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Belmont Resident Assists With Countywide Recovery Initiative

Susan Flanders, a Belmont resident and a petite grandmother of five, hasn't always been as focused and productive as she is today. As a teenager and a young mother she was once trapped in the maze of alcohol and drug addictions, dropping out of school, neglecting her children, and unable to hold a job.

Three years ago in openly disclose her from the disease of had begun almost ten it was scary to admit felt it was time to in the same way that supported and is an active volunteer movement in Lakes Region.

Susan is a mentor to steps in recovery and to treatment and other appointments. She coaches; she shares from her own experiences; and most important, she listens.



2002, she decided to journey of recovery addictions that she years earlier. "While what I was," Susan "give back to others" she had been nurtured. Today she in the recovery Belmont and the

others in their first often transports them

"For me, it was such a great feeling knowing someone was there to hear me and not judge me for what I was saying. I know what it is like to feel so useless and powerless," says Susan.

In addition to volunteering at Horizons Counseling Center, Susan has also spent time with the residents at the Odyssey Family Center, a residential treatment program in Canterbury for substance-abusing women and their young children.

Recognized for her achievements and courage, Susan recently received a scholarship to attend a one-week training at the New England School of Addictions in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. She also completed the Leadership Training Program sponsored by New Futures, a New Hampshire-based non-profit organization promoting effective strategies that reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. This preparation led her to advocate before NH legislators in Concord for continued funding for treatment programs. And this summer she completed the Leadership Initiative Program, a 16-hour training sponsored by the NH Task Force for Women and Addictions.

Currently, Susan is a member of the large steering committee that is organizing Belknap County's month-long observance in September of National Alcohol and Drug Addictions Recovery Month. Says Susan, "This month is all about letting people know there's help out there and that those of us in recovery can live a life of happiness, work, and pay our taxes."

"You know," she continues "last year was the first year I ever voted! I just didn't think I was important enough."

Susan's life is now full and rich. She is employed full time at the Martin Lord, and Osman Law Firm in Laconia and she, as a grandmother of five children in the Belmont School system, is an active member of the Belmont PTA. "I have chaperoned just about every field trip the kids have taken over the last seven years."

While she acknowledges the stigma often associated with the disease of addictions and even with those who are successfully in recovery, she says "everyone in Belmont, at the schools and elsewhere, has been wonderfully accepting of me. But like others in recovery, I can be – and I am now a contributing member of society."

For more information on Belknap County Alcohol and Drug Addictions Recovery Month, one may call the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families at 528-3185.