

Hooked on Recovery

Friday, March 20th, 2004

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

I've completed my first month as Executive Director. Boy, did that go by quickly! As usual, this past month was full of activity. We squeezed in a staff retreat and we asked ourselves again, "What do we do here at CCAR and why do we do it?" For me I was able to spend some time thinking about how much I love recovery. First of all, I love what it has done for me, personally. The smiling faces of my wife and four children are miracles of recovery. However, more importantly, I love what recovery does in the lives of others. To me there is no greater joy than to witness someone's life released and redeemed from the deadly grip of addiction.

Here at CCAR we have two main things to help people gain the freedom of recovery. These are the two main principles that guide all our work. They are "Putting a Face on Recovery" and "Building Recovery Capital". I'll talk about this in a little greater detail.

Putting a Face on Recovery: Why do we do this? Simply, people need to see recovery. People need to see the hope of recovery. Key decision makers and legislators need to see the healing power of recovery. If they see that recovery works, then they are more likely to fund and support "pro-recovery" policies. The beauty of this is in its simplicity, yes? I praise the hundreds and hundreds of people in recovery who have stepped out and publicly put their own face on recovery. How have they helped to promote recovery? Through things like Recovery Walks! (last year this drew over 3000 people to Bushnell Park), through videos, DVD's and CD-ROMs, through the website www.ccar.us, through local cable television shows (like Positive Faces in Willimantic), through appearances at the legislature, through posters and personal stories. So many people have offered themselves as "living proof" that "recovery is real". The impact is literally immeasurable. We do know that it is all good.

Building Recovery Capital: We define recovery capital as the internal, relational and community resources brought to bear on the initiation and maintenance of recovery. That's a mouth full, isn't it? ☺ In other words, what's inside that desires recovery? What relationships are available that will support recovery? And what does the community have in place to support recovery? CCAR builds these resources through peer recovery support services like our comprehensive training program, family support groups, Recovery Community Centers, working with faith communities, helping people navigate the treatment system and much more.

Through our two main things, Putting a Face on Recovery and Building Recovery Capital, we want to "soften" the community's attitude toward recovery. How wonderful it would be if a person coming out of treatment or just beginning the journey of recovery could land in a feathery soft community that embraces and nurtures recovery. How many more lives could be transformed? How many more lives could be saved? And in my opinion that is the bottom line of the two main things, making sure that anyone struggling with an addiction has an excellent chance to recover. May CCAR always keep the main thing the main thing.