www.teen211pbtc.org
Florida Abuse Hotline	800-962-2873	www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/
Family Anonymous	847-294-5877	www.familiesanonymous.org
Community Coach in Martin County	772-283-1814	www.martinmpo.com
Strengthening Families	772-672-8640	www.castletc.org/castle-programs/strengthening-families
Student Assistance Program	772-467-3010	http://www.nhtcinc.org/children.html
Volunteers In Medicine	772-463-4128	www.volunteersinmedicine.org
House Of Hope Jensen Beach	772-225-1060	www.hohmartin.org
House Of Hope Stuart	772-286-4673	www.hohmartin.org
The Salvation Army Stuart	772-288-1471	www.salvationarmyusa.org
The Salvation Army ST. Lucie	772-464-4846	www.salvationarmyusa.org
Mustard Seed Ministries Fort Pierce	772-465-6021	www.mustardseeds.org
Treasure Coast Food Bank	772-460-2195	www.stophunger.org



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WILLINGNESS

BY M.R.

I had so many ins and outs through the doors at the AA halls. Act of surrender, white chip, feel good, sleep, eat and work out and look “sober”. The one thing I didn’t do in AA was the actual AA itself. I thought that going to meetings all the time (because I heard that meeting makers make it) would relieve me of alcoholism and drug addiction. That’s what I heard. We hear some really weird, stupid and downright deadly stuff in the rooms of recovery. I also heard “wait, slow down, don’t recover too quickly” (as if I wasn’t dying too quickly) so I would wait. I wanted to want to want to be recovered from my condition but I didn’t know what to do. Even in AA I had men with multiple years of sobriety telling me to do all this crap other than to do what the big book outlines. I hadn’t even heard the word willingness in AA meetings for 6 years.

Willingness is my favorite word and my favorite idea.... Fact, if you will (and I hope you will). I finally had enough of my old life and I got down on my knees one night and asked God for the willingness to do whatever they were doing in the rooms of recovery. That was the first action I took towards getting better. Decision, willingness and action are synonymous to me in regards to the program. That lasted close to two years of an exciting and wonder life. When my willingness to do the program ended, my sobriety ended. I did not “choose” to go drink, as I believe I didn’t then, don’t now, nor will ever have the power to choose whether drink or not, but I stopped being willing to do the actions necessary and vital to sustain sobriety... comfortable sobriety at that. I did not want to drink more than I wanted to stay sober, as some tried to tell me. I simply stopped “doing” AA, the insanity returned, and I drank again.

The nightmare of my alcoholic and drug addicted slavery lasted almost two years, with a few small doses of physical sobriety, until the one beautifully painful moment in time when God allowed me to see true from false and I became willing. Fully drowning with nothing but the flimsy reed, which our beloved Big Book mentions is actually the Hand of Our Loving Creator. Let me tell you, in that moment I was fully surrounded by the obsession to get lit up. I did not want to call my sponsor or try again at AA, but I did anyway. I had heard many

times that the program is not for people who need it, it’s for want it. In my experience, it is for people who DO it. I did not know it then (nor can I even fathom now), but I had made a decision, became willing and took action to getting better right there and then. By the grace of god I made it to my good friend’s house and we began the process in the Big Book. We sat down and went through the first 3 steps in 3-4 hours. I literally “launched” my truck out of his driveway, flew home and began my 4th step. This happened within one week of physical sobriety and went from total despair to hope with action in one night. From that day on my willingness has been ferocious and has resulted in comfortable, happy, and useful sobriety. Useful LIFE. If I am willing, I will be doing. I began making amends and helping others in my first couple months. This has happened to so many of my wonderfully, awesome friends as well. So many . I have recovered from the ‘seemingly’ hopeless condition of mind and body called alcoholism and drug addiction. I am fully engaged in the process of recovery on a daily basis and I LOVE it. I get to do this. I always thought that I was ‘sentenced’ to AA until the moment I began DOING AA. I GET to do this. Did I mention that I LOVE it?

From powerless and useless to willingness and helpfulness. Willingness is always synonymous with action. This program is not for people who need it, it’s not for people who want it. This program is for people who DO it.

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DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH • TRAUMA ISSUES**BY KARINA PRIEST, LMHC****New Year, New You?**

This is an amazing time of the year, when we get to set new year resolutions/goals. We get to say goodbye to the old ways and hello to a brand new start. What a great opportunity to look back at the goals we set last year, and to see what we need to do different. It's important to set realistic goals, in other words, goals that you can accomplish. For example, if education is important to you and you want to get a degree, you can set a goal to obtain information about your degree of interest, get information on financial aid, visit the schools of choice, set an interview, take entrance test, and maybe start taking classes. If your goal for the year is to get that degree.....you may be disappointed when you realize you didn't give yourself time to do what it would entail. The idea is to break your goals into small parts that can be accomplished a little at a time. It works in your favor when you look at your goals once a month and can see that you are accomplishing something with each step you take. Don't set yourself up to fail by setting resolutions and goals that cannot be accomplished in a year. Look at different areas in your life and think about improvements you want to make in each. Some examples: education, employment, housing, spirituality, etc. You can write a goal for each of these areas plus others important to you.

Ok.....so.....you haven't been feeling well for a long time and have realized that something isn't right..... or.....you have stopped taking medicine that you know you need, or you have decided to start dealing with issues you have denied for a while. That's ok. It's a new year, a chance to start again and do something for yourself. Where do you begin? Set a goal about starting the process to get better. Find a therapist who specializes in the issues you have and inquire about insurance or cost. Set an appt and see if that person is right for you. If you feel medication is needed or has been recommended, set an appt with a psychiatrist or ask the therapist to give you a referral. Of course, if you are in recovery, staying clean and sober by following a program would be the place to start.

Concentrate on today. The past is gone, the future is not here.....today is all you've got, that's why it's called "the present". Open yours and see what's in store for you. Happy New Year!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Karina Priest, LMHC

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ABOUT THE ADDICT'S MOM

BY BARBARA THEODOSIOU

The Addict's Mom reaches out to families dealing with addiction. We invite mothers and families of addicts to join us. The Addict's Mom is a community where members can "Share Without Shame," their daily struggle, their sorrows, their victories with others who understand the impact of this devastating disease. We offer resources, groups, referrals, but most of all we offer hope and the knowledge that we are not alone in this fight to change perceptions and save lives. The Addict's Mom is currently registering for non-profit status and growing by the hundreds daily. Find us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and our online websites.

Why did I start the Addict's Mom?

When I discovered my two sons were using drugs, my life fell apart. For months I felt this isolation, this desperation and unbearable heartache. I couldn't function, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't work; all I did was focus on my two sons. My family suffered, my friendships suffered, I even walked away from a very successful business I had started. Nothing was as important as being with my sons, but I was so confused and full of pain myself, it took me some time to put my thoughts and life back together again.

As I lay in my bed of heartache and solitude, I kept thinking why doesn't anyone care? Why doesn't anyone understand? Yet, deep inside I knew I couldn't be the only mom suffering. Deep inside I knew there had to be others going through the same emotional pain that I was. I questioned, how were other addict's moms dealing with pain of having a child suffering from addiction? I wanted to create a place for all addict's moms to gather. A safe place where they would have the freedom to share their anguish without the burden of shame and guilt, that comes with having an addicted child. It was through my desperation, heartache and pain that the idea for "The Addicts' Mom" was born. I decided that since no one was reaching out to me, I would reach out to them. I believed that if I could find other addict's moms going through what I was, we would be able to "Share Without Shame" our experiences, our sorrows, our pain of having an addicted child, we would become stronger.

In the last six years, The Addict's Mom has grown from a small group on Facebook to almost 15,000 members and we expect to double our membership this year. The Addict's Mom now has a website and Facebook closed groups, fan pages, specialized groups, and more. The Addict's Mom is a forum that encourages personal change and healing. Thousands of mothers, along with dads, siblings, grandparents, spouses, children, recovering addicts, in fact anyone who loves an addict will find comfort by the open, honest sharing of challenges and victories experienced with their children. Their broken spirits find healing, hope and comfort in the darkness of addiction.

All members also share the sorrow and heartbreak when one of our moms loses their child from this terrible disease. Our moms know each of these losses is a tragedy that could be prevented. So to help bring awareness and change The Addict's Mom is taking action and moving forward into new territory.

With the help of our Executive Director, Duana Wilkins and Kathy Frasier, our Regional Director, I have decided to move

The Addict's Mom from a support community to a nonprofit organization where we will fulfill the mission of "The Addict's Mom." Our mission is to "Transform the perceptions of addicts and their families, saving the lives and futures of those who matter most, the children."

But there are still so many hurting moms out there we haven't reached yet. So many mothers who don't know there is a place they can share without shame. A place where they won't be alone and they can find hope, comfort and unconditional acceptance from other mothers going through the same experiences. This is still the main purpose of The Addict's Mom and I will never give up hoping to reach that mom and that mom, was me.

If you would like to join The Addicts Mom either because you are hurting from having a loved one suffering from the disease of addiction, or because you want to help bring awareness and change please go to one of our sites listed below.

Facebook Closed Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/theaddictsmom>

Facebook Fan Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/154033158118579/>

Facebook Grandparent to Grandparent:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/154033158118579/>

Facebook Addict's Mom 911 Interviews/Podcasts providing education to Addict' Moms:

<https://www.facebook.com/addictsmom911>

Addict's Mom online community:

<http://addictsmom.com>

The Addict's Mom Showcase:

<http://addictsmomshowcase.com>



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To get your event listed email us at info@all4uraddiction.com

All 4 Ur Addiction Recovery Guide, is not in any way associated with or endorses any events in any way. And as such, they do not accept responsibility or liability for any events.

Behavioral Health Network Meeting

Friday 02/28/2014 9:00 AM

Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network meets at
Jupiter Town Hall in Jupiter

Hanley Center Family Picnic

Sunday 03/9/2014

at Palm Beach International Equestrian Center
3400 Equestrian Club Drive, Wellington
www.hanleycenter.org

**The N.O.W. Matters More Foundation 1st Annual
Charity Golf Event**

Monday 03/10/2014 8:00 AM

at Alaqua Country Club in the Orlando, Florida area
www.nowmattersmore.org

3rd Annual Central Florida Women's Workshop

Friday 03/14 - Sunday 03/16/2014

at Life Enrichment Center
4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, FL
www.cfwomensworkshop.com

6th Anniversary Celebration Ice Cream Social

Sunday 03/16/2014 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

at First Congregational Church -- corner of Savona &
California Blvds in Port St Lucie, FL

Troop Gratitude District 140 Al-Anon Dinner

Saturday 03/22/2014 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

at Immanuel Lutheran Church 2655 SW Immanuel
Drive Palm City
FDC – 1st floor, building in back
Please bring a covered dish to share

District 6 Annual Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday 03/22/2014 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

at Holy Family Catholic Church 2230 Mariposa Ave.
Port St. Lucie, FL
Please bring a dessert to share

Big Book Workshop

Saturday 04/5/2014 8:30 AM - 9:00 PM

at Langford Park 2369 NE Dixie Hwy, Jensen Beach
www.treasurecoastroundup.com

Every Wednesday 6:30 AM - 4:30 PM

East Coast Clinical Health Fair

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Every Tuesday & Friday 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Drum circle 6642 US1 Hwy, PSL

Every Thursday 6:45 PM - 8:00 PM

Meditation Class at Unity of Stuart
211 S.E. Central Parkway, Stuart

Third Friday of the Month 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

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A NEW BEGINNING

BY DEBRA A.

"Whatever you do or dream you can do – begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it." -Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

All of us come equipped with a basic human drive. We appear to be born with an innate desire to grow and express to our fullest potential. Inherent in our nature is the impulse to do better and be better.

As we approach the new year many of us are inclined to focus on our personal plans for improvement. We incubate the seeds of our desires in this tender time of infinite possibilities. There's a sense of magic in the air. Who doesn't make a declaration of change of some sort? After all, this is the time of new beginnings. As I consider the concept of a new beginning, I can not help but think of all the failed attempts to change we hear about during this time of the year. There's plenty of snickering at the notion of New Year's resolutions gone awry. I believe the statistics suggest that only 10 - 20% of resolutions make it past February, let alone through the year. I dare say, many don't survive until the 3rd of January. All the good intentions appear to be cast asunder, swept aside by the lash of our engrained habits and ways of 'being' in the world.

How many of us have tried to quit smoking only to return at some point? How many have made every attempt to lose weight yet only temporarily see signs of success?

We swear this is the year we will stick to an exercise plan, listen to our mother's, or speak the truth. Then we fall short.

Yes, we say we're going to stop resenting our exes or strengthen our relationship with a particular family member. We swear we will keep a daily journal or overcome a fear. Then life happens. We miss a day, we backslide in our response. We entertain a feeling we'd rather eliminate for far too long.

Let's face it. Sometimes the road to our deepest aspirations may be winding and arduous. We do not always move from point A to point B 'as the crow flies'. More often than not, our path is two steps forward and one step back. It's what occurs during the one step back that is critical.

Will this be the moment we 'throw in the towel' and abandon our efforts, or can we overcome our all-or-nothing mindset?

Let us remember every day is a change to begin again. Every hour, an hour to begin again. Every minute is a minute to begin again. Something about this approach feels good to me.

It means I have not lost sight of the goal, but I consider my humanity and carry on.

I like it better.

Perhaps my resolution will involve being the best version of myself I can possibly be each and every day. To realize I may be flawed, but I am doing the best I can at any given moment. If I stumble, if I fall short, I can get back on course.

I can learn to acknowledge my small successes. I can strive to be gentle with myself.

Most importantly I can set reasonable goals.

Hooray to a new year! A chance to grow and move closer to our fullest potential.

Let us enjoy the process as we journey toward our greatness.

Explore this new resource to help you introduce the spiritual messages of recovery to children.

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www.12steps12stories.com

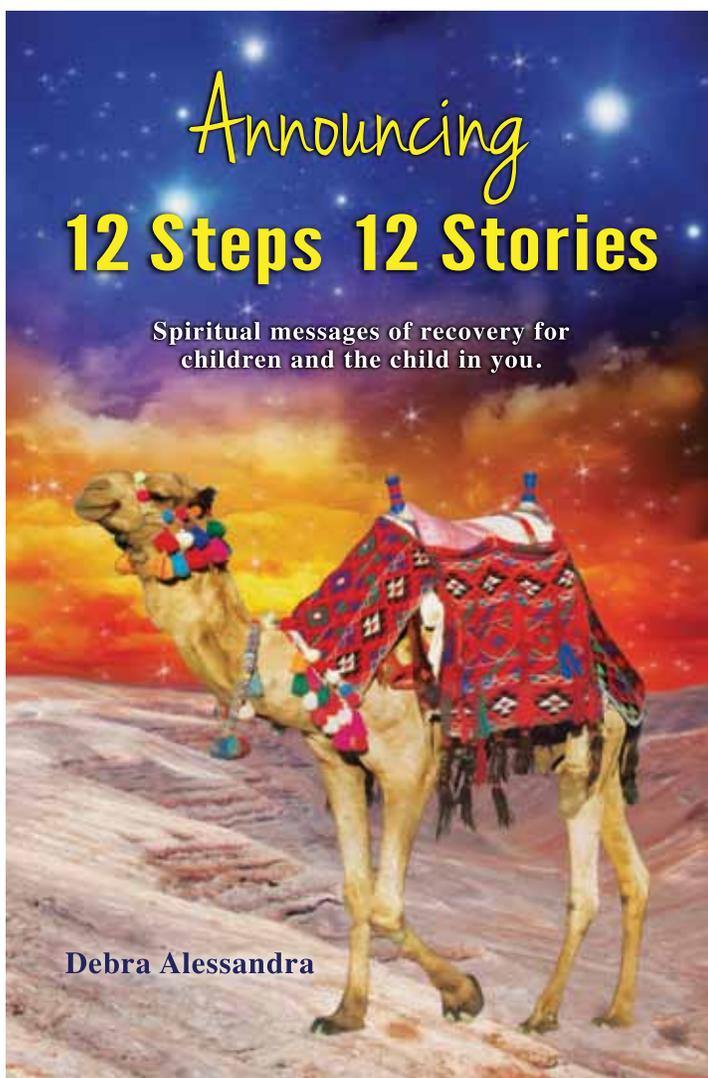
Debra Alessandra

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I awoke one day to find that it had snatched her away
 This slayer of lives, this demon so vile
 I stood in shock for quite a long while
 A profound sense of sadness washed over us now
 Left only the questions, Why, When and How?
 No easy answers where to begin,
 fighting this daily
 battle trying to win
 The realization hit there were others just like me, for
 this disease travels from sea to shining sea
 No race, gender, or class does it
 discriminate,
 Addiction, will it become your families fate?
 One thing in my heart I know to be true, is that you are
 me and I am you
 Moving forward addicts and families we must help
 each other along the way,
 this insidious disease for now is here to stay.

BY A MOTHER

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Positive Start Sober Living House (M)
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A NEW BEGINNING

BY DAVID GIBBS, M.A., LHMC, CAP, ICADC

The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time. -- Abraham Lincoln

“One day at a time- this is enough. Do not look back and grieve over the past, for it is gone; and do not be troubled about the future, for it has not yet come. Live in the present, and make it so beautiful that it will be worth remembering.” -- Ida Scott Taylor

The Bible speaks of new beginnings and tells us to “forget the past and look forward to what lies ahead” (Philippians 3:13-14).

As I was contemplating and struggling with the task of writing this article: A New Beginning, the excitement of writing about the concept of a new beginning caused a blurring of my vision. Then I recognized, my perfectionism was getting in the way and that the answer to what I needed to say, was right under my nose. I realized that the messages of the possibility of A New Beginning inundate us in various forms throughout our life span and development.

First and ever present for all of us is today, a new beginning, something we are all blessed with every day. I am made aware of this daily, as I am awakened in the morning by the sounds of birds chirping outside my window. I open my eyes and breathe in the possibilities of this new day. As I exhale I speak a message of gratitude to the universe for this gift. I celebrate knowing, that it is a starting, a new beginning that I have been given on this day. The struggles of yesterday, are laid to rest, knowing I have done the work needed to be done to maintain healthy living. Further, that nothing should burden me any longer as all of yesterday has retired with the sunset. So, it is a perfectly designed gift, that each day is a starting point, a beginning and the origin of something new. So, jump for joy in the present!!!

message of a new beginning in forms that may appear at first, to be benign. However, if one delves a little deeper, a simple nursery rhyme attempts to echo a message that a new beginning or starting point is always an option no matter how many obstacle get in our way. An amazing example of this is the nursery rhyme ; “Itsy Bitsy Spider” (also known as “Incy Wincy Spider” and several other similar sounding names) is a popular nursery rhyme that describes the adventures of a spider as it ascends, descends, and

re-ascends the downspout or “waterspout” of a gutter system

The itsy-bitsy spider
Climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
And the itsy-bitsy spider
Climbed up the spout again
(you know you sang it)

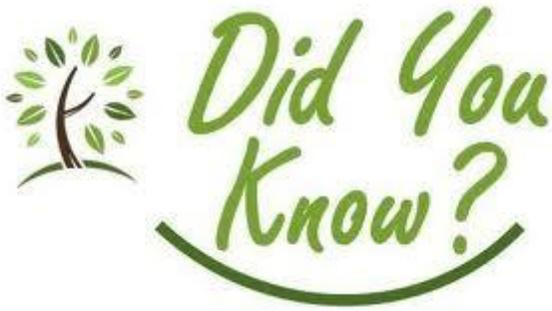
Even in our attempt to slow father time, the message of a new beginning becomes the focal point for millions of people across the country. The closing of one year reaches its destination on December 31 and a New Year rings in. It is with great anticipation for many that this ritual reverberates with the message of an opportunity to start again. So invigorated by this opportunity, millions of people will gather around friends and family to verbalize their yearning of a new beginning. The yearning is given witness by proclaiming a New Year’s resolution to all who will hear. However, It is with mixed investment for many, as they are simply caught up in the fervor of the palpable willingness of others to invest in the ritual too. The mixed investment for some will mean that their commitment to a new beginning fades slowly into the recesses of their once again failed; should have, could have and maybe next year.

Lastly, HAPPY BIRTHDAY !

This is one special day each year, when we reflect on the day our amazing journey began. The starting point. However, this is not meant to be stagnate and celebrated one time a year, as we are called to regenerate and be willing to extinguish the old to make way for a rebirth or a new beginning each and every day.

So, My friends, in closing I leave you with this. To embrace a new beginning, it will require from you an investment in a decision that has no alternatives. As you already have the knowledge of the outcome when you invest in the compromises to avoid recognizing the one decision you must make. Simply, you can decide today, Do I choose freedom or do I choose total bondage?

I choose Freedom – A New Beginning



☀ A new club house for recovering alcoholics and addicts opened its door. Club Choices is located at 1840 NE Dixie Hwy in Jensen Beach. 772-934-6768.

☀ Do you want to make a difference in your neighborhood. Next door is the private social network for you, your neighbors and your community. It's the easiest way for you and your neighbors to talk online and make all of your lives better in the real world. And it's free. www.nextdoor.com.

☀ Treasure Coast food bank also has a PET PANTRY – Through the generosity of the Help Us Help Them Fund, Treasure Coast Food Bank works to provide pet food to families through our network of existing partner agencies. 401 Angle Road Fort Pierce, FL 34947 Tel 772.489.3034.

☀ Building Bridges to Youth, a locally owned nonprofit, pairs teenagers and senior citizens for its signature mentorship program. It also operates the Roots & Wings Food Bank for 75 families, offers a weekly computer training course for seniors and holds several other activities for its enrollees. 720 SE Church Street, Stuart, FL 34994. 772-781-8300 or email for more information buildingbri47135@comcast.net.

☀ SCORE is a valuable network of 13,000+ volunteers who offer small business entrepreneurs confidential business counseling services at no charge. SCORE also provides local workshops and events throughout the country to connect small business owners with the people and information they need to start, grow, and maintain their businesses, as well as on-line workshops available. 3220 S. US Hwy 1, Suite #2, Fort Pierce, FL 34982|p. (772) 489-0548. <http://treasurecoast.score.org/>

☀ Free Tax Return Preparation the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals in local communities. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations.

☀ Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties can help students get scholarships Together with our donors, we build and strengthen communities through the power of philanthropy. Since 1972, we've awarded more than \$94 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and over \$7.1 million in scholarships to nearly 1,600 students. (561) 659-6800 <http://www.yourcommunityfoundation.org>.



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DID I CHOOSE ADDICTION

BY JENA S.

It was the last time I was in treatment where I truly began to realize I suffered from a disease and not a moral deficiency. It was quite relieving, to say the least. This understanding really transpired during one specific gender group during my last days in rehab. The topic was mainly focused on having the “disease of the brain” and how addict’s brains are truly wired differently. It was profound. I remember walking out of the group with feelings of consolation and contentment; it was then that I truly started to believe I was destined to recover.

At that very moment is when I began my true journey of this new clean and sober life. Although, I know I am not responsible for my disease; I am 100% responsible for my recovery. How lucky am I that I suffer from a deadly malady in which I have a choice and an option to recover from? It is with hard work, dedication and following simple suggestions that will knock this sickness right out of me.

Before I became grateful for an opportunity to save and start a new way of life, I wallowed in the distress of thinking and truly believing I was nothing short of a low-life, inferior and downright imbecilic human being who chose to ruin my life. It is nice to know I was in the depths of my disease and my brain was immensely functioning in a way a non-addicts brain was not.

Since I was so vastly interested in how my addict brain works, I couldn’t stop reading and trying to understand the conduct of my mind. There are three ways in which addiction exerts itself and manifests in the brain:

1. Craving for the object of addiction
2. Loss of control over its use
3. Continuing involvement with it despite adverse consequences

Addiction Changes the Function of the Brain

First, it overturns the way it registers pleasure and then it totally corrupts other normal mentalities such as learning and motivation. Just like cardiovascular disease affects the heart and diabetes affects the pancreas- addiction affects the brain. The brain goes through a series of changes, which begins with recognizing pleasure and ending with an intense drive toward compulsive behavior. I don’t think many people pick up that first drink or drug intending to form a grotesque and deadly addiction, but nearly 1 in 10 (23 million) Americans are addicted to drugs. That’s CRAZY!

Dopamine

It really all comes down to the element of dopamine in the brain. All addictive drugs, from nicotine to heroin, release a heavy rush of dopamine in the brain causing extreme pleasure and a euphoric feeling not otherwise felt without the use of a drug. So, not only does it contribute to the experience of pure pleasure, it also plays a vast role in learning and memory. Those are two HUGE elements in the cross between liking something to becoming addicted to it. This also plays an extremely important role in sustaining life because it links certain activities to human survival with pleasure and reward. Meaning getting and using your drug, in an active addicts mind, is as important as eating and drinking.

Full-Blown Addict

Using a certain addictive drug to the point where you have become mentally and physically addicted causes the area of the brain involved in planning and executing tasks to communicate in a way that pairs liking something with wanting it, which in turn drives us to go after it. So basically, our addiction gets to the point where our brain forces us to believe we MUST take action in seeking and using our drug of choice in order to simply survive

So when we stole, lied and cheated our loved ones, the question is and will remain to some unwilling to believe the facts: was it us, or was it the disease? Today, I know that I am a good person who suffers from the disease of the brain. I do not have a lack of willpower or show signs of weakness. My disease is not a chemical flaw or a moral deficiency. I know that I have to work hard on a daily basis to stow away my addictive behaviors in order to live a clean, honest and healthy lifestyle, and just for today, that is what I plan to do.

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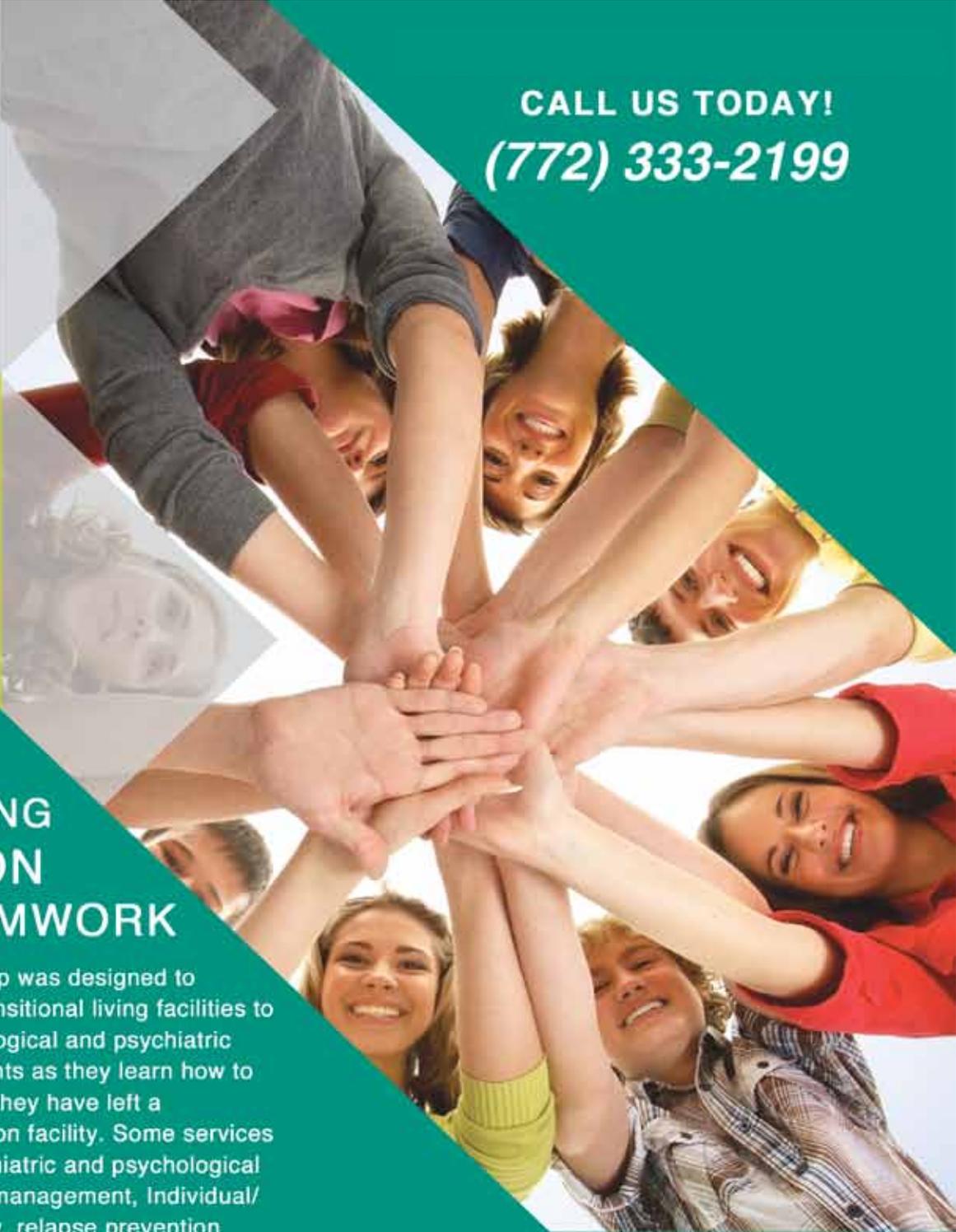
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