

FIRST UP

Fontana man creates organization to help people overcome addictions

BY BOB OTTO
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Come next fall, James Randolph will celebrate a milestone. His wife, Diana, and his friends will raise glasses and coffee mugs together and toast his success. But those glasses and mugs won't be filled with the one liquid that nearly cost him his family, and his life: Booze.

Randolph has been sober for nearly 20 years.

He remembers the day his life renewed. It was November 25, 1988.

"My wife had left me and gave me an ultimatum," said Randolph. "I didn't heed it and I was in misery."

And he was drunk again. But he fell down on his knees and begged for help. "I asked God for help on that day and I've never had a

drink since," he said.

In the ensuing years, he stayed free of the crippling drink by faithfully attending weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and by taking "one day at a time," he said.

Randolph's career blossomed. His three daughters excelled in academics and athletics. He and his wife own a beautiful home in Fontana.

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FONTANA MAN

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The family was happy and whole again. But something was missing. And at age 54, he knew it was time for a change.

"As you get older, you know your time is getting shorter," said Randolph. "I asked myself, 'How have I helped make someone else's life better?'"

The answer? He felt he hadn't. So Randolph quit his secure, and close-to-retirement, 29-year job as a Los Angeles County assessor. And he embarked on a new career path most would shun.

Randolph started "Pathway" in 2006. The non-profit organization provides a sober living home for parolees and those freeing themselves from alcohol and drug addiction.

Anyone can stumble and fall, but they can get back up, said Randolph. And everyone deserves a second chance, he added.

"We want to help them get back on their feet and get them back with their families," he said. "We want them to become productive members of society; to be good fathers and husbands again. They can be good fathers to their children again. I am passionate about that."

And without fathers, you have children looking elsewhere for fatherly love. "Kids join gangs because they're looking for the love and support they didn't get at home," said Randolph.

No more than six men live together at Pathway. They cook, clean, wash, and rely on one another for support — just like a family does. And they have a place to call home. "A place to live is the biggest part of changing their life around and staying sober," said Randolph. "Without a home, many would be living in the street."

BOB FANT is a Navy Vietnam veteran who served with the Amphibious Forces. He suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He spiraled down a dark path into alcohol and drug abuse that only exacerbated his PTSD. He found hope at Pathway.

"Pathway gave me a foothold, a place to grow

from," he said. "You've got to have a place to live or you're in constant transition. How can you start a life living on the streets?"

But not everyone is welcome, or allowed to stay. Without commitment to sobriety and following house rules, the half-hearted are shown the door, said Randolph. Residents sign contracts; they must write out a plan to move forward with their lives; they must attend weekly meetings. And if they don't, they face consequences.

"The men vote whether someone stays or goes who has violated the rules," said Randolph. "We don't allow a cancer to spread in our house."

At Pathway, the men (minimum age 18) all help one another, said Fant. Resume writing, knowing how to apply for benefits, where to get eye glasses and medical care, getting a ride to a job interview, or studying for a driver's license test all become easier when everyone pitches in to help.

"Everyone helps each other out," said Font. "That's how families work. You have each other to give you the strength to go on."

To learn more about Pathway, visit www.from-boystomen.com.



James Randolph is the founder of Pathway.