



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND CALIFORNIA

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ISSUE 100

VOLUME 7



Welcome to the **100th issue** of The Loop newsletter! Since its launch in October of 2012, The Loop has been essential in our communication strategy, keeping our staff and community abreast of the outstanding services provided by WestCare daily across the state and the stories of those that we serve! Achieving the 100th issue milestone is something that we should all be proud of and I am honored to have been a part of it! Thank you to everyone who has helped this publication become a reality each month with their time, creativity, and contributions!

September brings forth many important observances that directly align with our services including **National Recovery Month**, **National Suicide Prevention Month**, **Hispanic Heritage Month**, and numerous days that honor our members of the armed forces and their loved ones. In commemoration, our new Vice Presidents for WestCare California, Mary Ann Knoy, and Cleadus Shelton, will be sharing their thoughts following my message regarding Hispanic Heritage Month and National Recovery Month, respectively.

While I have had the honor of welcoming readers to each issue for so long, beginning next month, Mary Ann and Cleadus will be assuming this duty with their unique styles, voices, and perspectives! With my recent assignment as the Chief Operating Officer for WestCare's Western Region, it is time for me to pass

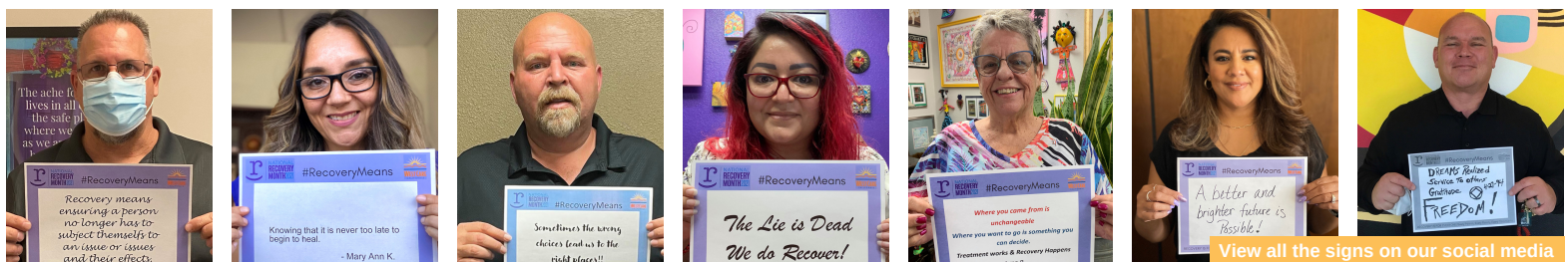
the torch to the new faces of our state's leadership to provide a warm welcome to each month moving forward! However, this isn't to say that you won't hear from me anymore via The Loop as I plan to, at a minimum, write one welcoming message a year.

I want to thank both Mary Ann and Cleadus for their hard work and know that under their leadership, we will continue to meet the needs of the communities and consumers we serve, thanks in large part to our dedicated family of staff! Keep up the excellent work and thank you for joining us in Uplifting the Human Spirit!

Stay safe and take care,



Shawn L. Ford
COO - Western Region



View all the signs on our social media



westcare.com



In September, we celebrate and observe National Hispanic Heritage month by highlighting the hard work and accomplishments made by the Latino community. As a Mexican-American woman, I feel blessed for having been surrounded by such a family/community-oriented culture that truly believes in working collectively and approaches everyone with genuine compassion. This belief falls perfectly in line with the WestCare vision and mission of Uplifting the Human Spirit as we work towards empowerment of our communities through the service to others.

I am proud to represent an organization that has made a commitment to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion that establishes a sense of belonging among employees. I am grateful for those that came before me and paved the way for me to access better opportunities and as I embark on this new journey, I look forward to continuing to share about all of the great contributions that are being made by our wonderful WestCare team members!

Mary Ann Khoy, Vice President, WestCare California



With September being National Recovery Month, this is a time of the year that hits very close to home for myself and my family. In 2006, I found myself not only dealing with addiction, but running from the law for absconding parole. It was in August of that year that my wife, Erin and I, were no longer on the run, but were now in the hands of the authorities and on the path to a better life. After 180 days in prison, I was required to complete a 90 day program with WestCare California. It was here that I learned the tools that I needed to be successful in my recovery and was blessed to have Erin's support during the process.

Fast forward 15 years and numerous positions within this amazing organization later and I am proud to stand before you, not only clean and sober, but in a position that I once dreamed of as I walked across the stage in completion of my treatment. Family is everything to me and this organization is a large part of that. Within this new role, I look forward to lending my leadership skills and experience to help our programs thrive and paying it forward in support of those whose shoes I once shared. After all, you can't keep it unless you give it away!

Cleadus Shelton, Vice President, WestCare California

September: Our California Staff Share What Recovery Means to Them!



"My recovery means everything to me. It means family that loves me unconditionally. It means that I never have to be alone. It means that I have purpose and it means that I lived a life well spent." – **Lynn Pimentel, Deputy Administrator, Administration**

"Recovery means today that I am a beacon of hope. I'm a product of God's grace and determination. I live a life of service and am forever grateful for the help that I received." – **Robert Church, Deputy Administrator, Administration**



"To me, recovery means remaining resilient and focused on accomplishing goals." – **Riderick Glaspie, Educator, SJVV (Fresno)**



"My recovery means that I am moving forward every day - never forgetting about the past, but remembering that I don't live there anymore." – **Sara Florez, Program Coordinator, Adolescent Services**

"My recovery started in May of 1985 and miraculously sustained throughout the years, making me who I am from parenting an adopted child to my profession and so much more! I've now been clean/sober more than 3x longer than I used/drank, but am fully aware that it's still there for me if I'm not awake and making wise choices. I continue to discover new aspects of addiction and recovery that need attention in my life and the lives of those that I serve. I am forever grateful." – **Cherie McCarthy, Admissions Specialist III/LPHA, Fresno Admissions and Adult Outpatient**



"On September 19th, I will have 4 years and 8 months sober from alcohol. My drinking was ending my life, but my sobriety was the beginning. Recovery has made me a better person who lives to help others and who makes my children proud to have me as their mother." – **Allonna Carlton, Counselor Tech, Fresno Admissions and Adult Outpatient**

"My recovery means another chance at life. Before addiction, I had a great life with a great job. During my addiction, I lost EVERYTHING. In recovery, I have been given a second chance at life." – **Angelique Luna, Counselor Tech, MLK Residential**



"Recovery means that I am no longer a slave to addiction and that I am able to help others gain their life back. My favorite quote is, 'Recovery did not open the gates of Heaven and let me in. Recovery opened the gates of hell and let me out!'" – **Jennifer Childers, Women's Coordinator, MLK Residential**

"I must put my recovery first so that everything in my life does not come last! Recovery means Uplifting the Human Spirit!" – **Deborah Gilleran, Outpatient Counselor, Fresno Admissions and Adult Outpatient**

"My recovery shows me that I can choose to respond rather than react in the midst of uncertainty and chaos. My recovery highlights my resilience and how far I have come, what I will have achieved and what I have overcome. My recovery means that I can face every triumph and obstacle one day at a time and one moment at a time because in recovery, there is serenity and freedom." – **Britney Kisling, Community Housing Matcher, Housing Services**





Program Spotlight: Bakersfield Campus - Residential, Outpatient, STOP, AB109

WestCare California, Inc.'s **Bakersfield Men's Residential and Outpatient** program provides co-occurring drug and/or alcohol addiction treatment services in a safe and supportive environment that is grounded in the fundamental belief that services need to be person-centered and focused on wellness and recovery. The program is designed to meet the person where they are in their stage of recovery. Residential treatment offers men an environment where they can focus on their recovery without the distractions of everyday life. The outpatient program serves adult men who require treatment services for substance use disorders while working and living in the community, but do not require the more intensive services provided in a residential program.

Services provided to adult men in residential and outpatient treatment include: comprehensive assessments, individual and group counseling including mental health and substance use disorder education classes, relapse-prevention, anger management,

criminal thinking, parenting, introduction to community-based support services, optional weekly onsite and community-based 12-Step meetings, HIV/AIDS education, vocational skills development, employment readiness and family relations and counseling. WestCare uses evidence-based curricula in our programs provided by trained, supportive and credentialed staff to assist the people we serve in setting the foundation for recovery. This foundation will help the men we serve understand their substance use disorder, improve their self-esteem and make positive choices as well as set and obtain goals. The focus and intensity of residential treatment is modified to accommodate the realistic and practical needs of each person with lengths of stay from 30 to 180 days. Men enrolled in the outpatient program are required to participate at least one time per week. A determination of the intensive of treatment needed is made at initial assessment and is modified to accommodate the needs of each person. WestCare welcomes family involvement in all phases of the program.



Meet Joshua THIS IS HIS STORY

Joshua S. was admitted to WestCare's Bakersfield Residential program on January 6, 2021, but self-discharged from the program five days later after submitting a positive UA. However, he was rereferred and re-admitted to the program the following day. During his time at the program, he excelled with working towards his recovery, helping others in their recovery and assisting with daily functions at the facility. In time, Joshua became the client job coordinator and learned to delegate workloads/duties and helped manage the WestCare client canteen. Joshua's successes at WestCare led him to a successful completion on April 12th and a transition into our outpatient program where he continues to receive support from his WestCare family.

While in the outpatient program, he secured employment through a temp agency. Sometime after beginning his employment, his contract with the temp agency was bought out by the company and was offered a full-time position with Mashburn Transportation Services, Inc. as a Service Technician/ Confined Space Tank Cleaner. Joshua is currently working full time and is on track to complete the outpatient program on October 3rd!

Kudos to Christopher Berchem, AB109 Case Manager



"We would like to give a big shout out of appreciation to Chris Berchem for always stepping up and helping out wherever needed. Thank You!"

– **Samuel Alonzo**, Program Coordinator, Bakersfield Residential

Wish List

The staff of Bakersfield Residential and Outpatient are currently seeking new or lightly used donations of:

- Dining room tables and chairs
- Bedroom dressers
- Patio furniture
- Living room couches

If you would like to make a donation, please contact samuel.alonzo@westcare.com or dwayne.gotay@westcare.com.



A Special Thank You to the Team at MLK Residential

By Dr. Herbert Cruz, MD, Medical Director, Administration

In August, I had the privilege of teaming up with the amazing staff of our MLK Residential program in Fresno to hold a COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinic at their facility for those that they serve! All in all, we conducted 100 tests and administered 35 vaccines! This would have been possible without the help of our staff who helped encourage apprehensive clients regarding getting the vaccine, watched after children while their parents took part, and, in some cases, held the hands of our men and women served as they received their vaccine.

I'd like to give my personal thanks to the following individuals for their assistance:

- Vanessa Acosta-Dale
- Josephine Alonzo
- Sherri Buchanan
- Sharon Chavez
- Norma Gonzales
- Jeremiah Hinojosa
- Elisha Simpson-Sanchez
- Deja Velasquez
- Marisela Velasquez

To all who helped in this crucial effort, thank you for your time and support! This coordinated effort was indeed the embodiment of Uplifting the Human Spirit!



8/28: Celebrating the Life of Toni Harrison (1949 – 2021)

Following the recent loss in July of our longtime staff, friend, and a tireless advocate for HIV/AIDS services in the Central Valley, Toni Harrison, our community came together at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Fresno to honor who she was and the countless lives that she changed through her many years of service as a staff and later Program Director of The Living Room.

We heard many heartfelt sentiments from our staff, former clients, Fresno AIDS Walk committee members, and her colleagues in the public health field. We were also proud to present the **2021 Fresno AIDS Walk Community Spirit Award** in her name, with her daughter, Rena, accepting on her behalf. Originally conceived by Toni in 2012 as a way to applaud the efforts of local heroes in the field of HIV/AIDS research, services, and care - there was simply no more fitting choice for our 10th recipient. The award sits today at The Living Room as an everlasting reminder of her leadership, contributions, and compassion for her community that she loved so much.

As echoed in the testimonials by attendees, Toni was truly unlike any other. While she was often unapologetically straightforward in her approach with a uniquely tough "New Yorker charm," she always wore her heart on her sleeve with only the utmost level of care for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS held firmly at the forefront of every decision that she made.

We love you, Toni and we miss you. There will never be another, but there will be many who will learn from the example that you've set. May your impact on our community be felt for years to come...



8/13: WestCare Bids a Happy Retirement to Kathy Hayden

Kathy began her journey with us in the fall of 2009. After a few years apart, she would return in January of 2015 to play a pivotal role in our transition to a Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) service model.

On top of her leadership duties, guiding our various mental health programs, and helping lay the foundation for new ones; she fully embraced the role of mentor for countless mental health interns, clinicians, and staff; and the results have been absolutely priceless thanks to her wisdom, knowledge and time!

During her virtual farewell party, she remarked, "I've been in the trenches for 42 years and will be ending my full-time career with WestCare. There is something to be said about the family philosophy here. The friendships that I've made here are some of the richest that I've had in my life. I'm most appreciative of being able to do what I've done here and help get our programs to where they are."

While she will be continuing her private practice, there is no denying that we will miss her. Congratulations, Kathy! We wish you only the best on this exciting new journey that lies ahead!

Our newest leadership promotions



Jenny Gonzalez was promoted to Deputy Administrator for California



Robert Church was promoted to Deputy Administrator for California



David Daniel was promoted to Director of Admissions/Adult Outpatient



Ed Crossman was promoted to Clinical Director for California

Employee of the Month (EOTM)



June 2021 Community Based EOTM:
Gerald Stith,
Admission Specialist III,
Admissions/Adult
Outpatient



July 2021 Criminal Justice EOTM:
Adriana Garcia,
Senior Case Manager,
STOP: Area 3
(Bakersfield)



July 2021 Community Based EOTM:
Brittany Silva,
HR Recruiter,
Administration

Kudos to Joslynn Davis, Community Service Representative



We'd like to send out a special kudos to Joslynn, for once again sharing her gift of creativity with us! This time, she painted a wonderful scene in front of our **STOP: Area 3 office in Fresno!** Commenting on her work, she noted, "It's my favorite tree that's why I painted building from that side angle."



Kudos ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Our team in Hanford are absolutely amazing advocates for their program and outpatient treatment services for youth! They took part in the Corcoran Farmers Market with Kings County Behavioral Health. Thank you for sharing about the great work that you do with your community!



CORE Awards
July 2021: Moral Booster
Benjamin Hernandez
Social Media Specialist, Administration

Connect with us in California

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare California at marketing@westcare.com