YOUR SMILE

Your smile can be the sunshine of my day.
Your dreams may illuminate the way.
Your wishes are my wishes too...
and I feel this way because I care for you.
Happily, I helped an old woman across the street,
a sparkle returned to her eyes as she brushed my cheek.
On the bus, a little girl asked my name...
I told her mine, and with a smile, asked the same.
I shook the hand of the newsstand man,
and then listened to his dreams, his wishes, and his plans.
I smile each day much more than I frown...
because the power of gratitude, perspective, and choice...
ever lets me down.
Because I care.

FEATURED STORIES

DANNY GIL GADSON

THE POWER OF LOVE AND CARE

ORLANDO
Editor’s Note

I remember my grandfather’s second wife very vividly even though she died when I was very young. She was an old southern woman who chewed what they called Snuff which was tobacco. I don’t remember her having many teeth, but I remember her smile and most of all her care for me which she showed through her cooking. This woman made every single thing from scratch. Her dinner spread was a thing to behold and she’d often send special things she’d made with love just for me... because she cared.

To this day, because of her, I love to cook for others and I cook very well. My joy is seeing the look on a person’s face when they are pleased with what I made as they sit there smiling in rapture and truly savoring the food. I do this because I care the same way that wonderful woman did for me.

In this issue we take a look at “care” and what it means right here on the pages of Expressions in Recovery.

Gil Gadson, Editor

Please send your story ideas to bit.ly/EIRSubmissions

It is the mission of Expressions in Recovery to promote hope, faith and a belief that together in this journey of healing and growth, of recovery and resilience anything we strive to achieve is possible.

To facilitate this mission, this newsletter—your newsletter was created. This forum was created by and for those in recovery to give a voice to our concerns, hopes and talents.

Rules for Submission

If you are interested in submitting a story, commentary, and/or poetry for inclusion in our next issue, please use the online submission form: bit.ly/EIRSubmissions.

Art, poetry, prose, true or fictional stories are welcome. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide hope, faith and information. In keeping with the spirit of this endeavor all contributions must be free from profanity and vulgarity.

Sections

Here and Now
Featured Stories
Expressions
The Last Word

Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255
Mental Health Crisis Line 215-685-6440
Domestic Violence 866-723-3014
Protective Services 877-401-8835
Philadelphia Recovery Community Center 215-223-7700

VOLUME 20, 2016

To view current and past issues visit www.DBHIDS.org/multimedia#EIR
IT’S SIMPLE
For me, caring is about having empathy, wanting to understand how others feel, and what makes them feel good or bad. There was a time that I was in a hospital and jail but there were those who chose to care about me and wanted me to get well; so very simply, how can I not care?

Yashiah Burrell

WHAT’S THE ALTERNATIVE?
When I was asked what do I think about the “Power of Care,” I laughed at first because we gotta’ care. I can’t see a life without caring, I think of my children and I feel it. Sometimes, just the thought of them makes me wanna’ cry. They’re beautiful and they need me so I have to care. We’re all human beings so how could we live without caring for each other.

Timothy Barnes

PEOPLE CARE ABOUT ME
I have to care because right now in my life there are people who are caring for me. They make me feel loved and safe. They make me smile all the time and when I’m feeling bad, they make me feel better. So I gotta’ care because people care about me.

Sandra Emmanuel

PART OF THE PROCESS
When I think of the power of care I think of someone making a conscious decision to do things that benefit others.

In recovery, if you are moving forward, as you stabilize yourself...very simply, caring is the inevitable next logical step. Often we receive help that changes our lives for the better. How can we not begin to care and invest our heart, time and efforts in caring for others?!

A life cannot be complete without caring. In the beginning, you are in recovery. As you progress, you move forward toward wellness, and in this stage, as you are becoming a whole person, caring is the next and sometimes most beautiful step as you strive to become whole.

Onzie Travis
He was a bear of a man, with a pot belly and a million-dollar smile. He was always neat, well dressed, and walked with a distinct swagger. He was the cousin of my mother's best friend, and they met accidentally one night when my mother had me with her and was visiting her friend. I was 2 years old but could talk very well for my age. When I met Danny I wouldn’t stop talking to him, and Danny and I fell in love on the spot. He loved my brothers and sisters, too, but it was clear that, besides my mother, Danny belonged to me.

Danny was funny. He had a laugh like Yogi-Bear, and when he laughed, everybody laughed. He was a handsome man, an unselfish man, and he was full of love and care.

We all loved to see him and my mother dance because when Danny did the Danny-dance, he never stopped talking – and it was hilarious.

When he took me to the movies or out to a park, we'd stop at our favorite two-for-one hamburger and hot dog joint. He'd always look at me and ask me, "How many ya want?" and I loved that. He always just wanted to make me happy. I remember when Danny taught me how to ride a bike. He was holding on to the back of the seat as he ran down the street with me. At one point I said to Danny that he could let go but he said nothing. As I turned to tell him again, he was not there. He was all the way up the block laughing because I didn't know I had been riding all the way down the block on my own.

Danny also taught me the sweet science of shooting pool, and, boy, was he good. Every time I pick up a pool stick, Danny is guiding my hand.

At night Danny would sing these old songs that I had never heard, funny songs with a catch, and then he'd tell me the most fascinating but true stories. Danny and my mother’s relationship was fragile; up and down, and sometimes that kept us away from each other once in a while, but I was never mad at him. It was hard to be upset with Danny, even when my mother tried, he always wound up making her laugh, too.

You see, Danny had one undeniable characteristic. He was very pleasant, he always cared, and he was kind. He cared for me and my family. He cared for the little old lady struggling with the day's groceries. He cared for the unknown child who just fell and scraped his knee. He threw scraps of food to the homeless, mangy mutt who prowled the alleyways in search of food, shelter, and safety.

When I think of caring, I always think of Danny. He will always be in my heart because he taught me the power of kindness and care.

Gil Gadson
I was already mad because the person Kenny looking right at me and shaking his head in disapproval every time I was outside. It always got on my nerves how he would just sit down like he told me to and listen to what I had to say, and then he laid it on me. “Boy! I seen you play basketball, football, stickball, and any other sport you had a notion to play and you what dey call a natural charmer! Now I don’t wanna hear no crying about what happened to you in yo past. Something happens to everybody, but what matters is what you do after it happens son.” I was talking to wasn’t taking the bait and was just looking at me like I was an idiot. I walked away from him and walked up to Mr. Kenny’s porch. Before I could say a word Mr. Kenny said, “C’mere boy, step up here!” He didn’t say, and then he laid it on me. “You can express your opinion. You be wrong a lot, but you argue so well, dey don’t know it. I seen you wit dem girls, too... Yeah, you a real charmer! Now I don’t wanna hear no crying about what happened to you in yo past. Something happens to everybody, but what matters is what you do after it happens son. Ain’t saying it don’t matter. I’m just saying that it was the past, so leave it there, son, and move forward. First of all, go back to school – and I mean college. Think before you speak! Stop burning bridges! And it’s all right to care about someone besides yourself. That’s what makes you a better man and a better human being, son.”

This old man came close to me, put his hand on my shoulder, got right in my face and said, “Son, you could be anything you wanna be — I believe that! Turn all that skill and talent into something good boy and if ever you need to talk, as long as I’m breathing, I’ll be right here, son.”

When Mr. Kenny took his hand off my shoulder, I wanted him to put it back. You see, I never had a mother or father or uncle or aunt, or anyone who ever touched me or showed affection or love because they cared, and here was this stranger treating me like I was his son. As I was getting ready to walk down the steps of his porch, he touched my shoulder again. My back was to him, but if he would have seen my face, he would have seen my eyes closed and me smiling. Very softly, he said, “I got faith in you, son, and before I close my eyes, I pray God lets me see you make it outta here and do what God made you to do.” I nodded my head and when I turned and looked at him, I saw all the love and care in the world in his old eyes, and for the first time in my life, I wanted to hug somebody; I wanted to hug him.

As I left his porch, I passed Mrs. Coleman’s porch and she said to me, “Ya’ know, Kenny don’t talk much to anybody since his son got killed. It was the most heartbreaking thing that could happen to a man. That cancer got Kenny’s wife when the boy was still in diapers. Kenny raised that boy all by himself and his son was such a happy child and grew up to be a fine young man. He had just got a scholarship to go to medical school when he was killed in a drive-by and he wasn’t even the target!” She stared at me for a minute and then said, “Ya’ know, I wouldn’t be surprised!” I asked her about what, and she said, “Boy, you look just like his son, the two of you coulda been twins!” and then she walked in the house.

I looked back at Mr. Kenny’s porch and he had gone in the house. It hit all at one time; he saw his son in me and he refused to let the same thing happen to me. He cared about me. He really cared, and knowing that gave me the strength to change my life.

I’m in college now majoring in psychology. I stop by to see Mr. Kenny when I can. He always knows when I’m coming, and I love how he waves at me when I’m coming up the block to his house. He smiles a lot now. It’s always brief when I come to see him, but I still love it when he touches my shoulder and looks me in the eye. He makes me feel like he’s my father. Life is different now because of the care this man showed for me. This is truly an example of the power of care.
HOW WE FEEL
The road we travelled brought us here and we have travelled far. We came to heal and face our fears, and show just who we are. We write to share our heart and faith, and show that hope is real. So listen friend, and hear my heart because this is how I feel.

BLESSINGS
Rainy days and sunny days are all the same to me. The beauty that each day can hold is plain for me to see. The rain is food for the earth and quenches the birds that sing. From the earth the flowers blossom and sweeten the fruit it brings. There are no dreary days for me; for me I love them all. Even as the seasons change and summer turns to fall. I marvel at what God has done; he never makes mistakes. He sets a banquet out for me and tells me to partake. At one time I never thought that life would get this good. He promised me that it would be...when I did as he said I should.

THE CONTENT OF YOUR CHARACTER
Martin Luther King spoke of this special thing that defines us, and who we are. In all that you do before, during, and after sweeten it...by developing the content of your character. Patience, empathy, love, and care standing on your word with no need to swear. Courage, fortitude, purpose, honor, and belief. Dignity, humility...appreciating what we've received. There can be camaraderie, friendship, love, arguments, fights, and blessings from above struggles for what is right. And the things we're all after: seeing and finding the content of your character. Patience, for a questioning child. Sitting with the elderly for a while. Looking deeper for another way, being careful with what you say as we're grateful for another day letting love do what it do, letting God inside of you only concerned with what really matters these things being...the content of your character. Walking with courage in spite of opposition, remembering the battle and your godly commission. These things all done with love, fortitude, and heart seeking what we are all after and using...the content of your character. When we teach our children how to love and pray, when we guide their steps each and every day, when they rely and trust us and all we say, make sure, when they reveal what they're after, that they're doing things that really matter because through God we can all enrich and develop.

THE LAST WORD
Early in my recovery and re-discovery, I was all heart but it was not balanced yet. I made many mistakes, but the one thing that I always had was that I cared. And by caring and listening, a great many of us have learned to be a better friend, a better sibling, a better son or daughter, a better husband or wife, and a better man. Feeling something in my heart fills me up and now my days mean something, and I am at peace. I've seen the beautiful and uplifting transformation of so many as they take control of their lives, contribute to society, and find fulfillment. I believe that some of the keys to achieving all this are simply caring about yourself, others, and your environment. In this technological age of the “me” dynamic, everything seems to be about self-fulfillment and not our fellow man. This issue culminates a planned series which addressed the power of Gratitude, Perspective, Choice, and now, Care. This was done purposely and simply. Gratitude has the power to change perspectives. Perspectives give you choices, and with power to freely choose your dreams, your goals, and purpose...care is inevitable.
CALL

**Alcohol, Other Drugs, & Gambling**
- CBM Member Services 888-545-2600
  - Behavioral health services for Medicaid recipients
- BHSI (Behavioral Health Special Initiative) 215-546-1200
  - Addiction services for the uninsured and underinsured
- Phila. Recovery Community Center 215-223-7700
  - Offers services that help people deal with their addictions in a safe and supportive community-based setting

**Intellectual disAbility Supports**
- IDS Office 215-685-5900
- IDS Registration 215-685-4677

**Homelessness Supports**
- Food Helpline 800-319-3663
- Outreach Coordination Center (24/7) 215-232-1984

**Domestic Violence**
- Phila. Domestic Violence Hotline 866-723-3014
- Congreso de Latinos Unidos (Español) 215-763-8870

**Training**
- IDS Supported Employment 215-685-4734
- Mental Health First Aid 215-685-3755

**More Services**
- City Hall Connection, Philly311 311
- Warmline A friendly “listening ear” Mon-Fri 4-7pm 855-507-9276

**24/7 Hotlines**
- Mental Health Line 215-685-6440
- Suicide Line 215-683-6100
- Child Line (State Hotline) 800-932-0313
- Domestic Violence 866-723-3014
- Congreso de Latinos Unidos (Español) 215-686-4420

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HealthyMindsPhilly.org
A friendly resource to support and improve the wellness of all Philadelphians.

Features include:
- A free, 24/7 online behavioral health screening
- Sign up for a free Mental Health First Aid training to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental illness or substance use challenges

LOCATE For crisis help in your area.

Network of Care™
DBHIDS.org/NetworkofCare
An online, one-stop-shop resource guide for people interested in seeking behavioral health services.

DISCOVER

The Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) offers resources, services, and advocacy through a strong partnership with a network of healthcare providers to help people, whether they are uninsured or underinsured, lead a fulfilling life in a supportive community free of stigma.

We believe everyone has a right to realize their fullest potential to determine their own destiny within their community, fully recover from mental illness or addiction, and use strength and resilience to overcome adversity.

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1. Einstein Medical Center (includes services for children)
   1 Penn Blvd
   Germantown Comm. Cntr
   215-951-8300
2. Mercy Hospital
   501 S. 54th St
   215-748-9525
3. Pennsylvania Hospital (Hill Mercer)
   8th and Locust St
   215-829-5433
4. Temple/Episcopal Hospital
   100 E. Lehigh Ave
   215-707-2577
5. Friends Hospital
   4641 Roosevelt Blvd
   215-831-2600

DBHIDS
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY SERVICES
888-545-2600
www.DBHIDS.org