

## **Faith Community Updates to the Task Force on Heroin Prevention**

### **September 2013**

The churches of Simi Valley are working to be an important part of solving the addictions that affect so many families. We have been intimately involved with these problems for many years. We have had the joy of seeing people overcome addiction, and experience the pain of walking to a graveside with mothers and fathers whose children have lost their battle with drugs or alcohol. We offer the following list of resources as opportunities to assist the families of our community.

#### **1. Blended Families**

A workshop for Blended Families is beginning on September 24 on the first and third Tuesday of each month at Simi Hills Christian Church, 4307 Walnut Ave. Simi Valley 93063 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This provides a forum to answer questions and offer help and resources for parents and children who are experiencing the challenges of step parenting.

About half of the 60 million children living under the age of thirteen are currently living with one biological parent and that parent's partner. We have become a nation of step-families and the step-family will not and cannot function as does a natural family. It has its own special state of dynamics and behaviors. It becomes difficult for step parent to find a role and relationship with a step child and understand the fact that the children are not yours and they never will be. We are stepparents, not replacement parents. Mother and father (no matter how AWFUL the natural parents) are sacred words and feelings. Yet in this position the stepparent still plays a significant role in the development of the child and the relationship between the child and the natural parent. Issues of money, discipline, the prior spouse, visitation, authority, emotional support, territory and custody become a source for conflict, resentment and separation between parents and children.

#### **2. Single Moms**

This offers an opportunity for single moms to meet together for support, encouragement, and enjoyment. They meet on the first Saturday evening of every month in the Simi Town Center's Community room from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for dinner and entertainment. Child care is provided in the Center by "Rockin' Kids," "Kid Gloves Boxing," and "Gotta Dance."

#### **3. Simi Valley Schools**

The youth Pastors of Simi Valley want to take the opportunity offered by the Superintendent of schools to visit the various Middle Schools and High Schools of Simi Valley during the lunch period. The intent will be to meet adolescents and develop healthy relationships while encouraging them to abstain from addictive life choices that have detrimental long term effects. The goal of the youth pastors will not be to proselytize or develop converts, rather our purpose will be to serve as role models for adolescents in a generation where role models are scarce.

#### **4. Recovery Meetings**

Meetings throughout the city designed for those who desire to interact with mentors and will benefit from accountability and encouragement from qualified leaders equipped to address struggles with addictions. There are several Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings held in different locations and times throughout the city. Understanding we live in an

addictive culture, the churches are offering more of a biblical based approach to overcoming all addictions through meetings such as Celebrate Recovery, The Door to Recovery, and Overcomers.

Celebrate Recovery meets at Grace Brethren Church on Wednesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Overcomers meets at Live Ride on Fridays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Door to Recovery meets at Simi Hills Christian Church on Thursdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

### **5. Master's Academy (Performing Arts)**

This offers professional instruction in piano, voice, drums, percussion, guitar, bass, wind and brass instruments from beginning to advanced level by professional accredited teachers. The academy offers both private lessons and group classes. Scholarships are available to help almost any family with music instruction. We also offer some free classes to beginning students based on class availability. Students have opportunities for public performances and to meet other musicians to become part of ensembles and bands.

### **6. Open Gym Nights (Sports)**

One night each month the churches will host an Open Gym Night at various schools in the community for the youth to come and play basketball, dodgeball or other sports. This will provide an opportunity during the week for the youth to 'hang out' in a safe environment and have fun.

### **7. Mic Check**

Mic Check is an event designed to showcase talent in the arts through poetry, acoustic sets, live street art paintings, and other forms of music and lyricism. It's our hope that teens and young adults are inspired to utilize their gifts and talents to build up the community of Simi Valley. The goal would be to encourage and walk alongside people interested in developing their musical skills through aspects of recording and the assistance of perfecting their performing arts. We believe the arts are a powerful tool which must be utilized by the churches in the community to discourage addictive behaviors by providing creative outlets in place of destructive ones. At Simi Valley Town Center on the first and third Saturday of each month from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

### **8. The Landing**

The Landing is a youth group for students who have unique life situations that have caused behavior and attitude difficulties, such as addiction, suicidal thoughts, anger issues, depression, or any behaviors that interfere with normal development. The Landing deals with establishing good habits and satisfying, trusting relationships in a 52 week program that focuses on correcting thought patterns and listening with loving, supportive ears. This provides an opportunity for youth between the ages of 12 to 18 to have a place where they can meet to address the challenges of addictions. Meetings will be held at Simi Community Church on Sundays at 7:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.

### **9. Men's**

Boys are future men. Men are present examples. It is imperative that we take great care in how we invest in young men. Men from different churches in Simi Valley are planning outings,

events, and functions to provide opportunities for boys, sons, and fathers to develop godly character, and to equip them to understand what manhood really is. We will provide opportunities and encouragement for boys and men to be loving, positive influences in their families, among friends, and in the community.

#### **10. Street Lights**

This is a new combined effort of the churches to help meet the needs of the community by seeking out residents of Simi Valley who have real needs either around the home or with the family in the way of food, clothes, transportation, employment or encouragement. The churches will spend time and effort within their immediate neighborhoods to be a positive influence in the community.

#### **11. Care Ministries**

The churches of Simi Valley offer benevolence to care for the needs of the community. It encompasses counseling needs, financial needs, hospital visitations, funerals and outreach to the homeless. It also includes working with families affected by addictions.

#### **12. Simi Valley Rehabilitation Center**

A California LLC has purchased a piece of property with the intent to build a rehabilitation center for men and women who are willing to recover from addictions. This organization currently is operating several other homes throughout Southern California. However, a formal application has not been submitted to the City at this time.