

# TLC attitudes of gratitude – fairy tale life fades as reality takes over

By Lynn Whitlow

Recovery realities face TLC residents every day. The fairy tale is over.

Once upon a time in a land far away, I remember when I was a young lass gravitating to library shelves filled with thick hardbound books filled with wonderful illustrations of castles, princes and princesses, trolls, witches and fairies.

Fairy tales – volumes filled with enchanted stories that had a magical ability to transport me away from reality. The magic only lasted a short time, until my mother's insistent reminder that the dinner dishes needed washing – now! Rude awakening, but reality.

As adults we can get caught up in a fantasy world – magical thinking that ignores the world falling down around us. Alcohol and/or drug use can, and usually does, keep the fantasy fires fed.

Prince Charming can be a disguise for a manipulative monster. The palace party atmosphere can drown out the angst of our children as they cry themselves to sleep, wishing that warm loving parents would return to them tomorrow.

We can live in a fantasy world only so long – a few weeks, months or years,

individual time lines vary. But ultimately, reality comes crashing back – loss of job because of excessive absences or coming to work under the influence, eviction notices, utilities turned off, credit maxed out, car impounded or wrecked, hepatitis C or cirrhosis, divorce, loss of family and friends and jail time.

The wreckage of our lives under the influence – where is the prince to carry us away? Where is the princess to love us, the castle to protect us? In the closest bottle of alcohol or pills? This reality is worse than the one we lived in before the fantasy trip.

Am I going to reach for that bottle and slide back into a world that doesn't seem so magical anymore or am I just plain tired of the lie, willing to face the shambles of my life and reach out for help to rebuild it, whatever it might take? Am I ready to get a referral to a detox center where I can get support and safety in freeing my body of the toxins poisoning me – my mind, body and spirit?

Am I ready to take the steps to go to inpatient treatment where caring trained people can teach me how to rebuild my

life, reprogram the messages I tell myself and others, put reality-based structure into my life and direct me on a healthy recovery path – a lifetime journey that can let me experience happiness and joys, as well as deal with adversity.

There is no instant fix – this is part of the fairy tale that goes away. It comes down to making good choices, making good contacts, asking for help when it's needed – leaving the fairy tale book on the shelf and moving on to the AA Big Book and/or NA The Basic Text for guidance.

The Siletz A&D Program has people dedicated to helping direct folks on the recovery path. Call 541-444-8286 or 800-600-5599 to get started. Each TLC resident reached out to get the help they needed before they were eligible to live there.

They have much to be grateful for: I am grateful to be able to provide a good Christmas for my son. I have good friends whom I can rely on for good times and bad times. A paycheck! I'm grateful for a good job, a great boss and wonderful co-workers. I am grateful for my dad and my sister, and to have boundaries with my

family. I'm very thankful to have great mom-and-son talks and to be able to be present in mind because I'm clean!

I'm so grateful for the whole A&D staff, all my support people and to my family who has loved me through my process. Thank you to all the Force Account workers – your work made our home more beautiful. I'm grateful to be home! Happy Holidays to all – you're in my prayers.

We have much appreciation for our volunteers – Alice McCain for overnight coverage at the TLC, Shawn Foultnier for some weekend repairs and Sunshine Keck for gifting us with some toiletry items.

We are so happy that the painting in colors has been completed in all TLC rooms. It really adds an extra warmth and character to each room.

We are grateful the Force Account guys have begun work on our outside picnic shelter and storage shed. A new ramp was added to the back deck to assure safe disabled accessibility in the event of emergency exits. It also makes it possible for all to enjoy the outdoor facility when it's completed.

Happy New Year to all!



Photos by Natasha Kavanaugh

Kaden and Justin McKibben (above) and Alexandria Kaiser (right) make and wrap gifts at the Siletz Tribal Community Center as they get ready for Christmas.



## Volunteer for Prevention Program

If you are interested in volunteering with the Prevention Program, here are specific guidelines for volunteering:

- Apply to be a Tribal Prevention volunteer at Human Resources. This will include agreeing to a criminal background check and a drug screen.
- Attend an orientation with Prevention staff to learn about ethics and program policies and procedures. A volunteer training program will be developed.
- For those with previous problems of alcohol/drugs, at least one year of living a clean and sober lifestyle is required.
- Participate in making a prevention video/DVD
- All people to be filmed must sign an agreement to be filmed.
- The Tribal general manager and Tribal Council must approve of the final cut before it's released for public viewing.

Any question regarding this process, please contact Jenifer Metcalf, Prevention coordinator, at [adprev@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:adprev@ctsi.nsn.us) or 800-600-5599 or 541-444-9618.

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