

The Stories of Recovery

Putting a Face
and Voice on
Recovery

Recovery is
everywhere

Speak out
about the
solution –
recovery

Our Stories
Have Power



MOAR

Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery

MOAR on Recovery Capital: An Investment for Society



MOAR
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Second Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-423-6627
Fax: 617-423-6626
www.moar-recovery.org



“Visible, Vocal,
Valuable,
Victorious
Voices for Recovery”



Welcome to our Addiction Recovery Stories Brochure that captivates and promotes stories of individuals, families, communities, coalitions, celebrations exemplifying the theme:

MOAR on Recovery Capital: An Investment for Society

People in long-term recovery, their families and friends share their recovery stories and advocacy successes to give hope to others and demonstrate the power and reality of long-term recovery. **MOAR** has learned that the way that we talk about recovery and the issues that we care about makes a difference – how we handle questions about addiction and recovery, policy issues and our personal experiences.

MOAR believes that addiction recovery is an investment for society. We believe that
Faces and Voices of Recovery ~ Visible, Vocal, Valuable
Demonstrate Hope that Recovery is Possible,
As we Remove Stigma and Discrimination

Special stories and pictures are wanted from you! Upon receiving your writing contribution, we will ask you to sign a form, which verifies your permission to use it. Please send your story, with or without pictures, of 150 words or less to the above address. You may email your contribution to maryanne@moar-recovery.org.

Please join our **MOAR** Voices for Recovery Speakers Bureau. We want to expand our capacity to educate the public about the value of recovery. We want your involvement and ideas.

Get involved in **MOAR** now.

Sincerely yours,

Maryanne Frangules

Maryanne Frangules

MOAR Executive Director

- Please know that **MOAR** participation does not mean you have to be public about your recovery. People choose to voice the value of recovery in the way that supports their values of recovery. This is one way to demonstrate “Recovery Capital: An Investment for Society”

You will note the focus of Recovery Capital from William White. He has introduced the concepts of recovery management and draws from researcher William Cloud in promoting the notion of recovery capital—those assets and resources a person brings to the recovery process. His writings are available at the Web site of [Behavioral Health Recovery Management, Inc. \(www.bhrm.org\)](http://www.bhrm.org).

MOAR - MA Organization for Addiction Recovery

MOAR's Invitation for You!

To participate in a statewide organization and project encouraging people in addiction recovery, their families, friends and supporters to participate in our public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of alcohol and other drug addictions.

Why MOAR?

The general public generally hears and sees the devastating effects of addiction, and does not grasp the positive contributions of people in the addiction recovery process. Through active involvement in the organization and membership of MOAR, people can take part in this exciting, grassroots movement.

What is MOAR?

MOAR, Inc. is a non-profit association with Third Sector New England, as fiscal sponsor

Mission:

To organize recovering individuals, families, and friends into a collective voice to educate the public about the value of recovery from alcohol and other addictions.

Vision:

To live in a society where addiction is treated as a significant public health issue and recovery is recognized as valuable to our communities.

Board of Directors:

President Amos Marshall, Vice President Thomas Delaney, Clerk: Rocco Antonelli Jr, Treasurer: Joseph Kelleher, Members: James Direda, Woody Giessmann, Maureen Harvey, Paul Kusiak, Daniel O'Connor, Rob Pezzella, Kate McHugh, Matthew Donovan and Vicente Sanabria.

You Can Do MOAR!

Please join us in Boston, East Boston, South Boston, Springfield, New Bedford, Worcester, and Beverly with plans for other areas. We need your voice to be an even stronger collective voice for addiction recovery.

What MOAR do We do?

- **MOAR** participates in peer recovery services, with local and national partners. We collaborate with Faces and Voices of Recovery, a national recovery movement.
- We participate in The Good Samaritan Campaign to build the way for legal protection from drug possession charges to people who seek medical attention for someone experiencing an overdose to save lives.
- We collaborate with Boston Public Health Commission NoDrug, Overdose Prevention, and Underage Drinking Prevention coalitions plus Massachusetts Coalition for Addiction Services to mobilize for positive change!
- Our Recovery Month Celebrations such as The Massachusetts Ride for Recovery led with Middlesex Human Services Agency, with past support from US Dept. of Human Services, SAMHSA/CSAT is another example.

Join MOAR!

Some **MOAR** Recovery Stories in a Capsule

Kattie Portis

Most recently, Kattie was the Mayor of Boston's Substance Abuse Policy Advisor. She is a MOAR valuable person, as she reaches out to promote prevention and recovery. She has been the driving force of the Recovery Month Walk.

Pete Crumb

He is a man in recovery, who has given his time to building safe communities promoting prevention and recovery. He is a leader in many western Massachusetts and statewide organizations. He is a valued **MOAR** Member and was President of MAADAC, MA Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors.

Diane Kurtz

She is the founding member of The Western MA Parent Support Group. She has over 12 years of group experience of helping parents support themselves and learn to navigate the system. She has done "How to Do Parent Support Groups" for families who want to do the same in their community. Her work served as a foundation for other family support groups. Both Pete and Diane's passion with **MOAR** support helped to bring about a western MA adolescent recovery home.

Amos Marshall

He is our **MOAR** President. He has moved from living in shelters to directing substance abuse services in a shelter. The man is a picture of recovery.

Maureen Harvey

She is a mother, who helps other parents and people in need of recovery, find necessary resources. She is passionate about helping others and providing hope. We love that she is so active with MOAR.

Joanne Peterson

She is the founder of The Learn to Cope Parent Support Group. She found herself strapped by society view point about addiction in the family, and from her learning how to move from isolation provided the means to start the ever growing Learn to Cope Family Support Group.

Teen Challenge Recovery Choir

Teen Challenge is a national faith based addiction treatment center. Their recovery flows in their music. Teen Challenge performs at our Recovery Month March and Celebration.

Telling Your Story in Sixty To Ninety Seconds

To tell your story in sixty to ninety seconds, to make a point with a purpose, use one or two sentences utilizing each of the following outline points.

- “I’m (your name) and I am in long-term recovery, which means that I have not used alcohol or other drugs for more than (insert the number of years that you are in recovery) years. Or... I am in long term recovery, which means that I have been helped by medication assisted treatment and/or with recovery support.
- I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future, while helping me gain stability in my life (use concrete examples).
- I am now speaking out because long-term recovery has helped me change my life for the better, and I want to make it possible for others to do the same.

SHARING YOUR STORY A Little **MOAR** Manual

Remember using your recovery story as an educational outreach opportunity is very different than telling your story at a 12-Step Meeting. You need not tell the specific details of your drug use or the very personal places that your addiction brought you. Whether speaking or writing your story for presentation, only do what you feel comfortable doing. You, as a person in recovery, are most important and valued, above all else. Remember you are teaching people about the value of recovery.

Some suggestions when preparing to share your story

- 1) When preparing your story, know these facts:
 - Who you will be talking to (Type, gender, and age of group)
 - Why have they invited you to tell your story (What is the purpose for your being there)
 - Are there going to be other speakers
 - What is the length of time you will be speaking
- 2) Use a format which emphasizes the positive changes in recovery
 - Strength: Share the strengths that you developed while in recovery and let people how treatment or whatever support systems helped and help you to cope
 - Hope: Share what you hope continues within your life in recovery, and what you hope the results will be of you telling your story.
- 3) Remember that for every story there is a beginning, middle, and end.
- 4) Always be honest. Never embellish or exaggerate your story and never tell a lie.
- 5) Never “put down” or say anything negative about a specific person, religious group, political party, institution, organization, or agency. Doing could cause problems or offend someone.

- 6) Remember that you are telling “your story,” not that of a spouse, family member, or friend. They may be part of the story, but do not make it their story.
- 7) Do not get too personal. The audience or reader does not need to know specifics. Be careful not to say anything that you might regret saying or that can be used against you later.
- 8) Never swear or use off-color or foul language.
- 9) Be careful not to use recovery “catch phrases” or 12-Step language that the reader or audience might not understand.
- 10) If you are hand writing your story, make sure that it is legible. Always proof read to correct any mistakes you may have made.
- 11) If you are including your children in your story, it might be useful to include a picture of the family together. Be sure you are comfortable doing this and are not endangering your children or placing them in a detrimental position.
- 12) If you plan to read your story to an audience, read it aloud to a friend first. This is a good way to be sure that it has the planned effect when read aloud. You also might want to time how long you take so that you are sure you speak for time you intend.
- 13) However you present your story, be honest, to the point, and be yourself. Do not use phrases that you are not accustomed to or that are difficult for you to say.
- 14) If you are speaking to an audience, try video or audio taping a “milk run” so that you can see how you look and sound. Does this until you feel comfortable with your presentation?

Additional Resources:

Faces & Voices of Recovery
1010 Vermont Ave. #708
Washington, DC 20005
Phone (202) 737-0690
Fax (202) 737-0695

<http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org>

Statewide
MOAR_MA Organization
for **A**ddiction **R**ecovery
c/o Boston ASAP
3rd floor, 30 Winter Street
Boston, MA 02108
617-423-6627
Fax-617-423-6626
Email: maryanne@moar-recovery.org
www.moar-recovery.org

**Join The MA Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Consumer Advisory
Board Call MA Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
Recovery Support Services Coordinator
Julia Ojeda at 617-624-5147**

Suggested Steps When Presenting Your Story to a Group:

- 1) Before speaking, remember the who, what, when, where, how, and why of telling story
 - Who will your audience be (gender, age, size of audience)
 - What is the purpose of talking to them (What type of group is it; legislators, service providers, students, etc.)
 - When are you scheduled to speak
 - Where are you going to be speaking
(auditorium, office, restaurant, from a podium, on a panel, from the audience, etc.)
 - How is the speaking format set up
(Is there more than one speaker, how are you being introduced)
 - Why are you there and what do you expect to accomplish
- 2) Have your story prepared in written form. Bring the written copy with you. Index cards that outline your story can be helpful in guiding you.
- 3) Leave for your destination early allowing time for traffic or unexpected circumstance.
- 4) Dress appropriately. You are representing MOAR and the Recovery Community.
- 5) Arrive early so you can familiarize yourself with the surroundings.
- 6) Review your notes and papers.
- 7) When you arrive, introduce yourself to the event's sponsor or other person in charge.
- 8) Realize that there may be media and photographers present.
- 9) Realize that people you know may be there.
- 10) Remember to stick to your speech format. Many good speakers refer to notes.
- 11) Remember to speak clearly, slowly, and loudly. Speak directly into the microphone and adjust the mike if you need to.
- 12) It is good to make eye contact with people. Find a friendly face or someone you know.
- 13) If you run out of things to say, stop speaking, say thank you, and sit down.
- 14) Do not leave the room immediately when you finish speaking. Be polite and listen to what others have to say.
- 15) When the meeting is over, thank those who invited you and make yourself available to answer any questions people may have.

**Remember that you are representing MOAR.
BE HAPPY AND KNOW THAT YOU MADE DIFFERENCE**

**Learn to Cope Support Group:
A Parents Pathway to Recovery,
by Joanne Peterson**



A parent's worst nightmare is either the death of a child from an accident or a terminal illness. Another nightmare is when your child becomes addicted to Heroin or Oxycontin.

Unfortunately this is not a rare thing these days. Not long after my son's 19th birthday our family faced this nightmare. My son who had graduated high school and was on his way to a successful life became one of the unfortunate stories of the present.

He had it all, good looks, a promising future, many friends and a family who loves him very much. For reasons I will never understand he tried snorting heroin one night at a friends house. Heroin does not allow for experimentation. Use turns quickly into addiction.

We watched in horror as the drug took him away and turned him into someone else. After all the years of warning him about drugs, heroin never crossed my mind. I can't describe the pain of losing them to this drug. It can be like watching someone kill themselves slowly. My son ended up in jail for a crime he never would have committed if it wasn't for this drug. It's a long and painful process trying to help your child and yourself through this. A parent is faced with judgment, guilt, fear and uncertainty of the future every single day. I had to learn to cope.

I could not believe that living out in the suburbs as we do that this could happen, but it did, and our family was not the only ones affected by this. Many parents are feeling alone and helpless through this. My son had mentioned that I should start a parents group because I was constantly seeking other parents going through the same thing.

In May of that year I started to speak out to parents on a panel convened by then Norfolk County DA Bill Keating, now a congressman! After that I agreed to interview for a local newspaper and advertised my support group and gave it a name.

After the story hit I received 93 emails. Some had already tragically lost their children, some were experiencing the desperation of trying to get treatment, some were visiting their children in jail and some were just emailing me to thank me for telling our story.

Learn to Cope is going strong today. We have meeting locations in Boston, Brockton, Salem, Lowell, Cambridge, Holyoke, Worcester, Quincy, Cambridge, Norwell, Tewksbury and Gloucester. We teach family members opioid overdose prevention We have an email support group, too. Some live too far or work at night but we are all in touch and we are all there for each other and coping together. We are growing stronger every day!

Go to www.LearntoCope.org for info

Parent Support Group of W MA - 20 Plus Years of Helping Families

Through MOAR and other organizations, the facilitators of the Parent Support Group of Western Massachusetts have spoken at groups in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and on a national level on How to do a Parent Support Group.

The parent support group is a peer to peer run group. The people in group have experienced the direct trauma that comes with having a child who has or is using substances. The group's goal is to help parents achieve a way to cope with active or inactive addiction behaviors in their children. To educate on issues that affect their immediate lives and help parents learn new skills that will create a more serene household. We discuss different topics that affect the way we relate to our children regarding the disease of substance disorder.

Part of the presentation goes over the stages that most parents go through. Also discussed is that there is no expectations from the parents to do any one thing. Each parent needs to do what his/her own comfort level allows. We also talk about how the facilitator is the time keeper and order keeper. We discuss the importance of dealing with denial and enabling and how it can be discussed in a gentle fashion. Also mentioned is the importance of respecting the person's floor time. Cross talk is allowed, but the facilitator needs to make sure things stay under control.

We present a list of what is important in establishing and continuing with a support group. A meeting place, (hopefully free) picking a time and day and the importance of consistently being there. How sometimes it takes a while for the group to catch on and you could be sitting in an empty room for a couple of month, but not to give up.

When attending meetings, seminars and forums concerning adolescent behavior and addiction disorder treatment, we collected materials to use to create our parent packets. Included is information regarding signs and symptoms, mental health issues, treatment, Alanon meeting schedules and the way to do an intervention and other resource material. A questionnaire was started to find out how long it took for a parent to seek help for themselves and get some acceptable treatment resources. A resource binder containing this information was created and available each week for parents to use. In addition to this, parents are encouraged to bring any flyer or information about where they have sought treatment for their children. Included also in this binder is information regarding help for mental health, the juvenile justice system, insurance and some transitional housing.

We explain that through **MOAR**, we learned the importance for outreach. Some of our outreach has taken us to school forums, school open houses, school substance abuse counselor's associate meeting and meeting with service providers. We are members of **MOAR**, and give a voice for families at local events. All this has allowed us to be visible and a contributor to the community and created a trust in our ability to function as a group that is helping parents.

Another avenue **MOAR** has helped us learn is advocacy. We are able to tell parents first hand how our voice was heard when a treatment facility closed in our area and a new one opened to replace it. We also explain the importance of educating our legislators of the value of treatment and recovery.

One of the most important things we like to leave a group with is the rewards, we have received from doing this type of work. To watch someone who felt alone and defeated realize they are not alone and there is hope.

Is Your Child Addicted to Alcohol and / or Other Drugs? Get Help from Other Parents and Other Support Services

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Parent Support Groups of W MA | Barbara Gallo Patricia Fereira | 413-245-1252 413-534-7237 | Holyoke |
| Allies in Recovery www.alliesinrecovery.org | | 413-210-3724 | Northampton |
| Whatever it Takes Parent Support Group | Deb Sadowy | 413-442-0935 | Pittsfield |
| Learn to Cope Parent Support Group www.learn2cope.org | Joanne Peterson | 508-801-3247 | Boston, Brockton, Gloucester, Lowell, Worcester, and Salem |
| The Parents' Forum | Eve Sullivan | 617-253-7182 | Cambridge |
| A Circle of Hope | Phil Lahey | 978-557-9235 Lahey2000@verizon.net | Lawrence |
| North Suffolk Mental Health Association | Kim Hanton | 617-912-7504 | East Boston |
| Bedford Parents support Group | Joanne Glover | Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30 pm Unitarian Church | Great Road, Bedford |
| Mass General Hospital | Maureen McGlame | Thursday 617-726-2712 | Mass General Hospital |
| Journey to Hope-Family Support Group | Susan Silva | journeytohope@comcast.net | East Bridgewater Town Hall & Middleboro Life House Church |
| Friends Helping Friends with Alcohol and Substance Abuse | Linda Vecchia | 617-846-7959 617-276-2544 lynvec@comcast.net | Winthrop |

Ruth's Story

August 25, 2004 is an evening I will never forget. It was my class graduation dinner at Brandeis University from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management. As I sat at the dinner table at the Faculty Lounge with my 89 year old mother and my husband by my side, my heart was full of gratitude for the incredible life that I have been given.

Over thirty years ago, I came face to face with the disease of alcoholism. For seventeen years alcohol slowly took from me everything I held near and dear. In the end I was an empty shell, sick, confused and hopeless. My new life began on October 20, 1973. Today the damage of the past has been repaired in every area of my life and my journey continues to amaze me - the gifts of recovery are miracles. Every day is a new beginning full of hope and promise. Challenges are opportunities and I am living a full life. My professional accomplishments which include my RN nursing degree and my work in the addiction field give me great satisfaction every day of my life.

My husband and my two sons and their wives and my four grandchildren are my joy. My wealth of friends both old and new have been by my side through the hills and valleys of life and they all celebrated with me recently on the occasion of my Masters Degree. I thank God each morning for this wonderful gift of recovery. Ruth Kelley

My experience in the Boston Consortium of Services for Families in Recovery By: Luz M. López, MSW, MPH, DSW, PHD

Working at the Boston Consortium of Services for Families in Recovery, a program of the Boston Public Health Commission, was a dream job because I combined direct care, management, service coordination, research and evaluation. With funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, this project sought to improve the delivery of substance abuse services by integrating treatment of trauma and mental health. It included the development and implementation of services not previously offered in substance abuse treatment, training staff in this work and engaging consumers in meaningful ways at all levels of the program.

As we came to the end of six years of implementing these changes, I can say that we have been successful. I have witnessed the improved capacity in programs to provide these services and the courage and resiliency of women survivors of violence and substance abuse. I have learned that providing comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and trauma informed services in substance abuse programs, truly makes a difference in women's lives. I also have grown in my own understanding of these issues and had the opportunity of collaborating with an array of providers and agencies, such as Harvard Street, Women Circle and Griffin House, Elizabeth Stone House and MOAR.

We also benefited from the voices and experiences of women Consumers, Survivors and in Recovery from substance abuse (CSRs) who contributed in the planning, development and implementation of the project. The participants have shared thoughtful and powerful insights and suggestions for improvements and made presentations at the BCSFR Steering Committee, State House, legislators meetings, etc. The courage and determination of these consumers are an inspiration for all of us. I remain committed to this work, and I feel grateful to have been part of an outstanding team of individuals who made this project possible.

**Poem
By
Natasha**

It seems only yesterday, I was young and having fun.
But then came my teenage years, and I decided to go on the run
I learned about drugs and sex and men that were just a joke.
And after they had a piece of me I'd sit in the bath to soak.
Drugs were taking over and I'd do anything for a fix.
And at the same time the town was calling me a trick.
I was dying a slow death; I was very sick you see.
I woke up in the hospital and wondered what had happened to me.
The doctor came with a folder full of tests.
I knew it was something bad cause in the mirror I looked a mess.
I read the packet slowly, and then I started just to cry.
I found out I had AIDS and I was very soon to die.
They did the best they could to get me on my feet.
And as soon as I left the hospital my dealer gave me a treat.
Back on the same stuff that was quickening my death.
I said to myself who cares and I shot all the rest.
I overdosed that day and I was very soon to die.
So I wrote this poem for you to know that drugs are not worth the try.
But if you are already using and you think its fun, well you'll see.
You'll see that it only kills you like it did me.

Was I a Bad Girl?

Did I do something wrong? I cried but I never knew what I was crying for. I grew up in a hell that continued into adulthood.

I suffered, my children suffered and then I began to break the cycle. I have been living with the disease of addiction since I was a child. My first addiction was stuffing my feelings about the age of six. I stopped feeling and then when I began to feel I did things obsessively so I wouldn't have to feel or deal with the pain of my childhood. As an adult I couldn't see myself as a victim. I made my choices and I would have to live with it love with it. I did not make the choice to be a drug addict or any addict.

Ericka

Treatment has helped to keep me alive. Detox, Intensive Outpatient (Day Treatment), and recovery homes have assisted me in learning recovery skills. I am grateful that Conexions, day treatment service is still open. I never thought that I would be grateful to coerced, mandated treatment – as in Drug Court. However, I am very grateful. I can be a mother to my children in the true sense of the word. I can be present to my brothers, who are, also, challenged by this disease. Recovery made me employable. I have done Community Service with **MOAR**, which has helped me learn how to navigate the system in a way that allows me mutual respect. **MOAR** validated what I relearn on a daily basis, to keep my recovery first, and that is the best community service of all.

Deb- A Parent Recovery Story

The Office of Patient Protection Chapter!

My story began like most of our stories do...you slowly start to sense something is wrong, seeing changes in your child or family member that you do not understand. My daughter is nineteen year old. When her grades began declining and her interest in participating in sports waned, I wondered if this was attributable to “normal teen development. It really was the beginning of her descent into addiction.

Traumatizing does not even begin to do justice to what you feel when you are watching your child or loved one literally dying before your eyes. In the midst of this crisis, I had to fight for insurance coverage and justify why treatment is necessary.

I hope my story offers support and resources to anyone in a similar place.

In November 2006, a decision was made to seek inpatient treatment. This decision was made following a near fatal alcohol overdose, a second emergency hospitalization for alcohol poisoning. A prior history of repeated relapses and a treatment history involving multiple treatment attempts evidenced by four plus years of outpatient therapy, both in individual & hospital settings, multiple assessments by addiction specialists.

Despite her history, my insurance company denied payment for her detox and rehabilitation stay. I found my way to the Office of Patient Protection because **MOAR** and the Parent Support Group of Western Massachusetts referred me. The Office of Patient Protection’s Stephanie Carter walked me through the appeal process. Ultimately my insurance company had to pay the eligible benefits.

Healthcare should be available for all people. Addiction needs to be recognized as a disease and healthcare coverage for treatment needs to be on par with coverage for other diseases.

We all need to stand up and end insurance discrimination. I encourage all to join parent support groups and MOAR! I hope that by our stories, we can increase resource awareness, such as **Health Law Advocates** and **the Office for Patient Protection**.

If your insurance company denies necessary treatment coverage call

Health Law Advocates

617-338-5241

Visit their website at: www.healthlawadvocates.org

And/Or

Office of Patient Protection: 1-800-436-7757



Interview with Paul Kusiak, **MOAR** Parent Member

As a result of Paul Kusiak's experience of having a child in the Minnesota recovery high school system, he clearly is glad to have Massachusetts do the same.

Paul's experience has taught him that parent and other family member's need support to:

- Realize that they cannot control their child's disease
- Learn how to lovingly detach, and not enable their child's self destructive behaviors
- Attend parent support groups where they can share experiences, learn to live their lives knowing that their child's recovery is hopeful and a real possibility.

He supports efforts to make prevention and treatment more accessible to all. Ending insurance discrimination is near and dear to his heart, too.

Mellisa's Story

Today, I am in recovery from addiction. I am grateful that I was coerced into treatment. Because of long term treatment I am able to be a mother, a daughter, a sister, and a wife. I had been struggling with my addiction for 7 years only to find myself homeless, living on Boston streets, in and out of treatment. I felt completely hopeless.

I was so desperate to stop but I didn't know how...It was life or death

Through the Cambridge Drug Court Program I was court mandated into Meridian House, which is a structured therapeutic community home. Drug Court and Meridian House taught me there are consequences to my actions. I learned to be held accountable for my choices. Long term, supportive, structured therapeutic community and active participation in 12th step groups helped me live in recovery. My community service participation with MOAR is now my employment. As a **MOAR**, MA Organization for Addiction Recovery member, I am helping to end discrimination surrounding addiction recovery.

Today, I am glad to say I am employed by **MOAR**. I am married, a mother, and a tax paying voting citizen! I know my voice counts!



Woody Giessmann

Woody Giessmann, LADC-I, CADAC (**Right Turn** CEO and founder), in long term recovery, an addiction counselor, and former Del Fuegos drummer, started Right Turn in March of 2003. Right Turn supports artists to enhance one's creativity by learning to live alcohol and other drug free, with new wellness skills.

Through his experience, as a creative person moving from a drug addiction history to becoming a drug addiction clinician, he has developed a unique treatment approach incorporating creative expression into recovery models. Right Turn brings creative people together into a safe haven where they can explore their art and preserve their creative gifts. Woody is a licensed and certified addiction counselor.

Woody has worked in many treatment modalities. His membership with **MOAR**, Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery demonstrates his commitment to spread the value of addiction recovery.

So Woody has created Right Turn, a vision of becoming the leading provider of drug, alcohol, and psychiatric treatment to the creative community, disseminating a unique treatment approach in settings all over the country. Creative people join together at Right Turn Inc to share ideas and develop an incredible sense of community. This is how and where the healing begins.

**For more Right Turn Information:
Call 781-646-3800 or go to info@right-turn.org.**



Above: Maryanne Frangules and Charlie Yetman at MOAR's Recovery Day Celebration 2009

The Charlie Yetman Story

I am one of the luckiest guys in the world! That's how I feel and I would like to qualify that. At this point in my life, I have been with the Boston Public Health Commission for over 18 years. I was hired by a wonderful woman with BPHC, Carol Fabyan-Takki, who has been my supervisor since 1990. Just imagine getting paid for something you loved doing for nothing. My position has always been one of providing help to others. What greater place to be in life? To watch miracles occur as the result of a little love, understanding, and acceptance. I followed suit with volunteering and it resulted in a teaching position at U-Mass. I teach Criminal Justice and love every minute of it. Again, I was hired by another terrific person, my former professor, Dianne Doyle-Pita, Ph.D.

Okay, here's the kicker; I am in my second decade of recovery from substance abuse. Along with that came a lot of wreckage; with that wreckage a CORI. The insight that these organizations had and the trust that is given to me and a lot of others with the same background issues is inspirational to say the least. We have been able to open numerous programs. The most recent being The Eddie Wyman Reentry Center at Long Island. This is a 30-90 day program. Men coming out of prison can be triaged, assessed, and evaluated for further treatment. More miracles to witness! Those of us that work with the program are licensed and empowered by agencies with the same penchant for insight.(i.e.; DPH, NAFC, MBSACC, DPS, MOAR, CCJPC to name a few) They realize that there is a unique quality that we have, an identification process. We are able to provide hope by our example and peer mentoring, along with our professional acumen. We are able to take toxic frames of reference and through an eclectic approach, help others to help themselves.

I don't want the reader to think that this author is anything special or an anomaly. Quite the opposite, I am one of many with something to offer. We only need a chance. I was given that chance and now I get to do what I love to do, making a living at the same time. I feel like the luckiest man in the world, but there are many men and women who will feel the same way if given the chance. *Charles Yetman, LADC I, CCS, CADAC II, CCJS, CDVC*



Michelle Jackson

My story began in Boston, Massachusetts January 16, 1979. My biological mother was 17 years old at the time of my birth. The decision was made that she was too young to raise a child; being a child herself and I was put up for adoption. Doreen and Bill Jackson (my adoptive parents) brought me home at the age of two weeks. I have 5 brothers. I was an all-star athlete on all levels. I played basketball on a High School Varsity level for 4 years, played on a Division 2 level in college, and had the opportunity to play on a Professional level as well. I come from a very loving and caring family atmosphere. I always received the hugs and kisses, the “good job Michelle,” and was greatly encouraged to follow my dreams and further my education.

Wanting to be accepted by my peers, at the age of 11, I had my first encounter with alcohol and marijuana. I was immediately addicted to that feeling it gave me. It had me wanting more. The obsession then progressed thru high school to compulsion. I then started experimenting with cocaine and prescription medicine. Failing grades, court appearances, jail cells, disappointment, and dereliction became very familiar. I began doing the very things I said I would never do to get high. In my addiction, I have had several ambulance rides due to numerous overdoses. I have been shot, had knives put to my neck, in some of the most dangerous areas, all due to finding the ways and means to get more.

At the age of 19, I was admitted to my first treatment program. At the program, I learned what I suffered from was called Addiction. It is a disease that is progressive, incurable, and fatal if undetected. I began finding out what my triggers were and why I continued to use even after knowing what the results would be. I started going to recovery support meetings with the other clients. I found a place where people, just like me had experienced and felt the pain I was feeling. They taught me that using is never the answer. They loved me until I could learn to love myself. At 18 months clean, I was ready to begin my journey to recovery. I went back to school and became a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Support groups and recovery meetings have saved my life

We all have certain gifts. My gift happens to be music. My music is my life experience and with that, I hope to encourage others to seek recovery. I am grateful to all of the people who have helped me and continue to help me in my journey. Without them, I would not have had the chance to live a more God centered life rather than a self-centered one and turn my despair to hope.

Sad Note: Michelle passed away in the last year from natural causes.



Jared Hamre

What has changed Me!

I celebrated seven years of recovery on September 13th 2012. That means 7 years without drugs. I am grateful for my recovery, and that does not mean life struggles have not come my way. Recovery has given me tools to cope with challenges.

For me, residential treatment, as in Phoenix House of Springfield started me on this life learning process. The staff and residents taught me the correct behaviors to lead a productive life. I learned that practicing positive behavior change has helped me become a good, dependable person.

I am still the same person that walked in those doors but I have changed how I act and how I perceive myself. When I was about 6 months into my recovery I decided to start giving back by speaking at my former high school. Helping others, owning my history, and sharing the value of my recovery has taken away the unnecessary shame to this disease

My drug addiction would have ruined my life. Recovery- in a matter of 3 years brought me positive friendships, a house, a dog, a loving significant other, who is not ashamed of my past and is rather proud and interested in my recovery. I am now a proud and dedicated father. I feel sad that some of my friends have passed away from using drugs. I could be one of them. I feel grateful that I am alive and living in recovery. I do not take recovery for granted. Phoenix House gave me a positive foundation.

Through **MOAR, MA Organization for Addiction Recovery**, I am learning how to use my voice to make sure that residential treatment like Phoenix House can expand to help more people live in recovery. Learning how to make positive changes in recovery, has given me skills to be a voice to speak up for positive public policy changes. Voices like mine joined with others in recovery, families, and friends are making a positive difference. I am proud to have been a peer facilitator for **MOAR AREAS, Addiction Recovery Education Access Services**, helping others to learn to navigate the system.

For National Recovery Month 2012, I was a Recovery Month Speaker at a National Press Conference. That is so hard to imagine, and it is real! I am so grateful.

Join MOAR!



Bliss

The falling is so easy, it's the getting back up that's hard. With that in mind there isn't much of my story before sobriety that I need to flesh out into detail. We are all really good at falling. I had to overcome addictions to start this journey. I had run down to the end of the road and found myself alone.

When I was whittled down to nothing left but my breath and the clothes on my back and I found myself open to new ways of doing things. I was open to new thoughts. My thought life shifted. I remember clearly thinking all positive things are possible for you to achieve. I still believe that series of thoughts were not from my addled and negative brain but from the grace of my higher power.

I happened upon the RECOVER Project and became a member. The RECOVER project is a peer run center for people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. I found myself filling in a daily calendar with simple, easy, and pleasant things to do. Before I knew it I was becoming interested and invested in life.

I became a volunteer peer leader, facilitator of both the Early Recovery Support Group and the Newsletter Committee, and a regular attendee of forums, conferences and workshops in the larger recovery community. I found a great sponsor and began working my steps. I was extending myself to and helping others daily without making a conscience effort. I began praying.

I looked around one day and realized I had held a RECOVER Project position for over a year plus my own place to live (keys and all). I am now at peace and truly happy.

Thank You to RECOVER Project! Now **MOAR is helping me share my gratitude!**



Lynn Bratley



Charlie

Lynn Bratley, M.Ed.
Founder/Director of Improbable Players

...and **Charlie**, "What did I do last night?"
(2nd of 6 masks Bratley made to dramatize the merry
-go- round of addiction)

I started the Improbable Players to inform people about addiction and recovery through theater. All of the young professional actors in the troupe are in long term recovery and all the plays over the years have been developed from their experience, strength, and hope. After each performance the players tell their stories; we have been privileged to put a face on recovery

for thousands of people each year for the past 28 years. My own story, which once seemed so ordinary to me-a story of closet drinking, blackouts, and endless promises to quit-became the basis for the first play, still performed today; it tells a timeless story of the hope and reality of long-term recovery for the whole family.

www.improbableplayers.org



John Frazier

Alcoholism adversely affected every area of my life- mental, emotional, physical and spiritual. Long-term recovery has helped me improve in all these areas and to become the productive person my active addiction prevented me from becoming.

When my long-term recovery began in 1976, I needed help from caring people 'because of my drinking, I was jobless, homeless and helpless. Many other caring people have since helped me to continue my journey in recovery. Because long-term recovery is not just abstaining from alcohol and other drugs, but also means changing for the better, it led me to become an active member of MOAR in 1992. I was working in the addiction field at the time and felt the need to give back even more to the recovery community because of the many gifts and opportunities recovery had given me.

I have always remained active in **MOAR** and became a part-time staff member. I have found **MOAR** to be an exemplary organization for anyone who feels the need to give back to the community in gratitude for the help they received that made their own recovery possible.

There are many different roles that people fill in carrying out the **MOAR** mission. The role depends on the person's comfort level. The goal is always the same-spreading the message about the value of recovery.



**Fernando Velasquez-
Massachusetts 2010 A&E Recovery Delegate**

I am in long term recovery from alcohol and drugs. Today, I am a responsible taxpaying father of three, grandfather of 8 beautiful girls. I treasure my family, and being there for them. As a certified alcohol and drug clinician, I am proud to be working at The Gavin Foundation, where the programs are shaped by a clear set of organizational values and goals, emphasizing spiritual, mental and social

recovery for individuals, families and the community

I began using drugs and alcohol at the age of 10 when I became involved with gangs in Puerto Rico. Because of my drug problem I was forced by my family to move to New York City where I continued my active lifestyle.

For years, my drug use led to me to prison. I was not a "nice" person. Besides criminal activity, I encountered physical problems from my behavior and drug addiction. In 1995, during my last prison sentence, I received help for my addiction. For once, I was able to listen. From prison, I entered and then graduated from one of Massachusetts state funded recovery homes.

I continue my recovery through mutual support meetings, returning to full time employment, volunteering, and advocacy. I feel proud to be a certified alcohol and drug clinician. I have been helping Latino community members, who are in the process of alcohol and drug clinician certification. I am proud to be Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse Services Consumer Advisory Board Chair, which allows me to offer my voice concerning addiction services and related policies. I believe in **MOAR, Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery**. I am a strong advocate for the Latino men, women, and families to build prevention, treatment, and recovery in their lives I was helped to find my voice, and my reward is in helping others.



Elizabeth Rodriguez, 18 years in long term recovery, was the 2009 Massachusetts Recovery Delegate to The A&E Recovery Rally. She joined over 10,000 Recovery Marchers to proclaim the National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month Theme;

Join The Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn: Together We Heal

She died from a long history of medical complications in the spring of 2012

Elizabeth was a vibrant spokesperson for all persons in recovery, especially persons of Latino heritage. She was a person, who was born in Puerto Rico. She moved to the Lawrence area, and resided in Methuen.

She was very concerned about the need for a stronger voice for her community. She saw the challenges of addiction and poverty all around her.

Her recovery was about helping herself help others. She knew it is possible to recover from addiction, and to cope with mental health issues.

Her recovery led her to becoming an educated person, certified and licensed in addiction counseling. She used her voice on a local radio show to outreach to others. She encouraged all to use their voices to speak up for recovery! We miss her very much and her voice lives on.



MOAR Congratulates Athena Haddon - SAMHSA Voices Award Winner

Athena Haddon was honored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Center for Mental Health Services, as a Voice Awards consumer/peer leader at The Paramount Theater, in Los Angeles, California. The Voices Award is given to an individual, who has played a vital role in raising both awareness and understanding of behavioral health (mental health and/or addiction issues) and has promoted the social inclusion of individuals with behavioral health problems.

Athena is the very wonderful Director of Everyday Miracles, a peer recovery support center hosted by Spectrum Health Systems in Worcester, MA. She is instrumental in organizing the Worcester Cares About Recovery Walk & Celebration to celebrate National Recovery Month. Athena demonstrates "Recovery Benefits Everyone!"





Rick Dyer, Attorney at Law

My story proves that recovery works. My name is Rick Dyer. Despite coming from a happy family, by the time I was in my early teens I was addicted to drugs and alcohol. Addiction quickly left me homeless, helpless, and penniless. I was robbed of my youth, and spent years in jail for crimes I committed while under the influence of, or chasing, drugs and alcohol.

The love and commitment of the recovery community helped me learn the tools to transform my life, return to school, and finally, to become a trial lawyer and advocate for people with addictions. Because of the people who believed in me when I had lost faith in myself, I was able to earn my G.E.D. while incarcerated, then go on to college and eventually graduate from law school. My crimes were pardoned by the Governor, and I am now being considered for a judgeship in my home state. I have been featured in both Parade Magazine (<http://www.parade.com/news/2010/06/27-judging-the-value-of-redemption.html>) and on CBS Weekend News (<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7118654n>).

Although I am a member of a 12 step group, recovery comes by many paths. It teaches responsibility and self-respect. That is why I am a MOAR Board member, and support The Improbable Players, and other recovery driven organizations. Recovery has brought me a level of satisfaction and accomplishment I never dreamed possible while using drugs and alcohol. Most importantly, though, recovery has shown me how to give back and to love: my community, my family, and most importantly, **myself**.

Remembering Our Friends Who Have Passed Away, Who Helped So Many People to Build a Life in Recovery

“Visible, Vocal, Valuable” *Remembering Eddie Wyman - by Charlie Yetman*

Don't know if you know that we named the reentry unit at Long Island the
"Steady Eddie Wyman Reentry Center".

Eddie referred to himself as "Steady Eddie". He said he was dubbed that nickname in his drinking days as a Postal Delivery Worker. He said it was not because of the "neither rain, sleet, nor dark of night mantra; but when he was walking through the South End a "bit under the weather" delivering the mail, he would hear, "Eddie, steady Eddie". Hence the nickname!

After retiring from the Post Office, Eddie went to work with the homeless at the Long Island Shelter. It was there that he started the Long Island Holding Program back in the mid eighties. He went back to school in his late 60's to obtain his Master's degree at the encouragement of his good friend and our former DPH Commissioner, David Mulligan.

The love of Eddie's life was his wife Bonnie. When Bonnie was sick and knew she was leaving the plane, she said to Eddie, "Catch yourself a young woman Eddie". Eddie replied, "What will I do with her after I catch her?" Ed had a million stories like that. He never took himself too seriously, but he took helping others very seriously. He always considered himself one of the luckiest guys on the planet. Even two weeks before his death when we had an impromptu AA meeting at Long Island in his honor. Knowing he only had a matter of days left in the universe, he asked if we could make some business cards for him for the Wyman Reentry Center. Carol Fabyan, John Christian, and I assured him we would. But Eddie passed before we could get them to him. Of course, as soon as he got to heaven, St. Peter had Eddie chair a special meeting with Jim Sweeney, Kevin Fitzgerald, Jack Leary, and a wealth of our other heroes in attendance.

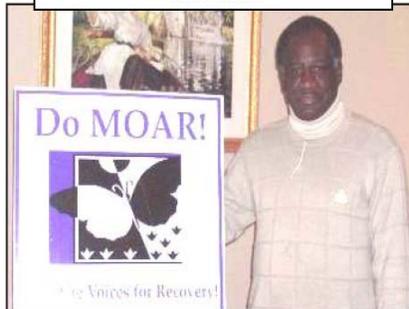
**Remembering Some of Our
Friends, Who Passed Away
2010-2012**

Their Spirit Lives On!

Frank Daly



Ron Budd



Carl Carter

Carl will be very much missed by MOAR members. His recovery was a 'positive addiction' to many. He made recovery his # 1 passion. Sadly, cancer took his life, In late summer of 2011. His spirituality will be alive in memory.

Rosemarie DeCastro



And a friend, Joseph Maglione (not pictured)

**Rachel Auspitz
Overdose
Prevention
Advocate**



Bob Herne, (far right) with other Massachusetts Ride for Recovery CoChairs, Rocco Antonelli Jr and Stephanie Almeida.

He passed away in March of 2011, after retiring, marrying, and moving - all in recovery. Goals to be aspired for...as well as helping people in recovery every day.

We Celebrated his Life during our **Bob Herne Ride for Recovery 2012**...We miss him!

**Elizabeth Rodriguez
Recovery Advocate**

