

# HOPE ReNEWS

*In Every Journey There is Hope From End to End*

The Newsletter Published by Hope Renewals, Inc.

**Fall 2005**

## Foundation Update

**T**he theme of this newsletter is honesty.

I have a sneaking suspicion that “dishonesty” is really the topic. Either way, why is this commonly touted virtue so hard to achieve?

We expect honesty of our children, but we must admit that complete frankness is tough even for parents to achieve.

I think the challenge of honesty is first and foremost, not to lie to ourselves. We must accept that kids in treatment have huge hurdles to face. While being hopeful about the future, we need to stay realistic about the time frames and circumstances in which healing can take place. It may take years for our kids to find a firm footing. After they leave treatment they still may experiment with rules and boundaries. Their ups and downs didn't begin with the treatment process and they certainly won't end when our kids leave that sheltered environment.

It is easy to be honest about the progress of Hope ReNews. The bottom line is that donations are coming in and help is already reaching families in need.

*“The bottom line is that donations are coming in and help is already reaching families in need.”*

The support we have received has been significant. We are approaching our year anniversary and we have met our start-up goals. We have a strong board, our fundraising reflects broad support, and we have parents calling us to ask how

they can help. This is our third newsletter and we are now in the process of developing our website.

Still, as we are new, our financial need remains paramount. We hope you will consider a donation and give some thought to others whom we might approach for support. And we would

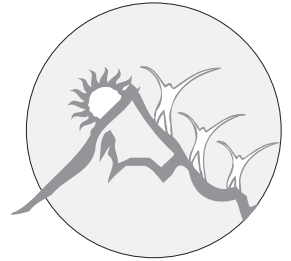
like more volunteers. Anyone interested in working with us should email me at [hoperenews@adelphia.com](mailto:hoperenews@adelphia.com) or write to the address given on the right.

Thank you all so much.

Sincerely,



Cathy Gilson  
President



### **Hope Renewals, Inc.**

is a non-profit organization established to:

- ▲ Provide partial scholarships for families committed to the therapeutic process who face financial challenges.
- ▲ Serve as a source of support and information for families with children in residential treatment.

### **For further information call:**

Cathy Gilson  
(310) 476-0258  
[Hoperenews@adelphia.net](mailto:Hoperenews@adelphia.net)

### **Contributions may be sent to:**

Hope Renewals, Inc.  
11611 San Vicente Blvd.,  
Suite 710  
Los Angeles, CA 90049

**Contributions are fully tax deductible.**

Tax ID # 20-1745035

### **Board of Directors**

Cathy Gilson, President  
Tracey O'Connell Sperry,  
Vice President &  
Treasurer  
Robert Seltzer, Secretary  
Patricia Oxman, Editor

*Views expressed in Hope ReNews are not necessarily those of Vista.*

# HOPE ReNEWS

*In Every Journey There is Hope From End to End*

The Newsletter Published by Hope Renewals, Inc.

**Fall 2005**

## Foundation Update

**T**he theme of this newsletter is honesty.

I have a sneaking suspicion that "dishonesty" is really the topic. Either way, why is this commonly touted virtue so hard to achieve?

We expect honesty of our children, but we must admit that complete frankness is tough even for parents to achieve.

I think the challenge of honesty is first and foremost, not to lie to ourselves. We must accept that kids in treatment have huge hurdles to face. While being hopeful about the future, we need to stay realistic about the time frames and circumstances in which healing can take place. It may take years for our kids to find a firm footing. After they leave treatment they still may experiment with rules and boundaries. Their ups and downs didn't begin with the treatment process and they certainly won't end when our kids leave that sheltered environment.

It is easy to be honest about the progress of Hope ReNews. The bottom line is that donations are coming in and help is already reaching families in need.

*"The bottom line is that donations are coming in and help is already reaching families in need."*

The support we have received has been significant. We are approaching our year anniversary and we have met our start-up goals. We have a strong board, our fundraising reflects broad support, and we have parents calling us to ask how

they can help. This is our third newsletter and we are now in the process of developing our website.

Still, as we are new, our financial need remains paramount. We hope you will consider a donation and give some thought to others whom we might approach for support. And we would

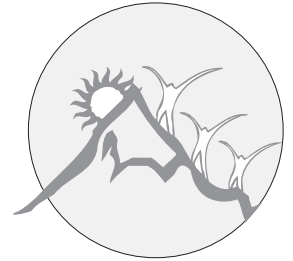
like more volunteers. Anyone interested in working with us should email me at [hoperenews@adelphia.com](mailto:hoperenews@adelphia.com) or write to the address given on the right.

Thank you all so much.

Sincerely,



Cathy Gilson  
President



### **Hope Renewals, Inc.**

is a non-profit organization established to:

- ▲ Provide partial scholarships for families committed to the therapeutic process who face financial challenges.
- ▲ Serve as a source of support and information for families with children in residential treatment.

### **For further information call:**

Cathy Gilson  
(310) 476-0258  
[Hoperenews@adelphia.net](mailto:Hoperenews@adelphia.net)

### **Contributions may be sent to:**

Hope Renewals, Inc.  
11611 San Vicente Blvd.,  
Suite 710  
Los Angeles, CA 90049

**Contributions are fully tax deductible.**

Tax ID # 20-1745035

### **Board of Directors**

Cathy Gilson, President  
Tracey O'Connell Sperry,  
Vice President &  
Treasurer  
Robert Seltzer, Secretary  
Patricia Oxman, Editor

*Views expressed in Hope ReNews are not necessarily those of Vista.*

# Parent's Point of View

Excerpt from: *What It Takes To Pull Me Through*

## Prologue

### *Summer Vacation*

The midnight curfew came and went. No car pulled up, no doors creaked open. Burns Chambliss called his daughter Mary Alice's cell phone. Still no answer. He left his wife, Lillian, asleep in the master bedroom of their vacation condominium in the mountains and paced the halls. For the second time in three days, he drank coffee, peering out the window for headlights.

Burns worked long hours at his Dallas business but made time for his four children. Lillian had quit her job as a dermatologist in order to spend more time at home. They'd given the kids the best of everything: private schools, riding lessons, family trips to Hawaii. Mary Alice was a natural athlete and Burns loved coaching her basketball team, taking her water-skiing, cheering her at gymnastics competitions.

As she finished middle school, though, Mary Alice became a foreigner in her own home. She treated her parents like an ATM; she'd tear in for a cash withdrawal, then vanish. When she didn't get her way, she'd pout and scream. Strange new friends called the house at strange hours, leaving strange messages.

Just after two in the morning, Burns walked downstairs, past a row of framed photos: Mary Alice snowboarding, Mary Alice soaring over a mogul, Mary Alice beaming from a pool like a little blonde angel. Precious Angel – that was her nickname when she was younger. Burns surveyed the chaos in her room. Mascara and lip gloss covered a bureau. Bathing suits, shorts, and tank tops spilled out of drawers. Burns sat amid the heaps of sheets and pillows on the unmade bed. He figured he'd close his eyes until Mary Alice arrived

and he could inform her of the latest development: She was grounded for the rest of the summer.

On the night table, he noticed a spiral notebook with a grinning Garfield on the cover. He picked it up. The rings were bent, the pages worn at the edges. The word "Confidential" was scribbled in marker on the cover. At sixteen, Mary Alice indiscriminately mixed capital and lowercase as she had since elementary school. She had kept diaries back then, too. Burns and Lillian occasionally sneaked a look, chuckling at the giddy tone she used in charting her crushes.

Burns flipped open the diary and read the first paragraph: "SANTE FE, NEW MEXICO. The ride here was 19 hours. I bought an ounce of weed and was high beyond my mind the whole time." Mary Alice had written this during a church trip early in the summer. She'd told her parents that the trip – a busload of teenagers touring the West and studying the Bible – had changed her life.

Burns kept reading. In La Jolla, California, Mary Alice wrote about sneaking away from the church group to get her tongue pierced. A day later she took out the stud because "I smoked and drank and it swelled a shitload." Over the next pages, Mary Alice mentioned using acid, cocaine, nitrous oxide, Ecstasy, painkillers, mushrooms, and more marijuana. Burns did the math: In just over a month, she had used seven kinds of drugs. She referred to trying something else, but she didn't even put down a word for it, just a jagged mark. It looked like a lightning bolt. Burns puzzled over that, trying to think what the mark signified: bolt...broken...crack. She had come

up with a symbol for crack. Burns's hands trembled. Mary Alice did crack. "But I will never do it again," she had resolved. "It isn't that great."

At Yosemite, she wrote about pretending to be sick so she could skip the youth group activities. She met a twenty-three-year-old mountain climber. "One thing led to another," she wrote, "and all my clothes were off."

Something began to churn inside Burns. It was raw mixture of rage and fear and guilt – he didn't know what to call it, but it was so intense that his heart pounded wildly. He felt dizzy. As he read, he lost count of how many sexual partners Mary Alice had during the month she'd kept the diary. Mary Alice herself couldn't keep track. Before taking the Western tour, she had spent a few days with her family at a beach resort. She remembered having sex with four guys during that time: "The gorgeous asshole/drug addict." "The cute jock," "The sweetie," "The innocent hottie." Then she realized she had overlooked another. "Ugghh! Regret that one. Fag! Rapist! Slut!"

Burns kept thinking one thing: They had failed. He stepped over the clothes and makeup on Mary Alice's floor and tiptoed to the bedrooms where the three younger children were sleeping. He looked in at each one. Then he went upstairs to wake his wife.

"Prologue: Summer Vacation",  
from *WHAT IT TAKES TO PULL ME  
THROUGH* by David L. Marcus.

© 2005 by David. Marcus.

Reprinted by permission of Houghton  
Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

# Conversation With A Therapist

Steve Sawyer, MSW, LCSW

## Core Issue: HONESTY

### *In Adolescent Therapeutic Development*

Adolescents who come to treatment are, without exception, pervasive liars. Lies are the silent partner of addicts and irresponsible behavior. Troubled youths and addicts are involved in behavior they don't want others to know about. They have a secret side that they hide from others by lying, covering up and manipulating.

Honesty makes us vulnerable. We have difficulty seeing how our needs will be met if we are not manipulative. We risk being a disappointment to others. We risk being seen in ways we don't want to be seen. We fear that if the truth is seen we will be abandoned. There will be no one to love us. These are some of the most powerful obstacles to honesty.

A critical factor to growth in treatment is being honest. The therapeutic demand is rigorous honesty, not the slippery attitude that society demonstrates. One of the challenges of an individual therapist is to provide a safe environment where one can become honest. Being more honest than what is role modeled in society is difficult for teens to conceptualize. Family, teachers, authority figures, and friends often seek the truth from adolescents. When the honest answer is given, teenagers often feel shamed by the response from adults. The truth is punished. However, just because we tell the truth does not mean we escape consequences.

Honesty is critical in healthy relationships. Troubled youth lie often in an effort to find belonging and significance. If lies are successful, one can never be sure what is real in the relationship. If I believe I must lie to you to have a relationship, what kind of relationship do I have if the lies

*“A critical factor to growth in treatment is being honest. The therapeutic demand is rigorous honesty, not the slippery attitude that society demonstrates.”*

work? Honesty can be risky in relationships. That's what makes it so scary but by facing the problems in relationships we create fertile ground for intimacy. Helping these troubled youths take risks with honesty and build relationships is one of the most rewarding aspects of the therapeutic experience. Honesty teaches them to trust others and, more importantly, to trust themselves. It helps them develop friendships and they learn how to let their parents love them again.

Troubled youths fear what they are. They often hold truths about themselves that are ugly and/or agonizing. When these adolescents begin to be honest it is as if a cancer was going into remission. The fact that others are allowed to see his flawed character and care enough to continue to provide help, teaches him how to care for himself and gives him courage to change.

A critical component to the process of being honest is taking it from the safe confines of individual therapy and making it work in the world at large. When a troubled teenager takes honesty to family therapy, it can create pain for the parents. Many of the adolescents have been hurting their parents with little to no empathy for months if not years prior to coming to treatment. As they begin to make positive efforts, empathy increases and they develop compassion for their

parents. When they share truthfully with their parents, the pain it often creates in parents is distressing to the adolescent. However, in the end the honesty creates relief. Family members learn how to live with each other more effectively and many times this allows for an emotional attachment that has long been lost.

As a therapist, I find nothing more rewarding than individuals looking at themselves in depth with the courage to change. I have found these experiences at times to be spiritual in nature. To be allowed into the depths of ones true self and to see what is there is an honor that uplifts me as well. Honesty is the road that takes us there.

#### Steve Sawyer, MSW, LCSW



Steve Sawyer has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Brigham Young University and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Utah.

Steve worked for 19 years as Director of Adolescent Services with Odyssey House of Utah. As a Primary Therapist at Vista, Steve provides youths the opportunity to explore and investigate issues troubling their hearts, and as a result, create healthier lifestyle choices.

# Life In The Real World

Interviews with recent Grads at various levels of Transition Program living\*

## STUDENT PROFILE

David is 18, a sophomore at the University of Utah and is in Phase Three of the Transition Program.

### When you were living at home and being reckless, did lying to your parents become easy?

**David:** Back then, I wasn't living with my parents because I got kicked out of the house. They would always call and check up on me. By that point I wasn't lying to them about using, but lying had become so ingrained in my relationship with my parents it really was a lot about other things. I would be honest and tell them that I was still smoking weed and drinking, but then when I would overdose or drink too much, it would get back them because I lived in a pretty small town. I would lie to them like, "Dad I think somebody must have slipped something in my drink." Really I had known that I had taken too many drugs, or eaten too many mushrooms. But back then pretty much any conversation that I had with my parents was full of lies.

### Do you remember how that felt?

**David:** I don't really think that I felt badly about anything. I do remember feeling really anxious and nervous about getting found out. It was kind of a thrill to lie, because I never knew when they were going to call me on it. My parents never really called me on my lies and I always thought that they would, so I would worry about what I had lied to them about and try to keep my stories straight.

### You have a better perspective now, what do you think it was like for them during that time?

**David:** It was probably really stressful for them because they knew that I wasn't doing very good. From the lies that I told them I bet that they were wanting to believe them so that they could feel better about me being safe.

### When you became involved with Vista and the therapeutic relationship with Lori, how did they create an environment where you were expected to be honest?

**David:** I would say mainly it was trial and error. I had lied to Lori and other people in the beginning of my Vista stay like I'm sure other people do, but really she made it an expectation to be honest. When I would lie, she wouldn't necessarily be mad at me but the consequences I would get from lying would be four times as bad as if I had told the truth. In the Vista environment, it is pretty hard to lie about things.

*"If I lie about a relapse, I'm pretty much screwed, because there is no way that I could get sober again by myself."*

### Is that the power of the peer group experience more than the individual therapeutic one?

**David:** It's both. I think you get a feeling of guilt, because everyone else is being honest about things that they don't want to be honest about. Everyone there has been through the same things you have and they're still being honest. Sometimes the therapists would just be good at reading you. For me they had a way of prying, like "So, what are you not telling us? What are you lying about?" I get anxious if I'm lying and I start saying to myself, "Do they know what I am lying about?" They just have their ways of bringing it out.

### Can you actually remember back to when things started to change slightly for you there and you found yourself speaking the truth?

**David:** Yes, I just remember when I was at Vista. I was being kind of quiet

and going with the rules. Doing what I was supposed to. You never wanted to talk because you knew that they can bring it out if you talked. But then after I stopped lying for a while and I was doing good, I got this sort of relaxed feeling, just like a calmness, and I was more sociable with my friends and my therapist. Just more happy overall, I guess. Cause when you're lying, it is really nerve racking.

### When you find yourself tempted to be less than honest now, what's that probably about?

**David:** It would either be that I was scared of consequences that I was going to get or I was scared how people were going to perceive me. But now that I have gone through all these things, I know what I know now. When I do something that I know Lori won't be happy about, I might think, "She doesn't need to find out. I could just not tell her and it would be fine." Right then, I'll just text her real quick – like, "Lori I did this and I'm just telling you so I won't lie to you later." It could be two in the morning and then she'll get it the next morning and say, "Thanks for telling me".

### What happens for you when you text her like that? Is it a relief and back to feeling relaxed or calm again?

**David:** Yes, because when I first start thinking about it and saying to myself that I don't have to tell her, I'll start getting like real sneaky thinking, a real anxious feeling and just feeling all slimy. Then I will text her real quick. If I was like, "I'll tell her later", when that later time came, I'd probably not tell her.

*DAVID continues on page 6*

\*The Transition Program, started in 2003, provides residential living for Vista graduates 18 years and older. Program participants are expected to pursue college classes, get a job and contribute service to the community while they continue with the therapy begun at Vista.

# Hope Renews, Inc Gratefully Acknowledges Our Supporters

*With Special Thanks to Glenn Schaeffer and Renee Schaeffer  
for their Generous Founding Donation*

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Adler	Mr. and Mrs. James Gilson	Mr. Joel Oxman
Mr. Rand April	The Kartoian Family Foundation	The Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Mr and Mrs. Donelson Berger	The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Matching Gifts Program	Mr. and Mrs. David Reamer
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Berger	The Kayne Foundation	Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Saggese
Mr. Ken Betts	Ms. Michelle LaVally and Mr. Kevin Gormican	Mr. and Mrs. Ian Schapiro
Mr. Duncan Brown and Ms. Janet Elliott	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Levin	Dr. and Mrs. John Sherman
Ms. Elizabeth Burguet	Mr. and Mrs. Vito Longo	Dr. and Mrs. Burt Sobelman
Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Coben	Ms. Alesia Ranney Marinelli	Mrs. Robin Sprietsma
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Cohen	Ms. Elaine McKinley and Ms. Kit Durgin	Ms. Laura Talmus and Mr. Everett Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Dasteel	Mr. and Mrs. Hal Moseley	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Werbin
Mr. and Mrs. John Elliott	Mr. and Mrs. Scott Newell	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Windebank
Mr. and Mrs. Evan Ellis	Mr. and Mrs. Brian O'Connell	Mr. and Mrs. Alen Zipperer
Mr. Davis Everett and Ms. Debra Loomis	Mr. Jeffrey O'Connell	Mr. and Mrs. Marty Zohn
Mrs. Barbara Gilson	Mr. George Olmstead	14 Anonymous Donations
The Gilson Family Foundation		

***Yes, we will help!***

**Enclosed is our 2005 contribution to Hope Renews, Inc.**

HOPE RENEWS, INC.  
11611 San Vicente Blvd., #710  
Los Angeles, CA 90049  
(310) 476-0258  
Hoperenews@adelphia.net

\$100     \$250     \$500     \$1,000     \$2,500     \$5,000     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed    **Made Payable to Hope Renews, Inc.**    OR    Charge my     Visa     MC

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my donation to be in the name of: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer my donation remains anonymous.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## WHEN HOPE EXISTS

To Members of Hope Renew's Board  
And Generous Donors,

We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your scholarship grant in support of Danielle's treatment. As you know, embarking on this journey presents many challenges. Help with this financial aspect has allowed us to focus on our family's well being. In addition to Danielle, we have two young children that have been part of Danielle's treatment. Support with this financial burden will benefit them as well.

We are so grateful for Vista, the Transition Program and now Hope Renew's. We intend to repay your generosity by continuing to grow as a family and someday being able to give back to the program. We hope more families will see their young people emerge from the programs able to live beyond their wildest dreams!

Our deepest gratitude.

Barbara & Frank Rossi  
and family

## DAVID

Continued from page 4

**Would you say that your parents have now learned to trust you? What's your relationship with them?**

**David:** I would totally say that. The first couple times that I went home they were really protective. They told me when to be home and asked where I was going and who with. They still kind of do that now. They ask what time I will be home and I'll say, "I don't know, we're probably going to be pretty late," and they are just like, "OK, that's fine I'll see you tomorrow, love you." And I'll come home at like 1:30 or 2:00 and they will be completely trusting of it.

**How does that feel for you to have come full circle with them about that?**

**David:** It feels really good, not just because I get to do things like stay out late or have fun with my friends. It's that they have tried to trust me so many times when I was just completely lying to them and now they are trying to trust me and I am being completely honest. We're both putting in the effort and we're both reaping the

benefits. I just feel good.

**How important would you say the whole honesty issue is to your sobriety?**

**David:** I would be willing to say that honesty really is the basis of my sobriety. Not because I am perfectly honest about things. I don't lie very often at all anymore but I do make mistakes and a lot of thinking errors do come up. I wouldn't say that I am totally honest, but I am honest enough to let people know when I lied and

*"I would be willing to say that honesty really is the basis of my sobriety."*

what is actually going on with me. I just figure if I get into a lying cycle and lie about something little, then a little bit bigger, then eventually if I relapse and lie about it, I'm not going to get help with it because no one will know. If I lie about a relapse, I'm pretty much screwed, because there is no way that I could get sober again by myself.

# Tools For Parents

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

The website for Hope Renew's is being developed and will soon be available as a new tool to link parents with valuable information. Visit us at [www.hope-renews.org](http://www.hope-renews.org)

A special thanks to Dave Grant, CT Web Factory, for helping us launch this project.

## SUGGESTED READING

*What It Takes To Pull Me Through: Why Teenagers Get in Trouble and How Four of Them Got Out*

David L. Marcus. Houghton Mifflin, 2005

*Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*

Dan Kindlon, Ph.D. and Michael Thompson, Ph.D.  
Ballantine Publishing Group, 2000

*Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*

Mary Pipher, Ph.D. Random House, 1994

*Angry All The Time; An Emergency Guide to Anger Control*

Ron Potter-Efron, MSW. New Harbinger, 1994.

*Helping Your Chemically Dependent Teenager Recover; A Guide for Parents and Other Concerned Adults*

Peter R. Cohen, MD. Hazelden Foundation, 1991.

*Parents, Teens and Boundaries*

Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. Health Communications, Inc., 1993.

*"As I've said before, I believe that when all is said and done, all you can do is to show up for someone in crisis, which seems so inadequate. But then when you do, it can radically change everything. Your there-ness, your stepping into a scared parent's line of vision, can be life giving, because often everyone else is in hiding."*

Anne Lamott, "Traveling Mercies"