April 2019

At the Heart of Wellness

Message from Maria

Dear friends;
As you are well aware, there are some intense feelings associated with addiction – on the part of the person in the throes of the disease as well as those connected with that person. This month I’d like to share a special message for those of us who love someone who is suffering.

I have several family members who have struggled mightily with addiction. I have felt all those intense feelings and have battled back the judgment that takes up residence in a worried heart. Understanding the root causes of behaviors helps us to find compassion and

In Case of Emergency...

How many times have you sat on an airplane, awaiting take-off, and heard the flight attendant say, “In the unlikely event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop down from the panel above your head… Secure your own mask before helping others”? If you are sitting next to your child or a loved one your natural impulse is to help them first. What the flight attendant is saying is that it is important to help yourself first so that you can be there to help others.

The same applies to those of us who are consumed by our concerns, worries and fears for a loved one who is struggling with substance abuse. When a loved one is in the throes of substance abuse it can feel impossible to focus on anything other than the latest crisis. Taking care of yourself falls to the very bottom of your to-do list, if it makes it on the list at all! Finding time to focus on self-care is vital if you are going to be helpful to your loved one and those around you. As the flight attendant said, self-care is not about being selfish, it is about taking care of yourself so that you can help others.

At McCall we treat more than just the client, we strive to impact the client’s entire support system. We start by acknowledging and talking about how profoundly difficult it is to be in a relationship with someone with a substance abuse or mental health diagnosis. We talk about their hurt, their challenges, their fears and let’s make sure that they know that they are not alone.

We offer a support group called Recovering Together, for loved ones of people who are struggling with addiction. Group members meet and talk with others who are in a similar place, who have similar worries and fears, and who face similar challenges. We provide links to online resources for families including AL Anon/Alateen meetings, and we work to instill the belief that self-care is not about being selfish, it is about being the healthiest, strongest you, so that you can help others who

Maria Coutant Skinner, Executive Director
understanding…but it isn’t a magic wand that eradicates uncomfortable feelings. So, how do we navigate the often muddy waters of determining where our help and compassion end and the other person’s responsibility for their recovery begins? One simple step is to ask yourself; who does this decision most benefit? That may appear to be an easy answer on the surface, but more deeply, is your action helping to ease the knot in your stomach, prevent rejection or feel needed and worthwhile? Or is it truly to benefit your loved one’s journey?

Each of us must take an active role in our wellbeing and that can sometimes mean leaning into the stuff we’ve spent a lifetime trying to avoid. Sounds – terrifying – right?

It doesn’t have to be. The feelings that arise in response to another’s suffering teach us important lessons about ourselves. When we feel the need to rescue or fix, get panicked or irritated, become enraged or break down, something deep in us is at work. Over a lifetime, we develop complex ways of protecting ourselves. In fact, it can often be easier to focus on the person with the disease than address our own issues. When we understand what’s underneath those feelings recognize that those coping mechanisms have served us in the past, we can begin to make peace with ourselves.

We cannot control anyone else – no matter how hard we try and how much we want to. In fact, doing so often harms both parties. Demonstrating love and need your support.

If you know someone who is struggling with addiction or if you are the loved one of someone please give us a call at 860-496-2100 and ask to speak to one of our counselors.

“Many codependents, at some time in their lives, were true victims—of someone’s abuse, neglect, abandonment, alcoholism, or any number of situations that can victimize people. We were, at some time, truly helpless to protect ourselves or solve our problems. Something came our way, something we didn’t ask for, and it hurt us terribly. That is sad, truly sad. But an even sadder fact is that many of us codependents began to see ourselves as victims. Our painful history repeats itself. As caretakers, we allow people to victimize us, and we participate in our victimization by perpetually rescuing people. Rescuing or caretaking is not an act of love.”

— Melody Beattie, Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself

McCall’s Heart

The McCall Center for Behavioral Health is fortunate to have a remarkable group of employees who are dedicated to our clients, our community and our agency. Beginning this month, and continuing throughout the year, we will be featuring a staff member. We know how amazing our staff is and we think it is important for you, our readers, to get to know a little bit about them as well. For McCall employees this is not just a job, they love this agency, believe in its mission, have hope for their clients (even when those clients feel lost and hopeless) and know that their work is critically important to turn the tide of the ravages of addiction toward the journey of health. Our employees are the heart of McCall. This month we are featuring Jessica Niek.
connection - with healthy boundaries helps you; and those around you.

All my best always,
Maria

Make a difference in someone's life and support McCall today.

Our mission is to provide comprehensive integrated substance abuse and mental health treatment to help people lead healthier and more productive lives.

Your donation will directly support our prevention, recovery and community programs and help us provide clients with the support they need-regardless of their ability to pay. Click here to donate today!

Hometown: Bristol

Position at McCall: Counselor at Carnes Weeks Center

Quote: It's a new day and the possibilities are endless

Something I love about my job: Getting to be a part of the client’s difficult yet wonderful recovery process and being able to come along side to help them pick up their pieces and put them back together in a different and beautiful way.

Thank you

Last week we had the honor to participate in the Connecticut Community Foundation's Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills. Over 2 days and 36 hours we shared stories about our staff and how they make "healing start here at McCall" and you responded in a BIG way!

We raised $5,240 with the potential for more in bonus dollars(to be determined next month).

We welcomed 12 NEW donors to the McCall Family, many of whom have been reading this newsletter each month.

We added 10 new Facebook followers and 15 new Instagram followers that can now hear about the wonderful work being done in our communities.

We reached a WHOPPING 994 people on Facebook and Instagram in 2 days!!

We are so thankful to all of YOU for making this campaign great
success and we look forward to continuing to make a difference in the lives of our clients.