



May 2011

The Village – Virgin Islands, Sion Hill, Featured in SAMHSA Video

By Kim Nosek – *Director of Treatment Services*

The Village Virgin Islands Partners in Recovery/ WestCare was selected to be featured in a video series being produced by SAMHSA's Center for Co-occurring and Homelessness Branch. The Virgin Island's MISAH program has been funded by this center under CSAT's Treatment for Homeless funding stream for over four years. A film crew from Cyclogram spent three days filming our amazing facility, interviewing staff, clients, and community members. The video series will feature the unique cultural aspects of providing services for homeless mentally ill substance abusers in the Virgin Islands. The film crew was especially interested in the human interest aspect of our staff and their lives here.

Gary Kaller, one of our counselors and local documentary film maker, worked as a member of the film crew. Shoots included "mock" client community

meeting and case conference, a guided tour of the plantation ruins led by Kendall Tutein, Regional Vice President, scenes of Jose Rivera, Maintenance

Supervisor, fishing off the Frederiksted pier, a gardening demonstration by our client Garden Crew Department Head, scuba diving off Rainbow Beach with Daniel Kurty- Positive Changes Assistant Coordinator, and an interview with Campell Carter, Mental Health Specialist, about helping our Rastafarian clients address their spiritual dilemma of marijuana abstinence. In addition, Ynette Tyson, Milieu Supervisor discussed parenting and treatment from Caribbean perspective, there was lots of interest in our resident peacock, MISAH, and much more. We might even get a glimpse of Marsha Taylor, Lead Counselor, singing karaoke. On a serious note, the video will also focus on the tragedy of substance abuse, mental illness and homelessness in "paradise."

The highlight of the shoot was a Crucian Culture Recovery Celebration held at the Sion Hill facility under tents. This fest was a real Crucian Jump Up and attendees included five Virgin Island senators who danced the night away. The fest included music by a local Quelbe band, a "nancy story" of "The Dancing Granny" performed by Xawntoia Franklin, Youth on Track Coordinator, with the assistance of Senator Terrance "Positive" Nelson, dancing performances by some of the youth in our prevention programs, and lots of local food.

This film shoot was a remarkable experience for all of us here at the Virgin Islands/WestCare. It reminded all of us of how special and unique our culture really is. The footage is in the process of being edited and the final product will be on the CHAB website (<http://chab.samhsa.gov/>) soon.



Misah, Sion Hill's resident mascot

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The Family that Plays Together . . . Stays Together

Submitted by Renee Alexander
– Area Director

WestCare Kentucky received a \$2,000 grant from Kentucky Appalachian Ministries in Berea, Kentucky to organize a number of activities and events for area families. The Estill County Community Involvement Center held three special family events during the Month of March;

- March 13, was a pizza party with a 16 ft. bouncy slide and house.
- March 25, YMCA in Richmond, KY was rented with swimming, basketball, racquetball, volleyball and dinner (Watched UK win NCAA Game--GO BIG BLUE).

- March 28, partnered with the Estill County Board of Education's (GEM) Girl Empowerment and Mentoring Program which is designed to expose young girls to activities that will assist them in gaining insight about themselves and the world around them. The first GEM group event was "You're A Jewel". . . Jewelry Making Night and Spaghetti Dinner.

Over 175 individuals attended all three events to participate in Great Food, Great Fun and Great Fellowship!



Swimming was a big hit at the YMCA

Mentors in the GEM Program making jewelry

Kentucky



Community Council Member Sandra Davis and her granddaughter enjoy Family Fun Night.



Michelle and children sliding. Everyone loves to slide.

Flower of the Month: Lily of the Valley



Fragrant!

Clusters of dainty, white bells on 8-10" stems grace the garden in mid to late spring, and they make wonderful corsages. Thrives in the shade, where it spreads rapidly to create dense clumps of emerald foliage for an elegant summer ground cover. Space 6-12" apart. *Convallaria majalis*.

A Poem for the month of May . . .

"'Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume:
There's crimson buds, and white and blue,
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers."

– Thomas Hood



WestCare Employees Attend IAODAPCA Spring Conference

By Charlene Hamann – *Recreation Therapist and*
Paul Weitz – *Clinical Supervisor*

Illinois

During the week of March 28th through April 1st, WestCare employees were given the opportunity to attend the annual IAODAPCA spring conference at the Westin Hotel in Itasca, Illinois. IAODAPCA (Illinois Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association, Inc.) is the state certification board for substance abuse counselors. Both WestCare Sheridan and Cook County employees took turns attending the week-long event.

The conference is an annual event that gives area substance abuse and drug treatment counselors the opportunity to attend sessions that will help improve employees' awareness and education in areas such as working with angry and aggressive clients, delivering effective parenting programs, gambling problems and the family, and behavioral health issues. The conference also gave the opportunity for people to network with others in different facilities and also to discuss new interventions and alternative ways to deliver treatment in various settings. Other highlights of the conference included a social breakfast and lunch each day, chair massages and many vendor booths displaying a wealth of information to all conference attendees.



▲ Sheridan employees Jim Carr, Carolyn Dickerson and Paul Weitz at the WestCare booth.



◀ Paul Weitz and fellow Sheridan employee Stan Brooks

Our Alumni Doing Great Things!

WestCare Alumni Corner News

Alumni Spring Fling Event in Nevada

By Darlene Steele – *WestCare Nevada Staff and Alum*

On Saturday April 16th, 14 of our WestCare alumni team came up to H.S.R to give back to where we came from. The alumni team consists of clients that have graduated from WestCare in the last 12 years. What we do is organize 3 different events every year, the first one being the Spring Fling; The event in the fall will be the Beast Feast; And the last one is called Music On The Mountain in the Winter for Christmas. The Alumni team also has a fireworks booth in July where we sell fireworks to the community as a fundraiser so that we can bring these events onto the camp. We always make sure that no one goes without. H.S.R is always first on Saturdays and then we always go to the Rancho Campus so the Women and Children can have their fun also.

So as a team we challenge anyone who wants to join to COME GET SOME OF WHAT WE GOT!



Brothers in recovery!



WestCare Nevada alums reunite at Harris Spring Ranch (HSR)



Sisters in sobriety!



New Programs Enhance Adolescent Services

By Andres Savransky – Program Coordinator

The Village South in Miami is proud to announce the implementation of two new prevention and outreach programs – Reach Out Miami and Project STYLE – that will enhance its continuum of care and provide much needed services for the adolescent and young adult population.

Reach Out Miami (ROM), funded by the Administration for Children and Families is a street outreach program that targets homeless and run-away youth between the ages of 12 and 17. ROM staff conducts outreach in selected Miami-Dade County areas to find and engage the runaway/homeless youth population. Some of the services provided include survival kits, referral and linkage, placement in shelters or residential treatment, HIV counseling/testing/referral, risk reduction counseling, and family reunification. Project STYLE (Strengthening Transitional Youth's Life Experiences),

funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, targets young adults ages 18 to 24 who are at risk for substance abuse and/or HIV. The program will include outreach in the community, free HIV testing, and targeted prevention interventions.

During the implantation phase, both programs have been busy building partnerships, establishing referral networks, and reaching out to other community organizations to ensure that all program goals are achieved. ROM staff has conducted outreach in several Miami-Dade County locations and has been working collaboratively with local shelters and other service providers. Project STYLE staff has also conducted outreach and is in the process of building partnerships. In March, both programs also joined efforts to conduct outreach at the Ultra Music Festival in Miami.

Florida Village South



Andres Savransky, Yasmin Castillo and Cyrus O'Brien at the 2011 AIDS Walk on Miami Beach.

Children's Center is Now a Quality Counts Daycare

By Dr. Anslie Stark-Bloom – Program Director

The Village South Children's Center is now a Quality Counts DCF Licensed Daycare. It is a great honor to be accepted into this "Children's Trust" program as only 15 daycares were accepted from the North Miami-Dade County area.

Quality Counts reviews early learning programs according to clearly defined, high-quality standards related to teacher qualifications, learning environment, curriculum, teacher/child ratios, family engagement and program administration. It uses a 5 Star method of evaluation and provides supports to help programs reach goals of high quality. Participating programs benefit from a mix of support services tailored to needs, including technical assistance, grants, scholarships and wage stipends. Quality Counts is proving that balancing higher standards with professional incentives helps to steadily raise the quality of services for young children and families.

Participating programs follow a multi-step process. First, they conduct a thorough review of their own setting, measuring themselves in terms of 5 Star standards and thereby establishing a "baseline" rating (no stars are awarded, as this baseline is the starting point for quality improvement). After this Self-Study, a formal assessment is completed by highly trained assessors.

Reports provided by the assessment team help the programs develop their own Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). Technical assistance specialists are made available to help develop and implement these plans. Other benefits include educational scholarships for teachers, and grants for materials and equipment. The first formal Star rating is completed after one year or more of efforts toward implementing the QIP. Star ratings are renewed annually thereafter.

Congratulations to our Village South Daycare!



One of the many children in our Daycare enjoying the playground.



“Legends Over the Colorado”

By Tracy Stevens – Area Director

In April 9th & 10th, WestCare Arizona participated in the 2nd Annual “Legends Over the Colorado – Vintage Military Fly-In” event at the Laughlin-Bullhead International Airport. The event attracted individuals and families from across the tri-state region as well as New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.

Although wind and rain prevented the highlight of the event and the only refurbished and airworthy B-29 Super-fortress, FiFi, from flying in on Saturday, she showed up on Sunday to a crowd of over 2,000 people. Other vintage aircraft on display and participating in fly-bys included the oldest and only flying B-24A Liberator in existence, a TBM Avenger, a Spitfire, a T-6 Texan, a Beech 18 and other vintage aircraft. Additionally, for a small price, one could get ½ hour ride in one of the vintage aircraft.

There was a hospitality tent, a Veteran’s Tribute booth where Veterans could make a DVD recounting their military service, photo opportunities with the Pin-up Patriettes, an exhibit from the local American Heroes Museum, Military Recruiters and a half dozen merchandise and food vendors. WestCare had a table at the event displaying information about the local services we provide, in addition to information about the Veteran’s services and programs WestCare provides across the United States including Minnesota’s VicTriVillage project.

Staff who worked the event enjoyed talking to the many visitors and locals who attended. Meeting so many Veterans from World War Two, Vietnam and the Korean War was an incredible experience. We got to see history walk right before us and the stories were wonderful. There were well over 500 people who visited our table and walked away with information about WestCare and some type of memento with our name and phone number on it. We even had a lady visit our table who is currently working as an intern at the WestCare California Men’s Residential facility in Fresno (It really is a small world).



▲ A trio of WWII aircraft soar in formation.

B-29 fortress FiFi comes in for a landing ▶



▲ ‘Fifi’ draws a crowd at Colorado River Air Show

Arizona



▲ Area Director Tracy Stevens and Program Coordinator Luann Gardner staff the WestCare booth.



Georgia



The Cares Team Welcomes Their New Member

By Miltina Fraser – Outreach Specialist

It is a pleasure to welcome Cinnethea Springer to our Team. Cinnethea volunteered with us for the past two years. She displayed a passion for our target population and was always a pleasure to work with. Cinnethea went above and beyond the call of duty and was always dependable. When an opportunity came for a new team member she was on top of the list.

Cinnethea has her Masters in Psychology and over 5 years of experience working with hard to manage at risk youth with a host of disabilities. Cinnethea’s

experience, education and wonderful personality have made her a perfect fit for our team.

The Cares Team is extremely excited to have such a versatile new team member. Cinnethea is not just a Cares Team asset, but her skills make her a benefit to the West Care Family as a whole. Welcome Aboard, Cinnethea!



Community Council Member Hosts Luncheon!

Submitted by Sharon Steinberg –

Foundation

Marilyn Moran, Community Council member in Nevada, has been supporting WestCare with her parents Jean Tobman* and the late Herb Tobman since the early days of WestCare's inception. Marilyn's husband John Moran* and his mother Goldie and his father former Clark County Sheriff John Moran, were also instrumental in building the foundation of WestCare. Here is the perfect example of how vital community resources are to the survival of a non-profit like WestCare. The hundreds of thousands of clients that WestCare has served in treatment programs, homeless shelters, triage units, clinical offices, and other facilities, could not have happened without the political, financial and advisory input from active community volunteers in the beginning days of our WestCare family.

Marilyn Moran hosted a beautiful luncheon for some of WestCare's original Lady Volunteers at the Las Vegas Country Club. There were flower arrangements at each seat that the attending ladies could have as keepsakes. I presented each lady with a "Friend of WestCare" gold pin for a thank you gift and we presented the Emblem Club with some WestCare archive photos displayed in a photo album. Our Ladies were originally members of the Las Vegas Emblem Club and eventually became known as the WestCare Angels. Jean Tobman's friend Mary Ann Hoban* recruited her dear friend Donna Stauff* to help with fund-raising and events in the early years. The group grew over the years and WestCare was blessed with a family of support that has endured for almost forty years.

I was blessed to have Mary Ann Hoban* and Donna Stauff* help at a Golf tournament at South Shore Golf Club at Lake Las Vegas last October. Coming from Kentucky, I knew that our WestCare community support was essential to our excellent programs in Eastern Kentucky. It bolstered my confidence as a new resident of Nevada to have the Las Vegas dream team of community support offering their assistance with our events that WestCare's Celebrity Advisory Council will be hosting.

Our Ladies in attendance to the luncheon were Marilyn Moran,* Jean Tobman,* Mary Ann Hoban,* Donna Stauff,* Mary Ann Riveira,* Sheila Arnos, Dianna Pacillo, Helen McLaughlin Rodriquez and Beverly Wyas. Attending from WestCare were Darlene Terrill, Judi Kosterman, myself, and CEO/President Richard Steinberg. Richard came by to thank the ladies for years of dedication and he shared some wonderful stories.

I look forward to the future of WestCare with our loyal support. Please contact me in Nevada, or any of our WestCare areas if you are interested in getting involved! Check out our web page at www.westcare.com to see what events we are planning. You are welcome and encouraged to be part of our team.

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* indicates current or previous
Community Council or Board
member.



No Boundaries for WestCare Staffers

Submitted by Express staff

California



Representatives from WestCare California programs combined their participation in a state professional conference with a visit to their counterparts in neighboring Nevada.

In between sessions at the California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators conference in Primm, Nevada, staffers from Fresno took time to visit WestCare Foundation headquarters in nearby Las Vegas. They also took a side trip to the iconic Harris Springs Ranch on Mt. Charleston, where WestCare Nevada has long operated a highly-successful treatment program.

Said California's Gary Knepper: "The Nevada folks made us feel very comfortable. And all the clients we interacted with had praise for the staff."

For hundreds of WestCare clients over the years, the path to sobriety began at Harris Springs Ranch. ▼



▲ 'Graveyard of the Past,' an old Therapeutic Community tradition

▲ WestCare California employees Val Sumner, Margaret Soza, Brenda DeLaCruz and Gary Knepper visit the home office in Las Vegas



Big Honor for Youth Counselor

By Maureen Kempa – *Children and Family Services Director*

On April 8, the Department of Juvenile Justice held a luncheon as part of Youth Success Week. There were booths from partnering agencies, a pot luck lunch and an awards ceremony honoring youth and staff who have made a significant difference. Kaley Casper was recognized for her exemplary efforts in providing mental health services to youth who are DJJ involved or those who are detained at the Monroe Regional Juvenile Detention Center. This is a significant accomplishment given that Kaley has been working for the Guidance/Care Center, Inc. for less than a year. In her position as a mental health counselor, Kaley provides TASC outreach services to those who are involved in the criminal justice system and are at risk or currently using substances. She spends countless hours speaking with youth who are having difficulty adjusting to being detained and conducting assessments to provide recommendations regarding treatment.

Often, youth are admitted under duress and she is able to calm them and help them explore the options they do have. She works closely with the detention staff, teacher, nurse, psychiatrist and probation staff in order to ensure that youths' needs are met and that nothing gets lost in the shuffle. She also spends her time doing comprehensive evaluations to determine placement when young people are committed to the department. Recently, she has become a member of the DJJ Re-entry Board which helps youth transition from a commitment program back to the community. Her enthusiasm and dedication are an inspiration. Great job, Kaley!

FLORIDA Guidance/Care Center



RaiEtte Avel-Chief Probation Officer/GCC Community Council member, Kaley Casper, Lawanna Tynes-MRJDC Superintendent.



Historic Graduation in the Equality State

By Richard Jimenez, M.A. – VP Wyoming Operations

WestCare Wyoming operates two Intensive Treatment Units located at Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution in Torrington. Both programs, "House of Determination" and "House of Healing," are Therapeutic Communities which provide treatment activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The programs consist of 72 beds each totaling 144 beds in all. Each program incorporates structured, social learning activities which are located in the same area in the prison and are segregated from the general population.

We are pleased to announce 12 WestCare "House of Determination" residents recently celebrated their completion of the residential treatment, therapeutic

community program. WestCare Vice President, Richard Jimenez, served as MC and welcomed the residents' families to the program's first graduation.

Warden Michael Murphy along with Wyoming Department of Corrections, Director, Robert Lambert, and Dan Shannon were in attendance. Warden Murphy, Director Robert Lambert and Prison Division Administrator Shannon, have been very supportive and generous with their time and efforts in helping WestCare establish the new program, which opened in July of 2010. At the ceremony, Warden Murphy congratulated the graduates while encouraging them to become fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers to their families.

Tony Young, Deputy Chief of Staff for Wyoming Governor, Matthew Mead, was the keynote speaker and read an inspirational poem to the graduates. It was a proud moment as these gentlemen were the first graduates of the men's ITU/TC WestCare program in Wyoming. The WMCI Education Department provided the cap and gowns for the graduates.



Wyoming



Mother's Day is May 8, 2011

Holiday Establishment

In its present form, Mother's Day was established by Anna Marie Jarvis, following the death of her mother Ann Jarvis on May 9, 1905, with the help of Philadelphia merchant John Wanamaker. A small service was held on May 12, 1907 in the Andrew's Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, West Virginia

where Anna's mother had been teaching Sunday school. But the first "official" service was on May 10, 1908 in the same church, accompanied by a larger ceremony in the Wanamaker Auditorium in the Wanamaker's store on Philadelphia. She then campaigned to establish Mother's Day first as a U.S. national holiday and then later as an international holiday.

Carnations

Carnations have come to represent Mother's Day, since Anna Jarvis delivered 500 of them at its first celebration in 1908. Many religious services held later copied the custom of giving away carnations. This also started the custom of wearing a carnation on Mother's Day. The founder, Anna Jarvis, chose the carnation because it was the favorite flower of her mother. In part due to the shortage of white carnations, and in part due to the efforts to expand the sales of more types of flowers in Mother's Day, the florists

promoted wearing a red carnation if your mother was living, or a white one if she was dead; this was tirelessly promoted until it made its way into the popular observations at churches.



“Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” Unites an Entire State

By Mike Weisser – *Minnesota Community Action Council*

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon was pioneered in Minnesota, beginning in 2004. It is a comprehensive program to create awareness for the purpose of connecting Service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources. It also delivers a series of formal Yellow Ribbon Training events to Service members and their families before, during, and after deployment. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon training is open to all branches of the military.

Since 9/11, thousands of Minnesotans have deployed in the service of our country. By developing a state-wide Yellow Ribbon Network, communities are uniting to honor and embrace those affected by military deployments. This outward showing of support helps to enable successful transitions . . . all the way home.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is united to bring Service members all the way home

Ask a Service member what he or she needs while on deployment and he or she will tell you, “Take care of my family.” Since there are no active military bases in Minnesota, we are creating, “Fort Minnesota.” Across Minnesota, communities are applying to become official Beyond the Yellow Ribbon cities. The goal is to create a comprehensive network that connects and coordinates agencies, organizations, resources and employers for the purpose of proactively supporting Service members and military families.

In partnership with a Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee, each community is asked to develop a sustainable Action Plan demonstrating their commitment to Service members and military families. The community identifies and connects leaders in key areas, leverages existing support activities, builds awareness throughout the community and takes actions which in turn build a stronger, more compassionate community. Sauk Centre, MN has applied to become an official Beyond the Yellow Ribbon city.

The National Guard infantry unit in Sauk Centre is an important part of our community. Guardsmen assigned here are our neighbors, employers, employees, and friends. When soldiers are de-

ployed we support them from Sauk Centre, as we should. But we also want to support their families back home while they are overseas. The soldiers’ spouses and children are left behind to mow the lawn, shovel the snow, fix the car, pay the bills, and care for kids all by themselves, etc. Even though their life is not in danger, many times the person left behind much harder time than the soldier that is deployed. This person has to do everything, even though they may have no experience with some of these functions.

That is when the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program comes into play in a town like Sauk Centre. The community will develop a plan to commit support to the serviceman and his family. WestCare Minnesota’s VictriVillage will be a part of that plan, by fully committing to supporting the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon initiatives. VictriVillage will be good fit by way of helping families before, during, and after deployment.

WestCare MN representatives, Jean McDonald of Sauk Centre, and I are liaisons between VictriVillage and the Sauk Centre Beyond the Yellow Ribbon initiative. As a local business woman and 30-year military veteran, Jean is well suited to help us support the efforts. She is a member of the Sauk Centre steering committee. I am a member of the WestCare Minnesota Community Action Council and will work with Jean to support the Yellow Ribbon organization. As stated earlier, the goal is to help our military families prepare for deployment, as well as supporting them while the soldier is deployed. Veterans residing at VictriVillage, as well as the facility itself will be available for that support. VictriVillage has offered permanent office space to Beyond the Yellow Ribbon in the administration building.

I urge Community Action Councils across the country that support veterans projects to look for other organizations in their state that could be partnered with to provide additional military family support. You can offer support, from auto repair, to



Minnesota

plumbing, electrical, and construction repair work. Individual citizens can offer to mow lawns, baby sit so the spouse left at home can have a break, shovel snow, or help with minor repair work around the house. Everyone can get involved. Let’s show our Service members that we really care!



2nd Annual UNLV Combat Trauma Conference

"She's back, but she's not the same!"

Focusing on Returning Women Warrior and Veteran Issues

May 25-26, 2011

Co-Sponsored by WestCare Foundation, Inc.

2010 marked the first opportunity to bring experts, professionals and returning warriors together for a time to focus on combat trauma, sponsored by the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. This first conference clearly raised consciousness, raised issues and raised commitment among many to maintain the focus and to raise voice to this subject that continues to be heard across the country. This second annual conference will spotlight the issues facing America's returning women veterans and their unique issues related to combat trauma.



America's returning OIF-OEF women warriors represents many new impacts of deployment and combat with which America must deal. The numbers begin to tell the tale:

- 15% of the US Military are now WOMEN.
- 9,000 WOMEN have received prosthetics.
- 1 in 5 WOMEN screened reported Military Sexual Trauma.
- 13,000 homeless are WOMEN veterans.
- 30,000 single MOTHERS deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.
- 40% of WOMEN veterans have children.
- 8.8% of Military WOMEN are divorced annually.

These numbers are staggering, both in their reality and in their effect on families, communities and the nation. The intent of this 2nd annual conference is to further raise the nation's consciousness of this current reality. But more than that, it is to highlight the resources that are available and those who are already at work helping our women return to full health and productive lives.

May 25-26, 2011

University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) • TAM Alumni Center • Las Vegas, Nevada

Early Registration Fee: \$100.00 • On-Site Registration Fee: \$150.00 • (No cost to Women Veterans)
Online Registration: www.westcare.com. • Look for the Woman Warrior icon and click.

CEU's to satisfy the requirements of multiple professional organizations (including addiction and other health practitioners, therapists, social workers, educators, etc.) are pending professional organization approval and will be offered at no additional cost.

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When is Cinco de Mayo?

Cinco de Mayo means 5th of May in Spanish. This day is normally confused with Mexican Independence Day (el Dieciseis de Septiembre) which is celebrated on 16th of September. Cinco de Mayo is the anniversary of a battle that took place between the Mexicans and the French in 1862. It is celebrated on May 5th every year.

Why is Cinco de Mayo Celebrated?

This day marks the victory of a small, poorly armed force of around 4,500 soldiers over the French invasion of a well-armed, professional army led by Napoleon III that had about 8,000 soldiers. This battle is popularly known as the legendary Battle of Puebla. The battle lasted for 4 hours and ended in the victory of the small Mexican army under Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza. So Cinco de mayo is hugely celebrated with pomp, gaiety and fiestas in the traditional Mexican style.

Why Cinco de Mayo is Celebrated in U.S.?

In addition to its importance in Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is significant to all Americans because it marks the last time that any foreign power has acted the aggressor on North American soil.



Cinco de Mayo

Carne Asada Tacos

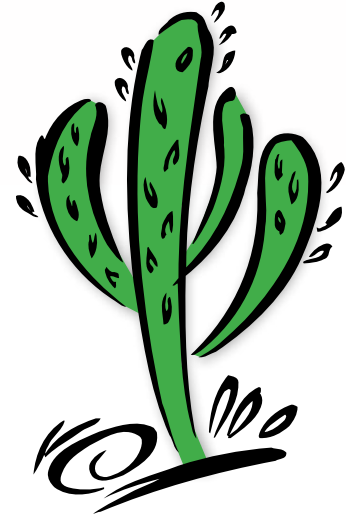
Recipes by Aaron Sanchez

Ingredients:

- 1 12-ounce jar sliced pickled jalapenos, drained
- 1 1 3/4-pound flank steak, trimmed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped white onion
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- Lime wedges, for serving
- 2-4 tablespoons Salsa (homemade or store-bought)
- Corn tortillas (homemade or store-bought)

Directions:

1. Make tortillas, if you're using Homemade Tortillas
2. Marinate the steak: Spread the jalapenos in a baking dish and press the steak on top. Cover and set aside at room temperature, about 1 hour.
3. Preheat a grill or grill pan to high. Brush the jalapenos off the steak, pat dry and season with salt and pepper. Grill the steak for 4 to 6 minutes per side for medium-rare. Let rest 10 minutes, then slice.
4. Assemble the tacos: For each taco, stack 2 tortillas and lay a few pieces of steak in the middle. Top with onion, salsa and cilantro. Top with lime wedges.



Salsa De Arbol

Ingredients:

- 4 dried arbol chiles, stemmed
- 1 pound plum tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 white onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican)
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- Pinch of sugar
- Kosher salt
- Fresh cilantro, for garnish

Directions:

1. Toast the chiles in a dry skillet or saucepan over medium-low heat, shaking the pan, about 2 minutes. Pour 1/2 cup boiling water on top, cover and let soak 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, preheat a grill or grill pan to high. Grill the tomatoes, turning, until charred. Transfer to a food processor. Add the chiles and their soaking water, onion, garlic, oregano, lime juice, sugar and 1 1/4 teaspoons salt; pulse until chunky. Set aside, about 1 hour. Garnish with cilantro.



On the FAVA Front

A Mother's Struggle for Justice: How Failed Systems Jailed My Son Steven

By Rhonda Jordal

(Editor's note: One of WestCare's strong alliances is with Family Alliance for Veterans of America. FAVA's Chairman is Rhonda Jordal. The following was published by the Justice Policy Institute.)

JUSTICE now holds a whole new meaning for me, a small town Iowa mom. I always have believed in right and wrong and was totally naïve to how things really work. Both my military sons, Army Combat Infantrymen, had plans after their service to be in law enforcement. But for the older of them, Steven, a wounded, two-tour honorably discharged Iraq combat veteran, this dream will never become a reality after spending 635 days in a county jail. If my son would have been taken care of like he should have, when he should have, he, and we his family, would not be where we are today.

Iraq changed my son and my family. Steven came back from war with "Invisible Wounds" - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Even after he was documented to have sustained a head injury, he continued to serve and was in numerous explosions after that. When Steven came back from his first deployment we noticed changes. He came right from the desert to the airport in Minneapolis in his desert dusty camo and boots. We stopped at the Mall of America for a meal and to get clothes. During the two hour ride home Steven said, "They told me it would be like this." "What?" we asked. He said, "I can't shut it off. While in the mall I couldn't stop looking at people's eyes, where their hands were, if they had bulges and now I can't stop looking at the sides of the road." He had never owned a gun in his life, and yet on his "R & R" he had to go buy one.

When Steven came home after his second tour, he was withdrawn and didn't want to talk to any of his family, including his wife. He didn't want to go outside their home to eat or go to a movie. He wanted to stay home and play Halo all the time with his battle buddies. He didn't sleep and when he did, he had nightmares. He had very little tolerance or patience and snapped at the smallest things.

In addition to the TBI and PTSD, Steven also had

injured his knee during the war; an MRI from a civilian hospital and report from an orthopedic surgeon stated he had a torn ACL. He finally had it operated on 15 months after the injury, but the Army only fixed the meniscus and refused to fix the ACL. After his surgery, Steven couldn't run or stride out, crushing his dreams of passing the physical exam to become a police officer.

At one point a letter came in the mail saying Steven's driver's license was revoked due to speeding tickets. Steven didn't have a speeding ticket prior to military service and yet 12 days after return from Iraq he had his first one, and racked up over \$7,000 in speeding tickets that we have paid or found receipts for. I called him about it and his reply was, you don't get it, the only time I feel alive is when I am going 160 miles per hour on my motorcycle, weaving in and out of traffic. I since have learned that the three most common items that a combat veteran buys upon return are a weapon, a motorcycle or a fast car. My son had all three, including multiple weapons and licenses to carry them in several states. After his second deployment, he would not be without a weapon.

His wife ended up leaving him and filing for divorce. His oldest brother and I took turns calling him and on one particular phone call he said to me, "What is this? Suicide prevention?" I said, "You bet it is, don't you dare kill yourself!" I was sobbing the whole call. I found out afterwards, Steven started smoking marijuana every day to keep from killing himself. Imagine a mom reading reports that her son was playing Russian roulette and would hold a gun to his head, sometimes pulling the trigger, sometimes smoking a joint so he didn't feel like pulling the trigger.

On December 22, 2008, Steven was arrested and jailed in Oklahoma City on one count of manufacturing an explosive device and one count of



possession of a firearm. Our son was playing "GI Joe" in the woods of a friend's parents, with permission, minding his own business and not hurting anyone, never intending to hurt anyone. A drug dealer with multiple convictions provided information against Steven in order to avoid prosecution. I'd learned in school that if you cannot afford an attorney, you'll be provided one. But we found out that we were just a "docket number" in an overworked system that pushed for a quick resolution. A few weeks after Steven's arrest the public defenders educated us on "Oklahoma justice:" "Come on vacation, leave on probation and come back for revocation." They laughed and said, "Don't you know you are in the Bible Belt?"

My son's bond was originally set at \$25,000 on the two counts. However, Steven had cooperated with

May Calendar



May 3rd

Nevada CAC Meeting
8:30am PT/1:00pm MT/2:00pm CT
3:00pm ET (Video Conference)

May 4th

CAC Monthly Report Due
Executive Committee

May 5th

CA Graduation Ceremony 6:30pm PT
(Fresno, California)

May 10th

Minnesota CAC Meeting
8:30am PT/10:30am CT
Victri, Minneapolis

Florida GulfCoast CAC Meeting
3:30pm PT/6:30am ET
Bradley Davis Building

May 17th

Arizona Volunteer Dinner - 7:00pm
Laughlin Ranch, Nevada

May 18th

MV Minnesota
8:30am PT/10:30am CT
VictriVillage Booth, Civil War Exposition
State Capital, Minnesota

May 21st

California Health & Wellness Walk
8:30am PT

May 24th

CAC Minnesota
8:30am PT/10:30am CT
(VICTRI, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

May 25th

Minnesota Deployment Ceremony
1:00pm PT/3:00am CT
Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
VictriVillage, Minnesota

May 25th, 26th & 27th
2nd Annual Combat Trauma Conference
Las Vegas, Nevada

A Mother's Struggle for Justice: How Failed Systems Jailed My Son Steven

Continued from page 12

the police after his initial arrest, and consented to searches of his car and home. His reward for cooperation was eight additional counts of manufacturing explosives and an increase in bond to \$185,000. The additional counts were based on false affidavits that eight of the items seized at his home were documented explosive devices, when in fact most were legal fireworks and model rocket engines that could be purchased at any hobby store. Due to these stacked counts, Steven spent 635 days in jail, with no medical treatment for any of his war related injuries the entire time.

Our justice nightmare didn't end with Steven's incarceration. His car and much of his personal property were seized by police "as evidence." We later learned that his car was sold by the storage garage in March of 2009. How can a car be evidence and then suddenly be sold? Important items of evidence, including the fireworks, were put in a hole and destroyed with a secondary device without any photographs, audio or video tape to preserve the evidence. We refinanced everything we owned to hire a team of attorneys, John Foley & Robert Mitchell, both of whom were from military families and former prosecutors.

After Steven's incarceration, I got power of attorney and recovered all his records. I read reports of my son's attempted suicide while still on active duty. I got a letter in the mail from the VA that he had been screened positive for TBI; I didn't even know what TBI was. I spent the next almost two years not only fighting to get my son out of jail, but also in educating myself. I talked to so many doctors of every specialty, read every journal and article, attended classes, seminars, webinars, and served on panels with veteran advocates and networked with any families that I could find that knew something or were going through something similar. I came to realize that my son was injured in Iraq and not taken care of, and this was at the heart of how he came to be trapped in the justice system.

Finally, in September 2010, we took a plea deal to get Steven released so he could get medical treatment, as doctors told us he was deteriorating. Our son is now getting medical help for PTSD and TBI, as well as for his other joint injuries, vision problems,

hearing loss, severe headaches...the list goes on. The worst, however, is dealing with his memory loss; he forgets to close the outside door even in winter, walks away when cooking and burns meals, or finishes cooking and forgets to eat. Steven did just get a service dog, Fieryo, and that has been a blessing. While he is learning how to re-imprint his brain, we are learning the "new normal." We see glimpses of our "before the war" son, and I live for those little glimpses. Most of all, I live for the day when my son might volunteer to hug his mom, as I miss that the most.

My husband and I saw changes in Steven after the war, but we were not educated in signs and symptoms. We thought, of course he is changed, how could he not be? We don't know what he saw or had to do. He was at war. We believed we just needed to give him time and space, not knowing that was the worst thing we could do. Now we are educated and because of that my husband and I have both become veteran advocates fighting to make changes for ALL our veterans. As our attorney Robert says, "It is a simple thing to say, 'I support our troops.' It is quite another to actually provide them with the support they need and deserve."

Rhonda Jordal is the mother of Steven Jordal and had seven family members in this war including two sons. She is the Chairman of (FAVA) Family Alliance for Veterans of America, www.fava.westcare.com. She served as a consumer reviewer for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program for psychological health, PTSD & TBI, and sits on the Jail Diversion Trauma Recovery veteran representative panel. She has helped in the drafting of bills related to veterans in her home state of Iowa. She is working on a book, "A Living Death," which documents what they went through those 635 days that Steven was in jail. A second book, "The New Normal," starts with Steven's release and describes what the family has been going through seeking all the diagnoses and treatments for their veteran. Rhonda can be reached at 641-585-5995 or jordal@wctatel.net.

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The ANGELS Among Us

By John Wallace – *WestCare Express Editor*

The month of April drew to a close with two significant and indirectly-related occurrences within the comforting arms of WestCare. Both involved unexpected blessings bestowed on us by private citizens whose generosity parallels their modesty.

Here are the stories, as related to the Express via e-mail by two WestCare Directors in two separate states.

From Tracy Stevens, Area Director-WestCare Arizona

“A lady who donates during the holidays just showed up at the Safehouse and asked for the Program Director. Staff told her she was out picking up kids and would be back shortly. So, the lady said she wanted to make a donation . . . and handed staff a \$10,000 check for Safehouse and just wanted a donation receipt sent to her! We verified with the bank that she and her husband had a valid account



and the check appeared to be good. I called the lady to thank her and make sure this is what she intended. She was very gracious and basically said she knew we did good work helping women, and she and her husband had been praying about this for some time and this is what the Lord wanted them to do. She said she will continue to see if we

need anything around Thanksgiving and Christmas. God is good every day!!!!”

And from Deborah Freeman, Program Director-Family Foundations, San Diego

“The Family Foundations Program in San Diego has become the lucky recipient of a \$5,000 cash donation! This donation came at the best possible time for our program, and we were able to purchase many items for our children that we have been needing, including cribs, bouncers, playpens, and building sets. We were able to buy 72 items for our facility, even an ice cream maker and food processor! We are very excited to receive all the new items, and we are so grateful to the donor . . . a private trust. We have been told we may receive another contribution next year. What a great Easter gift for our community!”

National Study Confirms Teen Drug Use Trending in Wrong Direction

Courtesy: The Partnership at Drugfree.org

Following a decade of steady declines, a new national study released today indicates that teen drug and alcohol use is headed in the wrong direction, with marked increases in teen use of marijuana and Ecstasy over the past three years. The 22nd annual Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) affirms a disturbing trend that has emerged among American teens since 2008 and highlights that as underage drinking becomes more normalized among adolescents, parents feel unable to respond to the negative shifts in teen drug and alcohol use. The study was released by The Partnership at Drugfree.org and MetLife Foundation.

According to the three-year trend confirmed in this year’s 2010 PATS data, there was a significant 67 percent increase in the number of teens who reported using Ecstasy in the past year (from 6 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2010). Similarly, past-year marijuana use among teens increased by

a disturbing 22 percent (from 32 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2010).



“You’re seeing this weakness in this generation of teens’ attitudes around drug and alcohol use,” Steve Pasierb, president of the partnership, told the Associated Press. “It’s not like this generation of kids thinks they’re more bulletproof than others, but they really don’t see any harm in that heavy drinking.”

The new data underscore alarming patterns in early adolescent alcohol use and found that teens view drinking alcohol – even heavy drinking – as less risky than using other substances.

- Of those teens who reported alcohol use, a majority (62 percent) said they had their first full alcoholic drink by age 15, not including sipping or tasting alcohol.
- Of those teens who reported alcohol use, one in four (25 percent), said they drank a full alcoholic drink for the first time by age 12 or younger.
- Among teens who reported drinking alcohol, the average age of first alcohol use was 14.

