

Rossanna Aldrich, founder of Recover Appalachia

I worked for a Healthcare organization that serves the underserved, people without health insurance, the poorest of the poor, where we struggled daily with limited resources in specialty such a behavioral health for substance abuse.



If there were Rules for Parents of Addicts, I did exactly what I shouldn't do. I paid the money. When my son would tell me he was in trouble because he owed money for drugs... what did I do? I went into panic mode. I could not bear the thought of my son being shot, stabbed or beaten by a drug dealer; in essence, I have been labeled as an enabler.

I even wrote to Dr. Phil and then I was reminded "I'm living in the real world".

It is not easy being labeled as an Enabler and Codependent. Unless you've walked a mile in my shoes with a troubled child then you might not understand my desperation to save my son. I prayed God would open doors and send resources his way.

Being the parent of someone with a drug addiction is one more label I wish I didn't have but I am not alone because every family is affected by drugs in some way. When I started RA Tennessee was ranked 48th in the Nation for Behavioral Health Services and Tennessee hit the mark for having the biggest drug problem in the country.

The United States is experiencing an epidemic when it comes to drug abuse. The Institute of Medicine report showed that over 100 million Americans are dealing with chronic pain, at a cost to the country of over \$540 billion dollars a year.

In 2010 God gave me a vision of this program called "Recover Appalachia". At the time it seemed to be out of reach but never far from my mind. Over the next couple of years God was preparing us for our roles in his plan. So in May of 2012 I lost my job of 10 years at the Healthcare organization then in Sept 2012 my son went to federal prison. I became depressed, withdrawn and even went through a period of mourning as if someone had died.

As my son accepted this life's storm and embraced it as a blessing I on the other hand was falling to pieces. He accepted the Lord at age 14 and has always been gifted with knowledge of the bible. He became like Paul confined within the walls of prison but knew he is a forgiven child of God. He has taken every opportunity to witness too many along the way. One day he called me and said *"Mom, while I am away I will make sure I learn something every day. I am going to take this time to restore my relationship with God where it needs to be. And when you think there is not a blessing in your son coming to federal prison, Mom look for the blessing. Now, I need you to get up and start this support program and target the kids."*

Here I am the mother, the supporter, the encourager, the protector and the teacher. But at that very moment my son was the encourager, teacher and supporter. As I thought about his words I began to realize that he was doing his part and I didn't have a right to sit here and not do mine. I started praying asking God if this is what he had planned for me. How could this happen?! I didn't even have a job but each day that passed the vision became clearer. I promised Jesus that if this was what HE wanted then I would make sure HE was the center of everything we do. I asked others to pray and one day out of the blue I received an email from another child of God. She said she had been praying and she and her family believed God wanted them to help start this program. So Recover Appalachia was born and as we walk on this path of recovery together I pray God will give us all renewed hope and confidence and when peace, forgiveness and understanding seems impossible--- HE will remind us it is indeed possible.

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