

---

# Heroin in Hudson:

A Community Crisis

**July 18, 2013 | 6:30pm**  
First Presbyterian Church  
1901 Vine Street, Hudson



## Thank You

A special thank you to speakers of this event for their time and commitment. Our community moves forward because of their dedication.

# Agenda

6:30	Introduction	Meg Heaton
6:35	Nick Motu	Explanation of opiate based painkillers & how they lead to heroin
6:45	Phil Drewiske	Personal story
7:00	Roger & Judy Drewiske	Parents story
7:15	Peter VanDusartz	Physical & psychological effects of heroin addiction
7:30	Steven Skoog	Personal story
7:45	Jodi & Phil Skoog	Parents story
8:00	Law enforcement HPD	Det. Sgt. Geoff Willems & St. Croix County Investigator Jim Mila
8:10	Karen Hole	A mother's story
8:25	St. Croix County Coalition	Sara Seidel
Until 9:00	Closing remarks	Question & Answer Period

# Warning Signs

## Signs that someone could be using

- Long sleeves even in hot weather
- Bruises or red irritation on arms or hands, hands frequently look dirty
- Nodding off, falling asleep in the middle of things
- Frequent phone calls & texts that he or she doesn't want others to see
- Itching frequently, picking at his or her skin
- Often sick, achy, shivering, throwing up
- Not sticking with school, frequently absent, dropping grades
- Withdrawal from friends/family
- Missing items from home, pawn receipts
- Easily irritated, dramatic rages at times

## Things to look for

- Missing spoons or torn apart soda cans (used to cook heroin with)
- Tubes from hollowed-out pens, straws or rolled up paper (to snort heroin through)
- Syringes
- Aluminum foil or gum wrappers with black streaks (used to smoke heroin with - also called "chasing the dragon")
- Pieces of stretchy resistance bands, shoestrings, belts with bite marks, elastic bands (all used to find a vein for injecting)
- Candles or lighters
- Small Ziploc baggies, balloons
- Small rolled up pieces of cotton. q-tips missing their ends (used to filter heroin through)
- Black ash on hands, tables, clothes, carpet (from bottom of cooking' spoon)

# Signs of Overdose

**Things to watch out for** - Could be a sign of a potential overdose.

- Snoring deeply - This is often and understandably mistaken for sleeping
- Turning blue
- Not breathing
- No initial signs at all - the effects can kick-in hours after the initial hit

**What not to do** - Things you should never do if you think someone has overdosed.

- Never put people under a cold shower or in a cold bath
- Never pick someone up to walk them around
- Never smack, hit or hurt someone to try and bring them around
- Never inject someone with salt water

The only affects any of these things might have, is to cause more damage, increase the likelihood of the person dying and/or delay the time it takes to call an ambulance.

**What to do: Call 911**

If you are searching to find out if someone you are with is overdosing you should call 911 right now because you are worried that they are overdosing and you are looking for information on signs of overdosing and what to do. It is simple. Don't take a chance with that person's life. **Call 911 to save their life.**

# Helpful References

## Books

*Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey through His Son's Addiction*

David Sheff, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

*Clean - Overcoming Addiction and Ending America's Greatest Tragedy*

David Sheff, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2013.

*Get Your Loved One Sober: Alternatives to Nagging, Pleading, and Threatening*

Robert Meyers, Hazelden, 2003

*Slaying the Addiction Monster*

Sheryl Letzgas MCGinnis, Booksurge Publishing, An Amazon.com Company, 2008.

*White Rabbit, A Doctor's Story of Her Addiction and Recovery*

Martha Morrison, M.D., New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1989.

*Cost*

Roxana Robinson, 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008.

## Web Resources

Search for online Nar-Anon group you'd like to join

[naranongrouponline.com](http://naranongrouponline.com)

Hazelden Teen and young adult addiction, drug rehab

[hazelden.org/web/public/alcohol\\_drug\\_rehab\\_youth.page](http://hazelden.org/web/public/alcohol_drug_rehab_youth.page)

Bringing the disease of addiction into the light of hope and healing

[shatterthestigma.com](http://shatterthestigma.com)

Join the cause & sign up to receive monthly updates.

[brainswish.org](http://brainswish.org)

Treatment centers in the United States

[www.alltreatment.com](http://www.alltreatment.com)

## YouTube

Confessions of a Heroin Addict

[health.discovery.com/tv-shows/addicted/videos/confessions-of-a-heroine-addict.htm](http://health.discovery.com/tv-shows/addicted/videos/confessions-of-a-heroine-addict.htm)

Misconceptions on Heroin Addiction (Hazelden Foundation)

[youtube.com/watch?v=dvpwHD-96-Y](http://youtube.com/watch?v=dvpwHD-96-Y)

Joe, Herzanek: *Why Don't They Just Quit? What Families and Friends Need to Know About Addiction and Recovery*

[addictsmom.podomatic.com/entry/2013-06-18T15\\_13\\_15-07\\_00](http://addictsmom.podomatic.com/entry/2013-06-18T15_13_15-07_00)

# Alcohol, Drugs & Other Addiction Services

<b>Alano Society of New Richmond</b> (New Richmond)	(715) 246-4912
<b>Burkwood, Inc.</b> (Burkhardt)	(715) 386-6125
<b>Hudson Alano Club</b> (Hudson)	(715) 386-2932
<b>Hudson Hospital &amp; Clinics Programs for Change</b> (Hudson)	(715) 531-6755
<b>Kinnic Falls Alcohol &amp; Drug Abuse Services</b> (River Falls)	(715) 426-5950
<b>Narcotics Anonymous Minnesota Regional Helpline</b>	877-767-7676
<b>Narcotics Anonymous Wisconsin Chippewa Valley Helpline</b>	888-543-0924
<b>Pierce County Human Services</b> (Ellsworth)	(715) 273-6770
<b>River Falls Alano Society</b> (River Falls)	(715) 426-0820
<b>St. Coix County Human Services</b> (New Richmond)	(715) 246-8209

## Heroin takes a hometown boy:

The Hole family Shares their loss

Tyler Hole died of a heroin overdose on Feb. 19 of this year at the age of 23. He was a member of the Hudson High School Class of 2007. His mother Sherri Hole is a speech pathologist who has been a longtime member of the staff at E.P. Rock Elementary. As she and her husband John grieve the loss of their son with his brothers, other family members and friends, Sherri wanted to share her thoughts on their tragic loss in hopes of sparing others the same experience.

Ty was a home-town Hudson kid who loved this town. He was born in River Falls and was a very welcome baby, our youngest son. Ty grew up with a loving family with two parents, two brothers, pets, stories at night, church on Sunday, dinner at the family table, and lots of friends. He had great friends that he hung out with in our neighborhood near E.P. Rock -many of them friends from early elementary years all the way through high school. He went to Sunday school and Bible Camp. He greatly enjoyed being a part of our church's youth group. He was confirmed. He enjoyed school- except for math classes- and loved all the social opportunities school and sports presented. Being the youngest of 3 boys, he grew up first watching and later playing Booster baseball, football, and basketball. His picture has appeared in the Hudson Star Observer several times- when he dressed up like a money tree for the Rotary Club's Halloween parade, when he was in the Homecoming Parade with the football team, when he was Prom Prince and now in his obituary.

Ty took incredible pleasure in being with people his own age. He had a comfortable, low-key personality and fit in well with almost anyone. He had great intuition and went out of his way to make people comfortable and entertained in social situations. He was a thoughtful son who did chores around the house. He made his own birthday cards and wrote in the last card he gave me "Happy Birthday Mom! Mom, thank you so much for always being there for me when I need you, and for always believing in me even if I don't. You are



the best mom anyone could ever ask for, we are all so lucky to have you in our lives. I hope you have an awesome birthday! Love, Ty.” Ty was a “regular” Hudson kid with a bright future and lots of plans to finish school, meet and fall in love with his “beacon of hope” and have kids of his own. He said he knew what he wanted but didn’t know how to get there.

After graduating from High School and a devastating break up with his first girlfriend, he was isolated from most of his friends and family. He’d made choices that took his life off track and was heart broken, ashamed and embarrassed. He felt that he’d been left behind. At 18, he thought he needed to be independent and get through it on his own with minimal help from his family. Unknown to us, he began using Oxycotin. His life quickly spiraled downwards. He wanted to move ahead with his plans but something always happened that made his plans fail. One of his friends called us in late August and told us through many tears that he was worried about Ty. Ty and “lots of kids from Hudson” were “chasing the dragon”- smoking heroin. Ty denied it all and passed a home drug test. We watched, worried, continued to monitor and question him. Things began disappearing from our home. When confronted in November 2011, Ty shocked us by telling us he was injecting heroin and his using was out of control. He’d progressed from Oxycotin to smoking heroin to injecting it. He said opiates are out of your system in four to five days and won’t show up on a drug test after that. He immediately went into Hazelden for the 28 day in-patient program. He embraced being a part of the Tiebault unit and his Tiebault “brothers.” He looked progressively more calm, focused, comfortable with himself during our visits. He told us he had the tools to deal with his drug problem and that it would never happen again.

After treatment, he moved into a sober house in St. Paul in order to attend intensive out-patient treatment at Hazelden Fellowship. He relapsed twice and was kicked out after 3 weeks. We talked frankly about the possibility of heroin killing him. His father took him to a pawn shop, showed him a revolver and told him every time he used, it was like putting one bullet in the revolver, spinning the chamber, holding it to his head and pulling the trigger. Ty assured us “that’s NOT going to happen- I’m NOT going to die. I’m NOT doing that anymore” and that he would stay away from drugs. He had all the tools he needed, he just needed to use them. He moved to Changing Gaits, a sober house/horse ranch based on faith. It was a few miles out in the country in northern Minnesota and was a small community of 9 men who started each day with devotions. Ty reconnected with his faith and felt he had great success in working on his recovery there. He stayed for four months. He thought he was strong enough to “get his life back on track” and wanted to enroll in college and get a job. We didn’t realize that staying sober needed to be his full time job and focus for the next few years. We thought he had made it through a terrible “stage” and were glad he was ready to move on. He moved to Owatonna, near one of his brothers, to attend Riverland Community College and the Fountain Center, an out-patient treatment center that’s associated with the Mayo Clinic. Ty noted that when he made good choices, good things happened to him. He frequently talked with us about being sober and working on sobriety. His connection and love for each member of our family was evident through all of his challenges. I understand now how hard Ty worked to protect us from what was really going on in his life and keep the ugly parts of his life separated from his family. Becoming a world class liar goes hand in hand with addiction. The lies and facade prevented us from knowing that he was in trouble and from applying every bit of our influence to demand that he go back into in-patient treatment.

He was home the weekend before he died and attended a board gaming convention in St. Paul with his older brother. He was clear eyed, sharp, and a witty part of our conversations. I was in the habit of checking his arms for marks- all looked good. He left Monday morning at 9:30 to go back to Owatonna to get ready for classes on Tuesday. He spoke to both of us on the phone later on Monday afternoon and ended his conversations with his typical “bye-love you.” On Tuesday morning just before 7 a.m., I saw a black & white patrol car go slowly by my house. It turned around and stopped. I thought immediately about Ty and

wondered if he had been in an accident or had been arrested for something. I opened the door for the officer who asked me to identify myself and be seated. He told me our son Ty was “deceased.” That’s a word that echoes in my mind everyday. He explained that an ambulance was called to an apartment in River Falls at about 3:00 a.m. and the responders were not able to revive him. It appeared to be drug related. His body was waiting for an autopsy. I needed to call and talk with police officers in River Falls and the Medical Examiner.

I can’t express the sorrow and sadness losing Ty has brought to our family. His loss has left a gaping hole in each of our hearts and he is dearly missed each day. Every day brings experiences that remind us of Ty. His absence from these activities needs to be grieved with many tears and regrets. We know Ty died knowing how much he was loved and each of us know how much he loved us in return. We face regrets and construct elaborate scenarios about what we wish we would have done or said. In reality, Ty’s battle with addiction was between him and heroin. Worrying about Ty was a central feature in our thinking for five years. Despite our preoccupation with his addiction, the battle was all his- personal and intense. In the end, addiction won and took our lovely son away from us and all the promises of his future.

I wanted to tell our story because Ty was such a typical Hudson kid. He was home-town grown and involved in almost everything our community offers. If kids like Ty are susceptible to getting involved in drugs, almost any child faces that possibility. Addiction lives in darkness, feeds off secrets and thrives in the shadows. When Ty was living, we kept his secret because it was HIS secret impacting HIS life. We say addiction is a disease but the tools that are provided for fighting it seem woefully inadequate. Looking in, we never imagined the magnitude of the daily struggle he faced to control it. We didn’t understand how devastating and all-pervasive it is or how grim the statistics of lasting recovery were. I wish we had done more reading and learning about addiction. We lived in fear and worry knowing the danger Ty faced. A common belief in recovery is that relapse is part of recovery. Relapse took our son’s life, he didn’t get a chance for more treatment or a “close call” overdose to emphasize the danger of heroin.

Our community needs to talk about this and figure out what we can do to prevent it. Preventing our kids from EVER trying drugs like heroin even once seems to be the best way to make sure another family doesn’t have to face this kind of loss. I hope our children in elementary, middle school, high school and the young adults in our community are getting the message that heroin will kill you. We need them to identify with the consequences, understand what the inevitability of what happens when you use, talk about it amongst themselves and decide not to allow drugs to be anywhere near them. When Ty tried drugs for the first time, it was for recreation, socially acceptable with his peers and he didn’t expect to become an addict. Most choices can be reversed. It appears some people are predisposed to become addicted, and the choice can’t be un-done. Looking back, I wonder what else we could have done to prevent this from happening. It doesn’t bring him back but maybe it could help prevent this from happening to your child. I see how naive we were even in the face of evidence that should have told us that Ty was using.

## Goodbye Heroin

Dear Heroin, here's a letter to explain,  
Why you, no longer, are going to be a part of my pain,  
Why I'm no longer going to continue playing your dangerous games,  
Of putting the flame to the spoon of shame.

You almost destroyed my dreams and put out my fire,  
By telling me, you could keep getting me higher and higher.

I know now that was just a pack of lies,  
You never did want to see me alive,  
You intention was to see me die, a slow and painful death,  
Along with all the other lovers you were putting to rest.

You made me feel like I could do whatever I wanted to do,  
But in the end all I wanted to do was you.

Tell me is that the kind of love that I should adore,  
Always on the floor, searching for more?  
We go a long, long way back,  
I even remember when you changed your name from heroin to crack.

Believe me when I say it's hard for me to put you down,  
But I just can't survive with you around.  
So what God has joined together, let no man undo,  
To my new love of life, I say, "I do."

