

cont. from page 1

..counseling available at both houses, Leon largely credits the power of example as the key to ARID'S successes. This begins with the staff and is passed down through the residents. Quoting Leon, "The newer guys can't help but learn something from the senior residents."

The rules are pretty simple. No use of alcohol or non prescribed drugs while in residence, treat the other men with the respect and dignity you expect for yourself, and take care of the House.

With help from volunteers, the men do their own shopping. They cook and clean for themselves. "The food's good and the rent is cheap," says Leon. "It's the best deal in town for a guy who wants to get better."

ARID is an acronym. The letters stand for Alcohol Recovery In Dignity. With the majority of people coming out of detox's and treatment centers today having dual addictions, ARID does not discriminate.



The residents are required to attend a minimum of three 12 Step Meetings a week as long as they relate to substance abuse. There is also an in-house AA Meeting every week in both Houses. These are facilitated by members of the local AA community. They are also attended by ex residents who come to share their experience, strength and hope with the new guys.

During their stay at the House, the men are expected to begin to clear away some of the wreckage of their past and to become productive members of society.

Some bring with them issues which require outside professional help. ARID has excellent reciprocating referral relations with many Detox and Treatment Centers, Hospitals and other agencies across the province. Ken Mackenzie, Fort

Erie's "Housekeeper" and ARID'S Assistant Administrator is also the liaison to the community.

Leon says he himself is more comfortable working one-on-one "in-house" and taking care of the finances. "Not a penny goes in or out of ARID without my scrutiny."

Leon tells us that finding funding, especially for staffing, has always been ARID'S biggest challenge. This is a problem that most Non-profit Charitable Organizations face.

A substantial amount of the money needed to run the Fort Erie house comes from Bingos, which are held in that community. These Bingos are run by Beverly Hayes and other Friends of ARID. These revenues took a 30% hit after 9/11 due to border crossing problems. Another 30% reduction is forecast after the non-smoking ban takes effect in June of this year.

In a study of ARID done by Jim Muir the need for more staff was reaffirmed. Bob Tisi now works at the Fort Erie House in a part-time support role. More staff is needed.

ARID also gets help from the Trillium Foundation which is funded by the Provincial Government. This is contingent on ARID'S Partnership Program which is in need of a lot more participation from the community. The Ministry of Health helps with Deficit Funding which is always required. In order to make ends meet, it was deemed necessary to hire a professional fundraiser. Chonee Dennis, of the Dennis Group, will solicit funds on ARID'S behalf.

She will target Industry, other Agencies and Foundations, and the community in general. Chonee is also in the process of setting up ARID'S own Foundation. Nature abhors a vacuum. The need is evident. The hope is that God, working through people, will provide.

When he was asked about

Arid's success rate, Leon said, "60% fo the guys that come in these doors complete their stay and walk out sober. If they continue to do what kept them sober while they were here, they stand a good chance. If not...well that's anyones' guess."

Keith told Leon in 1978 not to look at his job at ARID as a career. Other staff members came and went. Leon stayed. Leon's wife Gail, who is also a Friend of ARID, has given him strong support over the years. Though his retirement looms in the near future, Leon plans to always be there for ARID in one capacity or another. He says, "Helping other guys to get sober and productive is what keeps me sober."

GOOD CURRENCY

Randy E. is a current senior resident of ARID House in Thorold. He is 45 years old and has lived in St. Catharines his whole life. Randy's drug and alcohol abuse took him to the Salvation Army treatment center in Sudbury in May of 2005. He had nowhere safe to live as he pursued his recovery. Through detox, Randy was accepted as an ARID resident in August of 2005.

Right from the start, Randy has attacked his recovery with a passion. He goes to Treatment Aftercare. He attends meetings of a number of 12 Step Programs faithfully. Randy has been to an 11th step spiritual Retreat and completed an AA Big Book Study. He is getting help with issues stemming from childhood trauma.

Randy says, "I find the atmosphere at the House very supportive..especially the staff. It is extremely conducive to my recovery." Ken Mackenzie says, "Randy is one of those clients that are a pleasure to work with."

CONT...BACK