

## Faith Communities Partnering with Rehab Professionals to Save Lives

On August 5th and 6th, 2004, people from both the faith-based community and drug rehabilitation field, including 20 churches and 25 drug rehab groups from 21 different cities and towns, gathered at the lovely new Reed Conference Center in Oklahoma City for a two-day conference on substance abuse. The conference was co-hosted by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and Narconon International, along with Oklahoma's Narconon Arrowhead drug rehabilitation and training center.

The theme of the conference, "Faith communities partnering with rehabilitation professionals to save lives," was certainly achieved as many church members and rehab professionals decided to join together to learn and apply new skills for their congregations and communities.

In introductory remarks, Clark Carr, President of Narconon International, stated, "Why is Narconon here to greet you at a faith-based and community partners initiative conference on drug rehabilitation? First, we are a community partner...someone who works to bring the faith community and professionals in the treatment and prevention community together."

"Why are we here in Oklahoma City? Here are just some of the statistics necessitating it: 2 out of 3 adults arrested in Oklahoma City tested positive for drug use, Also,



*Clifton Mitchell, Coordinator, SAMHSA Faith-Based and Community Partners Initiative, speaking at the conference*

methamphetamine labs are being busted statewide at an alarming rate. In other words, we have work to do."

**CLIFTON MITCHELL, Coordinator, SAMHSA Faith-Based and Community Partners Initiative, spoke both days, encouraging church members to work with rehab professionals and to apply for grants from the government.**

"We have a fight on our hands. We have a war going on in our own communities. I mean a real war, a mean war. ... The way the economy is now, you can't sit back. You have

# Faith-Based And Community Partners Conference



Clark Carr, President of Narconon International, Master of Ceremonies

to form coalitions, become more political. ... It is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. ... It is your tax money. And all the President of the United States is saying to you is, 'We want you to come to this table because we need you. The government can't do it on its own. We need your help.'"

**KYLE McGRAW**, Director of Substance Abuse Services under the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, "Some years back when I ran my own treatment program, I realized that many pastors, perhaps through unfamiliarity or ignorance, did not really know what treatment was. If I could leave you with one nugget to take home with you, it would be 'Get to know the treatment provider in your community.' Sit down with them over a cup of coffee. Invite them into your church study. Some you may like. Some you may not. But some you will find fit with your belief and faith."

## ■ The Workshops

**BRAD YARBROUGH**, Director of the Oklahoma Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative, along with his colleague, Russ Urquhart, gave a workshop on the private sector working together with government.



[l.-r.] Clifton Mitchell, Brad Yarbrough and Clark Carr, at the closing

**"We have a fight on our hands. We have a war going on in our own communities."**

"The burden of responding to social need for decades and even centuries has been borne by the faith community. Government in the history of man has been a relative newcomer in providing social services, and we welcome its participation. ... Some problems are too broad or complex for one church or faith to put their arms around. What is necessary today is for both groups--government and faith--to co-labor to address this problem of alcohol and other drug addiction."

**WILLIAM E. LINK, Ph.D.**, delivered a very popular, four-session grant writing workshop. One attendee was amazed to learn how government welcomes prevention programs.

"I've been working for the last 10 years on the Community Building Initiative and I am completely, passionately sure that if we don't do something about substance abuse, we can't rebuild communities. You cannot rebuild a community when the residents of a community are poisoned. ... Until we do something about this issue, the kind of things that we have as dreams for the community, I don't think they will happen; so as far as I'm concerned, you guys are on the front line."

**DON COYHIS**, President and Founder of White Bison, Inc. and Wellbriety Movement, member of the Mohican Nation, gave an inspiring talk about his program based on the wisdom of Native Elders. The concept is to achieve 'Wellbriety,' a coined English word to mean not just sobriety, but living in sober and dignified wellness.

"White Bison has been in existence 16 years. We have a Council of Elders including people from the white, red, yellow, and black races. ... From our Elders we have

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Kyle McGraw



William Link



Wayne White



Don Coyhis



David Whiteris

learned that we are given 4 gifts for healing: The gift to forgive the unforgiveable (our ancestors within must forgive); Healing power; Unity; and Hope (the ability to dream).”

**DAVID WHITERIS**, Level II Addictions Counselor and Founder of Recovery Associates of Atlanta, gave a workshop which taught community-based organizations how to partner with faith institutions to provide services to benefit individuals and families impacted by substance abuse.

“We learned that a coalition of a small number of churches with the same goals and objectives would be far more manageable and far more effective than a coalition of 60 churches. ... Our federal grant does not allow us to proselytize, but we are allowed to have all Christ-centered staff. What we can do is provide services that help people to be more effective in their recovery. ... Some people ask us why we are so committed to helping them. They can come to our churches to find out that answer.”

**REV. JAMES McLAUGHLIN**, Pastor of Houston Greater Ward AME Church and Certified Pastoral Counselor along with Clark Carr demonstrated the Narconon® First Step Workshop, based on the works of L. Ron Hubbard, a voluntary program of hands-on, physical assist techniques used to help another through step-by-step drug withdrawal.

“My faith was tested by the demon of drug addiction in my congregation. I learned that tools existed where I could do something both practically and spiritually helpful to the addict, helping confront taking that terrible first step--coming off drugs. The Narconon First Step has

taught me how, with the resources my church and I had, not more, but just what already existed, and skills that I can apply with my own hands and with the help of a friend or family member of an addict, to help that addict voluntarily to confront stepping down off drugs.”

**DR. JOHN MARTIN**, Professor of Psychology and Family and Preventive Medicine at San Diego State University, brought together scientific motivational counseling with spiritual/religious approaches to the problem of motivating addicts to reach for treatment.

“Motivational interviewing is really a way of being with people, not labelling them or trying to force them out of denial. ... Studies have shown that sympathy is feeling sorry for a person and is never helpful, but always destructive. Empathy is a loving, standing with them. We don’t want to push them or drag them. We want to be with them, love them, and we want to listen to them. We’re good listeners and helpers, and we provide resources when they are ready and would like that.”

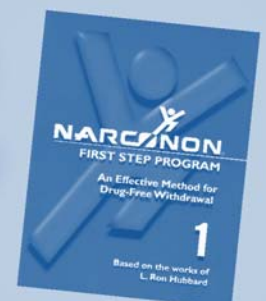
**WAYNE WHITE**, Certified Advanced Substance Counselor with "Footprints," delivered a workshop which taught how people can do 12 step programs while still participating in their own religious group.

“The 12 Steps were designed to establish a foundation where a person, if he practiced

**“If we allow our nation, our communities and our education to be overwhelmed by drug dealers and pharmaceutical companies, we will become a nation of drug addicts and drug pushers.”**

How to help someone  
come off drugs naturally

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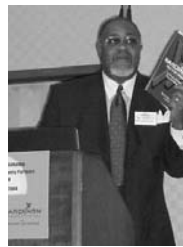
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Rev. Alfreddie  
Johnson



John Martin



Rev. James  
McLaughlin



Drug Prevention Panel: Bobby Newman, Joan  
Hastings and Lisa Stein

those principles in all his affairs, would get right with God and get right with others. There are principles in the Steps that would allow him to stay right with God, self, and others, a check and balance system, if you will. ... Laws change because man makes laws. But principles don't change."

**REV. ALFREDDIE JOHNSON**, Pastor, A True Faith Christian Center; Founder, World Literacy Crusade, in his luncheon speech, talked about the World Literacy Crusade and the importance of handling illiteracy.

"One of the causes of pain--pain is caused by having your reality shattered, by having your reality overwhelmed by some other's reality. When our reality has been overwhelmed by another person's or another group's reality we become that which we are overwhelmed by. If we are overwhelmed by a bully, most times we become a bully. ... If we allow our nation, our communities and our education to be overwhelmed by drug dealers and pharmaceutical companies, we will become a nation of drug addicts and drug pushers."



## ■ Drug Prevention Panel

During lunch on Friday, a drug prevention panel was hosted by **JOAN HASTINGS**, former State Representative, **LISA STEIN**, Director of Wichita Mountains Prevention Network, and **BOBBY NEWMAN**, Drug Prevention Specialist, Narconon Arrowhead.

Lisa Stein stated: "A rule of thumb in prevention: I ask myself, "If I had been told that, would that have helped me?" If not, it's not useful. ... Don't do programs to kids. They won't like it. They won't come. It won't keep them off drugs. Do them with kids. Invite them in up front. Recruit kids to work with you, and train them. ... Research shows that prevention CAN and DOES work. Drug prevention affects many things in the world of kids--school attendance, kid pregnancy, many things."

**OCARTA** (Oklahoma Citizen Advocates for Recovery and Treatment Association), **Parents Helping Parents** and **OSASA** (Oklahoma Substance Abuse Services Alliance) all had booths with useful material for the attendees.

*"This was inspiring, educational, developmental. What a great way to see what we are doing. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"*

*"Would love to see a 2nd conference here in Oklahoma with more Oklahoman involvement so that Oklahoma can build relationships together to fight the war on drugs."*

*"God Bless You for your passion and your commitment!"*

Links:

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) (SAMHSA)

[www.faithlinksok.org](http://www.faithlinksok.org) (Oklahoma Faith-Based and Community Initiatives)

[www.narconon.org](http://www.narconon.org) (Narconon International)

[www.stopaddiction.com](http://www.stopaddiction.com) (Narconon Arrowhead)

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If you know anyone who needs help,  
please contact us  
(323) 962-2404

[info@narconon.org](mailto:info@narconon.org)