

Family, friends supply guilt for alcoholics

By Sharon Dargay
staff writer

"I was intervened by my wife and two children, my mother and father, a brother-in-law, two close friends and their wives. After listening to each say what they had to say about me and my drinking, I felt guilt. But it dawned on me how lucky I was to have a family and friends with concern and overwhelming love for me."

The anonymous writer, now a recovering alcoholic, was a quiet lamb as he listened to family and friends expose his habitual drinking during an "intervention" session at Maplegrove Center in West Bloomfield.

The closely knit gathering was reminiscent of "This is Your Life," but with frank discussion supplanting saccharine memories.

One child recalled how he had fished Dad out of numerous bars or roused him from booze-fogged sleep over the years. Friends recounted their attempts to keep him from falling flat on the job. His wife, who had left him years before he started daily drinking, had returned for the session.

The outspoken, yet gentle accusations, jolted the man with a dose of brick-wall reality.

Initial numbness induced by the surprise confrontation melted, and shock gave way to genuine gratefulness. He decided to kick a longtime drinking habit, enrolling in Maplegrove's 28-day in-patient program.

THE SUCCESS story is one of many that Renee Gerger, intervention specialist at Henry Ford Hospital's Maplegrove substance abuse center, says underscores the need for a strategy-oriented kind of "intervention."

Intervention isn't new. It happens whenever a family member, friend or acquaintance attempts to convince a substance abuser to "get help." Its form may range from a family argument to a threat, or straight-forward discussion. Often it doesn't work because families are too embarrassed to admit a member is abusing alcohol or drugs. They're afraid to breach the subject, fearing it may "hurt" or anger the abuser.

"I use the analogy that it's like tossing a pin into the ocean and saying go dive for it, when you say to someone 'go get help' for your problem," Gerger explained. "Families must know that intervention can be a way of saving someone's life. I see it as a very loving thing to do."

GERGER developed, from scratch, Maplegrove's nine-hour intervention program two years ago, polishing a "catch as catch can" service into a structured, yet individualized program. It's designed to help families, close friends, clergy and sometimes co-workers of drug and alcohol abusers, learn about substance addiction and master techniques needed to confront the abuser.

The process costs approximately \$500 and includes some six hours of counseling, drug-related education and role-playing, with participants memorizing their confrontation statements like lines from a play. The statements are a combination of fact and personal observation, designed to expose the abuser's addiction.

The confrontation ideally occurs at Maplegrove, although Gerger and her assistants have tracked abusers down at hotels and other locations.

SURPRISE is an important element of the process. One of the participants generally asks the abuser to attend a family counseling session on behalf of another family member or close friend. Upon arrival at Maplegrove, the tables turn. The confrontation may last anywhere from 20 minutes to hours, depending on the abuser's response.

Gerger, a Southfield resident, said most participants gird themselves for a verbal battle, but explosive scenes rarely occur.

"It's in no way punishment," she stressed, adding, "very few (patients) who walk through the front door are singing joyously."

A ROOM in the facility awaits the patient. Sometimes, because of job responsibilities or other restrictions, the abuser may be enrolled in intensive out-patient care at the Henry Ford Troy facility.

Gerger said about 90 percent of the abusers seek treatment after the confrontation. A survey among patients also showed that anger toward family members generally subsided within two weeks.

Gerger contends that even resistant patients benefit from learning about their addictive disease. And abusers who stubbornly refuse help must consider potential changes in their previously comfortable network of family and friends.

When one man told his wife that he would consider visiting a divorce attorney if she continued to refuse treatment, the woman "stood up, put her hands on her hips and said, 'well, why didn't you say that in the first place?'"



Henry Ford Hospital's Renee Gerger: "I use the analogy that it's (intervention is) like tossing a pin into the ocean and saying go dive for it, when you say to someone 'go get help' for your problem. Families must know that intervention can be a way of saving someone's life. I see it as a very loving thing to do."

Drug treatment offered to teens

Henry Ford Hospital will open a new medical center, called the Maplegrove Youth Treatment Center, on Monday, Feb. 4 in West Bloomfield.

It will offer the first program for intensive day treatment of chemically dependent adolescents in Michigan. The opening falls on the fourth anniversary of West Bloomfield's Maplegrove facility, a residential center which has helped more than 2,000 adults recover from dependence on drugs and alcohol.

The youth facility already is scheduled for evaluation, and is scheduled to open. It will treat young people, ages 12-17, who are "abusing or moderately

dependent on drugs or alcohol," according to the center's program manager, Janice Cotter-Leacock of Ann Arbor.

EVERYONE IS welcome to a dedication program at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. The program is called "Drug-free youth — a vital resource for the family and community."

Guest speakers will be Dennis Wholey and Abigail Healy. Wholey is the host of the nationally broadcast "Late Night America" show which is produced at Channel 56. He is the author of the recently published book, "The Courage to Change," which deals with recovery from chemical dependency.

Healy is the liaison for alcohol issues for the Drug Abuse Policy Office of The White House. She recently was appointed chair of the American Bar Association's commission on Youth, Alcohol and Drug Problems.

Admission is free, but phone reservation is suggested by calling 661-6100. An open house and tours of the center will follow. The center is at 8773 W. Maple Road, 3 1/2 miles west of Orchard Lake Road.

THE 18-WEEK program of the Maplegrove Youth Treatment Center begins with a two-week residential. The next four weeks features the young

person spending the entire day at the center and returning home for nights and weekends. During this time, education will be provided at the center. For the first three months after the teen re-enters school, he/she will continue after-school involvement at the center.

"You might call the new center for teens the brainchild of the adult center," said Thomas Groth, administrative director of operations for Henry Ford Hospital's chemical dependency treatment programs. He explained that family involvement is a requirement for admission to the adult program.

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memory lane

MEMORIES, MEMORIES have we got the memories. And we'd like to share them with you. Using local newspaper files, we're dishing up slices of life in the Farmington community from 40, 30, 20 and 10 years ago.

JAN. 18, 1945

"OUR PLACE today is right beside our men in uniform," said an item in the Around the Block column on the front page of the Farmington Enterprise. "Let's remember that in the days ahead, and when we're tempted to do some extravagant, foolish thing, maybe we'll refrain from doing so. If you need to jog yourself up once in a while, just get out some of those letters and reread them — that should do it. We'd not want to trade places with a one of those boys, so let's do what we can to get them back here where they belong."

ESTHER BOYNTON, a longtime Farmington resident, passed away Jan. 15 — two days after her 92nd birthday. Born in New York State in 1853, she taught English at Detroit Central High School for more than 30 years. She moved to Farmington after retiring in 1914.

"DON'T SNUB your grocer," pleaded an advertisement for Hamlin's Market in Farmington. "He's doing his best. Every store has a limited supply due to the effort for victory."

LOIS GOERS, a Farmington High School senior, will represent her school in a good citizen contest sponsored by the Three Flags Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Four qualities — dependability, service, leadership and patriotism — were used to judge the candidates for the award. Other candidates were Pauline Early, Jayce Samuelson, Marion Rowland, Sue Goodrich and Marion Vanderburg.

SHORT ITEM: "Green stems of young onions will flavor soups and stews."

CLASSIFIED AD: "RED FOX skins bought at top market prices. Guntsville Taxidermy, corner 10 Mile and Taft Rds., Northville, Mich."

JAN. 13, 1955 —

LLOYD SMITH received the Farmington Junior Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award for 1954. Jaycee President Robert Clarke presented the award during a banquet held at Himmelsbach's Dining Room. Smith was the director of instructional music for the Farmington Public Schools and debate coach at Farmington High School.

AN APPLICATION for a permit to construct a shopping center on the west side of Orchard Lake Road south of 10 Mile Road was filed with the city building inspector. Plans called for eight stores, including a large National supermarket.

JOHN CLAPPISON was re-elected president of the Farmington Little League for the 1955 season at a meeting held in the Ten Mile Road School.

Other 1955 officers included William Parsons, vice president; W.P. Wood, secretary; Harry Lapham, treasurer.

AROUND THE BLOCK item: "If you're planning a tour of the side roads in the Farmington area, we would suggest you install heavy duty springs in the family car and add a couple of pillows for good measure. If this is too much trouble, you had better take it in low gear and creep through gently. The combination of freezing and thawing weather, plus increased truck and car traffic, has made the way mighty rough to say the least. The roads in the Clarenceville area north of Grand River, Powers Road between Shiawassee and 10 Mile, and some of the streets in the Floral Park section of the city should be taken with considerable ease. Don't say we didn't warn you."

FARMINGTON HIGH moved into a four-way tie at the top of the Inter Lakes League basketball standings by beating Waterford, 66-42.

JAN. 13, 1965 —

A WHOPPING growth of 30.8 percent in population was recorded by Farmington, while a more modest 19.9 percent hike was the pace in Farmington Township, according to figures released by the Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, which issued a report on population shifts in the Detroit area.

TOM NOLAN of Farmington Township was appointed director of the Farmington Republican Party. He replaced Byron Walter.

FARMINGTON MAYOR Robert H. Lindbert became the 1965 president of the Huron River Hunting and Fishing Club. The 1964 president was Robert H. Kennedy.

MIKE WILSON scored 21 points to help Farmington High beat Waterford 78-70 in prep basketball. Tom Taggart added nine points for coach Jack Quigley's Falcons.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP policemen on horseback? That was the idea when the trustees authorized the creation of a mounted police force for the township. Some 16 horses were available for duty, and 16 men volunteered to ride them.

The announcement caused some snickering by the spectators at the Board meeting, "said an article in the Farmington Observer. "The horses would be used for ceremonial purposes and for entertainment. But they would also be used to quiet disorders, and to search for missing people in wooded areas."

JAN. 13, 1975 —

A FAMILY of 10 escaped injury after an early-morning fire gutted part of their home on Power Road. Children, sleeping in the basement of the two-story home, were awakened by smoke and alerted the rest of the family, police said. Some 30 firefighters fought the blaze for two hours.



DALVIN KLEIN
INTERVIEW
COLLECTOR
JANUARY 29 IN THE
EASTLAND OVAL
ROOM IN THE
WOODWARD
SHOPS™ INFORMAL
MODELING FROM 11
TO 3.