



Women's Commission

ON ALCOHOL
AND DRUG ISSUES
— OREGON

PO BOX 14495 · PORTLAND, OR 97293

WWW.WCADIO.ORG

WINTER 2009

Open Invitation to Join WCADIO

WCADIO's Mission is to increase public awareness of women's alcohol and drug abuse issues and to promote services related to women throughout the State of Oregon. This means to **ALL** women who are affected by their own alcohol or drug use or that of their family or friends.

**Your Support Is Needed
Your Voice Will Be Heard!**

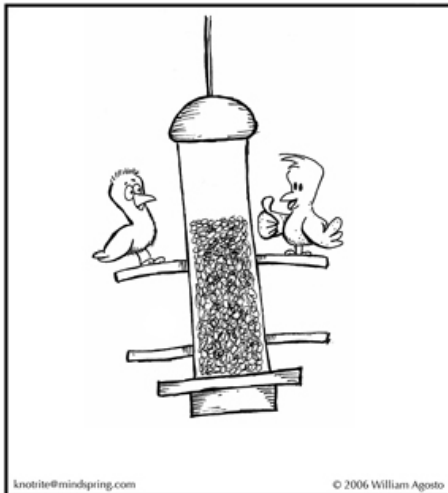
— See our website for application —



Visit us online at
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Calendar

- ♥ Valentine's Day Feb 14
- ♣ St Patrick's Day March 17
- ☀ 1st Day of Spring March 20



"Good mix. Nice location. Decent ambience. I give it a wings up!"

Top Medical Breakthroughs for Women

Health magazine highlights the year's best discoveries
— by Curt Pesmen

This year's biggest advances are changing the face and future of your health. From cancer and Alzheimer's disease to eating disorders and obesity, Health magazine reveals 20 breakthroughs you need to know about now.

Here is just a few of the 20 that were listed:

1. **Addiction**

Using the ER to help alcoholics

It's no secret that alcoholics and drug abusers visit emergency rooms more often than the average Jane. So this year the American College of Surgeons (ACS) decided to turn that fact of ER life into something more positive. They unveiled SBI — screening and brief intervention — during which ER docs or counselors conduct brief drug or alcohol interventions right on the spot. The idea stems from the belief that emergency settings offer an ideal place to provide wake-up calls to patients who don't yet have severe substance addictions. Such interventions have been shown to reduce a return to the trauma or ER center by 50 percent.

2. **Smarter sweets**

More reasons to eat chocolate! We know that dark chocolate cocoa powder has up to three times the antioxi-

dants found in green tea, plus twice the antioxidants in red wine; that's good for your heart. And studies have shown that dark chocolate's



polyphenols affect serotonin levels in the brain; that'll boost your mood. But this year dark chocolate has gained even more favor in medical circles. In one study, heart-transplant patients showed a decreased risk of clogged arteries two hours after consuming 40 grams of dark chocolate. In another, researchers from the University of Illinois found that subjects who ate a 22 gram CocoaVia dark chocolate bar daily for two months lowered their blood pressure and cholesterol levels. And investigation is underway to see if dark chocolate can be used to decrease PMS symptoms. Sweet news for us all.

3. **Eating disorders**

Brain scans reveal anorexia clues. Docs have long been

(See **Discoveries...** continued on page 2)

WCADIO Members Hard at Work!

Discoveries...

(Continued from front page)

stumped: Why is it so difficult for patients with eating disorders to learn and to “reprogram” healthy eating behavior? In a surprising study at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, researchers used MRI scans to track the brain activity of recovered anorexia patients and found that the reward centers of their brains were damaged — they couldn’t decipher much of a difference between pleasure or reward, at least in the short term. Researchers hope that this knowledge will help them better understand and treat the millions of women with eating disorders in the United States.

4. Liposuction

Using fat to fight disease
 Fat on your belly or thighs? Rarely considered a valuable thing, until now. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) announced this summer that, compared with fat in other areas of the body, belly and inner-thigh fat contain tissue with higher concentrations of stem cells. Surgeons and researchers hope to use the tissue to build stem cell lines and drugs that might one day treat diabetes, spinal cord injuries, or severe brain diseases. “Adult stem cells, derived from our own tissues, hold strong promise for improved clinical therapies,” says J. Peter Rubin, MD, a member of the ASPS Fat Grafting Task Force and co-director of the Adipose Stem Cell Center at the University of Pittsburgh. ❖

— For more helpful medical information visit www.health.com.

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WCADIO President Ann Uhler along with Ginger Martin, Bev DuBosch and Phyllis Stewart tend to WCADIO business. According to the big smile, it was business with some fun thrown in for good measure!

Criminal History May Create Barrier for Clients



Criminal history can be a Barrier to Work in the Child Care Field?

Some women in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction would like to work in child care. In most cases, these women will be required to have a criminal records check (includes a DHS Child Welfare check and possibly an FBI check) and to be successfully enrolled in the criminal history registry by the State Employment Department, Child Care Division.

Depending on the severity of any past criminal convictions, some people may never be permitted to work in child care. However, most crimes do not absolutely prevent a woman from being approved. An individual may reapply every three years.

For example, many people believe that a past conviction for prostitution will prevent a woman from being approved to do child care. That is not the case. A past conviction for prostitution will be considered for 15 years from the arrest, and applications will be handled on a case-by-case basis during this time. After 15 years from the arrest, the conviction no longer has any effect on being

approved to provide child care.

The case-by-case review can and usually does include the time since the arrest, circumstances surrounding the incident, and what has occurred since the incident. Usually, the woman will be asked for an evaluation by a qualified professional. If she follows the application process and submits all the required information, a woman who has successfully completed treatment for addiction could be approved as child care provider even with a conviction for prostitution within the last 15 years.

Other crimes may have different time period during which they are considered. For example, criminal driving while suspended or revoked is considered for 5 years while distribution of drugs to minors is considered for 20 years.

Contact the Employment Department, Child Care Division, for more information about how to apply for enrollment in the criminal history registry which is necessary when a person wants to work in the child care field. The phone number is: 1-800-556-6616 or 503-947-1400. ❖

Breaking the Cycle of Addiction

One year into its five-year run, a \$2.5 million grant program is paying dividends for local residents who have struggled to overcome drug and alcohol addiction
— by Mike Ferguson

Can the multi-generation cycle of drug and alcohol addiction ever be broken?

Two counselors at New Directions Northwest say the answer is yes, thanks to a five-year, \$2.5 million grant that Baker County shares with Union and Wallowa counties.



Barby Olmstead and Sherry Forsyth both report success stories after a little more than a year working with up to 20 clients at a time through the Northeast Oregon Collaborative for Child Safety, or NOCCS, program.

The grant, awarded in 2007 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, pays for services that people working on their addictions often struggle to access, including childcare, transportation, housing and, fitting for the holiday season, small Christmas gifts for the 53 Baker County children of clients enrolled in the program.

According to Forsyth, "there are families who have always had problems, and before all we could do was make phone calls on their behalf" to try to knock down whatever barrier was standing in the way of sobriety.

Sometimes it's as simple as finding school clothes for the children

involved. Other times it's more complicated, like making a mortgage payment to keep the family together in their home for one more month.

"We have spent thousands of dollars on the families so far, but in the long term, the ripple effect and the money saved this community is 10 times the thousands of dollars we have already spent," Forsyth said. "These are the families that in the past kept coming back and kept coming back for services without success."

A case in point is a family both Forsyth and Olmstead have worked with. Some of the family's details are disguised to protect their anonymity.

The family is blended and includes six children. Both mom and dad have struggled with addictions; one is a graduate of Baker County Drug Court.

The family lives more than a dozen miles outside Baker City, and only one parent has a driver's license. So when either Mom or Dad needs to be in town — for work, a counseling session or group therapy — both come to town during the hours the children are in school. When a work shift for the non-driver is over, the spouse must come back to town to provide a ride home.

The NOCCS grant paid for drug treatment, which the family couldn't afford. It also went for vouchers for the family's gasoline bill and even covered a couple of mortgage payments while the parents learned to live within their means and received training on making — and sticking to — a budget.

"Sometimes it comes down to the choice of feeding your kids or paying the agency (for treat-

ment)," Olmstead said. "If we remove those barriers to treatment, they can pursue their treatment full time."

Then there's the single mother who has three children and one more on the way. She's been through drug treatment — unsuccessfully — several times.

"This," Olmstead said, shaking her head, "was not her first rodeo."

The client was in a bad relationship with a man who eventually went to prison. She "had a hard time relaxing," in Forsyth's words, and "it was like pulling teeth to get her to engage."

The woman would do "just enough," Forsyth said, to keep Child Welfare authorities temporarily satisfied. There was mold in her house, which she was in danger of losing.

She "qualified for the NOCCS program right off the bat, and there hasn't been even a hiccup since," Forsyth said. "She's had no relapses and she's ready to give birth to a clean and sober baby."

The program is also drawing a favorable early review from the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Chris Black, who manages the Child Welfare Program for Baker, Union and Wallowa counties, said the way the grant is being utilized in all three counties "has opened many doors, getting services to families to facilitate their progress."

"From a systemic perspective," Black said, the grant has "improved relationships and processes between (service) providers. It's allowed people to feel more comfortable calling on one another and having more open conversations."



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Are You a Member of WCADIO...?

- WCADIO membership application is located on our website at www.WCADIO.org. We encourage you to join!

Breaking the Cycle...

(Continued from page 3)

Even if the money goes away once the grant cycle is complete in 2012, "we will still find ways to get families what they need," Black said. "We may not be able to buy everyone what we would have otherwise (if the grant is renewed), but we can have people call each other and say, 'Sure, we can see what we can do.'

"It's about maintaining and strengthening the collaboration we've already started."

While the two counselors say they're convinced that working as partners with other agencies and providing needed but heretofore hard to access wrap-

around services are keys to their success so far, they're also aware that more and more families will require this kind of holistic approach as the economy sours.

"The economy affects social services in a huge way, and we're preparing for a big crunch now," Olmstead said. "We're all threatened with services being cut, and as the economy goes down drug use is going to go up. But this keeps us moving in a positive direction."



Lois Gates, the project director for the NOCCS grant, noted that while 53 grants were awarded nationwide (and three

others in Oregon), only 11 were awarded to coalitions similar to the one established in Northeastern Oregon.

That means that NOCCS is one of the few groups in the country to find practices that work best so that other coalitions can borrow them for their situation.

"It's all about systems change," said Gates, a tireless advocate for her project. "This idea is so good it can work anywhere." ❖

Reprinted from Baker City Herald, December 11, 2008.

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