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Narconon Network Celebrates 40 Years

From a decision to start a drug rehab to thousands of lives saved....

Four decades ago an incarcerated heroin addict named William Benitez decided that he had to try something new to save himself from his addiction as well as to help other similarly afflicted friends.

Having tried many existing methods to escape his addiction, he continued to search for a way



*Where it all began:
the first Narconon group,
Arizona State Prison, 1966
(William Benitez far left)*

out. In the prison library he came across a book written by L. Ron Hubbard, *The Fundamentals of Thought*, which outlined an entirely new approach toward solving the problems of life.

He requested permission from Arizona state prison officials to start a drug rehabilitation program with 20 addict inmates, but was at first denied. Thankfully, he persisted, and on February 19, 1966, he was finally granted permission and founded what he called Narconon, meaning NARCOTics-NONE.

Shortly after founding Narconon in 1966, Bill researched his court conviction and discovered he had been tried under the



*William Benitez,
Founder of the
Narconon program*

wrong statute and was sentenced in excess of that prescribed by law. Upon return to court, Bill was advised that he could conceivably be re-sentenced to time served and be released based on his eighteen months already served. Narconon was only a few months old at that time.

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Benitez receiving an award for Narconon's first year in Arizona State Prison

Bill believed the program would collapse if he didn't return to complete it. Rather than petition for his immediate release, he requested a sentence which would allow him to fully implement Narconon. The Court re-sentenced him to four to six years which left him sixteen months to serve. Bill returned to prison and developed the program to its full capacity. As Bill states, "It was the best, but toughest decision I ever made in my life -- I would have loved to walk away from that court a free man."

Narconon subsequently came to the attention of the public when reporters from the *Arizona*

Daily Star secured permission from the Warden to interview the inmate who requested to be returned to the walls. The *Star* printed a two-part series on Narconon in August 1966.

Bill completed his prison term and was released in October 1967. Bill moved to California to expand Narconon and to make it available to persons in need.

Years later, Bill returned to Arizona and was hired as Inmate Liaison. Then he became Hearing Officer for the Corrections Director on inmate complaints.

As time went on, Bill said, "Sure, I started Narconon, but its success and expansion is due to the dedication of so many staff and volunteers throughout the world who have made this program and its benefits available to the public. Staff and volunteers' compensation is in knowing that they are providing society and its children a better environment in which to live. My thanks to them."

William Benitez died of natural causes in 1999. Up to the last year of his life, he participated in many Narconon network celebrations and often received phone calls from Narconon center executive



Calendar on which Benitez first wrote his decision to start the Narconon program

directors worldwide. In 1991, in celebration of its first 25 years, the Narconon network awarded William Benitez its first "Drug Free Hero" Award.

In 1970 Narconon legally incorporated as a non-profit public benefit corporation in the United States, with William Benitez as one of the first officers. The same corporation has maintained its 501(c)3 status with the IRS to this day and is the same corporation which is now Narconon International, Inc.



Benitez speaking at the grand opening in 1990 of Narconon Chilocco

Drug Problems

by L. Ron Hubbard

"Drug addicts have been found to have begun drug taking because of physical suffering or hopelessness.

... By eradicating in the addict the cause of the original suffering or hopelessness, the need of drugs is voluntarily dispensed with by the former addict.

... The addict has been found not to want to be an addict, but is driven by pain and environmental hopelessness.

As soon as an addict can feel healthier and more competent mentally and physically without drugs than he does on drugs, he ceases to require drugs."



L. Ron Hubbard, whose technology inspired William Benitez to start the Narconon program

"What impressed me the most about [Hubbard's] materials was that it concentrated not only on identifying abilities, but also on methods (practical exercises) by which to develop them. I realized that drug addiction was nothing more than a 'disability' resulting when a person ceases to use abilities essential to constructive survival."

William Benitez

40th
Anniversary

The scope of the Narconon program today

Clark Carr
President of Narconon International



Narconon was drug-free on its founding day in 1966. William Benitez, who founded the program, named it Narconon (meaning no-drugs) to signify that one does not need drugs to solve the problems of drugs. The 20,000 graduates who have completed our full rehabilitation program are indisputable proof that this method, based on the research and discoveries of humanitarian L. Ron Hubbard, gets extraordinary results. The great majority of those who complete our program go on to live stably drug-free, ethical and productive lives. Listed out, their names would roll out for a city block. Many graduates refer others

needing help to our 145 centers in 38 countries. Others have opened their own Narconon centers. Some become dedicated staff. Some have brought back decades of love and joy to their families and friends. We congratulate them all for this world-spanning accomplishment.

- Over 20,000 drug-free lives
- Drug education presentations to over 4 million people
- Centers in 45 countries



Narconon drug prevention groups now give presentations to over 500,000 people a year.



Today, the Narconon network has drug rehabilitation facilities and drug education activities in 45 countries.

