February 2005

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation
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Volume IV, Issue 2

Mockingbird Times

Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth

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Tsunami Hits Young Victims Hardest
Darius Reynolds

ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 26 2004, an earthquake that measured 9.0 on the Richter scale hit the Indian Ocean. The earthquake was the largest in forty years, causing tsunamis with waves as high as fifty feet; destroying the coasts of Thailand, India, and Indonesia. The devastation even reached as far as the coast of Africa. Sri Lanka was one of the worst to be hit by the tsunamis. Hambantota, a city in Sri Lanka, was completely destroyed. Over 30,000 people were pledged dead and 850,000 are now homeless in Sri Lanka alone. The United Nations (UN) International Children's Emergency Fund reports a total of 225,000 deaths.

The United States has given $350 million in relief money to help. President George W. Bush and Presidents George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton came together and held their own private fundraiser. The World Bank has given $250 million. Many countries have given money to help and many private agencies are currently working hard to raise more money. Students from over 50 schools in the northwest area also raised money for Sri Lanka.

An article in the Christian Science Monitor states that the people in Indonesia were too close to the epicenter to be warned early enough to be saved; stating that having a tsunami-alert system in the Indian Ocean could have saved thousands. Japan offered to help pay for a system to prevent this level of devastation should this kind of tragedy happens again.

February is Black History Month
Princess Hollins and MBT Staff

The Mockingbird Society is honoring hundreds of years of African-American history with compelling articles that will educate us about African-American culture and the many oppressive obstacles that have been overcome throughout the years.

In 1926, blacks were honored by “Negro History Week” which later evolved into Black History Month, although African-Americans have been in America since Colonial times. February is the month dedicated to educating people about the struggles and successes of African-Americans. Dedicating the whole month of February for African Americans to shine is a great accomplishment, but the Mockingbird Times wants to extend this by providing articles throughout the year that honor the many contributions made by African Americans in many communities. Prepare yourselves for eye-opening, strength-building articles about African Americans and other under-represented cultural groups to be featured in the coming months. In this issue, read Rico Evans’ piece on African American Inventors, and Echo Speed’s account of former slave Margaret Garner.

In addition to the articles our reporting staff is busy preparing, we want to challenge you out there to send us articles, poetry and artwork that honors and celebrates the often unrecognized contributions that African-American and other underrepresented citizens have made to American history. Contact us at newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-KIDS (5437).

There are a lot of good things about the month of February, but in my opinion the best thing about February is that it is Black History month. African-Americans are known for a lot of things, like being artistic and creative. They are not as well known for their inventions. African-Americans have made a lot of things that make our lives a lot easier; things that we take for granted, like the hairbrush or air conditioner to things that help save lives like the blood plasma bag and the gas mask. Let me tell you about two African-Americans whose inventions were so important that we still use them today. Granville T. Woods was born in Columbus, Ohio in April 1856. At the age of ten, he began work in a machine shop. In 1884, Woods received his first patent for the steam boiler furnace. In 1885, he invented a system called telegraphy. This system allowed telegraph lines to carry voice signals. People used this device to send messages from train to train, but it wasn’t until 1887 that he patented his invention. Woods owned his own company called Woods Electric Company. Through his company, Woods sold the invention that he made, but because of the color of his skin he had a hard time marketing his invention. He later sold his patents to a general electric company. During his career he received 35 patents for his invention that made such an impact on the transportation and communication industry.

Another important African-American inventor is Henry T. Sampson. Sampson was born in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1956, he got a Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Master of Science degree in engineering. If you ever wondered who made the cellular phone system, Henry T. Sampson is the man. Sampson invented the cellular phone system in 1983. This made portable phones available to more people. Before 1983, there were car phones and they only had one antenna with only 12 to 24 frequencies. That meant that there could only be one that calls happening at the same time, which resulted in people waiting for 15 to 30 minutes for a call to go through. With this invention, phones no longer depended on cords.

These are some of the many inventions that African Americans contributed. Without these inventions, life would be a lot harder. Just think, if Granville T. Woods didn’t invent the telephone system, how you would talk to your friend who lives in a different city. We would be still writing letters back and forth. You would have to wait for up to five days just to get a reply. African-Americans and people from other ethnicities are very important to this country. Without their contributions, we wouldn’t know half of the things that we do and our lives would be much harder.

Read Echo Speed’s account of Margaret Garner inside on page 4...
Letter from the Editor

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

GREETINGS AND HAPPY FEBRUARY! February is Black History Month and as such you will find a number of articles in this issue related to the trials, tribulations and contributions of African-Americans in American history and culture. The connection of African-American children, adolescents and families within the foster care system is clear and not surprisingly somewhat disturbing. Children of color in general and African-American children in particular are over-represented within the foster care system as they are in the juvenile justice system. For example, children of color constitute one-third of the King County child population but make up more than one half of all children currently in foster care in King County. African-American and Native-American children are over-represented at nearly every decision point in the child welfare system, which clearly suggests a systemic flaw.

There is a myth that African-American and other racial or ethnic groups have a higher rate of child abuse and maltreatment. However, this myth has been dispelled through a number of research projects including the National Incidence Study commissioned by Congress and conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services. Among other findings, these studies range from 1980-1993, researchers reported that, “No significant differences in the overall rate of child maltreatment between African-American and Caucasians were found...” The Mockingbird Society is dedicated to improving the current and future lives of the children involved in foster/kinship care and we are committed to building a system that provides services that are of the highest quality, timely and culturally relevant to the family.

Many of you have been following our progress regarding the Mockingbird Foster Family Constellation Project. The federal grant expired on December 31st however we have secured the funding necessary to continue this project with One Church One Child/UMJA Community Services and replicate the model in at least two new sites. As you may recall our outcomes for the test-piloting of the Mockingbird Model have been very positive including: minimal placement disruptions, siblings able to live together, services that are culturally relevant and competent, high satisfaction of caregivers including 24/7 respite availability AND though not all of the participating children improved their academic performance in most subject areas.

Finally, we’re hoping you will attend our Annual Fundraiser on February 6th. The youth at Mockingbird have been developing a video on foster care/youth homelessness and we plan to show a preview of this video due for release in March 2005. Come get a sneak preview, listen to youth speakers, enjoy great food and donate to a good cause!

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Quote of the Month

YOU’RE NOT TO BE SO BLIND WITH PATRIOTISM THAT YOU CAN’T FACE REALITY. WRONG IS WRONG, NO MATTER WHO DOES IT OR SAYS IT.

-MALCOLM X (1925 - 1965)

Mockingbird Times, February 2005

Letter to the Editor

This letter is from a foster mom of two young women employed to distribute the Mockingbird Times.

Jim,

I want to say thank you to you and your staff for all you have done for us. I am willing to continue to deliver about 25 of the papers myself in an effort to continue to support everything you do. I would like to continue to promote your work in this area. You have been so gracious to us. The girls now have a first job they can put down on job applications and resumes. We are almost at that age where we can begin to look for summer jobs. The girls have been able to experience some of the responsibility of a real job. They have learned the ins and outs of how to establish a bank account, how to keep a balance, what it’s like to save in order to buy something for themselves. These are lessons that build self esteem and life long real world skills. I do hope that things continue to go well for you and your endeavors to improve life for young people. I will encourage the girls to submit work from time to time. Once again THANK YOU for the ways you have supported us throughout the years.

Sincerely,
Glena Felker

Mockingbird Fundraiser

Don’t forget to join us at our 4th Annual Fundraiser on February 6th from 4-6pm. Call 206-323-5437 for information.

Thank you's...

Meet our Staff

Executive Director
Jim Theofelis
MFECF Coordinator
Shannon Barlow
Administrative Assistant
Lauren Frederic
MSW Intern
Emin Daniel
Senior Staff Reporters
Dennis Foster, Courtney Bednarek, Danus Reynolds
Satellite Reporters
Shay Denny, Lily Seguin-Evens, Ashley Grand, Anthony Gue, Janica Henderson, Princess Hollins, Echo Speed, Hollis Piggins, Shakeria Felder, Misty Cook
Contributing Writers
Jaye Eddleman
Volunteers
Anna Trombley, Kirsten Hansen-Day, Aleta Kennedy, Dmitri Pindel

*All Graphics designed by Echo Speed.

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The Mockingbird Times is a bi-monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between $7.50 and $8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to $25 per published piece. The Mockingbird Times has a monthly circulation of 60,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the U.S.A, through a private distribution list and as an insert in Real Change, South Star and Seattle Sun community newspapers. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the Moc kingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Moc kingbird Society are tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the Moc kingbird Society may be used in the amount of: $1,000+..... Protector $500-999.....Caretaker $250-500.....Organizations

NAME PHONE

ADDRESS EMAIL

CITY STATE ZIP

Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South Suite 350, Seattle WA 98144

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth and support the Mockingbird Society! Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the Mockingbird Times. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: $1,000+ $500-999 $250-500 $50+ $50+$upporter $25+ Foster Parent

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

Please fill me for the amount indicated.
My employer will match my gift; enclosed is my matching gift form.
I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.

FOUNDATIONS

Suggested Donations:

Please enter your email address to receive our newsletter.
Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Mockingbird Fundraiser

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*All Graphics designed by Echo Speed.
Positive Power: Money Management 102

If you missed the first installment of Money Management 101 in the December 2004 issue of the Mockingbird Times, I recommend it if you are interested in learning more about money management; specifically, increasing your net income, budgeting, controlling variable expenses, cash flow, and managing paperwork. Most of the information in both articles comes courtesy of Kelly Port’s Money Management class, offered at the Fremont Public Association in Seattle.

One of the things I didn’t understand about debit cards before I took Port’s Money Management class was that if you chose the option of credit on your debit card when paying for a purchase you aren’t establishing credit. The only difference between the two is how they are processed. If you want to start establishing credit, the first thing to do is get your credit report and start understanding your credit so you can see where you stand and find anything that’s going to get in the way of you buying something important, like a home. For example, because of lack of health care, homeless youth rack up enormous medical bills that can screw up their credit.

As of December 1, 2004 ANY person in Washington can get a free credit report from each of the major credit reporting agencies once a year: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Eventually everybody in the United States will be entitled to their free credit reports. This is slowly being put into effect to prevent an influx of requests. The way you go about getting your reports is to go to www.AnnualCreditReport.com or write or phone each company. It is also good to get your credit rating along with your report. This is something you will have to pay for (should not be more than $10) but it will help you understand what your credit reports mean. Once you have your reports you need to know a few key things to do is check it for errors. If you find an error contact the credit agency in writing and include any copies of documents to support your stance. Do not send originals! There will be an example error dispute letter online at www.mockingbirdtimes.org and along with the addresses and phone numbers of the three credit reporting agencies. Port’s money management booklet advises you to, “send your letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, so you can document what the CRA received.”

Interested in building credit? It’s an important thing to do before making a major purchase like a car or a house because insurance rates will be lower.

Port asked the class what some of the ways people in the class knew of to establish credit. I blurted out the only way I knew of doing this is to get a department store card. Port responded by saying that there are better ways to go about establishing credit. For example, there is a specific type of savings account you can get through your bank that offers a better way of establishing credit with lower Annual Percentage Rates (APR).

One of the most important things I learned in Port’s class is that “pay day loans=costly cash.” In other words, steer clear of places that offer quick and easy loans and the fast cash you need! These agencies have an outrageously high APR of 391 percent—meaning that if you roll over the loan (extend the time to pay it back) you will be paying back over 50% of the amount you borrowed. It makes no sense to be paying more on your loan than the loan itself. (one of the anonymous check cashing places) that says, “Your first loan on is free, get a free dinner (a pizza) and a free movie rental!” I know there are probably a lot of people out there who have fallen for this ‘scam’ thinking it’s a deal. The best advice is avoid these places all together and if you can’t avoid them make sure not to roll over your loan and pay it back! There are other options.

According to the class booklet, “When you need credit, shop carefully. Compare offers. Look for the credit offer with lowest APR – consider a small loan from a friend or family member. Most of the time by themselves or with the lenders own scores agencies might be different because the information that each agency has on you differs. Experian calls its scores Beacon. Experian calls their scores Experian/ Fait, Isak, Risk Model. TransUnion calls their score Empirica. As your data changes at the credit reporting agency your credit report changes too.

If you find yourself still wanting to know more, and/or if you have questions about credit or money management you should talk to someone at Kelly Port’s workshop. Take the FREE financial education classes that Kelly Port offers at the Fremont Public Association! You can contact her to register for the class at (206) 694-8684. This class will help to demystify credit.

Hey You! We are looking for articles, poetry, artwork, and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or homelessness. If you want to be published in the Mockingbird Times, call us at 206-323-5437 or email news@mockingbirdtimes.org. Check out www.mockingbirdtimes.org for more information.

Tsunami Continued from page 1

A fund raising group called Plan USA has been working in Sri Lanka for eight years to raise money, build schools and to help protect the children of Sri Lanka because of the many problems before the tsunami hit; problems like malnutrition, poverty and lack of proper medicine. The tsunami has only made those problems worse. Plan USA is working with government agencies to make sure there are clean water tanks and bathing houses for people living in camps. There are also thousands of children being taken and sold for sex and labor. Plan USA’s Marie Staunton, National Director, United Kingdom National Office (UKNO) writes in a January 2005 article, “What happened in the tsunami was that, after the children are given jobs like getting water and helping in their organization and state, “Children recover from disasters quicker when they are called upon to help to rebuild their community.” To give them a chance to help, the children are given jobs like getting water and helping take care of infants. Because of the tsunami children are even more vulnerable to traffickers and other predators. Plan USA is working with local organizations to help locate trafficked children and make sure they are put in safe-houses and receive proper health care and counseling.

Sri Lanka and all the other countries hit by the tsunamis still need a lot of help; if you would like to help or donate time please contact Plan USA at 800-576- 7918 or visit www.planusa.org. There are many other programs that you can contact if you want to help. To find out the closest one to you visit www.usaid.gov. But please do not forget that there are people here in America who also need your help.

We are One

We are a family of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong of three, all girls, are we. We unite. We talk. We fight. But, all in all, we stay strong
The Dirt on Heroin Abuse

Black History Month Series: Margaret Garner’s Story

With intravenous drug use, the user should take extra care because a lot of diseases can be spread through sharing needles and equipment and using dirty needles and equipment. The user can be keeping themselves at risk of control and the drug’s habit-forming action. It mimics certain chemicals in the brain that are already present; such as endorphins which block pain and induce feelings of pleasure and contentment.

Soon after using, heroin crosses the blood-brain barrier. In the brain, heroin is converted to morphine and binds rapidly to opioid receptors. The user will often feel a surge of pleasurable sensation, called a “rush.” Heroin is particularly addictive because of how quickly it enters the brain—the effects are almost immediate when injected and the user may initially feel sick. A feeling of calm and warmth spreads throughout the body and any troubles or pains seem very distant and unimportant. At higher doses, the user slips into a dreamlike state where they are not asleep nor awake, but somewhere in between.

Other than being a very powerful painkiller, heroin also depresses the central nervous system activity, making the heart rate and breathing slow down, suppressing the cough reflex and depressing the activity of the bowels, causing constipation. Some blood vessels dilate, releasing heat through the body, giving a feeling of warmth. Opiates can change the brainstem, an area that controls emotions to increase feelings of pleasure and can block pain receptors transmitted by the spinal cord from the body.

Heroin is dangerous, although heroin itself does not damage any major organs (including the brain) when pure. Health problems can arise from the impurities that are added during the manufacturing process. Death generally occurs when the user's breathing slows to a halt and/or the user's lungs fill up with liquid.

ECHO SPEED

IN LATE JANUARY 1856, within the beautiful rolling hills and impressive mountains of the famous Bluegrass state, Kentucky, 17 slaves of neighboring areas designed a desperate plan of escape from the wretched life of slave labor. Among this fraught, somewhat forlorn group of prisoners was a young mother and domestic slave woman named Margaret Garner.

22-year-old Garner resided on the Maplewood farm laboring in the cookhouse. Maplewood was a very prominent farm in Boone County that was owned and controlled by Mr. Archibald Gaines. Margaret Garner was wife to Robert Garner and mother to four children (two boys; two baby girls) whom (many believe) she loved exceptionally.

On a cold Sunday evening buried in snow, Garner and her husband’s friends, including her husband’s brother, joined up with the group of slaves who had all been plotting the grand flight to freedom. The plan was to make it to Wester Row, Ohio by way of the Ohio River. With two horses supplied by Mr. Kite’s residence before they found it.

Ultimately these inquiries were in vain. The Defense argued that she was brought there a number of years ago by her master to be a nurse girl (being pregnant at the time), and because of the law that unfettered slaves brought to free states with their owner’s consent, Garner was free from that time and in one stroke sliced her little girl’s throat, from ear to ear they say. Before she could compete the desperate slaughter, she was overpowered and hampered before her next attempt to take another one of her children’s lives. Everyone was thrown in jail.

The trial lasted two weeks. Garner’s Council for Defense argued that she was brought there a number of years ago by her master to be a nurse girl (being pregnant at the time), and because of the law that unfettered slaves brought to free states with their owner’s consent, Garner was free from that time and to her ear they say. Before she could compete the desperate slaughter, she was overpowered and hampered before her next attempt to take another one of her children’s lives. Everyone was thrown in jail.

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Make a rule about money: It’s okay not to lend them money if you think they are going to get high with it. Remember, though, that they will find other ways to get high and you may be in a lot of trouble and danger if you can afford to lend them a little bit.

Be honest—Speak to them about any worries you have without lecturing them. Let them know your concern and they will let them know they care about them and they might be able to reassure on some things you are worried about.

Be supportive and avoid suspicion—Appreciate that it is hard not to take it personally and that not everyone is successful. If they fail, don’t take it as a personal insult, offer support for the next time they try. Encourage them to think of it as a minor mistake, one that is NOT to be repeated. Only if they continue to use it is considered a relapse.

The best way to encourage a junkie toward a safer lifestyle is to be understanding and supportive of them. You can’t make decisions for them. Keep in mind that most heroin addicts do eventually get and stay clean and that the average length of time that someone stays addicted to heroin is about three years. If you have a loved one who is a heroin addict, try to be supportive as best you can but don’t let them walk all over you. Remember to ensure that YOU come first. Always explain your reasons for things and be honest. Hopefully if you are honest about your feelings then they will feel about yours.

Sources:
- www.addictiontreatmentresource.com/heroin-treatment.html
- www.herointimes.com
- www.heroin.org

SHAY DENEY

HEROIN (Diacetylmorphine or DIAMORPHINE) IS PART OF THE OPIATE FAMILY, A GROUP OF PAIN KILLING DRUGS (ANALGESICS) DERIVED FROM THE OPIUM POPPY FLOWER. Heroin affects the user by activating many regions of the brain. The brain regions affected are responsible for producing both the pleasurable sensation an addict often gets when taking the drug and also the physical dependence that the user feels when becoming addicted. Together, these actions account for the user’s loss of control and the drug’s habit-forming action. It mimics certain chemicals in the brain that are already present; such as endorphins which block pain and induce feelings of pleasure and contentment.

Most of the time, when someone finds out that a loved one is addicted to heroin, they speak to the addict about stopping. Heroin users will only stop when they are ready to stop. If they are forced to stop by being put into detox center or by keeping them away from it, they will only go right back to doing it as soon as they possibly can. According to “Jane,” by try and stop six years, “you gotta know it’s not an option to depart to another place after you get the habit.”

“Jane” goes on to say, “you can’t play the role of saviour, therapist, mom, and friend all wrapped up into one. Most likely you don’t have the energy to! As much as you may love and care deeply for your friend you have to let them take the first step and can’t enable them by keeping them from feeling pain and sometimes that means stepping away.” Here are some things you can do to encourage an addict to stop when they are still using:

- Keep in contact—don’t break all contacts because your loved one is a user. They won’t come to you when you try to get them to stop when they are still using:
- Don’t take all control and the drug’s habit-forming action. It mimics certain chemicals in the brain that are already present; such as endorphins which block pain and induce feelings of pleasure and contentment.

One of the major dangers of heroin overdose, which mostly occurs through intravenous use, is that the user gets a hold of a more pure form of heroin than what they are used to. Overdose symptoms are as follows:

- Blue lips
- Shallow breathing
- Clammy skin
- Pinpoint pupils
- Excessive fluid in the lungs
- Irregular heartbeat
- Death

AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C (which can progress to Cirrhosis) and many other blood transmitted viruses and other infections of the veins, skin, and muscles. Heroin is too strong of an influence over most addict’s lives for them to ever get help...or anything else.

Garner must have seen this desperate slaughter, she was overpowered and hampered before her next attempt to take another one of her children’s lives. Everyone was thrown in jail.

Remember, the difference between lapse and relapse—after going through detox, trying heroin again is classed as a lapse, not a relapse. Try to encourage them to think of it as a minor mistake, one that is NOT to be repeated. Only if they continue to use it is considered a relapse.

The best way to encourage a junkie toward a safer lifestyle is to be understanding and supportive of them. You can’t make decisions for them. Keep in mind that most heroin addicts do eventually get and stay clean and that the average length of time that someone stays addicted to heroin is about three years. If you have a loved one who is a heroin addict, try to be supportive as best you can but don’t let them walk all over you. Remember to ensure that YOU come first. Always explain your reasons for things and be honest. Hopefully if you are honest about your feelings then they will feel about yours.

Sources:
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- lumnarium.org/contemporary/tomorrison/mackley.htm
- www.herointimes.com
- www.heroin.org

It’s okay not to lend them money if you think they are going to get high with it. Remember, though, that they will find other ways to get high and you may be in a lot of trouble and danger if you can afford to lend them a little bit.

Be honest—Speak to them about any worries you have without lecturing them. Let them know your concern and they will let them know they care about them and they might be able to reassure on some things you are worried about.

Be supportive and avoid suspicion—Appreciate that it is hard not to take it personally and that not everyone is successful. If they fail, don’t take it as a personal insult, offer support for the next time they try. Encourage them to think of it as a minor mistake, one that is NOT to be repeated. Only if they continue to use it is considered a relapse.

The best way to encourage a junkie toward a safer lifestyle is to be understanding and supportive of them. You can’t make decisions for them. Keep in mind that most heroin addicts do eventually get and stay clean and that the average length of time that someone stays addicted to heroin is about three years. If you have a loved one who is a heroin addict, try to be supportive as best you can but don’t let them walk all over you. Remember to ensure that YOU come first. Always explain your reasons for things and be honest. Hopefully if you are honest about your feelings then they will feel about yours.

Sources:
- Levi Coffin, Reminiscences (Cincinnati, 1876), rootsweb.com/~kendlecl/slaverymargaretgarner.htm
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