

Issue #2 December 2008

 **WALDEN HOUSE** INC.  
*'Giving Hope-Changing Lives'*

SASCA III

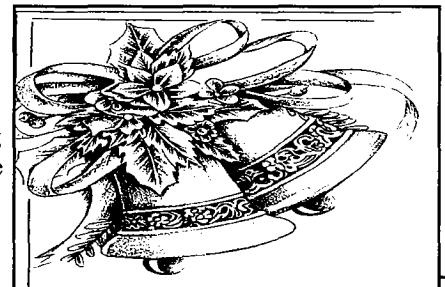
**Greetings from Mr. Thomas Powers, Director of DARS:** It is the time of year for giving thanks and self reflection. As we look back, it was a year ago that Governor Schwarzenegger elevated recovery services for inmates and parolees to a top priority for the CDCR. The Division of Addiction and Recovery Services (DARS) is tasked with oversight of over 200 staff, all working to provide treatment services to over 10,000 inmates and almost 6,000 parolees. Our latest task is meeting the benchmarks of AB 900 which requires activation of an additional 4,000 SAP and 2,000 community treatment slots. In the past year, continuing care has increased by 50 percent which is great news as research indicates that the return to prison rates for those completing a SAP, followed by 90 days or more of continuing care, are as low as 10 percent; far less than for those who don't. DARS encourages everyone to be optimistic while looking into the future and to take full advantage of all treatment opportunities.



***How do you make the best of what you learned inside?***

"I don't know anybody in the world that likes getting up and going to work. They get up and go to work because they need the money, they have a family. But being addicts, we're selfish. Because when we're out there we don't worry about anybody else but ourselves. But now, all of a sudden, we're not an addict anymore, and the baby is crying because it needs milk. We don't want to go to work, but if we don't go to work the baby's not gonna get milk, see,? So we gotta step up our game, just a little bit. Not for us, but for the baby.

"But you got guys that tell you, 'Ah, I don't know how to do that because all I know is hustling.' But they don't understand that you can't go from nothing and think you're gonna be a rocket scientist. Don't try to go do something that you're not gonna be good at. You gotta take what you can get. If you've been in San Quentin, Corcoran, Pelican Bay, Avenal, or in the High Desert prison, then there's one thing I know you know how to do: mop a floor. I know you also know how to do dishes. I put on my resume that I fed 5,000 people. My employer asks me where, I'll say San Quentin. That's right: San Quentin. And I did a good job. See, all of a sudden I got experience in the restaurant business. So when people say 'Well, I ain't never had no job,' I say, yes you have, and you did it for 19 cents a day. See what I'm saying? When you ask foreigners in San Francisco where they're from, they'll say Australia, or they'll say Germany. But they're not rich. Those people are just like the people that catch the bus or BART in San Francisco. But what they did was they got their ass up every day, and they went to work, and they saved their money, and they worked overtime, and now the reward is being able to come to San Francisco. Instead of blowing it all on dope, they paid for an airplane ticket, and a room that costs \$200 a day. And so what? Who cares? They earned it. How did they earn it? They got up, and went to work. *See that: they got up, and went to work.*" — Stanley C.



**EDITOR'S NOTE**— This issue of *The Positive* is dedicated to the strength of the holiday spirit. During this time, it is easier to recognize the good in the people around us, easier to find the courage to change, to recognize the meaning of family and friendship, to share of ourselves, to give to those less fortunate, and to appreciate the best memories of our childhood. Wishing you all a joyous, healthy, and prosperous New Year, your co-editors, Demetrius Andreas and Joe Loya.



"We can only appreciate the miracle of a sunrise if we have waited in the darkness"

**FROM THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS ON THE OUTSIDE**

**TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ON THE INSIDE**



“When in custody, there is always a battle in somebody about going back to what we know, and what we know only got us to prison. We need to look deep into ourselves, look for aftercare programs, and get tools in our lives to succeed. Before, all I knew was criminal thinking patterns.

“I would suggest you look into aftercare, so you can have the opportunity to learn to know yourself from deep within. Get the tools you need to deal with real life situations, like struggling to pay bills, find housing, people and places. What I learned in aftercare was how to communicate, because communication is so important. I learned about what I need, want, and especially how to feel, and more importantly, how to express myself.

“If I did not come to treatment, I would have stuck to the same negative thinking, and probably returned to prison. Now, I’m ready to complete my 1453 program, I’m in school full-time, and I receive financial aid. Upon my completion at Sharper Futures, I will be moving to an apartment with a roommate, where my name on the lease, which has also given me the opportunity to establish my credit. I didn’t know anything else, other than taking narcotics. Staying in treatment has given me the opportunity to change my life”.— **Veronica M.**

“I had the opportunity to get my life back in order at Amity Foundation. Treatment has offered me structure that was lost while I was using drugs, and going to Prison. I had distanced myself from my family. Coming to aftercare for my addiction, has given me a fighting chance to reunite my family. This is not easy, and although I get frustrated at times, and want instant gratification, I have to stop, sit back, let others do the driving, and accept change. That is when everything seems to fall right into place.”—**Charlie W.**



“Aftercare treatment has helped me with housing, educational goals, job readiness skills, and most importantly family reunification---I was able to get my 3 children to come live with me this December.

“I have registered at Cerritos City College, and I am enrolled in their Cosmetology program. The program scheduled me to meet with the Department of Rehabilitation, and they are going to fund my cosmetology classes, and public transportation to and from school.

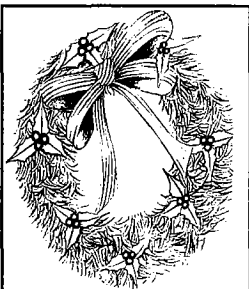
“My aftercare organization helped me mend relationships with my family, so now they are a great support system for me, and my children.” — **Dolores W.**

“I have spent the last fifteen years of my life in the Prison System, and have never done a SAP Program, or any kind of Recovery Program. So this last time I went to SAP, and I was picked up at the gate, and brought to the Fred Brown Program on March 23, 2008, Easter Sunday. I was tired of the drug use, doing time, and I came willing and open to change.

“In treatment I started to feel comfortable in my own skin, and realized there was more to life. The primary groups in the program changed my life. I had to write my autobiography, and I started to feel feelings I would normally stuff down. Because of drugs, I was in gangs, and went to prison. I now realize the drug use was only a symptom, and the problem was me.

“I graduated the program June 20, 2008, and in July I was made Primary House Manager, and employed at Fred Brown. This Fall I plan to enroll in school at Long Beach City College, and intend to begin classes in Drug and Alcohol Counseling. Treatment has taught me a new way of life, a new way to cope and learn, and to live life on life’s terms. I always tell the guys, “It’s Life or Death for me, and I choose LIFE.”

— **Philip T.**



**REMEMBER:**

There’s a **SASCA** in each of the four parole regions that will help you transition into the community with transportation, case management and placement. SASCA reps visit the SAPs on a regular basis. You can meet with them to discuss your individual plans. Also, there are FOTEP reps that visit each SAP to help participants enter into FOTEP, with or without their children for up to 15 months while working to reunify with their children and find employment. The contact information below will help you find the assistance you need when you are in the community, including getting into a FOTEP.

**SASCA REGIONAL CONTACTS**

**Reg I-** (559) 251-4800, ext. 250

**Reg II-** (415) 456-6655, ext. 47 and (415) 456-6655, ext. 22

**Reg III-** (213) 741-3713 and (213) 741-3737

**Reg IV-** (619) 294-8151, ext. 4001 and (619) 294-8151 ext 4000

**FOTEPs Regional Contacts**

**Reg I-** (559) 497-5823 or 233-04446

**Reg II-** (415) 217-3296

**Reg III-** Walden House (626) 258-0310

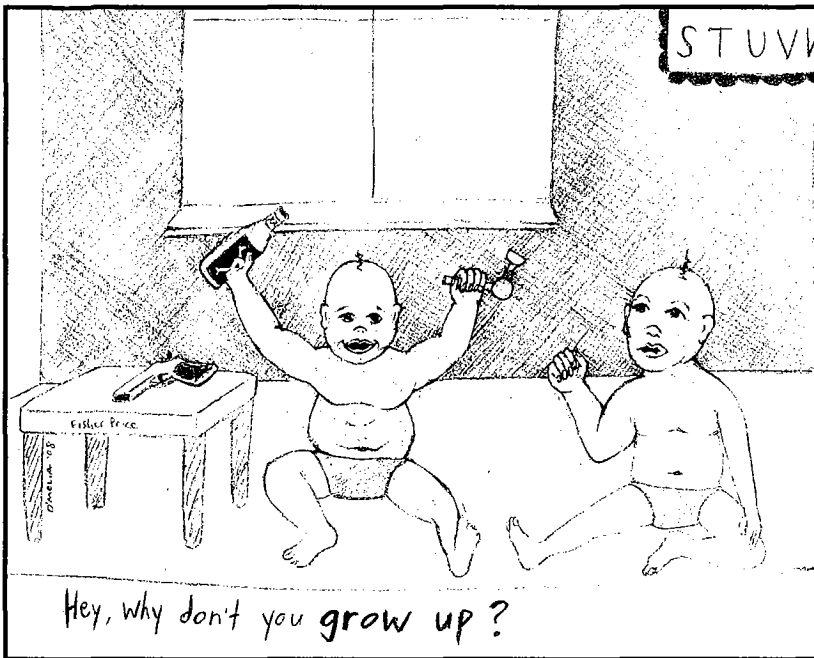
Phoenix House (562) 941-8042

PH Monrovia (626) 357-8612 x4372

**Reg IV-** (951) 845-0176 and

(619) 293-7754

“I have no regrets for the loneliness, for I have made friends with the night...”



**On being clean- Stanley figures it out:**

"I'm working on being clean. I have 8 months sobriety, but I don't have 5 minutes clean. And I'm gonna tell you why: I still make f....d up decisions. I'm still not honest. If you drop your wallet and I don't pick it up and give it to you, I'm not clean. I still got my sobriety, but I'm not clean. Being clean is having some morals, some principles, some ethics, things that you could say "I don't do that anymore." Things that you can say "I stand for." Because in "the game" you don't stand for s.....t. All you want is somebody to get over on. But when you get into the real world, responsibility is supposed to kick in.

"In meetings I hear stories about how a guy got his sobriety, how he got his home back, got his Benz back, got his life back. Those are good stories, but something that's better is when that person sits you down and tells you how he f....d up, how he relapsed, after 7 years. About the pressures that he had. How he didn't have a support group. So that when the pressure gets to you, you can remember what he said, and what he did, and where he ended up, and how he lost all his sobriety.

"That's why you have to raise your hand and you gotta ask somebody for help. Asking somebody for help is saying, "I need to trust you, because I got something to tell you, and I don't want nobody else to know. I gotta value your opinion, because you the one with the 25 years clean. I can't go to the guy that has four months sobriety, because he's just like me. I need to go to you.

"That's what's called having a sponsor. Because when you're f....d up, or you feel like f....ing up, you gotta have somebody there to guide you. It's like a blind man not having a seeing-eye dog. He doesn't know which way to go. That's how we are. We don't know which way to go, because we're in uncharted waters.

"But see, that's when the trust factor comes in. We're so busy not trusting ourselves, and not trusting everybody else, that we don't even trust the bank. Because deep in our head, we feel like using, and we want to have our money on us when we get ready to buy dope. This is why we can't put the \$500 in the bank. It's like the dope fiend that buys the Jordan shoes. Why doesn't he wear them out the store? Because deep in his mind he wants to get high and those shoes are collateral. He tells himself, "I can sell them when I run out of money." That's why he doesn't walk out of the store wearing his Jordan's. I never did. That's because I would eventually sell that \$150 pair of shoes for \$40. Does that make any sense? But people do it everyday. Everyday." —Stanley C

*(Editor's Note: Stanley is a SAP grad who completed a live-in program and began writing for an on-line website.)*

**JOE'S CORNER**

I believe that when we were infants we were innocent. As we grew into toddlers we wanted what was right and good and decent. We wanted to laugh and love, and mostly we wanted to be loved by our parents and family. We were noble in our tiny hearts, desiring to be honorable beings. But somewhere along the path of our childhood, things changed. A parent died. Or both did. A guardian maybe beat us. We got molested. People treated us badly. Bad things beyond our control sabotaged our innocence. So the compass in our souls that directs us toward the noble good got damaged and we lost our way. We began to act out, confused, angry, desperate, and eventually we turned dark and only full of ambition for behaving badly. And, surprisingly, we come to prison and pound our chests about respect and honor, even though we have showed an extreme lack of it for ourselves, in our own lives. So— why do we do this? I think it is because in every one of us we still hear a faint echo of our hidden away nobility crying to be unleashed again in this life. But we don't know how to return to a place of innocence to recover it, so we simply use the cheap terms "honor" and "respect" without ever embodying them ourselves. Well now it's time to revive that youthful nobility that still resides in your soul. Desire it. Reach deep inside for it. And most of all, fight for your honorable birthright with every courageous cell in your body. I want you to recapture your positive spirit. I did, after 9 years of my life in prison, and I can tell you right now that it sure was worth the tough fight.

**Joe Loya, Co-Editor**

*"I have no regrets for the shackles of deception, for I have broken through the walls of the prison of my mind..."*

*“I have no regrets, for life is born of struggle, And the will to survive!!”*



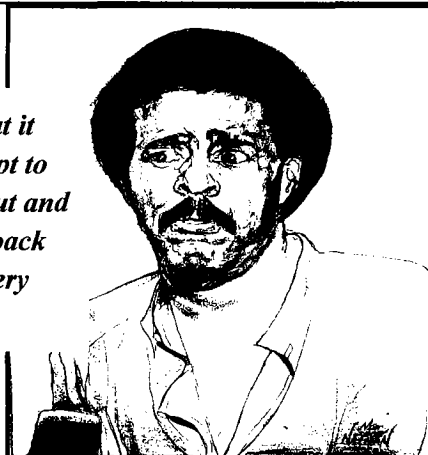
“I was overwhelmed with the guilt and embarrassment that I carried for the behaviors which caused me to end up in prison and away from my loved ones. Once I decided to come to F.O.T.E.P the only thing on my mind and in my heart was CHANGE, a change for the better. I’ve been here at the Walden House F.O.T.E.P at Treasure Island. I’ve participated in active processing and therapy. Through the groups and classes offered here I’ve learned so much about myself and gained so many tools to live a clean and sober life. I’ve learned how to identify my behaviors as well as to open the door and face life when it comes knocking. I now have a strong relationship with my children, family, and friends. Not to mention a magnificent extended family here at F.O.T.E.P. All this is only the beginning of what’s to come and I owe it all to the Walden House staff (both in & out of prison), their belief in me, and the belief I have in myself. Treatment is not the only thing I’ve attained through aftercare. I’ve also been able to transition into re-entry where resources to gain employment are unlimited. Aftercare is only the first step and has given me what I need to function as a productive member of society. So if there is one thing I can say to anyone about aftercare, it would be....JUST DO IT! IT WORKS! And although it may seem hard....please know that sometimes when one does what is hard, it can only get easier.” — **Suzie L.**



**On needing structure:** ..... “You understand what I’m saying? All of a sudden it’s a hit of crack, and then you’re running. If you do go to your parole officer you’ll be dirty and he’s gonna say, do this program here. But parolees say that they don’t like programs because they don’t like to have structure. They don’t want anybody telling them what to do. Well, what’s prison? There’s nowhere in society, that I know of, where you’re not gonna have somebody tell you what to do. See what I’m saying? So yeah, a treatment program will have rules. But all you gotta do is say that those rules are just like the laws on the other side of the fence. I gotta practice the rules. Because maybe I can do the laws because I’ve done the rules. And then I got to be responsible, like if I get a parking ticket- go tell my parole officer and make an effort to pay it. Maybe making a court date. And all this comes with a normal day, going to job interviews, going down and working the computer, from scratch, because remember, I don’t know anything. You see, I don’t know about no computer mouse, about click this, and click that. And it gets frustrating. But what I have to do is take time and do it, everyday. I have to do it every day, because I had a habit. I want that computer to be a habit, because my life is at stake, my livelihood is at stake.” — **Stanley C.**

*“I won’t talk about what it was like in prison, except to say that I’m glad I’m out and that I plan never to go back and to pay my taxes every day.”*

Quote by Richard Pryor  
Art by Joseph Nathan J.



**STATS & FACTS**

•Evaluation studies of prison-based TC programs in several states and within the federal prison system have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness at reducing recidivism and relapse to drug use, especially when combined with continued treatment in the community following release to parole. In one case, there were reductions of incarceration rates of more than 40% at 12 months and 50% at 24 months after release from prison for those completing the prison SAP and aftercare in the community.

**Submissions:** We welcome submissions of points of view, experiences, or a drawings. For more information, talk to staff.