



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

NETWORK

FALL 2005 / VOLUME 21 No. 4

In Brief

HURRICANES HIT AFFILIATES.

New Orleans affiliate, Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse was one of the first social service agencies to re-open in Katrina-devastated New Orleans. Informed Families in Miami, FL was struck by Wilma.

COA WEEK IS FEBRUARY 12-18, 2006.

Time to plan awareness activities (see p. 5)

CADCA'S NATIONAL

LEADERSHIP FORUM will be held February 14-16 in Washington, DC. Visit www.cadca.org for more information.



NACoA'S RUN FOR THE CHILDREN® continues, with Detroit and Marine Corps completed in October (see page 7 for pictures).

CATHLEEN BROOKS WEISS,

NACoA co-founder and former President, is being inducted into the Hall of Fame of Mount St. Dominic Academy in Caldwell, New Jersey on November 11. Cathleen authored *The Secret Everyone Knows*, is currently a Ph.D. candidate, is co-director (with her husband, Gary Weiss, M.D.) of the Next Step Institute for Integrative Medicine in Palm Bay, FL, which they founded 21 years ago and she is awaiting the publication of a new book.

Address Change:

NACoA's suite number has changed from 100 to 301. Please make the change in your address books.

KEY CONTRACTS HELP MOVE NACoA PROGRAM INITIATIVES FORWARD

NACoA has been contracted to develop new efforts that will increase activities in three major program initiatives. With support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), several new projects are underway. The following introduces three of these new programmatic efforts.

Faith Community Pilot Project

A poster (*Alcohol and Drug Abuse Hurts Everyone in the Family...It Doesn't Have to Be That Way*) and two pamphlets being used in a pilot project with faith organizations to reach confused and hurting family members affected by a loved one's addiction are already available. Supported by CSAT, the project includes a pamphlet for adults (*Alcohol and Drug Abuse Happens in the Best of Families*) and one for adolescents (*It Hurts... It Doesn't Have To*). Consultant Steve Hornberger, M.S.W., is assisting NACoA on this project and will also assist with the training.

Social Work Core Competencies

NACoA's Social Work Initiative is facilitating the development of core competencies for social workers, in partnership with panels of leading experts in the field, and in collaboration with the Council on Social Work Education. The effort is being supported by CSAP and is being chaired by Lala Ashenberg Straussner, Ph.D. Dr. Straussner is Professor and Director, Post-Master Certificate Program in The Clinical Approaches

to Addictions, New York University School of Social Work, and Editor, *Journal of Social Work Practice In the Addictions*. Shelly A. Wiechelt, Ph.D., has joined NACoA's staff as NACoA Social Work Initiative Consultant and is assisting NACoA Special Projects Consultant, Linda Kaplan, M.A., in coordinating the core competencies and curriculum module development efforts.

Clergy Curriculum Modules

NACoA is focusing on several projects to enhance and expand its Clergy Education and Training Project in partnership with other national organizations, including the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Modules based on the *Core Competencies for Clergy and Other Pastoral Ministers In Addressing Alcohol and Drug Dependence and its Impact on Family Members* are being developed for use within seminary courses across denominations and for post-ordination education and pastoral counseling continuing education programs. Rev. Robert Albers, Ph.D., Pastor of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and Professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, will lead this CSAT-funded effort for NACoA.

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EMERALD YEH RECEIVES MARGARET CORK AWARD



George R. Bloom, NACoA Board Chairman, presents Margaret Cork Award to Emerald Yeh.

NACoA honored Emerald Yeh for her film *Lost Childhood: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home* at a party hosted by Julie and Peter Cummings, Kathy Lowe Petersen, and Dennis Wholey in Washington, DC at the Washington Club in September. The television documentary was first aired on NBC's KRON and is currently being carried on PBS stations

across the country, as part of a public awareness campaign Yeh spearheaded.

The party, attended by notables interested in helping children of alcoholics, featured Jerry Moe, the National Director of the Betty Ford Center Children's Programs, as speaker, following remarks by Ms. Yeh and Mr. Wholey, author of *The Courage to Change* and well known for his weekly television program *This Is America!*

The Margaret Cork Award was created to honor pioneers in the field of children of alcoholics, and Emerald Yeh, a nine times Emmy award winner, was presented the award under the category "Public Relations or Media which highlights programs for and about problems of COAs."



Julie Fisher Cummings



Kathy Lowe Petersen



Dennis Wholey



RECOVERY SCHOOLS SUPPORT SOBRIETY

Schools for young people just out of treatment for addiction now include 25 high schools and eight college programs. These “recovery schools” have developed over the past few years to meet the needs of those needing an academic environment that supports sobriety. According to Andrew Finch, director of the Association of Recovery Schools, such programs offer a “protective cocoon” that supports recovery as students work towards graduation. He recommends that founders of such schools “be patient and persistent and reach out to people who have established schools...(and) be aware of referral sources and finding opportunities.”

More information and a list of sobriety schools in the United States are online at the Association of Recovery Schools website.

ALCOHOL ADS IN BOSTON SUBWAY CRITICIZED

A group of Boston-area advocates known as Massachusetts Banding Together Against Alcohol Advertising (MBTAA) is urging the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) and its ad agency, Viacom Outdoor, to ban alcohol advertising on bus and train lines, arguing that alcohol ads promote underage drinking and binge drinking.

“The MBTA doesn’t allow tobacco ads; they ban them outright,” said Amy Helburn, coordinator for MBTAA, “How can they argue that alcohol is less of a public-health threat than tobacco?”

A youth group, Roxbury Adolescent Life Options, sent volunteers into the subways with digital cameras

to document alcohol advertising system-wide. The young photographers found 140 ads on trains and in stations, including trains wrapped in Coors Light ads, Budweiser ads on the sides of trains, and ads for Johnnie Walker and Michelob Light. “It’s really not appropriate...for a state government entity to be promoting alcohol use...at odds with the state’s other public-health initiatives,” commented Helburn.

RAND STUDIES DRUG OFFENDERS

The Rand Corporation has just completed a study whose results question that many low-level drug offenders are unfairly sent to prison for marijuana-related crimes. The study, “Just Cause or Just Because? Prosecution and Plea-Bargaining Resulting in Prison Sentences on Low-Level Drug Charges in California and Arizona,” found that most people imprisoned on low-level drug charges had plea-bargained down from higher-level offenses, had prior criminal records, were involved with hard drugs like heroin or cocaine, or had been arrested in possession of large amounts of drugs.

WEB HEALTH SITE HONORED

The Spring/Summer 2005 World Wide Web Health Awards, a program that recognizes the best health-related Web sites for consumers and professionals, has honored www.recoverymonth.gov/2005. NACoA is one of the primary planning partners.

ECONOMISTS FOR HIGHER ALCOHOL TAXES

Congress has been asked by the Coalition for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems to raise federal excise taxes

on alcoholic beverages. Economists, including four Nobel laureates, say legislation promoted by the alcohol industry to reduce such taxes would damage public health, increase budget deficits, and threaten the safety of Americans, especially young people.

“Through neglect, Congress has allowed effective rates of tax on a substance that does more harm than any illegal drug to fall dramatically...” said Henry Aaron, senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution.

According to Stacia Murphy of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, the cost of alcohol use by youth alone exceeds \$58 billion per year. “Do we really want to encourage any more drinking by lowering the cost of alcohol?”

LIQUOR HEALTH LABELS REQUESTED

The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) is pressing the federal government to require health labels on wine, beer and liquor, noting their caloric content and potential link to disease. A petition, also signed by the National Consumers League and the Center for Science in the Public Interest, is now before the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, a Treasury Department unit that has jurisdiction over alcoholic beverage labeling.

ACOA CONFERENCE MARCH 29-APRIL 1

Leaders in the adult children of alcoholics field will be featured at the ACOA conference sponsored by US Journal Training, Inc., in Las Vegas. The conference will be in association with NACoA and is being chaired by NACoA co-founder Robert J. Ackerman, Ph.D.



AN OPEN LETTER TO ACOAs

by Tian Dayton

“EVERYONE INVOLVED IN LIVING WITH AN ADDICTIVE PROCESS NEEDS TO HEAL.”

We give great focus in treatment to the addict: what is the nature of addiction and how sobriety can be achieved. Even in this treatment landscape, dollars are scarce and professionals are stressed by the need to treat more serious and complex addictions than we have ever seen, with fewer resources. It is no wonder that those affected by living with addiction still remain relatively invisible. We can clearly measure sobriety from drugs or alcohol. You are using or you are not. You are on the road to recovery with supports like AA and treatment, or you are not.

But what about the group who grows up with addiction in their homes? Whose family’s emotional shape and psychological texture is defined to varying extents by the introduction of a chemical substance – one that when taken over a period of time has the power to turn otherwise kind and intelligent people into blithering fools, or sensitive people into abusive tyrants. Who, through living with addiction, have been tarred by the same brush? In the same way secondary smoke causes cancer in the child innocently inhaling the parent’s smoke, addiction causes an emotional and psychological cancer in the child daily inhaling its toxic effects.

In 1980 Janet Woititz named this group “adult children of alcoholics” or ACOAs. She wrote that children who grew up in homes where addiction was present carried huge burdens into adulthood that influenced the way they thought, felt and behaved. That even when addiction was no longer present, these people lived as if the emotional atmosphere of the home they grew up in still surrounded them. Thirty five years later we are finding that this is still a forgotten generation. Young people are growing into adulthood who fit the profile of ACOA to a tee, hardly knowing the term exists and often, even when they hear it, feel it somehow doesn’t apply to them. Is history repeating itself?

In the fifties we thought that if only we could get the alcoholic to stop drinking, everyone else would get magically better. Consequently, the newly sober addict often came home only to find a family that had developed such complicated defenses against feeling the pain, confusion, and anger that no one knew how to untangle the emotional mess that years of living with addiction had created. Today we know that everyone involved in living with an addictive process needs to heal from the experience. Otherwise, they may continue to live by the dysfunctional patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior that characterizes that process.

In future columns we will be reaching out to the generation who has healed from their own ACOA issues, and empowering each and every one of you to reach out to the generation still living in emotional hiding. Each issue will explore a different aspect of how growing up with addiction affects the ACOAs personality, ability to engage in intimate relationships, their parenting, and their work. Together we will unravel the twisted path addiction follows. We will explore all over again, with the benefit of hindsight and the enlightened recent research on the nature of relationship trauma and neurobiology, who today’s ACOAs are and what they look like.



Tian Dayton, Ph.D., TEP, is the Director of Program Development for the Caron Foundation and is in private practice in Manhattan. She will be writing a regular column on ACOA issues in the NETWORK, with an expanded version on our website, www.nacoa.org.

BOOK SHELF

By Stephanie Abbott



Wishes and Worries A story to help children understand a parent who drinks too much alcohol

For help in reviewing this book, which is written to explain alcoholism to children aged five to ten, I turned to two non-COAs, Erin, aged 12 and Barrett, aged 10. I asked them separately what they had gotten out of reading it. Erin felt the most important point is “It’s not the fault of the kid!” She also added that she thought that getting involved with things you like to do was a very good idea. Barrett had no hesitation either, the best point of the book was “It’s not your fault if your parent drinks.” He also noted that talking to a trusted adult was a good suggestion. “And we learn about all this in Scouts, too.”

So there you have it. I thought the book flowed well, it has lively illustrations, and is not unrealistically upbeat nor too depressing. Dad gets a counselor who sees both parents, and the family doctor and the school counselor give good support to the children. There is no mention of 12 Step programs. Still, Al-Anon got there first many years ago with the message: “It’s not your fault and live your own life, not someone else’s.”

The book is available through the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada (1-800-661-1111) www.camh.net/publications

THE LIVING STAGE

by Tian Dayton, Ph.D., TEP



The title seems to be a pun on stages of living, and the therapeutic technique of psychodrama, which puts the client’s inner life “on stage.” Dr.

Dayton calls her book “a step-by-step guide to psychodrama, sociometry and experiential group therapy” and it is a deeply thoughtful exploration of what that means and how it works.

Addiction, its traumatic effects on the addict and the family, and the healing process is described with clarity. The power of the experiential approach to treatment of many kinds of emotional pain is well documented elsewhere, but I have never read a more lucid description of the process. Students, experienced practitioners and the sophisticated general reader will all take away something from reading *The Living Stage*. I can’t possibly sum up the richness and depth of this book in a few paragraphs, but it will reward your careful reading. Available at www.tiandayton.com.

CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS WEEK FEBRUARY 12-18



National Children of Alcoholics Week, celebrated each year during the week of Valentines Day, offers individuals and community organizations an opportunity

to bring attention to the one in four children affected by alcohol abuse in their families, and to promote practical supportive solutions to help them.

The *Children of Alcoholics Community Action Guide* is a tool for implementing an awareness campaign in your community. Information on the COA Week poster contest and the guide can be obtained by calling NACoA at 888-55-4COAS.

RUN FOR THE CHILDREN® A FAMILY AFFAIR

NACoA’s *Run for the Children®* at the WALT DISNEY WORLD MARATHON WEEKEND is providing another challenging opportunity for NACoA’s runners and walkers and their families. “Family” stands out with many of NACoA’s participants. The team includes:

- A family with three generations participating and holding a family reunion celebration at the Run;
- A NACoA Advisory Board member, who has been a Team NACoA half marathoner the past four years, will run the full marathon with his daughter;
- A mother and son doing the half marathon together for the first time;
- A husband and wife teamed up to keep each other in good health; he will do the full and she is doing the half;
- Two sisters who are making people aware of our mission by having a garage sale, promoting wristbands, and asking everyone they encounter to help support their Run for the Children®;
- A staff sergeant in the USMC who ran the Marine Corps Marathon October 30, has a 9-year-old son who did the Fun Run on that day wearing the NACoA Run for the Children® shirt.



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

So many of our members and several of our affiliates were severely affected by the devastating hurricanes in September and October. After a while, the stunning losses and the constant onslaught of pleas for help begin to numb. At NACoA, we have focused on reminding one and all that the children suffer twice – first from the fear, confusion and loss of home and security, and secondly from the loss of nurturing parental support as the adults in their lives focus on their own trauma.

NACoA also is focusing on the enormous additional responsibility for those of us who work all year long to support persons – especially the children – who suffer from the chronic stress and trauma of living in addicted families. When one in four children, under normal circumstances, lives in a family with alcohol abuse or alcoholism, then at least 25% of the children of Mississippi and Louisiana living in the path of the devastating hurricanes are suffering additional trauma. We would like you to see a recent letter from the executive director of our New Orleans affiliate, the Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse For Greater New Orleans. If you wish to support CADA's critical efforts to facilitate recovery and support the children among the people they serve, as they struggle to re-establish their own year-round services, you can reach CADA at
3520 General DeGaulle Drive
Suite 5010
New Orleans, LA 70114
504-362-4272

Stephanie Abbott

Dear Sis,

Imagine 80% of your city underwater for over three weeks. Imagine over 1200 deaths and thousands more injured. Imagine a metro area of 1.3 million displaced. Imagine 8 weeks later over half of those displaced are still away from their homes. Imagine the number of homes destroyed or damaged beyond repair to be in the tens of thousands.

Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and Mississippi two months ago. There are still areas without electricity, water, sewer service, or phones. Tens of thousands of businesses are still shuttered and scores of social service agencies are either not open or having to operate many miles from their base of operations.

New Orleans is a city steeped in poverty, and Katrina made that worse, too.

CADA reopened to this scene on October 3rd. We were one of a handful of social service agencies that began serving the public that week. Only 2/3 of our staff returned. Some are still displaced and several have decided to relocate. And CADA is not alone, this story is repeated at every social service agency we know.

Hurricane Katrina has presented this agency with the biggest challenge in its 45 year history. It is the greatest challenge in my professional career.

Nevertheless, our mission remains the same. We may be doing things differently for some time to come, but we will still have as our goal the prevention and recovery from alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction. Sadly, many things will change for this city, known for its tradition, history and cultural diversity, but one thing remains ... the specter of addiction, which makes the physical recovery of this city all the more difficult.

We solicit your thoughts and prayers. We need them.

John King
Executive Director
CADA

Thank You



NACoA THANKS ITS SUPPORTERS

NACoA is deeply grateful to the many generous supporters who continue to make it possible for us to improve and expand our critical work to support children and families impacted by alcohol and drug dependence. Since our previous newsletter, contributions have been received from foundations, individuals and corporations supporting our *Run for the Children*®, Federal and State Government employees who have designated *Children of Alcoholics (NACoA)* during their annual Fall workplace campaigns, and from our members and *Team NACoA* marathon runners. We thank all of you for your help.

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**Children of Alcoholics
 (NACoA)**

“In Al-Anon we learn not to suffer because of the actions or reactions of other people.”

WHAT IS NACoA?

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) was founded in 1983, and is the national nonprofit membership organization working on behalf of children of alcoholics. NACoA defines children of alcoholics as those people who have been impacted by the alcoholism or other drug dependence of a parent or another adult filling the parental role. NACoA believes that no child of an alcoholic should grow up in isolation and without support.

OUR MISSION

To advocate for all children and families affected by alcoholism and other drug dependencies.

OUR GOALS

- To raise public awareness
- To provide leadership in public policy at the national, state and local level
- To inform and educate academic and other community systems
- To advocate for appropriate education and prevention services
- To facilitate the exchange of information and resources

- To initiate and advance professional knowledge and understanding
- To advocate for accessible programs and services

NACoA’s programs are designed to impact systems that affect children. NACoA supports its mission by seeking private and public funding through corporations, individuals, members, donations, grants and foundations.

To accomplish this mission we are:

- A membership organization which includes affiliate groups and cooperative relationships with other organizations
- A national center for information, education and advocacy for COAs of all ages, including:
 - the latest research information
 - culturally and linguistically sensitive materials
- A policy development center that obtains input from expert scientists, opinion leaders, policy makers and practitioners
- A central point of input for children’s health and welfare advocates and service providers who address populations of COAs

NACoA’s *Run for the Children*® in Detroit’s international marathon (October 23) and in the Marine Corps Marathon (October 30) are exciting memories. But the ever-popular WALT DISNEY WORLD MARATHON (January 7-8, 2006) and P.F. Chang’s® Rock ‘n’ Roll Arizona in Phoenix on January 15 are on the horizon, as is the Marathon of the Palm Beaches (December 5). The Disney *Run for the Children*® registration is full, and our Phoenix numbers are growing. You can still participate by volunteering to cheer on the runners on race day, register to run in the Phoenix race, or make a donation in honor and support of our *Team NACoA* heroes who are hard at work training for these events to help the children. You can donate online at www.nacoa.org or call us toll free at 888-554-2627.