

Meet B Here Today's Recovery Carrier Becky Vance

When it comes to recovery-related issues, Becky Vance is one of the most passionate people you'll ever meet. We met nearly 10 years ago while working on the field services team for The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, then known as The Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Our lives have changed drastically since 2005: while neither of us works at The Partnership any longer, we still live and work and breathe recovery--as a couple. Having Becky as the November Recovery Carrier not only honors the professional work she does, but expresses my loving gratitude for the many ways she models recovery for me in our daily lives together.

This is the 11th post in this Recovery Carrier series.

William White defines [recovery carriers](http://www.williamwhitepapers.com) as “people, usually in recovery, who make recovery infectious to those around them by their openness about their recovery experiences, their quality of life and character, and the compassion they exhibit for those still suffering.” (www.williamwhitepapers.com, 2012)

When you hear the term “recovery carrier,” as it relates to addiction, what does that mean to you? Do you think you’re a recovery carrier?

A recovery carrier is someone who is not afraid to share the miracle of her own recovery with anyone. In fact, she is always looking for new opportunities to share her story with others, because she knows others will pass it on. Yes, I believe in my heart that I am a recovery carrier. People often tell me that my passion for recovery is infectious and I love that! I even joke that I am the poster child for recovery; if you think about it, that’s really true, at least to the people I meet that haven’t been exposed to recovery.



What makes you uniquely qualified to do the work you do?

It may sound kind of weird but I believe that God selected me to share this message of recovery. I did not wake up one day and say “I think I’ll share my recovery story at a breakfast of 100 corporate leaders to help promote the value of drug-free workplace programs.” Not at a time when I had a huge fear of public speaking! That particular event, which we called “Sex, Lies and Drugs in the Workplace,” turned out to be a sentinel event for me, and was the launching pad for the work I do today. As a result of saying “yes” to sharing my story outside of a 12-Step meeting, which was absolutely terrifying to me at the time, I’ve been able to touch more lives than I could ever imagine.

Tell me how your personal story fits into why you do your work.

Maybe a better question is, *How do you carry the message of recovery in your work*

life? I have been truly blessed for the past 26 years to have jobs that allowed me to share my recovery story with literally thousands of people. I started out in the treatment community (marketing) because I wanted to help others find recovery. Then I was given the opportunity to work in the non-profit sector and use my story to help corporations recognize the value of and to implement drug-free workplace programs. In that position, I helped dispel some of the myths about people suffering from substance use disorders. Simply sharing my story with business leaders helped break through their denial and made them realize that drug use in the workplace is very common but it can be prevented. More importantly, as employers, they were in a very powerful position to motivate drug-using employees to get help. If someone has to choose between losing their job and getting help, chances are they will pick the latter. I saw drug-free workplace programs and fire people” but as an intervention and save lives. After six years of promoting drug-free workplace programs and presentations for doing hundreds of employers and employees across the country, I was fortunate to land a dream job with a national non-profit focused on drug prevention. This job gave me the opportunity to share the recovery message across the country and meet so many incredible people.



Currently, as a nationally recognized community liaison for a treatment center, I am blessed to have the opportunity to wake up every morning and spread the message that recovery is possible. I think the treatment industry sometimes gets a bad rap and is often mis-characterized. Sure, there are good programs and bad programs...ethical and not-so-ethical. For me, it's definitely not about "putting heads in beds," but about educating the community about the disease of addiction, including its impact on the health and safety of families and our society as a whole. It's about letting people know they are not alone, there is hope, and help is available. I am so honored to be able to help start families on the road to recovery.

Switching to recovery advocacy, from where you sit, what is the number one thing you'd like to see changed as a result of recovery advocacy?

Ultimately, I want what all of us in the field want – for more people who are still suffering to seek help, which requires more funding for research, treatment and prevention/education. We don't stand a chance of eliminating the stigma which is still so prevalent in our society if we don't do a better job of educating the public about this disease.

Can the recovery field do a better job around advocacy? What might that look like?

Absolutely! We can and should strive for continuous improvement. We have so many tools available to us now that were not available in the “old days” of the earlier advocacy movements – the most important being the explosion of social media. The possibilities are endless! Recruiting new advocates will be necessary if we want to expand the movement but how do we do that? There is still some confusion around the concept of anonymity within 12-Step programs vs. people in 12-Step programs speaking up about their own recovery. We need to do a better job of explaining the difference.

One idea that might work is to incorporate advocacy training into treatment centers’ aftercare programs. You have all of these people new to recovery who want to give back and we can give them the tools necessary to do that via advocacy. Some people might think this is a crazy idea but I think it could work!

Why is the work of recovery advocates so necessary right now?

Because we have some momentum building, much of it as a result of Greg Williams’ documentary, [The Anonymous People](#), and the way it has motivated and mobilized the recovery community to speak out. We have new legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act of 2014 (CARA 2014) that needs more champions.

With 23 million people in recovery, we have the power to affect real change, but we need more recovery advocates at the table to create and implement new policies that will help reduce stigma and remove barriers to treatment.

Becky Vance is a marketing and communications professional with more than 20 years of healthcare and other experience in both the public and private sectors. She is currently working for [Memorial Hermann Prevention and Recovery Center](#) in Houston. In her spare time, she volunteers for the [Greyhound Adoption League of Texas](#) (GALT) to help retired racing greyhounds find their forever homes. Whether working with the media to use advertising to “unsell” substance abuse across the nation, facilitating addiction recovery via treatment, or promoting the benefits of drug-free workplace programs to the corporate sector, Becky has always been focused on making the world a better place!

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MARFA

TxDOT will allow ‘Prada Marfa’ art exhibit to remain

Fake shop in desert is swipe at luxury goods industry.

By Juan Carlos Llorca
Associated Press

EL PASO — The Prada Marfa stands out, but not like the Italian luxury brand’s stores in the world’s major fashion capitals. It’s surrounded by desolate prairie, alone in a plot of dirt along a rural highway in the West Texas desert.

The art installation has become a must see for curious tourists since it was erected nine years ago along U.S. 90, about 40 miles from the small stray town of Marfa.

Scandinavian artist Michael Elmgreen and Inge

plis of shoes and handbags that appeared to be worth thousands of dollars — came in the state agency’s cross hairs after a local resident filed a complaint about Playboy magazine installing a 40-foot tall neon bunny along the same road-way.

The bunny was deemed a sign, and therefore in need of a sign permit under state law. The area is ineligible for sign permits, so the sign was eventually removed.

But that meant the Prada Marfa, with the luxury brand’s logo featured on its awnings, apparently fell under the same rules.

TxDOT says the group that manages the site,

BIG TEXAS RALLY FOR RECOVERY



Healthy accomplishment

Becky Vance (left) and Beth Wilson, both of Dallas, participate in the fourth annual Big Texas Rally for Recovery at the Capitol on Saturday. Hundreds of Texans, many celebrating recovery from drug or alcohol addiction and many supporters, gathered at the rally in conjunction with National Recovery Month. [AP/WIDE WORLD](#)