

# Living Proof Recovery Journal

*Written for us, by us...*



3rd Edition, Volume 1

Greetings,

I would like to give an update on the progress of our program. For the last two months, Living Proof Recovery Center has been implementing a program that is designed to help adolescents and teenagers, ages twelve to nineteen, in Camden and Gloucester Counties. We are proud to work with other Center For Family Services programs to make a change in the South Jersey. We are currently looking for volunteers that are interested in working with the youth, and are looking forward to having the program up and running by mid-December.

In addition, there will be a family workshop that will help individuals who are dealing with addiction within their household. The Recovery Center is constantly looking to bridge the service gap by helping those in need in our community. In closing, I would like to leave you with a quote:

*"We can accomplish many things, once we learn to get out of our own way." -Francis M.*

Sincerely,

John Thompson

Program Director

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**Develop a support system at the Recovery Center**

## My Love for Chocolate

No, I am not about to share a story about my battle with weight loss. I'm not about to discuss my love for a decadent piece of cake or gooey chocolate chip cookies. What I am about to share is an addiction to a form of chocolate that caused issues in my marriage and almost caused me to lose my mind for good.

I was a mother, a wife and an active member in my church. I had a prominent position working for the State of New York. During an ordinary day at work, a colleague introduced me to a form of marijuana called "chocolate" on the streets. It tasted and smelled just like chocolate, and after the first try, I was hooked. I didn't know the details of what was in it, where he got it, or how he managed to get it passed all of the security in the building. All I knew was I wanted more.

It wasn't until recently I learned chocolate is a mix of marijuana, opium and amphetamines. The high was immediate and like nothing I had ever experienced before. I went from smoking a joint to a blunt a day. I felt myself getting pulled deeper and deeper in. I started surrounding myself with others that were into chocolate. I got my supply at work and soon discovered a friend's husband was selling it. I frequented their house so much, my husband began to think I was cheating. I assured him I was not (well not with another man), and eventually I introduced him to my other love.

We found ourselves getting high every Friday and Saturday night. The only reason we were not getting high on Sundays was because we were in church, but that changed. We were now getting high and partying through the weekend, smoking chocolate and drinking mudslides.

Things started getting out of control and my husband no longer wanted to be a part of the chocolate trip. The ironic part was when my husband and I met, he was drinking, smoking marijuana, and using cocaine. I ministered to him and invited him to church. He gave his life to Christ and stopped using alcohol and drugs. Now the tables had turned. Now he was trying to minister to me and get me back in the church.

We moved from one part of the Bronx to the other, trying to get away from the elements, but this didn't work. I found new suppliers. I was still purchasing at work and the suppliers from my old neighborhood started making deliveries in my new neighborhood (which didn't go over well with the dealers in the new neighborhood).

I was using so often, I began hallucinating. One day, while walking down the street, I saw a man walking in my path, but before I could move out of the way, the man walked into me. I literally felt he entered inside of me. I thought it was a demon. I became fanatical about asking people if they noticed a change in me, assuming I was possessed with this demon.

I knew what I was doing was not pleasing to God, but I didn't know how to stop. I looked out my window and prayed every night for God to give me the strength to gain control over this addiction. One day I met with a family friend, Pastor Leroy Benton, of True Gospel Tabernacle, in the Bronx, NY. I went to church that Sunday. I got high before and after the service. Although I was still getting high, I joined the church. Pastor Benton had me in church so much, that the only day I wasn't in church was Friday, in which the women in the ministry reached out to me. I didn't have any more free time to spend with my chocolate love. The church held a women's retreat where I felt my life was changed. The Pastor took a hold and prayed for me until I felt the demons cast out.

After two years at the church, my husband decided it was time for a major move, far away from the Bronx and all those things I was familiar with. I left my job, my friends, my suppliers and chocolate marijuana behind. I erased everyone's phone number and information that was a part of that lifestyle and praise be to God, I have been clean and sober ever since.

I have joined a new church and my marriage and family are stronger than ever. I now volunteer at the Center For Family Services, where I help other women with addictions. I know how it feels to be drawn into a situation and lose control, and I know what it feels like to be delivered. These women feel I am a blessing to them, but they are a blessing to me and a constant reminder of where God has brought me from. My faith has been renewed and I have been restored. I bless God for another chance.

-Tasha's Testimony



In picture: Living Proof Program Director John Thompson, CFS President/ CEO Richard Stagliano, NJ Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services Asst. Commissioner Lynn Kovich, Arlene Maiuro, CFS Board Chair John Evans, CFS Vice President of Counseling and Community Service Tony Comito



On Wednesday, September 11th, the Living Proof Recovery Center (LPRC) celebrated it's official grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house. The day was filled with great fellowship among the center's guests which included local public officials, providers, and community members that contributed to the opening of the program. Each guest was given a guided tour of the center, and provided with information about its services, along with an invitation for membership. Among the special guests attending the grand opening was New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Assistant Commissioner Lynn Kovich, who applauded Center For Family Services' work to provide greater access to recovery support services in the community.

Following Commissioner Kovich's remarks, LPRC member Arlene Maiuro spoke about her personal story of recovery. Arlene, who holds a Master's Degree in education, struggled with an addiction to opiate pain medication. When she found herself homeless and with no one to turn to, Arlene reached out to LPRC for help.

"I don't know where I would be if I didn't have this program."

Through the support of LPRC's staff and members, Arlene found stability and a sense of community. She was happy to announce that she now has her own apartment, is looking towards returning to the education field as a substitute teach, and has recently been reunited with her daughter.

"They care. They check in on me to make sure I am safe. When I was hungry they found me food. When I was homeless they found me shelter. They never gave up on me."

**What's going on at the center:**

NA Meetings

AA Meetings

GA Meetings

Living Well Meetings

Mental Wellness Support Group

Line Dancing

Book Club

Resume Building

Peer Mentoring

Yoga

Arts and Crafts

Advocacy Opportunities

Wellness Workshops

and more!

(See our monthly calendar for details)

**Interested in volunteering? Please call 855-967-3268**

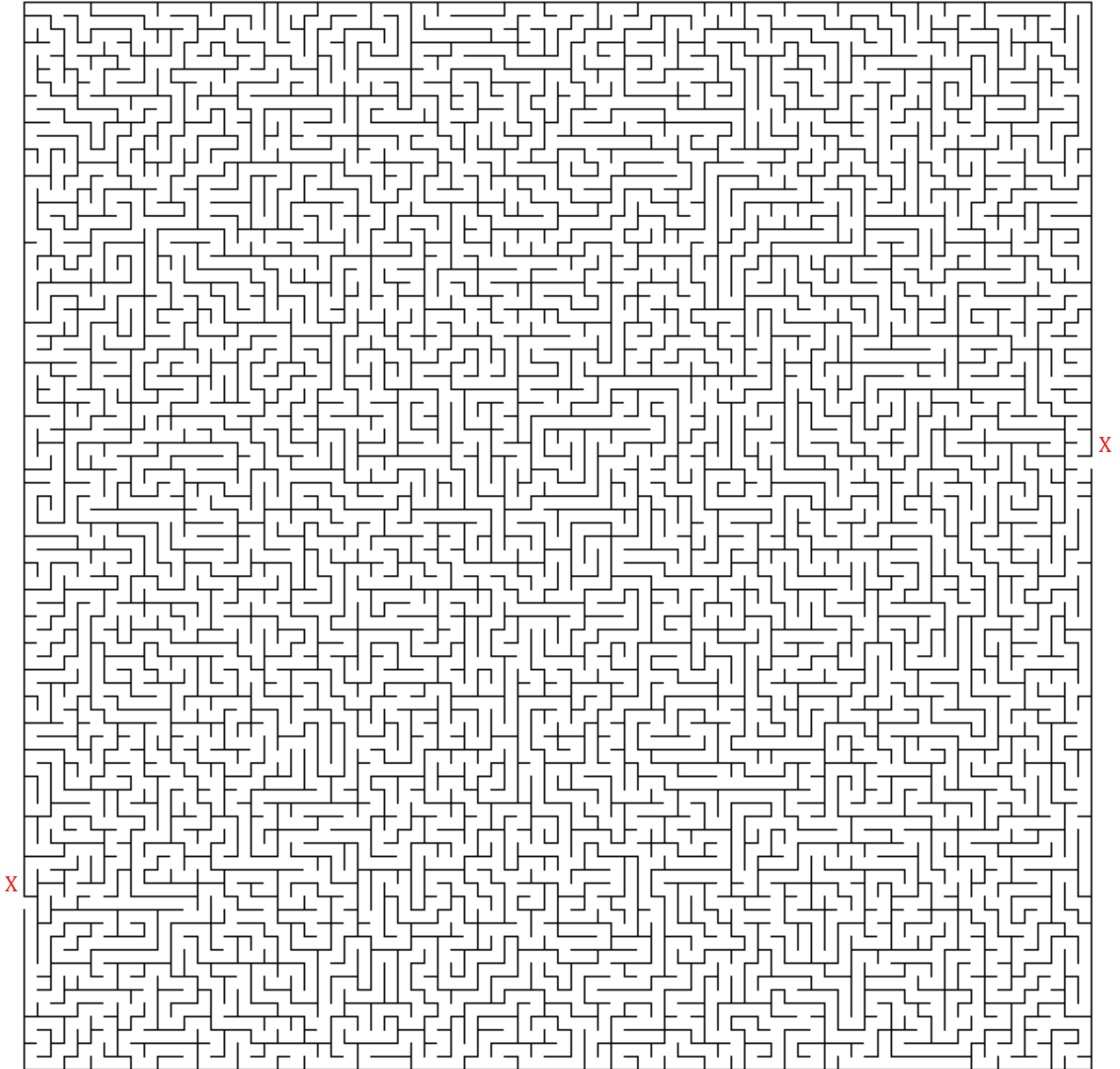
“The big question is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure.”

-Joseph Campbell

## **Possible Benefits of Recovery:**

- ◆ Healthy Living
- ◆ Satisfying Interpersonal Relationships
- ◆ Setting Goals and Going After Them
  - ◆ Financial Security
  - ◆ Taking Responsibility
  - ◆ Recognizing Self-Worth
    - ◆ Finding Purpose
  - ◆ Appreciating Simple Things
    - ◆ Spirituality
  - ◆ Helping Self and Others
    - ◆ Experiencing Life
      - ◆ Resiliency

## Recovery Puzzle



Directions: Start and finish where the red X's are

## “Things You Can Do Every Day to Help Yourself Feel Better”

By Mary Ellen Copeland PhD.

**Do something fun or creative:** crafts, needlework, painting, drawing, woodworking, making a sculpture, reading fiction, comics, mystery novels, inspirational writings, crossword or jigsaw puzzles, playing a game, taking photographs, fishing, going to a movie or other community event, or gardening.

**Get some exercise:** Exercise is a great way to help yourself feel better while improving your overall stamina and health. The right exercise can be enjoyable.

**Write something:** Explore your feelings through writing. It can help you feel better by releasing pent up emotions. Don't worry about how well you write, it's not important. All ways of writing are correct. Find what works best for you and remind yourself that the writing's only for you and no one else has to see it. Writing can allow you to safely process the emotions you are experiencing.

**Use your spiritual resources:** Spiritual resources and making use of these resources varies from person to person. For some people it means praying, going to church, or reaching out to a member of the clergy. For others it is meditating or reading affirmations and other kinds of inspirational materials. It may include rituals and ceremonies—whatever feels right to you. Spiritual work does not necessarily occur within the bounds of an organized religion. Remember, you can be spiritual without being religious.

**Do something routine:** When you don't feel well, it helps to do something “normal”— the kind of thing you do every day or often, things that are part of your routine like taking a shower, washing your hair, making yourself a sandwich, calling a friend or family member, walking the dog, or going food shopping.

**Get some little things done:** It always helps you feel better if you accomplish something, even if it is a very small thing. Think of some easy things to do that don't take much time. Then do them. Some ideas include: clean out one drawer, put five pictures in a photo album, dust a book case, read a page in a favorite book, do a load of laundry.





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Hours of Operation:

Monday: 10 AM- 5 PM

Tuesday: 10 AM- 8:30 PM

Wednesday: 10 AM- 6:00 PM

Thursday: 10 AM- 8:30 PM

Friday: 10 AM- 4 PM

Saturday: Open for Scheduled Meetings

Sunday: 12 PM—5 PM

Special thanks to our volunteers for the content of this newsletter!

