

Northern Hills Drug Court

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Northern Hills Drug Court Mission Statement

The Northern Hills Drug Court's mission is to increase community safety, foster healthy families, and proficiently utilize public funds. This will be accomplished by streamlining and coordinating services to felony offenders whose crimes are substantially related to the abuse or dependence upon a controlled substance with a primary consideration given to methamphetamine abuse or dependence. The Northern Hills Drug Court will increase long term abstinence by holding offenders accountable and ultimately reducing drug-related crimes.

This article was written by Hamish White, a certified alcoholism and drug dependency counselor who has his own addiction practice called Recovery Counseling Services in North Toronto, Canada.

Plan Your Sober Holidays! Sober holidays for those of us in recovery can also present some problems. Thoughts can creep in like, "maybe I can just have one eggnog" or "what a happy time - I know how to make it better" or "I feel lonely - a drink or drug would sure pick me up."

There are several techniques that I and others have found very helpful in maintaining sobriety and recovery during these tempting and difficult times. Recently sober people are often confronted with drinking and using [drugs] situations for the first time since they began their recoveries. There are solutions:

Plan your days. Let your sponsor or friend in recovery know where you will be and have that person's number with you just in case.

Have a Plan B

Continued on Page 2

Northern Hills Drug Court Graduates Three Participants

*Marty Jackley, South Dakota Attorney
General, Keynote Speaker*



Three Northern Hills Drug Court graduates were honored to have South Dakota's Attorney General as their keynote speaker. Marty Jackley, when speaking about the drug court program, said it has financial benefits, but more importantly, it goes back to the people. Rather than incarceration, drug court puts participants back to where they are productive in the community as effectual parents, wage earners and volunteers. "I think that's the important part of the drug court," says Mr. Jackley.

The graduates spoke about their addiction and how it impacted every facet of their lives. They all shared a history of shattered families, separation from the community, trouble maintaining employment and legal and financial problems. Intensive treatment and probation have given each participant the tools to be clean and sober caring, involved parents, productive citizens and dependable employees. One graduate summarized her journey with addiction and recovery; "I'm not as bad as I used to be, but I'm not as good as I'm going to be".



Plan Your Sober Holidays!

Have a Plan B

If you must attend a party or gathering where alcohol is being served, then have a Plan B, an escape route. If you are with a friend or spouse then tell them before you go that you may feel uncomfortable around alcohol and that you need to be able to leave the party on a moment's notice without having to explain why. In fact, you can always have an alternative place to go - like for a coffee or out to a movie. The pressure is off with this arrangement. Tell your host or hosts that you can probably only stay for a short time, but that you will know more in a while after you make a telephone call. Then you are not obliged to stay and what usually happens is that you have a great time because the pressure to stay is off. If you are on your own, make sure you have your sponsor's or a sober friend's phone number and that you know they will be home so that you can call or even meet with them if you feel the need. That's "Plan B."

Thanks I'd Love a Drink! What if someone asks you if you would like a drink, and you don't particularly feel like explaining to them that you have a disease that requires you not to drink one day at a time, and that you are a recent graduate of the local drug & alcohol treatment center (or drug court). What I do is say "What a good idea I would love a drink! Do you have a soda-water with lemon or a Coca-Cola?" This allows me to say yes and get what I want as well. Very few people will press anything alcoholic on us, but when they do I simply say, "Not right now, thank you, but a Coke would really hit the spot." Stay away from Christmas cake, rum balls and dubious punches and eggnog. Just a little of the old taste can start us urging for a more substantial dose.

A.A. Still Meets during the celebratory season. In fact, many groups have seasonal parties where food and fellowship abounds, and speakers talk of gratitude and of the real spirit of giving that is outlined in the 12th Step. Members are warm and inviting and most are serene in the knowledge that there is a safe place for them to be. Anyone with a desire to stop drinking or to stay sober and clean is welcome.

Out-Smart the Disease. Remember, alcoholism and addiction is not only physical diseases; they are also spiritual, emotional and mental diseases, which of course, is what we are as people. I need to be connected to sober people. I need to be doing sober things, going to sober places. I can't let the Christmas season be an excuse for a relapse. Over the holidays is the same way I stay sober all year round, that is, one day at a time. *Hamish White*



Drug Court Coordinator, Chris Pankratz

Red Ribbon Week

Northern Hills Drug Court helped kick off Red Ribbon Week by participating in the Red Ribbon Parade.

What is Red Ribbon Week?

In 1985, Federal drug enforcement agent Enrique Camerena was killed by drug traffickers in Mexico. In response to his death, angered parents across the country began wearing red ribbons to symbolize their commitment toward the creation of a drug free America. Congress officially proclaimed the first National Red Ribbon Week, October, 1985. The red ribbon has now become a symbol for the drug free movement.



Northern Hills Drug Court Web Site

ujs.sd.gov/drugcourt.htm



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