

THE NET-WORK

MAY-JUNE 2011

DO WE EVER STOP LEARNING??

BY: TOM Q.

People come and people go, good friends travel in and out of your life, and people change. If there is one thing that is certain in this world it's that nothing lasts forever. When we were children we were told to "GROW UP" and as we got older the phrase "YOUTH IS WASTED ON THE YOUNG" was tossed around. Never in my life had someone come up to me and said "Hey Tom, Look around you, this is life and it's beautiful and it's amazing but don't blink because you'll miss it". Well maybe someone did but I was too ignorant or just too high to pay attention. Now that I am getting older and my body hurts a little more every morning as I struggle getting out of bed, I am reminded of my mortality. Just like many of you, when I was younger I was invincible; I was able to dump all kinds of strange and wonderful chemicals into my body just to see how it would make me feel. Little did I realize that my experimenting would last @ 25 years. Not one time during this did I stop to think of how it would affect me in the future, not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally. It was a shock to me when I realized that the "party" had to end. One day I'm stepping off the stage at the "Trocodaro" and my heart is racing be-

cause I just finished playing the drums at a show for an hour and a half and the next my heart is racing because my 9 year old daughter just caught me stealing money from her Grandmothers purse to feed my habit. I had to admit it; it was time to end the party. When I finally decided to stop abusing myself and join the human race, I found I picked up a habit, a \$200-\$300 dollar a day drug habit. I wasn't happy and I wasn't proud. It's very embarrassing to know you can't get out of bed without your "medicine" or you're going to be sick if you can't "medicate". What a struggle!!! When I started to get my life back together I realized that in my head I was still the 21 year old boy, but when I looked in the mirror I was a 35 year old man. I also noticed that the people I was in group with didn't look much older than my niece and nephew. Despite the physical differences I figured we all were there for the same thing. Thinking like that was a mistake, I noticed that as people started to share their stories they seemed almost PROUD of their addiction and proud of the fact they were in Rehab. They told their stories with a twinkle in their eyes and a smile on their face.

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Special points of interest:

- Starting June The P.A.C. is starting a... PARENTING SUPPORT GROUP.
- The PAC is also starting a FAMILY GROUP.

DO WE EVER STOP LEARNING?? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

When I shared I had tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat telling about the way my daughter looked me in the eyes and asked why I had Grandma's purse. I didn't understand what they were proud of. It seemed like they were wearing their addiction as a "Badge of Honor". Was having a life threatening disease suddenly cool and I was unaware of it? This went on for several weeks and I was puzzled the entire time. I couldn't get passed the way everyone seemed happy about their lives. I was in crisis and I was in pain, why the hell were they smiling? I went home every day and thought about it, I discussed it with the few people I befriended in group and no one could help me. At this point my puzzlement turned into anger and resentment. When people would share I would get an attitude or become a "rude boy". I was letting other people's success in recovery affect how I was feeling. I stopped going to N/A meetings altogether and figured I would try A/A, they must be different I thought. On the very first meeting I saw the same exact thing going on, people were HAPPY telling their story!! I was livid and it showed on my face. During the break a man named "Fish" came up to me and asked why I looked so upset. I started telling him about what I went through in my life and that it wasn't anything to be happy or proud about. He stopped me and in a fatherly manner told me that NO ONE was proud of their past but what they were proud of was that their past brought them to this point in their lives and that their addictions brought them into the rooms of A/A and N/A. He told me that I was



one of the lucky people who was graced with an education that you couldn't find in any school. He told me that I graduated from addiction into recovery, and that was something to be happy and proud about. It was at that point that everything "clicked" for me; I understood what he was saying. It's not that people liked what they did in their past, it was what they learned from doing it that made them smile. They were proud of the fact that addiction didn't claim their lives like it did so many of their friends. Through the constant re-telling of their personal stories of struggle they were able to help others while reminding themselves of why they were there. I realized that I was getting angry at people in my group because I thought they were too young and weren't serious about recovery. I never stopped to realize that age had nothing at all to do with it. We should always remember that every meeting or group we attend is a learning experience. We should use every day of our recovery as an education, we should NEVER stop learning about ourselves or our disease. It shouldn't matter if the person is 18 or 81, they all have something to teach us and we should all be willing to learn. Sometimes we learn more looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.

Knowledge is
empowering...
Never stop learning!

JUST A LITTLE RECOGNITION...

Ya Know...

Counselors come and counselors go. I have been coming to NET-Steps for quite some time now and I have had several different counselors but the one I have now I wouldn't trade for anything in the world. He's funny, smart and VERY intelligent. He has a sense of humor that matches his personality....BUBBLEY!



He has a genuine concern for all of his clients, and he NEVER plays favoritism. I could be having a bad day and no-matter what, by the time I'm done with my session, I'll be walking out of his office with a smile. He deserves some type of recognition for the devotion and commitment he has towards his job and clients. I have a lot of respect for him and his enthusiasm.

He faces many challenges on a daily basis just like we do, so once in a while it doesn't hurt to ask..."How are you doing today"? This counselors name is... "James Carunchio". Thank you for all the laughs and smiles you have given me. It takes a VERY SPECIAL person to do what you do.

Your client,

Twiggy

7 week old hit sky high

On May 4, 2011 at the intersection of Westmoreland and Aramingo Avenue something breath-taking and life changing was about to happen. A proud father was pushing a stroller that was carrying his 7 week old precious daughter while enjoying the warm weather in the Port Richmond area. As he began to cross the street a light blue SUV hit the stroller sending both the 7 week old little girl and stroller at least 10 feet into the air according to police. The baby was taken to St. Christopher's Hospital where they first listed her condition as critical but changed it to stable after running a few test. The father wasn't physically injured but I'm sure the he has plenty of mental scars. The unidentified driver of the SUV was hauled off in handcuffs suspected of DUI police said. A female passenger that was in the car won't be charged, according to police.



Submitted by P.A.C

Homeless Woman Arrested for Sending Son to School

Posted by Julie Ryan Evans

A **homeless woman** in Connecticut has been **arrested** for one of the most unthinkable reasons imaginable -- **she sent her son to school**. **Tonya McDowell**, 33, was arrested last week and **charged with first-degree larceny for stealing \$15,686** -- the cost of the public school education for her 6-year-old son. To make matters worse, the child's babysitter, who provided documentation that said the boy lived at her Norwalk address, was **evicted from her public housing unit** for her role in his education. McDowell and her son had been bouncing between an acquaintance's home in Bridgeport and a homeless shelter in Norwalk with the boy spending afternoons with the babysitter. The school he attended was in Norwalk School District, which had recently decided to crack down on infiltrators. Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia told the *Stamford Advocate*, "This now **sends a message to other parents** that may have been living in other towns and registering their kids with phony addresses." Wow, what a harsh way to send it. And **how exactly is putting this woman in jail going to help remedy the situation?** It's not like she's going to be able to pay the money back, and what of her child? Will additional taxpayer dollars be necessary to care for him? Sure there are rules, and school dollars need to be used carefully, but is there really a taxpayer alive who doesn't think this boy would be better off in school -- any school -- than out on the streets with his mother? Of course we can't just let anyone show up at any school they like, or chaos would ensue, and yes, there are services and help available that may have worked for them. But there's **got to be some bend in the bureaucracy** when it comes to cases like this. This mother was doing the best thing she possibly could do for her son, and now she faces criminal charges. *That* just seems criminal.



Do you think this woman should be prosecuted just for sending her son to school?

THE NET_STEPPERS

BY: BRIAN I.

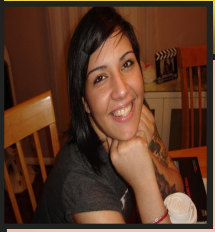
In October 2010, a counselor and I embarked on a journey to gather men and women, counselors and clients alike to start the first NET-Steps organized softball team (starts May 2011). Of course it wasn't until March that the signs went up for people to actually sign up. What many people don't know is that before the sign-up sheet went up that there was a lot of work and time that went into getting this off the ground. First of all we had to get a sponsor, and then get into the league and most of all we had to actually believe that we could even pull this undertaking off. Like in the past, many have tried to do the same thing, some a little different, but all have failed. If it wasn't for determination I don't think we would be getting ready for our inaugural season. As you can see, the sign-up sheets have been taken down and now the process of meetings, tryouts and finally getting to the 15 person roster that will make up our team begins. Great thanks go out to Annette and John Carroll for sponsoring this team. They are taking a **BIG** chance with us and I firmly believe that it is their faith in all of us that led them to encourage us to do more in our recovery. Recovery can be expressed in many ways and softball is one of them. Recovery doesn't have to be boring and if you signed up and make the team you will see recovery at its best.

SOFTBALL

THAT'S MY GAME

Pregnant woman is killed crossing Roosevelt Blvd.

April 13, 2011 By Mike Newall\Journalist



She was eight months pregnant, a single mother who lived in a small, well-kept house with her parents and 5-year-old son, where religious statues decorate the shaded yard and her son's red and blue bicycle, still with its training wheels on, sits on the porch. Some days, she would sit on her back steps blowing bubbles with her son or clapping along as he splashed in a plastic kiddie pool. Petite and pretty, with big brown eyes and a wide smile, she was excited to be a mother again, her neighbors said. Stunned family and neighbors struggled to grasp the loss of Giselle Moya, a 28-year-old Rhawnhurst woman struck and tragically killed Monday night by a northbound motorcyclist as she tried to cross Roosevelt Boulevard near Lexington Avenue. "I am sick, I cannot believe this happened," said her distraught father, Eduardo Moya, who spoke briefly to reporters while clutching photos of his daughter. He then excused himself, having to go to the police station for more information about her death. Moya, who was apparently walking to her home on the 2200 block of Faunce Street, just a few blocks from the accident, died at Albert Einstein Medical Center shortly after being hit. Doctors could not save her unborn child. The 25-year-old motorcyclist suffered a broken leg and head injuries and was in stable condition, police said. Police motor vehicle accident experts were still investigating Tuesday evening, and no charges have been filed. Moya's

family said they did not know yet where Moya was coming from when she was hit. "Details are vague right now," said a man who identified himself as Moya's uncle when reached at the family home late Tuesday afternoon. "We are still trying to add everything up. We are in shock. "It was about 9:30 p.m. Monday when Moya tried to cross the 12 lanes of traffic near a marked pedestrian walkway on a block that leads to Faunce Street, police said. She was hit in the inner lanes. There is no stoplight at the crossing, though there is one a few hundred yards north at Ryan Avenue. Despite the crosswalk, the stretch of roadway seems a particularly dangerous place for pedestrians to walk; the crosswalk is painted in the middle of a winding, downward curve, with traffic speeding north from Cottman Avenue. John Flynn, 65, sitting on a stool Tuesday in the window of the Eggs Nest Bar, which overlooks the crosswalk, said the stretch of boulevard has long been deadly. Growing up in the area, he remembers a tree just yards from the crash site that locals called "Dead Man's Tree" for all the motorists that struck it. Flynn recalled a patron who left the bar and was killed crossing the walkway about 10 years ago. Area residents said two traffic cameras installed in recent years at Cottman Avenue and Rhawn Street have slowed speeding cars, but the bend near the crosswalk remains dangerous. Arvind Patel, 73, a clerk at the Hub Motel, also located near the crosswalk, said a woman died a few years back trying to cross at the same spot

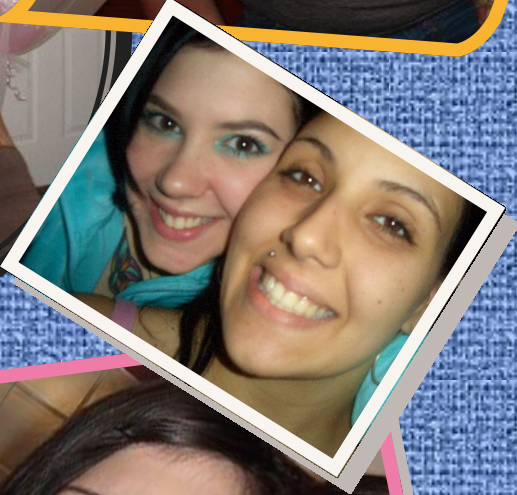
as Moya. "You can hardly see if someone is speeding," he said. "They should have a light there". On Faunce Street, neighbors remembered Moya as a loving parent who would play with her son and her tiny black Chihuahua, Bubba, who would sometimes slip into neighbors' yards. "She would come over all smiling and apologizing," recalled Daniel Lombardo, who lived next door. "She was a real down-to-earth girl. "Lombardo had just returned home on Tuesday afternoon from making funeral preparations for his son, Daniel, who died of a drug overdose over the weekend, when he learned of Moya's death. He could not believe the double tragedy, he said. Close in age, his son and Moya were friends and would often share cigarettes over the backyard fence talking about the struggles in their lives, he said. "It just kills you," he said. "She was a beautiful young woman with a beautiful young son who she cared for and now she's not going to be here to do that - her son is going to miss her."



Celebrating Life



Giselle Moya



"JUST FOR FUN"

HOROSCOPES-the month of MAY/JUNE 2011

BY: THE "GURU" TWIGGY

- ARIES**- This month you will welcome many challenges. Be confident in what you learned and be eager to share with others-Keep an open mind!!
- TAURUS**- Not only are you powerless over your own addiction but others as well. Carry the message...not the addict!!
- GEMINI**- God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but keep in mind that God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves, make an effort... you'll be surprised of the outcome.
- CANCER**- If you are willing to go the extra mile go ahead and do so, it will be well worth it.
- LEO**- This month you will need to remember where you came from and how hard it was to get where you are headed today...Don't EVER forget the pain and misery you went thru.
- VIRGO**- Don't deny your feelings, practice honesty and surrender to life as it is, use the tools of the program to survive your emotions.
- LIBRA**- Do the footwork and leave the results up to your higher power, making an effort pays off.
- SCORPIO**- Before making amends to others, make amends to yourself first.
- SAGITTARUS**- There is no shame in making mistakes, the shame is in repeating those same mistakes over and over and not learning from them.
- CAPICORN**- This month you will be dealing with acceptance and admittance. Keep in mind; Admittance is done verbally and Acceptance is done spiritually.
- AQUARIUS**- This month has many challenges that you can overcome. When asking your higher power for guidance you are growing spiritually.
- PISCES**- This month the message is... God help me so I can help myself but more importantly, help me so I can help others.

A HISTORY OF RELAPSE by: HD/TQ

A couple of weeks ago a letter was dropped off at my desk. This letter was written over 5 years ago but I felt it has a powerful message. I was struck by the rawness of it and if you take your time reading it you can see a part of yourself in the person who wrote this. We have ALL been at this place during our addiction and we have all felt this way at some point.....

MARCH, 2006

Well, here I am again, back in recovery with this essay that they asked me to rite. "WHY AM I HERE?", now that question couldn't have come at a better time. "Why is that?" well two days ago that question was on my mind more than recovery. Why am I still alive? Why cant I just die? I relapse all the time and when I was out there I OD'd twice, but still I couldn't die. I just couldn't figure out what the problem was...am I supposed to live life sad and miserable with everything being taken from me leaving me lost. What is my cause? Why am I here saying to myself "God is this your sick and f***ed up way to get a thrill"? I just couldn't understand. I was told so many times that I left before the miracle happened but NO I didn't. I finally had my miracle the other day, it wasn't the kind I was looking for but I realized why I am here and alive in recovery. I'm here because God knew what he was doing and wanted to make sure this is what I really wanted this time. The first time I did it for everyone else and this time after losing everything I realized I'm doing it for me. God knew I was for real because I got my blessing and I was reunited with my daughter Destiny who was abandoned by her mother. I'm here to be a father, I'm sober and still alive to be the dad my daughter may not of had a chance to meet. I'm here because God had plans for me, other than being a junkie.

Abuse-Free PainKILLERS



The government has recognized, and announced that the abuse of prescription painkillers right here in America is an epidemic that must be addressed. One of the pill manufacturer giants known as Pfizer has made a painkiller pill that they said is abuse proof. The pill is called Acurox and the following are claims that the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are in the process of investigating; The pill crumbles into chunks instead of becoming a powder. If a person mixes the crushed pill with liquid and draws it into a syringe it becomes "sudsy." If someone tries to inhale the crushed pill an irritant contained in the drug will bother the person's nose. There is another opioid that Pfizer makes called Remoxy, it is a gelatinous form of long-lasting oxycodone. This drug can't be chewed, crushed or even drawn into a syringe. Mixing it with any type of alcohol doesn't release the drug's full potency as it does with other opioids. I wonder if the chemicals that are used to make these medication "abuse free" lessen the potency of these medications. What kind of side-effects would these "abuse free" chemicals have on those who are prescribed those medication? I'm sure that the FDA will be thorough with their investigations and those who abuse these known painkiller will be thorough with theirs as well.

Submitted by: P.A.C

JUST A PLAY ROOM?

BY JOSE H. DELEON

There has been an upgrade to the NET-STEP'S Play Room. Who would have thought that a treatment facility would actually erect a Play Room so that their clients could attend their therapy sessions? These parents don't have to stress over whether or not a baby-sitter is going to show up, or if they have to borrow the money from someone to pay for child-care. While other facilities talk about what issues need to be addressed so that their clients can take a more active leading role in their treatment, NET-STEP'S has talked, thought it through, and put their words into action. The Play Room here at NET-STEP'S cannot be compared to any other treatment facility's child care program. There is, without a doubt, a genuine love at NET-STEP'S for all kids that enter through the front door. Whether it is staff or clients, every-



kids get plenty of attention in this building. The Play Room has a flat screen T.V that has children movies/songs playing non-stop. There are plenty of dolls, action figures, puzzles, games, storybooks, coloring books, rocking horses, etc. that help with the development of their young minds. The parent's children know where to run to as soon as they enter the building. Though these things are great there was a new age group that was starting to come into the Play Room that needed more of a mental challenge. Once again the issue was addressed and action was taken by NET-STEP'S. Three Dell computers were added to the Play Room with programs that target ages between 3-7 years old. The programs teach them how to read, spell, and do math problems. There are levels to these programs that allow them to move up only when passing their previous level. The programs include;

Arthur's Kindergarten, Arthur's Math Games, Arthur's Computer Adventure, Clifford the Big Red Dog Reading, Reader Rabbit Learn to Read with Phonics, Reader Rabbit Personalized Reading, Reader Rabbit Personalized Math.

There is no doubt that child-care is an issue with many clients that attend treatment throughout the city. Many times this causes parents to miss out on vital therapy session that is obviously important. I believe that NET-STEP'S is leading the way in this area, and is pushing the standard of care to a new level.



MINDFULNESS, MEDITATION AND THE MONKEY MIND

BY: MARK HIRSCHMAN

You may have heard some of the patients or staff here at NET-Steps talk about the importance of being "mindful" and of the many benefits of practicing meditation and wonder just what are they talking about. I hope to give you a brief introduction to the subject with the intent of grabbing your attention and interest so that you start trying it out.

MINDFUL-what does that mean- "I am always mindful of where I walk so I don't get my new sneakers dirty." Well that's close but no cigar! Being mindful just means that you are paying attention to your life in the here and now. Not thinking about stuff that happened yesterday or last year or when you were 4 years old, nor worrying about what is happening later today, tomorrow, or next week. It sounds simple but takes practice to remain "in the moment". It means that you respond to the situation in front of you based only on its merits and not anything else. Just had an argument with your girlfriend? Got a ticket? Lost \$20? Found out you are on hold? Hit the lottery? Got a raise at work? Finally got the phone number of the person you've been after? Don't allow either positive or negative emotions from something else color your response to THIS situation. Don't be planning what you are going to do afterwards or worrying if you left a light on at home...just pay attention to the here and now.

I am sure that everyone has experienced moments of mindfulness. It may be walking down the street, coming to the clinic, and suddenly noticing the shape and color of the clouds. Most of us just can't STOP all of those distractions without losing focus of what we are trying to do right now. The trick is to just notice the distractions and not get caught up in them. Don't judge, don't reflect, don't ponder, don't evaluate, don't rate the thoughts-just become aware of them and redirect your attention to the matter at hand. Being mindful is living in THIS moment. Accepting what is rather than what isn't or what could've been. It is accepting what the situation is-not what it could or should have been if you don't like it, Then take action to change it. Don't just complain or resign yourself to it. If you like it, then what can you do to continue it and encourage it to come back again.

Mindfulness gives power back to the individual rather than increasing feelings of helplessness and impotency. I can't control the things that happen to me but I can change how I react to them. Any situation has the potential to have a good or a bad outcome, it is our view and bias that determines how we see it. For example- I miss the bus. I can stand there being angry because now I am going to be late or I can strike up a conversation with the person next to me and maybe find out something interesting. One event but 2 very different responses based on how I choose to view it and what I focused on.

Mindfulness