



Meta House

metamorphosis

Spring 2008

HEALTH MATTERS IN ADDICTION

Alcohol and other drug abuse set the stage for complex issues that pose unique threats to a woman's health. With more than 23,000 women in Milwaukee reportedly addicted to alcohol or other drugs, substance-related health issues also have a significant social and economic impact on our community. The use of emergency room visits during health crises is common for women with substance abuse disorders who often neglect their health for long periods of time and typically do not have access to primary health care or health insurance.

Women who abuse substances mostly use alcohol and other drugs to suppress emotional pain that stems from childhood sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse. As these substances temporarily medicate emotional pain, they can also mask physical pain, which starts to surface once women stop abusing substances and begin the recovery process. Health effects that are linked to substance use disorders include liver, respiratory and heart diseases.

Due to the unique differences in biological make-up, women are more likely to develop substance-related health problems faster than

men, according to the National Women's Health Resource Center. For example, alcohol-related liver damage develops faster in women because they have a smaller ratio of water to fat. Also, the enzyme that breaks down alcohol before it enters the bloodstream is less active in women.

One of the most common diseases associated with substance abuse and liver damage is Hepatitis C, which is caused by a virus that is transmitted through blood. Cirrhosis promotes dysfunction of the liver and is a long-term effect of Hepatitis C.

Another consequence of substance abuse is respiratory disease. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported long-term marijuana use has similar effects to tobacco use such as cigarette smoking. This leads to an increase risk of lung infections such as asthma, emphysema and lung cancer.

Hypertension, heart attacks and strokes are effects of heavy alcohol and drug use. For example, cocaine use causes a stimulation of the nervous system, which increases the heart rate and blood pressure and can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Comprehensive substance-abuse treatment centers for women, such as Meta House, recognize the strong connection between addiction and women's physical health. Meta House clients experience a range of health issues associated with their substance abuse.

To address these issues, Meta House has a staff nurse to assist women with various health concerns such as chronic pain, liver and respiratory diseases. The staff nurse provides pre-natal and post-partum care as well as infant health care. A primary role of the Meta House nurse is that of educator. The nurse provides proper health information to women and children who may not typically have access to it. Additionally, Meta House staff works with a team of human and health care providers to link women with appropriate community health care options.

By staying in recovery and maintaining proper nutrition and exercise, Meta House clients are able to improve their health status. The Meta House program helps women take control of their health and well-being, while understanding the connection between health and addiction.

Did you know that the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates the cost to society of illicit drug abuse at \$181 million? This includes health care, criminal activity, and lost productivity. Successful treatment and rehabilitation can help to significantly decrease these numbers.

META MOMENTS - JUNE 26, 12-1PM

To learn more about *Health Matters in Addiction*, join us for lunch on Thursday, June 26 from 12-1PM for *Meta Moments*. Hear, first hand, about the effects of substance abuse on women's health from the Meta House Staff Nurse and a graduate of the program. This free event will be held at the Meta House Residential Treatment Facility at 2626 N. Bremen Street in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood. An RSVP is appreciated, but walk-ins are welcome. Call 414-977-5807.



Meta House, Inc.
P.O. Box 11564
Milwaukee, WI 53211-0564



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meta Moments, June 26, 2008

HEALTH MATTERS IN ADDICTION

Thursday, June 26, 12-1PM

Meta House Residential Facility

2626 N. Bremen Street in Riverwest, Milwaukee

Meta Moments, August 28, 2008

WHY WOMEN ABUSE SUBSTANCES

Thursday, August 28, 12-1PM

Meta House Residential Facility

2626 N. Bremen Street in Riverwest, Milwaukee

A Day for Meta House Annual Fundraiser, Friday, December 5, 2008

FROM HOMELESS TO HOPEFUL:

FINDING REFUGE IN RECOVERY

Breakfast 8AM-9AM or Lunch 12PM-1PM

Call Wendy at 414-977-5807 for event details or
visit www.metahouse.org.

CURRENT WISH LIST

With warmer weather right around the corner, Meta House is in need of a few items to help keep us cool! **Window A/C Units** (Due to electrical constraints, units must be: 8,000 b.t.u.'s or less; plug into a regular outlet; and be no more than 5 years old.) **Fans** - box or stand-up, **Lawn Chairs** in good condition

Baby needs include: new infant car seats, baby bottles and nipples, Onesies (sizes 0-6 months), newborn diapers, bottle brushes, crib bedding & bumpers

Other high priority needs include: cleaning supplies, water pitchers, cups, bowls and silverware, pots & pans

META HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you Meta House Board of Directors!

President, Jennifer Bartolotta; President-Elect, Tonit Callaway; Treasurer, Kristen Beres; Secretary, Janice A. Rhodes; Ex-Officio, Anne Reed; At-Large, Pamela Mattox; Members: Brozine Brown, Bridget Carey-Ruffin, Nancy Joseph, Ann Navin, Victoria Pryor, Jane Rizzi Stromwall, Anna Sutton, and J.D. Watts.

Metamorphosis is written by Trish Davis.

metahouse.org

FROM META HOUSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRANCINE FEINBERG



It has been 45 years since Meta House first opened its doors with the mission of helping women reclaim their lives from the effects of substance abuse.

In 1963, when women who abused alcohol were sent to jail rather than to

treatment programs, Our Home Foundation, Inc. was born in Milwaukee when a home on State St. with room to help seven women recover from alcoholism was opened. As the house originally belonged to Mrs. Meta Orth, it quickly became known among its residents as "Meta's House." In the years since, the organization, named Meta House, has celebrated many accomplishments.

The growth of Meta House has been strong. In 1988, Meta House became one of the first substance abuse treatment centers in the country to allow children to stay with their mothers while in residential treatment. We now have beds for 33 women and 17 of their children. Our Meta Housing Program expanded from 12 to 28 apartments and we have doubled our Outpatient Treatment Program capacity.

With success comes challenges. Last year, we faced financial setbacks due to funding cuts by Milwaukee County. Instead of viewing this as an obstacle, we chose to develop a strategic plan which includes diversifying our funding streams. We also took the opportunity to build greater connections with the local community. We are grateful that a significant number of you reached out and helped us close this financial gap so that we could continue offering life changing services to families in Milwaukee.

Meta House continues to grow and change in direct response to the needs of the families that we serve. One of these changes witnessed over the years is the increasingly poor physical health of the women. The impact of alcohol and drugs on the female body has always been devastating. Add to this the effects of poverty, poor nutrition, and a lack of health care characteristic of so many of the women we serve today, and we find that we are serving women with very serious health challenges. This newsletter focuses on this challenge.

How do we sustain an agency like Meta House and keep it growing for another 45 years? We continue to recognize the needs of women and we invest in their futures. As we look ahead, we know that we can only continue to provide our essential work with your support. Thank you.

YOUR TAX REBATE MATTERS

This year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is expected to dole out tax rebates to more than 130 million taxpayers as part of President Bush's 2008 Economic Stimulus Act to boost the country's slumping economy. The IRS estimates that individual taxpayers could receive up to \$600 and a maximum of \$1200 for those who file a joint return. The rebate payments are expected to begin in May. As you mull over what to do with your rebate, please consider donating a portion to Meta House, where your support could help buy food for a woman and her children in our Residential Treatment Program or ensure that day care is available for newborns while their mothers work to maintain recovery and build a new life. Below are a few ways your money can help make a difference:

- \$50 - Purchases specialized toys critical for use in mother-child therapy
- \$100 - Funds General Education Diploma (GED) classes for one client
- \$200 - Covers one month of food for a women in residential treatment
- \$500 - Funds a week of daycare for newborns in residential treatment with their mothers
- \$850 - Covers one month's rent for a family living in Meta Housing
- \$1,000 - Covers one month of treatment for past trauma for four women

META HOUSE IN THE NEWS

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel recently chronicled Meta House graduate Pam's journey to recovery. Pam, a mother of four, graduated from Meta House in 2005 and is currently an area manager for a small cleaning service. The print version of her story was recently featured in the *Faces of Hope* section. Meta House's Residential Treatment Facilities were highlighted throughout the online video. To read or watch the video of Pam's story, go to <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=726122>.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Kimberly Snow has been a volunteer in the Meta House nursery since the fall of 2006. Volunteering one day a week, Kimberly has helped to care for dozens of babies while their mothers are receiving treatment at our residential facility. Kimberly, a part-time Pre-Law Advisor for Marquette University, said the experience of volunteering is mutually beneficial. "As a mother of three grown children, it is wonderful to hear a baby's laughter or to rock a baby to sleep," Kimberly said. "I admire the women at Meta House for their courage and devotion to the well-being of their children, and ultimately to themselves." *Thank you, Kimberly, for your dedication to Meta House!*



Want to volunteer at Meta House? Call Carryn at 414-977-5802 to discuss upcoming opportunities.

VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED

Good with computers? Have a little extra time each month (or a flexible work schedule)? Meta House is currently looking for one or two more individuals to assist with database maintenance. Volunteers are needed for a few hours each month. Days and times are flexible, but must be during regular business hours. Strong computer skills and attention to detail are a must!

Interested? Please contact Carryn Sami for details at 414-977-5802 or csami@metahouse.org.

Helping Women Through the Progression of Recovery

A HEALTHY RECOVERY



Ever since Irene can remember, alcohol flowed freely in her presence. As a young girl, she watched her parents become addicted to the substance that would eventually claim her mother's life at 34.

While her mother frequented local taverns at nights, Irene and her siblings were left alone at home. Irene recalled the sexual abuse from her male relatives often happened during this time. To numb the pain, Irene started drinking at 14. Her addictive relationship with alcohol began first with high school friends and boyfriends.

An incident with an abusive boyfriend landed Irene in prison, where she first learned about her lung disease. She was told she had pneumonia in both of her lungs and was connected to an oxygen machine to help her with her breathing.

Despite her inability to breathe on her own, Irene continued to drink for many years. She reached many low points, including a suicide attempt. She was abandoned by her husband whom she married when she was 15. And because of her addiction, she could not care for her five children.

At 65, Irene found out about Meta House. She was skeptical since she had not experienced long-term success with other treatment programs. However, she wanted to change her life.

Irene enrolled in Meta House's Outpatient Treatment Program in 2005, which she successfully completed. At Meta House, Irene received trauma counseling to help her cope with her abusive past. In addition to participating in GED preparatory and computer classes, she also took a parenting class to learn how to be a better grandmother. "Meta House was really the one that sunk in," Irene said. "I feel that Meta House did a lot for me by understanding where I was coming from. I felt comfortable talking to them."

Meta House also helped Irene recognize the importance of her health. While Irene was in treatment at Meta House, she found out she had developed diabetes. Staff helped Irene to monitor her diet to make sure it was aligned with nutritional guidelines for managing the disease. They also served as an intermediary during doctor visits and monitored Irene's health medications to ensure they did not interact with new prescriptions. "My counselor could ask questions I was afraid to ask," Irene said. "I was more comfortable with her going with me for my appointments."

This year marks Irene's third year in recovery. She has a stronger relationship with her children and she recently completed the Meta Housing Program and moved into a beautiful apartment.

Since completing treatment, Irene's health has greatly improved. The dosage for her lung medication and the levels on her oxygen tank were recently lowered because Irene's ability to breathe on her own in sedentary circumstances has increased.

Though she acknowledges that the process remains challenging, Irene is managing her recovery. "Meta House gave me hope," Irene says. "It's not just about alcohol or drugs, it's about life."

Your contributions are critical to Meta House. Please help us to provide essential services to women recovering from substance abuse and their children.

Yes, I want to support Meta House!

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 Other

Name _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Check Enclosed _____ MasterCard _____ Visa _____ Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to Meta House, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Thank you!

Please detach and mail to: Meta House, Attn: Development, 2266 N. Prospect Avenue, 4th Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202.