

Kentucky native and 20/20 news anchor Diane Sawyer displayed problems with adult drug abuse throughout Kentucky. What the show that aired Feb. 13, "Hidden America: Children of the Mountains" did not show are the solutions many throughout the Bluegrass are providing.

One such solution began with eight men in 2006 at the Pike County Detention Center. The center started WestCare, a six-month substance abuse pilot program for men, with a total of 24 beds. Last year, the facility expanded male services to 36 beds and added 11 females to the program.

Program supervisor and councilor Rodney Bentley said the program is voluntary with a very agenda.

"Monday through Friday, they (volunteer inmates) have a certain time to be up," Bentley said. "The program offers a chance to obtain their GED; there are church services and counseling"

He said the program runs closely to the 12-step program's guiding principles outlining a course of action for recovery from addiction, compulsion, or other behavioral problems, originally proposed by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) as a method of recovery from alcoholism.

The in-house drug treatment program separates the volunteer inmates from the rest of the prison population as Bentley says to "keep them separated from that mentality."

"To graduate you have to complete five different workbooks and recovery dynamics broken down to understand what the 12 steps are all about," stated Bentley. "The person learns to become accountable for his or her actions and take responsibility for them"

Bentley said WestCare partners with the University of Kentucky hospital to follow-up with paroled inmates to see how well they are doing.

"We give them every phone number and every resource when they are released," he said. "It always comes back to choices. We offer structure, job opportunities with meetings to help the person stay off drugs"

WestCare is also working towards opening a "family-friendly" women's drug rehabilitation treatment center. William J. Baird III, Co-chairman of the WestCare Kentucky Board of Directors presented a \$92,000 check to Pike County Board of Education Superintendent Roger Wagner in July of 2008. The money was granted to the program by the Pike County Fiscal Court, through single county coal severance taxes. The funds were used to purchase the former Lookout Elementary School from the board of education. WestCare is in the process of transforming the site to house women and children.

While there have been reports the center will open in 2010, area director Erdil Looney told the Daily News there is no timeline and the reported number of 45 beds isn't set in stone.

"We hope to have a minimum of 45 beds," he said. "Our goal is to keep the family together as much as possible."

Looney said the center is working closely with other social services such as adult education, job training and day care. He said classes will be offered to further the women's education as well.