

Spiritual Healing

“Spiritual healing takes time”, is a statement that is frequently heard. One may not be as familiar with the concept that the process requires effort and may be quite painful before any benefits are experienced.

Facing the reality: Once a person finds a safe place to share his/her story, it can be very helpful to face the reality of the past. It can be painful at first to share, but the pain diminishes as it is validated and released.

Forgiving others: A great rabbi once gave good direction about forgiveness to his student: “Love your enemies, pray for those who hate you and despitefully use you.” This is not easy, but speeds the process of healing when accomplished. In a group, someone on hearing this direction blurted out “You are doing it more for yourself than for the offender.” What an insight!

Forgiving yourself: Some folks may agree to the idea of forgiving others, but struggle with forgiving themselves. They judge themselves unmercifully even while extending compassion to those who despitefully use them. It may help to ask oneself: “Who am I not to forgive myself when God has already forgiven me?”



These three steps, though possibly painful, will help the process of healing so the benefits of spiritual comfort may be achieved.

Clyde Cassimy, Chaplain

continued from page 1

My Perception of Chemical Dependency

effective coping strategies in staying sober.

One of the most unexpected things I learned during my internship is that every person can benefit from the healthy behaviors learned in recovery. Many of the negative behaviors found in a person dealing with addiction can also be found in those not drinking or using. I was surprised to recognize some of those negative behaviors in me. The BMC not only teaches a person how to live without alcohol or drugs, but how to take responsibility for one’s action and to communicate well. I am a healthier person because I had the opportunity to use the coping skills and communication tools I learned at the BMC and to apply them in my own life.

Kristen Friend

RAA Report

The BMC Recovering Alumni Association (RAA) has really been going places lately. Some local and some more distant. In June, a group of about 40 alumni members (current and previous patients, friends, and family) took the Metrolink to LA and strolled around Olivera Street and Chinatown, enjoying the shopping, food and culture of LA.

In Redlands, the RAA has recently enjoyed a couple of different venues. First was a picnic at Ford Park. Many alumni members enjoyed volleyball, fishing, picnicing, and card games. Next was cosmic bowling at Redlands Empire Bowl. There were disco lights and music along with the fun of bowling.

The semi-annual women’s retreat was held at Green Valley Lake during August. 24 women participated in meetings, nature walks, rowing on the lake, and enjoying some wonderful fellowship and food. The women say the view was spectacular, but the best part was relaxing and laughing together.

The annual RAA golf tournament at El Rancho Verde Country Club was a great success. This is a fund raising event to assist in keeping lots of other activities going for the alumni throughout the year. However, it was not only a financial success, it was also a lot of fun. The best part of all of these activities is enjoying life, and each other sober!



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER

Staying with Sobriety

Chemical Dependency Services
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, CA 92373

Please write to the address below if you wish to have your name removed from the list to receive announcements or notices introducing new services, health educational programs and events, or products of Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. All reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that your request is honored.

Promotional Services
c/o Access Center
245 East Redlands Blvd. Suite A
San Bernardino, CA 92408

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In This Issue

My Perception of
Chemical Dependency



Healing and Recovery:
A Story of Success



At a Glance



Family Connection:
"Surviving" the Holidays



Spiritual Healing



RAA Report

We want to hear from you

To inspire our readers and recognize your accomplishments, we would like to feature your story in one of our upcoming newsletters. Please send us a personal article or poem depicting your experience with addiction and/or alcoholism to:

**Attn: Elaine Coyazo,
LLUBMC, 1710 Barton Road,
Redlands, CA 92373**

My Perception of Chemical Dependency

Interning for the BMC Chemical Dependency Unit has been one of the most intense experiences of my life. I began my internship just wanting to help the patients through my education of therapeutic recreation and to learn all I could about addiction. I quickly found the BMC to have a very emotionally challenging atmosphere. I had never before witnessed people so broken and disappointed, but also people so invigorated and renewed. The BMC is a unique place where miracles and healing may take place for the patients and their families if they are willing to take part in what is offered.



siblings, and children of patients. Through my experiences working with the family members, I realized that chemical dependency is a family disease, affecting all members. I appreciated the opportunity to work with the children of the patients. I felt

rewarded to help give children a voice, explaining to them that they are not unlike anyone else. I loved helping kids understand that they didn't cause the disease and they can't cure or control it, but that they can take care of themselves by making good choices.

During my internship I learned about the disease of addiction; how substance abuse is a life-long struggle, how it gets worse over time, and can be deadly. I began to understand that this disease impacts every part of a person's life: their family, job, finances, spirituality, self-esteem, and health. I saw that many of the patients were unaware how much this disease has negatively impacted their lives and the lives of their families. Often, the patients just needed the opportunity to think with a clear mind to see how far their addiction had progressed.

Interning at the BMC for recreation therapy was a unique experience. Along with my supervisor, Elaine Coyazo, I taught leisure skills groups, teamwork groups, and assertion skills groups. Often the patients did not initially realize that these groups were helpful in recovery, but I saw moments where a patient would remember an activity they once enjoyed that had been forgotten during their addiction. I enjoyed helping patients understand that these activities can provide alternate stress reducers, in place of drinking or using. I learned that utilizing leisure activities, reaching out to a sober support system, and learning to communicate more effectively are all

I was fortunate to take part in the family groups consisting of spouses, parents,

continued on page 4

Healing and Recovery: A Story of Success

My name is Angel and my sobriety date is September 19, 2005. I am a recovering pain pill addict and alcoholic. As a child I was bit by a tick and got Lyme disease which causes joint pain, fevers, nervous system disorders, headaches, fibromyalgia, and severe fatigue. My Lyme disease went undiagnosed for approximately 10 years until 1998 and as a result is now a chronic case that cannot be cured by antibiotic therapy. It was in 1998 that my addiction began as I got my first taste of narcotic pain medication to treat my seemingly never-ending migraines and joint pain.



I remember that first time I took a Vicodin I felt the overwhelming feeling of peace and contentment that washed over my entire being. I never set out to become a drug addict. In fact I grew up in a loving home with good values. I was a straight A student and a cheerleader in high school with dreams of getting a college degree and being someone important. It was only after that first Vicodin that something inside me changed and I changed into someone I never knew I could be.

Within 5 years I had climbed the pain management ladder through Vicodin, Norco, Demerol, Morphine, Dilaudid, until I finally met my true love, Oxycontin. As my addiction progressed, I found myself turning my back on the God of my childhood and I felt myself drifting deeper and deeper into depression. My pain was only getting worse and by 2005 no pain medication would fix how I felt inside.

It was at this point I entered the BMC Chronic Pain Track. I remember being offended when a counselor suggested that I was an addict because in my sick mind I thought my excessive use of opiates was justified because of my illness and pain issues. I always thought an addict was someone who hid in alleys behind dumpsters using dirty needles to inject illegal drugs. I thought because my drugs came in a bottle from a pharmacy that I was different. I was so wrong.

It was only because I was so miserable that I was willing to do some simple things that were asked of me in treatment. I was told that it was possible to live with chronic pain and illness without using narcotic pain medications. I took a leap of faith and followed direction and I have found a life beyond my wildest dreams, free of any mood or mind altering substances. I rarely have

continued on page 3

At a Glance

Men's Retreat

Friday - Sunday, October 24 – 26
Wrightwood

Join us for a weekend of fun, fellowship, relaxation and spirituality. Come enjoy the fresh air, good food, and great friends. Event will include speakers from Alumni, AA, NA and CA. For more information, contact Rigo at 909-567-8211.

Fall Festival

Saturday, November 8
LLUBMC Gym

Event will include kid friendly costumes, DJ, dancing, and food. Bring the whole family and enjoy some safe, sane, sober fun with other recovering families. For more information, contact Reeann at 760-953-9032.

Gratitude Dinner

Sunday, November 23
LLUBMC Gym

The Recovering Alumni Association is hosting their Annual Gratitude Dinner. This yearly event for the Thanksgiving season is always packed with fellowship and a great feast. For more information, contact Reeann at 760-953-9032.

New Years Eve Party

Wednesday, December 31
LLUBMC Gym

Events will include DJ, dancing, food, and sober fun. For more information, contact Reeann at 760-953-9032.

Family Connection: "Surviving" the Holidays

It is that time of year again where traveling begins, families unite, and old traditions continue. The smell of baked goods waft through the air and in Southern California we gear up for a "cold winter" of 75 degrees.

The struggle for many is that the holidays tend to focus on family gatherings. For those early in recovery, the holidays can be a time of extreme stress, confusion, and depression. Add in interacting with some family members and the difficulties escalate. Alas, is there any hope?

Some simple steps can instill hope back into the holidays. Whether one utilizes Rule 62 (don't take yourself too seriously), reading about acceptance in the Big Book (page 417), calling your sponsor, or going to a meeting - there are solutions.

The first time a person experiences holidays during sobriety, it is a good idea to start new traditions:

- Allow yourself to limit the amount of time you spend with family.
- Spend time with only immediate family rather than extended family.



- Learn to compliment each other and express gratitude.
- Find some marathon AA/ NA/ al-anon meetings and participate and be of service.

AA has three little mottos which can assist in "surviving" the holidays:

- First things first
- Live and Let Live
- Easy does it.

Have a wonderful, sober, holiday season.

*Jackie Christianson, Mark Platt,
and Glenis Knight*

continued from page 2

Healing and Recovery: A Story of Success

pain and when I do I am able to continue living life without medications. Most importantly I found my way back to God and peace of mind.

I have continued to do some simple things on a daily basis for 2 years and 10 months. I have a sponsor, attend 12 step meetings, and look for opportunities to be of service to others. I will forever be grateful to the BMC for educating me about my addiction and directing me into the 12-step community! I encourage anyone who is struggling with chronic pain and an addiction to pain medications to seek out the solution and don't leave until the miracle happens for you! My most recent miracle... I will be graduating college in 2 weeks... and it is all a result of recovery!

Angel V.

In the Sun

That feeling of being alone in my head
has finally gone away.

I woke up today with a new sense of joy,
at starting a brand new day.

The clouds overhead have lifted,
and revealed the warmth of the sun.

The smile I felt was gone for so long,
has finally overcome.

I'm thankful to be out of that place,
I hope to never return.

I appreciate all of my dearest friends,
for showing so much concern.

I feel like a different person,
with the chance at a wonderful life.

Forgive me please if I have caused you
unnecessary strife.

Elizabeth H.

