Sage's Army Newsletter

Fall 2019

Sage's Army, Inc., P.O. Box 156, Westmoreland City, PA 15692. Phone: (724) 863-LIFE (5433). Access to this Newsletter can be found at our Website: www.sagesarmy.com, Email: admin@sagesarmy.com

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to address issues related to drug and alcohol addiction by providing informational support to children and families by raising awareness ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

Who we are…

Sage's Army was created by Carmen Capozzi and his family after his son, Sage Capozzi, 20, died of a heroin overdose. They felt it was important to raise awareness of drug problems among youth and erase the fear of talking to parents about them.

Sage's Army has grown and continues its movement as a grass roots, non-profit, all volunteer group who offers bi-monthly Family Reinforcement/Recovery Sessions, bi-monthly Grief meetings (for those who have lost loved ones to this epidemic), a monthly Coffee Break for women, presentations to schools, churches, or groups wanting to learn more about addiction. We also offer a 24/7 Phone Line assistance. Please see Page 7 (Headquarters News) of this Newsletter for full details.

Sage's Army Help Line

Awareness, Compassion, Action

Substance Abuse Issues
You Are Not Alone

724-863-5433 (LIFE)

24/7 Phone line assistance with Sage's Army

Emotional Support
Treatment Facility Options
With or Without Insurance
Parent and Peer Guidance

Team Meetings

Sage's Army Team Meetings are attended by a group of dedicated volunteer individuals, along with the Officers and Directors, who help map out our present and future events. We would like to hear from any of you about ideas that you may have and want to contribute or, if you would like to attend the Team meeting in person, just contact one of our staff or e-mail admin@sagesarmy.com.

"In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger — something better, pushing right back." ~ Albert Camus

Quotes of the QUARTER

"Every experience in your life is being orchestrated to teach you something you need to know to move forward." ~Brian Tracy

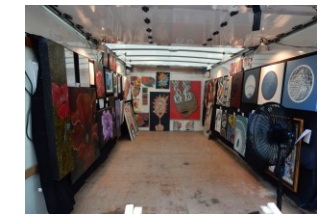
Events We Attended

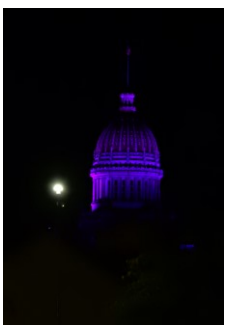
(regular Monthly meetings not listed)
Aug 1 – Mount Pleasant National Night Out. Festivities for all and Sage's Army table.
Aug 6 – Latrobe National Night Out. Night out for families, Sage's Army table and volunteers.
Aug 16 – Carmen in Harrisburg for Parent Panel Advisory Council (PPAC) meeting.
Aug 31 – OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY.
Sep 3 – Sage's Army Team Meeting at the Headquarters.
Sep 8 – HOPE (Heroin Outreach Prevention and Education) Initiative at PNC Park.
Sep 13 – Art for Recovery and Transformation at Palace Theatre, Saint Clair Park and downtown Greensburg. Sponsored by Sage's Army and Strive Health of Greensburg.
Sep 14 – Pittsburgh Recovery Walk (11th and Waterfront) Pittsburgh.

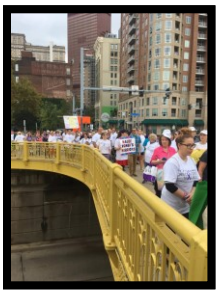
Upcoming Events

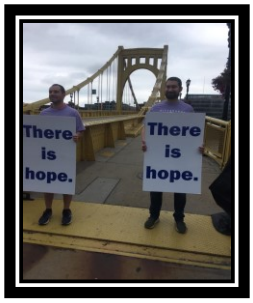
Oct 3 – Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation Fall Family Funfest at Twin Lakes. Great outing with lots of activities and giveaways.

Oct 4 -- **Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters *NOTE time change…4-6pm.**
Oct 9 – Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Oct 10 - Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Oct 23 - Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Oct 24 – **Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.**
Nov 1 – Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters *NOTE time change…4-6pm.
Nov 13 - Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Nov 14 - Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Nov 27 – Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Nov 28 – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
Dec 6 - Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters *NOTE time change…4-6pm.
Dec 11 - **Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.**
Dec 12 - Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.









Sage's Army Successes

Thank you all for your great support at Sage's Army and Strive Health of Greensburg Art for Recovery and Transformation trailer at St. Clair Park during Music Fest on Sep 13th. Your support and participation was over the top. The artists were awesome and provided something above the norm for our Sage's Army event. So happy to see all of our friends who stopped by our exhibit.

70,237
Died in 2017

EVERY ONE of them was someone's child.

Newsworthy Tidbits

ALERT...Vaping may be injurious to your health. Please read all of the warnings.

Pot Breathalyzer...Marijuana laws catching up to impaired drivers.

Investigations underway...for JUUL Labs vaping device being investigated by Feds.

Warning...US warns Mexico to get a grip on drugs if it does not do more about trafficking.

It's a Fact...in 2012, drug firms shipped enough opioids pills for at least 20-day supply for ALL U.S. persons.

The bad news...in May 2019...85% of inmates required detox services.

The good news...there is a decline in drug fatalities.

Lives saved...Medics in Pennsylvania say 22,001 doses of Narcan were used between Jan 1, 2008 and June 8, 2019 (252 in Westmoreland Co. and 915 in Allegheny Co. alone).

Our deepest sympathy...Franklin Co., Ohio had 9 drug O.D. deaths in a two-day period.

Be on your guard...Epidemic level deaths still in Delaware (6 over Labor Day), Maryland, New Jersey and Vermont. It's not over yet…we are still losing 12 people a day in Pennsylvania to overdose

23 MILLION Americans...living in long term recovery.

5 MYTHS
ABOUT DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION

1. "OVERCOMING ADDICTION IS A SIMPLY A MATTER OF WILLPOWER."
Prolonged exposure to drugs alters the brain in ways that result in powerful cravings and a compulsion to use. These brain changes make it extremely difficult to quit by sheer force of will.

2. "ADDICTION IS A DISEASE; THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT."
Most experts agree that addiction is a brain disease, but that doesn't mean you're helpless to it. The brain changes associated with addiction can be treated and reversed through therapy, medication, exercise, and other treatments.

3. "ADDICTS HAVE TO HIT ROCK BOTTOM BEFORE THEY CAN GET BETTER."
Recovery can begin at any point in the addiction process and the earlier, the better. The longer drug abuse continues, the stronger the addiction becomes and the harder it is to treat. Don't wait to intervene until the addict has lost it all.

4. "YOU CAN'T FORCE SOMEONE INTO TREATMENT; THEY HAVE TO WANT HELP."
Treatment doesn't have to be voluntary to be successful. People who are pressured into treatment by their family, employer, or the legal system are just as likely to benefit as those who choose to enter treatment on their own. As they sober up and their thinking clears, many formerly resistant addicts decide they want to change.

5. "TREATMENT DIDN'T WORK BEFORE, SO THERE'S NO POINT TRYING AGAIN."
Recovery from drug addiction is a long process that often involves setbacks. Relapse doesn't mean that treatment has failed or that you're a lost cause. Rather, it's a signal to get back on track, either by going back to treatment or adjusting the treatment approach.

2 BILLION!...money in grants to fight opioid epidemic declared by President Trump.

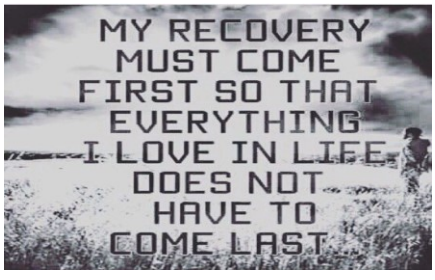
Government reports indicated guideline for prescribed opioids for chronic pain should have Narcan paired with each prescription (even though opioids should not be first choice for chronic pain).

Warning...

Federal Health Officials issue warning against marijuana use by adolescents and pregnant women, citing higher levels of THC in today's plants.

Our Note of Special Thanks

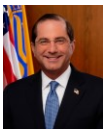
To our Troopers on the road, ever vigilante, arresting drug dealers on our major highways, keeping our children safe from harm and our First Responders, saving lives every day. THANK YOU!!!



NOTABLE QUOTES

Carmen Capozzi, President of Sage's Army: *"Grief is a personal experience and no one can tell you how to live through it. I still feel Sage is present in my life. My son changed my life. He showed me true love and he gave me purpose for 20 years and then it was just over in an instant."*

Father Robert T. Lubic from Connellsville, St. Rita Parish at the Catholic Community Response: *"The problem is substance abuse in general. People are still using, and we still need to be there for them."*



Alex Azar, Health and Human Services Secretary (on e-cigarettes): *"We will continue using every regulatory and enforcement power we have to stop the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use."*

Carl Tobias, Professor, University of Richmond School of Law (on recent "win" through courts): *"Seems there will be little money for the plaintiffs if Purdue takes bankruptcy and the owners are not kicking in any money for settlement."*

Alexander Star, Pitt professor, Star Lab (on the new Pot Breath Tests, at what level starts impairment): *"It probably also depends on whether a person is a regular user and the persons size, the presence of THC in breath doesn't mean the person can be impaired."*

Colleen Hughes, Executive Director of Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission who implemented the jail drug pilot program speaking on the 40% of inmates still receiving counseling and injections: *" This is positive. It shows treatment works."*

Warden John Walton, Westmoreland County Jail: *" 204 of 239 new inmates are addicted…It's the most it's ever been. The numbers are up."*

Tim Phillips, Director, Westmoreland Overdose Task Force at Westmoreland Community Action…(warns): *"People are still overdosing, they are just surviving."*

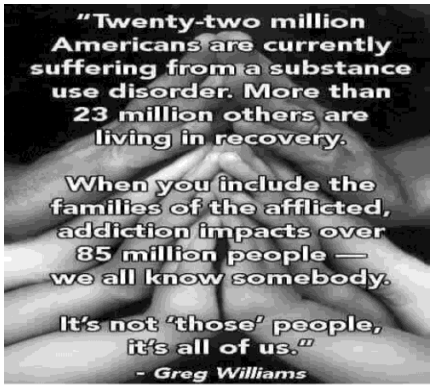
From the Sage's Army Prayer Team…

a prayer for those in need

Good and gracious God, we ask you to send forth your grace so that we might help our sisters and brothers who suffer from addiction to opioids and other substances. We pray that addicts will not fear seeking help and that their loved ones will never give up. We pray for all people who help the addicted and we pray for everyone who has lost loved ones. May we response as the church, proclaiming the Good news, filled with hope and gladness. We ask this through Christ our Lord Amen.

Think about it…in the next ten years, there will be a group of kids in every middle school with one thing in common…their parents overdosed on heroin and died.

Ohio's first recovery high school graduated its first class this last month. Their success is having access to recovery coaches, programs and support of peers just like them. Way to go Ohio!



Questions & Answers with Sage's Army

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION? Let us help you find the answer.

What is vaping?
Electronic cigarettes (transition from traditional cigarettes to not smoking at all)

FIVE Vaping Facts you need to know:

1. **Vaping is less harmful than traditional smoking** (but, there are 7000 chemicals in e cigs, many of which are toxic, but fewer than traditional cigs).
2. **Vaping is still bad for your health.**

Nicotine is the primary agent in both regular cigs and e cigs and it is highly addictive. It raises your blood pressure and spikes your adrenaline which increases your heart rate. Many unknowns about vaping, you need to know they are potentially dangerous to your health.

3. **Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional cigarettes.**
4. **Electronic cigarettes aren't the best smoking cessation tool.**

Although they have been marketed as an aid to help quit smoking e cigs have not received Food and Drug Administration approval as smoking cessation device.

5. **A new generation is getting hooked on nicotine.**

Among youth, e cigs are more popular than traditional tobacco products. In 2015, the U.S. Surgeon General reported e cigs used among high school students had increased by 900 percent and 40 percent of young e cig users had never smoked regular tobacco. It was promoted to help smokers quit, but vaping is possibly leading to regular cig smoking later on.

(Above info on Vaping reviewed by Michael Joseph Blaha, M.D., M.P.H, Director clinical research John Hopkins)

What is the latest information Vaping?
U.S. health officials recently are urging people to stop vaping until they figure out why some people are acquiring serious breathing illnesses (along with previous deaths reported). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there have been 450 possible cases of lung disease related to vaping reported in 33 states. Six have ended in death *(see Tribune Review 9/11/2019 "Kansas confirms 1st death tied to vaping).*

Why is Opioid use causing addiction in seniors?
Older persons are increasingly prescribed opioids to address chronic pain. An opioid pain medication such as oxycodone and acetaminophen can put you at risk for overdose and death. Even if you take your dose correctly as prescribed, you are at risk for addiction, abuse, and misuse that can lead to death. Do not take the above if you have severe asthma, trouble breathing, or other lung problems.

How long before an adult becomes addicted to pain pills?
According to experts from the Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing warn dependence can set in after a few days (as little as 3 days). Discomfort and side effects can occur when pills are stopped.

AskK the Question and we will find the answer. Submit questions to newsletter@sagesarmy.com or by snail mail to Sage's Army Inc., PO Box 156, Westmoreland City, Pa. 15692

Article of the Quarter

Are Benzos (Benzodiazepines) the Next "Opioid" Crisis?

When Rachel Ziegler was 22, her doctor prescribed 0.5 mg of Xanax once a day to treat generalized anxiety and panic attacks. "I don't recall ever discussing a potential stopping point," says Ziegler, who works as a chemistry-lab technician at the University of Illinois, "but I do remember asking her if I would become addicted." Ziegler says her doctor minimized the risk, telling her, "Oh, you'll be okay. You'd have to take it like three times a day for three months to get addicted." But after about three months, the psychiatrist wrote her a new prescription, then another, until before she knew it, she'd been using Xanax for six years.

Women are twice as likely as men to have an anxiety disorder and thus also twice as likely to be prescribed benzodiazepines, according to a 2019 report in *JAMA Network Open.* Between 1996 and 2013, benzodiazepine prescriptions increased by 67 percent, from 8.1 million to 13.5 million, according to a 2016 study in the *American Journal of Public Health.* The increase in use and misuse has led to a concerning spike in deaths: The overdose mortality rate involving benzodiazepines for women between the ages of 30 and 64 increased by 830 percent between 1999 and 2017, according to a January 2019 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Drug packaging states physiological dependence can occur even when they're taken as prescribed, but it doesn't explain dependence is widespread among users who take the drugs for longer than two to four weeks, according to a 2018 article in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine.* And many do: Between 2005 and 2015, the number of people using benzos for six or more months increased by 50 percent, according to the *JAMA* report. "Anyone who uses these medications long-term is going to experience tolerance and withdrawal," says Wilson Compton, M.D., the deputy director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The best way out of this burgeoning crisis is a simple one: "We should really look at limiting the number of patients on chronic benzodiazepines," says Stephen Delisi, M.D., of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, a national nonprofit addiction treatment provider. Dr. Compton agrees. "Part of the problem in our health-care system is that doctors spend 10 or 11 minutes with each patient. That's not a good way to treat anxiety," he says. "There's a tendency to want to use medication for everything." Other methods, like therapy, take longer to work but may be better in the long run. "Often the solutions are outside of the pill bottle—developing healthy coping strategies and dealing with life on life's terms," Dr. Garbely says.

Like many users, Ziegler developed a tolerance, taking up to 4 mg to get the same effect she did at 0.5 mg. "I had to keep taking more to get the anxiety relief that I needed so badly," she says. Eventually, no amount seemed to be enough. In 2017, she spent a weekend "withdrawing in agony in my parents' bed" when she was supposed to be at a wedding. "That's when I finally came to terms with the fact that a drug had me completely under its thumb," she says. "I was enslaved, and it was 100 percent terrifying."

It took Ziegler about four months to taper off the drugs, a period marked by panic attacks, her body temperature oscillating between sweating and shivering, and what is known as "benzo rage," which she describes as the "adult version of a toddler tantrum." The last pill she took was in August 2017. "Benzodiazepines are extremely appealing because they work too well, too fast, and Americans are all about the quick fix," says Ziegler, now 29. "But it's pretty clear how we are paying the price."

RESOURCE PHONE NUMBERS

Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission – 800 220-1810 ext. 2
Allegheny County Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services – 412 350-3328
Butler County MH/MR Drug and Alcohol – 800 292-3866
Cambria County MH/MR Drug and Alcohol – 814 536-5388
Clarion/Armstrong/Indiana Drug and Alcohol – 724 354-2746
Fayette County Drug and Alcohol - 724 354-2746
Somerset County Drug and Alcohol – 800 452-0218
Washington D&A Commission – 724 223-1181
Westmoreland CRISIS Hotline – 800 836-6010
Alcoholics Anonymous – 866 851-8459
Narcotics Anonymous – 800 992-0401
PA Get Help Now Helpline – 800 662-4357
Sage's Army Helpline – 724 863-5433

For a listing of In/Out **Patient Treatment Facilities** please go to our website (sagesarmy.com) and look under Addiction Resources OR call the Sage's Army Help Line at (724) 863-5433.

Headquarters News...

Sage's Army Family Reinforcement / Recovery Session

***Who*:** Friends and family members of anyone that may have a problem with addiction.

***When and where*:** Every second and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Sage's Army Headquarters at 216 Fourth Street, Irwin, Pa. 15642.

Addiction affects the whole family, often the best chance for an addicted person to get better is for his or her family to get better. This bi-weekly group session provides both the information and guidance that family members need to deal with the immediate crises of addiction,and also the on-going support they need to make necessary and often painful choices that family recovery requires.

Information and Referral
We are available to guide family members throught the maze of treatment and recovery options. We maintain a resource center with a collection of printed material, books, meeting schedules and brochures.

Cost:
Free of charge

Where:
Sages Army Headquarters
216 Fourth Street, Irwin, Pa. 15642.

When:
Every second and fourth Thursday of the month
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Awareness, Compassion, Action
www.sagesarmy.com
facebook.com/sagesarmy

GRASP®

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing
Westmoreland Chapter

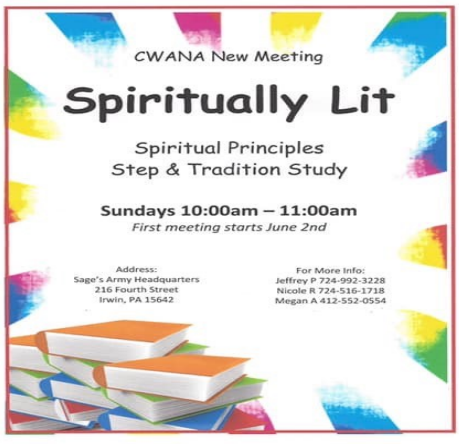
Having lost a loved one to substance use can isolate you. You may feel that no one understands the pain. We here at GRASP do. We have all suffered the same loss, but have found that we do not have to be alone in our grief. We are here to listen, to support and to share your burden.

Chapter Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, from 6:30-8:00 PM
at Sage's Army Headquarters
216 Fourth St., Irwin, PA 15642

GRASP *provides sources of help, compassion, and - most of all- understanding for individuals and families who have had someone they love die as a result of substance use or addiction.*

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing

For more information and to pre-register
Contact: Michele Rubin at graspwestmoreland@gmail.com
Visit the GRASP website: www.grasphelp.org



Sage's Army will schedule a presentation to your school, company, church, or any group. Please download our Presentation Form under What We Do, Projects, then Presentations on our website at Sagesarmy.com

Sage's Army Coffee Break

Where: 216 4th Street, Downtown Irwin. Entrance at Miller's Crossing Parking Lot
When: The FIRST FRIDAY of every month 4:00-6:00 pm

Coffee Break is for women that have family members struggling with addiction. This is a time to find support and know you are not alone.

FREE coffee and pastries will be provided as well as light refreshments. For more information contact Tina at 412-512-7236.

Registration or Sign Up is NOT Necessary

Capozzi Flooring
Residential - Commercial
1117 Woodward Drive • Suite #3, Greensburg, PA 15601
Phone: 724-837-8453
Fax: 724-837-8455
Carmen Capozzi
Owner
Cell: 412-817-7851
• Flooring Showroom
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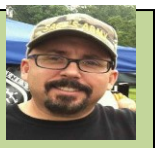
From *OUR* President, Carmen Capozzi…



Sage's Army has been blessed with amazing volunteers over the past 7 years. Some were only here for a season and that is ok, without them we could not have accomplished what we have done in our county and state. With our voice, we have even inspired other people in other states to form their own front-line soldiers and advocate for those battling substance disorders. There is hope through Awareness, Compassion and Action. **Thank you**.

Your Business Card HERE…

$40.00 for business card size for 3 months.
$110.00 for 4 X 5 insert for 3 months.
$120.00 for business card size for 12 months (paid in advance).
Distribution: Hard copies to professionals, churches, medical offices, events, meetings, schools, etc. Extensive database distribution, local social media (15,000) and millions on the web. For additional information, contact newsletter team by email at: newsletter@sagesarmy.com

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Frontier Realty
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Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601
Office 724.832.8040
Fax 724.836.6288
Cell 412.551.9023
Email sshubuck@aol.com

Gina Cerilli, Esq.
Westmoreland County Commissioner

For those of you who wish to join our "Closed" page on Facebook, just request to be added by sending us a message on the "Open" page and we will add you.

YOUR GIFT WILL PROVIDE AWARENESS, COMPANSSION, AND ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

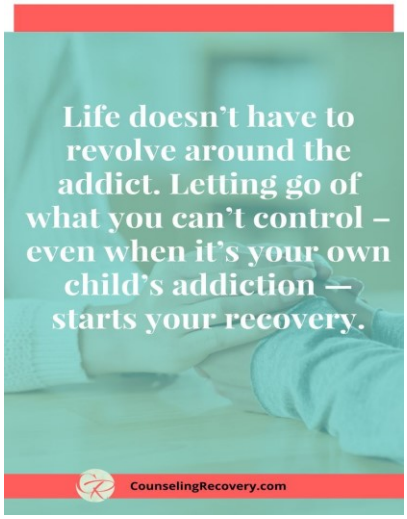
ENCLOSED IS MY DONATION OF:
○ $50 ○ $100 ○ $250 ○ OTHER:____
Make checks payable to:
Sage's Army
PO Box 156 Westmoreland City, PA 15692
Visit Sagesarmy com to make a credit card donation

CONTACT INFORMATION
NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
EMAIL: _____

SAGE'S ARMY is a non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Carmen Capozzi following the death of his 20-year-old son, Sage, providing free:

- Education
- Family Support groups
- Helpline to guide individuals seeking treatment 24/7
- Narcan Trainings
- Drug and recovery awareness presentations

If you or someone you love is experiencing addiction, help is available. Call the Help Line at: 724-863-5433
Email: admin@sagesarmy.com



Sage's Army, Inc. is a 501 © (3)-non-profit organization. All donations to which tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law are, are tax deductible. To donate to Sage's Army, please visit us on the web at sagesarmy.com.

TEACHING AWARENESS
DRUGS DON'T DISCRIMINATE
SAGES ARMY
PEOPLE DO
ONE PERSON AT A TIME
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