

Sage's Army Newsletter

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

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.

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.



WANTED

Sage's Army is looking for Volunteers who are interested in helping with administrative functions, IT (Information Technology) type work, or would just like helping within our Army. We always have room for more! If you are interested in donating some of your time, please contact us at 724-863-5433 or by email at admin@Sagesarmy.com



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.

Sage's Army Help Line



**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

"People spend a lifetime searching for happiness, looking for peace. They chase idle dreams, addictions, religions, even other people, hoping to fill the emptiness that plagues them. The irony is the only place they ever needed to search was within."

~Ramona L. Anderson



"The mentality and behavior of drug addicts and alcoholics is wholly irrational until you understand that they are completely powerless over their addiction and unless they have structured help, they have no hope."

~Russell Brand

Events We Attended

- Oct 2** – Sage's Army Team Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Oct 4** – Juvenile Probation Fun Fest at Twin Lakes, table and volunteers.
- Oct 10** – Carmen et al spoke in Pittsburgh at the Point.
- Oct 12** – Carmen in Harrisburg, PPAC meeting.
- Oct 17** – St Agnes, Substance Abuse Ministry (HOPE), Carmen speaking along with FBI Field Officer, DEA Agent.
- Oct 18** – Emerson Automation Solutions, Carmen spoke.
- Oct 20** – 2nd Free Hep C testing at Sage's Army Headquarters, courtesy of Central Outreach Wellness Center.
- Oct 22** – Carmen spoke at West Hempfield school.
- Oct 24** – Western Pa School of the Deaf, Carmen gives presentation.
- Oct 25** – Belle Vernon High School, Carmen speaking.
- Oct 27** – Downtown Irwin Trick or Treat after parade. Fun time for kids and grown-ups at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Nov 1** – Carmen, et al speaking at Wendover Middle School.
- Nov 1** – Addiction Focus Group presentation for adults caring for the needs of children of loved ones suffering from drug disorders.
- Nov 5** – SADD Conference at Seven Springs. Sage's Army table and speaking.
- Nov 6** – Sage's Army Team Meeting at Headquarters.
- Nov 11** – Thank You Project Dinner.1
- Nov 13** – Sage's Army Directors Annual Meeting.
- Nov 14** – Carmen interview with local TV personality.
- Nov 16** – Carmen spoke at Mt Zion church, West Newton.
- Nov 30** – Westmoreland Co. Permanency Practice Summit, Carmen speaking, Sage's Army table and volunteers.
- Dec 7** – Downtown Irwin Cookie Exchange, Sage's Army Headquarters participating.
- Dec 18** – West Mifflin High School ROTC, Carmen speaking.



Upcoming Events



- Jan 8** – Team Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Jan 4** – Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Jan 9** – Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Jan 10** - Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Jan 23** – Elliott Bridge to the Community, table set up.
- Jan 24** – Monessen Middle School Presentation.
- Jan 26** – Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Jan 27** – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 1** – Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 5** - Team Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 13** – Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 14** – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 27** - Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.
- Feb 28** – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.



Mar 1 – Coffee Break for Women at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Mar 5 - Team Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Mar 13 – Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Mar 14 – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Mar 27 - Grief without Stigma Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Mar 28 – Family Reinforcement/Recovery Group Meeting at Sage's Army Headquarters

NOTE* If YOU are available to volunteer for any of our upcoming events, YOU are ALWAYS more than welcome to join us! WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS (and our thanks to those volunteers who do attend functions to assist us).



Sage's Army Successes

We are humbled by the response to our “help” and guidance meetings and sessions that are held at the Sage's Army Headquarters every month by our very capable leaders. We encourage all who need us to please plan on joining these sessions that are here to learn and heal.

The Sage's Army Help Line is an amazing group of dedicated persons who are making difference seeing that those who need help are being placed where they are getting help. We will continue as long as we are needed.

Newsworthy Tidbits

Can it be? In one month's time...1 out of every 4, 18 to 20 year old's abused drugs.



20 Million...people currently use illicit drugs in the U.S.

Under the age of 50...drugs are the leading cause of death.

Our President...has declared the drug epidemic a Public Health Emergency.



Addiction to opioids is declining...but heroin OD deaths rising because of fentanyl lacing.

Now we know...our government has determined synthetic opioids are shipped from overseas, typically China.

Help is on the way...a Senate bill...seeks to increase access to treatment for drug disorders, and assistance during the transition.

How long before it is on the streets...according to the FDA, new pill form opioid drug (sufentanil), has just been developed.



Support for Grandparents...access to resources to take care of grandchildren impacted by the opioid epidemic.

It's a FACT...THC Concentrations in marijuana might be 40 times more potent than the “weed” of the 70's.



Will it never end...in just a matter of weeks, 3 Westmoreland Co. docs charged with illegal



distribution of opioids.

Doesn't take long...after just 5 days of prescription opioid use, you can develop long term dependence as per Mayo Clinic.

Let's Do it AGAIN...Governor Wolfe allowed free Narcan to be distributed one day in

December...let's repeat this success!



The Roman Catholic parishes in the Irwin area, have joined together to form **SAM** (Substance Addiction Ministry). Part of the ministry will offer educational presentations thru the year. Recently, a joint session was set up with Kelley Wesolosky, a Community Outreach Specialist from the FBI Pittsburgh Field Office, Brian Dempsey, DEA Agent, and Carmen Capozzi, President of Sage's Army. Be on the lookout for SAM presentations in your area!

NOTABLE QUOTES



President Donald Trump: "Together, we will defeat this epidemic...it is a true epidemic...as one people, one family and one magnificent nation under God." Quote from President Trump after signing a Opioids Bill into law.



Dr Robert R. Redfield, Director, Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "We must support the families of those fighting addiction and recognize that stigma is the enemy."



Dr Kelley Clark, President, American Society of Addiction Medicine: "Addiction can't be cured, but it can be successfully treated."



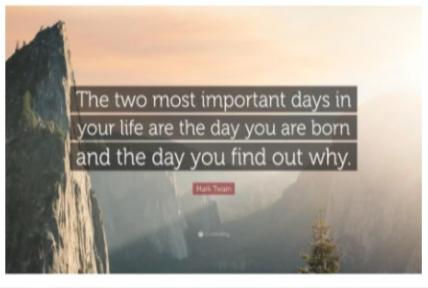
Dr Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner of Food and Drugs: "With the right treatment and support, recovery is possible and individuals are able to regain control."



Dr Sarah Wakeman, Medical Director, Substance Use Disorders Initiative, Massachusetts General Hospital: "We have historically not thought of addiction as a medical issue and so our health care and public health system are woefully unprepared to respond in a robust way."

A leading addiction therapist wrote in "The Demonization of Addiction":

"Relatively few people respect the addictive condition as a legitimate life-threatening illness. Rather there is disgust not only for addiction but for the addicts themselves. Addiction illness claiming over 72,000 deaths in 2017, yet much of society disdains both the person suffering and their families."



Opioids are having a devastating impact on children in our country and in our community. In Pennsylvania alone, more than 100,000 kids are being raised by their relatives or guardians as a result of an opioid related death.



Addiction vs. Recovery

It's all about me and what I want

"How can I be of help other others?"

Lying, Cheating and Manipulating to get what I want

Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness allow me to get what I need.

"I can take care of myself!"

"There is something bigger than me."

Rationalize, justify and minimize when I'm wrong.

Owning my part, admitting my faults and trying to grow from them.

Projecting a false image of myself

I am no better and no less than anyone else.

Hide and deny my fears so as not to appear weak.

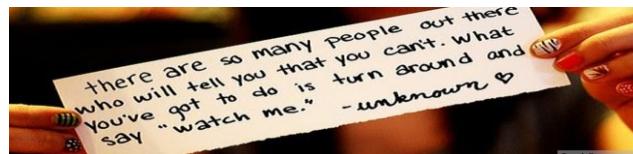
Acknowledging my fears and limitations and asking for help.

Edgewood Treatment Center



Being in flooring for 30 years plus, while reading the **Floor Trend** magazine found an article about two flooring companies coming together to help those struggling with addiction. These companies apparently have seen addiction destroy lives, families and businesses. Not just opioid addiction: alcohol, gambling, etc. The world is running from pain (physical, mental, emotional). People want a quick fix then when addiction sets in, they want quick fix out. Addiction is not like a headache, can't just take a pill and you're all better. It takes a lot of work and commitment to get clean and stay clean. People in recovery are some of the strongest people I have ever met because they are fighting a world of stigma, shame, and guilt.

The conversation comes up daily in the business I am in. Last year over 72,000 people lost their lives to opioid drug related deaths and over 88,000 people died from alcohol related deaths This is over 160,000 families destroyed. Silence kills. ~Carmen Capozzi



QUESTIONS and Answers

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

with Sage's Army



How can I, as a parent, help guide my child in these times of substance abuse?

Be a good listener.

Set clear expectations about drug and alcohol use, including real consequences for not following family rules.

Help your child deal with peer pressure to use drugs.

Get to know your child's friends and their parents.

Monitor your child's whereabouts.

Supervise teen activities.

Talk to your child often.

What are the short-term effects of marijuana?

Euphoria (high) THC activates the reward system in a similar way to other drugs of abuse

Memory impairment. THC alters how info is processed in parts of the brain areas involved in memory and concentration

Possible mental reactions cause anxiety, fear, distrust, or panic particularly in people new to the drug.

Physical changes are red or bloodshot eyes, increased appetite, increased heart rate, and sleep issues.

Can using marijuana effect a person's driving?

Marijuana impairs judgement and many other skills needed for safe driving such as alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time. Also, with mix of alcohol driving impairment is worse.

Note: above comments about marijuana are not pertaining to medicinal uses of the drug. Check with your physician for more info

What can be expected for different treatments of addiction?

Detox, A few days to 2-3 weeks, depending upon the persons drug history.

Inpatient rehab- 30 days to several months.

Outpatient treatment- 3 to 6 months.

Sober living- a minimum of 6 months.

12 step meetings- recommended 90 meetings in the first 90 days of sobriety, and as needed moving forward

(an article published in the Los Angeles Times found that the rates of first year relapse among individuals who stayed in treatment 90 days plus is half that of people who left treatment sooner)

What can be expected of detoxification from substance abuse?

It is not pretty: mood swings, anxiety, depression, irritability, aggression, confusion, headaches, nausea, food cravings, stomach cramps, insomnia, tremors, chills sweating, muscle aches, flu like symptoms.

It begins when a person starts the abuse voluntarily for the pleasurable effects. But long-term use creates physical and chemical changes with the users' brain, warping impulse control and creating the physical dependence.

Article of the Quarter

ANATOMY OF AN OPIOID EPIDEMIC



By **LAWRENCE KLEMENSON, MD**

There is a quick, simple solution to our opioid overdose epidemic, and it was already used to end a U.S. heroin epidemic 100 years ago. It will become obvious once two major misconceptions are corrected:

1. Long-term opioid prescribing has not only been shown to *not* be helpful for chronic pain; it in fact causes it. It worsens pain by repeatedly causing tolerance and agonizing withdrawals (the main symptom of which *is* pain) to develop. The resultant suffering can only be curbed by successive, increasingly deadly dose increases. This fools users, who are unaware that they're in unending withdrawals, into believing their pills are helpful and needed. Opioids also shut down the body's production of endorphins. Thus, the only way chronic users can obtain any pleasure or tension relief is via pills; this adds to their desperation. All of this is analogous to how psychiatric drug use, though often helpful initially, ultimately can cause people to become chronically "mentally ill," as Robert Whitaker showed. Just as there was no "mental illness" epidemic until psych meds were widely used, there was no chronic pain epidemic until long-term opioids were widely given. Until 1990, doctors rarely gave opiates due to awareness of these issues: they were prescribed either briefly for severe pain from surgery/injury, or continuously for end-stage cancer (in which overdose is often more a goal than a concern). But today's doctors dispense ten times as much — 200 million opiate prescriptions yearly, mostly for non-terminal clients. The average days-of-supply per script is still climbing: it's now nearly 3 weeks; that's long enough to produce tolerance and pain-worsening. And these scripts are regularly refilled. Such profiting by creating chronic suffering only occurs in the U.S.

2. Buprenorphine, which is now integral to most opioid addiction programs, is only able to reduce opioid cravings because it's just another opioid. Like all opioids, it's addictive, and euphoric in new users; it's Finland's most abused and lethal opioid. It's often combined with a tiny amount of opioid antagonist (naloxone) under the brand name Suboxone. But naloxone is poorly absorbed orally, so it doesn't block buprenorphine's effect. Thus, youths who've had a taste of opioids and are tempted to ramp up their usage but can't find their parents' pills or get pain doctors to directly prescribe them, have a new source: they can get endless supplies by merely claiming to be heroin addicts hoping to quit. Real heroin addicts *may* use it to quit heroin, or to tide themselves over until their next fix or to sell on the street to raise cash. So, buprenorphine may more often be a new way to create addicts, and a gateway/enabler of heroin abuse, than it is a treatment. This could partly explain why overdoses really took off *after* it came to market in 2002. Is it wise to put addiction *treatment* into the hands of a field that thrives by creating addiction? Isn't that like putting a fox in charge of a henhouse?

Rather than pump yet more opioids into the system, why not drastically cut them back to pre-1990 levels, by simply resuming enforcement of the 1914 Harrison Act? This law helped end that era's heroin epidemic, by criminalizing the prescribing of opiates to maintain addiction. It led to the jailing of some MDs who did so; this scared most other MDs from following in their footsteps. Prescribers of any opioid longer than two weeks, other than for end-of-life care, should again risk prosecution. Perhaps their sentences should be longer than for street dealers, since at least with street dealers you know what you're getting into; with doctors, it may be the last thing you'd expect.

To fully enforce the Harrison Act now, the 2000 Drug Addiction Treatment Act must be repealed since it undermined it by exempting buprenorphine-peddling from being deemed a violation. This is crucial, since Suboxone docs dole out 30-day opioid supplies like candy. Each sees hundreds of clients for 5-minute monthly office visits in assembly-line fashion. It's so lucrative that even high-pay specialists like anesthesiologists often do it. The recent big rise in buprenorphine scripts was half as great as the recent fall in pain pill scripts. And only the brief-supply pain scripts fell. So, the medical field *appeared* to curb its opioid-dealing, while really just playing a game of whack-a-mole. Suboxone docs, in particular, are nearly 10 times as likely to have been previously sanctioned for offenses like excessive narcotic prescribing.

RESOURCE PHONE NUMBERS

Westmoreland County 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 for Insured and Non-insured, please go to our website (sagesarmy.com) and look under Addiction Resources.

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 through 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.



Sage's Army is a **non-profit organization** that solely depends on your contributions. Your \$ can help us continue our work. **Awareness, Compassion, and Action...**Latest Tribune Review announces 36% less OD's in our county, mostly due to AWARENESS programs. This is what Sage's Army is all about. Thank you for your continued support!




 Sage's Army will schedule a presentation to your school, company, church, or any group. We have a form under Projects, then Presentations on our website at Sagesarmy.com



2ND & 4TH WEDNESDAYS EACH MONTH

GRIEF WITHOUT THE STIGMA

Have you lost a loved one to addiction? Do you need to talk to others who know how you feel? Do you need to work your way through the web of grief? This group is for anyone (parents, siblings, spouses, girl/boyfriends, friends, etc.) who has suffered a loss to the addiction epidemic.



Please join us on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 6:30 – 8 pm at Sage's Army Headquarters.

Grief Without the Stigma Support Group

For everyone who has suffered a loss

Confidential and Free

Don't allow the stigma of addiction to prevent you from getting the support you need

SAGES ARMY HEADQUARTERS
216 4th Street
Irwin, PA 15642
724-863-LIFE
www.sagesarmy.com

Sage's Army Coffee Break



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

When: The 1st Friday of every Month from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Where: 216 Fourth Street, Downtown Irwin Entrance at Miller's Crossing Parking Lot.

Free coffee and Pastries will be provided.

For more information contact Tina at 412-512-7236

Justin Monstrola and Crystal Urban
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Chef:
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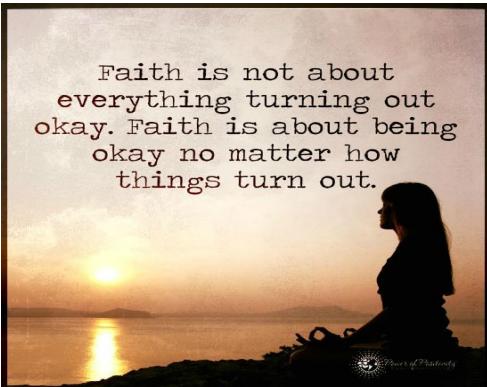
Manor, PA 15665
(724) 863-8540
www.gourmetaffairs.net
gourmetaffairs@comcast.net



BIG THANK YOU...to SSAD

students, administration and all the students at Belle Vernon High School for allowing us to spread the awareness to your great school. We have had so many great presentations at many schools recently and are overwhelmed at the reception that has been extended to our group.
And, lest we forget...to all our dedicated volunteers, committee members, newsletter persons, school program presentations, technology support persons, our help line persons, our guidance session group coordinators, and special thank you to Carmen for his tireless efforts for Sage's Army and speaking engagements, and so much more, and especially not to forget Cindy who makes it all happen for us.

Faith is not about everything turning out okay. Faith is about being okay no matter how things turn out.



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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Paws Across Pittsburgh

Non-Profit Animal Rescue

Renee' A. Hardy
Board of Director/Fundraising Coordinator

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Loyalhanna Veterinary Clinic, Inc.

Henry L Croft, Jr, VMD * Lynn Springer, DVM

397 Hauger Hood Road , Stahlstown, PA 15687

724-593-6111 * www.loyalhannavet.com



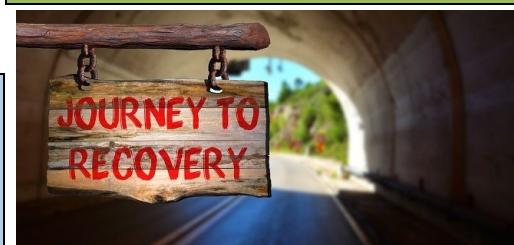
"Office hours by Appointment"
Monday & Thursday 8 am to 8 pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 8 am to 5 pm
Saturday 8 am to 12 noon

Pawsitively Great Care

**From OUR President,
Carmen Capozzi...**



To my fellow team members.
..Merry Christmas everyone. Thank you for your commitment to volunteer and to help all those affected by addiction. See you next year. P.S. take time to recharge and practice self-care. Love you all...Awareness, Compassion, Action!



A silent tragedy is right in our homes with our children...does it lead to drug abuse?

1 in 5 children has mental health problems
43% increase in ADHD
37% increase in teen depression
100% increase in suicide rate in kids 10-14 years of age

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.

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