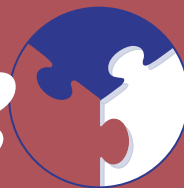


Connections



YFA Connections Helping People Fit the Pieces Together Since 1969

Spring 2005

Cathy Doran, M.A.
President/CEO

Youth & Family
Services

Peggy Larson, M.S.
Director

Crisis Residential Center

Peace Mentors

In-Home Family
Counseling

Adult Services

Tom Murphy, M.S.W.
Director

Chemical Dependency
Treatment

Co-Occurring Disorders
Treatment

Intimate Partner
Violence Perpetrator
Treatment



The CRC Changed My Life Forever

By Lorenzo Silva



I was 16 years old, lonely, confused and angry about the way my life had gone. I was looking for hope. I hopped from one friend's house to another until my welcome ran out. I lived on the streets for awhile. My grades were slipping. I started to use drugs. I stole things, whatever I could, valuable or not, then I would try to sell it. I remember sleeping in a cardboard box and that was when I hit the very bottom. I don't remember how I arrived at the CRC. I think I was given a choice: either CRC or Juvenile. The time I spent at the CRC changed my life forever.

I was an only child of divorced parents. My mom raised me by herself and worked very hard to put food on the table and a roof over our head. She was even able to buy a little house for us up on Central Avenue. She met a man when I was around 12, married him and things were good for awhile. I went to a good school, got good grades and excelled at sports.

Soon, my step dad began having

some problems. We all have them. Its how we deal with them that makes us who we are and who we become. He began to get physical with me. A pat on the back became a smack on the back of the head.

Instead of words, he conveyed meaning with a slap across the face. When he got really mad, he would pick me up by my shirt with two fists around my collar. I still remember the way my shirt cut into my armpits.

Then my step dad lost the little bit of hindrance that he had. When he was mad, he started to hit, elbow, pull hair, to drag me across the carpet. He did whatever he wanted. He had complete control. He never did anything to me when my mom was home. And he would tell me

repeatedly that if I ever told my mom, he would hurt her. Sometimes he even said that he would kill her. I didn't know if I should believe him or not. I kept quiet, I devolved into myself. One night he went overboard and I was afraid for my life. He hit me so hard, I couldn't breathe. I was

Continued Inside



Lorenzo Silva, currently an account executive with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, had his life changed by his experience at the CRC.


What Is The CRC? CRC stands for Crisis Residential Center. It's the place where we provide help for local youth who are in conflict or crisis. We are privileged at YFA Connections to provide this temporary shelter and counseling in a beautiful, old, lower South Hill home. It's a large Craftsman style house that was built in 1909 during Spokane's mining heyday. While it may have hosted important guests and grand events during its history, the home is significant now for the healing that begins within its walls.

The youth who stay with us at the CRC are seeking solutions to the crises in their lives. Some are at risk for self-defeating and dangerous behaviors. Some have run away from abusive homes. Some are homeless and have been trying to survive on the streets. By the time they get to us, these youth typically are disillusioned, fearful, angry, and just plain exhausted. While we can only offer temporary shelter as we help them find solutions to their situations, the warmth and charm of the big old house provides the perfect backdrop for the journey into healing.



YFA Connections
Crisis Residential Center


Cerium Networks Receives 2004 Roger Emerson Award

 YFA Connections is a local independent nonprofit human service agency that provides prevention, intervention, education and treatment programs to the Spokane community. Founded in 1969 under the name Youth Help Association, YFA has provided a wide array of free services to youth, adults and families in crisis for over 35 years.

Roger Emerson was an early supporter of the agency and active member of the Board of Directors until his untimely death in 1990. To honor Roger's generosity, commitment to service, and support of programs for less fortunate members of our community, YFA Connections initiated the Roger Emerson Award in 1993 to recognize outstanding community service.

The 2004 Roger Emerson Award was presented to Cerium Networks, a Spokane based communications technology company, for their generosity in helping YFA obtain, install and train on a new telephone system. Like most nonprofit agencies, YFA struggles with outdated office technology and hand-me-down computers. While communication is critical to the work we do, locating resources to purchase new equipment is extremely difficult. We are pleased to honor Cerium Networks with the 2004 Roger Emerson Award for allowing the agency to conserve limited resources for direct services while increasing our ability to communicate effectively with clients in crisis.

Cathy Doran Named President/CEO in November 2004

 I am proud to lead an agency with such an excellent reputation and long tradition of service to the Spokane community. I have been associated with YFA for ten years, first as Director of Adult Treatment Services and now as President/CEO.

Since the Agency was founded in 1969, more than 35 years ago, our mission has been to provide counseling and treatment services to people in crisis, regardless of their ability to pay. We serve individuals and families struggling with a whole spectrum of issues. And by the time clients get to us, the struggles or conflicts in their lives have typically spun out of control. It may be a teen staying at our Crisis Residential Center because she's run away from home and been picked up by the police; or a young man referred to Peace Mentors after perpetrating violence at school. It may be a family torn apart by Intimate Partner Violence or the stresses of addiction; or an adult struggling with addiction and mental illness. At YFA, they all receive individualized care by dedicated professionals regardless of their situation or their ability to pay.

The puzzle pieces in our logo are meant to signify the many parts — family, work, social, physical, psychological and spiritual — of all our lives. As helping professionals, our job is to help our clients reconnect the pieces of their lives in healthy ways.

This issue contains the stories of two very different individuals who received services at YFA. The common denominator is that both individuals came to us struggling with pieces of their lives and received, along with counseling, care and hope from our staff. Both individuals were able to put back together the pieces of their personal puzzle and go on to lead happier, more productive lives.



Cathy Doran received a M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Gonzaga University. She is licensed/certified in Chemical Dependency, Mental Health and Domestic Violence Perpetrator Treatment, and has been with YFA Connections since 1995.

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The Challenge of Treating Co-Occurring Disorders

By Kathleen Armstrong, M.Ed., L.M.H.C., C.D.P.



For most of my career, I have worked with individuals with co-occurring disorders, which means they have both a mental illness and chemical dependency. The challenge in working with these individuals is to find treatment for both disorders simultaneously. It is difficult to stabilize an addiction when a mental illness is causing serious stress; and it is difficult to adequately address treatment for mental illness when someone continues to use drugs and alcohol.

I've worked with one gentleman with a co-occurring disorder for almost ten years. He was diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder, which is a mental

illness that combines the elements of a psychotic disorder (delusions) and a mood disorder such as depression. And he was a chronic alcoholic. If I would ask him when he'd consumed his last drink, he'd look at his watch and say, "...at about 4:00 p.m. today." He was also paranoid and thought others believed he was evil and the devil. When I first began working with him, he was so agitated in group that he could only last about 15 minutes before getting angry and cursing at someone. He was also delusional and sometimes believed that he was God and that his job was to bring Jesus back.

Over time, with individualized and intensive therapy, he began to improve. He participated in individual sessions with me every week for over two years, plus group sessions with other individuals suffering from similar disorders. He saw our Nurse Practitioner, who adjusted and monitored his medications. And he learned that in order to get better, he'd have to stop drinking and stop smoking pot. Today, he has almost four years clean and sober from alcohol and almost two years off pot. He still has psychiatric symptoms but understands that his thoughts are delusional and that his condition can be controlled if he takes his medication as prescribed. He lives in his own home, owns and drives his own vehicle and for the first time in 20 years has a girlfriend.

His is one of the success stories that make my work at YFA Connections so fulfilling. Living with a debilitating mental illness is hard enough but add in a struggle with chemical dependency and you have a tremendous challenge to overcome. To me, this man, like so many others who struggle with co-occurring disorders, is a hero.



Kat Armstrong has been with YFA Connections for six years and is the Clinical Supervisor for Adult Treatment Services. Prior to coming to YFA, Kat worked with the chronically mentally ill for 19 years. She earned her M.Ed. from Whitworth College, is a licensed Mental Health Counselor, and a Chemical Dependency and Mental Health Professional

Continued from front The CRC Changed My Life Forever

really scared. I left home.

When I finally got to the CRC, I was lost. My foundation was gone. I had no other place to go. I needed help. The counselors were fantastic. I felt like they really cared. They were not just doing their

"Desperate people do desperate things; kids should not have to be desperate. I am thankful for the people at the CRC for helping me turn my life around."

Lorenzo Silva

job but what they really enjoyed doing. They cared for all of us that were there in a way that made each of us feel important and special.

In "group" I realized that it was not just me; other kids had problems, too, some worse than mine. I was no longer alone and now I had people who wanted to help me.

The CRC counselors contacted my mom and helped us both deal with the issue of my step dad's violence. They helped us sort things out and heal together as a family. My step dad moved out. I moved back home with my mom. It was the first time that I was able to spend time and relate with my mom in years and I had really missed her.

I have a family of my own now. I'm happy. My kids are awesome. My wife is a beautiful and caring woman. People say that time heals all things. But when you are abused, you never forget the way you feel. That feeling is what I want to convey to people. Desperate people do desperate things; kids should not have to be desperate. I am thankful for the people at the CRC for helping me turn my life around.



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Helping People Fit the Pieces Together Since 1969

Something To Smile About



Runaway and homeless youth come to the Crisis Residential Center from the streets and from families in conflict and crisis. While they often carry confusion and anger, they almost never carry a toothbrush.

Our counselors try to help these youth develop healthier strategies for coping with their peers, families, and community. They also emphasize the importance of good nutrition and personal care. While at the shelter, everyone eats healthy meals and is encouraged to respect and care for their bodies.

Thanks to the generosity of **Dr. Randall K. Stephens** who practices dentistry on the northside, we can now supply everyone who comes through our doors with a toothbrush.

Wish List



Our Crisis Residential Center provides temporary shelter and counseling to runaway, homeless and at-risk teens. With spring in the air, our wish list is full of items that can be used outside. And of course we have need of all the usual items for school, homework, personal care, and inside activities. To make an in-kind donation, please contact the YFA Connections Administrative Office at 532-2000. Thank you!

- Soccer balls
- Footballs
- Basketballs
- Frisbees
- Nerf balls
- Outdoor games
- Hoodies/sweatshirts
- Picnic/patio tables & benches/chairs
- Hammock & stand
- Backpacks
- Notebooks/pens/pencils
- Calculators
- Journals
- Socks & undergarments
- Arts & crafts supplies
- Card stock
- Glue sticks
- Blunt end scissors