

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment: Making a Difference in Arizona

Arizona's proximity to Mexico's border makes it susceptible to drug smuggling from Central and South America. Thus, it is not surprising that Arizona has adults and youth with significant substance abuse issues. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University study found that in March 2003, 80 percent of all offenders in the U.S. criminal justice system report having substance abuse problems. Arizona mimics these same statistics. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, drugs such as amphetamines and marijuana were the most common addictions of the people entering treatment facilities in Arizona during 2004. The need for drug treatment in state and local jails is evident.

In Arizona, federal Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) funds are used to help the state and local governments improve residential substance abuse treatment programs within the state and local correctional and detention facilities. RSAT also helps support community-based aftercare services for probationers and parolees.

During federal fiscal year 2005, state of Arizona funded the following 10 programs:

- Arizona Department of Corrections – Men in Recovery
- Arizona Department of Corrections – Women in Recovery
- Arizona Department of Corrections – Progressive Recovery
- Arizona Department of Corrections – Total Recovery
- Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections – Adobe Mountain School
- Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections – Catalina Mountain School
- Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections – Black Canyon School
- Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections – Aftercare Recovery
- Maricopa County Sheriff's Office – Alpha Program
- Maricopa County Sheriff's Office – Transitional Alpha Program

The success of Arizona's RSAT programs is evident. Arizona Department of Corrections (ADOC) and Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) residential programs operate 365 days a year. Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) residential programs operate 210 days per year. Since 1998, 3,433 (60%) offenders who entered Arizona's residential substance abuse treatment have successfully completed the programs. Of the offenders who completed the residential program in FFY2005, 90 percent have remained drug-free. While the offenders who completed the aftercare program in FFY2005, 92 percent remained drug-free and 94 percent remained arrest-free.

The success of Arizona's RSAT program is not only evident by the high success rate, but by the impact residential substance abuse treatment has on the offenders. ADOC reports that the majority of the offenders are now employed or in school full-time. Many expressed that the voluntary nature of the program contributed to their success by making them feel as though they chose to change their behavior and increased their commitment to recovery after treatment.

Statistics tell a partial story; data indicates a quantitative success. However, individual successes tell a human story. Following are narratives that describe how grant funds changed the lives of individuals who completed RSAT programs.

ALPHA PROGRAM GRADUATES SPEAK AT AWARD BANQUET

Each year, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Jail hosts a banquet to honor the contributions of hundreds of people who volunteer their time to enrich the lives of the inmates incarcerated in the county jail. Several former inmates who are graduates from the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment-funded Alpha program are invited back to speak to the volunteers and staff members who helped change their lives for the better. In addition, one year after graduation from the Alpha program, they are invited back to speak and offer advice to new graduates about the reward and challenges of life in recovery.



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Jail's Alpha program banquet.

VIETNAM VET FINDS HELP THROUGH THE ALPHA PROGRAM

Jeff's downward spiral into addiction began when he returned from combat in Vietnam. He was haunted by the horrors of combat and returned to an angry public. To make matters worse, Jeff was responsible for an accident that killed his best friend. His fiancé left him because of his drug addiction, but she told him to look her up after he had been drug-free for a year. Jeff's addictive lifestyle eventually landed him in the Maricopa County Jail where he enrolled in the Alpha program. While in the program, he was challenged to evaluate

his life and the decisions he had made. He graduated from the Alpha program in May 2003.

Eight years after his fiancé left him and one year clean and sober, Jeff called his ex-fiancé. They were married and are now celebrating their one-year anniversary. He spoke at the last Alpha program banquet. Jeff is working as a chef at the Veterans Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona.



Attendees enjoy Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Jail's Alpha program banquet.

YOUTH BEATS METHAMPHETAMINE ADDICTION AND BECOMES A PEER MENTOR

Jay was committed to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) in March and arrived to the Recovery drug treatment program in May. Jay has completed the majority of his treatment work and now is a peer mentor for groups and journaling. Prior to his ADJC commitment, Jay was smoking methamphetamine at least four or five times per day for several years. Jay's father also has a history of substance abuse. Jay would roam the streets at night committing burglaries and thefts to support his increasing methamphetamine habit. Jay was placed on probation when he was found incoherent on the roof of a house. He violated his probation on several occasions for testing positive on urinalysis tests and for failure to

complete substance abuse treatment. When Jay arrived to the Recovery program, he seemed hesitant to address his needs. He is now a model youth in the program. He has completed his seven challenges program and is a peer leader with the implementation of the New Freedom program.

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD FATHER LEARNS PRIORITIES AND VALUES IN RECOVERY PROGRAM

Izzy was convicted on drug and endangerment charges and committed to ADJC. He had been running the streets with gang members, using drugs, skipping school, and was never at home. Just prior to his incarceration, his girlfriend became pregnant. ADJC staff worked with him to sort out his priorities and values. He decided he wanted to turn his life around, finish high school, be a good father to his baby, and a good partner to his girlfriend. He graduated Recovery in 2005 and continues to live with his mother. Izzy is 16-years-old and is committed to finishing high school. He works in the family-run business, cleaning office buildings and residences. He also completed aftercare counseling with Touchstone (FFT). Izzy continues to be drug free. He is helping with the financial support of his four-month-old child. Izzy is also paying off all of his fines and court fees. His parole officer is in the process of completing the paperwork to give the youth an absolute discharge.

REHABILITATED YOUTH NOW VOLUNTEERS AT BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Jaime arrived at ADJC after being adjudicated on charges of drug possession, drugs at school, reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident, disorderly conduct, and simple assault. Jaime graduated the Recovery program in 2005. He has earned his GED and is currently in aftercare individual and family counseling. Jaime's parole officer and mother both report the counseling continues to be helpful. He continues to be drug free. He is planning to go to school to learn how to be an auto mechanic. Jaime volunteers at the boys and girls club in Tucson where his sister works.

These success stories are possible because of the federal funding that has been provided under the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment grant program. The proposed elimination of the RSAT program for FFY 2007 will dramatically impact the three Arizona institutions providing RSAT services. The lack of FFY 2004 funds resulted in a loss of 51 beds statewide. The reduction of federal funds in FFY2005 and 2006 will further reduce the number of RSAT beds available. Without the continued federal support, the future of these programs and the positive results stemming from the programs would not exist.