



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**National Roads  
Advocacy with  
Anonymity**

**State Roads -  
Join Us!**

**The Road to  
Education**

**Consumer  
Driven Services**

**Byroads—  
Recovery Ren-  
dezvous**

**2 State Roads— A Man with a Message**

**2** On February 2, 2002, Mitchell Kobza drove drunk. He crashed his car. His girlfriend, Kari Kunneman, died.

**3** His alcoholism took the life of his friend, left her family grieving and changed his life forever.

Now he wants young people to avoid a similar fate. Kobza, 24, began telling his story at schools under a judge's order. He continues to tell it in honor of Kari and her family. He hopes to make a difference.

Now sober, he takes full responsibility for the consequences of his alcoholism. "I was bulletproof, invincible. I thought nothing could happen to me," Kobza recently told the students of Leigh High School in David City. He had been in trouble with alcohol more than once while in high school. "My drinking just got worse," Kobza told the students. On New Years Day 2002 he was arrested for drunken driving and Kari bailed him out. One month later she was dead. Kobza had been binge drinking for a week before the accident.

Kobza was charged with vehicular homicide and faced up to 10 years in jail. He was ordered to complete an alcohol rehabilitation program and spent 90 days in jail and another 120 with a surveillance ankle bracelet. But it was the 600 hours of community service that led him to be-

gin sharing his message to high schools and middle schools around Nebraska, generally at his own expense.

Feedback from the students has been overwhelmingly positive. "It had a strong influence on me", one student wrote. Another student wrote, "He changed the way I think. I ended up at every speech he did that day". "The message was really powerful" wrote another.

Mitch Kobza's message is also a powerful example of how speaking out about addiction and recovery can make a difference in other people's lives. For information on how to arrange a presentation in your town, contact either the Nebraska Recovery Network at 1-888-225-2372 or Mitch Kobza at 402/430-5004.

**2006 Unicameral Update**

Three months into the 2006 Unicameral:

- LB 844, which attempts to streamline the HHS department, was amended and placed in General File
- LB 862, which appropriates \$500,000 to be used for alcohol-related birth defects prevention programs has been amended.
- LB 914 and LB 915 allows the court to order restitution to law enforcement agencies and property owners for the costs in rehabilitation of the property where the clandestine laboratory used by the person to manufacture the controlled substance is located. Both amended and placed in General File.

**Philosophy**

AA is a synthesis of all the philosophy I've ever read, all of the positive, good philosophy all of it based on love.

I have seen that there is only one law, the law of love, and there are only two sins;

The first is to interfere with the growth of another human being, and the second is to interfere with one's own growth.

I stood off and took a long look at life and the values I found in it.

I saw a paradox, that he who loses his life does indeed find it.

The more you give, the more you get.

Bill Wilson

# National Roads— Advocacy with Anonymity



In the winter issue NRN shared with you information on advocacy with anonymity. This is the second article in that series.

**Remember.** You can speak out publicly without compromising the principles of the recovery program in which you participate. By doing so, you will be reaching out to alcoholics, addicts, their families, and their communities and providing them with new hope.

The traditions don't not preclude you from speaking out about your own recovery or from advocating for the rights of other alcoholics and addicts, as long as you do not involve the twelve-step group by name. But while the idea of speaking out may interest you, you may be grappling with a number of concerns. Here are some more of the questions typically asked, as well as information to make you feel more comfortable with this idea.

For more information, visit [www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org).

**Q: What do I say about my membership in a twelve-step group if it was the means of my recovery if I am speaking to the media?**

A: Simply say, "I found recovery through a twelve-step group, but our traditions do not permit me to name it in the media."

**Q: Where should I speak out?**

A: Start by talking with one other person or a small group. As you become more comfortable talking about your disease and recovery, expand your audience. You may want to speak at meetings of civic or religious organizations. As your comfort grows you may want to speak publicly or privately with your city council, state legislators or public officials.

**Q: How can I advocate if I am uncomfortable speaking publicly?**

A: Write letters to our local newspaper responding to a published article on the subject. Submit an op-ed piece on a relevant topic such as expanding insurance coverage for the treatment of addiction and alcoholism. Write to your elected officials supporting the rights of people with alcohol and drug addiction.

The Nebraska Recovery Network was established to encourage grassroots advocacy for substance abuse and addiction recovery in Nebraska. Through funding assistance from the Nebraska HHS Office of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Addiction Services, our primary aim is to connect people in recovery, their families and friends of the recovery community with individual and community advocacy opportunities.

## Send More Information. I want to be on the mailing list.

Yes, I want to help people with addiction to alcohol and other drugs by advocating for recovery issues. I am willing to: (Check all that apply)

- Add my name to those supporting recovery in my area
- Receive e-mail alerts and information about recovery advocacy activities
- Write letters to, call, or visit my elected officials on recovery issues
- Attend local advocacy events
- I want to help with special projects at the local level, like working with others in local recovery programs.
- Please accept this tax deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help.

### YOU CAN REACH ME AT:

Names on our mailing list will not be sold for commercial purposes.

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Phone		
Fax		
Email		

## The Road to Education



Faces & Voices of Recovery is pleased to announce that thanks to the recovery community and its allies, thousands of students with drug convictions, many of whom are in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, will now be able to obtain financial aid to students.

A provision in the budget signed into law by President Bush recently will allow students with prior drug convictions to regain eligibility for federal student financial aid, repealing a ban that has been in place since 1998.

The law goes into effect on July 1, 2005. People

will be able to receive aid unless they are convicted of a drug felony or misdemeanor while in school. Students convicted while receiving federal aid will remain ineligible for one year for a first possession, two years for a second, and indefinitely for a third, with harsher penalties for selling.

The US Department of Education, which oversees the new law, will be deciding how it will be implemented over the next few months. Faces & Voices stated, "People can participate in treatment programs in order to qualify for their aid to be restored."

For more information go to:

[www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org).

## Moving toward Consumer Driven Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) has produced a Federal Action Agenda for a consumer-driven system with the goal of recovery.

A draft definition of consumer driven developed by the National Mental Health Advisory Council states: "Consumer-driven means consumers have the primary decision-making role regarding the care that is offered and received. The consumer voice is paramount in determining all aspects of care for consumers and must be fully represented in all aspects of service delivery. The term "consumer" should be understood to mean those people who are receiving or have received services either voluntarily or involuntarily. It means consumers are the primary authors and decision-makers in developing policies affecting local, state, and national service delivery. All meetings and preliminary discussions involve consumers. Consumers outnumber government staff, contractors and secondary stakeholders (non-recipients of services) and are the first and primary stakeholder. As primary authors and decision-makers, consumers are compensated with comparable wages paid to other staff and providers. Public entities lead the way in hiring consumers, setting an example for private business. Input from consumers is meaningful. Internal meetings excluding representative consumers are discrimination and contrary to the ideals that define consumer-driven.

Nebraska Recovery Network Toll Free Number

**(888) 225-2372**

Nebraska Recovery Network  
2101 Sheridan Blvd. Suite 400  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
Phone: (402)477-2377  
Toll Free: 1 (888)225-2372

*All Roads Lead to Recovery*

**Reminder:**

**No one who is advocating in the media should identify him/herself as a member of any specific 12 Step Program!**