

Mothers of addicts look to each other for support in Marlborough

<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/article/20150321/NEWS/150329064/1995/NEWS/?Start=2>

- [• Beating addiction, behind bars](#)
- **By Danielle Ameden/Daily News Staff**

Posted Mar. 21, 2015 at 7:16 PM

Updated Mar 21, 2015 at 7:17 PM

MARLBOROUGH – As the mother of two addicts, Kris Long believes it’s only a matter of time before one of them dies from a heroin overdose.

“I’m not going to be shocked. It’s not going to surprise me. It’s almost inevitable,” she told a group of other mothers Saturday. And while she would be devastated, she knows she is doing everything she can to prevent it.

“I’m not going to blame myself.”

Long and the other women shared similar stories during a breakfast meeting of the Massachusetts chapter of The Addict’s Mom.

About 400 mothers and other loved ones have joined the state’s chapter of the national support group. Coming from Marlborough or Ashland or far as West Springfield, more than a dozen of them met at Embassy Suites Saturday to talk about how to help their addicted children.

Cheryl Juaire of Marlborough, who lost a son to drug addiction, said an event taking place on May 17 across the country called “Walk A Mile In My Shoes” will help raise awareness about the problem and stomp out the stigma around the disease.

Juaire is also starting a local support group of GRASP, or Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing, because the need, she said, “is so incredible.”

“It’s hurting my heart how many people I know to refer,” said Tiffany Wallace, of Ashland, whose daughter is a heroin addict in recovery.

Wallace, who co-founded HEROin U – MetroWest Opioid Task Force, is involved in presenting a discussion on addiction and free screening of the documentary “The Anonymous People,” on April 2 at 7 p.m. at Ashland High School.

Members of The Addict’s Mom group said it will take the state Legislature’s help to solve the drug epidemic and commit more resources to rehabilitating addicts.

Susan Benoit, of West Springfield, said she's been dealing with an "insurance nightmare" trying to get help for her son and struggling to find him a bed in treatment and recovery programs.

Long, who lives in Foxborough and serves as the Massachusetts group's administrator, said she thinks her daughter is safer locked up in jail right now.

While many voiced feelings of helplessness, Matt Ganem, a recovering heroin addict who is eight years clean, urged the mothers to keep the faith.

Ganem said the system in Massachusetts is broken right now, but as an outreach coordinator for Wicked Sober, he works to help other addicts recover.

"It absolutely can happen and it's a beautiful thing," he said.

Now in long-term recovery, Danielle Boland of Southborough said she's also an addict who works to help others, providing interventions and family coaching.

She said the problem of drug addiction is bigger than people realize and the stigma needs to go away.

"Everyone knows someone, but I still think it's the whole 'It's not going to happen to my kid' or 'They must have done something wrong,'" she said.

Phillip Parlee came to the meeting with his mom Joyce Ferreira, of Lowell, and proudly stated he was 141 days clean.

The 31-year-old said heroin was really his downfall, but he is committed to sobriety.

"I feel bad about all the stuff I put everybody through," Parlee said, recounting that his drug addiction started when he began smoking marijuana when he was 10 years old. He then started using club drugs, prescription drugs and opiates before his mom got him help.

"Tough love actually did work for me," he said.

Danielle Ameden can be reached at 508-626-4416 or dameden@wickedlocal.com. Follow her on Twitter @damedenMW.