



December 2007

From Addiction to Spiritual Recovery

By Terence Flynn

Addictions are a serious problem in our society. Frequently we think the problem is the addict's alone or those closely associated with the addict. The problem is much greater. Think of an

Bellwood Presents Eating Disorders Specialist Joan Johnston, MD, FCFP

As part of *Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2008*, Dr. Joan Johnston will be joining Bellwood for 2 eating disorders education workshops.

Dr. Johnston is a family physician from Edmonton with a practice that focuses on working with individuals afflicted with eating disorders. Her expertise comes from more than 2 decades of personal recovery from anorexia nervosa.

On Monday evening, February 4, 2008, Bellwood will host an *Eating Disorders Community Awareness Evening* facilitated by Dr. Johnston. This is a **FREE** public presentation, open to all members of the community, including individuals struggling with eating disorders, families and friends, educators, the general public, and anyone working with individuals struggling with an eating disorder

On Tuesday, February 5, Dr. Johnston will present "*Eating Disorders as Addiction*", a 1-day clinical workshop in which she will show how eating disorders can be viewed as similar in many respects to chemical dependency, and how approaching these disorders using the addiction model and the 12-Step Program promises new hope for recovery to those afflicted.

For more information about these workshops, or to register, contact Jennifer Teran at (416) 495-0926, Ext. 165, toll free (800) 387-6198, or email jteran@bellwood.ca.

addiction as a pebble. When the pebble is tossed in the pond, the ripples it creates begin small but continue to become larger and larger before they reach shore. The addiction is the pebble and our society is the pond. The rippling and devastating effects of addictions ultimately affect everyone. It's most deadly effect is that it leads to loss of meaning, purpose, self-worth and enthusiasm for life.

Twenty years ago, Anne Wilson Shaeff wrote a book entitled, *When Society Becomes An Addict*. She wrote there are "millions of persons in this country affected by the diseases of addictions and co-dependence and these diseases are reaching epidemic proportions . . . producing early death and unhappy, destructive and destroyed persons."¹

Two decades later, the ripples of addiction have spread even further into our societal pond. We are seeing even more death, unhappiness, destructive and destroyed persons resulting from addictions and co-dependence. In the past twenty years we have become a society that is increasingly focused on product. Consumerism has escalated and we have been lulled into an addictive belief that enough is never enough. In many cases, we sacrifice our quality of life in favour of the pursuit of more and more products. A high percentage of individuals and families live beyond their means and are heavily in debt. In the past twenty years, fast food restaurant portions are estimated to be 2 to 5 times larger.² The size and extent of our shopping malls and big box stores are monuments to our pursuit of products. As a society, we are just beginning to awaken to how much of the world's oil, gasoline, water and electricity we consume. We are a society with addictive tendencies manifested in our consumerism and consumption.

Marketing and advertising strategies aim to

convince us that our happiness and peace is contingent upon amassing more and more product. The product is presented as the thing to give us a fulfilled life. The fulfillment never completely arrives and we begin to discover they do not necessarily deliver the happiness and peace for which we long and search. We consume and consume and our thirst is never sated.

When our thirst for inner peace, happiness and fulfillment is not satisfied by products and consumerism, it is an easy transition to search for these in addictive substances such as alcohol and drugs or in addictive behaviours such as gambling, sex or eating. It is hardly surprising then that addicts are on the rise in our society.

The rise in addicts and the prevalence of addictive thinking suggests that we have a problem as a society and we are attempting to medicate it through addictive thinking and behaviours. *... continued P. 2*

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... From Addiction *continued from P. 1*

In the period between 1994 and 2004, the Canadian Addiction Survey (Health Canada) reported heavy drinking up from 8.7% to 12.5%.

Society today is not evil, rather it is a little like the male species of the Bird of Paradise of Papua - New Guinea. Over time, they have developed dramatic plumage to distract predators from the females and young. Some of them have continued to develop more and more tail feathers to the point where they cannot get off the ground and airborne. So now their colour does not serve them and the species. In a similar way our elaborate societies, complex cultures and incredible technologies have helped us survive and prosper. They also have a way of weighing us down and interfering with our ability to lift off into meaningful life. They can end up holding us hostage. When this is the case they have the potential to harm and/or destroy us.

Forty-six years ago, the Swiss Analyst, Carl Jung wrote in a letter to Bill W., one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, that in his opinion some form of reconnection with a person's spiritual self was the way to effectively overcome an addiction. At the conclusion of that letter he wrote: "The helpful formula is: spiritus contra spiritum."³

The Latin, spiritus, has two meanings. The first is "breath" and suggests a real enlivening principle or force at work. The second is "alcohol" which is a distilled spirit that ultimately sedates. So, his helpful formula states that to overcome an addiction we need to reconnect with the real spirit, the enlivening life force within and around us, to work against the false spirit of alcohol and/or mood altering substance or behaviours that form the basis of addictions.

Carl Rogers, the founder of the human potential movement, developed a personality theory based upon a "single force of life" he calls the "actualizing tendency".⁴ This tendency can be defined as the built-in motivation present in every life form to develop its potentials to the fullest extent possible.

We are spiritual beings as much as we are physical, emotional and rational beings. The spiritual part of us is what Rogers refers to as the actualizing tendency. The spiritual part of us seeks expression. It wants out and when it is imprisoned through an addiction or our lack of awareness of it, it will keep pushing until we pay attention to it and allow it to be the "single force of life" for us that it is meant to be.

Some of our society's consumerism and consumption tendencies have a flavour of the "quick fix" map.

Have you ever wondered how a blade of grass can push its way through the sidewalk, or saplings crack boulders, or animals survive in the desert or the frozen north? It's that "single force of life" seeking expression. That same force is working even when an addiction is present. The spirit in us wants out and wants expression.

Addicts become involved with mood altering substances or behaviours in the first place because they are dissatisfied with their life as it is. They start out wanting life and they get the wrong road map to get them there. They go for the "quick fix" map of mood altering substances or behaviours only to find they are on the fast track to destruction and death. Some of our society's consumerism and consumption tendencies have a flavour of the "quick fix" map. This map always leads us in the wrong direction.

Over time, addictions stealthily snuff out the life of those who are ... *continued P. 3*

What Does The Research Tell Us?

The Impact of "Working Your Program" On Recovery Status

By Simone Arbour, MA, Research Coordinator

Aftercare is the key to a successful, lasting recovery. An effective aftercare program provides continuing care and support to the recovering addict after they complete their primary treatment phase.

Published research suggests that the three months following initial addiction treatment is a crucial phase for recovering addicts. Studies have shown that 60-80% of clients who relapse do so within the first 3-4 months after discharge (*Marlatt & Gordon, 1985*).

During the first 3-4 months of sobriety, an addict's brain begins to repair the damage caused by the substance abuse. It is during this vulnerable time period that a client will begin to learn new ways of thinking about, and coping with, life's ups and downs (*Lemonick & Park, 2007*). It is for this reason that recovering addicts require continued support to maintain the gains made during their initial treatment.

Addiction treatment research has consistently shown that aftercare helps individuals in recovery. In a study examining the course of male alcohol abuse across the lifespan, researchers found that regular attendance of AA meetings was related to an increase in relapse prevention (*Vaillant, 2003*). Specifically, the study found that men who were abstinent for at least one year, attended roughly 20 times more AA meetings than men who were not. ... *continued P. 3*

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entrapped by them.

In the end, the addict feels imprisoned by the addiction. Like a prisoner, the addict does not experience freedom. Alcohol, drugs, gambling, food or sex runs the addict's life and they are out of control because of that addiction. Imprisoned by these they are left dissatisfied. Our destructive consumerism and consumption can lead to our feeling out of control and dissatisfied.

It is time for a spiritual awakening. It is time to go back to Jung's "helpful formula" and recognize that to move beyond our dissatisfaction is to discover and recover who in truth we are and what we really need. It is time for us to reconnect to the "single force of life", the spiritual part of who we are, to reclaim our lives and find the inner peace and freedom for which we long and which we deserve to enjoy.

Millions of addicts have found their way out of the prison of addiction. The key to their freedom has been found by many in the following of the 12 spiritual steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Addiction treatment programs have provided the opportu-

nity for others to find out who they are in truth and to provide them with the tools to change their lives and begin to experience freedom again.

Recovering addicts have proven and are proving there is a better and more meaningful way to live. They show us there is a way out of our prisons by pursuing a spiritual path.

Spiritual paths to discovery and recovery have features in common. The first is to recognize how out of control life feels — to allow myself to feel my pain and dissatisfaction. The second is to know that I can't find the path on my own — that I need the help of power greater than myself. The third is that I have to let go of the thoughts and behaviours that have been wreaking havoc in my life and killing my spirit — that I need to make positive and constructive changes in my lifestyle. The fourth is to recognize that the path to recovery takes time as well as effort — that I need to recover spiritual values of honesty, respect, fairness, compassion and love and allow them to be the driving forces of new life and behaviours.

Addictions are terribly destructive and spiritual recovery is remarkably healing. I recommend that we follow the lead of recovering addicts. If each of us would drop the pebble of authentic spiritual living into the pond of our society, we would be amazed at what healing ripples it would wash over each of us and the world in which we live.

The recovering addict would remind us to walk the spiritual path one step at a time and to go forward gently to discover the real beauty in living.

Terence Flynn, MA, MS, ICADC, ICCS, CCGC, is the Director of Spiritual Care at Bellwood Health Services.

References:

- 1) Shaeff, Anne Wilson. *When Society Becomes An Addict*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987
- 2) cf. Ledikwe, J.H., Elio-Martin, J.A., Rolls, B.J. (2005). Portion Sizes and the Obesity Epidemic. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 135, p.905-909.
- 3) Internet SOF: The Spirituality of Addiction and Recovery/Carl Jung's Letter to Bill Wilson.
- 4) cf. Rogers, Carl R. *A Way of Being*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1980

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... What Does The Research Tell Us? *continued from P. 2*

These findings not only apply to AA participation, but can also be achieved with other forms of aftercare. For example, Sannibale et al. (2003) demonstrated that any aftercare attendance was associated with higher levels of relapse prevention.

This finding is also demonstrated by the research conducted at Bellwood. Results reveal that Bellwood clients who participate in regular aftercare are more likely to be completely abstinent from both alcohol and drugs in the 6-months since leaving treatment compared to clients who attended sporadically or not at all. Of those clients who

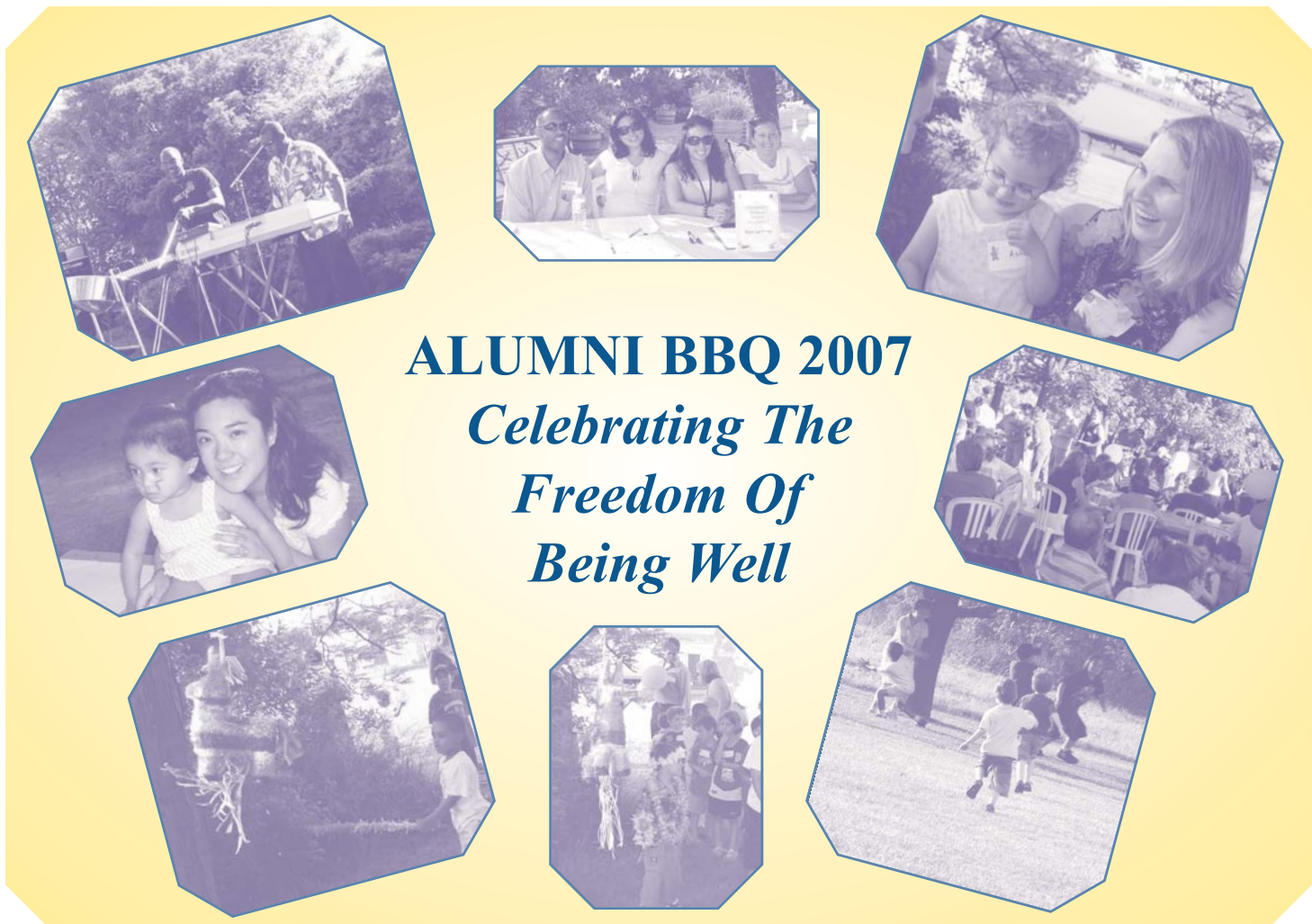
were completely abstinent at 6-months follow-up, 85% attended support meetings at least once a week (See Figure 1). In addition, research results also showed an association between the number of regular supports used by clients and their recovery status. For example, over half of the Bellwood clients who were abstinent at 6-months follow-up attended at least two forms of regular aftercare (See Figure 2). What is more, only 16% of abstinent clients did not engage in any form of continuing care.

The results from Bellwood's research and other addiction treatment studies

seem to confirm the notion that support is the key to overcoming the isolating disease of addiction. While recovery is a life-long journey, aftercare programs can provide recovering addicts with the tools and support necessary to maintain the gains made in initial treatment.

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ALUMNI BBQ 2007

Celebrating The Freedom Of Being Well

... What Does The Research Tell Us? *continued from P. 3*

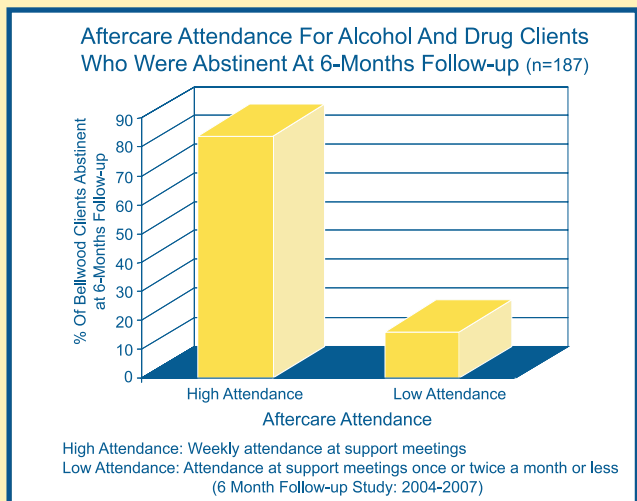


Figure 1

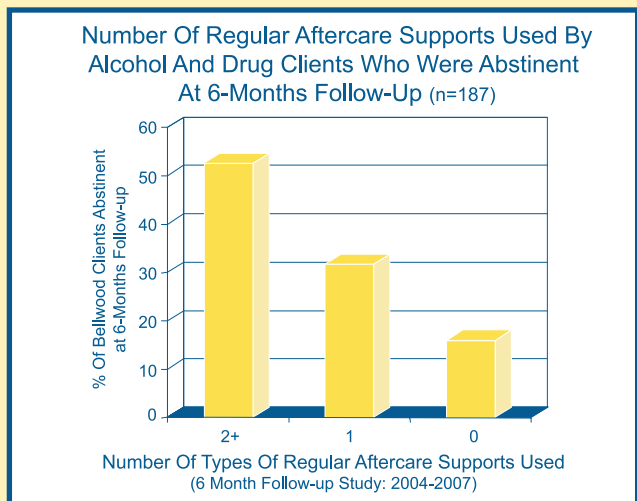


Figure 2

Remembering Bill Livingston *By M. Linda Bell, President and CEO, Bellwood Health Services*

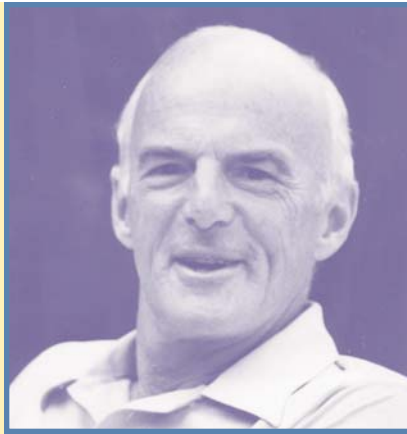
Every once in a while, your eye will catch the sun's rays bouncing off a spider's strand. It glistens and dances, fades from sight, only to come back again for an instant or two. Sometimes, you need to stop, take a step back and then, you see it again. More often, we miss it totally. We do not notice. Our attention, our focus, is somewhere else.

At Bellwood, the focus of the staff is the clients. We expect clients to focus on themselves and their recovery. At Friday graduations, clients often thank their therapist, physician and recovery counsellor. They remember the intake and assessment counsellors who helped them to get into treatment. They acknowledge the nursing, fitness and dining room staff, and, of course, the other clients. The ones who shared the treatment experience. These are the people who are most visible.

But just beneath the surface, is another tier to the Bellwood team. It includes staff and volunteers with expertise and knowledge in administration, finance and governance who are dedicated to Bellwood's vision.

Twenty-four years ago, my father and I had the good fortune to be introduced to Bill Livingston. Bill was the President of Eaton Bay Financial Services back then. He went on to become the President of Laurentian Bank before he retired. Bill agreed to become the first Chairman of the Board for Bellwood. He maintained this role until this past summer. Bill provided leadership to many organizations. Throughout the years, he was on the Board of Directors of Princess Margaret Hospital, West Park Hospital, the Toronto Conservation Authority, the Scott Mission, the Canadian Red Cross and Canadian Blood Services.

During WWII, he was part of the libera-



William Ross Livingston
August 8, 1922 – August 5, 2007

tion of the Netherlands. He was 21 and he said to a buddy, "If I get out of this alive, I want to make a difference in the world." Bill did make a difference to this world. He was a much loved father and husband, a successful business man and was active in many organizations.

Bill had a very aggressive cancer. In late July, I went to visit him at the family cottage in Muskoka. His wife Joan and their daughter Anne were caring for him. While his energy would come in spurts, he was bright and warm, just like always. Being a practical man, he quickly moved to the major business issues at hand. He said, "I have to resign my position as Chairman of the Board. I had not expected to be doing this; I had anticipated attending many more meetings. I have been told I have less than one month to live." It was very powerful and very honest.

My response was: "Not so fast, before I accept your resignation, I have one last thing for you to do. I need your signature on the hospital's operating plan that is being submitted to the Local Health Integrated Network." I pulled out the paper and he signed it. Next we discussed the status of Bellwood and the options for a new Chairman of the

Board. With the business agenda completed, I came to the point of no return. How do you say goodbye to someone so important in your life? It is a gift to have the opportunity but it is tough to do.

I thanked him first for his faith in me, for being my mentor, for constantly reminding me to stay focused. I thanked him for supporting Bellwood over the past 24 years and told him: "Many people would not have wanted to dirty their hands by being involved with addicts." We reminisced about the ups and the downs, the challenges and the successes; about how privileged we were to have been given the opportunity to create something special for our fellow man. We laughed and we cried together. Ann took a picture. It is a beautiful picture. It captures both of us, our caring for one another, sharing the final milestone in our journey together.

The first strands that the spider sends out are the thickest and strongest. They form the exterior of the web which becomes the anchor, the foundation upon which the web is built. Only when the foundation is complete, will the spider start to weave the inside strands. The eye is often drawn to the centre of the web because it is the most visible. It is the most intricate. But, there is much more to greet the eye as the whole structure of the web reveals itself.

Bill Livingston and Gordon Bell were two anchors, two pillars upon which Bellwood has stood for 24 years. When I see a spider's filament I will remember you, Bill, for being.

In recognition of Bill's commitment to Bellwood and his long standing support for the Canadian Blood Services, a future blood donor clinic will be held in his name. Details of the clinic will be posted on www.bellwood.ca when available.

Bellwood Outpatient Groups

Bellwood offers a number of group-focused treatment programs on an outpatient basis.

- **OHIP-Funded Alcohol Treatment Group**
 - 16-week program available to Ontario residents dealing with alcohol abuse or dependency
- **Bulimia/Binge Eating Treatment Program**
 - 10-week program that focuses on tools for change based on self-awareness, group support and psycho-education
- **Eating Disorders Family Education Program**
 - 4-week program that offers education for concerned family, friends, colleagues and associates
- **Sexual Addiction Treatment Groups**
 - 10-week Group
 - Partners Group
 - 3-Hour Education Workshop
 - 5 or 10-Week Relapse Prevention Group
 - Intensive 5-Day Treatment Program

For more information about any of these groups, call the Bellwood Intake Department at (416) 495-0926 or 1-800-387-6198, or email info@bellwood.ca.



The Gordon Bell
Foundation
for the
Prevention of Addiction
www.gbfaaddiction.com

The Gordon Bell Foundation for the Prevention of Addiction is a charitable organization engaged in addiction prevention activities. The Foundation promotes awareness of problems related to abuse of alcohol, drugs, food, tobacco and gambling and strategies to promote healthy options for living.

To make a tax-deductible donation, please forward a cheque, made payable to:

The Gordon Bell Foundation for the Prevention of Addiction
1020 McNicoll Avenue, Toronto, ON M1W 2J6
Attention: J. Laird

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2008 Professionals in Residence Days Schedule

Professionals in Residence Days provide an overview of Bellwood and an opportunity for addiction education for health care and corporate professionals. These information days are designed for Occupational Health, Human Resource and Employee Assistance Professionals; Physicians, Nurses and other Health Care Professionals including Social Workers, Therapists, Psychologists, and Addiction Counsellors.

Join us for some addiction-related education and learn about Bellwood's treatment programs and how we can be a resource for you, your patients, and employees.

Upcoming 2008 workshop dates are:

February 27, April 23, and June 26

To register, contact Charles Senior at cseior@bellwood.ca, or call (416) 847-0752, toll free (800) 387-6198.

Who's New At Bellwood

Rochelle Dressler, RN; Russell Forrest, Manager, Intake and Assessment; **Ronak Ghatalia**, Marketing and Communications Specialist; **Crystal Gillet**, Program Assistant; **Ole Hansen**, Program Assistant; **Wendy Lee**, Physical Health Instructor; **Carole McPherson-Scott, RN; Sarah Moreton, RPN; John Newell**, Intake Assistant; **Anne Pepper**, Therapist; **Sophia Rimas**, Finance Assistant; **Louis St-Laurent**, Consultant CF/VAC Client Services; **Jeff Suddes**, Program Assistant; **Susan Summer, RPN; Connie Thompson**, Recovery Counsellor; **Nicole Trotman**, Program Assistant.

Maureen Dankworth, RN, has been with Bellwood since 1985, and has helped guide hundreds of individuals toward the road of recovery. Maureen is stepping back from her regular duties but will continue to help out at Bellwood as needed. We wish Maureen all the best!