



First Newsletter

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Thank You Donors!!

Over the Influence Recovery is an official non-profit charity! I want to give a big thanks to our first supporters of Over the Influence who believed in me and this project. We have six committed monthly donors with a total of \$281 a month!! And six generous one-time donors! We brought in \$1123 last year and here are some things your money accomplished:

- Purchasing 12-step workbooks for the women to do together
- Sheltering "Sally" (see story on page 3) for the weekend before flying to Tennessee
- Purchasing a pack & play for one of the gals in rehab to have her baby with her
- Providing zoom for weekly and one-on-one meetings
- Purchasing He Still Moves Stones by Max Lucado, for us to read this new year together

Thank you SO much! Please share the link below to donate!

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About O.T.I Recovery: The Beginning

I still remember one of my first networking events in March of 2019, where my soon-to-be business coach introduced me and said, “Gigi is launching a recovery program for women.” I was nervous, and I felt a little deceptive. I had not done much of anything towards it, except visit some rehabs in Mexico and create a vision board that said I was going to do it. I had been in corporate for almost 17 years and was very rusty at networking. I smiled nervously and do not remember what I said in response, but my mind felt anxious and fearful of what I was getting myself into. Nevertheless, by September of that year I had launched my Facebook page and was looking for a place to hold weekly recovery meetings. I looked at local churches, but they had no availability or desire to host recovery meetings.

I looked for local office spaces, but they would not rent just one hour a week. Even the local library would not offer a spot unless I was a non-profit organization. My higher power, God, knew a pandemic was coming and that a physical location was not going to work for long. So, before the whole world did, I learned Zoom and launched online virtual meetings! The meetings were slow at first, just me, logged on and working while I waited to see if someone would log on. There were a couple girls I had met that joined here and there, but not consistent. Still, I was there, logged on, every week. Then... an amazing old friend also with more than 20 drug-free years decided to join with me. That was fun as we reconnected, talked, laughed, and cried.

“So, before the whole world did, I learned Zoom and launched online, virtual meetings!”

Then an incredible lady I met through Facebook who after a few years of sobriety was starting a sober-living project joined. It became a beautiful place to come to every week, full of inspiration and encouragement. It has been over a year since I kicked off the weekly meetings, and now there 7 women who come consistently, ranging from one month to 20 years sober! We are growing close and growing strong. We are learning from each other, supporting each other, and becoming friends. The weekly meetings have become exactly what I imagined, and I am beyond honored and delighted to host them!

“Sally”, the first Over the Influence client.

Before online meetings, I was traveling to Tijuana, Mexico to visit the rehab where I got sober, as well as to support fellow companions that were starting their own recovery homes. One day, I got a call from the Oasis, telling me there was a gal, named “Sally”, an American they found roaming the streets. I went to see her. She was a bit distracted, hazy, and confused, but she did know where she was and wanted help.



A few women who got to meet Sally before she left for Tennessee.

I visited here a few times and asked if I could help find her family. She told me she did not think her family would care where she was, but she did have children, two young boys and an adult daughter, who may care to know where she was. I searched online for the names she gave me, with no results. We scoured Google and Facebook together for pictures with the same or similar names but found no matches.

At home that night, I accidentally typed in Sally’s first and last name, and something unbelievable came up in the google search!! There was a missing person’s page looking for someone with her same name. I contacted the person that posted it, and they were very skeptical. “We’ve gotten people contact us before who are trying to get money from us with stories of somewhere they claim to have seen her”, her cousin told me on the phone.

“There are two missing reports on her, one in Tennessee and one in California, where she was last seen. We get our hopes up and it is devastating to her mother when it is not true. Can you prove it’s her before I tell her?”

“I can try!” I answered. I can go to Mexico and do a video call with her so you can see if it’s really her.”

And so, I did, and it was her! Her family was overjoyed. By then I had started the zoom meetings and set up some family meetings so they could see her and talk to her. It was beautiful! After 3 months, I coordinated her admittance to the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center, where she did a 6-month program before flying home to see her family that for over 4 years, had not known if she was dead or alive! This was my first experience working to support women in recovery, and what a first it was!! It was just what I needed to confirm this is exactly what I wanted to do!



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