September is National Recovery Month!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

September is National Recovery Month, an entire month committed to recovery education and celebration. While so many are dying from addiction, it is easy to get bogged down in the sadness and depression, the hopelessness that many people feel, whether you are a person suffering from addiction, or family, friend or first responder of someone addicted. However, September encourages us to focus on the recovery that can and does happen every day in this country, where brave and wonderful people are able to overcome the dangerous and deadly grip that addiction can hold. Recovery is real, wonderful, powerful, life-changing, and hard.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) says the following about Recovery Month:

National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with a mental and/or substance use disorder to live a healthy and rewarding life.

Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery, just as we celebrate health improvements made by those who are managing other health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. The observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. Since these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population, Recovery Month provides a vehicle for everyone to celebrate these accomplishments. Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities around the country celebrate National Recovery Month. They speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and furthers a greater understanding about the diseases of mental and substance use disorders.

So, for those in recovery, celebrate your month with joy and self-love for all you have accomplished so far and will continue to accomplish each day forward! For those still struggling, know that recovery is possible and you are worth it! Celebrate that phone call to get into treatment. Recovery is real and waiting for you. For families/friends of those addicted or lost to addiction, know that recovery is possible for millions and that there are many people, programs, and organizations dedicated to recovery. We will never give up our fight!

Please enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

With Love,

Michele Avery
President & Founder
Recovery Advocacy Day is Tuesday, September 26th, 2017, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex, 501 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

All are welcome to join Pennsylvania’s recovering community for a day of advocacy in Harrisburg. Recovery Advocacy Day aims to raise awareness of substance use disorders, celebrates individuals in long term recovery, and acknowledges the work of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Participants are welcome to arrive any time after 10 a.m. to meet with their elected officials where they can share their recovery experience and convey a message of hope. At 2 p.m., participants are invited to attend a media event in the main rotunda which will consist of remarks from individuals in recovery and state officials.

Questions?
Contact recoveryadvocacy@gmail.com
“Follow your dreams—no matter how out of reach they may seem.”

KAITLYN’S RECOVERY STORY

By Kaitlyn Rothermel-Walters, CRS

Hello my name is Kaitlyn and I’m an addict.

I can remember the first time I ever used Heroin and I absolutely hated it! I would use from time to time after that, but I was always able to put it down.

I then met the love of my life, Joshua. He changed my life and we had a daughter together in September of 2014. After she was born, she was very colic and a preemie (born at 32 weeks). I also had severe postpartum depression. I started to use heroin on a daily basis to cope with the depression. After 2 stays in rehab, I lost my job. I overdosed twice within 72 hours and then got arrested a month later in Harrisburg trying to buy drugs.

At this point, I knew I had to make a change. I found a Methadone Clinic in Camp Hill called Addiction Recovery Systems (ARS). It changed my life and made it manageable. It was like nothing I have ever experienced. I could fix my problems while living out in the real world and not confined in a “safe place,” such as a rehab. I have been on Methadone since September 2015. I wouldn’t have changed my recovery experience for anything. I am currently tapering off Methadone and I will be done tapering in November 2017. I am also in ongoing outpatient counseling with the Naaman Center to help sustain my long-term recovery.

While taking methadone, I have accomplished a lot of different things. I completed my Certified Recovery Specialist classes and now I’m certified to help people in recovery. I’m also a full time student at Southern New Hampshire University, my husband and I just purchased our own townhome, and I have a steady full time job. I also finally finished my probation after being supervised for 18 months.

I will end with this: “Follow your dreams—no matter how out of reach they may seem.”
Medication-assisted treatment (MAT), combines behavioral therapy and medications to treat substance use disorders.

For some people, their pathway to recovery is abstinence. This means that they live a life free from all mind or mood altering substances, usually following a 12-step recovery program. This includes no alcohol consumption, no illegal drugs, and no legal or prescribed drugs that alter your mind or mood.

However, there is a growing movement in the recovery community concerning MAT, which combines medication to control or reduce symptoms of withdrawals and cravings to use illegal substances along with therapy/counseling, and participation in social support programs. Even though MAT in many cases has been a proven effective treatment, it is still shunned by many in the recovery realm. However, MAT can be an effective lifesaving treatment for those who have been unable to sustain long-term recovery through abstinence.

**Buprenorphine** is more commonly known as Suboxone. It is an opioid partial agonist. That means that it produces effects such as euphoria or respiratory depression but the effects are weaker than drugs such as heroin. Treatment with Buprenorphine is monitored by a doctor and consists of introducing the Buprenorphine to the patient, stabilization which begins when the patient stops misuse of the problem drug (such as heroin) and no longer has cravings, and then maintenance on a steady dose. Once a patient is in the maintenance phase, they can be medically supervised to slowly wean off the Buprenorphine or continue it long term with continued therapy.

**Methadone** has been around for decades and, when taken properly, is safe and effective. As with Buprenorphine, Methadone is monitored closely by a doctor and works best in conjunction with therapy. The length of time in methadone treatment varies for each individual. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Methadone treatment should be a minimum of 12 months. When a patient, under supervision of their doctor, is ready to end methadone treatment, it must be reduced gradually to prevent withdrawal. Women who are pregnant or nursing can safely take methadone. When heroin withdrawal happens to a pregnant woman, it can cause a miscarriage or premature birth. Methadone helps save the pregnancy and helps the woman manage their addiction and avoid health risks from using illegal drugs.

**Naltrexone** can be in pill form and also in an extended-release injectable form. It is used to treat opioid use disorders and alcohol use disorders. The injectable form is more commonly known as Vivitrol. In order to start Naltrexone, the patient must not have used opioids for at least 7-10 days. Vivitrol is is injected once a month and blocks the euphoric and sedative effects of drugs such as heroin. It also suppresses or reduces cravings and you cannot abuse or misuse Naltrexone. If you relapse while on Naltrexone, you will not get high. However, it cannot prevent life-threatening consequences if you use opioids, including respiratory arrest and circulatory collapse. Just as the other MATs, Naltrexone works best in combination with therapy/counseling and social support programs.

Rainey’s Light believes that there are many pathways to recovery. Some paths work better for some people than others. Whatever path is chosen by a person trying to recover in conjunction with their medical professional, it should be viewed positively. If it saves lives, eliminates negative behaviors associated with addiction (such as criminal activity, lying, stealing) and enables those in recovery to lead productive, happy lives, then we see success.

**Migliore Treatment Center**
60 South 41st Street
Harrisburg, PA

**JFT Recovery and Veterans Support Services**
300 Market Street
Lemoyne, PA

Call (717) 635-9943 for more information.

At Rainey’s Light, we partner with other local organizations to collectively help as many people as possible.

One such organization is the Natalie Cribari Drug Awareness Fund (NCDAF). NCDAF has two pantries to help assist people with food, clothing and small household item needs. If you are in need, please visit one of their pantries located below.

**NCDAF**
Natalie Cribari Drug Awareness Fund

Resource: [https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment](https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment)
“...relapses can and do occur, especially within the first 12 months, but they can serve as a cue that the recovery plan needs to be adjusted for sustained success.”

Dear Andy,

My brother is a recovering heroin addict. He has been “clean” for almost 5 months. I love my brother, but I am scared that he will relapse. Our family has trouble trusting him because of all we went through when he was actively using (lying, stealing, etc.), and I know that hurts him. How can we learn to trust him again and best support him emotionally in his recovery?

Sincerely,
A Nervous Sister

Dear Nervous Sister:

When in active addiction, I was aware of my deplorable mental, physical, and social condition. Also, the anguish and sorrow I caused my family and friends did not escape me. I believe this is true for every addict. Still, void of any meaningful recovery, this disease mandates that the addict pursue their next “fix” regardless of the consequences. Once an addict embarks on their road to recovery they are already aware of the damage their actions, while in active addiction, have caused. They certainly don’t need to be reminded.

This is not to say your concern of relapse is unreasonable. Relapses can and do occur, especially within the first 12 months, but they can serve as a cue that the recovery plan needs to be adjusted for sustained success. What I hope you understand is that your brother faces a difficult challenge, and provided his current behavior is not contrary to healthy behaviors commonly associated with addiction recovery, I suggest you give him the benefit of the doubt as to the sincerity of his efforts. It is your brother’s responsibility to regain your trust since it was his actions that eroded it. Once again, if he’s sincere in his efforts to maintain recovery, he’ll understand your hesitation to take him at his word on all matters, and he’ll continue to live in a manner that will eventually lead to the restoration of your trust in him.

In the meantime, explain to him that you are available and willing to discuss any thoughts, concerns, or fears he may have related to his addiction or recovery, and do so without judgement or scorn. And never hesitate to employ “firm” love if necessary.

About Andy

Andrew Signore is a U. S. Air Force veteran and a former police officer. He is also a long-term recovering heroin addict with a passion for helping others find or maintain their path to recovery.

Send your questions to Ask Andy at raineyslight@yahoo.com, or mail to Rainey’s Light, 316 N 48th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17111

If you or a loved one is suffering from addiction, we recommend you seek treatment immediately by a medical professional. This column should not replace professional medical advice and treatment.
ABSTINENCE-BASED RECOVERY MEETINGS

By Scott Hill, CRS

“Hi, my name is Scott and I am an alcoholic...and a drug addict.” I used to say that and I believed it, too. It was something that I was good at (or not, depending how you look at it). For years, I was “Scott the Addict” not because I loved drugs and alcohol but, because I hated reality. Anything to mask the pain of life. Booze and drugs were the vehicle I used to check out. Life on life’s terms? No thanks. Needless to say, over the course of twenty-three years of active addiction I became dependent upon these two necessary evils. All the while, I was creating a destructive brokenness to my already bent life.

I first entered the rooms of AA at the age of seventeen after a drunken debacle in high school. Back then, I went for the sake of others, not because I wanted to. I continued attending these meetings because, deep inside, I knew there was something different about me. I showed up for over two decades, rarely sober, but under the impression that if I was at least going then I might get something positive out of it. I did not take their suggestions and I never worked on any of the steps. My plan was to get well by osmosis.

My inability to get honest with myself and others kept me going in and out of the rooms for years. I would return time and time again with my tail tucked between my legs. Usually after discovering that my rock bottom had a trap door. I knew there was something good in those rooms. I wanted what those people had. I had a desire to stop using, but I didn’t have the willpower to stop. I kept going back.

Nowadays, I introduce myself as somebody who used to struggle with drugs and alcohol, but am now living in long-term recovery. I started taking the suggestions of others in the rooms. I got a sponsor and started working on the steps. Brutal honesty, total surrender and a renewed hope for the future. I am so much more than just an alcoholic or drug addict. We all are.

Every addict has within them the ability to get well. However, none of us can do it by ourselves.

That is what these meetings are all about. They are rooms full of like-minded people who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other. If you have been to meetings before and say that they are not for you-I say you were at the wrong meeting. Don’t sell yourself short. Find the right fit. You are worth shopping around for. Meetings are life savers. Diabetics take Insulin. Addicts go to meetings. Period.

There are so many types of meetings out there these days and they are not all the Anonymous-style (AA, ACA, Al-Anon/Alateen, CA, CGAA, CMA, CoAnon, CoDA, CO-SA, COSLAA, DA, EA, FA, FAA, GA, GamAnon, HA, MA, NA, NarAnon, NicA, OA, OLGA, PA, SA, SCA, SIA, UA, WA). So, saying you don’t like meetings is not a valid point. Perhaps, you just are not ready for a better life. Maybe you do not want to be judged by others. Maybe you are just making excuses. Nobody is going to judge you-we are all there for the same reason. There are meetings for our loved ones, too. The people whose lives are being tossed about because of our disease. They, too, need to get themselves well (AlAnon, NarAnon). Recovery heals what has been damaged.

Meeting makers make it. Cliché but, true. 12 Step Meetings, Celebrate Recovery, Smart Recovery. Recently, I heard about Creative Recovery. Keep shopping. You will find where you belong.

Meetings have given me what I never had before...a life worth living. Reason to get up in the morning. True joy. Stick with it. You will be amazed. In closing, I just want to say, “I’m Scott, Certified Recovery Specialist, living in long-term recovery and I go to meetings because I love my life and if I can help others see the light, well, I’m all about that.”

PA KICK-OFF FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH


Hosted by the PA Dept. of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

RECOVERY DAY

Mark your calendar for September 23rd! Rainey’s Light will have a table at this year’s Recovery Day held by Dauphin County Drug & Alcohol Services. Recovery Day is Saturday, September 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Harrisburg Mall on Paxton Street in Harrisburg. Please stop by our table and visit with us!

http://smile.amazon.com/ch/81-2430605

You can support Rainey’s Light just by shopping using Amazon Smile! Just use this website or go to smile.amazon.com and chose Rainey’s Light as your charity. It costs you nothing and Amazon will donate every time you shop with them!
RAINEY’S LIGHT

Rainey’s Light is a non-profit organization in memory of Lorraine "Rainey" Avery of Carlisle, PA, who died of a heroin overdose in May of 2015.

Rainey was an intelligent, beautiful and charitable young woman who loved her children, family, friends and animals. Rainey would help anyone or anything in need. She volunteered hundreds of hours with her oldest sister to help homeless animals at shelters, rescues and spay/neuter and vaccine clinics, and helped TNR neighborhood feral cats. She was charming, thoughtful and a genuinely good person who is missed by everyone who knew her.

We are continuing her dream of a stable, quality life for herself and her children by helping other parents like Rainey successfully transition from inpatient to outpatient recovery.

SCENTSY FUNDRAISER

Check out our new Fall Scentsy Fundraiser to benefit Rainey’s Light!

Our fundraiser will be open for the whole month of September!

Click here to join the party and start shopping today!

Please Accept My Tax-Deductible Contribution to Rainey’s Light

Name(s) ______________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip ___________________________________________________________________________________
Email ___________________________________________________________________________________________
Phone __________________________________________________________________________________________
Amount $_______________________________________________________
   o General Donation
   o In Honor or Memory of: __________________________________________
   o I wish to remain anonymous
Special Note: _____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please make checks payable to Rainey’s Light and mail to:
Rainey’s Light, 316 N 48th Street, Harrisburg, PA  17111