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Postcard from the President
 by Caroline Stewart

Greetings A New PATH family,
 I last wrote to you at the end of March and so much has changed yet has stayed the same. I deeply hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy despite the very real Covid-19 menace. Please wear masks and practice good social distancing. We can do this with a patriotic national We here at A New PATH have, remarkably, been busier than usual these past six months. I know that our intrepid leader, Gretchen Bergman, has been busy almost daily on local, national and international Zoom meetings geared to continue spreading our important message that: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS ARE NOT A CHOICE OR A MORAL FAILING. Our children, friends and loved ones who from substance use disorders are needing our compassion, support and shepherding more than ever during these dark Covid days..... We here at A New PATH are continuing our dedication to saving lives. April Ella, Elon Burns and Nate Smiddy keep knocking our socks with their frequent trainings across San Diego educating our citizens how to save lives from accidental opioid overdoses with Narcan. Did you know that we now educate both the San Diego Department and the Department of Probation? A New PATH is so deeply proud that we have now saved over ONE THOUSAND San Diegans from death by overdose..... Hoping you attended our Virtual Fashion Show and Musicales: Strut for Saving Lives on Saturday, September 26th. Despite the challenges of modern technology, I believe we truly pulled a fabulous event that entertained and moved all of us.... I want to shout out to my neighbors and good friends who have so graciously supported A New PATH: Debbie Eaton, Kelly Perskey and Ellen Moxham.... I remain anxious but am now getting a handle on Zoom. I feel deeply appreciative of members of our board (Kelley Gebbie and Lucky Michael) and my precious employee and case manager (Lynn Zenick, MSW) who joined me on Zoom in addressing the Annual Statewide Substance Use Disorders Conference; our topic: The Unsung Hero of Harm Reduction, Clinical Case Management. We four are all mothers and family members who know how essential aggressive, engaged clinical case management is with regards to shepherding our children into treatment and sustaining sobriety.... That being said, HALLELUJA!!!

Continued on page 3

Executive Director's Message
 by Gretchen Burns Bergman

Anxiety & Gratitude

We are living in a time of acute anxiety where our whole world has shifted. Worry about the safety of our loved ones is ever present, and fear for the future of our democracy is very real. Our last newsletter came out at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, and six months later masks and social distancing are part of our daily lives.

We are adapting to an online reality, but I sincerely miss human contact with friends and fellow advocates and the ability to give and receive hugs.

I'm grateful to have been able to pivot to a world of technology in order to remain active and engaged in the struggle for human rights and dignity, and to end the war on drugs that has been so damaging to our families. Never before has it felt so painfully obvious that the drug war targets communities of color and poverty, so the need to raise our voices against systemic racism is critical. It is also imperative that we continue to deliver lifesaving harm reduction and overdose prevention trainings and Narcan (a safe drug that quickly reverses an opioid overdose) to those most at risk of overdose during these troubling times.

The frustration of witnessing accelerating hatred and bigotry is immense, so I'm even more committed to A New PATH's mission and our deep belief in tolerance and compassion. We will not be silenced or rendered impotent in the face of anger, prejudice and violence.

I'm also thankful to everyone who added creative ideas, energy and financial support to our *Strut for Saving Lives...virtually!* event last month. It was truly successful, helping us to continue our critically important campaigns and projects. Every challenge offers a new opportunity, and in this case we were able, through technology, to reach an audience from as far away as Tahiti.

Stay safe; stay well. Treasure your loved ones and hold sacred your right to voice your opinion. Please VOTE – like your life and the future of your children depend on it. I wish you a warm and loving holiday season, peace and the beginning of a beautiful new year in 2021 where smiles and hugs are plentiful.

A New PATH is grateful to the Parker Foundation, Alliance Healthcare Foundation and the Drug Policy Alliance for grant support in 2020.

PATH Welcomes Your Involvement!

PATH holds semi-annual educational speaker meetings and seminars. We invite you to attend and to get more involved in our many projects to reduce the stigma of the disease of addiction and to increase substance abuse treatment options.

Our Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month at 6pm. Please let us know if you are interested in attending or if you would like to serve as a member of the Board of Directors or PATH Ambassadors: 619-670-1184 or april@anewpath.org

Whenever you shop at Amazon, a portion of your purchase will go to A New PATH. There is no fee to register. Go to [Amazon.com/smile](https://www.amazon.com/smile) and look for A New PATH, Spring Valley. Help support our mission while shopping!



You can register for Ralphs club card online at www.ralphs.com/ Using A New path AND NPO #90278 and every time you shop at Ralphs PATH will automatically earn a rebate.

You can also contribute to A New PATH through Food 4 Less: www.food4less.net

PARENT SURVIVAL KITS AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH WITH SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

Who do you turn to for help when a loved one has a substance abuse problem? Where do you go for information when your substance abusing family member gets arrested? We have created a brochure of information to help parents navigate the criminal justice system. It includes information on when to intervene, warning signs of relapse, court related phone numbers, and the judicial process. If you would like a copy, please send \$1 for postage.

We Want and Need

Your donation of a Car...Van...R.V... Travel Trailer...
5th Wheel...Truck...or Off-Road Vehicle

(Some Restrictions Apply)

Take Advantage of Your Tax Deduction

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Please Call Our Toll Free Number Today To Arrange Your Free Pickup!

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ALTERNATIVE NEWS SOURCES

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

www.anewpathsite.org

www.jointogether.org

www.narconews.com

www.drcnet.org

www.reconsider.org

www.drugpolicy.org

www.sdchip.org

www.centerforce.org

For more resources and links please visit anewpath.org

Help A New PATH reduce stigma and celebrate recovery

Celebrate the silver "silver lining" of sobriety and show your support of loved ones in recovery or your pride in your own recovery by wearing a "path 2 recovery" silver cause bracelet.



Celebrate recovery by ordering your path 2 recovery magnetic R ribbons and placing them anywhere visible to help to reduce the stigma and show that you support

A New PATH



ASK MOM HOW TO SAVE A LIFE OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION & RESPONSE TRAINING

CONTACT APRIL@ANEWPATH.ORG TO SCHEDULE AN ONLINE OR IN PERSON TRAINING & RECEIVE A FREE NARCAN KIT

VISIT ANEWPATH.ORG/NALOXONETRAINING FOR A LINK TO OUR TRAINING VIDEO
619.670.1184

SUPPORT A NEW PATH BY PURCHASING AD SPACE

A New PATH appreciates your support! We continue to expand and our newsletter now goes out to over 4,000 people! Consider purchasing an ad for our April edition.

\$60 - business card \$125 - 1/4 page \$250 - 1/2 page

Our next printing deadline is **March 30, 2021**

Make checks payable to: A New PATH, 2527 Doubletree Road, Spring Valley, CA 91978. Phone: 619-670-1184,

Thanks for all of your support!

A New PATH newsletter is published quarterly by the Parents for Addiction T organization.

Gretchen Burns Bergman - Managing Editor
April Ella - Editor

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SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND/OR CO-OCCURRING DISORDER FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP



WHEN: Meets the 4th Friday of each month 6-6:30 PM

HOW: It's free please pre-register at: <https://namisandiego.org/event-registration/?ee=18112>

WHERE: NAMI San Diego
5095 Murphy Canyon Rd 320

WHAT: Group discussions are confidential and open to all adults 18 and over.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

PATH is endorsed by

- ▷ Jewish Family Services
- ▷ Mental Health America in San Diego County
- ▷ NAMI San Diego
- ▷ Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes
- ▷ Join Together/Demand Treatment
- ▷ Drug Policy Alliance Network

The views of the authors of this newsletter
A New PATH

Continued from page 1 Postcard from the President

My own son is now 20 months sober and blossoming thanks to respectful, engaged shepherding....Finally, I want to thank another one of my warrior moms, Anita Fisher. Anita has stood by my side for now close to three years, meeting monthly to co-lead the joint NAMI-A NEW PATH family support group for families whose adult children suffer from co-occurring disorders. Our take-away from 3 years of hearing from concerned parents is that we need to hire more social worker-case managers on the street, overseen by clinicians and not the police. We need to accept that too many of our Black family members and brethren are being incarcerated when what they need is clinical intervention and not punitive measures...Too many Moms mourning. Love, Caroline

Commentary: Prop. 25 would end the discriminatory money bail system in California. It's time

By Brian Richart, Gretchen Burns Bergman -
Article printed SD UT - 9/23/2020

California's justice system should treat everyone equally under the law, regardless of how much money is in their pocket, and a yes vote on Proposition 25 this November will end the

The current system of money bail is unfair, treating those
Take Kenneth Humphrey, a 63-year-old San Francisco man accused in 2017 of theft. The court set his bail amount so high that he

fundable fee to a bail bondsman for his release.

Because Humphrey didn't have enough money in the bank to buy his freedom, he languished behind bars for nearly a year. Unfortunately, there are thousands of stories just like Humphrey's.

In some cases, people who are overcharged or innocent of at great risk if they choose to wait in jail for their trial — have to make an impossible choice: go to jail or plead guilty to crimes they didn't even commit. That's unjust. Those who cannot afford bail may wait months or even years for their day in court. On any given day in California, tens of thousands of people sit in jail for no other reason than their inability to pay their bail or purchase a bond. These used jail beds cost taxpayers around \$5 million every single day. That's wasteful. On the other side

regardless of whether or not they pose a risk to public safety in their community. That's unsafe.

By any objective measure, the bail system needs reform. That's why after years of study and substantial input from judges, criminal justice reformers, individuals with lived experience and their family members, attorneys and public safety experts, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 10 to replace the current money-based system with one that bases a person's release on

as an overdue restructuring of an unfair, discriminatory system. The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board endorsed the

force thousands of poor people who have been arrested to stay in jail while awaiting trial, disrupting and even damaging their lives."

Immediately after the law passed, the bail industry and the

Why? Because it's what's good for their business, not people and certainly not public safety.

Voting yes on Proposition 25 would enact Senate Bill 10, ending money bail in California. It will protect defendants' rights by promoting the ideal that everyone is innocent until proven guilty and will base your liberty on your risk to public safety rather than your ability to pay.

The discriminatory nature of the money bail system is well-documented. National studies have shown that bail amounts for Black and Latino men are typically a third higher than those for White men. A 2013 study of a bail system in the California justice system found that while Black adults appear to be more likely than White adults to meet the criteria for pre-trial release, they are 11 times more likely to remain in jail prior to trial. To mitigate the risk of reforms deepening racial disparities, the Legislature passed a companion law in 2019 making California the only state in the nation with a statutory requirement to validate fairness of the

new risk assessment system looking at outcomes through the lens of both race and ethnicity. It's a level of transparency and accountability that has never existed in our pretrial justice system, and that's

A yes vote for Proposition 25 in November is not only a vote for justice, it's a vote for public safety, because it will promote the policy

because they have enough cash to do so.

The choice before Californians this November is simple: to perpetuate an unfair system that is more punitive on the poor — or to build a new system that upholds the ideals of equality and fairness in pretrial justice by supporting Proposition 25. We urge voters to stand with us on the right side of history by voting yes.

Burns Bergman is executive director of A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing).

Barriers that keep jailed voters from voting

Most people in jail are legally eligible to vote, but they are prevented from doing so by numerous barriers. The Prison Policy Initiative and Reverend Jesse Jackson's Rainbow PUSH Coalition released a comprehensive new report about voting from jail. Most of the 746,000 people incarcerated in jails can vote.

One of the biggest barriers to voting in jail is the fact that local

and it' in response to questions about the issue.

The Prison Policy Initiative and Reverend Jesse Jackson's Rainbow PUSH Coalition released a comprehensive new report about voting from jail. Most of the 746,000 people incarcerated in jails can vote. The spread of inaccurate eligibility information can also occur when registration forms contain incorrect, confusing, or incomplete information about criminal disenfranchisement laws. Given that elec-

surprise that people working at and detained in jails are frequently confused about eligibility as well. For example, in California, there is no barrier to eligibility to vote if you are detained pre-trial or serving a misdemeanor sentence. There is also no barrier to persons on probation or who have prior criminal convictions. However, there is a barrier to people who are serving a felony sentence or who are currently on parole. The report is here: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/jail_voting.html

Pandora's Bottle

By Robert Kelleher

I swerved my ride into the mountainside.
I was drunk as bliss that day.
I served a concrete week inside
where dopamine fiends stray
And consumer poison is the American way.
Prohibitions always divide us.
Pharmaceuticals sway congress today.
Brain chemicals still drive us.
Judges and politicians claim premonitions
and ransom families for guilty admissions.
They author laws that create outlaws
and equate human flaws to civil cause.
End the inhuman War on Drugs,
whose agents swagger like righteous thugs.
Kill the moral talk you're trying:
You're lying as my sick friends are dying.
Junkies and "functionals" live to score
poppies that power the Afghan war
or siphon north black tar and snow
stained pink by the blood of Mexico.
Pill doctor shoppers haunt the Midwest.
Bathtub chemists zombify the blessed.
Old boys crack Pandora's bottle every night.
Cement gypsies turn the color of fluorescent light.
Welcome to the dawn of the American police state
where fear and apathy shape constitutional fate.
Two million citizens sleep in a cage tonight
too few are violent, too few are white.
Education and rehabilitation can heal fatal spirals.
Empathy uplifts but vengeance defiles.
Smash spy tech and spin a cleaner Earth.
Burn the doctrine that wealth equals human worth.
In my time,
I walked through chemical fire and hypothermic rain
and poured beautiful drams down my drain.
Now, I ask the grim reaper of fear,
"is the age of psychic slavery here?"
She smiles and tells the truth unfurled:
"one knows almost zero about the world."

Remove the Word “Abuse” - 2020

Faces & Voices of Recovery and the Recovery Research Institute of Harvard Medical School & Massachusetts General Hospital have joined together in creating a petition to end the use of the term “Abuse” in the names of governmental agencies which use the outdated term. Words and language matter and stigma has been

with addiction. Terms such as “abuse,” increase stigma and add additional harm to those seeking – as well as those in – recovery. Addiction is a disease. Using words such as “abuse” or “abuser” . It takes an act of congress to change a government agency name, so support is needed at all levels. A New PA

A New PATH endorses Prop 17:

Nearly 50,000 Californians who have returned home from prison can't vote even though they are raising families, holding jobs, paying taxes, and contributing to society in every other way. They should be encouraged to reenter society and have a stake in their community, not be punished by having their voting rights denied. Prop 17 will right this injustice and restore voting rights to Californians returning home from prison.

A New PATH endorses Prop 25:

The money bail system is unfair, unjust and discriminatory, making it a crime to be poor. Under the current money bail system, people who are arrested even for minor

bondsman. their homes and their families before they even get a day in court, because they don't have money in the bank. Proposition 25 will make our communities safer by determining who stays in jail based on their actual risk or threat to public safety, rather than their ability to pay bail.

A New PATH opposes Prop 20:

A New PATH and drug policy reform advocates work to reduce police violence, dismantle structural racism and end mass incarceration. Prop. 20 is dangerous because it seeks to embed us

Propositions 47, 57, and Assembly Bill 109 in one sweep, Prop. 20 would make it easier to charge low-level crimes like bicycle theft as a serious felony. Prop. 20 would drop the felony theft threshold from \$950 to \$250, and create a brand new set of felony crimes. For people inside prisons, Prop. 20 would restrict access to parole and rehabilitative programs, making it harder for them to earn credit towards release. This anti-reform initiative also violates privacy, requiring persons convicted of certain misdemeanors, like shoplifting, to submit to the collection of a DNA sample. Prop. 20 supporters want you to believe that additional carceral spending and harsher sentencing will keep people safe, which is a myth. In California, crime continues to decline steadily year to year. Research also shows there is no direct connection between violent crime and the release of people from jail and prison under Prop. 47 and 57. Reha- e urge you

to support racial justice and vote NO on Prop 20.

The Racial Justice Act:

This historic law will legally prohibit racial discrimination in convictions and sentences

Governor Gavin Newsom signed The Racial Justice Act (AB 2542) into law, a bill long championed by criminal justice reform advocates and co-sponsored by Californians United for a Responsible Budget. The Racial Justice Act allows those who can demonstrate racial bias in their cases to petition for dismissal or resentencing. “We are thankful that Governor Newsom signed the Racial Justice Act. W the racist roots of the criminal legal system,” said CURB Executive Director Amber-Rose Howard. “Far too many Black families have been torn apart due to systemic racism, and it is time that we address that trauma in our courts.” Surprisingly, the Racial Justice

from discriminating against a defendant based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. Systemic racial disparities are pervasive in mass incarceration in California, where Black men are over eight times more likely to be incarcerated than white men. Nearly a hundred advocacy organizations across the state urged support for the landmark bill, including A New PATH.

Purveying the Covid Wilderness from the Vantage Point of a Licensed Psychotherapist

Caroline Ridout Stewart, MA, MSW, LCSW – as seen in SD UT on 8/30/20

In mid—March 2020, with Covid-19 creeping into our daily national news like an invasive weed, I decided as a psychotherapist, to reach out to all of my patients to inquire how they are doing

on-line psychotherapy using SKYPE, What's Ap and FaceTime to name a few video venues. I was surprised when many of my patients thanked me for thinking of them but then acknowledged that

several months later, with Covid-19 more invasive than ever, I am hearing almost daily from my clients asking me if I can meet with

anxiety, many with panic attacks, chronic low-grade depression, catastrophic fears about what the future holds and general, gross anomie informed by the need for social distancing.

You could say that I came to the profession of psychotherapy through a backdoor. I was, indeed, a college anthropology instructor before returning to graduate school to train to be a clinical social worker. My anthropology training has greatly helped me better understand the unique challenges that Covid-19 is now presenting to my patients. We humans are hard-wired to be social animals. We are primates who both enjoy but authentically need daily physical contact. I am reminded of the early Harry Harlow studies which showed that infant Macaques would choose a faux fur wire mother over a wire mother with a milk source. In other words, humans crave physical connection more than food.

One other salient issue that I grew to understand during my

informed by what Martin Buber calls states of “communitas” or , something that is fueling my patients' growing angst is the fact that they have achieved deep states of communitas with their Zoom community as they openly talk with colleagues and friends about their Covid-19-informed distress, yet are then thwarted from the essential complimentary hugs for which they are so deeply pining. I might also add that couples

a couple talking about divorce because they are now both working from home and keep tripping into one another's workspace.

I am an anxiety disorder specialist. My patients talk to me about the anxiety they feel often informed by what we therapists call

tients that what makes anxiety a “disorder” is the fact that it is often fueled by irrational thinking. However, with respect to Covid-19, it pains me to tell my patients that what they are experiencing is not necessarily irrational anxiety (such as a fear that you will fail your next math exam even though you have a record of stellar math achievement) but authentic fear. It strikes me as disingenuous to tell my patients to use Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to identify and challenge their irrational, negative thoughts when, indeed, the risk of death from Covid-19 is a real possibility for all of

my patients' fears and not urging them to challenge them. I strongly encourage my patients to use dog companions and healthy distractions (long walks in nature) to remediate the righteous fear.

Finally, a painful common theme reported by my patients during this dystopian time, is a pattern of sleep disturbance rife with anxious ruminations. Many of my patients report awakening at

anxious brain is one that pines to “put the puzzle pieces away.” In other words, their active brains are working hard to contain the confounding variables fueled by Covid-19 yet are unable to do so. An essential mental health take-away, from my 35 years of psychotherapy practice, during this pandemic is be to kind to yourself. Neither over-pathologize your mental state nor under-estimate the pain you are in. There are good people out there succumbing to hopelessness because of the real vast unknown. Please know that you are in good company. I entreat my patients to keep our San Diego Access and Crisis Line close at hand: 888-724-7240.

International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, 2020

During the Dual Crisis of Opioid Overdose & COVID-19 A New PATH is Raising Awareness About the Critical Need for Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Services in Our Community. On 8/31/20 families held vigils to honor those who have lost their lives to an overdose, solutions that save lives such as expanding access to naloxone, a safe drug that reverses an overdose, and making medication assisted treatment more available. Through our Moms United to End the War on Drugs national campaign "Ask Mom How to Save a Life" mothers are providing overdose prevention education, training and naloxone / Narcan kits to prevent opioid overdose deaths.

In San Diego we collected pictures of individuals lost to overdose for our Tree of Remembrance, which was displayed at a candlelight vigil at Crown Point Park, held by the La Mesa Chapter of GRASP and A New PATH. Elon Burns gave an overdose prevention training and distributed Narcan kits.

Depression, suicide, homelessness and drug use is rising, and Fentanyl is increasing the numbers of accidental overdoses. "During this pandemic we must not forget our most-at-risk and vulnerable drug dependent populations," said Gretchen Burns Bergman. "The stigma associated with drug use allows punitive tactics to prevail and prevents the adoption of innovative harm reduction strategies that can save lives."

On Aug. 30, John Whitaker of A New PATH LA and Paso Por Paso held a virtual vigil to honor lives lost to overdose. "Naloxone saved my life 5 times. Today, my children have a mother! Today I help others in recovery transition to and regain their lives and families," said Maria Alexander, Center 4 Living and PATH LA.

Moms United to End the War on Drugs is an international campaign of A New PATH to end the violence, mass arrest, incarceration and accidental overdose deaths that are the result of current punitive drug policies. International Overdose Awareness Day, started by the Salvation Army in Australia in 2001, is an opportunity for people around the world to publicly mourn loved ones without guilt or shame. Many participating countries also use this day to send a strong message to current and former drug users that their lives are valued and that no one should ever die from a preventable fatal drug overdose.



Please help support our cause by purchasing a #TooManyMomsMourning reusable face mask for \$20 at anewpath.org/merchandise



A New PATH

A New PATH Is Saving Lives With Narcan Distribution During COVID-19.

On 6/3/20, A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing) delivered 1,344 kits of Narcan to the San Diego County Department to be given to inmates being released early from seven jail facilities in the county due to Covid-19. At the end of May, San Diego County had reduced the jail population from 5,597 to 3,665. Individuals returning to the community after incarceration are 129 times more likely to die of an overdose than the general public. A New PATH created an 8 minute Narcan training video for inmates being released. This will potentially reduce overdose deaths in our community and give inmates a chance at successful reentry.

Naloxone Report By April Ella, Program Manager

As of October 12, 2020, A New PATH has trained over 5600 people and have a reported 1212 opioid overdose reversals. Our program has been running throughout the entirety of the pandemic. You can request a 10 person socially-distanced in-person training or a training on Zoom! Our reach is broad but still limited. If you know anyone who would benefit from an opioid overdose reversal training and naloxone/Narcan kit, please contact April Ella april@anewpath.org.



During this pandemic we must not forget our most at-risk and vulnerable drug dependent populations. It is critically important that we continue to deliver harm reduction and overdose prevention services to the community. Depression, suicide, homelessness and drug use is rising. Fentanyl is increasing the numbers of accidental overdoses. Through our Ask Mom How to Save a Life campaign, A New PATH continues to distribute Narcan, which can quickly reverse an opioid overdose to families, treatment and sober living centers, jails and syringe exchanges. In the past 2 months alone we have saved over 200 lives through our program. As of 10/2/20 we have 1211 lives reported saved through our program.

Moms United Empty Chair



The 8th Annual "Empty Chair at the Holiday Table" Campaign Highlights Human Stories of Loss Caused by the War on Drugs

The holidays can be a particularly painful time for families who are missing a loved one at their holiday gathering. Each holiday season mothers across the globe are joining Moms United to End the War on Drugs "Empty Chair at the Holiday Table" Campaign by sharing photos of an empty chair with a picture of a lost or missing loved one due to the War on Drugs. These photos represent the tens of millions of families that have been ravaged by punitive prohibition policies, whether it is separation due to a loved one's incarceration; an accidental overdose; their being harmed or killed by drug war violence; or their being lost on the streets due to drug problems. Since 2012 Moms United has gathered these photos featuring a chair with a sign and one of these statements: incarceration, accidental overdose, drug war violence, or stigma. They are becoming part of a growing collection of personal stories of loss and as well as a moving and poignant video featuring these haunting pictures. Moms are mobilizing to end the war on drugs, which has been disastrous for our families and communities. Follow and share the campaign on Facebook and Twitter.

VIRTUAL *Event* **Strut for Saving Lives!**

A New PATH Presented the 16th annual “Strut for Sobriety!” celebration of recovery from addictive illness as a Virtual Event: “Strut to Save Lives!” with a live streamed fashion show, shopping & entertainment on 9/26/20.

This uniquely reimagined event, co-chaired by **Liz Crocker** and **Colleen Ruis Ince**, featured a pre-show hour of entertainment, education about treatment and recovery and sponsorship recognition. **Connie Conard** served as Honorary Chair (in honor of Virginia Napierskie). A PATH to Recovery award was presented to **Patty McCarthy**, Executive Director of FAVOR. **Geni Cavitt** (TV personality), **Rory Devine** (NBC SD), **Joe Bauer** (radio personality) and **Tommy Sablan** (KUSI) were guest speakers. At 1pm a live fashion show with singers, dancers, professional models and guest models in recovery was presented by **Gretchen Productions**, featuring Macy’s and local boutiques. Watch parties with social distancing were held in private homes.

September is National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month. “Strut for Saving Lives!” coincided with efforts made throughout the country to end discrimination against individuals who struggle with substance use disorders. Addictive illness is a public health problem that affects millions of Americans regardless of age, cultural background, race or profession.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the overwhelming success of this event, which benefits A New PATH’s efforts to reduce the stigma associated with substance use disorders in order to increase access to quality treatment services, as well as to continuing our lifesaving overdose prevention training and Narcan distribution project.



Save These Dates!

March 19, 2021 – A New PATH is proud to partner with the Vista Hill Foundation to present a uniquely reimagined fashion show with social distancing at the Town & Country Hotel.

September 25, 2021 – A New PATH is looking forward to presenting Strut for Sobriety! at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina.

For more information: www.anewpath.org

TOO MANY MOMS MOURNING *By Gretchen Burns Bergman – September 1, 2020*

In the middle of the dual crisis of COVID-19 and opioid overdose, the systemic racism of our criminal justice system raised its ugly head with the police killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, after a long line of violent and unjust law enforcement incidents. To remain silent was simply no longer an option, so people have taken to the streets to condemn racism and demand justice.

Mothers across the cultural spectrum mourn the loss of their children to an overarching and punitive criminal justice system and incarceration, but dramatically more so in black communities, where it has become infuriatingly normalized to have a father in prison. African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites.

My two sons struggled for decades with addiction to heroin, although they were born to white privilege. My older son was arrested for possession of marijuana when he was 20 years old, and spent 11 years cycling in and out of prison for non-violent drug offenses and relapse. He is a survivor of both incarceration and accidental overdose. My younger son was also damaged by criminal justice involvement, which created significant roadblocks to recovery. Both were stigmatized and criminalized, and our family struggled with societal shame, mounting financial pressures and emotional pain.

The drug war is a war on people and it was designed to control and harm people of color. It has cost over a trillion dollars over the past 4+ decades, and created a system of mass arrest and incarceration, disproportionately affecting black and brown communities.

Moms who have gone through immense hardships to migrate to another country so that their children have a chance to live and prosper are having their sons and daughters torn from them when they arrive in the United States. We have a humanitarian crisis at our border.

Mothers who were found to be using drugs, despite any evidence of child neglect or abuse, have had their children taken away by Child Protective Services and placed in foster care, a flawed system that during COVID-19 can affect a parent's ability to even visit their child. Besides the trauma of separation, removing a child can be a missed opportunity to provide a treatment incentive for the parent. These policies have had a deeply harmful effect on communities of color and poverty. Moms are deeply grieving the loss of a loved one to overdose. A person dies every 11 minutes of an overdose in the US today. This is particularly frustrating and enraging as many of these overdose deaths could have been prevented with harm reduction strategies and naloxone (a safe drug that can quickly reverse an opioid overdose).

And although our country has endured decades of blatant prejudice and injustice to communities of color by the criminal justice complex, most recently and vividly we heard George Floyd call out for his mama as he was being slowly murdered by a police officer who held him down with a knee on his neck for almost 9 minutes.

My sons are now in their forties, and both are in long-term recovery, working as drug and alcohol counselors. Together we advocate for harm reduction strategies and an end to the failed war on drugs. They came through my body and will forever be connected to my spirit and soul. We all are human beings and we share the fact that we all have a mother who brought us into this world. So, it's time to listen to moms. We see, feel, smell and taste when our children are harmed. We hope, we fear, we experience sadness and joy as our children go through their life experiences.

We understand the intersection of racism, the war on poverty, immigrant and LGBTQ prejudicial policies and the drug war. Silence creates a form of acceptance, so we must speak out for tolerance and equality, particularly when times are tough and we fear we no longer have a voice. If we hesitate and fail to protect the rights of others and look away in a self-protective stance, we will have lost our humanity, and in the process, evil will have won over good. Now more than ever, we need to work in coalition and with respect for one another.

We must all raise our voices for change together because we are losing far too many precious lives. Moms must be vigilant in promoting and protecting humane and life affirming policies, and in resisting all forms of hatred and bigotry. Too many moms are mourning.

Gretchen Burns Bergman is Co-Founder / Executive Director of A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing), and Lead organizer of Moms United to End the War on Drugs. www.momsunited.net

This article appeared in the San Diego Union Tribune 7/14/20





Moms United to End the War on Drugs #moms2020vision & #TooManyMomsMourning



May 10 Interview with Gretchen Burns Bergman and her two sons Aaron Burns & Elon Burns



May 15 interview Moms United to End the War on Drugs and Moms Stop the Harm Canada with Caroline Stewart, Gretchen Bergman, Leslie McBain & Jennifer Howard



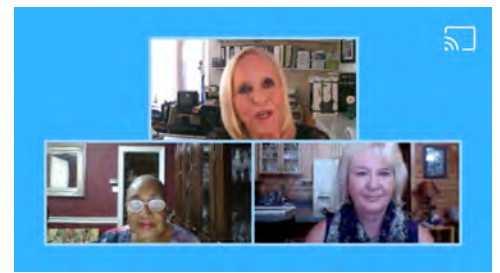
May 22 Interview with Moms United in the US and Recovering Justice in the UK with Julia Negron, Gretchen Bergman & Fiona Gilbertson



May 29 interview with 3 Moms United Steering Committee Members: Gretchen Bergman, Karen Garrison and Sharon Ravert.



June 26 interview with Diane Goldstein, Jessica McElfresh and Gretchen Bergman



July 31 conversation with moms united representatives G. Rosaline Preudhomme and Colleen Cowles

#TooManyMomsMourning



August 28th interview with 3 moms who lost their child to overdose with Shawn Norton, Dianne Carden-Glen & Patricia Rosen



September 14 Strut for Saving Lives interview with Gretchen Bergman, April Ella and Krista King



October 9 Conversation with Hanna Liebman Dershowitz, Christina Dent and Gretchen Bergman

Please watch these videos on momsunited.net

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We invite you to join us!

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MISSION STATEMENT

To reduce the stigma associated with addictive illness through education and compassionate support and to advocate for therapeutic rather than punitive drug policies.

WHO WE ARE

A non-profit advocacy organization of parents, concerned citizens, individuals in recovery, healthcare professionals and community leaders working together to educate the public, media and decision makers about the true nature of addiction, and to expand access to treatment services. We advocate to end discriminatory drug policies that serve as roadblocks to recovery. Our goal is to reduce prison recidivism, save lives, heal families, and move towards a healthier society.

ATTENTION PATH MEMBERS

For immediate and up-to-date information, please send us your e-mail address and we can inform you electronically!

Contact april@anewpath.org

HISTORY

PATH grew out of a series of pre-Substance Abuse Summit meetings with parents, Superior Court Judges and Officers of the criminal justice system in the Spring of 1999. Founding members are Gretchen Burns Bergman, Sylvia Liwerant and Tom O'Donnell.

PATH WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

Alliance Healthcare Foundation
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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
S.D. County Supervisor Ron Roberts
Transforming Youth Recovery
The Thursday Club
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Diego

For their generous support!

OUR PROPOSALS FOR THERAPEUTIC JUSTICE

1. Long-term rehabilitation in a structured therapeutic community-based recovery environment for non-violent drug offenders.
2. If the nature of the crime does not allow for this, alternative, sentencing should include immediate placement in a rehabilitation and recovery program within the prison system.
3. Upon release from prison or structured recovery homes, individuals with substance-related disorders should be offered transitional programs, such as sober living environments and outpatient services, to prepare them to re-enter society.



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