



The Oil Can

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When one of us recovers from addiction...

Everyone Benefits

Everyone does benefit from the work of FOR-DO, an acronym that stands for "Friends of Recovery — Delaware-Otsego."

"Addiction is a universal problem in this country," Gary Russo began. "But people can and do recover from addictions. The addicted can be restored to sanity and usefulness." And, when addiction people recover, the lives of their families, friends and neighbor are improved as well.

Gary Russo, FOR-DO's executive director since January 1st of this year has been in recovery since 1986 and remains an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Gary holds a masters degree in Addictions



Counseling from Grand Canyon University and has 20 years of experience in advertising and marketing sales management. "Helping those with substance abuse disorders is my lifelong dream," he added.

Jeanette Tolson, also a FOR-DO staff member, is a New York State licensed Master Social Worker (MSW) and a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC). Jeanette joined the FOR-DO staff in April this year with more than four years' experience in the addiction field. Jeanette works directly with recovering addicts to support and facilitate their progress toward sobriety. "We honor the choices they make about their own recovery process," Jeanette said. "And we advocate for them along the journey."

That journey from addiction to a stable recovery can take years. While their recovery is in progress, life goes on. Many addicted persons are employed and are raising families while pursuing recovery. Stress can and does lead to relapse. FOR-DO aims to reduce the risk of relapse by supporting those on the path to recovery in a variety of ways. FOR-DO provides peer-based support, life skills education, social out-lets, informational resources and centers for mutual support meetings.

FOR-DO operates two centers — the Turning Point-Oneonta opened in 2007 and the Turning Point-Delhi, which opened this year. Programs at the Turning Point-Oneonta include weekly recovery-friendly yoga classes, recovery coach training, telephone recovery support, childcare for those children whose parents are attending 12-step or other gatherings, recovery rallies and monthly recovery dinners.

A four-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the economic driving force that currently sustains FOR-DO's operations in the two counties. "Our goal is to provide services to more than 800 adults and create recovery friendly communities in both counties," Jeanette said. It's federal dollars that are well-spent. "Substance abuse alone costs our nation more than \$484 billion annually," Gary said. "That's more than diabetes and cancer combined."

Tom Heitz, editor

Friends of Recovery — Delaware-Otsego (FOR-DO) executives Jeanette Tolson (left) and Gary Russo (right) were at Rotary last Tuesday to share their work in support of those recovering from addictions.