

A communication periodical for our clients, staff & the community at large

# The Chronicle

A Paterson Counseling Center Newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- Methadone is the preferred choice for treating Heroin Addiction
- PCC Counselors Are Licensed and Certified
- PCC Has A Fully Accredited and Licensed Nursing Staff
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## A Story About A Girl Name Erin

Erin's problems started at about age 15 with alcohol. What started out innocently quickly turned into a full blown addiction. Erin fought her alcohol addiction for 3 years. She had been in and out of about 6 different rehabs, some of them 2 and 3 times. She had dropped out of high school and at one point was court ordered to a rehab in western Maryland. She was there for 90 days and while in treatment she got her G.E.D. When Erin got out she was able to stay clean for a year and a half. It seemed she had finally gotten her life together. She got a job and a car and she enrolled at Del. Tech.

One night while attending an AA meeting someone offered Erin Heroin. For whatever reason Erin tried it. She told me later that she was addicted after the first time. The first time she snorted the drug but it was soon after that she began using a needle.

Erin continued to use heroin for 2 years. She drove to Philly, into Kensington Everyday, sometimes more than once a day. She put herself in a lot of dangerous situations going up there. Erin was spending about \$250 a day on heroin and cocaine, and she did whatever she had to do to get that money. She sold everything she owned, she sold other peoples things, she stole from her family and her friends. She eventually started selling the drugs to support her own habit.

At one point when Erin was very deep into her addiction, she got very sick. She had a heart attack in Philadelphia, her weight was down to 98 lbs. and she had trouble breathing so she had to use an inhaler to breathe properly. At that time she was seeing a therapist who suggested that she start going to the methadone clinic. Erin took his advice. She went there for about 4 months but at the same time she was still using heroin, just not as often. She got tired of going to the clinic everyday and standing in line for sometimes hours for the methadone and she decided to get off the methadone and the heroin and get some serious help.

She put herself in detox and was there for a week. Then the state sent her to a long term treatment center. Erin arrived at the center on a Friday, my husband and I went to visit her on Sunday to bring her clothes and personal things. On Monday Erin's cravings for heroin were so intense, so overwhelming that she ran away from the center, she hitchhiked to my place of business and she stole my car. She went to Kensington and while she was there she had the car stolen from her, she was beaten, raped and left in the streets. A lady found Erin and brought her to her house, cleaned her up fed her and told her she could use the phone if she needed to call someone. Erin called Pat, she is a family therapist who had been working with our family. She told Pat that she desperately needed help. Pat picked Erin up and gave her two choices. she could turn herself in for the car theft or she could continue to live the way she had been living.

Erin chose to turn herself in. At her bail hearing my husband begged the judge to make her

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Erin **1**

## Erin (Continued)

bail so high that she shouldn't be able to get out, which he did. I remember her calling me that night begging me to bail her out of jail, we couldn't do it because we knew that this was our last chance to keep her alive.

At her hearing for the felony car theft, my husband told the judge he would drop the charges if Erin could get some kind of help for her addiction. The judge agreed and sentenced Erin to the Crest. The Crest is a treatment center that is part of the prison system. There weren't any beds available right away so Erin had to spend 5 months in the women's prison. While she was in prison we got to see Erin one hour a week. Erin spent Christmas in prison that year but not with her family because it wasn't a visiting day. Finally a bed became available at the Crest and Erin was accepted. She was there for 4 months when she had gotten far enough in the program to get out on work release. She got a job at a coffee shop. She would go to work in the morning and then back to the Crest after work. By this time Erin had been clean, drug free for 9 months.

Erin called me one night and asked me to take her to work the next day. She needed to get some blood work done before work and was afraid if she took the bus she would be late. I picked Erin up at the Crest that morning and we went to get her blood work done. When she came out of the office she was clearly upset. She was shaking, sobbing and doubled over with stomach pains. It was like she was going through withdrawal. She told me that as soon as the nurse put the needle in her arm to get the blood it triggered something and made her think about using heroin again. I tried to tell Erin to put it out of her mind, to not think about it. I found out later that it was easier said than done.

We went out to the car and Erin put in this Pink Floyd tape and this song "Wish You Were Here". Out of the blue Erin said to me "Mom, I love this song, if I ever die will you play it at my funeral?" I said I would if I was still around, and that we had no reason to be talking about funerals.

We got her to work and it was still early, Erin brought me into the Franciscan center which was right next door to where she worked. Erin told me she went there every morning to pray and meditate and get her head clear before work. We sat in this little chapel and talked for a while. Erin seemed to be feeling a little better. I didn't want to leave her but I had to get to work. Erin walked me out to my car. She gave me a hug and a kiss and she said "I love you mom". I said "I love you too". As I was getting in the car I said "Wait Erin you forgot your Pink Floyd tape". She said "that's alright, hold on to it".

I watched her go into work. Later that night I got a call from the Crest. They said Erin never returned from work. They said if she wasn't back by 11 o'clock they were going to put a warrant out for her arrest.

I found out months later that Erin did call the Crest that morning. She told she was having a difficult time, they sent a couple of counselors out to talk with her but apparently they thought she was well enough to stay at work.

When I got off the phone with the Crest I started to think about that morning and how much pain Erin was in and I got worried. I called my friend Pat in Philly, and asked her to go to Kensington to look for Erin. She went out looking a few nights. Then one night she spotted Erin in Kensington and they made eye contact. Erin jumped into a car with someone and took off. Pat tried to catch up to them but they lost her. That was the first time Erin had run away from help.

Later I was at work when I got a phone call from the Philadelphia coroners office, they said they had my daughter, she was dead from an apparent heroin overdose. I called my husband and I called Pat, she came down from Philly to get us. When we got to the office it was the most impersonal experience I had ever had. I felt like to them this was just another dead junkie, this is something they see every day. We didn't get to hold Erin, or touch her. They just put my husband and I in a room, turned off the lights and turned on a computer screen.

On the screen was Erin's face. Source: [heroinalert.org](http://heroinalert.org)