

Glowing Embers Newsletter

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Giving Back!

As a younger teen on the near eastside of Indianapolis, 15-year-old Brittany learned some harmful behaviors from her older brothers. By the time she started treatment at EmberWood Center, she had committed petty theft with them many times.

Brittany's family could barely survive on her father's salary from a grocery store job, and her mother was in jail. To complete this picture, Brittany was expelled from high school for being "a threat to other students." The Salvation Army was the bright

spot in her life; volunteers provided hot meals to her family on a weekly basis.

After being arrested for possession of marijuana, Brittany landed in EmberWood Center's *Street Alternatives* program; simultaneously, she started classes at the Metro Diversion School. As her counselor taught her to dream about a different kind of life, wonderful things began to happen. She stopped using marijuana, and she stopped all involvement in criminal activity.

As Brittany's counselor gained her trust, Brittany shared with him that she and her father would scrimp and save their pennies so they could rent movies and buy popcorn once a month; this was quality time Brittany treasured with her dad, who was her sole caretaker. As a reward for her quick and remarkable improvement, EmberWood Center treated Brittany and her father to a night at the movies, complete with a generous allowance for concessions.

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Thirty Years and Counting ...

Last February, EmberWood Center marked our thirtieth birthday as an organization serving Indianapolis and Marion County. We also changed our name after a year-long formal process of

strategic planning and capacity building.

In an effort to reintroduce our organization, as well as build and strengthen relationships with other service providers, we launched a brown bag luncheon

series last summer.

To open the series, we had the good fortune of partnering with the State Department of Health to roll out their new health plan for adolescents.

About two years ago, a group of individuals from

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New Staff at EmberWood Center



Adult Substance Abuse Counselor **Elyce Elder** comes to us with a masters in art and art therapy from the University of Louisville. She holds the highest Indiana certification in addictions, which is CADAC IV. In addition to 10 years of experience in the addictions field, Elyce worked in the Greenwood Recovery court system and

brings to our staff a thorough familiarity with the legal system. She also has a specialization in women's addiction issues and trauma. Elyce's artwork was featured in EmberWood Center's first *Myths of Addiction* art gallery show in September. Welcome Elyce!



Adolescent Substance Abuse Counselor **Cindy Lambert** was

previously an intern at EmberWood Center and greatly enjoys working with near eastside youth. Currently she is completing her masters in social work (IUPUI). In addition, Cindy is fulfilling an internship as a school social worker at nearby Arsenal Tech High School, where she helps students with crisis and anger management, behavioral issues in school, referrals for mental health resources, and gaining life skills. We are thrilled to have Cindy on board as a leader in our adolescent programs.

Giving Back

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To quote Brittany, this was "a night I will never forget."

Brittany completed treatment in *Street Alternatives*, but is staying involved in the program.

As her quality of life improved, she did not forget what it was like to struggle. With positive new influences in her life and constructive activities, like helping create an activities room for the

youth at EmberWood, Brittany got an idea on her own ... she decided to give back. To complete the circle, Brittany is becoming a volunteer and serving food at the

same Salvation Army center that once served her family.

Not every story has a happy ending, but some do, when young people find doors of opportunity at places like EmberWood Center.

Giving a donation to EmberWood Center helps to ensure that the doors of opportunity remain open for other deserving youngsters.

Forget not from where you come, for it is you who can light the path for others on this journey we call life.

United Way Campaign at EmberWood Center

EmberWood Center has been a United Way agency since 1994, and because we know we can't do it alone, our staff give to United Way to support the agencies that make us whole as a community.

This year the internal campaign took a different twist. Staff were divided into three teams who competed to collect the most donations of items and goods for

the Julian Center, another United Way agency in central Indiana. A spirit of competition led to much greater resourcefulness than usual!

We had 100% participation among employees, collecting 1,370 items for the Julian Center, another United Way agency as part of our internal United Way campaign.

The winning team collected 670 items to donate to the Julian Center. In total, EmberWood Center donated 1,370 items ranging from canned goods and clothing to toothpaste.

Live United!

Have you made your pledge or donation to United Way?

uwci.org

Street Alternatives Program

This year EmberWood Center got a grant from the City Crime Prevention Fund to implement a program called *Street Alternatives*, utilizing a best practice model from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The program is 24



weeks long and includes treatment, connecting youth with community resources, and teaching healthy lifestyle choices.

Very often alcohol and other drug abuse robs young people of their childhood; part of our role is to give back some of those childhood experiences. With that in mind, staff threw a Halloween/pumpkin carving party for our clients.

Program participants brought their family members to help carve the pumpkins and enjoy pizza and candy. Several of the participants

had never carved a pumpkin before; sometimes it is the little things we take for granted.



Most of us would never imagine that carving a pumpkin would keep inner city youth off the streets and smiling.

Myths of Addiction

EmberWood Center decided to try a new way to raise awareness about the stigma attached to substance use disorders, commonly referred to as addictions.

We partnered with the Harrison Center for the Arts and sponsored an art show focused on the myths of addiction. The show opened September 4, and almost 1,000 people pondered the various

artists' interpretations of addiction.

Special thanks to sponsors **Keystone Construction**, the **National**



The pink elephant in the room.

Bank of Indianapolis and our **Board Members** for helping to underwrite the cost of the show.

Visit our website to see some pictures of the artwork.

www.emberwoodcenter.org



Thirty Years and Counting *(cont'd from p. 1)*

around the state came together to form the Coalition to Improve Adolescent Health. That coalition, which included EmberWood President Vince Failla and MCCOY Executive Director John Brandon, crafted Indiana's first comprehensive strategy to address adolescent health; Indiana is one of only seven states to have such a plan.

So when EmberWood was ready to

launch its brown bag series last June, less than one month after the *Picturing a Healthier Future* plan was released, State Adolescent Health Program Director Stephanie Woodcox joined Brandon and Failla to introduce the plan to the community. The Plan identifies 10 priority issues addressing access to care and prevention for young people ages 10 to 24.

Since then, on the second Friday of the month, guest speakers have done brown bag presentations on other related topics, such as dating violence and binge drinking. If you would like to attend or present at our brown bag series, contact Amanda aslaten@emberwoodcenter.org. To see a copy of the plan, go to www.INadolescenthealth.org.

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Treatment. Recovery. Transformation

We're on the Web!

www.emberwoodcenter.org

EmberWood Center is a not-for-profit, community-based agency providing alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and outpatient treatment services. Most of those we serve could not access services if it were not for the state and local grants, contracts, and individual donations we receive to provide services to children, adolescents and adults.

Our mission is **to promote growth, respect and integrity through community-based services to address the cycle of addiction with individuals and families.**

Our vision is of a world where individuals have the tools and resources to navigate life without having to rely on alcohol and other drugs to cope, and where effects of substance use disorders are minimized.

You can help make our vision a reality with your donation. Invest in the future of our community by making a contribution today, either on-line at www.emberwoodcenter.org, or by using the attached envelope. Thank you!

In the Spirit of Giving

It is that time of year when the spirit of giving abounds. It is also the time of year when nonprofits ask people to give. EmberWood Center is not different from others in that respect, but there is a matter we want to point out – we give, too! Our staff gives, we teach our young clients to give to the community, and we benefit from the time, talent and resources of community members. I believe you will see evidence of those relationships in this newsletter.

As you prepare for this season, we hope you will consider sharing your resources with EmberWood Center.

Sincerely,

Vincent G. Failla, President

EmberWood Center recognizes and expresses our thanks to the graphic arts students of **The Art Institute of Indianapolis** for designing our new brochure in a class competition. Our gratitude goes to: Jennifer Park, Michael Maranto, Caryn Helton, Isaac Pena, Erika Manuel, Kristin Moats, Thomas Jackson, Tia Brand, Nicole Bonaventura, Alyssa Duskey, Mark Batta, William Von Bank, Ian Titus and Daniel Rivera. Also, to their instructor, Steven Williams, and to Greg Craddock, Graphic Design Director, THANK YOU!!



Our thanks also go out to the young clients of EmberWood Center who are growing, changing, and learning to

become community volunteers. Per our Adolescent Counselor Bryan: "Our kids may not have money, but they do have time, so they choose to give time. It's about a spirit of giving. Being involved can take multiple avenues. But investing in the lives of youth will always prove a beneficial return in the future."

Thank you to our very involved Board members for all their help with outreach, planning, serving on committees, and hosting special events for EmberWood Center. You rock!!