

Eastside Alcohol/Drug Center

Early History

The Eastside Alcohol Center had a modest and somewhat colorful debut in the Bellevue area in 1968 when it opened its doors to the public primarily as an information and referral center. It was known at the time as the Eastside Council on Alcoholism and was located in a trailer at 156th and Bel-Red Road adjunct to the King County Health Department facility. It was staffed by a salaried director, Fred Groth, and volunteer workers.

Prior to 1968 the only available facility for treatment of any kind on the Eastside was Overlake Hospital which maintained a few beds for alcohol patients. Dr. Robert Hoskins, an Overlake staff member and one of the first trustees on the board, was one of the few area physicians who could enter such a patient into the hospital.

Mike Maher, also an original trustee and an active member of the board from its beginning to this day, recalls that United Air Lines had a non-stop flight to Minneapolis dubbed by locals as "The Red Eye Special" which people took in order to enter the Hazelden Clinic in Center City.

The idea for the modest beginnings was the brainchild of a few interested Bellevue businessmen who saw the need for an alcohol facility of some kind on the Eastside. One of the sparkplugs of the early organization was Rev. John Huston, rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina. At that time AA meetings were being held in his church once a month and he had become familiar with the recovery concept.

These men realized that they were working on untried ground, but saw a need for a facility and an information and referral system that could correct misinformation and myth about alcoholism in their area. They enlisted the advice and assistance of Richard Silver, director of such a center in Seattle and used ideas from the Hazelden Clinic in Minneapolis. After a few months planning and consulting with each other the decision was made to open an information and referral center. The only other such center in the area was the one headed by Silver in Seattle, so the Eastside Center was to become a pilot program in that it was the first center in King County to operate outside the Seattle City limits. In fact it was to become the second such center in the county.

The ideas and plans were there and now came another big hurdle. Financing. Money to put their plans into actions. Chuck Nachiem, one of the original planners and among one of the first trustees who is still active on the EADC board today, Mike Maher and others, literally doorbelled for contributions. Nachiem, active in car dealership circles, asked and received monies from car dealers in the Bellevue area. He was able to get Hansen Buick Company to donate a car that was to be used by the first director. Individual contributions were received and in the spring of 1967 their plans

were ready to become a reality.

This is where the colorful aspect of EADC's past comes into view. A man representing himself as a knowledgeable person with some alcoholic training presented himself on the scene requesting that he be hired as the center's first director. As it turned out his experience in the field of alcoholism was little more than that of having been an inpatient in a facility in Olympia. Today, Fred Groth describes him as a "con artist" and indeed he must have been, as he landed the job and the new car to boot. However, the enchantment with this fellow was only three months long and as a story goes the man got drunk and Maher and Nachiem finally went to his apartment and recovered the car and various items he had taken from the center.

In 1968 Fred Groth was hired as director and some serious ground work was begun by the founding group. Groth was extremely busy just helping people and since money was always of primary concern, plans were continually being formulated on how to raise it. The referral center was receiving only \$3,000.00 a year under the auspices of the State Mental Health. On the local level Christmas tree sales were held during 1967 and 1968 which netted approximately \$4,000.00 each year. The trees were donated by John Callison, an interested citizen, and Chuck Nachiem. Rhododendron sales were also held during those same years which netted about \$4,000.00 each sales. Bellevue Town Hall was one of the early contributors as were private parties.

Political action began to play an increasingly important role in the state's alcohol centers due in large part to the efforts of these Bellevue people. Medical professionals became interested and helpful and they rallied other, mostly recovering alcoholics, to the cause. Some of them went to Olympia to gain support for financial funding from the state and drew to their cause a State Senator from Eastern Washington who was interested in alcoholism as an illness. In 1968 and 1969 enough support had been gathered in support of alcoholism centers that a paper was written that separated alcoholism from the mental health department. This was known as the Washington Paper.

Financial struggles remained but in late 1968 and 1969 state funding began to increase and action on the federal level eased the burdens greatly.

In 1970 the center moved to the Pacific National Bank Building in Bellevue Square where they rented space in the basement from Kemper Freeman for \$100.00 a month. The rent remained the same until they moved to the Uni-C Building in 1973.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY
OF
EASTSIDE ALCOHOL/DRUG CENTER

1968 Eastside Council on Alcoholism formed - located in trailer on Bel-Red Road.

Executive Director - Fred Groth
Trustees -
Rev. John Huston - President
Charles Nachiem - Treasurer
Kathleen Vierling - Secretary
Lennox Scott
Dr. Gordon Carlson
Michael Maher
Dr. Robert Hoskins
Mr. Arnold Gibson
Mrs. Lloyd Blair

1969 May 1 - July 1 65 clients in office - persons phoning for information 25 to 30.

August 18-25 - first court school (ADIS) held. Two 2 hour sessions.

Community fund drives organized.

Early contributors - Bellevue Town Hall - \$1,000.00
Automatic Switch Co. - \$250.00

Added staff of 3 through federal grant.

Motivation Therapy Group for wives of alcoholics held - attendance 22.

22 presentations of school classes made.

Total number of yearly phone calls - 3,225.

Number of court referrals at ADIS - 126.

1970 Moved to Pacific National Bank Building in Bell-Square.

Opened services in North Bend and Kenmore on part-time basis.

Center raised 49% of its own operating income.

Puget Power donates \$1,000.00.

Workshops for teacher's held - 60 attended.

1971

April - Services extended to Issaquah - averaged 1 appointment per day at that time.

Volunteer staffing utilized.

Center affiliates with National Council on Alcoholism.

Washington State Senate Bill 298 passes, making \$16,000.00 available to center.

Barbara Starr appointed director.

1972

Family Orientation and Motivation course starts in January.

EADC's nominee Judge Anthony Wartnick receives "Man of Year Award."

EADC facility remodeled.

1973

April - Center moved to Uni-C Building on 104th NE - Bellevue. Referrals and inquiries doubled as result of move. Center now fully staffed by qualified people.

May - EAIRC has more new alcoholic clients than any other center in King County.

EAC revenue support - \$17,664.00 - federal grants
\$3,000.00 - state grants
\$2,420.57 - charges for services

1974

Average flow of clients through center - 252 per month

Name changed to Eastside Alcohol Center.

July - 101 people attended ADIS.

Center shows a financial loss of \$1,198.61 during the past year.

WSU picks EAC for a documentary on alcohol centers.

September - 200 to 300% increase in client during past year.

Youth Program started - Andy Brennan hired as Youth Counselor.

Cost at EAC lowest per client of any affiliated agencies.

October - 1/4 of all contact in total alcohol agencies done at EAC.

1975

Probation counselor hired.

Total Central Alcohol Agency cost per client \$140.00. EAC cost per client \$16.00.

March - Two ADIS schools operating a month.

March - 5 counselors handling a case load of 400 per month.

Andy Brennan hired as assistant director under Barbara Starr.

Staff in-service training programs began.

ARP - (GP) program initiated in August.

Center handling all alcohol involved or related referrals from King County Juvenile Hall at rate of 20 per week.

Washington State Council featured Eastside's young people (YARP) at meeting.

Barbara Starr resigns as director.

1976

Senior Citizen program started - 1 class held per week for 14 weeks.

Monitoring system for all probation cases implemented.

Counselor sent to North Bend, Fall City, Duvall, Carnation area.

October case load 533. 557 participating in various programs and services.

Alcohol workshops presented to Mercer Island, Issaquah, Lake Washington and Bainbridge Island School staffs.

Andy Brennan appointed director in January.

1977

January - 613 people came through the center. 613 involved in 714 programs.

1/2 day a month training sessions for counselors instituted.

July - 2nd ADIS school started.

Outreach services for aged started. 1,056 persons seen and 115 referred to treatment the first quarter.

1978

Evening Family Awareness Group started in addition to daytime Family Awareness Group.

RAP group started as follow-up to GP.

Training sessions for hospital nurses held.

Staff and counselors active in workshops and speaking engagements.

January - EAC sponsored an open house - 70 people attended.

Fee charges raised \$10.00 for supervised treatment (6 months - \$60.00: 1 year - \$120.00: 2 years - \$240.00).

NIAAA grant extended 1 year until September 1981.

Workshops and speaking engagements at various schools in area given.

November - 1st class of Intensive Care Program begins. 10 attended -- 9 completed Phase I of program.

1979

January - EAC moved to Ashwood School - Open House February 23rd.

Industrial Alcohol Counselor and Volunteer Coordinator hired.

Volunteer program implemented.

Budgeted revenues for 1979 \$350,393.00.

Intensive Care Program name changed to ACTION.

Workshop for clergy in East King County held -- 160 attended.

July -- Evening ACTION Program becomes effective.