



Redeemed 2 Repeat, together with a local church, offers a firm helping hand to those recovering from addiction.

(Special to GSJ)

## Redeemed 2 Repeat provides missing piece to drug rehab

By SRIANTHI PERERA

Dawn (last name withheld) had a severe neck injury in 2003 that necessitated the use of prescription drugs. As years passed and the pain didn't subside, her intake of opioid medications spiraled out of control and became an addiction.

Seven years ago, Lee (last name withheld) had a dental procedure that went awry. Unable to bear the nonstop throbbing of a nerve in her mouth, she underwent several surgeries and was given progressively stronger medications until she almost lapsed into a coma. She, too, was addicted to painkillers that kept her in a constant fog.

Because the drugs were prescribed by a doctor, they felt "justified" in taking them.

The two Gilbert women are classic examples of how prescription pill popping leads to chaos. Not surprisingly, both their marriages and family lives crumbled along with their extended social fabric.

Fortunately, the two women had turning points that led them to seek professional help. And when they

emerged from the detoxification programs — still nowhere near normal — they were lucky to have the support of a local nonprofit organization to rebuild their lives.

Redeemed 2 Repeat was founded by Liz Beck about four years ago to connect with local churches to provide the extensive support necessary for addicted individuals.

"We help train members of the local church on how to mentor someone who's had a struggle with addiction and help them walk with someone in everyday, real-life situations and give them tools so they can be successful in their life instead of going back to using drugs," Beck said.

The Christ-centered program began at Sovereign Grace Church in Gilbert and has extended to a few other churches in the Valley. Eight more churches from across Arizona are also in training for the program and the group is looking for more churches to enroll.

"We teach the church that they are just like people who struggle with addiction. At the core, we all have the same

issues. We all need hope and we all need help to walk this life," Beck said. "When they're needing escape, they'll run to a substance, where I would run to Netflix or food. When we look at what the real issue is, then we can deal with it and we can fix it. That's what we do."

Opioid addictions take a toll that can't be easily remedied. Families are fearful and mistrustful after living with erratic loved ones.

Dawn's younger daughter was affected from her mother's unpredictable behavior. "She would come home from school and not know what she was walking into. If Mom was going to be passed out, if Mom was going to be coherent, if Mom was going to get sick that night, if Mom was going to walk up the stairs and fall over," she said.

It was no less disturbing for Lee's household.

"After all the surgeries, I lost ability to just function," she said. "I couldn't take care of my two kids. I was sleeping all the time and my mom was taking care of them."

Even though the daily pill popping

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has stopped, those on the path to recovery have fresh challenges: They are fragile, uncertain and fearful.

"I thought, 'I'm going to get out of these meds and come back home and I guess it would be normal, whatever that means.'" Dawn said. "And it was far from it."

She found that she needed counseling and direction on a daily basis.

"You need to be connected to somebody and you need to be talking to them every day," she said. "Here I am, three years later, and I'm just now ready to deal with some things that happened in the past. It's a journey."

One of the bleakest sides of the experience is the loss of hope.

Lee, who could barely sit in class because she was sweating and shaking, told a woman at the recovery center that she was devoid of hope. "I said I don't ever see myself coming out of this addiction, ever. I said I see a black hole."

Subsequently, she left the program and relapsed two weeks later.

That's when she got connected to Redeemed 2 Repeat.

Lee needed help "20 times a day," she said, even with the most basic chores.

"I would be on the phone with her while she's in the store," Beck recalled. "That's why we need to be able to walk with people in those situations. A lot of times, she would come and sit at my house because she did not know how to do 'today.' We would sit and talk through budgets and things like that."

Lee also got help from Dawn, who had by then recovered enough herself to be able to volunteer for the organization.

After all, its name is Redeemed 2 Repeat: Redeem yourself and repeat by helping others.

Now, about 20 former addicts are turning their lives around with the help of Redeemed 2 Repeat.

Beck runs Redeemed 2 Repeat from her Gilbert home. The volunteers have meetings around her kitchen table and she devotes a room to an office and counseling.

For funding, she manages with grants and private contributions; the town of Gilbert gave \$5,000 to the group this year. While this is Beck's full-time job, she has two part-time staffers, including Dawn.

The group organizes an annual fundraiser and other smaller events; upcoming is a comedy night on Nov. 3.

The organization also works with the Chandler/Gilbert Substance Use and Treatment Task Force to provide rehabilitation.

Although Beck has never been ad-

dicted herself, she watched addiction firsthand when her husband struggled with drugs for 17 years.

"His addiction cost us our family. He chose to be in his addiction; he chose that over his family," she said.

They divorced six years ago and she lost everything she had, including her house. Her former husband died last year.

"As I was trying to rebuild my life, the way that my church walked with me through that, they were a part of that process with me for years and years. They saw the ugliness of addiction. They were at the hospital with me, they were at my home, they were helping me as I was trying to rebuild my life," she said.

That closeness with the church became the basis of the organization she founded.

"During all that time when it was very dark for me and I didn't have hope and I didn't think that my life will ever change, God gave me hope and he changed me and he gave me a love for people who struggle with addiction," she said.

Nowadays, Lee talks to Beck once a month or so.

"She sent me pictures of her cooking with her kids. Things that we take for granted, what we just do, was an amazing thing for her," Beck said.

It's a long, hard road to resume relationships after an addiction. "A unique piece of what we do is not excusing them with the ways they hurt their families, but helping them face that and take that responsibility," Beck said.

Volunteers show that life is wrought with struggles that have nothing to do with addiction.

"By connecting them with people in the church who would be considered 'normal,' they're able to see that they really are all the same," she said.

There's help for drug addiction, such as crisis intervention, prevention and treatment, but there's little help for transition.

"This is the missing piece," she said.

**Redeemed 2 Repeat is holding a family comedy night fundraiser, "Unchained and Unhinged,"**

**7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3 at Sovereign Grace Church, 1280 N. Cooper Road, Gilbert. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children ages 17 and under. For tickets, visit [redeemed2repeat.org/tickets](http://redeemed2repeat.org/tickets).**

For more information on the nonprofit, call 480-213-0873 or visit [redeemed2repeat.org](http://redeemed2repeat.org).