

AdLib

Libertae's mission is to empower women and their families to maintain sobriety through comprehensive treatment programs that create and support healthy communities.

The Bi-Annual Newsletter of Libertae

Fall/Winter 2009 - 2010

Women and men *are* different—and so are treatment options for those with substance abuse disorders

In 2007, a research paper titled *Gender-responsive treatment for women with substance use disorders* was published by W.A.T.C.H. (Women and Their Children Heal)— a statewide coalition of programs for women and women with children. Researched and written by Connie Karasow, Libertae's Executive Director, and Rosa Davis, Executive Director of POWER, a women's treatment program in Pittsburgh, this paper was the culmination of more than three years of work. The result addresses how substance abuse treatment providers integrate gender specific treatment policies and protocols in their approach to treatment.

Coincidentally the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is in its final approval process for the release of the new Treatment Improvement Protocols Series XX: Substance Abuse Treatment: Addressing the Specific Needs of Women. This new TIPS manual expands the breadth and scope of our WATCH paper and adds exciting new dimensions for a comprehensive model from administration to treatment and advocacy.

As these two publications converge, W.A.T.C.H., with the encouragement and support of the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs, has begun the development of specialized training modules. These modules will be used to establish new curricula designed to set a new, high standard for gender responsive treatment for practicing clinicians and administrators.

One clear component of gender responsive treatment is knowing that women are relational beings. Women learn skills for living in residential programs and community based treatment by practicing how to resolve conflict, assert their needs, assert their boundaries, face their fears, share their tears, and develop reasonable expectations, and increase trust and self confidence as they find their voices. Women are also different developmentally. The following is an example of the materials illustrating some of these differences.

Women have unique life-course issues and events. Young women face greater gender based socio-cultural expectations (Gilligan 1990) as they form their identity and are more

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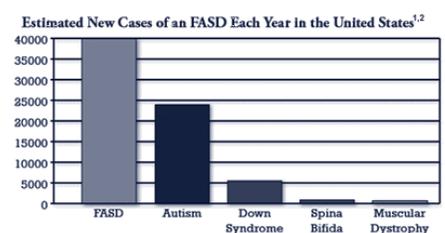
FASD — Facts & Figures

During September we spotlight the tragedy that is FASD — Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders — in order to educate and raise awareness. FASD is the single most preventable birth defect and most preventable cause of infant mortality. In fact, it is 100 percent preventable!

Conversely, when a pregnant woman drinks, she puts her unborn child at great risk for lifelong disabilities. The possible effects include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities. According to SAMHSA as many as 40,000 babies are born with an FASD each year at a national cost of about \$6 billion.

Many women may not know when they first become pregnant, and continue to drink socially. It's important therefore, that a woman who plans to become pregnant stop drinking before she knows she has conceived. No amount of alcohol has been proven to be safe during pregnancy, so remember, if you are pregnant or plan to be — don't drink!

For more information, visit www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov.



Libertae's Wish List

In the spirit of the holidays, we've expanded our more or less standard list to include some items that will provide fun and entertainment for our women and children:

- Wii for each house
- pillows
- linens
- diapers
- toothbrushes/paste
- journals
- school supplies
- art and craft supplies
- basketball
- volleyball net
- calendars
- new fencing
- Wal-Mart and Target gift cards
- shoes
- slippers
- robes

In Memoriam

Libertae recently lost a client on October 8. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dominique's son Steven and the rest of her family, as we are reminded that this is a progressive, sometimes fatal disease. 

Dear Friends,

At Libertae, while non-denominational, we encourage women to explore their own notion of spirituality — a power greater than themselves. We also collect stories that embody the “higher power” aspect of our work. These tales of serendipity and grace empower us, knowing they are not mere coincidences and that we do not do our work alone. These stories serve to remind us of the importance of our work, and may serve to remind you, our supporters and friends, of that power as well.



Connie B. Karasow, E.D.

Recently, one of our women (we'll call her Jane) took her baby girl for blood tests. The results showed an anomaly in the blood and so we had her sent to Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania for further testing.

While Jane was waiting for her child to be examined, another woman in the waiting room struck up a conversation. As they talked, the older woman asked Jane if she was staying overnight there with her baby. Jane explained that she couldn't because she lived in an institution, and the woman asked her where that was.

When Jane told the woman she lived at Libertae, this woman revealed that she had graduated from Libertae 27 years ago! She then asked where she was going to live when she graduated from the program, to which Jane replied, Quakertown. The woman told Jane she also lives in Quakertown and offered to meet with her and take her to meetings when she completed her program.

The best ... at the conclusion of the baby's testing it was discovered that the test results were incorrect and she had nothing wrong with her, a result of the first set of tests being mixed up! What a strange and wonderful world this is, and how blessed we are by powers beyond our control and understanding. For Jane this was a sign that she may have someone looking over her, she may begin to trust, to hope and begin the important work for a better life for herself and her family.

We want to continue our work with women like Jane, enable pregnant women to deliver healthy babies in sobriety, help children have a normal, safe and secure childhood, and heal families by breaking the cycle of substance use disorders. Please join us. Your continued support is critical to our ability to use our experience, knowledge and belief in the relational power of recovery for women and the redemptive quality of that experience.

Peace.



Connie Karasow
Executive Director

susceptible to substance use related to social influences. Women's work lives are more complicated than men's (Fitzgerald 1995) with caregiver responsibilities being a major developmental task.

Pregnancy, parenting, and childcare issues are developmental milestones involving substance abuse disorders. Substance abuse and dependence during menopause may exacerbate postmenopausal risks for coronary heart disease, osteoporosis, and breast cancer (Register 2003). The typical pattern for coping with elderly parents in addition to the usual demands of work and family is that sons offer financial assistance and daughters and daughters-in-law provide the time-consuming, hands-on care.

Women are more likely to outlive their male partners. Widowed women were also significantly lower in overall mental health and social functioning and significantly higher in depressed mood (Wilcox 2003). Some suggest that the baby-boom generation is more likely than earlier generations to have experienced drugs and alcohol, and may abuse them after age 65 (Benshoff and Harrawood 2003).

This is a fraction of the material from which the training curricula will be developed. This is an exciting opportunity to set a standard of engagement with women, children, and families in Pennsylvania that will be based on women's experiences and women's strengths, and based on best research-based practices. ♪

Partners!

A Community Partners Grant of \$1,000 was made to Libertae from Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation, on October 29 at Bucks County Community College. The award was made in keeping with Wachovia's mission: to build strong and vibrant communities and make a positive difference where we live, work and play. The Foundation said of Libertae, "Your organization is a vital component to this mixture and we are honored and proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you in support of your efforts." ♪



From left to right: Jeff Bach, District Manager; Shirley M. Brosious, Store Manager, Feasterville PA; Marie Juszczyszyn, CSSR Andalusia Store; Sang Kim, Community Bank President (holding check); Connie Karasow; Dawn Doherty, VP, District Manager of tri-county area

Volunteer Recognition



President of Eta NU, Carol Garozzo, Representative Gene DiGirolamo, and Sue Rade

Libertae's First Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon was held Oct. 23 at the Buck Hotel to celebrate and honor our volunteers for their generous support and devoted service. Since 1973 we have enjoyed steadfast support from numerous individuals and organizations. At Libertae, our women learn they are accepted and supported and have the capacity to rejoin our larger family as responsible, active members of society.

The winner of the Outstanding Organization award were the women of Eta Nu, the local chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, the international social sorority, who have supported Libertae for nearly 20 years.

The Outstanding Leader award went to State Representative Gene DiGirolamo, a committed proponent of the belief that "treatment works!" and long-time supporter of our program.

Sue Rade, a volunteer, mentor, and board member was given the award for Outstanding Individual. Starting by helping with childcare in 2005, Sue joined the board of directors the following year and never looked back. Her energies on the behalf of the women of Libertae are ceaseless. ♪

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- Lou Shaknitz
- Susan Rade
- Stephanie Wood

Wanted

Volunteers dedicated to our mission who wish to serve on our Board of Directors. We are especially looking for anyone in the areas of construction, marketing, and fund development, or who is a Libertae alumna. Contact Connie Karasow at 215-639-8681, ext. 210. ✍

SAVE THE DATE!

April 22, 2010

Don't miss it — food, fun, fashion ... what more could one want? Watch for your invitation in the early spring.