

Pathways

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can't make him do this," Anne Marie recalled. "It's state law. How do you help your kid if you can't make him do this?"

Jon had to be convinced, and eventually he was. A positive drug test sent his family on a road they now say has changed all of their lives, not just that of their addicted son.

Kim, a Walled Lake resident, decided to divorce her alcoholic husband after more than seven years of marriage, but already the damage was done to her young daughter.

I got her into counseling and Alo-Tots, and by age 13, she was using," Kim said, adding she believes Lauren had a predisposition toward alcohol abuse. "Her father was an alcoholic, her grandfather was an alcoholic."

Kim thought Lauren was just being a kid and trying things out. Then her 13-year-old daughter nearly died of an overdose, while the family was living in Florida.

"I figured this would do it," Kim said. "This would shake her up. But it doesn't work that way with addiction."

Short-term didn't work

Jon's family first tried Growth Works, a Plymouth-based outpatient counseling service. They'd learned Jon was drinking, smoking marijuana and taking stolen prescription drugs like Vicodin and Tylenol-3.

When he refused to participate, his parents searched for a more intensive therapy. In Georgia, they found a "drop off" program, but it didn't involve parents at all.

Through a friend, they heard about Pathways in Southfield, which provides longer term care and counseling. Clinical director Don Robinson said the facility has been open at 9 Mile and Providence since 1992.

"Parents usually contact us as the result of some crisis involving suspected drug or alcohol abuse," he said. "Sometimes, families have other forms of treatment and may have been referred through that."

It's never easy at first, but Lauren accepted she had a problem and agreed to be admitted.

"What I observed was she was willing to go in, but she did not know what Pathways was about,"

Zero Tolerance: It's Michigan Law



Did you know?

■ State law mandates that any alcohol whatsoever contained in the body of a person under 21 years of age is illegal.

■ There is no "responsible" drinking for people under 21.

■ A police officer can administer a breathalyzer any time, any place to those under 21.

■ Refusing to take a breathalyzer test may result in driver's license seizure, a \$200 fine, plus court costs and two points added to offender's driving record.

■ Any "under 21" violation will remain on the offender's driving record for seven years and any additional offense during that time is considered a second offense, which carries higher fines and penalties.

The law for people under 21:

1. Driving a vehicle with any amount of alcohol in the body is illegal. Consequences: 30-60 day license suspension; up to 45 days of community service; up to \$250 in fines; \$125 license reinstatement fee and substantial auto insurance rate increase or suspension.

2. Purchase or possession of alcohol. Consequences include \$100 fine, plus court costs; court-ordered community service; substance abuse assessment at offender's expense; loss of driver's license on second offense.

3. Use of fake I.D. to buy alcohol. Consequences include mandatory suspension of driver's license for 90 days; substance abuse assessment at offender's expense; substance abuse education and treatment; \$100 fine, plus court costs and 90 days in jail.

4. Transporting or possessing unopened alcohol in a motor vehicle operated by a person under 21. Consequences include auto impoundment for 16-30 days; \$100 fine, plus court costs and 90 days in jail.

5. Transporting or possessing open or empty alcohol container in the passenger area of a vehicle. Consequences include \$100 fine, plus court costs and 90 days in jail; substance abuse screening at offender's expense; alcohol education or treatment at offender's expense.

6. Allowing a person to drive your vehicle after they have been drinking. Consequences include 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine, plus court costs.

(Information provided by Hegira Programs, Inc.)

Kim said. "She figured it would be a two-week program...I don't think she even understood recovery until she got into long-term."

During his intake interview, Jon told a counselor that he didn't

have a drug problem, Anne Marie said. His parents were making it up, to hide their own drug abuse.

"It's usually the case that they're not coming in voluntarily," Robinson said. "They pretty much

force their parents' hand."

Moving through

Pathways has a five-phase program, which clients move through by reaching a certain set of "therapeutic criteria," he explained. For instance, in order to move out of phase one, clients must memorize the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and start talking openly and honestly about their drug use, among other things.

"That's a marker for us that they're ready to accept more responsibility," Robinson said.

It took a long time for Jon to reach that first marker, Anne Marie said.

"For eight months, he sat there and did nothing. He said he was going to bankrupt us. He thought we had the problem."

Jon's father, Hadley, had a very difficult time in the beginning.

"It was scary, because you didn't know what to expect, and Jon wasn't going to be living in our home for a while," he said. "I thought I was doing the right thing. I enabled him a lot."

From other parents, he learned how to stand up for himself as a father.

"One parent told me the more you pulled yourself away from your child, the closer you become," he said. "It took me seven or eight months to pull away, but I did."

While adults were very involved in Jon's and Lauren's recoveries, their parents believe seeing kids their own age had the greatest influence. Likewise, the parents had help from people who had been in their position.

Pathways also offers sibling support groups, Robinson said. "Both (parents and children) have to be involved to have this work inside the family system. The parallel track in recovery tends to be a better track."

The family dynamic changes dramatically when clients return home, he said, and parents have to learn not to treat their child the same as when he or she was in active addiction. After-care is Pathways' sixth phase, where clients are living outside but coming back to the facility for group therapy sessions.

"They can talk about things with people they know also have been through the same things,"

he said.

A University of Detroit-Mercy study conducted a few years ago indicated the program has a 70 to 80 percent success rate. "They were able to track down graduates of the program and track how well they had done," Robinson said.

This spring, Jon will add a diploma from Plymouth-Canton Schools to his Pathways diploma, which he earned after two and a half years. That's a longer term than usual - most stay 12 to 18 months, Robinson said.

Treatment is not inexpensive. Some insurance health plans do cover it, and Pathways has "sobriety scholarships," created by the center's own fund-raising efforts, along with help from Oakland County for families that meet certain guidelines.

But the difference in their son would have been a bargain at any price for Hadley and Anne Marie.

Transformation

"It's two different kids," Hadley said. "He was an immature little punk with a behavior problem, and now he's 18 years old and he's more mature than pretty much any 18 year old."

Lauren's success has been equally profound. "She's going to college and working full-time, and she's pulled As and Bs...I haven't seen that since grammar school," Kim said.

Going through Lauren's addiction and treatment - the 19-year-old college student has been clean and sober more than four years - helped her grow as well.

"When you deal with somebody you love, you can't separate them from your life. You have to learn to deal with the aspects of the disease and you learn to cope with some really unhealthy ways of living. Pathways has taught me how to make better choices for my family."

Jon's parents agree Pathways made a difference in all their lives. Hadley feels the program made him a stronger person and brought their family closer together.

And there's something else, something a little less tangible and harder to define. Something about not having to worry and wonder so much about their son's safety and well-being. "It just feels

Success

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a few years ago.

"I just basically relate my story to theirs, and make them feel like they're not alone."

His life is very different now. After high school graduation, he plans to join the Marines, to keep some structure in his life. One of his goals is to get help with college tuition and study, perhaps, to be in law enforcement.

Instead of fighting with his parents, they now have a close relationship, one he credits with helping him stay on the right path.

"That's one of the things that keeps me doing good is having my family supporting me."

Officer

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doubt in my mind to take it."

He's been a public safety reserve officer for the City of Farmington since the fall of 1999.

"I'm the first in my family to become involved in law enforcement," Keeley said. "My brother is a fire fighter in North Salem, New York."

He's pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Keeley and Cheryl, his wife of 13 years, have two children, Shannon and Michael.

He previously worked in manufacturing for more than 15 years. He started on the plant floor, then went into supervisory work, followed by engineering.

His hobbies include softball, bowling and golf.

Course left off OCC catalog

A morning World Religions class is being offered at Oakland Community College during the Summer II session. This course was inadvertently omitted from the published catalog. The registration code for the eight-week course, which begins July 1, is 003975. Touchstone registration is currently underway. Call (248) 341-2345.

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