

Living My Life in Recovery - One Day at a Time

I finally surrendered my life to God, and the promises are coming true, one day at a time!

I came to the Res on April 13, 2007, and from the minute I walked in those doors, I knew my "Gig" was up. I knew that if I didn't ask for help, I might not be back. I would lose everything that meant so much to me: my girls, my husband, my parents, my in-laws and, most of all, my dignity and self-esteem (what I had left of it).

So while I was in Res XII, I began to let go of my fears, and my need to control everything in my life. I obviously couldn't control things, look where my attempts got me! I graduated from the Res, got a sponsor right away and went to a lot of meetings. I didn't like them at first, then got used to them and actually started looking forward to them! I made a lot of new friends and still carry their numbers in my wallet!

I joined the Alumnae group at the Res and it has really played an important part in my recovery. I look forward to seeing these women every 3rd Saturday, laughing and planning and just plain old having fun chatting together! I'm staying connected and accountable for things in my life now.

I have a wonderful job in downtown Seattle I got when I opened up in a meeting and was approached by a gentleman who told me he would love to have me work for him at his firm. I now show up for work every day, I'm accountable for the work I do and I don't live in fear of the unknown, fear of what I did (or didn't do) and worrying about things that I had said that offended people. I can hold my head up high and I have confidence now that I've never had before.

My joys in life now are my teen daughters and "staying connected" with them. They are truly wonderful girls and my husband and I feel so blessed. We just celebrated 20 years of marriage and I am grateful I had the opportunity to stay clean over the last 17 months and live in the moment with him each and every day. He truly is my "Best Friend".

My other joy in life is singing! I feel like this is total therapy for me. At church, I sing in the choir and perform solos. I've also performed at weddings. I look at singing in such a different way now— I feel so much more connected with my spiritual side when I sing. It's a gift I've been given and I truly appreciate it. My girls sing with me, and one plays violin and the other cello. The oldest will soon be off to music college.

All in all, I get to wake up every day now feeling excited to just feel good again. My life has gotten better and better in the past 17 months and I know as long as I humble myself to my disease each and every day, life can only get better!

I am so passionate about the Res and all the tools they have given me, but also for the compassion they showed me and the loving and caring environment they had waiting for me.

Recovery to me means living each day in the moment, and treasuring every person you have in your life!



Michelle Ummel,
Residence XII Alumna

Upcoming Events

Community Tours of Residence XII

Friday, November 21 and Friday, January 30 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. Additional tours available upon request. Learn about addiction treatment and the programs offered at Residence XII while touring our facility from a patient's perspective. RSVP to Pat Dye at (425) 823-8844.

Alumnae Thanksgiving Potluck

Friday, November 21, 2008 at 6:00 pm at Residence XII. Bring a salad or entrée and join us for an evening of food, friendship and recovery support!

2008 Candlelight Meeting

Friday, December 5, 2008 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the North Kirkland Community Center. For alumnae, their guests, sponsors and staff. A women's-only event.

Removing the Stigma of Recovery



Erika Voris,
Intensive Outpatient
Counselor

In the Merriam-Webster dictionary stigma is defined as “a mark of shame or discredit.” Stigma, and its closely related “cousins” stereotype and discrimination, impact all of us throughout our lives. Many of us have felt the sting of rejection and the fear of discovery or internal pain that facing social stigma and stereotypes

can create during our own life. The incredible women I have had the opportunity of encountering through my work as a counselor at Residence XII have told me of their own fear and pain associated with the stigma of addiction. For each of them this has impacted and touched them in different ways and addressing their own internal, as well as external stigma, is a part of the journey to recovery for them all.

The stereotypes our society perpetuates through the media do not mesh with the reality of the addict or alcoholic women I have worked with. The women who come to Residence XII represent all walks of life – teachers, nurses, soccer moms, students, environmental engineers, grandmothers, etc. Addiction has many faces, but with these are faces with common pain and symptoms. I believe that as a society we are moving forward in combating these stereotypes and becoming more educated to the reality of addiction.

Unfortunately, societal stereotypes and stigma are often internalized, creating shame for the addicted woman. As counselors, one of the most important things we can do is help women work on addressing this sense of shame. Shame can keep women from coming to treatment for the help they need to address this disease. A woman may feel as if she is alone in the behaviors associated with this disease, or that others will judge her for them. When shame is confronted in treatment, the behaviors of the disease seem more “normal” and a woman begins to accept that she has the disease of addiction. As counselors we try to teach women to separate their

addict (the disease) from their wise woman (their true self).

In addition to shame, stigma can create silence. Women fear rejection from their partners, family, employers, and friends if others know that they have the disease of addiction. This fear of disclosure can greatly impact the woman’s ability to build a strong sober support system and maintain her sobriety. When a woman is diagnosed with cancer or other illnesses, her friends, family and community typically rally around her with love and support. Women in recovery often fear that others would take away this support if they knew she was an addict or alcoholic. This fear can keep women silent. Time and again a woman I am working with will disclose to me that she is fearful about telling a person in her life that she is in treatment. She will spend time talking about this in group, getting herself ready to confront this issue. Later she will come back to the group and let us know that she has done it; she will tell me that the person didn’t react with derision, fear or disgust but with acceptance, support and pride.

Compounding this problem for many alcoholics and addicts is the fact that many have mental health issues they are addressing as well. Whether it is trauma, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, or other addictions, facing multiple issues can be overwhelming. Group therapy again normalizes the experiences of addiction and creates a support network of other women in recovery. It is empowering for a woman to see that she is part of a bigger community. This empowerment helps women cope and provides a strong foundation for recovery.

It isn’t only the women in recovery who address stigma and stereotypes, their families face these issues as well. They too can struggle with shame, isolation and fear. Family members are in need of education regarding the physiological disease of addiction and how it has affected their family system, and they need to learn that they too are on a journey of healing and forgiveness. For both women in recovery and their families, education about the disease of addiction and its symptoms helps them progress from feelings of weakness and shame to a belief in knowledge and the power of their wise woman. Strength comes from knowing that what was once perceived as being shameful has actually allowed women and their families to confront life’s challenges and become stronger.

Recovery...a Celebration of Life!

On Tuesday, September 23rd we hosted 600 guests at our 2nd Annual Benefit Luncheon at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. Beautiful rose flower decorations produced by Jan's Creative Design provided a very elegant atmosphere! Our emcee, Jean Enersen of KING 5 Television, kicked off our theme, "Recovery...a Celebration of Life" by asking those in the audience who were in recovery, or had a family member, friend, or co-worker in recovery, to stand. More than 80% of the audience rose to their feet to acknowledge the far reaching impact of the disease of alcohol and chemical addiction. It was an awe-inspiring moment and brought home the importance of the day's event which was to raise money to help create better access for women who need treatment, and begin to remove the stigma associated with this disease.

Red Jet Films produced a wonderful film which told the story of three inspiring alumnae who are now in recovery, enjoying healthy family relationships, and providing contributions to the community through their work and involvement. We wish to especially thank Roberta Romero, our client speaker, who painted a vivid picture of her life before and after treatment—she is truly an inspiring woman, mother, wife, and employee. We also want to thank our Planning Committee, Table Captains and volunteers who helped make the event such a success, as well as our generous sponsors including The Kirkland Rotary Foundation; The Boeing Company; Safeway Stores, Inc.; Massage Envy of Woodinville; Facelogic; Judith Ann Harding, Certified Public Accountant; KING 5 Television; and Evergreen Healthcare. Mary Piggott, Honorary Chair of the Event, announced an amazing Challenge Grant of \$25,000 from the Norcliffe Foundation to Residence XII.

On behalf of the women and families that we serve, we are very grateful to all those who attended and gave so generously in support of the work at Residence XII.



**Roberta Romero, speaker,
and Jean Enersen, emcee**



Residence XII Alumnae News

The Residence XII Alumnae Planning Committee has been hard at work organizing the fall retreat to be held on October 25th and 26th. We have had an awesome response from Alumnae and the 40 available spots were quickly filled. We are looking forward to learning more about spirituality and nutrition as well as sharing conversation and great food with one another. The Planning Committee hopes to put together another retreat next year in early spring. Stay tuned for further details!

Our second Potluck was held at the Res on September 19th. Over 40 women participated and it was great to spend time with the women in treatment. The potlucks get Alumnae involved with other Alumnae and help maintain a connection to the

Res. They also show the women in treatment that there is a way to stay in touch and bridge the gap after they leave the Res. The next potluck will be on November 21st at 6 pm at the Res. Come join us and bring an entrée or salad and get to know other Alumnae as we celebrate an early Thanksgiving. Questions? Contact Stacy Smalls at nubianmoon@comcast.net or call Pat Dye at the Res at (425) 823-8844.

A special thanks to those Alumnae who have come back to the Res for the in-house Sunday night meeting to share their stories with the women in treatment. If you would like to share your story or help with driving women to off-campus appointments, please contact Cat at cathryncrane@gmail.com.

Other News from Residence XII

Director's Corner—Fall 2008

It is a crisp, clear Fall day as I write this newsletter article. Just last week we had our very successful 2nd Annual Residence XII Luncheon. It was wonderful to see almost 600 friends and supporters gather to celebrate "Recovery...a Celebration of Life"! My thanks to all of you who were able to attend, celebrate the joy of recovery and raise funds to keep treatment affordable for the women and families entering Residence XII.

Often Fall signals a slow down in the hectic pace of Summer and a return to normal schedules for all of us. This Fall—is a bit different. For the first time since 9/11, I sense a generalized anxiety among many people I know. We are filled with uncertainty about the outcome of the elections and the media focus on all of the doom and gloom and economic turmoil.

So how does one remain balanced when all around them things seem negative? It is at times like this that I am most grateful to be grounded in the spirit of recovery! Those familiar slogans like "One Day at a Time" and "Keep It Simple" have helped me during cancer treatment and they will help us all survive the stresses of the next few months or possibly years. Of course the Serenity Prayer is at the root of it all:

*God,
Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change
The courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

How much more simple can it be? I cannot control what is happening in the larger economy, but I can change my part in small ways. I will continue to live my life wisely in terms of spending, and I will continue to support those individuals and

philanthropic causes that benefit those less fortunate than I am. As the stress continues, I believe we will likely see more chemically dependent women seeking treatment, some of whom may not have the resources to pay for it. Residence XII will remain a steady place of recovery and healing during these uncertain times. Your support last week at the luncheon and over the years makes this possible.

Take care and remember the wisdom in the words "This Too Shall Pass."

Sharon Chambers



**Sharon Chambers,
Executive Director**

Wanted: Leaders for our Residence XII Board

The Residence XII Board is seeking to expand its membership; we are looking for individuals who are passionate about our mission of helping chemically dependent women and their families. While we welcome all who can contribute to our mission, we are especially looking for individuals with finance and/or real estate development experience as we continue to move forward on our facility expansion. We are also looking for individuals with strategic planning experience for non-profit boards. If you are interested in learning more, please contact our Executive Director, Sharon Chambers at (425) 823-8844.

Preventing Relapse: A Study Examining the Role of Mindful Body Awareness

A major issue for women in chemical dependency treatment is the link between relapse and a history of interpersonal life stress. A remarkably high proportion of women entering chemical dependency treatment have experienced traumatic violence such as physical, sexual and verbal abuse, resulting in life stress. A recent study reported that 89% of women entering chemical dependency treatment had a history of such trauma. Additionally, authors Herman and Aposhyan suggest that chronic pain complaints may be the physical manifestation of trauma, resulting in a possible overlap of these health issues.

This Fall Residence XII will implement a new research project in its residential inpatient program: Mindful Awareness in Body-oriented Therapy for Women's Substance Abuse Treatment (MABT Study). The study is designed to test a new treatment that combines massage techniques and body awareness exercises with the development of mindfulness skills. The goals of this study are to help women in substance abuse treatment accept sensory and emotional experiences. This skill is thought to be important for relapse prevention given the connection between stress, negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, sadness and the resulting behavior and relapse. Additionally, we hope to learn if this type of treatment will work in community clinic inpatient and outpatient programs.

The MABT approach teaches awareness of the body for managing the effects of stress and is thought to help a woman increase her emotional regulation in stressful situations. Mindful awareness is used to increase skillful and healthful responses to situations that may be distressing or that may precipitate unhealthy behavior such as relapse. The MABT approach blends the connection of the mind (mental and emotional awareness) with the body (sensory and physical awareness) in an innovative approach to relapse prevention.

Recruitment for the study is scheduled to begin in October 2008. Eligible women will be residential inpatients, whose aftercare plan includes one of our outpatient programs (Intensive Outpatient or Relapse Prevention). The process of entering the study consists of a short eligibility survey and a commitment to complete assessments at the beginning, three, six and nine months after entering the study. The purpose of the eligibility survey is to ensure that the woman is a good fit for the study and the study is the

right choice for the woman. Women who are eligible and choose to enter the study will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: the treatment as usual (TAU) group, or the MABT group. The MABT group will be asked to commit to coming to Residence XII for 10 MABT sessions over 12 weeks, in addition to their regularly scheduled treatment program.

The MABT intervention will be provided by three Licensed Massage Practitioners (LMP). The LMPs have been licensed and practicing in Washington state for at least five years. Each LMP will be trained in the MABT approach by Cynthia Price, PhD, a researcher at the University of Washington's School of Nursing whose work includes developing this innovative intervention. By following the TAU group, the researchers will be able to compare the relapse rates of those who received usual care to those who received the MABT approach. Both groups will provide invaluable information that will advance our understanding of serving the chemical dependency recovery community with the most effective treatment programs, and the best tools for success. This study is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Previous research with the MABT intervention include a study with female veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic pain, and studies with women in recovery from childhood sexual abuse. These studies had positive outcomes in women with trauma histories. Additionally, both studies with women in recovery from childhood sexual abuse found favorable results including increased body awareness with decreased PTSD, dissociation, physical symptoms and overall psychological distress. Study results suggest that MABT positively affects a woman's sense of inner security, an important factor in healing from trauma. The new study starting at Residence XII in October of this year hopes to better understand the link between interpersonal life stress and relapse in women's addiction treatment.

If you have any questions about the MABT study at Residence XII, please contact Marissa Brooks, Research Coordinator at (425) 605-4310 or mbrooks@residencexii.org.

Holiday Waldorf Salad

Classic Waldorf salad may be on many a holiday menu, but this festive version will get raves for holidays to come. The addition of crunchy red and green bell peppers, as well as dried cherries to complement your ham, will set this dish apart. Serves six.

¾ cup sweet dried cherries
1 cup boiling water
2/3 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup sour cream
Juice of half a lemon
1 Tablespoon Splenda
4 Granny Smith apples cored and cut into ½ inch dice
3 medium celery stalks, ends trimmed, peeled
and cut into ¼-inch slices
½ medium-size red bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced
½ medium-size green bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced
Salt and pepper to taste
Radicchio and romaine lettuce leaves
½ cup of candied pecans

In a small bowl, soak the cherries in boiling water for ten minutes. Drain and cut into halves. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice and Splenda until they are well combined. Add the cherries, apples, celery and bell peppers, and using a rubber spatula, stir together to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill in the refrigerator for one hour. To serve, arrange the radicchio and romaine leaves decoratively on a large platter, spoon the salad into a mound in the middle, and sprinkle the pecans over the top.

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