

STEP 2 NEWS

Providing comprehensive, coordinated services related to the treatment and recovery of chemically dependent women and their families, resulting in sustainable self-sufficiency.

Providing a Safe Harbor for Women & Children in Our Community

Volume 11, 2006

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Often times we forget about the difficulties that our women encounter outside of their mind-boggling substance abuse issues. They are often dealing with the loss of their children and even more discreet, the loss of themselves in whole or in part.

Now, you might ask "How does one lose her/himself?" particularly when everyone wakes up to a mirror. Unfortunately it happens all too often, even with the healthiest of individuals. Sometimes emotional pieces of our selves are taken by others with one tragic event or in miniscule pieces over time. Sometimes we give those pieces away. Either way these losses are real.

Loss of all types and the resulting grief are a normal part of life. From the moment of birth and separation from the mother's womb through the rest of life until death, people experience many losses.

If experience is the best teacher, one would think we would be better at handling endings, losses, and separations. But loss is challenging for most individuals. Failure to address losses can add to the confusion, anxiety and distress. Social perceptions we think we are suppose to live by can pressure us even more. When our perceptions of normalcy contradict our emotions, there can be inner confusion and a shattering of dreams and hopes. These shattered dreams can intrude on our ability to create future stories or pictures, nourish hope, and make plans for the future. This is all too often where substance abuse comes into the picture.

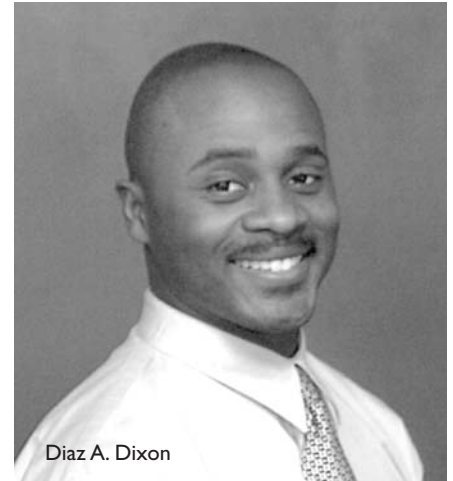
Loss is a shattering experience. We face the painful and demanding task of coping with our loss as we seek to find something to replace what was lost or fill the space the loss has created. At the same time, there is the challenge of daily living and possibly the need to find a new sense of purpose. STEP 2 is lucky to have great staff that dedicates themselves to helping our clients find that new purpose.

When a loss occurs, remember to be easy on yourself. Know that is ok to experience sadness. Take time for yourself; seek out support groups, friends, prayer, and /or counseling. Don't take inappropriate advice personally.

Know that people mean well, but also know that you don't have to listen to them. Take what you can use and discard the rest. However, let them know what you do need from them if they ask.

Each loss is unique and no one knows exactly how you are feeling except you. Seek out those who have experienced similar losses and have recovered from them. Ask them what steps they took and decide if that is appropriate for you.

Moving through loss is not an easy road, but people are traveling on it everyday.



Diaz A. Dixon

Celebrating 20 Years

of Guiding Women and Families through Recovery

Celebrate with STEP 2 on September 7 at our gala dinner. Guest honoree is the First Lady of Nevada, Ms. Dema Guinn. Tickets are \$200 per person or \$2,000 for a table of ten.

To purchase tickets or discuss sponsorship opportunities please contact Becky at 787-9411 x 226 or bcontos@step2reno.org.

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A Story of Hope

When I was little I was a Daddy's girl. I was never very close to my mother or my brother. When I was eight years old my Dad died of cancer. It was really hard for me to get closure with my Dad's death. I was extremely angry, no one had told me that he was going to die. For several years after I would still cry myself to sleep.

I started using drugs at 13. It was "cool" with my friends and most of my family were users at the time so it didn't even seem wrong. I did my first line of cocaine, and smoked my first joint all in the same night. Later that night the same guy who gave me those first drugs also gave me my first sexual experience. He raped me.

At 17, I met Frank who "swept" me off my feet. Shortly after Frank and I started dating my best friend died in a car accident. Deep down I knew there was nothing I could have done to prevent the accident so I could only mourn her loss. For three months after her death I visited her grave every day. Frank was there for me and I think at that point he really did care about me.

Six months later I found out I was four months pregnant. I quit everything immediately but was scared because I was still using before I knew I was pregnant. I gave birth - thank God - to a very healthy baby boy.

But three weeks after my son was born I started using again. For years, Frank and I fought constantly, broke up and got back together many times. Unfortunately my son witnessed all of that destructive behavior. I ended up living with my uncle and his girlfriend in a very chaotic situation. Finally at 21, I realized that I was working dead-end jobs and didn't have a high school diploma or GED. I knew I needed to quit and quickly get my life on track.

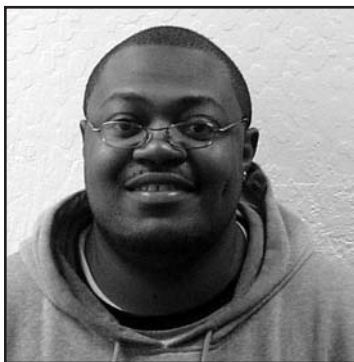
I told my Aunt that I needed help and she told me about STEP 2. I was told I could get clean and go through this program and still be with my son. I left my son with my Mom to begin my recovery at STEP 2. Today I have 5 months clean. I now have my GED. I also got an acceptance letter from a college. My son is with me and I am the best mother I have ever been. My mother is my best friend and I now have a relationship with my brother.

Every morning I wake up next to my son and I thank God for the life I live today. I am grateful for being here because in all my life I have never been happier. If it wasn't for STEP 2 I wouldn't be at this point.

Kristen - a STEP 2 client

Life Lessons of a Volunteer

"I have learned more in the last 8 months than I have my entire life" - Aaron Lewis



Aaron came to STEP 2 eight months ago as a VISTA Volunteer. At 26, after completing a bachelor's degree in film and video from Columbia College in Chicago he was at an impasse. He was interested in grad school but wanted to find some clarity in his life direction.

He decided to volunteer, signing up with the VISTA program. VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) places individuals with community-based agencies to help find long-term solutions to the problems caused by urban and rural poverty. Raised in Pearl Mississippi, Aaron wanted an experience on the West Coast. VISTA matched Aaron with STEP 2.

Aaron noted that his work with the clients at STEP 2 made his problems seem small. "I learned to step outside of my shoes and step into someone else's (shoes). Working with

the women taught me about life - about respecting life."

Pam Pittsford, his site supervisor, stated that "Aaron listened to the clients, attended group dinners and truly cared about the women while maintaining appropriate boundaries. He served as a good role model for the clients on what a man should and can be." Pam went on to say "Aaron is a beautiful human being, a very special young man and we were very lucky to have him."

We would like to congratulate Aaron who is beginning an internship with New Line Cinema in LA and attending grad school at Loyola Marymount. But as Aaron noted, "No classroom can compare to the volunteer experience."

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Safe Harbor Circle

Our recent donors of over \$1,000
Thank you for your generosity.

EL Cord Foundation
Nevada Women's Fund

The Circle of Quilts

The clients at STEP 2 are providing warmth for some of the infants and children served by the Children's Cabinet. Through a partnership with Susan Phillips at Quilt Ministries, the women at STEP 2 are learning how to sew quilts. This new venture provides the women with a new skill, the pride of completing a project and the opportunity to give back to the community. All of these elements contribute to the women's broader life skills they are learning during their recovery at STEP 2.



Susan teaching a client the finer points of threading

Barbara, one of the clients, was very moved stating, "This is so wonderful I want to make quilts for Children's Cabinet on my own, too."

According to Susan, the Children's Cabinet relies on the community for volunteers to make quilts for the infants and children they serve. Unfortunately, some of their quilting volunteers were unable to continue to assist which left a need. STEP 2's clients are happy to fill that need especially since some of the children at STEP 2 have also been assisted by the Children's Cabinet.



Susan and Mary from Quilting Ministries, STEP 2 clients and Kristi Dorf, STEP 2's Family Wellness Coordinator

Wish List

The clients of STEP 2 are in need of various sizes of NEW underwear, bras, and socks. Many of our women come to us with nothing and this would be a great help.

If you can assist, please drop off your donation to the Administrative Office on 3695 Kings Row or email Tina Dean at tdean@step2reno for more information.

STEP 2 is also looking for storage space to assist us in accommodating the generosity of our community. If you are able to donate storage space to STEP 2 please contact Mike at 787-9411 x. 207.



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Chief Executive Officer
 Diaz Dixon

STEP 2 NEWS **Volume II, 2006**

Golf Tournament May 22, 2006



Don't miss this year's annual charity golf tournament to be held on **May 22** at Thunder Canyon Country Club. You can enjoy a great day of golf on one of the premier courses in the community and support the critical work of STEP 2. The cost is \$500 for a foursome.

Entry forms are available online at www.step2reno.org. Look for "Charity Golf Tournament Entry Form" on the home page. **Entry deadline is May 15th.**

Thank you to our generous tournament sponsors including



Time is running out so enter your teams today.

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