

R.I.S.E. promotes recovery and expanded opportunities for people with mental illness, substance use, and dual diagnosis by employing a collaborative approach to advocacy, service, education and research.



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# Recovery Support Specialist Newsletter

Issue 32—June 2011



BethStoneking and Jeanne Bishop, CRSS at the VA Volunteer Awards Ceremony. Jeanne won an award for 10 years of service.

## The Mirror and the Crowbar

I was given two gifts today that have helped me fill a hole I've been dying to fill for over 20 years.

The Mirror was the gift of seeing myself through other peoples' eyes.

The Crowbar allowed me to pry my head out of my ass long enough to see that the hole was already filled.

I've always been a member of the group.

I held myself outside, while doing the best I could.

Jokes on me -- I'm the only one who thought I was outside.

-Jeanne Bishop

# In this Issue...

“The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it.”

- C.C. Scott

## Institute XXV Graduation

15 students graduate in Institute 25!

## Personal Stories of Hope, Empowerment and Gratitude

Graduates of institute 25 share their experiences.

## Advisory Committee

Julie Croteau, CRSS

Kathy Lewis, CRSS

John McElroy, CRSS

Dan Steffy

Patricia Porrás, CRSS , BHT

Beth C. Stoneking, PhD, MSW, CPRP - Publisher

Beverly McGuffin, MSN, RN, CPRP - Editor

Andrea Burke - Page Designer

## JOURNEY BACK TO HEALTH

**A**fter many years not working (and having numerous hospitalizations for bipolar mental illness and eating disorders), I was lucky enough to be discharged to the care of La Frontera Center and Vocational Rehabilitation in 2002. With their help and years volunteering and healing, I was lucky enough to be accepted into the 8th RSS Institute and graduated in the summer of 2006.



**Nadia Shivack, CRSS**

At the same time I learned my graphic novel called “Inside Out-Portrait of an Eating Disorder” was published by Simon & Schuster! Three months later I began work at Café 54 and three months after that got a part time job on the employment team at La Frontera under the wonderful supervision of Betty Seery (now at DKA). Two years later, I left to work at DIRECT Center for Independence; my long range goal to return to working with persons with all types of disabilities.

Now, nearly three jobs later with 5 years of experience since graduating from the RSS Institute, I have finally made my dream; to return to my original profession as an Occupational Therapist. I last worked as an Occupational Therapist in 1998 in Albuquerque, NM and on April 20, 2011, I began fulltime work as a staff OT at Health South Rehabilitation Hospital. My goal continues to be to get off SSDI and AHCCCS and it is in full view, 13 years after it all came crashing down!

I never could have made this journey back to health without the RSS Institute, all the love, support and hard work that went into its creation, the folks at CPSA, La Frontera, Voc Rehab, Café 54, my endless volunteer experiences, my dog, Lucy, the medications, NAMISA and zillions of other bits of love and help I received along the way from too many to count. Most of all from all those that have and continue to “pave the way” fighting for their own recovery each and every day in whatever manner, shape and form they can.

Muchisimas Gracias a Todos!

- Nadia Shivack, CRSS



## EMPOWERMENT VS POWER

I began to have hope and realized that it was possible for me to become an RSS when I could discuss non-linear recovery processes. I have looked to see how far I had come since “isolating” and discussing the differences between a supportive recovery environment versus a non-supportive recovery environment. This helped me to see I am on the right track and more aware of areas I need to improve. The discussion regarding power versus empowerment helped me understand more clearly how to empower myself rather than to take power and control. Listening to others expressing their perspectives added to an “ah-ha” moment, leading me to feel empowered. Also, understanding Dan is still coping successfully in spite of his mental health challenges and that Beth has relatives close to her who have challenges made me feel more secure and confident in myself and with the RSS training process. I’m looking forward and am grateful for the opportunity to experience growth and hope through future recovery.



Peggy Brown, RSS

-Peggy Brown, RSS

## FULL CIRCLE

The very first time I experienced hope was the moment Adam Galvin reached out to me, called me at a motel down near Miracle Mile and suggested I come to the halfway house he was managing.



Mike Reed, RSS

That was 2 days after I had been asked to leave a halfway house at Old Pueblo.

How ironic I now work for Old Pueblo. Adam called me on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, a Friday. I used for 2 more days (April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>). I checked into Compass Detox Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008. My sobriety date is April 7, 2008.

That was the turning point in my addiction. It was the first time someone had reached out to me. I had been through rehab numerous times before, always put up a good front, like I was doing well. People came to me for help and advice.

This was the first time I accepted help, was open to suggestions and was working with a sponsor. My sponsor, Chris, knew I had used a few times but didn’t drop me as a sponsor. His help got me through this difficult time and gave me hope for my future.

-Mike Reed, RSS





# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

**Top Row (left to right):**

Mike Reed

James Richardson

Jason Yoder

Geoffrey Kabat

**Middle Row (left to right):**

John Washburn

Carleen Raybould

Darryl Keys

Linda Vandenheuvel

Cindy Beckley

Peggy Brown

**Front Row (left to right):**

Shawna Whittaker

Janet Simmons

Andrea Shreeve

Janíce Marie Wilson

Eleonora Wright



Photo taken by Candy Eley, CPSA



**CRSS Panel**

**Top:**

John McElroy, COPE

Julie Croteau, Camp Wellness

**Bottom:**

Fred Ortega, LFCA

# Changing Habitual Thoughts



Jason Yoder, RSS

Ideas of suicide had been a part of my life since early adulthood. These thoughts were a form of coping; it was a way of knowing I would always have a way out.

When a neck injury limited my activities it became apparent that things could not get much worse than they were. A point had come when I either had to use my escape route or choose to become an agent of my own change. I was receiving counseling at the time and many of the observations that my therapist made were observations I had heard before, the most notable was the observation that I was overly critical of myself. I recognized that those thoughts were serving a sense of self loathing. Since I could no longer afford to use ideas of suicide to cope I became to challenge the self-statements that helped form the sense of self loathing. I started to think about how I would enjoy being a father and this, among other hopes, helps me find the strength to recognize and challenge the habitual thoughts of criticism. I know that I am a capable person and I am finding that I am able to do the very difficult work of changing habitual thoughts. This in itself serves as hope.

-Jason Yoder, RSS

# Gratitude



Cindy Beckley, RSS

On May 1, 2002, I drank until midnight. I had decided two days earlier to start life at forty as a person who was sober, clean, and non-smoking. I was scared witless that I was going to kill someone by drinking and driving.

I sat down beneath a large lamp post, acknowledged that I was too drunk to drive and that my heavy drinking had caused an enormous deficit in my first forty years. I prayed to god to help me lose the desire to drink. I was thinking that I could slowly reduce my craving and subsequently my drinking. I'd been on a binge of alcohol and drugs for a year.

God decided to end my compulsion immediately – something I hadn't even dared to pray for. I didn't have a "last drink" to commemorate the situation. I quit "cold turkey" and never had a desire to drink or drug again.

I was completely shocked by my change of mind, body and spirit. I spent the next fourteen days alone, but then I wandered into Alcoholics Anonymous on May 16 and found community, too. I found strong, welcoming support immediately. At the end of the month, I felt so convicted in my sobriety that I quit smoking as well.

I have never doubted or challenged God's decision. I have made daily prayers of gratitude to maintain or improve upon my sobriety. It has been the most important decision of my life.

-Cindy Beckley, RSS

The three of us have been called many things,  
but never before any of these until James  
Richardson came along!



# Word Search

i	r	o	u	a	c	t	i	v	i	t	y	v
e	g	c	h	a	l	l	e	n	g	e	t	j
n	v	e	d	u	t	i	t	a	r	g	i	o
g	n	i	d	n	a	t	s	r	e	d	n	u
n	i	g	t	r	e	w	o	p	m	e	u	r
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c	k	o	a	u	e	n	h	s	s	c	p	n
e	n	k	o	h	r	n	u	g	i	a	e	s
r	r	r	t	p	c	e	o	s	c	l	r	g

acceptance  
challenge  
empower  
help  
recovery

acknowledge  
change  
future  
journey  
supportive

activity  
community  
gratitude  
listening  
understanding

