

Subject: Re: where can I find Past Articles/stories
From: Chesterton Tribune (chestertontrib@earthlink.net)
To: surviving_straight_inc@yahoo.com;
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Is this the one?

Pathway drug treatment center closes suddenly

By VICKI URBANIK

Seven months after moving to its new location in Porter, the Pathway Family Center's drug treatment program for adolescents is shutting down in Porter County.

Bob Taylor, coordinator of the Porter County Drug Task Force Unit and a local Pathway board member, said it's his understanding that the facility on Canonie Drive closed Thursday. He said Pathway has also closed its facilities in Ohio and Michigan for the same reason -- inability of families to pay for the treatment.

³Financially, I don't think people could afford it,² he said, citing the current economic climate. ³The whole thing is a mess.²

Another Pathway board member, Community Action Drug Coalition President Dr. Mann Spitler, said when the CADC first approached Pathway about branching into Porter County, Pathway projected that it would need \$1.2 million to operate a local facility. Pathway, a non-profit organization, provided \$120,000, while local sources contributed another \$512,000, including \$200,000 in county economic development income tax funds.

However, Spitler said with expenses totaling \$899,000 through the end of June, the total funding wasn't enough.

³They just couldn't sustain it,² he said.

Both Taylor and Spitler agreed that the troubled economy is the main reason for Pathway's closing. Spitler noted that Pathway has never turned away anyone for treatment, but that many families still felt they couldn't afford the services even when offered on a sliding scale. Taylor said if families did have private insurance to cover the costs of drug treatment, many have lost that coverage due to job losses.

Spitler also said that a federal loan program that helped cover the costs of adolescent treatment came to an end more than a year ago, making it even more difficult for families to get the help they need. Taylor said the need for an intensive adolescent drug treatment programs definitely has not gone away in Northwest Indiana. He cited an increase in thefts from vehicles in north Porter County; the thefts are attributed to the drug problem, he said, as thieves take small change and pawn the stolen goods in order to buy drugs.

³Hopefully, Washington will wake up and see that the problems they think they're solving are getting worse, not better,² he said.

Pathway came to Porter County with much fanfare, with the CADC identifying the Pathway program as one of its priorities and with bi-partisan support from county officials to award the \$200,000 in one-time program start-up costs. Taylor said he believes those county funds have been spent and cannot be recovered.

After receiving the county funding in 2007, Pathway opened a temporary facility in Chesterton that provided services such as drug screening, clinical assessment, and a 24-hour parent help line. Last December, Pathway announced that it assumed a lease from McDaniel Fire Systems for a 9,000 square foot building at 804 Canonie Drive in Porter. The agreement relieved the organization from

having to pay rent or utilities until May.

Despite the closing of Pathway, Spitler remains optimistic that local programs can help put a dent in the drug problem.

Last year, CADC hosted its inaugural Manda's Race, named in memory of Spitler's daughter who died after a heroin overdose. The event raised about \$5,000, a portion of which was donated to the Chesterton based Frontline Foundations, a faith-based treatment program for 18 to 25 year olds; Spitler said the funding provided scholarships for two people to get drug treatment. The CADC has also contributed to Chesterton High School teacher Dave Milligan's substance abuse class. Spitler said the CADC will continue to support the smaller scale projects. ³I'm very hopeful we can expand on what we already have here,² he said.

Porter County officials have said that combating drug use has been a top priority. In May, the Porter County Council approved a recommendation from the commissioners for \$458,665 in income tax funds for a new men's halfway house in Valparaiso for those recovering from addictions. But unlike the county funding awarded for Pathway, the halfway house funding came with an agreement that if the halfway house fails, its assets would revert to Porter County.

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