

Voice

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spiraling out of control. "I perfected how to live a lie. My drug use went from experimental to self medicating," she said. "I do believe I am the face of addiction."

Victoria said the biggest barrier she faced in getting treatment was herself, but when she was entered into Cape May County Drug Court, she received the help she needed. Coincidentally, one of her former counselors whom she had not seen in years, Jim Mahoney, was in the audience. Mahoney, who is also a recovering alcoholic and addict, has worked in the addiction field in north Jersey for many years. He said recovering addicts, especially between the ages of 18 and 28, need life skills training and some sort of vocational recovery program as part of their treatment. He said they need to learn how to become productive members of society following their rehab.

"Most of these people just sat around playing video games, watching TV and doing drugs," he said. "They need that kind of help finding a job."

Mahoney said every county in the state is eligible for Chapter 51 funding, which is state funding for substance abuse prevention, education and treatment. Given Cape May County doesn't have a treatment or rehabilitation center and few drug awareness programs, the county could use this funding to create assistance for addicts.

Edward Shim, the Cape May County Drug Court Prosecutor, said he would like to see legislation that would allow those who complete the drug court program to have their drug related criminal charges expunged from their record so it doesn't

follow them around in the job market. Shim said when he was a pharmacist he had close friends with a son who became addicted to oxycodone. He said it's very common for people to become addicted to their prescribed drugs, but couldn't believe his friend's son had become a victim.

"There are two things we absolutely know about the drug problem in this county," he said. "The first is that we have one and the second is that we don't yet have a solution."

Mickey, a recovering addict, said he became engaged with a rehab program, but Cape May County is in dire need of improving its treatment and awareness of drug addiction. He suggested the county and local communities establish mentoring and prescription drug awareness programs, "Scared Straight" programs, Alcoholic and Narcotics Anonymous groups, humanized treatment, monthly community meetings like the county forum and regional rehab facilities. He also suggested fliers and other advertisements to inform the public of these programs.

"It's hard to find the information unless you know someone who's done it," Mickey said.

He said those who are incarcerated for drugs should also receive treatment while in prison to ensure they lead a better life once released.

"You wouldn't throw a diabetic in jail and not give them insulin, so why throw an addict in jail and not give them treatment?" he said.

Sue Anne Agger of the Learning Recovery Center of Wildwood said she has had eight members die of drug overdoses since she began working there in countless individuals end up in prison for drug related crimes. She said her children often ask

her why she works with people who could be dangerous. Agger said that stigma is constantly associated with drug addicts, but it is not necessarily true in most cases.

"These people are my neighbors, they are members of my community and they just need help," she said.

Agger brought with her a kit from the Atlantic City Shared Needle Exchange, a program that allows heroin addicts to exchange used needles for clean ones at city-run mobile health clinics. She said this program stemmed from a law in the state to prevent the spread of HIV, AIDS and hepatitis. She said instead of providing addicts the tools they need to use drugs, the state and local communities should offer more treatment options and educational programs.

"We need a detox center, halfway houses and education for children and the public to prevent use of drugs," she said.

Laurie Johnson, Director of Family Promise in Lower Township, said people who enter the program for assistance to their families while homeless, are required to take a drug test.

"I can count the number of times I've given people the admission voucher for the drug test and you never see them again," she said.

Johnson said her own son became an addict and she was forced to take him to a detox and rehab center in Florida.

"There's no treatment for people here," she said.

Johnson also read a letter on the behalf of her close friend whose son has also been taken to Florida for rehab and is now nearly 70 days clean. She said her friend knew her son had been smoking marijuana, but couldn't believe when she



Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

Watching the Cove come and go

Part of the fun of being a year-round resident is watching the Cove change shape after storms. Here, the stone jetty at the end of Beach Avenue, recently covered with sand, has been partially uncovered by the weather. The pilings seen in the upper portion of the picture have at times been covered with sand – and at other times, six feet of piling is exposed.

Water

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found out he was addicted to heroin. Johnson said it's time for Cape May County to establish more treatment options for addicts in the area.

Gabor said these types of forums would continue in the county's effort to address the growing drug problem. She said the public will be informed of future events, as it has for the last two forums at the County Administration Building.

"This is a long-term, ongoing project," she said. "We really want to make a difference."

flows going into West Cape May through Canning House Lane and out through Wilbraham Park.

"Based on the data showed from July 2012 thru June 2013, the Canning House Lane meter recorded 1,518,340 gallons of water when the flow rate was below 40 gpm and 4,476,570 gallons of water when the flow rate was between 40 and 100 gpm. Accordingly, the Canning House Lane meter that was replaced would have recorded 5,994,910 gallons less than the actual volume delivered," the Dixon report says.

The report also says the Wilbraham Park meter would have recorded 2,048,000 gallons of water when the flow rate was below 40 gpm and 2,084,406 gallons when the flow rate was between 40 and 100 gpm. Dixon said based on that data, the Wilbraham Park meter would have recorded 4,132,406 gallons less than the actual volume delivered. He said his firm found the borough came out ahead by nearly 1.9 million gallons.

Deputy Mayor William Murray said he reviewed the study and as a former lawyer and engineer, he concluded that Dixon's methodology is quite sound and has confidence in the report's findings. Immediately following the conference, Mayor Pam Kaithern provided the media with a statement from the borough, which said West Cape May is glad that after almost three years Cape May has finally responded to Eden's analysis of the water loss dated January 2011. West Cape May officials had

not yet had the opportunity to review Dixon Associates' report, but still gave a preliminary response.

"The fact is that once Cape May's meter in Wilbraham Park was shut down, the water 'loss' stopped. Cape May's report fails to address this fact, and provides no alternative explanation for where their 'missing' water went," the statement says. "The report's results are speculation, not fact. Its conclusions are a back-extrapolation about events in 2005-2011, based on data from 2012-2013, after Cape May's defective meter was replaced."

The statement also says following the borough's attempt to resolve the situation more than a year ago and Cape May's refusal to do so, West Cape May remains willing to mediate through the state mediation service.

"So, in the end we are left with two conflicting accounts that must be reconciled, and a financial responsibility that must be allocated," the statement says. "The ratepayers of West Cape May can be rest assured, this administration will continue to work diligently toward proper restitution of funds."

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