

METH AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

August 2020

A STORY OF HOPE & RECOVERY

IRMA'S STORY

OVERVIEW OF THE METH AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

The Meth Strike Force recognizes the need for trauma-informed intervention that includes the whole family. Many people develop substance use disorders after living through trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Some risk factors include having a parent with a substance use disorder, losing a parent, having an incarcerated parent, experiencing physical or sexual abuse and many others. When a child can be part of a parent's recovery, the child can develop a sense of resilience and strength in their family.

In San Diego County, we see the intergenerational nature of meth addiction and strive to support families recovering together.



My experience within the system started in August of 2002. I was under the influence when I was arrested with my children in my car. Back then, the system was not as trauma informed and individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) were viewed in a different light. I struggled to understand the system and the requirements as I was 30 years old and had not been involved until then. I was struggling with the death of my youngest daughter to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and my addiction had spiraled due to a lack of coping skills within six months of her death. My children were placed in foster care and I became homeless and was spiritually and emotionally broken. I continued to use 3-4 months after my arrest, until someone was able to guide me into recovery. My clean and sober date is 12/23/2002. God willing I will have 18 years this year.

I was supported through the substance use treatment system including my recovery program, ParentCare. I continued to receive more guidance from my SUD treatment in being able to manage my mental and emotional health at that time and learning about relapse prevention, coping and life skills that I did not have when entering treatment.

SUD treatment is a new way of life, literally. My hope is that many people will receive the opportunity to learn the abundance of tools provided through treatment. It has been my experience, that every journey is different and necessary and no one is worth less than anyone. The struggle is always individual and change is possible, and I believe perception and expectations are not an indicator of the possibilities an individual can achieve.

12 step treatment has also been one of the biggest blessings I have been taught in recovery. I implemented the 12 step recovery program into my life and became willing to be open-minded about giving recovery a try. I worked with a sponsor, completed my steps, participated in meetings, took on commitments and attended therapy. I believe that it truly does matter who is in your support system and being able to establish a strong foundation has helped guide me into the strong woman in recovery that I am today. I still struggle with self-esteem issues, broken dreams, regrets and remorse from missed opportunities. However, I also live with hope, faith, stability, and an abundance of tools that I can use to get me through every thought and feeling that arise.

A very important thing that I would share with people entering the SUD system is to work on “self” in order to heal all those external and internal cuts and bruises caused by the trauma that lead them into addiction. No matter what others think of them, they are worth much more. Addiction does not define who they are, it only shares a glimpse of who they once were. There’s hope in recovery.

Here I am today:

During the course of my case here in San Diego, I graduated from Vista Hill ParentCare Recovery Center in 2004, successfully completed Substance Abuse Recovery Management System (SARMS) and their wraparound program. I continue to be active in my recovery and ongoing process.

In 2005, I became the co-founder of ParentCare’s Alumni Program alongside my ParentCare counselor. For the past 15 years I have been very dedicated to this group, where I encourage other graduated ladies to continue their life in recovery with their families. I personally received the San Diego County “This Person Award” in 2018 in recognition of “outstanding hope for and support of a person in recovery” San Diego County Wellness & Recovery Summit. I attended Cuyamaca College for three years, achieving a 4.0 GPA while continuing to work full time. I currently participate in Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) which is through the County of San Diego and am a current student at MARSTE services working on my Drug & Alcohol certification.

I currently work for ParentCare East. I began here in 2010 as a Case Manager and am now working in Recovery Services as a counselor. I work with graduates, known as ParentCare alumni, who seek to have ongoing support after completion of the program.

I have come full circle, and now I have the opportunity to guide other women in their ongoing recovery and provide a safe haven for their children when possible through ParentCare alumni activities and events. I’ve collaborated in various projects as the voice of a birthparent and prior participant of the Child Welfare Services system. My heart is in utilizing my experience, strength and hope to my community and advocating for trauma informed care and changes to better support the people who need SUD services. I feel that accessing the SUD system has been a blessing in my life, although at the time I could not see it, or understand what or where I was going.

My children have a secure, stable home, with food, clothing and are healthy. There are three boys, ages 25, 17 and 15, and two daughters who are 20 and 19.

"Addiction does not define who they are, it only shares a glimpse of who they once were. There’s hope in recovery."

Irma will be a presenter at the upcoming virtual Meth and Families Webinar Series.

Hear her speak and learn more about her story.

**Date: September 22nd
Time: 9am to 12pm
Cost: Free
Location: Virtual**

For more information visit no2meth.org

LOCAL RESOURCES

www.no2meth.org or 1-877-NO-2-METH

Access and Crisis Line: 888-724-7240

2-1-1 or (858) 300-1211

NATIONAL RESOURCES

SMART Recovery: <https://www.smartrecovery.org/>

Alcoholics Anonymous: https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US

Narcotics Anonymous: <https://www.na.org/>

Al-Anon: <https://al-anon.org/>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255