

What Now?

New transitional counseling offers help to young people in the time between assessment and treatment.

by Chris Allen

NCADA has long provided evaluation of adolescents for possible problems with alcohol and other drugs. Our counselors conduct these thorough assessments at no cost. If they determine there is a problem, they inform the teens and their caregivers of their options and, when necessary, offer referrals to area treatment providers.

But we've always felt we could do more to help these teens and their families, if only we could overcome some formidable hurdles.

For example, when we complete our evaluations, more than 95 percent of the adolescents who have a substance problem say they're willing to take positive action to address it.

But sometimes waiting lists, unexpected costs, transportation issues or other obstacles causes their motivation to wane. In some instances, a young person might be willing but a parent or caregiver might deny there was a problem. The end result was that relatively few of the teens who needed additional help actually got it.

NCADA believed that another approach could go a long way toward addressing this problem: a non-treatment option for our youngest clients and their families, an option they could use between the time they were first assessed and the time treatment became available to them or when they found their way back to healthier choices and greater success at school. We called it Transitional Counseling.

To make Transitional Counseling a reality, we scoured the country for evidence-based models of motivational enhancement, educational support and short-term counseling that we could adapt and deliver here in St. Louis.

NCADA then applied for two highly competitive innovation grants, one from the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund and the other from the Missouri Foundation for Health. Both funders recognized the value of our idea and granted our request for funding to make it possible. Consequently, we are proud to introduce this new, no cost, Transitional Counseling Program to teens and their caregivers throughout St. Louis City and County and the surrounding five counties in Eastern Missouri.

NCADA has always worked to assist teens and families as they deal with substance abuse issues and navigate the tumultuous waters of school, community and peer pressures. We are excited to finally be able to offer another level of support beyond assessment and referral.

We are grateful to the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund and the Missouri Foundation for Health for the support that is making this new program possible. Together, we're working to provide an answer to parents, school officials, and other members of our community who ask, "What now?" when a young

person encounters difficulty with substances. The answer: NCADA is once again the place to turn.

For more information about NCADA's Transitional Counseling Program contact Chris Allen at callen@ncada-stl.org or (314) 962-3456, ext. 336.



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Monday,
August
18th was
NCADA's
first day
in its new
home:

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY What Jane Knows

the Billy Building. In the last issue of this newsletter, I shared the remarkable story of Billy Kolen and why our new building carries his name.

When the staff arrived that first morning, we went to our new workstations and new offices and sat behind unfamiliar desks positioned in unfamiliar ways. And when we looked down, there was a white envelope on each of our computer keyboards with our names printed in simple letters on the outside. Inside, we found a folded card: It was conceived, designed, written, and edited – entirely on her own initiative – by Jane Young, our human resources manager.



Howard
Weissman
Executive Director

Opening the card, each NCADA employee, myself included, found these words:

There's work and there's your life's work.

*The kind of work that has your fingerprints all over it.**

The kind of work that changes lives.

Both yours and the people you serve.

We do that kind of work at NCADA.

We don't come here to sit on the sidelines.

We come here to swim in the deep end.

We want our work to add up to something.

*Something big. Something that couldn't happen anywhere else.**

Billy Kolen's work and life magnified that kind of passion.

He gave immensely. Then outdid himself, and gave some more.

His life added up to something. Something big.

In his name, we open the doors at 9355 Olive – The Billy Building.

It's where hope will start for many people.

Where addiction will stop.

It's work that couldn't happen anywhere else

But at NCADA.

*Passages in italics above were adapted from Apple Inc.'s welcome note to new employees.

Quite a note.

Jane didn't know Billy personally. She knew him only through what she had heard me say about him. Yet she took it upon herself to design the card, write those words, and then distribute one to each of her fellow employees. Jane never met Billy, but Jane *knew* Billy. She understood who he was, what he stood for, and how he can inspire us. And she found a way to share her understanding with us so that we, too, can take inspiration from his example.

It's true, of course, that merely moving to a new building does not magically deepen our commitment or improve our outcomes. But it's also true that taking stock of who we really are and why we work at NCADA reminds us of what it takes to make a difference.

With NCADA poised to mark a half-century of effort, we find ourselves in an environment of new challenges and we look for new sources of inspiration. So we have attached to our mission the name and face of a person who embodied



the passion and zeal we bring to that mission. And, as Jane saw so clearly, the very act of doing so reminds us that IT IS POSSIBLE to have an impact. IT IS POSSIBLE to improve people's lives. IT IS POSSIBLE to prevail against forces that seem larger and stronger than we are. IT IS POSSIBLE to change the course of a young person's life for the better.

The stress of the move was considerable. It caused great disruption and demanded much from our staff. Yet our people grumbled less than they had every right to and, instead, worked long, backbreaking hours to turn a sea of cardboard

into a functioning, efficient workplace. On that Monday morning, barely 60 hours after the last moving truck had pulled away, we could have found confusion and chaos. Instead, we found inspiration at our desks in Jane's note. It was one more example of how exceptional this team is.

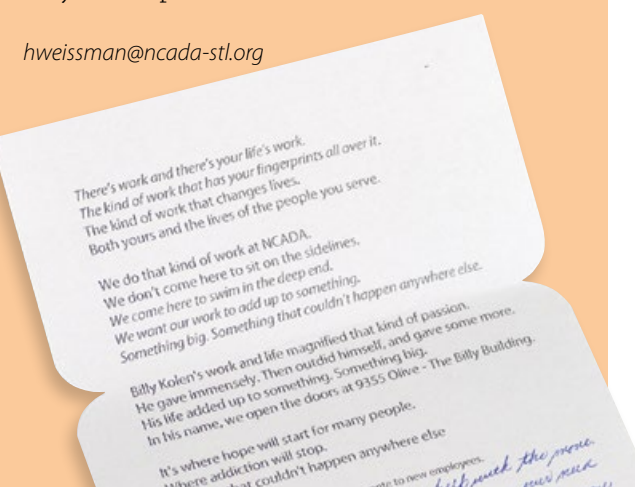
So we now work from the Billy Building. We remain fully engaged in our mission, just as Billy Kolen was engaged in his. When we pass his name on our way in, it's a small reminder of a huge truth: At this place, in this agency, we are all-in. Every single day, dedicated, talented individuals give their all to make a difference. We are all-in because that's what our work requires. We are all-in because that's what the people we serve – our families, our neighbors, our children, and our community – deserve.

NCADA's address has changed and, as we settle into our new home and face the future, we have a renewed sense of urgency. It used to be that those who worked to help people avoid or overcome addictions were marginalized and dismissed. Today, those who advocate the legalization of drugs feel compelled to try to vanquish us. This is, in fact, progress. Mohandas Gandhi put it this way: "First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, and then you win."

NCADA has moved into the Billy Building. We've unpacked our boxes and reorganized our materials. We are back in business, stronger than ever.

Every working day of his life, my friend, Billy Kolen, used all of his skills, talents and gifts to serve those in need and support the people with whom he worked. I'm proud to report that the people of NCADA, like Jane Young and so many of her agency colleagues, are following Billy's example. 

hweissman@ncada-stl.org



CALENDAR

(For Coalition On Addictions information see page 4)

October 8

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; St. Charles Public Library, 427 Spencer Rd., St. Peters, MO 63376

Learn how to provide initial help to young people experiencing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance use disorders. Register at ncada-stl.org or contact Danna Squires at (314) 962-3456.

October 17

Substance Abuse Awareness Day – Jefferson County

Drury Inn & Suites, 3800 State Rt. 141, Arnold, MO 63010

This one-day conference is presented by the Methamphetamine Action Coalition. To register visit methactioncoalition.org or contact Cassandra Miller at (636) 282-1010, ext. 268.

October 21

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132

See above for description and registration information.

November 7

Tobacco Training

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132

Join us for our yearly Tobacco Training. For registration details visit ncada-stl.org or contact Dana Squires at dsquires@ncada-stl.org or (314) 962-3456 by October 31.

November 18-19

2014 Substance Abuse Prevention Conference

Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, MO 65049

For details visit actmissouri.org.

December 5

Addiction & the Family Impact

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132

Enhance your understanding of addiction and its impact on individuals and families. Explore strategies for working with codependents and children of addicts/alcoholics. To register visit ncada-stl.org or contact Catie Myers at (314) 962-3456.

December 11

Ethics yoU

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132

Review codes of ethics. Complete a self assessment to examine your approach to ethical decision making. Practice applying ethic codes. For full details or to register visit ncada-stl.org or contact Catie Myers at (314) 962-3456.

January 28, 2015

NCADA Open House

8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132

Please save time to visit us in our new office.
Details coming soon.

COA Anticipates an Enhanced Role in the Addictions Community

In 1986, the St. Louis Coalition on Addictions started educating people interested in addiction disease and providing networking opportunities for professionals in the field. Recently, however, COA has become a victim of its own success. Meetings have drawn so many people that late arrivals had to stand in the aisles elbow-to-elbow with colleagues.

Facilities at NCADA's new building will correct those problems, thanks to a main conference room with three times the space of that in the old building and a sophisticated new audio-visual system.

This upgrade will permit COA to reach out to a wider audience – with an additional emphasis on college students – and expand its activities and influence in the St. Louis addictions community.

Meetings of the St. Louis Coalition on Addictions (an NCADA program) are held the second Wednesday of each month from noon to 1:00 at NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd. 63132, and are open to anyone interested in learning about addiction disease. A complimentary lunch is served. A certificate for one contact hour is available for \$3.00. Please check ncada-stl.org for meeting updates. 



The main conference room at 9355 Olive Blvd measures 60' x 34' – three times the size of the meeting area at NCADA's former office.

Upcoming COA Meetings and Speakers

Oct. 8 – Lori Zey, “The Changing World of Hepatitis C”

Nov. 12 – Stacey Langendoerfer, “The MSAPCB (Substance Abuse Credentialing in Missouri)”

Dec. 10 – Susan Taylor, “Women and Addiction – How Is It Different From Men?”

The Farm – A New Treatment Program for Adolescents

Twenty minutes north of St. Charles, nestled on 96 bucolic acres near Winfield, Mo., The Farm welcomes adolescents with substance abuse problems and treats their illness.

Recently opened by Bridgeway Behavioral Health, The Farm is a residential center using evidence-based psychiatric services, horse-assisted therapy, family programs, art therapy, school-credit opportunities and more to help young people deal with addiction.



Clients live on The Farm for a minimum of 60 days, take responsibility for assigned chores and participate in a structured therapeutic environment designed specifically for adolescents.

The Farm opened in August with residential space for 10 teenagers and is initially treating only young men. Bridgeway hopes to expand over time to a capacity of 40, women and men. An open house will be held October 10 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information about this program contact Chris Lewis at clewis@bridgewaybh.com or call (844) 224-2400. 



New PFH Young Adult Center Opens in St. Louis

Preferred Family Healthcare has opened a new 16-bed residential treatment facility for young adults in South St. Louis. Located at 4066 Dunnica Ave., The center will focus on individuals from ages 16 to 26.

An open house is scheduled for October 2, between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

For more information or to RSVP contact Kelly Bell at kbell@pfh.org. 

Xanax – Another Dangerous Drug?

Commentary by Dan Duncan

The abuse of prescribed opiates gets a lot of attention – justifiably – but another drug of concern needs to be brought into the prescription-drug conversation: Xanax (a brand name for alprazolam).

Xanax-related issues have been generating increasing numbers of calls to the NCADA counseling staff. Psychiatrists prescribe Xanax, which belongs to the benzodiazapene family, mainly to treat anxiety and panic disorders. The growth in its use has brought with it a commensurate increase of problems, specifically addiction.

Unfortunately, we seem to have a short memory when it comes to this class of drugs. In the early 1980s, Valium, another branded variant of benzodiazapene, was the most widely prescribed drug in the country. It was touted as effective in addressing a wide spectrum of issues associated with anxiety, depression, panic disorders, etc. But after a few years as the darling drug of doctors who treated these and other conditions, it became all too apparent that substantial numbers of people were developing a dependency on the drug. The medical field eventually backed away from it.

Despite that cautionary experience, Xanax seems to have become the Valium of today, even though it can be 10 to 20 times more potent – and more dangerous – than its predecessor.

At NCADA, we have heard from some individuals who use Xanax alone and some who combine it with other drugs. But combining Xanax with alcohol, for example, can increase the intensity of the panic attacks Xanax is intended to treat. And the synergistic effect of using two central nervous system depressants at the same time can be deadly.

Some people who are addicted to opiates also seem to be drawn to Xanax. In some instances, toxicology reports of people who have overdosed and died from opiate use also have revealed the presence of Xanax in their systems.

Dr. David Ohlms, a noted St. Louis psychiatrist, shares NCADA's concerns about this drug. “Xanax is the most overused tranquilizer in the world, highly addictive and very dangerous,” he said when we spoke recently. “I tell med students all the time, ‘Don’t ever prescribe this drug.’”

So, what now? We have to start including Xanax in our discussions of the danger of prescribed drugs leading to addictions. Those of us who work in the addictions field must sound an alarm that local physicians will understand as a reason to prescribe this drug much more sparingly than they do now – if at all. 

Dan Duncan is associate executive director of NCADA.
dduncan@ncada-stl.org

BULLETIN BOARD

Researchers Say E-Cigarettes May Increase Risk of Addiction to Cocaine and Other Drugs

E-cigarettes may increase the risk of addiction to cocaine and other drugs, nicotine researchers suggest in this week's New England Journal of Medicine.

While e-cigarettes eliminate some of the health risks associated with regular cigarettes, they are pure nicotine-delivery devices, with the same effects on the brain as cigarettes, according to the wife-husband research team Denise and Eric Kandel. They say e-cigarettes can serve as a “gateway drug,” making people more likely to use and become addicted to drugs.

In earlier research in mice, the Kandels found nicotine dramatically enhanced the effect of cocaine. Denise's research suggests nicotine may have a similar effect in humans. She found [...]the rate of cocaine dependence was highest among users who started using cocaine after having smoked cigarettes. Dependence was much lower among people who had begun using cocaine before they started smoking.

This is an excerpt from an article published on drugfree.org

Marijuana Withdrawal Symptoms Common in Teens Treated for Substance Use

A new study of teens treated at an outpatient substance abuse clinic found many showed symptoms of marijuana withdrawal.

Marijuana was the substance used most often by 90 of the 127 teens in the study, HealthDay reports. Of those teens, 84 percent were considered to be dependent on marijuana, and about 40 percent experienced symptoms of withdrawal when they stopped using marijuana—a sign of drug dependence, the authors said.

“As more people are able to obtain and consume cannabis legally for medical and, in some states, recreational use, people are less likely to perceive it as addictive or harmful,” study co-author John Kelly of Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Addiction Medicine, said in a hospital news release.” But research shows that cannabis use can have significant consequences, and we know that among adolescents it is second only to alcohol in rates of misuse.”

This is an excerpt from an article published on drugfree.org

Prevention Leadership Conference Draws 180 Teens

The 24th annual Prevention Leadership Conference held on July 31–August 1, drew 180 teens (and their adult sponsors) to the Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch. This year’s theme was Ride the Wave of Prevention, and the teens participated in a variety of beach-related activities designed to develop the confidence to resist peer pressure and to be an effective leader.

The conference featured a range of local and national speakers, as well as 28 educational breakout sessions. 🇺🇸



NCADA Golf Tournament 2014

On August 8, over 100 golfers converged on Tapawingo National Golf Club in Sunset Hills for NCADA’s 20th Annual Golf Tournament, presented by Seeger Toyota.



Kurt Andersen (left) and Aaron Pollard at the 2014 tournament.

Thanks to the efforts of the golf committee, and the generosity of sponsors, donors, and participants, this year’s tournament raised more than \$90,000 to support NCADA’s prevention programs.

This year’s guest speaker was Stacie Davis, who has been actively involved with NCADA’s leadership programs for three years. Stacie, now a senior at Incarnate Word Academy, spoke about the importance of prevention in her life and in the lives of other teenagers.

If you are interested in helping to plan for our 21st Annual Golf Tournament, please contact Lynda Wolpert at lwolpert@ncada-stl.org or (314) 962-3456, ext. 335. 🇺🇸

Golf Competition Winners:

Flight A: Judy Anthon, Michael Flynn, Patrick Flynn, Terry Flynn (54)

Flight B: Derek McClure, Dan McNamara, C.J. Strohm, Ed Tasch (67)

Putting Contest: Kurt Andersen

Closest to the Pin: Zach Ketner

Longest Drive (Male): John Kelly

Longest Drive (Female): Lynn Watkins

Counseling Staff Evolves and Expands

NCADA’s staff of counselors has grown to meet the challenge of the new transitional counseling program (*see page one*). Senior counselor, Bobette Figler, has been joined by Chris Allen and Myka Ornbau.

Chris holds a master’s degree in school counseling from Southeast Missouri State University, and previously served as an NCADA prevention specialist.

Myka hails from California and is a graduate of the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. 🇺🇸



Tributes & Contributions

June – August 2014

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