

Budget: \$1.2 Million
Paid staff: 8
Established: 1993
Service strategies: Twelve-step counseling; women's residential treatment and mentoring; prisoner re-entry and job placement



No more revolving door: Women addicts regain lives

Mesa, AZ

A pretty, middle class girl, Chris was literally pulled from the gutter after being hit by a car, just one consequence of a lifestyle that was destroying her.

Chris was addicted to heroine and cocaine, and was losing everything in the process. "I would take drugs to control my experiences," she said, "but eventually I found myself looking up to see the sidewalk."

Salvaging the lives of addicts and repositioning former prisoners for success, WINR serves 230 women each year, employing 99 percent and restoring 70 percent of graduates to healthy, sober lives.

Typical of those who cycle in and out of therapy, Chris had failed countless treatment programs. She knew how to play the game, to say the right words to get herself off the street and into a warm bed. Once cleaned up and revived, she always returned to her first love, drugs.

"She had become a parasite," said Women in New Recovery (WINR) Executive Director Patricia Henderson, who picked Chris up, high on drugs and laying on the side of the road. "She was living off a system designed to help her. But no recovery program works until the addict is ready."

"It was years before I realized that charm and personality are not recovery," said Chris. "What I needed was real change."

More than 10 years ago Chris came to WINR as an addict. During recovery

she became Henderson's driver. Today she is director of WINR's alternative living program.

Chris, like nearly 70 percent of addicts who complete this unrivaled WINR program remain clean and sober.

"That's what makes WINR so different," said Henderson. "We don't toss out unprepared individuals to fend for themselves. Women are welcome to stay as long as they need to, to make a long-term recovery."

Women in New Recovery began in 1993 when Henderson, herself a former alcoholic and addict, left the corporate world to share her experience and hope with other women. At the time there was virtually no residential care available for women or women with children living on the streets or in un-supportive environments.

One of the most smartly-conceived agencies in the social services world, WINR has served over 3,500 women largely supported by service fees. The residential property is maintained by the residents.

Successful treatment plan. In residential programs run by recovered addicts and alcoholics, WINR serves nearly 230 women each year, 65% coming directly from prison, jailed for substance-abuse related crimes.

Staff and peers love them through the withdrawal process, provide emotional support and belonging, mentor using a 12-step program, and teach the life skills necessary for a successful return to society.

Women move from a seven-month core program into transitional phases as described in the text box on page 2, including programming tailored to mothers with children and the mentally ill, and incorporating work, community service and peer-to-peer mentoring.

During their residency women receive a vocational assessment and are given job placement assistance, along with budgeting courses, credit repair, and home-buying resources. At pro-



Client-turned-staff (L to R) Brenda, Chris and Lea.

gram completion, 99% are gainfully employed.

Moms and "meth." Until recently, women generally struggled with alcohol, heroin, marijuana, or crack addiction. Today, however, 8 out

of 10 WINR residents are addicted to methamphetamine. Meth, once considered the drug of “burnouts,” is now used by suburban soccer moms, corporate wives, and single mothers.

Today’s woman, faced with an impossible social ideal, is expected to juggle a job, kids and home, be the family’s emotional anchor, and look like a rail-thin movie star. Many feel compelled to be all and do all.

To boost energy and feel more capable of meeting these demands, many moms turn to “meth.” Also known as crank, ice, or speed, it is a highly addictive stimulant that produces an energy-driven euphoria that can make busy moms think they can achieve it all.

That was the case for Melissa, a recovering meth addict and mother of four, who now works full-time as a case manager for Arizona’s Department of Economic Security. Melissa started using meth because “it made her feel good,” she said. She

No. served annually: 230
Ethnicity: 75% Caucasian, 16% Latino, 6% Native American, 3% African-American
Volunteers: 50 alumni
Audits: Available upon request
Programs: **Primary Program.** For seven months women attend daily 12-step meetings, weekly sponsor meetings, and maintain employment while residing on campus.

Transitional Program. A two-month follow-up program when residents begin to return to society. They are allowed to date, pursue careers and must volunteer in the community.

WINR & Kids. A program in which women committed to sobriety reunite with their children in a home-like environment. Emphasizes skills in balancing recovery, children and work.

Alternative Living. Up to 60 women who have completed the primary program pair up in a buddy system for this transition phase, living in one of six homes within two miles of the WINR campus.

WINR Achievers. Permanent housing is available for eight individuals diagnosed with both substance abuse and mental illness. Special job assessment and case management is provided to guide participants to self-sufficiency.

Our Common Welfare. Peer-to-peer support services funded by a \$325K grant from the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that assist individuals re-entering society and contribute to long-term recovery.



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until they are ready to return to their families and society as strong, contributing members.

Patricia Henderson knows more women need the stability and recovery WINR provides. She welcomes new financial partners with the vision to reach more women by increasing WINR’s residential capacity.

“Arizona can do more to create effective, positive outcomes within this high-needs population,” Henderson said.



thought it would help her “raise the kids and clean the house.” Fueled by meth, she could do more, faster.

Once she was addicted, however, her life quickly disintegrated. Hope-

less, having lost kids, family and home, Melissa checked into Women in New Recovery, where she was surrounded by a new circle of friends.

After 16 months, Melissa was clean, confident and ready to begin again. Having learned how to function without drugs, she regained custody of her children and her place in the community.

WINR is a full-service program that works. Participants transition slowly, developing self-esteem and life-skills

