

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse has a devastating toll on individuals, families, and society. Armed with expertise and determination, Wisconsin hospitals are fighting the war on drugs and alcohol in their communities with counseling and services aimed at prevention and treatment.

Wheaton Franciscan Center for Addiction Recovery helps Racine mother overcome addictions

Sherrill Aukland is a vivacious, 58-year-old who lost years of her life to alcoholism and pain killer addiction. She did eventually recover – but only with the help of her five sons, the Wheaton Franciscan Center for Addiction Recovery, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Sherry is an active, outgoing woman who abused pills and alcohol well before her divorce in 2003. Instead of feeling better, she spiraled deeper into depression and guilt. After two years of this, she recognized her decline and tried for a year to recover.

“I felt spiritually bankrupt,” she said. “I was trying to get out of a bad situation but doing all the wrong things. I didn’t want to live, but I couldn’t ask for help because I didn’t want to realize I was addicted and alcoholic.”

One night, she had had enough. She gathered her five boys, ages 13, 16, 18, 22 and 26. She had already been questioned by one of her sons, who had done a search on her migraine medication and learned it was addictive. She handed them the remainder of the pills, “admitted” the drinking problem they knew about, and told them she needed help. They responded quickly and firmly.

They drove her immediately to her doctor, refusing to leave until he hospitalized her. After three days, the doctor discharged her. She moved to her mother’s basement apartment, where she detoxed on her own for 10 days. Her boys searched online and found the Wheaton Franciscan Center for Addiction Recovery.

Located in Racine, the Center for Addiction Recovery is a private, comfortable site devoted to providing addictions treatment for adults. Programs include primary outpatient day treatment, morning and evening intensive outpatient, and continuing care groups.

When Sherry was strong enough, one of her sons took her to the Center. She remembers that she was asked to list her goals. One was that she would overcome her addiction to pain killers. Still not willing to admit her alcoholism; the second goal was to have a glass of wine with dinner.

Sherry went every day for a month to four hours of counseling with the Wheaton Franciscan outpatient program. In the meetings she learned about alcoholism and addiction and what these diseases do to your mind, body and spirit. She received support, guidance, and resources, and found her spiritual core again.

Sherry and her boys also attended an educational evening meeting for families at the Center. The session provided education for the boys, who learned of their increased risk for alcoholism and addiction.

Sherry took the recommendation of her Center counselor and began attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings. She got a sponsor right off the bat, worked the steps and did everything the program suggested.

Today, Sherry is a successful landlord. She fills in at the Center for Addiction Recovery to introduce new participants to the AA program. She continues to attend AA meetings and has been sober five years as of March 2010. Her sons – her reason for living and recovering – have told her how thankful they are to have found the Wheaton Franciscan Center for Addiction Recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous. Because now they have their mom back.



Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Milwaukee

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

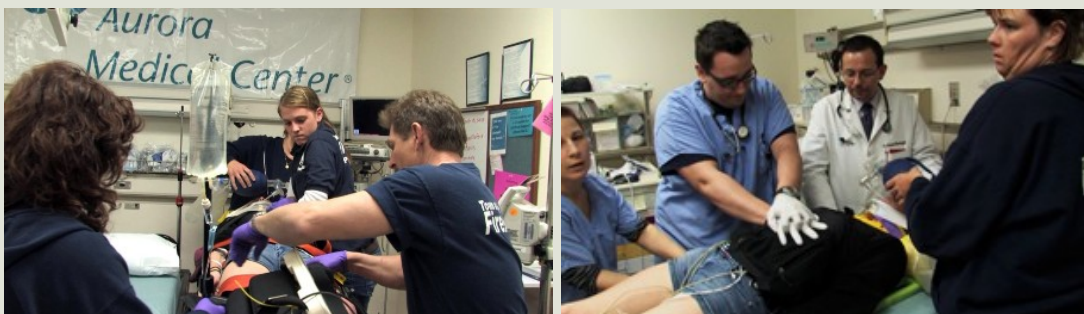
Trauma drill raises awareness of perils driving impaired

Caregivers at Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha partnered with two area high schools for a trauma drill to help raise awareness of the perils of driving impaired and to promote safe behaviors for students attending proms. In coordination with the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) programs at Central and Wilmot High Schools, the drill involved a party where a student overdosed and students leaving the party crashed their car.

To educate students, the media department from Central High School filmed the drill and showed it to students at both schools. Following the film, students were shown the mock car accident that was set up by Town of Salem Fire and Rescue.

Aurora Medical Center treated four “patients” from the drill, which included a teenage girl whose parents received the worst news of their lives.

The drill involved a number of Kenosha County fire departments, EMS units and law enforcement agencies.



Communication and cooperation are key when situations such as these arise in real life. One of the goals of training is to make sure information is shared frequently and communication lines stay open. Training also provides caregivers with valuable experience in dealing with specific emergency scenarios. Circumstances will change rapidly, and keeping everyone in the loop can sometimes be just as challenging as dealing with the crisis at hand.

Aurora Medical Center Kenosha

Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at mgrasmick@wha.org.



Read more about hospitals connecting with their communities at www.WiServePoint.org.