



Waunakee Rotary Club

Feb. 23, 2012
Vol. 46 No. 24

A faith-based recovery program in Milwaukee boasts an 85 percent success rate for those who complete the year-long, life-changing experience.

But as Katie Gruber, the speaker at the Feb. 16 Waunakee Rotary meeting attested, addicts have to really want to change their lives.

Katie grew up on the East Side of Madison and graduated from the Teen Challenge program in 2008. She told her own story of recovery and described Teen Challenge, a rehabilitation center for men and women of all ages.

Katie's parents divorced when she was 8 years old, and she became an angry kid, she said. She began using drugs socially at age 14, and her abuse escalated until she could no longer talk to people unless she was high.

In 2001, she was arrested for an alcohol-related incident and ordered to undergo treatment at Tellurian. There she met a man who introduced her to heroin. Her life spiraled out of control, and in one year, she overdosed 11 times. She was in and out of jail and even at Mendota Mental Health Institute, she said.

In 2006, while back at Tellurian, she met another young woman, and the two decided to commit a burglary and go to Mexico. This time, she faced felony charges.

Her mother had read a book called "Cross and Switchblade" about Teen Challenge and asked the judge to sentence Katie to a year there with probation.

Katie hated it. She had to pray, take up Bible study and wake up at 5:30 a.m. In an effort to manipulate the system, she told authorities at Teen Challenge she felt suicidal. Then she was sent to Taycheedah

Correctional Institute, a women's prison.

"God got ahold of me," Katie said. "I got on my knees and asked God if I could get a second chance."

Katie finished the year-and-a-half Teen Challenge program, then completed her undergraduate degree at UW-Milwaukee. She is currently in the second semester Marquette University's master's program studying nonprofit administration.

Fellow Rotarian, Leonard Allen, pastor at Christian Assembly of God Church, said Katie is like many youths in Waunakee. He planned to have others from Teen Challenge speak at the church that evening.

Other News:

- Ken Ballweg announced that the Mentalist Show to benefit the Waunakee Community Foundation is Feb. 25 at the high school. He'll be selling tickets.

- Susan Vergeront said the Kenyon College Choir will perform at First Presbyterian Church March 7. The concert is free.

- Rex Endres said Whitetails is coming up Feb. 21. Tickets are also still available for the Super Raffle.

- Mike Ableidinger reminded the group that the Chamber of Commerce breakfast is Feb. 21 at 7:30 p.m. The annual dinner and auction is March 1 at 5:30 p.m.

- Mike is also the chair of Rotary's Easter Egg hunt this year and will be looking for help.

Guests: Ann Lemke and John Sargent, guests of the club; Mike Holm, guest of Linda Olson; Millie Lorenz, guest of Roxanne Johnson; Vicki Daubert and Jeanine Gumley, guests of Susan Hedrick; Becky Jenks, guest of Sean Wayne; Wayne Ruhlend, guest of Leonard Allen;

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Calendar of Events:

- Feb. 21, Chamber of Commerce breakfast
- Feb. 21, Whitetails at Rex's Innkeeper
- Feb. 25, Mentalist Show
- March 1, Chamber of Commerce dinner & auction
- March 7, Super Raffle
- March 8, Winter fun event, 4:30 p.m., Indian Lake
- April 28, Rotary Work Day
- June 8-9, Rotary District Conference, The La Crosse Center on the Mississippi.
- May 5, Kids Triathlon

Laura and Peter Zielski, guests of Susan Vergeront; Randy Guttenberg, guest of the club.

Visiting Rotarians: Kevin Piette.

Birthdays: Feb. 24, Danny Paul
Feb. 26, Sandy Taylor.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Feb. 23, Leonard Allen;
March 1, Susan Vergeront; March 8, Pat Durden.

Programs: Feb. 23, Mark McFarland, classification talk;
March 1, Club Assembly; March 8, Steve Collin, Area Representative for Fellowship of Christian Athletes;
March 15, Tim Kiefer, Dane County Board Candidate.

Greeters: Feb. 23, Scott Cochems and Allan Dassow; March 1, Lori Derauf and Patrick Durden; March 8, Fritz Durst and Rex Endres.