

Sober Times

"There is no greater joy than seeing recovering women reunited with their families."

A Publication of Mrs. Wilson's/ALFRE, Inc.

Winter 2006

FOCUS ON RECOVERY

ONE ALUM'S SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY

Joyce* (not her real name) describes herself as "an alcoholic from day one." She grew up with a bar in her home and parents who, although not alcoholic, "liked the dancing, gambling, party life." Joyce liked that life too and began sneaking beer from her parents at age 8. Soon she was drinking until she passed out and "never had just one." But, she thought she was "functional." After all, she completed school, held a job and did all the "right" things until her early twenties, when she discovered heroin.

Thus began a 17-year odyssey that included stealing, break-ins, homelessness, and never knowing where her next meal was coming from. Despite it all, she never stopped using. She tried to stop, many times. She went to so many detoxes that she was refused further admission. She tried one methadone maintenance program after another until "they cut me off." She was in and out of the rooms of the 12-step fellowships, but still, she could not stay clean and sober.

Until the spring of 2002, when Joyce found herself in jail for six months. She says, "Jail is the only thing that stopped me. I had been held overnight many times, but when I got incarcerated for six months, I got a flash of reality."

Near the end of her incarceration, the judge told Joyce that if she ever came back, she would be sentenced to 20 years. That's when Joyce asked to go to a program. The judge agreed, provided Joyce did the footwork to get admitted. She had heard for years how good Mrs. Wilson's was, so

she did everything that was necessary to be admitted. Even though she was angry that she couldn't drink or drug anymore, she was ready to do the work involved in achieving and maintaining recovery.

When she arrived in September of 2002, Joyce was immediately struck by the warm, welcoming feeling she got from everyone here. She was drawn to the way they were all so connected and did everything together. She wanted to be a part of that. Even the structure was comforting. She credits being told when to do certain things, like chores or going to bed, as helping her to straighten her life out again. Her counselor helped a lot too. "She didn't sugar-coat things and she brought out things I didn't realize I had in me."

After completing Mrs. Wilson's, Joyce spent another six months at The Tomlinson House, before striking out on her own. She was scared to go, but her transition was eased when the other residents told her "we'll always be together, no matter what." Like many graduates, Joyce remains in Morristown. She works full-time, maintains an apartment, attends meetings regularly and visits family on days off. And, she gives back. A lot. She sponsors residents, attends our on-site meetings, goes on commitments and says "giving back makes me a better person today. It reminds me where I came from and that I can slip back into the old me if I don't constantly work on myself." Her journey has not always been easy, but she is successful, largely because she remains connected to the network she developed here at Mrs. Wilson's.

OPENING THE DOORS TO RECOVERY



We are very grateful to all our friends who donated items to the annual "Holiday Wish List" program, which helps to make the residents' Holiday Season a bit brighter. The presents we received this year were extraordinary! We are especially thankful to the "Ambassadors" of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce who went above and beyond at playing Santa Claus this year.



Parsippany-Troy Hills Rotary Club gift of \$200 presented to Kathy Howie, Executive Director by Maurie Mader October 2005.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

NEW YEAR/NEW LOOK



As I write this, people everywhere are thinking about the New Year and wondering what it will bring. We here at Mrs. Wilson's are excited about the changes we see on the horizon for 2006. This is the year that all our efforts in 2005 are becoming visible.

As you can see elsewhere in this newsletter, we received new furniture to facilitate our expansion plans. By the end of first quarter 2006 we hope to have our licensed capacity up to 14. In addition, we have ordered new matching furniture for all the bedrooms. Now the ladies will not need to deal with mis-matched beds and dressers. We also have a new front door; one that closes tightly and saves on energy costs.

Our website has a great new look! Thanks to the folks at River Internet Communications, www.mrswilsons.org is modern, easy to navigate and has a softer feel. Former board member Peter Fair donated the beautiful photos. Please check it out! By the time you get this, we hope to have added PayPal capabilities to the site.

We've entered into an exciting collaboration with Refresh and Renew, an organization devoted to empowering women. Check out their website at www.refreshandrenew.com. Look for us at their annual "Woman, A Work in Progress." event being held this year at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany on March 25.

And, we have some marvelous new ideas for our spring event, which we are calling Papillon. Our superbly creative event planning committee is busy preparing a marvelous reception at the Grand Café. See the back page of this newsletter for Save-The-Date information. It promises to be a fabulous evening.

If you would like to be a part of these exciting changes, please call me. And, as you move through the New Year, I hope you will continue to feel free to call me at any time with ideas, suggestions, concerns or positive feedback.

Fondly, Kathy

Thank You!

Printing and Publication of the *Sober Times* is courtesy of:
Reed Business Information-Morris Plains,
Presbyterian Church of Morristown,
The Wall Street Group, Inc.

Sober Times

Published by Alfre, Inc., a nonprofit organization providing housing and treatment services to recovering alcohol and drug dependent women facilitating their responsible and successful reentry into the community.

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EXTREME MAKEOVER-HALFWAY HOUSE EDITION

CALLING ALL EXTREME HOME MAKEOVER CANDIDATES!!!...

Now that we are getting all new furniture, the rooms need a real "facelift." Let all your creative and home decorating ideas come forth to help us give the bedrooms a real boost. We are looking for women's groups who would be interested in undertaking the task of redecorating a room with paint, window treatments, comforters, wall hangings and lots of imagination! Each room is fully furnished, we just need that special touch that will make it a home. Each re-done room will take on the group's "name" and add a little something extra to an already unique living experience. Work will begin sometime in the spring, so if you are interested in being part of this wonderful project, please contact Lee Williamson at ext. 11.

ALUMNI ALERT - We are looking for any Alumni who would be interested in helping to re-decorate one of the residents' rooms. A special friend of Mrs. Wilson's has donated the funds to re-do one of the bedrooms, we just need the energy and talent of a group of alumni to get the job done. Spring is right around the corner, so if you are interested please contact Lee Williamson at ext. 11 for more information.



Thanks to the United Way of Morris County Real Estate Grant we recently added bunk beds and wardrobes to facilitate our capacity expansion from 11 to 14 beds. Phase Two will be to replace our old, worn bedroom furniture with new matching furniture - a result of the generosity of the Frog Crossing Foundation and the E.J. Grassmann Trust.

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OPENING THE DOORS TO RECOVERY

The board of directors and staff would like to say a special thank you to the following foundations for their continued support of Mrs. Wilson's Mission in 2005: The Willits Foundation, The F.M. Kirby Foundation, William E. Simon Foundation, Frog Crossing Foundation, The Leavens Foundation, Hidden Pond Foundation, Taussig Foundation, Joy Street Foundation.

The Sober Start Scholarship Program 2005 is Mrs. Wilson's annual appeal to help defray the increasing program costs for women seeking recovery. The goal is to ensure as many women as possible can receive treatment. This year's goals were exceeded by 25%. If you are still interested in contributing to the scholarship program please contact the Development Director at 973-540-1781 x11.

Thanks to all of you who were so gracious in your giving. An extra special thank you to the Dope Open for their gift of \$3,000 presented by Mary Mulholland in December 2005.

DID YOU SEE? Mrs. Wilson's Halfway House was featured on News12 New Jersey's Business News with Marlene Waldo in November 2005. Marlene took a spe-

cial interest in Mrs. Wilson's through her organization called "Because We Are Women." At their annual workshop in October, one of our alumni was chosen for a makeover and presented her success story to women who were looking to transform their lives. We are grateful to Marlene for helping to raise awareness of addiction treatment for women in New Jersey.



Friends of the Morris Museum presented the residents with a Christmas Tree graciously donated from their annual "Festival of Trees" by Peter Mancuso, Board of Directors, Morris Museum. The proceeds from the Festival of Trees go to benefit the Friends of the Morris Museum.

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Mrs. Wilson's
Open the Door to Recovery

PAPILLON

Wednesday, April 19, 2006

Six o'clock p.m.

The central graphic is a white rectangular area set against a blue background. It features a decorative border of stylized flowers and butterflies. The text is arranged vertically: the organization's name and tagline, the event name 'PAPILLON' in large bold letters, the date 'Wednesday, April 19, 2006' in italics, and the time 'Six o'clock p.m.' in italics. To the right of the text is a detailed line drawing of a Papillon dog's head and neck, facing left.