



MOMENTUM

NEWLETTER

O K C
M e t r o
Alliance, Inc.

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From the Director's Desk

By Ann Simank, LCSW
Executive Director

When we think of the holidays, we think of a time for celebration and love, a time for sharing memories, making new ones, and building hopes for a new and better year to come. However, for many who are facing addiction or substance abuse issues, the holidays can be a difficult time. Often alone as family and friends are unable to cope with their loved one's dependency on substances, and even in some situations, jobless and home-

less, they come to Firststep for a chance at recovery. Firststep is a work recovery program focusing on the individual, helping them to develop their future as a clean and sober person who can re-enter society in a positive way. Today we have eighty-five men and thirty-eight women in our Firststep programs who are working hard to overcome addictions and return to a normal, productive life.

Recent statistics indicate that alcohol and drug abuse takes a huge toll in lost lives and is directly related to 33% of all suicides, 85% of all homicides, and 50% of all traffic fatalities in Oklahoma. Although these statistics are overwhelming, we make a difference at Firststep by offering services to those who want to take the path of recovery. Our Firststep programs are designed to give individuals renewed strength and confidence by helping them overcome substance abuse and return to their families with viable employment in the community. Remember, change is possible and we see it happen every day

at Firststep!

Thank you for all of your support of the Firststep Residential Work Recovery program for men and women and the Public Inebriate Alternative, a jail alternative for those who are inebriated. We look forward to another successful year in 2011 of serving our community and those who are in need of recovery.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Happy
HOLIDAYS

Dormitory Open House and Ribbon Cutting at Women's Firststep



Pictured: Councilmember Pete White, Vice Mayor Brian Walters, Ann Simank & Penny Tullis

A new 56-bed dormitory for Women's Firststep, 12511 S. Sooner Road, was dedicated on Sunday, November 21, 2010. The new dormitory was funded by numerous individual donations, corporate donations and private foundations. Board President Penny Tullis said "The new dormitory provides a safe and beautiful atmosphere for an additional 20 Oklahoma women who want to recover from substance abuse. This would not have been possible without the full support of the community and those who were so very generous with financial support of the project."

Vice Mayor Brian Walters read a Citation from the Mayor's office and participated in the ribbon cutting with City Councilman Pete White, Penny Tullis, President of the Board of Directors, Jimmy Durant, Board Vice President elect, Robert Dennis, Board Member and Roy Vinyard, Board Member. Ann Simank, Executive Director and Richard Hutton, former Executive Director also helped with the ribbon cutting. Punch and cake was served to all those attending. A special thanks to Debbie Kaczmarek, Administrator of the Women's program and her staff for their hard work in making this

event successful!

We would like to thank the following for their financial contributions to the dormitory:

FHL Bank Topeka
 BancFirst
 Inasmuch Foundation
 Sarkeys Foundation
 The Kerr Foundation
 OEC
 Kirkpatrick Family Fund
 Rusty Noble and the Bilby Foundation
 Rotary Club of South Oklahoma City, District 5750
 Individual Donors
 The Southern Hills Baptist Church



Pictured: Vice Mayor Brian Walters reading the citation.



Pictured: Ribbon cutting ceremony.



Pictured: Jerry Tullis

Board of Directors holds Strategic Planning Retreat

The Board of Director's held a Strategic Planning Retreat on November 5, 2010 at St. Luke's UMC in "The Mansion." Consultant Sandra Le Van, M.B.A. facilitated the retreat. Board roles and responsibilities were covered in the morning session and the afternoon session established future direction of the agency by defining clear goals and objectives. The Strategic Planning Retreat was made possible by a capacity building grant from the OKC Community Foundation.

§ Thank You So Much §

We would like to thank all of our friends in the community for your monetary gifts, in kind donations and job placements throughout the year. Your support is key to the long term success of OKC Metro Alliance, Inc. and its Firststep and PIA programs. We look forward to continuing the work of helping more Oklahomans recover their lives in the new year. We're excited that you've chosen to partner with us in that endeavor. If you'd like to offer your continued support or want to become acquainted with our organization, you can find more information at www.okcmetroalliance.com. Thank you and have a Happy Holiday!

The Women's Graduate Housing Program and its Legacy

The following is one woman's account of how the graduate housing program has enhanced her life.

"Through the graduate housing program I have been able to obtain a home, retain employment and continue my sobriety. The best thing of all is that I'll be getting custody of my children this month after not having them for the past two years."

"Instead of being sent back out into society after graduation, this program has given me the structure I need to stay clean and sober, have a safe place to live and the help and resources I needed to get my life back together."

S.J.

The graduate housing program is in partnership with The City of Oklahoma City and the OKC Housing Authority to help women who have graduated find housing in the community and to provide case management supportive services. Women in this program are employed and are re-establishing their lives with family and community.

Firststep Fast Facts

- Total clients served at Men's Firststep program in 2010: 264
- Total clients served at Firststep since inception: 6,520
- Graduation rates at Firststep are 33% which is higher than the national average of 20%
- Women's Firststep Greenhouse is open all year. Don't forget to purchase your winter plants. Call 794-2834 for more information.
- Ground has been broken for the new storm shelter at Men's Firststep. We are grateful to Mr. Rusty Noble and the Bilby Foundation for helping make this possible.

R.C.'s Story

My name is R.C., a moniker I took on the day I arrived at Firststep. Mainly because I was ready to leave behind everything about my old life, including my name. I was heavily addicted to cocaine, meth, marijuana and alcohol and had been for most of my life. My marriage had just ended and my life was at the lowest point it had ever been. To continue to use drugs and alcohol was a sure death sentence - one that I was pretty close to being ready to accept. Luckily for me, I found my way to Firststep, "a work recovery center," something I had never been through before. "Work recovery?" I thought. This doesn't sound good, but I was willing to give it a go. What I found was that the "work" aspect of this twelve step recovery program was what was going to save my life. Being given a job and entrusted with responsibilities really enhanced my life. In addition, the principles of AA, also offered at Firststep, was what my life needed. Forgotten virtues were

soon re-instilled and I began to feel as if a real and lasting recovery was now possible. I took advantage of all the recovery tools Firststep had to offer (AA meetings on site and out in the community, counseling with a Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor made available through Tri City Youth and Family Counseling Center, a small group with my peers, and the support and literary resources that were provided by the administrators). Since completing the program at Firststep, I now feel as if I can start my life over with renewed hope and confidence. Thank you Firststep for helping me to take that first step!

Ever Thankful,

R.C.

A Story of Restoration

When I came to Firststep I was a financially, spiritually, and emotionally broken. I didn't care about anything. I thought I was born to be the way I

was, an addict. I had lost touch with all reality. I felt there was no way out but I wanted a way out. God gives you what you need.

I was ordered to Firststep. I made a decision to turn it over and to do things the way they wanted me to. Yes, it was hard because I had done things my way for thirty-one years in active addiction. But with the structure of Firststep, I started to see things in a whole new light and things were beautiful. For the first time in a long time, the sky, flowers, birds were beautiful. I reconnected with my kids and grandkids. If not for this program this would not have happened. Some of the ladies will get it and some will not, depending on whether you are ready for change or not. I've learned responsibility, forgiveness, and I have learned to love again. I thank Firststep from the bottom of my heart.

M.H.

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Would you like to contribute to OKC Metro Alliance, Inc. and the Firststep Programs?

Financial Contributions

A cash or credit card gift is a simple and convenient way to make a charitable donation.

Please make checks and money orders payable to OKC Metro Alliance, Inc.

Our address is:

211 N. Walnut Avenue

Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Donate to our endowment

You can designate a check to OKC Metro Alliance, Inc. and our Firststep programs or you can visit our website at www.okcmetroalliance.com for a link to donate to our endowment fund at the OKC Community Foundation.

In Kind Donations

such as clothing, furniture, linens, cosmetics and personal hygiene products for our clients are always accepted and appreciated.

Reminder: All donations before Jan 1st are tax deductible for year 2010. Thank you for your continued support of our mission and programs.

OKC Metro Alliance, Inc. is a not for profit 501(c)3 corporation. As a not for profit agency, your donation helps us to achieve our mission to assist Oklahomans who want to recover from substance abuse.