

CHANGING LIVES

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News of Note:

- Paul Cannon & Scott Whittle represented The Bridge at the ASI Convention in Tampa in August.
- Ruth Brown's new cookbook, "Cooking with Love 2" is selling extremely well. Proceeds from the sale will go for an additional freezer in the Food Services area.
- The ladies' bedrooms at Lorne's Place were redecorated recently in light, cheerful colors. Redecorating the men's quarters in the Denski House will be our next major project.
- Carol Cannon is scheduled to present the keynote and two workshops at the 20th Annual Celebration of Family Recovery in Hagerstown, MD, September 26.-28.
- Clients will be attending the Kentucky Recovery Fest in Bowling Green the last weekend in August.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS EVENT

The much-anticipated community awareness event, Tiffany's Tea, took place on June 30 at Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green. Our featured speaker, Linda Chapman, came from California with her husband to share the story of their daughter Tiffany's life and tragic death from addiction to prescription drugs.

"As parents, we weren't prepared for this. We didn't know what to do," said Chapman. Following her presentation, Greg Eurick, Program Director at The Bridge, responded, "Your daughter's death

was not in vain, Linda. This was the most moving story I have ever heard. We have all benefited from your sharing it."



Tablescape at Tiffany's Tea

Sponsored by five helping agencies (The Bridge, Onsite, Quest House, The Ranch, and Life Skills), the program was both touching and informative. Representatives from each of the sponsoring agencies described the services they offer to individuals and families struggling with similar problems. At-

tendees were also given packets with additional information.

Plans and arrangements for Tiffany's Tea were made by Tammy Eurick, Marketing Director; Scott Whittle, Development Director; Ruth Brown, Food Services Director; and other staff and volunteers.

UPCOMING ALUMNI WEEKEND

The fall Celebration of Recovery/Bridge Alumni Weekend is scheduled for Oct. 17-19, 2008. Annette P, alumna and former staff member, will speak at the Saturday night meeting on "The Many Faces of Fear."

Says Annette, "My fears were so well disguised that I could not recognize them for what they were. I blamed my inadequacies (the inability to communicate openly and honestly, the inability to feel, and



Playground Construction

the inability to love) on other people and circumstances. The twelve steps taught me how to stop masking my fears with alcohol, food, fantasy, etc."

Intended to be both fun and inspiring, the Celebration of Recovery will be held in a big tent placed next to the new Inner Child Playground. Designed, created, and donated by Don and Vera F., the playground includes a sandbox with a beach umbrella, a volleyball court, tree swings, and other stuff for little kids in adult bodies.

For further information about the Celebration, call our toll-free number (877-866-8661) or email nancy@thebridgetorecovery.com.

SPECIAL FEATURE BY CAROL CANNON

EXACTLY WHAT IS A NEGAHOLIC?

How would you define *negaholism*? I consider it a habitual frame of reference—a deeply embedded mental filter system through which everything looks bleak. For people reared in the midst of addiction or abuse, such an outlook comes quite naturally. It's like second nature. Adults who have endured painful experiences as children and who have been unable to express their feelings openly have a truckload of backlogged emotions. These feelings get stuck in the pipeline.

Several years ago, I asked my then twenty-nine-year-old son, Kurt, to email me a sizable file of photographs that he had scanned at my request. For some reason, I couldn't download the file when it came in. My little computer hummed and blinked busily for ten minutes, and then I received a message that said, "Shame on you—your file is too big."

I telephoned Kurt, who obligingly divided the file in half and re-sent the material. But I couldn't download the smaller files either. I didn't realize that the original transmission was stuck in the pipeline, preventing new messages from coming through. When I deleted the offending file, it reappeared. I still couldn't open it. I deleted it again and emptied the trash. Assuming that it was in the garbage truck going down the road, I logged off, triumphant.

When I logged back on, the original message was back. I deleted it yet again. It reappeared. I'm nothing if not persistent, but computers disdain



persistence. I could not make that file go away. Being technologically challenged (would you have guessed it?), I had no idea what to do. Finally, it occurred to me to accept my powerlessness—my inability to solve the problem single-handedly—and call tech support. The technician said that my system was log-jammed. The oversize file was too big to budge. That's why I couldn't get rid of it.

Negaholism is like that. Traumatic life experiences create painful feelings that build up and create a backlog of negative emotions that get stuck in the pipeline and recycle themselves endlessly. This may have to do with the fact that the brain itself has a bad-news bias. According to research done at Ohio State University, our brains react more strongly to negative stimuli than to positive stimuli. There is a greater surge in electrical activity when we hear anything downbeat than when we hear something upbeat. Since our survival depends on our ability to detect and dodge danger, this is a good thing. But, on occasion, it can work against us. If the internal alarm system becomes hypersensitive and be-

gins to cycle constantly, we've got a problem.

Here's a brief summary of the things martyrs and misery addicts do best:

1. They assume the worst, await disaster, anticipate unhappiness, expect abuse or abandonment, and assume that everybody is against them.
2. They absorb blame and guilt, think they deserve to be maltreated and, when it happens, they blame themselves.
3. They accept the unacceptable, tolerate the intolerable. Victim/martyrs are like door-mats with Welcome signs on them.
4. They worry OUT LOUD. Rehashing their worries endlessly reinforces their pessimism.
5. They collect grievances. Martyrs never forget an insult. They can recount every detail long after the fact: what the offender was wearing, where he sat, and what he said.
6. They invite persecution. Misery addict's minds are offense-seeking missiles. They don't feel right unless they're being wronged!
7. They indulge in self-punishment, self-sacrifice, and self-sabotage. They berate themselves, use self-demeaning language, and refuse to accept affirmation.

Adapted from Hooked on Unhappiness, pp. 28, 29, 35-43.