



# STEPPING STONES

*Providing Steps to Recovery*

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## SS Responds to the Deadly Threat of Heroin



In Will County, the number of deaths caused by heroin overdose has nearly doubled from 15 in 2005 to 29 in 2009, for a total of 86 heroin-induced/related deaths during that five year period.

In Illinois, heroin is the most common illegal substance for which individuals enter treatment. At Stepping Stones, the percentage of clients reporting heroin or other opiate use has increased from 10% to 27% in the past 10 years.

Paul Lauridsen, clinical director, points out, "As the overdose death numbers indicate, keeping an individual who is using heroin or other opiates alive is a fundamental consideration for the treatment providers. The effort begins with seeing that the client and those close to them get critical information on how heroin and other opiates affect breathing and other basic life-sustaining functions. When overdosing is likely, this information could be instrumental in saving a life."

Staff member and registered nurse Judy Hamilton adds, "While our goal is to achieve complete abstinence from alcohol and drugs, we realize the extreme risk for individuals who use heroin if they relapse after even a few days of abstinence. Therefore, it is important that we provide information on these risks and the resources available in the community to help reduce the risk of accidental death from overdose."

One year ago, in anticipation of implementation of the Overdose Prevention Act, key staff and the Board of Directors discussed Stepping Stone's role and responsibilities in addressing the drastic increase in heroin overdose deaths.

The act enables greater access to a safe, effective and low-cost overdose reversal drug. A federally-approved drug, Naloxone reverses the effects of opiates. The law authorizes programs to disseminate overdose prevention information and permits trained lay people and health-care professionals to administer Naloxone in an emergency without fear of medical practice law violations or criminal prosecutions.

Symptoms of heroin withdrawal may begin within a few hours of the last dose, peak within 24-to 48-hours and may last for a week or more. Symptoms of withdrawal include restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps and uncontrollable leg movements. Because the withdrawal is so distressing, relapse is common. When an individual is off opiates for as few as three days, his or her tolerance level decreases and there is a greater risk for overdose.

According to Executive Director, Pete McLenighan, Stepping Stones remains dedicated to assisting people to become alcohol and other drug free. However, because opiate users are particularly vulnerable to overdose following periods of abstinence, specific actions were taken, including, but not limited to:

- Actively supporting passage of the Overdose Prevention Act.
- Education of the Board of Directors, staff, stakeholders and community leaders.
- Training of staff on heroin overdose recognition and response.
- Development and presentation of educational materials for all opiate users and their families.
- Development of cooperative arrangements with several physicians in the community who prescribe medications that reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings experienced during early recovery.

- Development and implementation of a working agreement with sisters and Brothers Helping Each Other for provision of Naloxone.
- Leadership in organizing community Forum on heroin held at Joliet Township High School West on March 30.
- Working with a committee of WC Juvenile Justice Council to develop a fact-based presentation of the issues.
- Advocating for the adoption of recommendations from a recent Roosevelt University study that included: Providing comprehensive Drug Education, increasing treatment funding, supporting overdose prevention and Naloxone administration and providing limited protection for persons seeking medical assistance in response to an overdose.

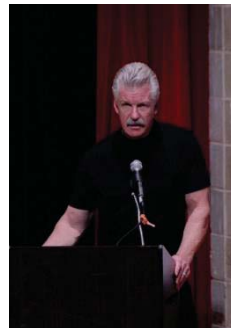
## Rally Celebrates and Encourages ‘Recovery’

Recovery from substance abuse is something to celebrate! It takes a caring community to provide the resources and support for individuals and families.

The sixth annual Rally ‘Round Recovery, sponsored by the Southwest Coalition for Substance Abuse Issues, brought 375 individuals in recovery, their families and friends, local officials and health care providers and resources to Bicentennial Park in September.

The local rally is done in conjunction with other events hosted around the country to observe National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month.

Clinical Director Paul Lauridsen of Stepping Stones, a member of the Southwest Coalition, commented on the importance of the event, “This event and the activities surround it are important in promoting a better understanding of recovery and the hope it offers individuals in recovery, their family, and the community.”



*(Above, from left) Senators Linda Holmes and A.J. Wilhilmj, Abbey Granger taking a rind on one of Jim Nesci’s Cold-Blooded Creatures, Will County States Attorney James Glasgow and the Honorable Ray Nash.*



*(At left) A “community of volunteers” hold Blondie, the 15 foot albino Burmese python, a member of Jim Nesci’s Cold-Blooded Creatures.*

*(At right) Sara D. and Russell C. provide personal testimony on their journeys to recovery.*



# Thanks to Supporters and Volunteers

**Public Officials Attending:** Senator Linda Holmes, Senator A. J. Wilhelmi, Will County States Attorney Jim Glasgow, Judge Ray Nash, Will County Treasurer Pat McGuire.

**Entertainers:** Disturbance, Hufford Junior High School Band with Laura Jelenek, director; Jim Nesci & the Cold Blooded Creatures, Just Add Water, Mt. Carmel Folkloric Dancers, Na'Koshia Banks, Ricardo Rivers & United Souls.

**Sponsors:** AFSCME #1028-WC Employee Union; Bob Harrison, US Army NC; Chicago Blackhawks, Chicago Bulls, Chicago Cubs; Copier Dynamics; Eich's Sports, Exxon Mobile, James Roof, First Midwest Bank, Kallan Elias; Quality QuickPrint; Silver Cross Hospital; Stepping Stones; Tim and Monica Granger; WC States Attorney James Glasgow.

**Resource Fair:** AA Journey to Wellness; AA District 51; AA Spanish; Alcohol Monitors-IL; Campfire USA; Center for Community Concerns; Chestnut Health Systems; Done with Drugs; Huntington Learning Center; Joliet Alano Club; Lifering; Linden Oaks at Edwards Hospital; Morning Star Mission; Nar-Anon; NOFA-Illinois Birth Mothers; Overeaters Anonymous; RAAPDA; Serenity House; Silver Cross Hospital; South Suburban Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse; Stepping Stones.

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## *From the Director ...*

### **Some really good news for a change ...**

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Adam Stoner Charity Golf Outing was held near Peoria, in memory of Adam. A special thanks goes out to the family and friends of Adam Stoner, especially Adam's parents, Tom and Chris, and brothers, James and Mark. We appreciate all the effort that Clint Brown, Quinn Headington, and especially Cyrral Curfman made to organize another successful outing. This event raised almost 46,000 for Stepping Stones and was both a morale and financial boost for us.

In September, we were notified that we would receive a grant of \$200,000 to provide assessment and treatment for persons involved with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). While our proposal was well written, this award was primarily based on Stepping Stones' past performance demonstrating timely and effective services for DCFS involved persons.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, a group of caring, ambitious and effective women held a unique and fun event called Witches' Night Out to benefit Stepping Stones and three other local organizations. Stepping Stones was very fortunate to have been selected by the organizers. For more information, please visit [www.withcesnightout.com](http://www.withcesnightout.com).

Pete McLenighan

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## ***Witches' Night Out provided fun and funds***



According to Kathy Mihelich, chair, WNO raised \$15,000. The event was the idea of women professions who wanted to make a difference in the lives of other women. This event included a bazaar with 50 business and crafter booths, a buffet dinner, raffle, fortune teller, photo opportunities at a haunted house and entertainment by the Harvest Moon Band. It was a great night for the guests, many of whom came in costume, reports Kathy. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Witches Night Out has been scheduled for the Thursday before Halloween in 2011.

*(Pictured from left) Andy Mihelich, Executive Director of the Spanish Community Center, Pete McLenighan, Executive Director of SS and Corina Ventura, Vice-President Harris Bank, a platinum sponsor of the event.*

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**Mission Statement**

Stepping Stones is dedicated to providing effective treatment for persons suffering from the illness of addiction to alcohol and/or other drugs, even if these persons are unable to pay for the cost of such services.

**Board of Directors**

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Robert Kelly    Sr. Maurice White, OSF

*Stepping Stones has been determined by the IRS to be a 501c3 organization and donations are deductible as provided by law.*

***Your donations are appreciated! With reduced state funding, our ability to serve everyone who require our services is affected. We thank you for your concern and help!***

