



# THE NEXUS JOURNEY

RECOVERY CENTER INC.

## THE MIRACLE OF RECOVERY

### OUR MISSION

*The mission of Nexus Recovery Center is to serve as a link to sobriety, independence and dignity for low-income women and their families affected by addiction. We inspire hope, offer respect and honor the unique differences of female addicts.*

## Nexus Responds to Local "Cheese" /Heroin Epidemic

Since 2005, 24 local youth have died from an overdose of the addictive heroin mix called "cheese"; seven of them this year alone. This new drug has gained both local and national attention due to the age of its victims and the innocence of the name. "Cheese" is an addictive and lethal mixture of black tar heroin and over-the-counter pain relievers such as Tylenol PM. The drug is sold for as little as \$2 per use and is found primarily in Hispanic neighborhoods and used by Hispanic youth. Cheese/heroin has been listed as the drug of choice for many females entering our Adolescent Program.

In April the ABC News program Nightline came to Nexus to report on the cheese/heroin epi-  
*"Cheese"/Heroin continued on page 3*

## Holiday Card Project to Benefit Nexus

Nexus is embarking on an exciting new project in partnership with the Healing Arts program in San Antonio. With the help of Texas artists and our adolescent clients, Nexus has developed a line of corporate holiday cards. The proceeds from the sale of the cards will support Nexus programs and services.

The Healing Arts had just launched a similar program in San Antonio, which was very successful. There were not any comparable programs operating in Dallas and Nexus was asked to participate in the project. In April, two artists from Healing Arts came to Nexus to work directly with our Adolescent Program. The artists spent two days with the girls to create holiday themed works of art. All of the girls participated and the results were incredible! Candy canes, cowboy hats, snowy landscapes, and even



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*Holiday Card Project continued on page 5*

# New Board Members Installed

**Nicole Blythe** is a Partner at Grant Thornton and specializes in accounting for nonprofit healthcare industries. She is a member of the Junior League of Dallas, a mentor for College Street Church of Christ Women in Youth Group, an instructor for the YWCA Financial Empowerment Course, and a volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House of Dallas. Her skills include accounting, personnel, and management and she has a special interest in organizations serving the needs of women in the community.

**Sarah Jane Francis** is a member of the Junior League of Dallas and has been involved with the Walt Garrison Rodeo for MS Board. Her skills include cooking, party planning, gardening, and fundraising. She plans to assist Patti Flowers with the construction of the Nexus serenity garden.

**Ashley Hollweg** is a psychologist who worked for three years as a counselor and advocate for mentally ill homeless women in California. Most of her clients were dual-diagnosed with mental illness and addiction. She is affiliated with the American Psychological Association and volunteers regularly at Terrell State Hospital. While pursuing her PhD at SMU, Ms. Hollweg worked at the

Dallas County Jail counseling inmates. Her Master's thesis was an evaluation of Dallas County's first drug court, Divert Court, run by Judge Creuzot who works closely with Nexus.

**Yolanda Lawson, MD** is an advocate for women's health and is interested in helping promote sobriety for women. She has referred patients to Nexus in the past and understands the importance of recovery services in our community. Her professional skills include medical, women's health, and counseling services. She also has experience with investing, management, marketing, fundraising, public relations, planning and social work. She has been involved with Baylor Women for Life and Kwanzaafest.

**Laura Reilly O'Hara** is a partner with Strasburger & Price, LLP and has served on the North Texas Diversity Counsel Board of Directors. She has been involved with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Coppell ISD, Genesis Women's Shelter, St. Ann's Church, and Attorney's Serving the Community. Her professional interests include offering legal advice to health-care organizations. She appreciates Nexus' attention to the children of our clients and wants to be involved in helping clients get back on their feet.

**Ed Tauriac, Jr.** is a partner with Deloitte & Touche and has served on the Girl Scouts of Tejas Council. He is a member of the TACA Grants Committee and led the United Way campaign at Deloitte & Touche this year. His skills include accounting, investment, management and planning. He is the proud father of twin girls who are 10 years old. He enjoys participating in organizations to enhance the local community.

**Cheryl J. Walton** is involved with Jack and Jill of America, Inc., a foundation who has granted money to Nexus for the past two years. She has a Master's degree in Social Work from Ohio State and has worked for the Houston Housing Authority, Harris County Adult Probation, the Texas Youth Commission, Dallas County Adult Probation, and was a Federal Probation Officer for 8 years. She is a sustainer in the Junior League of Dallas and has been involved with the Dallas Historical Society, the White Rock YMCA, and St. Philips School. She and her husband moved to Dallas in 1987 and she has three children.

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For comments, suggestions, or more information, please call (214) 321-0156 x2104.

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## “Cheese/Heroin” *(continued from page 1)*

dem. One of our adolescent clients gave an anonymous interview detailing the ease of obtaining and becoming addicted to the drug. As a 17-year-old female, our client was introduced to the drug through classmates at her Dallas high school. Soon she began creating her own mixture of the drug to her liking, altering the amount of heroin in the substance. This is one of the deadliest aspects of this drug; users often don't know if the cheese mixture contains 3% or 10% heroin.

In May 2007, *The Dallas Morning News* suggested that cheese/heroin may soon eclipse marijuana as the drug kids are most often arrested for possessing on campus. During Dallas' 06-07 school year 113 kids were arrested for possessing cheese on campus. The drug appeals to both male and female youth alike. In fact, the first cheese related death was an 18-year-old Dallas female two weeks away from her high school graduation.

Nexus has been on the frontline of confronting the cheese/heroin epidemic. We have been called upon by various media outlets looking for information on the drug and its victims. Nexus staff and counselors have been interviewed for ABC's Nightline, KERA radio, D Magazine and a Spanish language interview on Univision Channel 23. All of these interviews have focused on the cheese epidemic, how to find treatment, and Nexus' expertise on treating female substance abusers.

Nexus' expertise includes Medical Director Dr. Carlos Tirado who recently advocated on behalf of Nexus clients and received approval from ValueOptions to treat the girls in our program with the medication buprenorphine. “Medications like buprenorphine show promise in increasing a child's chances of avoiding relapse and re-integrating into normal school, family and social life. Of course medication is not a panacea, and things like family involvement, self-help therapies, and healthy lifestyle choices are essential to insure lasting recovery,” comments Dr. Tirado.

In a shared position with UT Southwestern, Dr. Tirado has the advantage of applying the latest science to the clinical setting here at Nexus. He also recently received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Disparity and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to conduct a scientific survey of cheese/heroin use in Dallas County. The results of the survey will be the first comprehensive assessment of the cheese/heroin epidemic in Dallas and will provide treatment providers and lawmakers important information on the scope of the cheese problem in our community.

Now, more than ever, the Nexus Adolescent Program is critical to meeting surmounting needs in a community beset by increasing adolescent drug use.

# CARNIVAL

*On April 28th the Nexus Child Development Center celebrated young children by hosting a carnival in their honor. In recognition of the Week of the Young Child the carnival focused on health and safety. The carnival boasted booths aimed at teaching children proper nutrition, dental care, and fun ways to get exercise. Sprawled across the Nexus campus was a bounce house, face painting stations, sidewalk chalk art, a DJ playing music, and the Dallas Fire Department was on hand with their fire truck. More than 300 clients, past clients and family members of clients attended the carnival. Photos by Abby Foster.*



*The kids enjoyed meeting the firefighters and having the chance to explore the fire truck.*

# Aftercare Participants Attend NA World Convention

On Friday morning, August 31st, fifteen aftercare clients and Sheila Washington our Aftercare Coordinator headed for San Antonio. The Narcotics Anonymous (NA) world convention was held there from August 31 thru September 2 and the Nexus aftercare group was in attendance. Ms. Washington worked hard to plan activities for the aftercare group and had this to say about the convention, "This was a great opportunity and experience for our ladies to see the power of recovery at a world level. Experiencing this event introduced the aftercare clients to the no-limit boundaries of what they can accomplish through recovery."

The goal of the Aftercare Program is to help clients transition into everyday life while facing hurdles and maintaining their recovery. Ms. Washington has made it a point to work with the ladies in aftercare on issues such as job skills, dressing for success, and self esteem issues. By participating in National Recovery Month and attending the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous, the women in aftercare have had the opportunity to meet other women from all over the world who face the same challenges, fears, and successes. One of the most important tools in recovery is not being alone and having a strong support group around you. It is part of our mission at Nexus to serve as a link to sobriety and independence; by participation in this world-wide event, our aftercare group is doing just that.

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## Initial Donation Launches Serenity Garden

Nexus board member Patti Flowers recently approached Nexus with the idea of creating a serenity garden for our campus. The idea behind the garden was to create an area for clients or their family members to have a quiet place to think, pray, or to simply be with their thoughts. New board member Sarah Jane Francis also took an interest in the project. Mrs. Francis is an active member of her garden club and felt a connection to the serenity garden. She and her husband, Will Francis, decided to be the first donors to this project allowing Nexus to begin laying the ground work for the garden.

We quickly enlisted the support of a local landscape architect Kristi Miller who has offered her services pro bono. With her help we began designing a garden with many phases to accommodate volunteer and civic groups to support in the building process. It was important to us that the garden is environmentally friendly and so native plants were chosen to keep

water costs down. Lastly we wanted to provide comfort to the garden's visitors, so berms were built up to accommodate large plant material to provide cool shaded areas.

Today we have a beautiful set of plans complete with a labyrinth designed for meditative walking, various stations welcoming the visitor to sit for a while, and a large oak tree looking over the garden to remind visitors of the many clients that have found a new life here at Nexus. We are currently looking for volunteer groups to help us bring our serenity garden to life and have several phases available for various groups and budgets. If you would like to support the serenity garden please call the development office at 214.321.0156 x 2102.

The logo for Tom Thumb is displayed in a white, bold, sans-serif font against a dark green background. The text is arranged in two lines: "TOM" on the top line and "THUMB" on the bottom line.

*Are you a Tom Thumb shopper?  
When you check out, use your  
Reward Card and ask the clerk to  
link your purchases to #415.  
Nexus will receive a percentage of  
your total grocery bill every time  
you shop. Thanks for making a  
difference!*

## Holiday Card Project *(continued from page 1)*

a Pegasus adorned with lights representing Dallas covered the pages of what would eventually be Nexus' holiday cards. The project proved to be beneficial for the adolescent clients; all were overjoyed with the opportunity to have two days of creative expression.

The cards are now ready and available for purchase. There is a minimum order of 1,000 cards and all cards are customized with corporate logos and a personal greeting. We have a beautiful catalog available to view the various cards offered. If you would like to order holiday cards or for more information please contact the development office at (214) 321.0156 x 2102.

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## Chi Omega awards Nexus \$25,000 for play therapist

We are happy to announce that Chi Omega has awarded Nexus \$25,000 to fund a part-time play therapist for our Children's Center. The goal of our Children's Services program is to help children develop character and life skills while healing from the effects of the addicted parent. The children in our care are at high-risk for problems in school and in social relationships, and for abusing alcohol or illegal drugs themselves.

It is Nexus' goal to offer a holistic approach to treating the entire family in our care. Currently, school age children attend the Betty Ford Center's Children's Program and drug education provided by Rainbow Days. For younger children play therapy is a powerful healing tool that addresses a wide range of social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues. Through an emotional and social behavioral checklist we will be able to measure change in each child. We expect to see changes in the areas of self-esteem, confidence, and developmental milestones. Chi Omega's generosity will allow Nexus to continue to increase the services and level of care we provide our clients and their children.

Chi Omega is well known for their popular Christmas Market held every year at the Dallas Convention Center. As a beneficiary of this year's Christmas Market, which is November 1-3, we have the unique opportunity to take part in the festivities. With a little help from our adolescent clients, and board members Patti Flowers and Sarah Jane Francis, Nexus will decorate our own tree which will be on display at the Christmas Market. Nexus volunteers will also be on hand to tell attendees about Nexus and to sell holiday cards designed by adolescent clients (see related story page 1).

## BOY SCOUT PROJECT



*In August, Samin Odhwani (pictured above) and twenty of his friends descended upon the Nexus campus. Samin had been working towards his Eagle Scout award and chose Nexus as his community service project.*



*Enlisting the help of his friends and family, Samin spent months developing his vision and a plan for the PPWC dormitory. When he arrived at Nexus in August ready to implement his plan, he did so with great attention to detail.*



*Samin raised all the funds necessary to purchase the materials and enlisted the volunteers needed to make the project a success. The final product includes new flower beds and plants, along with a walking path for moms and kids.*

# ExxonMobil Intern Marissa Awtry Serves as Volunteer Coordinator

Nexus was awarded a grant from the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program to hire an intern this past summer. We were delighted to welcome Marissa Awtry as our summer intern. She was encouraged to apply for the ExxonMobil internship by her school adviser. "When I saw Nexus and read the agency mission I knew instantly this was where I wanted to be," Marissa said.

Marissa arrived at Nexus on June 4th ready to serve as Volunteer Coordinator for the 8-week duration of the ExxonMobil internship. In her time at Nexus, Marissa was charged with the task of developing the infrastructure needed for Nexus to make the Volunteer Coordinator position ready for a full-time employee. She spent her time creating a database of volun-

teers and a separate database consisting of Nexus' needs.

One such group of volunteers was Deloitte. The company wide IMPACT Day allows groups to tackle large tasks or projects for local charities. On June 8, 2007 more than 31,000 Deloitte employees across the nation took on more than 600 projects. We were thrilled to be one the projects chosen and that Friday more than 30 volunteers from Deloitte came together on the Nexus campus. This volunteer group came early on in Marissa's time at Nexus. It gave her great insight into what would be required of a Volunteer Coordinator and how she could best spend her time developing the position.

Marissa had this to say about her experience at Nexus, "Substance



*Marissa Awtry, 2007 ExxonMobil Summer Intern.*

abuse was a part of my family; my mother was an alcoholic so I know first hand the devastation this disease can cause. I specifically wanted to work with women and children affected by substance abuse. This felt like a very personal endeavor for me and I felt comfortable and prepared to work with Nexus clients. I am so grateful for this experience."

## WISH LIST

*Nexus is in need of the following items:*

- Bus passes for outpatient clients*
- Grocery gift cards for outpatient clients*
- Infant formula and diapers*
- Maternity clothes*
- New and gently used clothes for women, adolescents, infants and children*
- Office supplies*
- School supplies*
- School uniforms*
- Toiletries*
- Twin bedspreads and comforters*

## Donor News

Nexus Recovery Center thanks all its donors who help us bring programs and services to the women and children we serve. Below are the donors who have come forward recently to support Nexus, and we are truly thankful.

The **Women of Saint Michael's and All Angels Church** have been a long time supporter of Nexus - this year was no exception with their gift of \$6,000 for our Aftercare Program. Nexus' Aftercare Program is a place for women to continue recovery by staying connected with other recovering women. The goal of this program is to help women transition back into society as they face the real world and to help them develop relationships in their local recovery community (see story page 4). Thank you Women of Saint Michael's for your generous support.

A new partnership formed for Nexus this year when the **Rosewood Foundation** donated \$4,000 in support of our general operating needs. **Citigroup** continued their support of Nexus this year with a \$10,000 gift to the Nexus Client Care Fund. This Fund exists to cover expenses for clients who need extended residential treatment, or who do not qualify for state funding. Since 2002, Citigroup has given a total of \$50,000 in support of Nexus.

# Deloitte IMPACT Day impacts Nexus

The employees of Dallas' Deloitte office were on hand in early June to volunteer their time and services for Nexus. As a part of Deloitte's national Impact Day, more than 30 volunteers arrived at the Nexus campus bright and early to do their part. The Deloitte team was charged with the task of beautifying the Nexus grounds and offices. Included in the task was a general clean up, straightening up our volleyball court, clearing and removing gravel, tilling the soil, painting offices and gazebos, and planting spring color.



*One of the Deloitte volunteers and Deloitte event coordinator Melanie Carter pause from working on the volleyball court to pose for a photo.*

While this was no small task, the volunteers of Deloitte came prepared and ready to work. Armed with a front-end loader, tillers, paint cans and brushes, and all the gardening tools needed to complete the task, the volunteers quickly got to work. In front of the dorm that is home to our women and children, Deloitte volunteers cleared gravel and tilled the soil making the dorms front area ready for sod and spring flowers and plants. All along the walkways of Nexus we now have beautiful begonias, hostas, and hibiscus. Everywhere you looked that Friday you could see the blue shirts of Deloitte volunteers. Many of the clients at Nexus were so excited to have new flowers and color on the campus, but their main thrill was seeing so many people giving time and resources to support them.

Ms. Reem Samra, an Audit Director at Deloitte and Nexus board president, said, "I received several positive comments from the volunteers that participated in the project. They were all very impressed with the organization and its mission. A number of the volunteers reached out to me inquiring how they can help in the future with participation in other volunteer opportunities such as mentoring and participation on the board. In fact one of the volunteers, Ed Turiac, a partner in the Deloitte Dallas office, volunteered to join the board." Ms. Samra went on to say, "I participated in the day too and thought that it was a great experience and had more appreciation for what the employees of Nexus do on a daily basis."

Volunteers are a vital part of the services we provide here at Nexus. If you would like more information on volunteering at Nexus please call 214.321.0156 x 2101.

# DELOITTE



*Deloitte volunteers plant flowers in front of the Crystal Charity Children's Center.*



*A volunteer tries to protect herself from paint.*



*Many thanks to all the wonderful Deloitte volunteers.*

*Photos: Abby Foster*

# Title Sponsor Comerica Bank Leads Westapher Golf Charity to Record Year

Nexus is grateful to the Preston Center Rotary for a very successful Westapher Golf Charity. We are also grateful to Comerica Bank for taking the lead as this year's title sponsor. The tournament took place October 8 so the results are not final yet. However, preliminary figures indicate a substantial increase over past years.

This year the dinner and auction were held the evening before at Northwood Club. With more than 100 auction items and over 200 guests in attendance, it looks like this portion of the event will help make 2007 a banner year for the Westapher. Some of our most notable auction items included a ride in a Russian subsonic jet, business class tickets on American Airlines anywhere in the world, and great jewelry and art pieces.

The golf tournament included more than 140 golfers. Mother Nature held out for us again this year, although

barely! The rain came just as the last team was finishing their last hole. The winners went home with the beautiful Westapher trophy and those with the highest scores went home with golf lessons from the PGA Tour Superstore. The winning team, Fred Seipp, Warren Huddleston, Albert Huddleston, and John Hammarley, won with a gross score of 58.

As always, funds raised at the Westapher help support programs at Nexus. Historically, Westapher funds have helped bridge the gap in funding between a client's need for treatment and the amount of government support. Thank you to all of the participants and volunteers who made this year's event a huge success. By participating in the Westapher you are directly supporting the women and children of Nexus.



*Nexus is proud to announce the publication of a success stories booklet. To order your free copy, call 214.321.0156, ext. 2104.*



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