

A HEARTFELT INDEPENDENCE DAY STORY

DOCTORS, DETOX TEAM TO DONATE SERVICES TO HELP LAS VEGAS WOMAN

Her Desire to Stop Using Heroin is So Strong; We Were Compelled to Help Her, Says Doctor

For more than 25 years, Lynn, a part time bookkeeper, Independence Day and just about every day was filled with the fireworks of heroin addiction. For this Independence Day, a group of doctors, nurses and counselors from Los Angeles are donating their time and resources to put the Las Vegas resident's hellish fire out for good.

"I have been clean for as long as six months at a time, but always found an excuse to shoot up again. Heroin is my personal demon," said Lynn, a mother to a 37-year-old daughter and 20-year-old son along with two stepchildren. "During the darkest hours of my struggle, I isolated myself from the world and those who care most about me just so I could hide my drug use. I have done things that I now make me feel ashamed just for one more fix. If I knew then what I know now I would have never used heroin that first time."

At 26, Lynn unknowingly married a heroin addict. A fisherman by trade, he was gone at sea for months at a time. He easily hid his drug use from the San Diego native. Later, she began shooting up heroin to make her feel good and accepted by others only to lose her hard won self respect and tumble down the slippery slope of physical and psychological dependence. She later divorced him after enduring years of physical abuse. She is currently married, but separated from her estranged husband who is addicted to methadone.

"When I first tried heroin, it felt good for a while, but it quickly deteriorates into hell. In the darkest hours of my illness, I felt like the walking dead. I had no hope for the future or that I would ever overcome my struggle with heroin. I disappointed my children and set a terrible example for them. Now I have hope I never dreamed possible. I look forward to giving back, sharing my story and working with the elderly. I also want to date again and share my life with someone I care about."

Lynn will undergo a rapid-like detox onto Naltrexone therapy. The Naltrexone implant, contains non-addicting medication that helps to prevent cravings and provide opiate-blockage up to 10 weeks. Lynn will return every 8-10 weeks for repeat implants for up to twelve months. "Naltrexone is a good tool to use when a patient begins on the road of recovery. It provides a safety net to keep a patient from falling on the bad days, said Stuart Finkelstein, M.D., an Addiction Medicine Specialist in Cerritos with The Coleman Institute who is volunteering to provide care. "The implant also provides the patients with a sense of powerfulness over their addiction. It allows them to remain focused on the better choices they must make towards their recovery." She will also begin counseling and locate support services to help with the psychological effects of her addiction.

"The implant is an insurance policy against herself and her desires and cravings for heroin," said Dr. Finkelstein.

Lynn learned about The Coleman Institute from a small advertisement in free newspaper advertising career opportunities. For more than six months, she called Michelle Walters, Director of Operations at the Institute pleading for help. Impressed by her sincere tenacity and compelling story, The Coleman Institute's physicians, nurses and counselors will donate their time and resources to help the financially strapped Lynn finally overcome the stronghold of her addiction. Along with helping her physical detox from the opiate, the addiction specialists will help her rejuvenate her life and help coordinate an aftercare plan to help teach her skills to live a sober lifestyle. Lynn will undergo treatment June 26-30 in Cerritos.

"I am more grateful than they will ever know for donating their services to me," said Lynn, 55. "I want to share my story and warn others of the dangers of addiction. If I help even one person, I am happy."

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