



# WWEN Connection

Wisconsin Women's Education Network

on Addiction, Recovery & Prevention

Spring 2007



*"For happiness one needs security, but joy can spring like a flower even from the cliffs of despair."*

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

## Putting a Face to Recovery . . .

Hello, my name is Lydia Del Valle. Today I am proud to say that I am clean and sober. Two years ago, with a strong addiction to alcohol and crack cocaine, I went to *United Community Center/Centro de la Comunidad Unidas* (UCC) looking for help. Here's my story.

Throughout the 17+ years that my husband and I have been together, we've had a long history of abusing alcohol. Although we loved and took care of each other, we could not help one another because we were both really sick into our addictions. During those years, we had our children taken away from us and placed in foster care. We had to fight to get them back. When my husband went to jail, I was suddenly left alone to care for our eight children. I was terrified. My drinking increased quickly and I was introduced to crack cocaine. I was soon spending more time outside of the home in search of my next high. I felt like I was running downhill with no way to stop myself and no one to help me. I knew I needed and wanted help.

Upon entering UCC's *Latinas Unidas* (LU) Women's Residential Treatment Program with my three youngest children, I was assigned a care coordinator. The staff helped get my older kids placed and settled. Once in treatment, I was surrounded by people who wanted me to succeed. My AODA counselor and mental health therapist made sure I stayed on track and was open and honest about my behaviors, thoughts and feelings. My care coordinator often brought my kids for visitation and took me to jail to visit my husband. I kept in contact with my husband so he knew we were all doing okay. Getting and staying clean and sober was very difficult, but I had a lot of support.

While I was still in UCC residential treatment but on the verge of getting out, my husband was released from jail. Not long after his release, he ran off with money I had saved and spent it on a binge. I was scared. How was I to stay clean and sober if he wasn't? My care coordinator, my counselor and I met with my husband to discuss the situation. He was very ashamed and admitted to needing help. As I continued growing stronger and stronger on my program, my husband began attending the UCC AODA Outpatient Treatment Program. If we were going to make it together, we both needed to be clean, sober and healthy.

In 2004, after five months, I graduated from UCC Women's Residential Treatment Program and began attending the AODA Outpatient Treatment Program. Today, both my husband and I continue with the AODA services at UCC. We need to learn how to work together as partners and healthy parents—our children need to heal and learn how to trust us again.

UCC's LU program saved my life, my relationship and my family. The UCC staff taught me how to live sober and how to face life without the need for drugs and alcohol. Today my husband and I remain clean and sober. We have our self-respect and the respect of our children back.

We continue to keep in touch with UCC staff knowing we can turn to them whenever we need help and guidance. UCC has helped my husband and I become role models for our children. In the next few months we will be buying our own home. It thrills us to see how far we have come.



Lydia Del Valle

### WWEN Staff

#### Flo Hilliard

Project Manager  
WWEN Project  
608•265•2679  
fhilliar@facstaff.wisc.edu

#### Chris Dunleavy

Program Assistant  
WWEN Project  
608•265•4267  
cdunleavy@dcs.wisc.edu

January 9, 2007  
**News Summary**

## More Going Public with Recovery Stories

More addicted individuals are taking part in Recovery Walks and other public events designed to put a face on the disease and advocate for policy changes, the [North County Times](#) reported January 7, 2007.

"We've got to get the message out there," said Dorian Grey Parker, a recovering addict from Hartford, Conn., who last fall took part in a recovery march that drew 2,500 participants. "I show up for the newcomers, who are finding hope in seeing people with multiple years of recovery, and I come out for the clueless. There is such a moral stigma attached to this disease. It all comes from not understanding, but we can change that."

Activists say that the strategy is based on past efforts that raised public awareness on issues like breast cancer and AIDS. Observers see the movement springing from grassroots self-help groups. "I still don't think the general public believes that an addict or alcoholic ever gets well," said Phillip Valentine, executive director of Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery, which organized its first Recovery Walk six years ago. "Many, many people have long-term, sustained sobriety and you may not know about it. We need to put a face on recovery so people won't be so afraid or fearful or angry at it. It's not a hopeless condition."

One obstacle facing organizers is that nobody is quite sure how many recovering addicts there are in the U.S., although estimates range into the millions. The Center for the Study of Addictions and Recovery at the National Development and Research Institutes in New York is planning a national survey.

Another complicating issue: how to define recovery. "Recovery is not only someone who is no longer using alcohol or drugs, it's someone who's got on with life so they are once again part of the community," said Pat Taylor, executive director of Faces & Voices of Recovery. "It's not just that you're sober, but that you've gotten your life on track."

Former reporter William Cope Moyers, the son of journalist Bill Moyers and now vice president of external affairs at the Hazelden Foundation, has been one of the most public faces of the recovery movement. "My first public speech was to a Rotary club in St. Paul and I got up thinking I'd speak from an authority's position as an employee of Hazelden," said Moyers.

"I rattled off all these statistics and began to notice people dozing off. It was a tough crowd. So I chucked my speech and told them, 'I want to talk about this disease I have.' Everybody sort of sat up. That's when I learned the real power in the authenticity of experiences of people like me. Nobody can impeach my credibility when it comes to being a recovering drug addict. I made it despite myself. For that I am grateful and I want to give back."

*The above is an excerpt—to view the complete article please visit:*

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2007/more-going-public-with.html>





# United Community Center Centro de la Comunidad Unida

by Mara Bach, Admissions Supervisor



**U**nited Community Center/Centro de la Comunidad Unidas (UCC) provides services to Hispanics/Latinos and near Southside residents of all ages. The Human Services Department offers outpatient, day treatment and aftercare, and the *Latinas Unidas* (LU) offers in-patient residential treatment program. The target group served is Milwaukee County residents who are experiencing alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) and mental health problems in their lives.

Developed as a Hispanic/Latino community service organization, UCC's specialty and strength is serving the Hispanic/Latino population; however, other ethnic groups are served as well. The program offers integrated substance abuse, mental health, and physical health services, congruent with the Latino's worldview in which physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the individual cannot be separated.

The LU's AODA In-patient Residential Treatment Program is a 16-bed, 24-hour licensed community-based residential facility that serves predominantly adult females of Latino heritage with alcohol and other drug-dependency problems. Residents may also present with co-occurring disorders such as substance abuse and depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

LU is the first and only residential treatment program in Wisconsin specifically designed for Latinas and their families. The LU Women's Residential Treatment Program began in 2001, expanding in 2002 to a 16-bed facility. Since the expansion, the possibility of women entering the program with their children became a reality. In the past four years, the program has had 25 babies delivered, all born drug free to mothers residing in the LU program.

The program's overall objective is to restore sobriety and self-sufficiency skills to enable this target group of Latina women to become and remain alcohol or drug free and to become productive and stable members of their community and their families. The average length of stay is approximately 120 days per client. The program provides comprehensive services supplemented by "wraparound" care coordination.

Latino cultural values and principles, including language-specific needs (i.e., Spanish and/or English), help strengthen the residents' efforts in achieving and maintaining sobriety. The LU personnel include bilingual and bicultural Hispanic/Latino staff, both professional and paraprofessional. A culturally-sensitive treatment perspective emphasizes the need for practitioners to be familiar with and knowledgeable about the diversity across and within the Latino population, as well as other ethnic populations served by the program.

Children, family members, and significant others are also provided with counseling and support services while the woman goes through her treatment program. On some occasions, women are allowed to bring their infants or small children with them into the residential treatment facility. Children residing in the facility or those living elsewhere whose mothers are residing at LU are also offered extensive support services for the well-being of the family. The children are given a forum to express themselves in a safe, positive, non-threatening environment, working with UCC professionals where trusting relationships have already been established.

### UCC Mission Statement

United Community Center/Centro de la Comunidad Unida will provide services to Hispanics/Latinos and near south side residents of all ages in the areas of education, cultural arts, recreation, community development, and health and human services. UCC will assist individuals to achieve their potential by focusing on cultural heritage as a means of strengthening personal development and will promote high academic standards in all of its educational programs.

**Focus on Treatment**



United Community Center  
Centro de la Comunidad Unida

1028 S. 9th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204  
414•384•3100  
<http://www.unitedcc.org>

## Upcoming Event: Premiere on HBO

# Addiction

PREMIERES THURSDAY, MARCH 15, AT 9PM

### WHY CAN'T THEY JUST STOP?

This spring, in an unprecedented, multi-platform campaign, HBO brings together many of the leading experts to explore the latest breakthroughs in the research and treatment of drug and alcohol addiction.

Exploding the myths of addiction as a moral deficiency or lack of will, *Addiction* examines scientists' recognition of the problem as a serious, but treatable, brain disease. Beginning with a 90-minute centerpiece documentary created by one of the most acclaimed teams of documentarians ever assembled, the program also includes thirteen additional episodes, a companion book and a rich-media web site featuring extensive video segments, expert content and resources for individuals and families looking for help. Complemented by a national outreach program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Addiction* is a program that no family can afford to miss.

The "*Addiction*" project officially launches with the centerpiece documentary airing on March 15. HBO will use all of its tools to support the project including multiplex channels, HBO On Demand, podcasts and web streams. A four-DVD version of the documentaries will be sold for a minimal price at retail outlets and online. Visit: <http://www.hbo.com/addiction/index.html>  
All 14 films in the series will initially be aired through March 30.

"HBO is utilizing all of its platforms to develop programming directly targeted to the various needs of the American public on this complex public-health issue. Our resources are committed to illuminating, demystifying and defining addiction -- a problem that is riddled with misconceptions." said Chris Albrecht, HBO's chairman and CEO.

Join Together's director of online communications, Eric Helmuth said "The producers of the series really expended a tremendous amount of energy, time and money learning about this issue and talking to medical experts and families dealing with addiction."

For the complete Join Together article about the HBO special, visit:

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/features/2007/new-hbo-addiction-series.html>

Wisconsin Women's Education Network  
on Addiction, Recovery & Prevention

Professional Development and Applied Studies  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
610 Langdon Street, Room 516, Madison, WI 53703  
608•265•4267