

NEWSLETTER

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COMMUNITY NEEDS PROJECT OPEN



Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death nationwide for those under the age of 50. Last year in Illinois, over 1,900 people died from an overdose, which is almost twice the number of fatalities from car accidents.

Project OPEN (Opioid Prevention and Engagement Network) is a group of medical, behavioral health, public health, education, individuals from the recovery community, court and law enforcement organizations in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties who have come together to help build a network to prevent opioid addiction through awareness, education, and training. Organizers hope to foster hope and help end the stigma surrounding substance abuse, as well as ending substance abuse and misuse in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties to improve and save lives.

To find out more information, visit the website, www.theprojectopen.com or call (815) 285-7899.

PROJECT

OPEN

opioid prevention and engagement network

GRATEFUL FOR SOBRIETY



Do you have a sober anniversary coming up? Let us know so that we can print it in our next newsletter!! Email us at SVVOR.org

RECOVERY 101 HOLIDAY CHALLENGES



ADDICTION RECOVERY IN AUTUMN CAN BE CHALLENGING

Life revolves around the cyclical balance of the four seasons. The fall equinox occurs every year with consistency and we find ourselves one year older celebrating the stable rite of change and passage found in nature. Students return to school, the baseball pennant race begins in earnest and the leaves begin to blossom with colours in anticipation of the coming winter. Fighting addiction during the holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving where the cycle in nature involves family and social gatherings which tend to be ritualistically embraced and celebrated can be daunting for some.

For those suffering from drug or alcohol addiction, these celebrations are usually spent in a state of intoxication. Whatever joy is experienced is usually associated with the "stoned" state induced by the addicts' indulgences. When the addict enters into recovery, one of the concerns experienced revolves around the notion that these celebrations will no longer be joyous without the preferred drug of choice or drink. For some there is even a fear that they will never have a "good time" again since a "good time" is so closely linked with their addictive behavior.

Many years ago a close friend related a story regarding his addiction and recovery that speaks directly to this concern. An avid hockey fan, when he was several months into recovery his beloved Habs began their hockey season. His wife, a huge fan as well, was excited to watch the opening game but was concerned for husband who, in the past, had ritualistically consumed several beers before the end of the first period. This was to be their first hockey game since his sobriety. My friend, in relating this story, spoke of his indifference as he sat down to watch. He had always been an extremely boisterous fan, gesturing at the TV and loudly proclaiming his joy when the Canadians scored and his disappointment when the game was not flowing in the direction of his team. But that was always with a beer in hand and several already consumed (cont. pg 2).

LIFESTYLE OVERHAUL

SUPPORT THE PETITION!

The Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery (SVVOR) is a community organization advocating for those in recovery from drugs and alcohol. Our primary mission—for Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties—is to create an environment suited so that those in recovery do not fall back on old ways. Those in recovery need solid introductions to clean and sober living. Those in recovery must have support. But, where to begin? One way to help those addicted find recovery is a residential treatment in-patient facility focusing on substance abuse treatment. Unfortunately, no such place exists in the Sauk Valley Area.

Counselors, physicians and social services are struggling to find placements for those in need of treatment. Too many needing help are turned away due to space limitations. Further obstacles include travel and the expense of private treatment facilities.

SVVOR asks that you please sign a petition supporting a residential in-patient drug and alcohol treatment center in the Sauk Valley Area. This facility would prioritize those living in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties; it would also work with the State of Illinois Medical Card. Please support those in need.

Thank you.

This petition can be found at SVVOR.org or on our Facebook page or Change.org



AUTUMN IN SOBRIETY

Cont. from pg 1:

For the first time since he could remember, he now sat in front of the TV with a ginger ale with three months of sobriety already under belt. He did not feel excited or interested in the game and was watching only for the sake of his wife. He believed and accepted that hockey could no longer be a part of his life if he was to remain sober. As the game progressed, his wife noticed that he was moving closer to the edge of his chair. Ten minutes in, the Habs scored and my friend, without any forethought, found himself jumping with joy and wrapped in his wife's arms in celebration. He suddenly stopped, pulled away from his wife, and stared at her in bewilderment. After a few seconds, the two re-embraced with a joy that neither had ever experienced watching a game together.

The fundamental emotive qualities that explained my friend's passion for hockey were still there – they were not alcohol or drug dependent– they were dependent on him; his true self. This story demonstrates that those things in life that are truly important will continue to be so in sobriety. In fact, the joyous moments surrounding the seasonal rituals of life will be more fully appreciated once the addict enters into recovery. The social lubricant of alcohol and drugs were not enhancing the celebratory mood of holidays or social occasions, they were masking them – only allowing a debased and altered understanding of the factors that render these occasions so special. In treatment for these addictions, the individual is exposed to “mindfulness” therapies that teach the value of appreciation for the “real” human qualities that determine our true nature and our ability to appreciate and celebrate the intimate social and familial gatherings that return year in and year out as the seasons revolve. The laughter and joy that these occasions bring to friends and family are NOT dependent on stimulants such as alcohol or drugs – they are pure and only once the drugs and alcohol are removed from the addicts life can he or she fully embrace the wonder of these events.

Sobriety Home Foundation offer a number of helpful therapies and have qualified therapists who are very much aware that the joyous celebration of life are vital, and they develop programs in their institutions that lead to the recovering addict's awareness that they will be participants in these events and that they will embrace them and appreciate them on a greater and much more profound level in sobriety. --www.sobriety.ca.

For some, attending in-person meetings has become difficult. Whether it be transportation, Covid precautions, changing jobs (YEAH!! to having a job), those in recovery are finding it harder and harder to make an in-person meeting, according to Nina Damhoff at the Whiteside County Health Department.

The stresses of Covid and of the upcoming holidays are frightening. Feeling isolated, fear, anger, resentment, jealousy (*stop already* with social media) bring tension and strain to an already overtaxed system. And here's where maladaptive coping skills have gotten us in past trouble.

Sponsors, group members and clinicians are how we learn to deal with life's stressors in positive and healthy ways. And when we find it difficulty to physically see these people, old coping skills may try and make a return. Please reach out before this happens!!

At SVVOR, a list of area in-person meetings can be found online (SVVOR.org). If unable to make one of these, go online; intherooms.com or virtual-na.org/meetings are great starters. Podcasts are also good for a daily recovery boost. The *ODAAT Chat Podcast*, *The Bubble Hour* and *Recovery Elevator* dive into all areas of recovery.

Whatever you do, don't do it alone. Help is available. Contact SVVOR.org for more information.