



# The Digest

Winter Edition 2015 Volume 35, Issue 3

A publication of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. and Alliance, Inc.

## Who Am I? Learning Who You Are Without Drugs or Alcohol Finding Yourself...Again

"I always referred to myself as a functioning user. I thought I was invincible," says **Aurora**, a young woman who started smoking marijuana in high school to escape from life's pressures. She had good grades in school, played sports, and went on to college. She has held down jobs that she really enjoyed and excelled at. She worked hard to reach the expectations of those around her and make others happy before herself.

In the beginning of her college education, she refrained from alcohol but smoked marijuana frequently. She set boundaries for herself in order to avoid losing self-control, something she saw her friends do with alcohol and drugs.

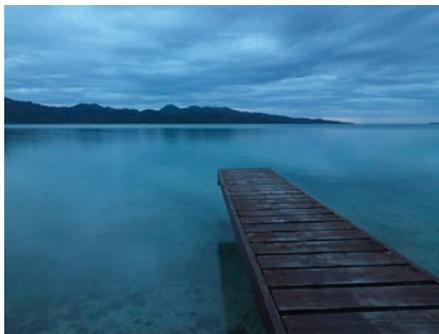
After the very public arrest of her father, and a significant emotional trauma around that same time, she began experimenting with harder drugs, such as ecstasy and cocaine, and started drinking. Ages 19 to 22 were her most damaging years, she remembers. She acknowledges that the boundaries she set on her prior usage no longer existed.

Once she returned home from school, she got a job she loved working with children. Those boundaries returned but she was still steadily using marijuana and alcohol but never when she knew she would be around children. She came to Sinnissippi to get help for the second time. The first time had been during high school. She was taught emotional exercises that she still uses today and began talking with her family about her feelings. Throughout these years she had support from her step-mother's family, especially her cousin, who provided relief for her when she could not get it at home. But, she continued to use.

In February 2015 after celebrating the success of an event she had coordinated, Aurora and a friend were arrested after a traffic stop for speeding. Her turning point was realizing that at age 23 she was facing a felony for possession of a controlled substance-wax (an intensely potent form of marijuana), something that would impact her entire future. She now calls her arrest, "a blessing in disguise." She made the

decision to come to Sinnissippi Centers for the third time.

This time was different. She took her recovery seriously. However, there were barriers for her to overcome. Her first day in group she knew another participant



and was extremely hesitant to open up about the life that she had thought she had hidden so well. However, this same young man brought her to the realization that just because she thought no one knew, that did not mean it was true. She remembers, "I was so afraid of letting everyone down, of not

living up to the expectations that everyone had of me. No one even talked about my dad, so part of me really thought that people didn't know. But he said to me, 'I live down the street. I went to school with your siblings, I know what is going on and I am not going to look at you any differently for deciding to get help.' That moment is when my recovery really started. I focused on trust and transparency, which means trusting who you are telling your story to, trusting yourself to be honest, and telling your story in its entirety."

As a young adult going through recovery, Aurora is learning who she is without the haze of marijuana or alcohol. She is also learning to share her feelings with others in a healthy way, instead of turning to drugs and alcohol as she has done in the past. She acknowledges, "I started smoking when I was about 14. I have never really had a time in my life when I have not been high long enough to figure out who I am. It has been most interesting to see what other people's perception of me was."

She continues, "The hardest part was cutting off social ties. Telling people that I had stopped smoking really showed me who my true friends were. By doing that, I got my goals back. I also learned that I was speaking the truth to get my power back." Aurora is honestly telling her family her true feelings, making it possible to create better relationships with her family

*"Finding Yourself" continued on page 2*

## Holiday Furlough By Patrick Phelan, President/CEO

Sinnissippi Centers will be closed for three furlough days in addition to our normal four day holiday closures for the Christmas and New Year's holidays this year. **Sinnissippi offices will be closed from December 24, 2015, through January 3, 2016.**



*Patrick Phelan,  
Sinnissippi Centers'  
President/CEO*

We are trying to decrease costs without sacrificing services. Every year we have a dilemma as our funding is squeezed ever tighter by the State of Illinois. The question we ask frequently: "Do we cut critical services that will lead to pain and suffering for those we serve, or do we use every means possible to balance our budget and maintain those services?" The latter seems to be the right thing to do, and as helping professionals we cannot bear to eliminate programs that could ultimately lead to loss of life.

However, in order to balance a budget that consists of 80% personnel expenses, we do so on the backs of our talented and dedicated staff. This year we have lost nearly \$750,000 in grant funding, and have learned that a portion of our local county support is in jeopardy due to the state budget. Those cuts mean furlough days, a freeze on salary increases, and a scheduled decrease in retirement plan funding. I have serious worries for the future of our field. How many bright and talented young people will choose this career path if a living wage may not seem possible?

The second problem with continuing to make do with what we get, is that we send a false message to our funders that it is OK to keep cutting. Across our state, agencies that have gotten by for many years are closing their doors or are becoming part of larger systems that may not serve their community in the way it deserves. Illinois must decide whether a sustainable system for the treatment of mental illness and substance abuse is a priority. If we wait for another year like the one we are currently experiencing, it may be too late both for our community agencies and the future of our workforce.

**"Together creating the highest level of care, empowering people of all ages to find joy and hope."**

Respect □ Integrity □ Compassion □ Humor □ Collaboration □ Acceptance □ Quality



SINNISSIPPI CENTERS

## Sinnissippi News

### Mental Health First Aid

Sinnissippi Centers will host an Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training on January 22, 2016, at Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon office, 325 Illinois Route 2. In the MHFA course, participants learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addictions concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. The cost per participant is \$40 which includes class materials and lunch. For more information contact Cassandra Zimmerman at [cassandrazimmerman@sinnissippi.com](mailto:cassandrazimmerman@sinnissippi.com).

### CTC Educates Morrison High about Suicide

Sinnissippi Centers' **Shannon Dean** and **Ashley Snyder** and the Community That Cares' **Jennifer Bubrick** and **Connie Davis** provided a Suicide Awareness and Prevention presentation to students at Morrison High School on November 5, 2015. The group talked with over 350 students about suicide and how to seek help for their friends or themselves. The training allowed students to feel comfortable enough to ask for assistance if they themselves needed help, with approximately 20 of the adolescents identifying that they wanted to talk with someone after participating in the presentation.

### Healthy Families Celebrates the Holidays

Sinnissippi Centers' programs also offer holiday joy for their clients. Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) currently serves 100 families in its four county service area. HFI hosts a Christmas party in each county on different days. Santa attends each party, handing out gifts (donated through the Sinnissippi Foundation) as well as two books for each child. The children and their families also get a photo with Santa.

### Hosting Legislators for a Greater Cause

A soup kitchen luncheon was held by the Whiteside County Healthier Communities Partnership on November 23, 2015. Among those in attendance was State Representative Mike Smiddy as well as several local officials. The luncheon provided an opportunity for community service providers to ask questions about Illinois budgetary talks. Its purpose also illustrated the impact of the budget standoff on those who struggle daily and who, many times, need the most assistance.

### Florissa Holds an Open House

Over fifty community members and area service providers toured Florissa on October 20, 2015. Florissa is a collaborative partnership that includes Kreider Services, Sinnissippi Centers, and KSB Hospital. The location on North Galena Avenue in Dixon is a central service facility for children 0-18 years of age who have behavioral, developmental, social, or emotional needs. The facility includes play areas, therapy rooms, and a resource library. In addition to services such as assessments and therapy, children and families are able to participate in activities such as yoga, ADHD forums, and sleep education clinics among many others.

Sinnissippi Has a New Look Online and It Is Portable

## You Can Take Us With You

Sinnissippi Centers has a brand new face and a new home online. "We have added an important feature as part of a long-planned update of the Sinnissippi website," says **Andy Jackson**, Sinnissippi Centers' Marketing Coordinator. "Our website is responsive now. That means it has the ability to adapt to any size device, such as a phone or a tablet, and still be easy to use and navigate," adds Jackson. It is now located at [www.sinnissippi.org](http://www.sinnissippi.org), a subtle but important change from our previous website address of [sinnissippi.com](http://sinnissippi.com). The .org address better reflects Sinnissippi's not-for-profit status.

"We live in a mobile world and you have to reach out to people who need help in the ways they are able to respond," says Jackson. "Our website was long in need of an upgrade so that it could be used on mobile devices, something that just wasn't the case in the past." Traffic to websites from desktop and laptop computers is rapidly declining and the number of visits from mobile devices like phones and tablets is rapidly increasing. "Sites that don't adapt may be left behind," adds Jackson.

While the goal of mobile friendliness was vital, the upgrade benefits users no matter what type of device they are using. Sinnissippi.org features a much higher visibility of the 24-hour crisis phone number. **For the first time the site offers the ability to sign up for an e-newsletter** and other electronic communications which, in the future, will allow a cost savings by a transition away from printed newsletters and other printed mailings to more electronic communications via e-mail and social media. In addition, there are new pages for the Community That Cares and for wellness and recovery stories, and other features have been improved.

"The entire website, no matter what device you are using, allows a better user experience and allows you to get the information you need more immediately when you need it and from wherever you are," says Jackson. "That is the mission of Sinnissippi Centers to provide quality, coordinated, and responsive services for the needs of those with mental illness, substance use issues, and other behavioral healthcare needs," adds Jackson. "The changes we have made to the website fit perfectly within our mission."



## Finding a Rhythm for Wellness

Sinnissippi Centers' Project Redeploy has embarked on a music project for the adolescents in their program. The music project will allow program participants the opportunity to find a hobby that they truly enjoy without having to worry about the cost associated with learning such a skill. Sinnissippi Centers' Court Services Specialist **Adam Zuck** acknowledges that the project is a step in the right direction for adolescents who are in need of a creative, positive outlet.

He hopes that the project will impact them into adulthood, creating an avenue for relaxation and enjoyment. According to Zuck, "Many of these youth feel like they have no real future. By allowing them to learn how to play an instrument and working towards a goal, we are giving them not only something to look forward to every week, but something that they can use as they get older. Learning a musical instrument requires dedication, energy, time, and responsibility, which are important life skills" says Zuck.

The project is still in the planning phase. Because of this, Zuck is seeking the donation of guitars, sheet music, picks, and other music related items. Please **contact Adam Zuck at 815-284-6611 for more information.**



Adam Zuck,  
Sinnissippi  
Centers' Court  
Services Specialist

### "Finding Yourself" continued from page 1

members, including her father.

She has recognized the potential in herself, something that she could never do previously. Her felony court case was lowered to a misdemeanor, a reflection of her hard work and dedication to sobriety.

In Sinnissippi Centers' Intensive Outpatient Program she remembers finally realizing that, "There are great things about me despite all of the damaging things I have done. People make mistakes. I was chasing an unrealistic perfection, which I have now stopped chasing. I also lost sight of happiness. There is no growth with addiction. I still have opportunities. I want others to know that mistakes will happen. You have to have been pulled back in order to propel yourself forward. I lived as someone else for so long and sobriety has made me realize that by being my best self, I can better help others."

# Art Helping Many Lives

Imagine the feeling you get when you take home a beautiful work of art produced by one of the many talented artists in the local area. Now imagine the feeling when you know that purchase benefits an organization that improves and saves the lives of those with a behavioral healthcare illness or disorder.

You don't have to imagine it. The Expressions Art Sale and Reception takes place **April 5 - 22, 2016**, at The Next Picture Show in Dixon and will feature around 35 works of art by talented local and regional artists.

Expressions gets started on April 5, 2016, when around thirty art pieces and around 50 silent auction items go on display at The Next Picture Show (113 West 1st Street) in Dixon.

Once they go on display, you can purchase any of the art and view and place bids on the silent auction items, although most of the auction bidding will take place in the final half hour.

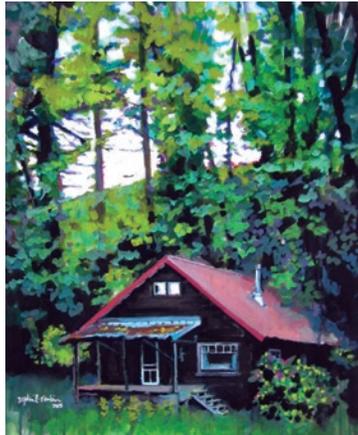
The reception will take place on

Friday, April 22, 2016, from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM at The Next Picture Show. Admission is free and light refreshments will be served.

This year's event will also include a special photography exhibit by clients of Sinnissippi Centers. "We couldn't have done the client photography part of Expressions without the support of **Tom Cartwright**," says Andy Jackson, Expressions coordinator. Cartwright donated cameras and other equipment

that allowed clients to spend a long period of time searching for and photographing subjects. "The clients will not only get the satisfaction and enjoyment of seeing their work on the walls of a top quality gallery, but clinicians also used the activity to provide some relaxation and enjoyment for clients while taking the photos. It's a win-win," adds Jackson.

According to clinicians, many clients have found a new hobby that they could not enjoy otherwise.



"*Sundown on Route 126-Springfield, Oregon*" by Sydni Reubin is the featured piece of art for the 2016 Expressions Art Sale & Reception

## The Holidays Are a Good Hectic

The holidays can be a hectic time, but that can be a very good thing. The Sinnissippi Foundation and Sinnissippi Centers are very busy at this time of year with several projects that bring quite a bit of holiday cheer into the lives of clients and staff alike.

The annual Holiday Food basket project provides a holiday meal to Sinnissippi Centers' client families in need. "This year, we anticipate distributing over 100 baskets to families just before Christmas," says **Cassandra Zimmerman**, Sinnissippi Centers' Marketing Specialist and basket project coordinator. "Every \$25.00 in donations to this Foundation fund allows one family to enjoy a holiday meal."

Other holiday activities include the client holiday party held each year in mid-December.

Clients who attend get a warm meal, a few presents, enjoy games, and are entertained by Sinnissippi Staff during the ever popular holiday skit. The Healthy Families Illinois Program also hosts several smaller parties for families (see story at left under *Sinnissippi News*).

"In all these cases, the holiday food baskets, and the holiday parties, there are clients who will not get to enjoy any other holiday festivities," says **Patrick Phelan**, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO. "It provides a positive social experience during what can be a difficult time of year for many of those who we serve," adds Phelan.



Some of the Sinnissippi Centers' staffers who presented a holiday skit to the clients who attended the 2014 Client Holiday Party. This year the party occurs on December 11, 2015.



# SINNISSIPPI FOUNDATION

## Foundation News

### 23rd Annual Foundation Golf Open

The 23rd Annual Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open was another big success. A field of nearly 120 came to enjoy the beautiful weather and a round of golf with friends and colleagues. The Sponsor of the Year Award was presented to Larry and Ann Prindaville (pictured here) for their long time support of the Foundation. Proceeds from this event exceeded last year's.



### Gardenstock Art & Music Festival

The 7th Annual Gardenstock Art & Music Festival was enjoyed by around 2,200 individuals from near and far.

Gardenstock is organized by **Bud and Lisa LeFevre** of Distinctive Gardens (pictured here, and at far right) with help from their army of volunteers. The festival is held on the



grounds of Distinctive Gardens. Proceeds raised benefit Sinnissippi's Youth Garden Program. This year Gardenstock featured nine bands, over forty artists booths, and an expanded "Bus Town", a gathering of vintage VW Microbuses driven to the event by veteran "Gardenstockers".

### Celebrating Wellness & Recovery

Around 150 people attended the annual Wellness and Recovery Celebration held on the grounds of Sinnissippi Centers' Dixon office. Each September those in recovery, those seeking wellness, and the family, friends, and others who support them, gather for a time of fellowship, mutual support, and celebration. It features speakers who encourage others to continue treatment and recovery. The event is supported by donations to the Sinnissippi Foundation.

### Gifts In The Spirit of the Season

The Sinnissippi Foundation's annual appeal during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays has seen a great response, raising over \$6,000 in donations in the first three weeks. The goal is to raise \$10,000 to support the various programs and services of the Foundation. Thanks to all who have given gifts not only at this special time of the year, but also throughout the year.

## The Digest Newsletter

**Editor:** Andy Jackson

**Writers:** Andy Jackson, Cassandra Zimmerman

**Contributors:** Phyllis Berge, Connie Davis, Patrick Phelan, DeAnne White, Adam Zuck

**Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. is funded, in part, by the Illinois Department of Human Services**

# Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

www.sinnissippi.org

## Dixon

325 Illinois Route 2, Dixon, IL 61021  
(815) 284-6611

## Mt. Carroll

1122 Healthcare Drive, Mt. Carroll, IL 61053  
(815) 244-1376

## Oregon

100 Jefferson Street, Oregon, IL 61061  
(815) 732-3157

## Rochelle

1321 North 7th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068  
(815) 562-3801

## Sterling

2611 Woodlawn Road, Sterling, IL 61081  
(815) 625-0013

## Additional Locations by Appointment

Dixon-Town Square Centre

## 24-hour Emergency Phone Number

**800-242-7642**



Sinnissippi Centers is accredited by  
The Joint Commission and recipient of  
the Gold Seal of Approval.



**SINNISSIPPI  
FOUNDATION**

325 IL RT. 2, STE.100 • DIXON, IL 61021 • PH: 815-284-9380

## Donations

Donations can be sent to the address above.  
Please specify if it is in honor or memory of a  
family member or loved one. Or donate online at  
[www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation](http://www.sinnissippi.org/donate-foundation)

## Recent Donations

Dean & Tracy Ahlers  
Lawrence R. Allen  
Bonnell Industries  
Boss Carpet One Floor & Home  
Darlene Butterbaugh  
David Cain  
John & Beth Chase  
Connie Clayton  
James Crangle Foundation  
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Anonymous  
Ed Saunders  
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Warren & Paula Sherman  
Anonymous  
Wahl Clipper Corporation  
Rick Watson  
Stan Weber  
Charles Winterton

## In Honor of....

**...All those aspiring for each step in their  
personal recovery!**  
Lyn Brokaw

**...Tom Hermes**  
Barbara Weiner

**...Jim Sarver**  
Heritage Square

**...Sinnissippi Centers' Board of Directors**  
Jim & Inger Sarver

**...Sinnissippi Centers' Clerical Staff**  
Jim & Inger Sarver

## In Memory of....

**...Tony Arduini & Patricia Menchaca**  
Arlene Arduini

**...Willard Gieske**  
Shirley Reese

**...Robert H. Hutchinson**  
Mary Ann Hutchinson

**...Esther Ludwig**  
Harold & Mary Scuffham

**...Frank Moews**  
Larry & Ann Prindaville

**...Deb Nye**  
Terry & Karen O'Malley

**...Marilyn Parks**  
John Parks  
Harold & Mary Scuffham

**...Ray & Florence Prindaville**  
Larry & Ann Prindaville  
Erin & George Roeper

**...Mary Reigle**  
Larry & Ann Prindaville  
William Reigle  
Jim & Inger Sarver  
Harold & Mary Scuffham

**...Alice Scuffham**  
Harold & Mary Scuffham

**...Tim Stewart**  
Tammy Stewart

**Expressions Art Sale & Reception Art  
Donations (to date)**  
Ann Potts  
Sydni Reubin

To sign up for the electronic version of The Digest visit [sinnissippi.org/newsletter](http://sinnissippi.org/newsletter)