

Thursday, November 17, 1989

NEWS

Students struggle to stay off drugs at UNLV

By Rebecca Bostick
YELLIN' REBEL

Editor's note: This is the second of two articles regarding drugs and drug use at UNLV.

Take a look at the people you're sitting next to. They may not have always been as calm and collected as they are today. You wouldn't know it to look at them, but recovering drug addicts have been through extensive rehabilitation to get to this point and most of them are keeping quiet about their past.

"Shaun" (not his real name), a 21 year-old sophomore at UNLV admits he hasn't always been in control of his life. Three years ago he entered an adolescent rehabilitation program after six years of drug use.

For five of those year, he says, it was just smoking marijuana and drinking with his friends, but the last year found him doing and deal-

ing cocaine.

"When you're on drugs, your head is so messed up, you don't even realize what's going on and don't recognize a need to stop," he said. He explains, "Drugs are more powerful than sex, or money, or love."

Once he began dealing drugs, he said, "Everyone's your friend. Your life IS drugs."

This is why he knew he had to put an end to the cycle. Too many of those friends were dead the next week, but Shaun explains that being on drugs is a sort of death as well.

"There's no thought, no love, no feeling," and emotionally and mentally you're dead.

Shaun voluntarily entered a hospital program just days after his 18th birthday. The program included an evaluation, where they determine the length of your stay

(the average being 30 days) and provide you with constant group therapy, counseling, and, most im-

portantly, 30 days to stay clean and get your head straight.

Also recommended is a membership with Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous and a suggestion to attend 90 meetings in 90 days. Usually these groups have sponsors, people to turn to when you feel the need to take drugs, or need to talk.

Unlike most, Shaun didn't have a sponsor. "I didn't trust anyone enough," he explained. He made it through meetings on his own.

Getting off drugs is an individual choice. "It's not up to your parents. It doesn't matter how much money you've got, or whatever groups you join. You need to want to stop," Shaun adds.

Several counselors made it clear that you don't have to hit bottom to make it back to the top, but Shaun disagrees.

"I think everyone wants to stop, but they need to make the first move." He said that after the initial

hospital stay if the 12 step programs (N.A. or A.A.) are followed, a person can stay clean.

Eventually Shaun abandoned the group meetings, but managed to stay away from drugs as well.

"It's been three years as of Nov. 4," he says, quoting his time away from drugs.

Today his is left with an extreme sensitivity toward even mild drugs, like aspirin, and he is concentrating on the future. He works full-time for the airlines, has a fiancée and a five-month old child and is looking forward to completing his studies as a hotel major.

"I don't want to say, don't get into a program. They're great, if they're right for you." He says that the N.A. meetings are inspiring because you see other recovering addicts and hear success stories and you realize it's possible to stay off drugs.

The first step is the most important, and there are a number of

options. Local hospitals such as Charter and HCA Montevista offer in and outpatient programs and are covered by most insurance plans.

Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous are non-profit, twelve-step programs designed to help addicts live day to day without a chemical dependency. N.A. has six or more meetings daily at various locations, including a Wednesday night meeting at 8 p.m. in FDH 105. A.A. meets in Beam Hall, room 200, Thursday nights at 6 p.m.

An N.A. representative said, "We're not here recruiting members, we just want to let people know we're here for them if they need us."

It is possible to live without drugs, and success stories are everywhere—just look around.

Shaun admits he'd probably be dead by now if he hadn't rehabilitated, but instead he is living proof that there is life after drug abuse.

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In Brief

Construction takes away parking places

The southern portion of Parking Lot M (Student Health Services) will be occupied by the A and F Construction Company from November 20, 1989 until July 24, 1990 for the construction of the new UNLV Dining Facility. The handicapped parking in the southwest corner will remain open. Alternative parking may be required.

The University Road access to Parking Lots F (Tonopah Hall), G (Beam Hall) and M (Student Health Services) will be changed to a single lane.

Traffic congestion will be increased, so allow additional time in traversing these areas.

Alpha Epsilon Pi rents frat house

The brothers of Alpha Epsilon Pi are renting a fraternity house.

The building, located at 3914 Vanessa, is a warehouse in the Spring Mountain Park business, at Spring Mountain and Valley View.

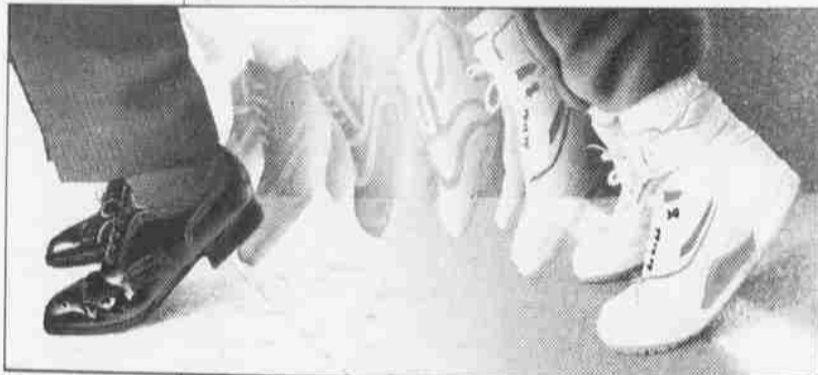
The house, which took two months to

locate, costs \$700 per month. It will be used for meeting and social functions but not as a residence.

Vice President Scott Allan said, "It took a while to find just the right place, but it seems to be the best one to accommodate our needs."

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